

**MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING  
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL  
November 19, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order electronically at 6:03 p.m. on Thursday, November 19, 2020. Mayor Pro-Tem Loretta Clawson presided. Council members present included Sam Furgiuele, Connie Ulmer, Nancy LaPlaca and Dustin Hicks. Staff members present included Town Manager John Ward, Town Clerk Nicole Harmon, Fire Chief Jimmy Isaacs, Public Works Director Rick Miller, Police Chief Andy Le Beau, Deputy Public Works Director Todd Moody, Planning Director Jane Shook, Finance Director Amy Davis, and Cultural Resources Director Mark Freed. Town Attorney Allison Meade was also in attendance.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Pro-Tem Clawson welcomed all in attendance and announced the following board vacancies:

**BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

Three alternate positions  
One regular position

**COMMUNITY APPEARANCE COMMISSION**

Four regular positions

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

One regular position  
One student position

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

One position

**TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

One resident position  
One business that promotes tourism position  
One restaurant owner/operator position

**TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

One position (Cooperative Extension)  
One resident position (Alternative Transportation)  
One student position

**WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Two regular positions  
One student position

**TENTATIVE AGENDA ADOPTION**

Upon a motion by Mr. Furgiuele, seconded by Ms. Ulmer, Council voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

J.P. Pardy spoke on behalf of the Boone Skate Park to urge Council to support approval of the Project Agreement for the NC Parks and Recreation grant for the Skate Park. He stated that the funds received were enough to fund Phase I of the park and that he hoped building could start in the spring. Mr. Furgiuele thanked Mr. Pardy for his work on the project. Ms. Ulmer echoed her thanks and asked if the park saw many female skaters. Mr. Pardy confirmed that there were female skaters, more now than ever. Mr. Ward expressed his thanks to Mr. Pardy for working with the Town's intern on the grant application and thanked Council for their support of the grant and for skateboarding in Town.

Becca Nenow of Boone announced the opening of her new refillery business in Town and stated that she was working hard to reduce single use plastics.

Adam Zebzda of Boone thanked Council for their support of student applicants on Town boards and noted that there were four applicants for consideration on the agenda. He noted that he would be working with staff to help correct some formatting issues on the board application.

Michael Weiss of ASU attributed the recent increase of flooding events, crop failures and hurricanes to climate change and stated that NRLP was complicit. He believed NRLP to be a public institute that belonged to the public, and felt that the public needed to make them accountable.

Sam Gass of ASU stated that he was an a member of the SGA and the Sustainability Board chair at ASU and that he was concerned about the fact that NRLP did not have a net metering policy. He stated that he was currently writing a bill for the SGA that included information about the lack of on bill financing at NRLP, as well as the need for them to purchase more renewable energy sources.

Ryan Dalton stated that he was a local solar installer, but noted that he had yet to install solar in Boone due to the lack of net metering which was crucial to the solar industry. He added that the lack of net metering stifled solar in Boone, and encouraged members to do all they could to encourage NRLP to establish net metering in Boone.

ASU Student Molly Thomas submitted the following comment via email: "I am deeply troubled by the Town of Boone and NRLP's inaction to fight climate change and create policies that would bring solar energy to Boone. Please support Fair Net Metering by demanding that NRLP create a Net Metering policy that (1) compensates for solar fed into the grid at a retail rate; (2) limits any fees for solar customers to \$5.00."

ASU Student Pearl Young submitted the following comment via email: "I am deeply troubled by the Town of Boone and the NRLP's inaction to fight climate change and create policies that would bring solar energy to Boone. Please support Fair Net Metering by demanding that NRLP create a Net Metering policy that: 1) Compensates for solar fed into the grid at a retail rate, and 2) limits any fees for solar customers to five dollars."

Aidan Malone submitted the following comment via email: "I am deeply troubled by the Town of Boone and NRLP's inaction to fight climate change and create policies that would bring solar energy to Boone. Please support Fair Net Metering by demanding that NRLP create a Net Metering policy that: 1) Compensates for solar fed into the grid at a retail rate, & 2) limits any fees for solar customers to 5 dollars."

ASU Student Jessica Navarro submitted the following comment via email: "I am deeply troubled by the town of Boone and NRLP's inaction to fight climate change and advocate for life scale solar projects in Boone. I ask that you support Net Metering and it's incorporation into NRLP policies in order to foster more incentives for an already growing solar community."

### **ADOPTION OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA**

Upon a motion by Ms. LaPlaca, seconded by Ms. Ulmer, Council voted unanimously to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

1. Proclamation - National Hospice and Palliative Care Month
2. Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes - October 2020
3. Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes - October 2020

### **COUNCIL MATTERS**

#### **TOWN MANAGER UPDATE**

Town Manager John Ward updated members on the following topics:

1. Selection and introduction of Sustainability Coordinator and Grants Manager- Mr. Ward welcomed George Santucci, former director of New River Conservancy to Town staff and noted that he would be working a part

time schedule through the end of the year before transitioning to full time after the first of the year. Members welcomed Mr. Santucci, and Mr. Furgiuele stated that he believed this to be one of the best developments since he had been a Town Council member.

2. Covid-19 Update - Mr. Ward updated members on local and state Covid-19 statistics and noted a slight increase in numbers locally. He further noted the Governor's introduction of a new risk rating system with different levels of restrictions. Mr. Ward stated that there had been no major spikes on campus recently, but anticipated increased numbers due to holiday gatherings and increased tourism due to ski season. He noted that area ski slopes had indicated that they were taking safety precautions and would be opening soon if they had not already. Mr. Ward announced that staff had plans in place to utilize retired Town staff who were still qualified to operate snow removal equipment as back up in case of an outbreak among Public Works staff.

3. Public Restrooms - Mr. Ward noted that restroom usage at the Jones House remained heavy but was seeing a decline. Staff had researched options for restroom trailers, with the only local option that was ADA accessible being a plastic portable toilet system costing approximately \$4,800 per month. He expressed concern with ventilation in the trailer, and believed that these types of trailers were what were used at the construction site on campus during the initial Covid-19 outbreak among contracted construction workers. Mr. Ward indicated that a second option was a trailer containing stalls for men, women and ADA usage. He described the trailer as being 16 feet in length and requiring hook ups for water and sewer. Mr. Ward believed the rear of the King Street parking lot would be the most appropriate location for this trailer, and that the cost would be around \$8,000 per month. Mr. Ward asked members to take into consideration security and cleaning of either option which he estimated would add on approximately \$1,000 per month.

4. Mr. Ward thanked Town of Boone Recycling Coordinator Marsha Owens for her work on a grant with NCDEQ for recycling receptacles which were installed at the Town's parks, the Greenway Trail and at the Jones House.

5. Mr. Ward announced that the NCDOT Great Trails Plan had been published on their website for public comment.

6. Mr. Ward stated that he had met with the Rural Transportation board and that NCDOT STIP projects had been delayed approximately one year.

7. Howard Street Update- Staff has been working with NRLP on relocating overhead utility lines underground and was awaiting the state's new fiscal year for funding. Mr. Furgiuele asked if Mr. Ward could estimate when a groundbreaking would take place. Mr. Ward answered that he was hopeful that this could occur by summer of 2021.

8. Mr. Ward announced that 44% of the Town's street lights had been converted to LED at a savings of approximately \$2,000 per month. He added that with that savings, more LED lighting could be purchased and installed.

9. Mr. Ward stated that the Landscape Division recently planted 14 new maple trees at Boone Jaycees Park. This brings the total new tree plantings this year to 102 trees.

10. Mr. Ward announced that the Street Department was required to have a dump truck bed replaced due to many safety concerns with rust and corrosion. This truck is utilized to apply salt brine and beet juice as well as push snow during winter storms. This purchase was necessary to maintain expected service levels to citizens and provide safe equipment to employees.

11. Upper Junaluska Water Storage Tank project has been completed.

12. CDBG - Deck Hill Water Storage Tank Replacement Update - The Preliminary Engineering report has been submitted to NCDEQ and the project engineer addressing review comments. Staff, along with the project engineer and HCCOG are working through the site development and environmental review process.

13. Mr. Ward announced that the Town recently received an improved ISO ratings in both districts. He indicated that in the Town limits, the rate improved from a 3 to a 2, narrowly missing level 1. In the rural fire district, Mr. Ward stated that the rating increased from a 5 to a 3, and noted that the Town of Boone was in the top 5 of the nation for departments of its size. He added that this rating would result in reduced insurance premiums for residents.

Mr. Furgiuele asked whether it was possible to extend tree plantings along Queen Street, to which Mr. Ward answered that staff would work to plant trees in this area. He stated that he was hesitant to move forward with plantings in this area due to the possibility of a parking deck in the area. Mr. Ward indicated that pricing was in place to move forward with discussions of financial modeling, and that staff would be moving forward on geotechnical work at the site.

### **TOWN ATTORNEY UPDATE**

Ms. Meade provided an update to members on the following subjects:

1. Board training has been successfully completed for all but the Sustainability Committee due to scheduling difficulties.
2. Ms. Meade presented her current list of priorities and asked for input from members. Mr. Furgiuele felt that language regulating food trucks was important, but not more so than anything else on her list and should be placed at the end. This was the consensus of Council. Ms. LaPlaca felt that the food truck issue was important and that she heard from many people about the subject.
3. Farrington/Grand Boulevard Parking Complaints - Ms. Meade stated that Planning staff had worked hard at contacting all problem vehicle owners and that they were all now stickered and that the issue was resolved. She added that the issue would be discussed more generally at the planning retreat in January. Mr. Ward stated that he had talked to both parties and that many complaints have been received. He believed there may be a need to revisit district requirements pertaining to parking.
4. Ms. Meade requested a change in Town policy regarding infrastructure easements to the Town. She believed it was unnecessary to bring these easements to Council and that they could be handled in-house the same as utility easements. Ms. Meade noted that this change would not apply to the dedication of roads or subdivisions, and that a slight change to Chapter 96 would be needed. Mr. Furgiuele asked whether there would still be discretion by staff on the easements considered, as well as the ability to reject. Ms. Meade answered that staff would retain discretion and could bring easements forward for Council consideration if staff had concerns. Mr. Furgiuele made a motion to amend the agenda to allow action on this matter. Ms. Ulmer seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Mr. Furgiuele made a second motion to approve Ms. Meade's request as presented, but clarified that staff need inform Council members about easements approved by staff only when the Town requested the easements were required under the UDO or other Town ordinance. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

### **BOARD LIAISON UPDATE**

Ms. LaPlaca reported that the Sustainability Committee had recently discussed net metering and was working on its assigned projects. Mr. Hicks added that the committee was working toward net metering and a Town-wide composting project. Mr. Furgiuele asked whether the committee would be staffed by Mr. Santucci once he became a full time Town employee, to which Mr. Ward answered that it would.

Mayor Pro-Tem Clawson was pleased to report that the TDA announced that tourism had held at approximately the same as last year despite the pandemic.

### **APPOINTMENT TO COMMUNITY APPEARANCE COMMISSION**

Mr. Furgiuele nominated Sam Gass to serve in the student position on the Community Appearance Commission. Hearing no other nominations, Mayor Pro-Tem Clawson called for a vote.

Aye: All  
Nay: None

Mr. Gass' term will expire on June 30, 2021.

### **APPOINTMENT TO CULTURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD**

After brief discussion, Mr. Furguele nominated Mr. Carpenter to serve in the student position on the Cultural Resources Advisory Board, and Ms. Banh and Mr. Gonzalez in regular positions if they were willing. Hearing no further nominations, Mayor Pro-Tem Clawson called for a vote.

VOTE:           Aye: All  
                  Nay: None

Mr. Carpenter's term will expire on November 19, 2021. Ms. Banh and Mr. Gonzalez's terms will expire on June 30, 2023.

### **APPOINTMENT TO DOWNTOWN BOONE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION**

Ms. Ulmer nominated Ms. Biddix to serve on the Downtown Boone Development Association. Hearing no further nominations, Mayor Pro-Tem Clawson called for a vote.

VOTE:           Aye: All  
                  Nay: None

Ms. Biddix's term will expire on November 19, 2023

### **APPOINTMENT TO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Mr. Furguele nominated Ms. Smith to serve on the Tourism Development Association in the business that collects tax seat. Hearing no further nominations, Mayor Pro-Tem Clawson called for a vote.

VOTE:           Aye: All  
                  Nay: None

Ms. Smith's term will expire on November 19, 2023.

Mr. Ward noted the dire need for Board of adjustment members and explained that a lack of members could impact Town projects as well as other development within the Town. Mr. Furguele asked whether staff had approached Planning Commission members to see if they would be willing to leave the Planning Commission and serve on the Board of Adjustment since they already had much of the technical training needed. Ms. Shook stated that staff had not done this, but that it was a good idea and that they would do so. Ms. Ulmer agreed and noted that she had reached out to people asking them to serve, but had been met with resistance due to personality conflicts with some of the existing members on the board. Mr. Hicks suggested providing incentives to board members that might entice applicants such as a small stipend. Mr. Ward felt that this approach could work and that the Town could provide dinner to board members. Ms. Meade also noted that the board may also have a reputation for late meetings, but added that the board had adopted a rule to stop cases at 8:30 p.m. Mr. Furguele felt that Mr. Hick's idea had merit and that it should be discussed at the planning retreat in January.

### **CONSIDERATION OF PROJECT AGREEMENT- NC PARKS & RECREATION**

Upon a motion by Mr. Furguele, seconded by Ms. LaPlaca, Council voted unanimously to approve the request as submitted.

|                  |                                           |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>               |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Sam Furgiuele, Council Member             |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Nancy LaPlaca, Council Member             |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Clawson, Furgiuele, Ulmer, LaPlaca, Hicks |

### **UPDATE REGARDING DOWNTOWN PLANNING PROJECTS**

Ms. Shook gave a presentation regarding planning projects downtown. A complete copy of the presentation may be viewed online at <http://boonenc.iqm2.com/Citizens/Default.aspx>. Mr. Furgiuele asked whether there was any consideration given to including the parking lot near the First Baptist Church in the boundaries since it was directly across from the King and College project which was included since it was built to the sidewalk. He was concerned that if the church were to ever move and the site redeveloped, that it might make sense that the downtown core be located there as well. Ms. Shook replied that that had not been discussed because those parcels were mostly vacant. Members thanked staff and committee members for their work on these projects. Ms. Shook thanked her staff as well as GIS Coordinator Chris Miller and committee members for their work on the projects as well. She indicated that staff would begin working more closely with the Town Attorney moving forward to get her input on the documents.

Mayor Pro Tem Clawson declared a break at 8:36 p.m. Council reconvened at 8:49 p.m.

### **REQUEST FOR STAFF TO WORK WITH NC CLEAN TECH CENTER FLEET MANAGEMENT CENTER**

Ms. LaPlaca presented a request and made a motion for staff to work with NC Clean Tech Center Fleet Management. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. Ms. Ulmer asked what Ms. LaPlaca wanted staff to try and figure out. Ms. LaPlaca answered that she wanted staff to work with the Clean Tech Center to look at how to manage fleets. Mr. Ward indicated that he was interested in learning more about the Clean Tech Center's work and noted that one of the things that staff ran into when looking at different options was how it operated when from an eight cylinder to a four cylinder. Ms. LaPlaca made a motion to approve the request as submitted. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

### **INVITATION TO NRLP TO DISCUSS LACK OF FAIR NET METERING & CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION**

Ms. LaPlaca read her next request:

"1. Ask NRLP to give a PPT presentation before the council in January 2021, specifically discussing the lack of cost-effective and fair net metering, setting aside an hour for the discussion. Council members can submit questions via John Ward; and 2. Supports this resolution, recognizing that climate change is a critical issue that deserves our immediate attention, and that Boone's lack of clean energy is a problem.

The Town of Boone is served by two electric and gas utilities: NRLP and Blue Ridge Electric Membership Coop (BREMCO). This item concerns only NRLP. While the state of NC as a whole has ~\$14 billion worth of solar invested, with some counties reporting as much as \$800 million in solar investments, Watauga County has close to zero. Electricity used by the TOB and its residents is only 1-2% clean, and the current restrictions on "net metering" have effectively killed distributed solar in Boone. Because NRLP is exempt from North Carolina's REPS, it has no legal obligation to increase its percentage of clean energy. If we are to do our part in averting climate disaster, Boone – and the rest of NC, the U.S., and the world – must reduce GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions 50% by 2030 – less than 10 years from now. Under our current trajectory, we will remain at 1-2% clean energy in 2030, which is irresponsible and unacceptable. This is a discussion that warrants participation by Boone residents, who overwhelmingly want clean energy options, as a survey conducted by NRLP in 2017 made clear. Attached are a list of my initial questions, and I welcome questions from other council members. (I reserve the right to add more questions.)

TOWN OF BOONE RESOLUTION ON REQUESTING A PRESENTATION FROM NEW RIVER LIGHT  
AND POWER ON NET METERING POLICIES

WHEREAS, we are in a climate emergency, with climate-change-fueled disasters happening faster and faster;

WHEREAS, there has been approximately \$13-14 billion worth of solar investment in the state of North Carolina from 2007 through 2018, with nearly \$800 million in Duplin County, \$700 million in Robeson County, and \$430 million in Catawba County, with zero listed for Watauga County;

WHEREAS, there are approximately 7,000 solar jobs in North Carolina, with nearly 500 solar jobs in Buncombe County, nearly 1,000 in Mecklenburg and Iredell Counties, and only a handful in Watauga;

WHEREAS, a federal report issued in September 2020 by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission warns of financial havoc due to climate change,

WHEREAS, Boone has only a handful of rooftop solar installations due to the unfair policies of both New River Light and Power and Blue Ridge Electric Membership Coop;

WHEREAS, the cost of solar in NC is cost-competitive with fossil fuel power, even without accounting for the staggering environmental damages, estimated at 14-34 cents/kWh for coal and 4-18 cents/kWh for natural gas;<sup>5</sup> and ~90% of North Carolina's coal fleet is uneconomic, i.e. costs more than clean energy;

WHEREAS, the cost of solar continues to drop, with rooftop solar installations coming in at 3-4cents/kWh, and utility-scale solar at 3.7 to 3.8 cents/kWh;

1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/16/climate/wildfires-hurricanes-climate-change.html>

2 See [www.energync.org](http://www.energync.org), 2019 RTI update for details.

3 See <https://www.thesolarfoundation.org/national/> for a list of solar jobs by state, county and congressional district, as well as a breakdown in the types of jobs.

4 [https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/09/business/climate-change-economy-cftcreport/index.html?mc\\_cid=af2a8a93eb&mc\\_eid=7e24fc0e68](https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/09/business/climate-change-economy-cftcreport/index.html?mc_cid=af2a8a93eb&mc_eid=7e24fc0e68) "Climate change poses a major risk to the stability of the U.S. financial system and to its ability to sustain the American economy," the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission's climate subcommittee wrote.

5 <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-015-1343-0>

6 <https://www.sierraclub.org/articles/2019/07/study-nearly-90-percent-duke-energys-coal-fleet-likely-unprofitable>

7 <https://www.wfae.org/energy-environment/2019-08-28/nc-oks-duke-long-range-plan-but-wants-data-on-retiring-coal-plants-early#stream/0>

WHEREAS, Boone residents and businesses deserve the right to cost-effectively put solar on their own homes, without extra fees or other disincentives; in other words, fair "net metering" policies (see [www.ratesofsolar.com](http://www.ratesofsolar.com));

WHEREAS, Boone residents deserve a clear and binding path to reduce fossil fuel emissions 50% by 2030 as required by the IPCC's October 2018 1.5 degree study;

WHEREAS, while transportation emissions are more difficult to address, our electricity resources could change immediately;

WHEREAS, other issues deserve discussion at a future date, including energy efficiency programs such as on-bill financing, home energy audits (for example, 5% of homes per year analyzed at a steep discount to home and business owners), weatherization goals (for example, 5% of homes per year getting subsidized weatherization upgrades such as new windows, window film, insulation, checks for leaks, window caulking etc); as well as an overall yearly spending goal on Energy Efficiency (EE) programs;

WHEREAS, there is a lack of transparency from NRLP on electricity mix, wholesale and retail costs of various types of electricity, utility profit margins and other useful information.

The Town of Boone Town Council:

1. Requests that NRLP give a PPT presentation before the council in January 2021 specifically discussing the lack of cost-effective and fair net metering, setting aside an hour for the discussion. Council members can submit questions via John Ward; and
2. Supports this Resolution, recognizing that climate change is a critical issue that deserves our immediate attention, and that Boone's lack of clean energy is a problem.

Mr. Hicks summarized a comment which was submitted by email from Brian Burke to members of the Council. He stated that Mr. Burke supported Council requesting this presentation and said that NRLP should layout clearly what the options were for each of the renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives listed in the resolution, as well as any obstacles to embarking on them and how they had sought to overcome them. He added that Mr. Burke also wished to see any decision making criteria for deciding to adopt or not adopt each of these initiatives. Mr. Burke further recommended that the Town Council invite Appalachian State University leadership to the presentation. Ms. Ulmer and Mr. Hicks expressed support, with Mr. Furguele stating he could not support the resolution without some changes in the language, which he viewed as unnecessarily hostile, and did not believe it was appropriate to start a discussion with NRLP on this subject with antagonistic language. He suggested that in the fifth paragraph a period be added after rooftop solar installation, to delete the rest. He added that his view was that Council should start out with the expectation that it could work cooperatively to achieve these goals. He also suggested adding a period after installations in paragraph eight, and in the twelfth paragraph he suggested striking the last "whereas" clause. Without these changes, Mr. Furguele stated that he would not support the resolution and expressed concern at Council demanding NRLP give a PowerPoint presentation. Ms. LaPlaca replied that she did not accept these changes and believed that PowerPoint presentations were a normal thing to do. She added that she did not believe the resolution to be hostile and requested a vote on the resolution as is. Ms. LaPlaca asked Mr. Hicks how transparent NRLP had been from a student view. He believed some antagonism was justified because of the lack of action by NRLP. He stated that he would support this as is, but believed it would make sense to replace the word unfair with exactly what the Council meant. Ms. LaPlaca stated that she was willing to change the word unfair to fair. Mr. Furguele felt that changing the word unfair to fair did not make any sense and asked whether Mr. Ward felt that the current language would create any potential problems with respect to his ongoing dealings with NRLP.

Mr. Ward noted that he did have concerns and did not know where the Town would be without the help of NRLP on projects like Howard Street, the potential solar array and LED lights. He added that he was all for getting NRLP to the table for discussion, and believed it would be interesting to have not only NRLP but also someone from the commission that approved requests from NRLP to be present as well. Mr. Ward stated that he was unsure if the wording and the terminology in the current resolution as written would set the best stage for a cooperative agreement. Ms. LaPlaca made a motion to move forward with the resolution and changing the word unfair to fair. Mr. Hicks seconded the motion. He then clarified that he did not mean to change the word unfair to fair, but to expand that to be specific as to what Council was talking about in terms of what was fair net metering.

TOWN OF BOONE RESOLUTION ON REQUESTING A PRESENTATION FROM NEW RIVER  
LIGHT AND POWER ON NET METERING POLICIES

WHEREAS, we are in a climate emergency, with climate-change-fueled disasters happening faster and faster;<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS, there has been approximately \$13-14 billion worth of solar investment in the state of North Carolina from 2007 through 2018, with nearly \$800 million in Duplin County, \$700 million in Robeson County, and \$430 million in Catawba County, with zero listed for Watauga County;<sup>2</sup>

WHEREAS, there are approximately 7,000 solar jobs in North Carolina, with nearly 500 solar jobs in Buncombe County, nearly 1,000 in Mecklenburg and Iredell Counties, and only a handful in Watauga;<sup>3</sup>

WHEREAS, a federal report issued in September 2020 by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission warns of financial havoc due to climate change;<sup>4</sup>

WHEREAS, Boone has only a handful of rooftop solar installations due to the unfair policies of both New River Light and Power and Blue Ridge Electric Membership Coop;

WHEREAS, the cost of solar in NC is cost-competitive with fossil fuel power, even without accounting for the staggering environmental damages, estimated at 14-34 cents/kWh for coal and 4-18 cents/kWh for natural gas;<sup>5</sup> and ~90% of North Carolina's coal fleet is uneconomic, i.e. costs more than clean energy;<sup>6</sup>

WHEREAS, the cost of solar continues to drop, with rooftop solar installations coming in at 3-4 cents/kWh, and utility-scale solar at 3.7 to 3.8 cents/kWh;<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/16/climate/wildfires-hurricanes-climate-change.html>

<sup>2</sup> See [www.energync.org](http://www.energync.org), 2019 RTI update for details.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.thesolarfoundation.org/national/> for a list of solar jobs by state, county and congressional district, as well as a breakdown in the types of jobs.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/09/business/climate-change-economy-cftc-report/index.html?mc\\_cid=af2a8a93eb&mc\\_eid=7e24fc0e68](https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/09/business/climate-change-economy-cftc-report/index.html?mc_cid=af2a8a93eb&mc_eid=7e24fc0e68) "Climate change poses a major risk to the stability of the U.S. financial system and to its ability to sustain the American economy," the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission's climate subcommittee wrote.

<sup>5</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-015-1343-0>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sierraclub.org/articles/2019/07/study-nearly-90-percent-duke-energys-coal-fleet-likely-unprofitable>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.wfae.org/energy-environment/2019-08-28/nc-oks-duke-long-range-plan-but-wants-data-on-retiring-coal-plants-early#stream/0>

WHEREAS, Boone residents and businesses deserve the right to *cost-effectively* put solar on their own homes, without extra fees or other disincentives; in other words, *fair* "net metering" policies (see [www.ratesofsolar.com](http://www.ratesofsolar.com));

WHEREAS, Boone residents deserve a clear and binding path to reduce fossil fuel emissions 50% by 2030 as required by the [IPCC's October 2018 1.5 degree study](#);

WHEREAS, while transportation emissions are more difficult to address, our electricity resources could change *immediately*;

WHEREAS, other issues deserve discussion at a future date, including energy efficiency programs such as on-bill financing, home energy audits (for example, 5% of homes per year analyzed at a steep discount to

home and business owners), weatherization goals (for example, 5% of homes per year getting subsidized weatherization upgrades such as new windows, window film, insulation, checks for leaks, window caulking etc); as well as an overall yearly spending goal on Energy Efficiency (EE) programs;

WHEREAS, there is a lack of transparency from NRLP on electricity mix, wholesale and retail costs of various types of electricity, utility profit margins and other useful information.

The Town of Boone Town Council:

1. **Requests that NRLP give a PPT presentation before the council in January 2021 specifically discussing the lack of fair cost-effective net metering**, setting aside an hour for the discussion. Council members can submit questions via John Ward; and
2. **Supports this Resolution, recognizing that climate change is a critical issue that deserves our immediate attention, and that Boone's lack of clean energy is a problem.**

Adopted this 19th day of November, 2020.

Rennie Brantz, Mayor

Attested to:

Nicole Harmon  
Clerk, Town of Boone, North Carolina

|                  |                               |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>APPROVED [3 TO 2]</b>      |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Nancy LaPlaca, Council Member |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Dustin Hicks                  |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Ulmer, LaPlaca, Hicks         |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | Clawson, Furgiuele            |

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Clawson, seconded by Council voted unanimously to enter into closed session at 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.
3. 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 the two lawsuits between the Town of Boone and Watauga County.

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Clawson, seconded by Ms. Ulmer Council voted unanimously to exit closed session at 10:14 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Clawson seconded by Ms. Ulmer, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m.

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Nicole Harmon, Town Clerk

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Rennie Brantz, Mayor