

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Mid-Year Retreat
June 24, 2019

The Blowing Rock Town Council held a Budget Adoption and Mid-Year Retreat meeting on Monday, June 24, 2019. The retreat was held at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock, NC. Present were Mayor Charlie Sellers, Mayor Pro-tem Albert Yount and Council Members Jim Steele, Sue Sweeting, Doug Matheson, and Virginia Powell. Others in attendance were Town Manager Shane Fox, Finance Officer Nicole Norman, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner, who recorded the minutes.

Call to Order

Mayor Sellers called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Council Member Powell made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

Consent Agenda

1. Budget Amendment Ordinance #2019-06

Budget Amendment Ordinance to account for various items. **Budget Amendment Ordinance #2019-06 – Attachment A**

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

Proposed Fee Schedule Amendment – Pool Rates

Council Member Powell advised she felt the pool rate should be doubled for non-tax payers and be effective July 1, 2019. Council Member Matheson advised the problem he had was he felt it was unfair to the Blowing Rock School children because most of those kids don't live inside the city limits. He further stated there is always going to be a higher non-tax payer attendance to the pool because not many children live inside the city limits.

After further discussion, Council Member Steele made a motion to approve the amendment to the pool fees, seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

2019-2020 Budget Adoption

Manager Fox reviewed the 2019-2020 Budget and what was discussed at the two Budget workshops.

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the budget ordinance as presented, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Yount. Council Member Powell advised she

would like to go back to the pool fees to discuss further. She explained after thinking about it she had an idea to allow Blowing Rock School kids to show their report card at the pool and be able to get the tax payer rate at the pool. Council discussed, and the majority liked the idea. Council also discussed if this should include parents or just the children, the majority was in favor of just the children being offered the benefit. Council discussed going forward this year but discussing in more detail at the January Retreat how to go forward with the pool fees in the future.

Council Member Powell made a motion to amend the motion regarding pool fees to allow Blowing Rock School children to show their report card and get the tax payer rate for pool passes, seconded by Council Member Matheson. In favor of the motion: Council Members Powell, Matheson, Steele and Mayor Pro-Tem Yount; Against the motion: Council Member Sweeting. Motion passed.

After the amendment to the pool fees, Council re-voted on the Budget. Council Member Matheson made a motion to approve the FY 2019-2020 Budget ordinance, seconded by Council Member Steele. Unanimously approved. **FY 2019-2020 Budget – Attachment B**

Discussion Topics

Sunset Streetscape Project

Town Manager Shane Fox gave an update on the Sunset Drive Streetscape Project's current progress. Streetscape to date is approximately 15% complete, Water is approximately 1% complete and sewer work is at approximately 83% completed. Mr. Fox advised the majority of the work has been focused on sewer. Mr. Fox further advised the project is moving along on schedule.

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock mentioned the contractor has been very diligent in working with property owners along the construction areas providing a cost estimate for additional sewer taps, water taps or sprinkler connections.

Council discussed the "bump outs" in front of First Baptist Church and asked Manager Fox to get a memorandum of understanding signed and in place with the church for who is responsible.

Manager Fox advised one of the main issues of the project, which has somewhat been resolved, was the dust. Mr. Rothrock advised during a meeting it was discussed that speeding in the construction area was stirring up the dust. Manager Fox stated temporary speed bumps as well as parking a police car on the street had help control the speeding.

Council Member Powell suggested better communication with the property owners on the progress of the project. She suggested meeting with the owners or sending an email periodically to inform them of updates and/or progress updates.

ST Rentals/Planning

Mr. Rothrock advised his department had sent out a letter and application packet to approximately 125 residents who have been renting short term. The purpose was to let those areas know the ordinance that was adopted by Council last summer. The application is to be filled out and send back to Planning and Inspections. The application to be filled out by the owner, is to attest their property is in compliance.

Mr. Rothrock advised as far as enforcement, twenty-five (25) letters were sent out, out of those six (6) appealed. The six (6) appeals were brought to Board of adjustment and one was appealed from the Board of Adjustment to Superior Court, which is still pending.

Bass Lake Sidewalk

Manager Fox gave Council a briefly update on the progress. The project is moving forward, but slowly. All Easements have now been obtained and now it lies with DOT's legal department. The Easements were much more challenging to get than what was first thought. Council Member Sweeting advised it was tentatively set to begin in September. Council briefly discussed the process and possible time line.

Board Appointments

Council briefly discussed the Board Appointment process with Manager Fox. Council Members felt they need to work on a way of encouraging more residents to apply for the volunteer boards. Council Members suggested putting notice out a little sooner, it was suggested to put notice in the October water bills as well as continue to advertise the way it's been done in the past. Currently there are rules in the Town's ordinance for the applicant's qualifications, but with the re-codification process getting ready to start it's the perfect opportunity to update those rules.

Watauga County

Council briefly discussed funding sources needs from Watauga County as well as briefly discussed the lease agreement with the County regarding Davant Field. Council asked Manager Fox to discuss that agreement with the County. Council discussed the sales tax distribution and agreed the current ad valorem method is much more beneficial to the Town. Manager Fox advised he would like to work on building a strong relationship with Watauga County for going forward, Council agreed.

Town Manager Evaluation

Council briefly reviewed with Manager Fox the Manager Evaluation form that was enacted last fall.

Other

Council discussed briefly the Interconnect between Boone and Blowing Rock. The consensus was for Manager Fox to meet with the Town of Boone's Manager to discuss further.

Council briefly discussed the time-line for the remaining utilities on Valley Blvd to be placed underground. Council agreed Senator Deanna Ballard really helped speed up that process.

Council Member Powell asked for an updated list of streets to be paved and have it updated for the citizens to have access to as well. Council Member Powell suggested a better communication effort be made between Council and the groups that are coming to Council with requests. Council discussed ways to better prepare these groups for what the Council's expectations are before bringing their topic before Council.

Council briefly discussed the 2014 Comprehensive Plan. Planning Director Kevin Rothrock is in the process of working on updates. The plan is re-done every ten (10) years and updated every five (5) years.

Council briefly discussed and agreed to give Manager Fox until the January Retreat to get acclimated and start on the next set of goals.

Manager Fox gave an update on the Legacy Trail – after taking numerous trips to review with different departments, the state has agreed to allow the Town to put Pedestrian Signage up both ways near the steps at the trail. DOT should be coming within the week look at potentially painting a crosswalk. Also, if a handrail needs to be added to the steps that would be a cost to the Town. Mr. Fox advised there isn't a guarantee, but efforts are being made to find a solution to fix the issue at a low cost to the Town. Council thanked Manager Fox.

ADJOURN

At 4:00 P.M. with no further business to discuss, Council Member Sweeting made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

MAYOR _____ **ATTEST** _____
Charlie Sellers **Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk**

ATTACHMENTS

Budget Amendment Ordinance 2019-06 – Attachment A

FY 2019-2020 Budget – Attachment B