

**MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
May 11, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Town Council of the Boone Town Council was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 11, 2022 at the Town Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road in Boone. Mayor Tim Futrelle presided. Council members present included Mayor Pro-Tem Edie Tugman, Todd Carter, Virginia Roseman, Dalton George and Becca Nenow (remote). Staff present included Interim Town Manager and Finance Director Amy Davis, Town Clerk Nicole Harmon, Public Works Director Rick Miller, Fire Chief Jimmy Isaacs, Police Chief Andy Le Beau, Planning Director Jane Shook, Sustainability and Special Projects Director George Santucci, and Communications Specialist Laney Pilkington. Participating remotely were Human Resources Director Dale Presnell, Public Works Deputy Directors Todd Moody and Josh Eller, Deputy Planning Director Stacey Miller, Cultural Resources Director Mark Freed and Town Attorney Allison Meade.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

TENTATIVE AGENDA ADOPTION

The agenda was adopted as presented by consensus.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tyler Moffatt, representative of Greenway Baptist Church, spoke to make Council aware that the church would be applying for a text amendment to allow them to move forward with using their spare parking lot without going through the rezoning process to change the usage.

DISCUSSION REGARDING FY 2022/23 BUDGET

Discussion began regarding the fiscal year 2022/23 proposed budget. Ms. Davis presented information regarding the recent tax revaluations, special projects in the Town, and the need for stormwater controls. Ms. Roseman proposed a potential \$.01 tax increase to help address some of the special projects presented, particularly stormwater control. Ms. Davis noted that a \$.01 increase only amounted to approximately \$220,000, and that Council would be limited as to the projects they could complete for this amount of money. She then went through the proposed budget department by department and discussed revenues and expenditures. Attention was called to the new roof needed for Fire Station One on King Street, as well as the potential sale of the Blowing Rock Road building. It was the consensus of Council to discuss the potential reduction in list price of the Blowing Rock Road building further after the budget season. Ms. Davis indicated that if needed, funding could be designated for Covid-19 resources, including American Relief Act funding. Howard Street was discussed briefly before moving forward to subsidies and allocations. Mr. Carter asked to recuse himself from this conversation due to his employment with the Hospitality House. Mr. Freed spoke briefly regarding special events and programs being offered by the Cultural Resources Department. Mr. Carter expressed a desire for funding for a June pride event, with members being concerned that the program funding allocated was not enough. Chief Le Beau indicated that his department currently had three vacancies and believed that the recent pay increase by the County was partly to blame. He believed that the Town needed a pay step plan to help retain officers, but believed that the recent pay increase would help recruit applicants. Mr. George suggested cutting two of the vacant positions and funding a pay scale instead. In reaction to a recent email to Council members, Mr. Carter suggested looking at changing the color of patrol cars from black to a less imposing color scheme, with Chief Le Beau indicating that he would look into pricing. A brief update was then given on the progress of Fire Station 4 at the Bolick Farm. Parking and Public Works were discussed next, with Ms. Davis indicating that Parking Manager Reta Jackson had ideas about raising parking fees for permitted lots, which she would forward to Council for their consideration. Mr. Miller noted a 6% increase in water rates and a 3% increase in sewer rates to maintain current service levels that would take effect in FY 22/23. Mr. George asked about the success rate with the federal lobbyists, with Mr. Miller and Ms. Davis indicating that they were the reason the Town was able to secure USDA funding for the water intake and Howard Street projects. Ms. Davis indicated that she would ask the lobbyists to come back at a later meeting to introduce themselves and update Council on their current projects. Discussion turned back to the creation of an annual pride event, with Mr. Carter suggesting a small event at the Jones House initially, with the event growing each year to include vendors and a parade in the future. Mayor Futrelle updated members on the grading being performed at the Bolick Farm, and that the first phase of the project would be Fire Station Four. Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman was concerned with the amount of money being spent on rent for the Public Works building that had already been sold, as well as the fact that the Town did not yet have architectural plans for the new building. Ms. Roseman asked for opinions on a \$.01 increase to fund quality of life

projects such as stormwater improvements. Mayor Futrelle felt that since potential grant money could be utilized to fund a study before a tax increase was put into place to fund this particular project, \$50,000 should be set aside to help fund the assessment. Ms. Roseman then asked how much of a pay increase staff could get for a \$.01 tax increase. Mr. Carter asked for a specific line item each year dedicated for cost of living increases. Mr. George was concerned that a tax increase would backfire and would end up hurting renters in the long run.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Mr. George, seconded by Ms. Roseman, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at approximately 4:00 p.m.

Nicole Harmon, Town Clerk

Tim Futrelle, Mayor