

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Meeting
September 10, 2019

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, September 10, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock, N.C. 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, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Town Engineer Doug Chapman from McGill Associates, Public Works and Utilities Director Matt Blackburn, Police Chief Aaron Miller, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Building Inspector John Warren, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Finance Officer Nicole Norman and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner who recorded the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sellers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

REGULAR AGENDA ADOPTION

Council Member Steele made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

Budget Amendment Ordinance to Account for various items. **Budget Amendment #2019-09 – Attachment A**

Resolution for the 2020 Census Partnership. **2020 Census Partnership Resolution – Attachment B**

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

MINUTE APPROVAL

Council Member Matheson made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 13, 2019 Regular Council Meeting and Closed Session Minutes, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mr. Lee Cohen, 492 Skyland View Drive, spoke on behalf of the Pickleball Community, he advised that Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the country and is extremely popular with the aging “Baby Boomer” generation. He further advised Blowing Rock’s Pickleball community would like the opportunity to work with Mayor, Council and Parks and Recreation staff to create a better and safer pickleball environment for residents and visitors. Mr. Cohen expressed gratitude for the recent renovations to the courts area

retaining wall, walk way and new steps. He advised further fencing between the courts and the walkway is absolutely necessary for the safety of anyone passing through the park.

Mr. Chohen stated the pickleball group would like the Town to consider converting the lower basketball court to three (3) permanent pickleball courts in Memorial Park. This would give Blowing Rocks' beautiful park a complete recreational experience; tennis, basketball and pickleball.

Mr. Chohen advised it's a safety concern as well as the heavy "portable net" duffle bags that have to be carried by the players, many of whom should not be carrying these bags back and forth down the new, very steep staircase. He advised permanent nets would completely eliminate this issue. Mr. Cohen further showed some locations in the area that have permanent pickleball courts.

Ms. Ellen Bray, 225 Rocky Glen Lane, advised she is the "keeper" of the pickleball schedule and contact list with approximately eighty (80) people. In the beginning of summer, they started with playing three (3) days and now at seven (7) days a week. Ms. Bray further stated at any time all three (3) courts are filled up. Ms. Bray stated she would like Council to consider putting up permanent nets. Ms. Bray further stated the new county Recreation Center is not going to take care of their problem.

Mr. Mike Cantanese, 175 Chestnut Drive, advised from his observation the lower basketball court is not usually used for basketball. He stated every now and then he will see a father and son playing "Horse", but typically the pickleball players are the only ones using the court. Mr. Cantanese further advised he would like the Town to consider putting up fencing. He explained it's a safety issue when people use the walk way behind the courts and all players have to stop and wait for the people to pass before they can resume their game.

Ms. Gigi Poole, 147 Dogwood Lane, thanked staff for striping Laurel Park Drive as it has helped with the construction traffic in that area and many wrecks have been avoided. She further thanked staff and Council on the progress that has been made on Legacy Trail. Ms. Poole asked for consideration be made to stripe some areas on Main Street as well; in front of Six Pence and near the stoplight on Main Street.

Rick Parsons, 1577 Greenhill Road, spoke about speeding on Greenhill Road. He thanked whoever reduced the speed limit to 25 on that road but explained there is still a big issue with speeding. Mr. Parsons asked Council to do something about the speeding on that road.

Betsy Wilcox, 460 Greenhill Circle, admitted she had found herself guilty of speeding on Greenhill Road unintentionally. She advised something she thought would be helpful and catch people's attention when their "mind is somewhere else" is a flashing light to get the motorist attention.

Mayor Sellers thanked the citizens for their input and advised Council would take these suggestions under consideration.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Public Art Request – Blowing Rock Inn

Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown advised the Blowing Rock Inn is requesting to install a 72” by 20” sculpture in their flower bed beside their gazebo. The sculpture is a wood frame that is covered with rusted tin roofing and is in the shape of a Triquetra Knot.

BRAAC approved the installation of the sculpture during their September meeting that was held on September 5th.

Council Member Sweeting asked if the sculpture would be permanent or temporary. Ms. Brown advised it would be a permanent sculpture. Council Member Sweeting further advised she liked the sculpture.

With no further questions or comments, Council Member Matheson made a motion to approve, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Yount. Unanimously approved.

2. Financing for Capital Items

Finance Officer Nicole Norman advised the Town requested financing proposals from nine (9) area banks to finance the acquisition of capital vehicles and equipment for the approved FY 2019-2020 Budget. A four (4) year note in the amount up to \$300,000 was solicited with five (5) bids received. The lowest bidder was United Community Bank with a rate of 1.82%. Staff recommends the financing bid be awarded to United Community Bank.

Council Member Sweeting asked Manager Fox if he was pleased with the selection of the trucks and equipment.

Manager Fox advised the overall bids of each of the items either came in at or below what was predicted. From an overall budgetary standpoint, he was very pleased.

Mayor Pro-Tem Yount stated for the record he and Manager Fox had discussed the Chevy Silverado that went for \$67,000 is not a pickup truck. Manager Fox advised that was correct, the vehicle is the 2020 version of the 2019 5500 Model which is truck/dump truck/snow plow usage vehicle.

Council Member Steele further stated for the record the Town received multiple bids on each vehicle and didn't select them without thought and consideration. He thanked staff for their hard work.

Council Member Matheson made a motion to accept the bid from United Community Bank at 1.82%, seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

3. Financial Report

Finance Officer Nicole Norman gave the Financial report for August 2019. Council had no questions or concerns.

4. Ad Hoc Update

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock gave an update on the Ad Hoc committee:

- Ad Hoc Committee met on July 1st and established the purpose of the group to develop a vision for Valley Blvd and considered expanding the scope to include downtown area as well
- At the July 9th meeting, the Town Council confirmed that the Ad Hoc should focus on developing a vision for Valley Blvd only
- The Ad Hoc Committee agreed to utilize the services of an urban planner to;
 - Capture community input and consensus
 - Develop a future vision for Valley Blvd through community involvement and use of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan
 - Create graphics/visuals, and
 - Evaluate the current Land Use Code to identify its strengths and also deficiencies that may hinder accomplishing the vision

- An RFP was developed in August that was sent to twelve (12) planning firms in the southeast US
- Staff received three (3) proposals by the August 30th deadline
- The Ad Hoc Committee evaluated the proposals on Tuesday September 3 and selected Benchmark Planning for an interview
- The interview with Benchmark will be held on Monday September 16 at 4:00 p.m.
- Town Council will have the opportunity to review and approve specifics of a consulting services contract prior to final selection, perhaps a special meeting
- If a consultant is selected, all public visioning workshops will be held in October 2019 to gather information from year-round residents and as many seasonal residents as possible
- Final presentation to Town Council by consultant currently scheduled for January 2020

Council thanked Mr. Rothrock for his update.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Mayor Sellers – attended the Blowing Rock Historical Society’s meeting and learned of some concerns with the 1888 Museum. They would like to work with the Town to make the necessary repairs.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Yount – big changes to zoning be coming in 2021. Asked Mr. Rothrock to meet with Council and bring them up to speed on the changes.

- Council Member Matheson – AppalCart has reduced their schedule to one (1) day a week. He will be setting up a meeting to meet with Craig Hughes from AppalCart, Manager Fox and Executive Director of the TDA Tracy Brown to meet and discuss a plan going forward.
- Council Member Powell – Asked staff to look into putting on the Town website the list of “Right of Way Tree Trimming” so that people will be able to know when their area is scheduled.
- Manager Fox – Updated the following:
 - Reached out to NCDOT about the Sunset Crosswalk- pedestrian only is \$15,000 - \$18,000 and the Full Arm is \$150,000 to \$200,000
 - Fire Department sent five (5) Firefighters trained in swift water rescue to the Eastern part of the state to help with Hurricane relief
 - Sunset Project – main water and sewer lines have been completed. Still on tract to be completed by the deadline.
 - Highway 321/Valley Blvd – Town staff working with NCDOT to get the fall planting done

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Council Member Sweeting made a motion to adjourn at 7:15 p.m., seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

MAYOR _____
Charlie Sellers

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

Budget Amendment #2019-09 – Attachment A
2020 Census Partnership Resolution – Attachment B