

**MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
March 27, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order on Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road in Boone. Mayor Tim Futrelle presided. Council members present included Mayor Pro-Tem Dalton George, Todd Carter, Virginia Roseman, and Eric Plaag (entered meeting at 6:22 p.m.) Staff present included Town Manager Amy Davis, Town Clerk Nicole Harmon-Church, Planning Director Jane Shook, Police Chief Andy Le Beau, Sustainability and Special Projects Manager George Santucci, Long Range Planner Jessica Mitchell (remote). Town Attorney Allison Meade was also in attendance.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TENTATIVE AGENDA ADOPTION

Upon a motion by Council member Carter, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem George, Council voted to approve the agenda as presented.

VOTE:	Aye:	George, Carter, Roseman
	Nay:	None
	Absent:	Tugman, Plaag

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joan Brook of Boone spoke in opposition to a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza that was being discussed by the Human Relations Commission. She read the following statement (entered as received):

“I am opposed to the passing of the ceasefire resolution currently on the table and passed by HRC.

A ceasefire resolution passed by the Town of Boone is unlikely to influence political agents overseas, may cause harm to members of our community, and therefore has no place in public discourse in Boone, NC. Not because of silencing public opinion but because of further obstruction and propagandizing the ability and opportunity of the public for civil discourse.

I do have several action items.

- We adhere in every instance, to the Town of Boone regulations for introducing Proclamations and Resolutions
 - Proclamations must hold town-wide importance or serve an educational purpose for a significant number of Boone residents.
 - A resolution is a formal expression of opinion, will, or intent from the Town Council that often addresses a matter of special or temporary nature. ***I would like to request and add to the Town website, that if that opinion or intent causes harm, discrimination, harassment or bullying to other citizens in our community, then that Resolution may not be considered or brought before the Town for consideration first, but should be referred first to the HRC. The ceasefire now resolution was not, but first presented to Town Council in February and did cause harm, harassment and bullying, as reflected in the HRC Minutes from the March 20th meeting***
 - Such resolutions will then be reviewed by HRC members and follow the criteria below
-
- That we (the HRC) maintain an anti-bias culture, and hopefully can grow and continually improve these skills
 - That the HRC review all proclamations and resolutions with at least 1 week ability to read in full the stated Resolution or Proclamation before public comment, and before a vote is taken on the Resolution or Proclamation. I have been at 2 HRC meetings in the past 6 months where this has not been the case. For this last resolution, it was emailed only 2 hours before the meeting
 - I would like to suggest that in the event that another volatile resolution reaches the HRC meeting chambers, that a private vote be cast
 - That any member of the public making comment before the HRC be made aware of how bias statements that may inflict mental or physical harm to another community member, and therefore will not be considered “public opinion,” and may be asked to leave or interrupted from making such statements by the

HRC Chair or other member leading the proceedings.

- That Roberts Rules of Order be taught to every HRC member and followed without exception at every meeting
- That “mob” mentality is not public discourse when it erupts into name-calling, bullying and harassment, as it did at the HRC meeting on March 20th, and is not permitted in public buildings in the Town of Boone.
- In closing, I’d like to express condolences for all suffering and deaths in Gaza, and for all suffering and deaths in Israel due to the massacre of Oct 7th. And for the hostages themselves and their families, I wish only a speedy and safe return to their home.

I understand the need to want to stop this war against Hamas, but asking Israel to sacrifice their safety, again, won’t help. What would help, is to believe Israelis. That negotiating with terrorists is not the road to peace or the road to a Palestinian state. The ceasefire resolution currently passed by the HRC incorrectly and with prejudice, is titled, “Ceasefire Now Resolution in the War Between Israel and Palestine. This is incorrect. It is a war between Israel and Hamas. Helping all of us in fighting back against such anti-Israel sentiment would go a long way in healing a large segment of Boone residents. And that could begin today by not accepting the Ceasefire Now Resolution at all. Not with revisions, not with amendments. Nothing. Show that Boone is a place of peace and love and acceptance for all. Keep Boone Safe

Nicholas Hammock of Boone recalled his previous appearance before the Town Council and stated that he had learned that the overdevelopment and consequences thereof were not the fault of the members of the Council. That being said, Nicholas was concerned that no one was accountable for overdevelopment and the destruction of the ecosystem. He then announced that he was running for fifth district representative as an independent write in candidate.

REQUESTED APPEARANCES

DR. LESLIE ALEXANDER-WATAUGA COUNTY SCHOOLS

Watauga County Schools Superintendent Dr. Leslie Alexander gave a presentation regarding the preparation of students for the workforce. A complete copy of the presentation can be viewed online at https://boonenc.igq2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=3724 Following the presentation, Council member Plaag stated that, in a recent meeting of the Watauga Housing Council, it was noted that schools in town were at maximum capacity. Dr. Alexander confirmed that Hardin Park and Parkway schools were both at capacity. Council member Plaag expressed the need to work with other local leaders, specifically the County, on a strategic approach in terms of housing. He urged Dr. Alexander to inform the County that the Town of Boone was interested in conversation. Council member Carter noted the new affordable development on Delmar Street and suggested that if a teacher lived there, they could walk to school. Mayor Futrelle added that App State should also be included in conversations surrounding this topic.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

Upon a motion by Council member George, seconded by Council member Carter, Council voted to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda:

1. Town Council regular meeting minutes February 14, 2024
2. Town Council regular meeting minutes February 28, 2024 (with typographical errors corrected as indicated by Council member Plaag)
3. Outside Agency Funding Application

VOTE: Aye: George, Carter, Roseman, Plaag
 Nay: None
 Absent: Tugman

COUNCIL MATTERS

REQUEST FOR DIRECTION REGARDING DANIEL BOONE PARKWAY

Mayor Futrelle gave a brief summary of the discussion of the Daniel Boone Parkway held during the March 13 regular Town Council meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem George indicated that he was against the construction of a bypass around the area and stated that he would rather sit in traffic and keep the environment safe. Council member Carter stated that he was also opposed for the same reasons. Council member Plaag was concerned that the plans presented showed the bypass crossing multiple ridge tops. Council member Roseman did not believe she could rightfully vote for a project that affected people that she did not represent, and stated that until neighboring communities were in agreement with the project she would vote against it. The members of Council were in agreement that Mayor Futrelle should vote against the Daniel Boone Parkway project at the next meeting with NCDOT.

BOONE NEXT UPDATE: DISCUSSION & CONSIDERATION OF GUIDE FOR OUR WORKSHOP DETAILS

Planning Director Shook presented a guide regarding the next steps with the Boone Next comprehensive plan update. Members were pleased with the guide and stressed the importance of social media and press releases. Director Shook indicated that staff would be running advertisements about the workshops in the paper (print and online), and would be utilizing yard signs, letters, and emails and would work with the Human Relations Commission to obtain suggestions about accessibility.

CLOSED SESSION

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro-Tem George, seconded by Council member Plaag, Council voted to enter closed session at 7:46 p.m. pursuant to:

1. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.11(a)(1), to review, approve and seal closed session minutes from Council's prior closed session(s).
2. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.11(a)(3), to consult with the Town Attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the Town Council and obtain legal advice, consider and/or give instructions to the attorney concerning one or more potential legal claims.

VOTE: Aye: George, Plaag, Carter, Roseman
 Nay: None
 Absent: Tugman

Upon a motion by Council member Roseman, seconded by Council member Carter, Council voted at 8:19 p.m. to exit closed session.

VOTE: Aye: George, Plaag, Carter, Roseman
 Nay: None
 Absent: Tugman

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Futrelle adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:20 p.m.

Nicole Harmon, Town Clerk

Tim Futrelle, Mayor