

**MINUTES**  
**Town of Blowing Rock**  
**Town Council Meeting**  
**October 8, 2019**

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, October 8, 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 Matheson made a motion to adopt the agenda with the removal of the Sunset Gateway Project from the agenda due to the presentation not being finalized, seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Bovino Annexation – Resolution #2019-10 and #2019-11

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved. **Bovino Annexation – Resolution #2019-10 and #2019-11 – Attachment A & B**

Budget Amendment Ordinance to Account for various items. **Budget Amendment #2019-12 – Attachment C**

Council Member Sweeting, Seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

Samaritan's Purse Tax Release. **Tax Release #2019-3 – Attachment D**

Council Member Steele made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

**MINUTE APPROVAL**

Council Member Powell made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 10, 2019 Regular Council Meeting, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Matheson made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 19, 2019 Special Meeting, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

### **SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR**

Ms. Gigi Poole, 147 Dogwood Lane, advised it has been ten months and counting on the Legacy Trail. She explained she appreciates the efforts that have been made but had ruined several pairs of jeans going in between the fence slats, so she won't "kill herself" walking on Main Street into Town. Ms. Poole reminded she has brought up the striping on Main Street and realizes it's NCDOT's responsibility, she advised she doesn't have a voice with them, but the Town does. Ms. Poole thanked Council for their time.

Bob Green 297 Gideon Ridge Rd – Spoke about the traffic noise on Hwy 321/Valley Blvd. Mr. Green advised the noise in the Green Park corridor is mainly caused by speeding trucks going 40 to 50 mph. He further advised he would like to propose changing the speed limit for trucks and have a truck and car speed limit bringing the truck speed limit down to 20 mph. Mr. Green stated on a foggy day you can't hear the trucks, but on a bright sunny day it will vibrate the windows in his home when trucks are speeding and hit their breaks in the curve. Mr. Green concluded he just wanted to start the discussion and thanked Council for their time.

### **PRESENTATIONS:**

#### **1. Blowing Rock Police Department Community Survey**

Dylan Powell, the Town's summer intern, presented the results of the public perception survey of the Blowing Rock Police Department. Mr. Powell advised the goal was to receive back 200 responses but had well exceeded that with 436 responses received, including 29 from businesses and 21 from hotels. Mr. Powell advised the surveys were distributed through the mail via the May/June water bill, posted on the Town's website, in person to downtown businesses and hotels and placed on the counter in Town Hall. Mr. Powell advised

- 96% of the community agrees or strongly agrees that the Blowing Rock Police Department is professional, comforting and prompt.
- 86% of respondents have interacted with the Blowing Rock Police Department
- Respondents that have interacted with the BRPD in the past two years had more favorable view of the BRPD and also rated problems in section four of the survey with greater importance
- Problems in section four were ranked (greatest to least):
  - Parking Violations
  - Traffic Safety
  - Drug/Alcohols Abuse

Property Crime  
Violent Crime

- Permanent residents had a (marginally) less favorable view of the BRPD, were more likely to have interacted with the BRPD, and perceived section four's topics as more major. Seasonal residents had an inverse opinion
- The topics of concern in respondent comments were, in order of prevalence:
  - Traffic-related
  - Parking/tickets
  - Dispatch
  - Violations of the noise ordinance

Council thanked Mr. Powell for his hard work on compiling the survey and survey results.

## **2. Police Presentation**

Chief Aaron Miller presented the "Life Saving" award to Master Police Officer Lance Dotson and Senior Police Officer Caleb Hildebran.

## **3. Heather Ridge – Water Line Completion**

Public Works Director Matt Blackburn advised the Public Works Department completed the Heather Ridge water line replacement this past month. This included the installation of approximately 300 feet of 6" PVC water line, and new fire hydrant and three service taps. Material cost for this project was just under \$6,000. While this section of line is still on a dead end, the hope is that the upgraded line will help to alleviate cloudy water complaints. Mr. Blackburn advised this was the first time since 2007 the Public Works Department has undertaken a waterline replacement in house. He further advised the estimated cost savings was approximately \$20,000 for the Town to do it verses contracting out.

Council thanked Mr. Blackburn for his hard work.

## **AGENDA ITEMS:**

### **1. Blowing Rock Chamber Winterfest Request**

Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown advised Town staff has implemented a Special Events Application to anyone or any organization who is requesting to hold an event in the Town of Blowing Rock.

The Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce has submitted an application to close Park Avenue on Saturday, January 25, 2020 for some of their events during Winterfest. It would be closed from Main Street to Wallingford.

The dog keg pulls, a band, and the beer garden would be in this area. This will allow them to have more control over the beer garden and the crowd would be more spread out instead of cramming everyone in the American Legion parking lot.

Town staff has reviewed the Special Event application and has given their feedback and approval of the request.

Council Member Powell advised she had looked through the application and thought it looked great, wanted to suggest adding info about Wi-Fi.

Council Member Matheson advised in working last year with the beer garden he remembered the biggest issue was getting people to come through the ID check first before being served beer and there was also issues with controlling them leaving. He asked if there was a plan to better plan to better control that this year. Suzy Barker with the Chamber advised one of the reasons, other than taking up a large amount of parking, the Chamber is requesting to move the location of the beer garden is to have a more defined and enclosed area to eliminate issues from the past. Ms. Barker further advised as stated in their application, the Chamber is requesting using the Police Department parking lot for the beer garden. She explained it is an excellent space, has some natural barriers already and this would allow for only one entrance and one exit.

Council Member Matheson asked if hard spirits would be served again this year. Ms. Barker advised she did not intend to do that this year.

Council Member Sweeting thanked staff for the newly created application, she advised it was excellent and very helpful for Council to see the plan. She stated she had a couple of concerns. The first concern is closing off the entire street and blocking the residents from being able to get in and out, especially if there were to be snow. She explained she was a little concerned about blocking the equipment under Parks and Recreation in case there was a need to get to it for snow removal. She further explained she also was concerned with blocking the Police parking area. Council Member Sweeting stated she felt the residents of that area have been very cordial with Art and the Park and the Farmers Market.

Council Member Sweeting advised her other concern was she had an ethical issue with promoting alcohol next to our Town Park where children are and being in our Police Department parking lot where the Town's DARE officer is. She advised her recommendation was to move both the events to Davant Field. Council Member Sweeting stated she had gone and looked at the location and felt there was plenty of room to have both events in that location.

Council Member Sweeting advised she felt something could comeback on the Town that "we're promoting and selling alcohol near the park and she personally has a real ethical problem with that". She further advised she felt that "we as a Council need to look at what they are saying if we allow this to happen".

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to allow the Chamber to have the Winter Fest events, the Beer Garden and Dog Keg Pull, but would like the location of the events to be held at Davant Field, Council Member Matheson seconded the motion for discussion.

Council Member Matheson asked the Chamber what problems they would see in having in their planning with changing locations.

Ms. Barker advised it would be difficult as having the event closer to Town and more accessible to the business district would be much better. She explained it's important to the Chamber to keep these events close to Town near the restaurants and retail district. Ms. Barker further advised although Davant Field is beautiful, it would pull the event away from Town center.

Council Member Sweeting asked if the Chamber had thought about getting shuttles to bring people in from further areas of Town to the event. Ms. Barker advised that could be an option, however would be a huge expense for an already limited budget. She further advised the Chamber felt it would be a more successful event the closer it is to Town.

Some various options were discussed.

Police Chief Aaron Miller advised it was his suggestion to move the keg pull to Park Avenue because the event last year took up parking and with the Town being full it was really affected by the lack of parking. He further advised the entire street did not have to be utilized and could have an emergency lane access for residents as well as emergency vehicles.

Council Member Sweeting asked Chief Miller if he saw a problem with moving the event to Davant Field. He advised he couldn't speak to that, the only thing he could speak to is that would eliminate parking at Davant Field.

Ms. Barker advised she had worked closely with Ms. Brown and Chief Miller over the past few weeks on the planning and felt they had come up with a very good plan for the event.

Council further discussed options.

Chief Miller advised he had suggested the Police parking lot for the beer garden as he felt that was a more controlled area. He explained it helped to separate the beer garden and the keg pull as they both draw a different crowd to each.

Mayor Sellers stated he felt the Department Heads had worked hard coming up with this plan and asked Council if they would be willing to try it for this year.

Council Member Steele advised he had heard a lot of different suggestions and would ask the Chamber take those into consideration and come back with an "A, B, C" approach as to what their three options are. He further advised it could go back and forth all night debating and he didn't feel "we will get anywhere tonight with a decision".

Mayor Sellers asked Ms. Barker if that would give her enough time. Ms. Barker advised it would be difficult. After further discussion Council Member Steele and Mayor Pro-Tem

Yount suggested the Chamber wait and come back with the “A, B, C” options and when ready the Council can call a special meeting to discuss.

Council Member Sweeting amended her motion, the new motion was to table the request for approximately two weeks and call a special meeting at that time to discuss the new options, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

## **2. Financial Report**

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

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- Mayor Sellers – Advised the Foley Center had been sold as of October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Yount – He was empathetic with Mr. Green’s comments on the truck noise on Hwy 321. Suggested getting DOT involved to help control the issue.
- Council Member Matheson – 104 Riders for the AppalCart last month. This is the last month for this year, which is currently running on Saturdays only.
- Council Member Powell – Thanked the Police Department for the “Active Shooter” meeting that Officer Dotson and Officer Church had for the parents as well as their training with the students. Was very proud of their knowledge and professionalism.
- Manager Fox – Updated the following:
  - Sunset Project – only two months from having the project completed.
  - Bass Lake – sidewalk bid opening is October 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 7:20 p.m. Council Member Matheson made a motion to go into closed session under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5) – discussion of potential acquisition and NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) – attorney-client privilege, seconded by seconded by Council Member Steele.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, Council Member Sweeting made a motion to adjourn at 7:40 p.m., seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

**MAYOR** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Charlie Sellers**

**ATTEST** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk**

## **ATTACHMENTS**

**Bovino Annexation – Resolution #2019-10 and #2019-11 – Attachment A & B**  
**Budget Amendment #2019-12 – Attachment C**  
**Tax Release #2019-3 – Attachment D**