

**MINUTES – WORKSHOP/RETREAT
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
February 4, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order at 9:05 a.m. in the Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road in Boone. Mayor Rennie Brantz presided. Council Members present included Mayor Pro-Tem Loretta Clawson, Connie Ulmer, Sam Furgiuele, Dustin Hicks and Nancy LaPlaca. Staff present included Town Manager John Ward, Finance Director Amy Davis and Town Clerk Nicole Harmon.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold the annual budget workshop.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Director Dale Presnell presented Council with a turnover report and noted that the turnover rate was holding at about the same as last year. He stated that there was still an issue with turnover within the Police Department and noted that there were two retirements from that department, as well as a transition to a different department to accept a higher position. Mr. Ward attributed that particular transition to the department's high level of training. Mayor Brantz asked whether the Town's police salary was competitive compared to other departments, to which Mr. Presnell answered that staff was able to do salary adjustments within budgeted funds in the last fiscal year and that salaries were now competitive. Council Member Furgiuele asked whether the benefits explanation had been well-received by staff, with Mr. Presnell stating that it had. Mr. Ward noted that he believed that shift work was a contributing factor to the increased turnover percentage in the department. Council Member Furgiuele inquired as to the number of employees eligible for retirement at the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Ward indicated that the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Public Works Director were all eligible for retirement, though they had not yet expressed any intent to retire in the near future, and would make for a difficult situation when they decide to leave. Council Member Furgiuele voiced his continued concern with the lack of an information technology position within the Town, and did not believe that it made sense that the Fire Chief and IT position remain combined when the Fire Chief decided to retire. Mr. Presnell noted that the wellness card benefit was well received by staff and stated that no misuse had been experienced. He added that his department was working on a diabetes education class to educate employees on healthy ways to keep blood sugar levels down, and announced the addition of the MD Live benefit which would save on insurance costs. When asked by Council Member Furgiuele if there had been any changes to employee health insurance benefits, Mr. Presnell answered that information would be received in the next few months, but that he believed it would remain about the same. Mr. Ward noted that staff had been working with the North Carolina League of Municipalities on health and safety grants for equipment such as bullet proof vests. Council Member Furgiuele asked whether the Police Department had a program in place for stress reduction, with Mr. Ward answering that the department had handled that program internally. Council Member Hicks suggested staff develop ongoing education programs for health and wellness for Town employees. Council Member Furgiuele agreed with this, and suggested that staff reach out to various recipients of the Town's outside agency funding, such as Community Care Clinic, for help since they had expertise in areas that could be beneficial such as diabetes prevention. Mr. Ward noted that the CPI was currently at 2.3% and that staff felt that previous compression issues had been addressed with in-house salary adjustments. Mr. Presnell stated that his department did not plan on requesting anything extra in the budget this fiscal year. Council Member Furgiuele asked whether the Town provided childcare support for Town employees. Mr. Ward answered that it had not been researched since he had been employed with the Town, and noted that it could not be afforded without reducing another benefit or identifying another revenue source. He added that he believed there was an understanding among employees that family always came first whenever there was an illness or childcare issue. Council Member Furgiuele suggested that staff look into the possibility of a childcare facility at the new municipal complex, and believed it would be cheaper than trying to reimburse employees for sick or vacation time. Mr. Ward noted that staff would look into the possibility, but that the facility would have to meet state childcare regulations. Council Member Hicks believed it would be a good idea to offer childcare to citizens during public meetings to make them more accessible. Council Member Furgiuele did not believe that would ever be possible unless sales tax was returned to the Town, and felt that staff should continue to look for incentives for employees to live in Town. Mr. Ward stated that staff did an informal survey and believed that it would take a high stipend amount to get employees to move inside Town limits. Council Member Furgiuele stated that living in Town had ramifications that were not only connected to sustainability, but also effective governance, and also suggested that staff look into a subsidy for employees who drove hybrid cars on their commutes to work. He noted that an employee could get one or the other of these benefits, but not both. Mr. Ward indicated that staff would keep these in mind, as well as the educational reimbursements that were previously offered. Council Member Furgiuele believed it to be imperative that employees' pay be kept at least

at pace with the cost of living increase. Mr. Ward stated that he believed employee raises tied to the cost of living adjustment to be the biggest pat on the back for employees that Council could approve.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural Resources Director Mark Freed presented Council with a report of the changes that had taken place in the department over the last fiscal year. He stated that staff was working on increasing the Jones House's social media presence and that their recent concerts had sold more presale tickets than ever before. Mr. Freed indicated that Cultural Resources staff had been working closely on Downtown Boone Development Association staff on downtown events, which he believed to have been beneficial for everyone involved. He stated that concerts were going well and that staff had an exciting season planned, and added that there were more than 100 students enrolled in the current music lesson session. Mr. Freed indicated that he believed that state grants would become more competitive, but that the Jones House had received \$8,000 in recent years which allowed staff to subsidize the cost for children to participate in music lessons. Council Member Furgieule asked how much revenue was generated by the department, to which Mr. Freed responded that in previous years, revenue has been approximately \$45-50,000. Council Member Furgieule asked whether Mr. Freed knew if the Daniel Boone Native Gardens group still existed and if there was a point person with the State Garden Club with which staff had contact. Mr. Freed indicated that the lease was with the State Garden Club, though they have given more autonomy to the local club in recent times than in the past. Council Member Furgieule stated that he had recently heard that the group no longer existed and voiced his concern with the Town having a legal relationship with the State Garden Club. Council Member Furgieule told members of a previously situation when the Southern Appalachian Historical Association vanished when they had an obligation to the Town, and stated that he was concerned the same thing could happen with the State Garden Club. Council Member Furgieule believed the Daniel Boone Native Gardens had the potential to be the kind of property that could generate revenue from weddings held at the venue. Mr. Ward indicated that staff would research the possibility, but noted that there would be quite a bit of maintenance and upkeep that went along with that. Mayor Brantz asked how long the current contract with the State Garden Club was, to which Council Member Furgieule responded he believed it was approximately twenty years, which was against legal advice. Mr. Freed noted that the State Garden Club lease only gave them access to six parking spaces, with the Farmer's Market and/or SAHA holding access to everything else on Saturdays, which limited parking for potential events at the gardens. Council Member Furgieule noted that most potential events held at the gardens would be in the late afternoon, to which Mr. Ward added that groups wanted to come in early for set up, then come back in the afternoon. Mr. Freed noted that staff hours would also be a limitation in that weddings often took an exorbitant amount of staff time and would take away from other projects. He also indicated that there was an increase in weekend usage at the Jones House, with Mr. Ward noting that Saturdays at the Jones House were only possible due to DBDA funding. Mr. Ward announced that the Northern Peaks Trail that was promoted by Senator Ballard was being studied as a state trail with the trail head being located at the Rivers House. Mr. Freed noted that Town staff has installed a new roof, cleaned the inside and removed garbage from the property, but that the next step was to install an HVAC system to control the temperature and mold. Council Member Furgieule stated that Public Works staff should do renovations within current force account limits if at all possible. Mr. Ward noted that there could be future potential to collocate joint space with the Tourism Development Authority with another music, visitor, or history space in the house. Mr. Freed stated that local history was a big request from visitors to the Jones House. Council Member Hicks believed it would be a good idea for the Town to provide community space, and suggested the Rivers House or the new municipal complex. Mr. Ward stated that staff had not explored that option for outside groups, but could look into it, taking into consideration the operational cost and staffing. He added that he did not believe the Rivers property to be large enough, and stated that he may struggle in providing a space for a fee that covered the cost of operating that was also affordable to users. Mr. Freed noted that the Jones House currently accommodated meetings at the Jones House by non-profit groups as long as there were staff members there working. Mr. Freed stated that staff planned to expand the annual Doc Days celebration to include a presentation at the Appalachian Theatre, and music events at venues downtown. He added that staff was requesting an increase in cleaning services at the Jones House due to the increase in foot traffic, as well as a request for wi-fi in an attempt to be more accessible during events. Discussion turned to the public restroom facilities at Daniel Boone Park, with Mr. Freed indicating that a new pre-fabricated facility would cost around \$200,000. Mr. Ward noted that staff was constantly challenged with that facility and that they were trying to develop partnerships to perform enhancements without contradicting the park's master plan. Council Member Hicks suggested installing compost toilets instead, to which Mr. Ward responded that he was unsure they would be able to handle the amount of usage the park typically seen at the facility. Council Member Furgieule suggested that compost toilets could be installed at parts of the park with less usage. Mr. Freed also indicated there was a need for increased parking at the Farmer's Market, and suggested that the spaces below the

Town storage yard could be utilized, the Jaycee Park space could be better utilized in an attempt to create additional parking, or the large pine trees along Horn in the West Drive could be removed to create parking along the road. Council Member Furguele was unenthusiastic about decreasing the amount of green space or trees in Town, and instead suggested the use of an AppalCart shuttle from the Public Works parking lot.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 11:07 a.m. Council reconvened at 11:26 a.m.

POLICE

Police Chief Dana Crawford presented Council with a Power Point which outlined the department's goals and accomplishments over the last year. Council Member Furguele asked whether there were problem areas along Highway 105. Chief Crawford answered that the areas along Highway 105 without turn lanes remained a problem. Mayor Pro-Tem Clawson noted that a potential new traffic signal at the old high school intersection should help congestion in that area. Chief Crawford continued on in his report to add that the biggest false alarm violators were the chain outlets, and that false alarm calls had dropped by almost half in the last year. Council Member Furguele asked whether false alarm calls were still in concentrated areas, to which Chief Crawford answered that there were still repeat offenders, mainly corporate businesses. Chief Crawford noted that the department had a large case closure rate, more than double the national rate, and that 75% of the department's cases ended up as federal cases. Council Member Furguele asked how much time Town officers spend in court. Chief Crawford answered that many cases plead out before they reach court since they were such good cases. Mayor Brantz asked whether drugs were the most serious crimes the Town had, with Chief Crawford answering that most of the Town's crime stemmed from drugs. He also noted that the department was involved with the Special Olympics and other charity organizations and school-related activities. Chief Crawford went on to state that communications answered more than 49,000 calls this year with 41,000 calls for service and 8,000 911 calls. Department assistance during funerals was briefly discussed, with Chief Crawford indicating that the department assisted with 2 or 3 per day with the help of ASU Police Department and the Sheriff's Department. He believed that they could be more efficiently run from the funeral home's points of view, and was unsure how much longer the department would be able to continue this service due to the great deal of time officers had to dedicate to each service for traffic duty. When asked by Council Member LaPlaca whether this service was typical of other departments, Chief Crawford answered that it was. He continued his presentation by requesting four full-time officer positions for patrol to keep up with Town and ASU population growth, at a cost of approximately \$227,000 plus benefits. Mr. Ward indicated that in order to fund this request, Council would have to approve a 3% tax increase. Chief Crawford also suggested a retention plan/longevity bonus program for Police Department employees and that Council consider reinstating the thirty-minute rule in the take-home car policy. Chief Crawford announced that the department had started propane testing last week as part of the department's bio-propane experiment. Council Member LaPlaca noted that the maintenance cost on natural gas powered vehicles was high, and that the beauty of electric vehicles was that there was virtually no maintenance cost. Mr. Ward indicated that there were pros and cons to using electric police cars, even if they still manufactured them. Council Member Furguele asked what the experience had been with the hybrid police car assigned to the Downtown Officer. Chief Crawford answered that it had its limits, and announced that the new Downtown Officer would be introduced next week. Mr. Ward asked whether there was any downside to adding the thirty-minute rule to the take-home car policy. Council Member Furguele stated that the minute limitation made more sense to him, and that he was more concerned about officers' response time, to which Chief Crawford agreed. It was the consensus of Council to direct staff to move forward with a take-home vehicle policy that included a thirty-minute response time for employees. Chief Crawford noted a request for funding in the amount of \$3,000 for a citizen police academy planned for this year. When asked by Mr. Ward how he prioritized staff salary increases and retention bonuses, Chief Crawford answered that his answer would depend on the specifics of the situation. Mr. Ward noted that digital speed limit signs were priced at \$13,000 per sign, and that staff was looking at different ways to fund them, including working with the league for grant opportunities. Council Member Furguele suggested using the Town's lobbyists to help advocate for support and funding. Mr. Ward noted that the lobbyists were utilized to obtain clean water grant funds and Appalachian Regional Commission grant funding. Council Member Furguele believed the lobbyists could be helpful when asking for targeted funding and to help create grants as the state pushes to expand ASU. Chief Crawford noted that the County had recently announced that it would fund a deputy position at Hardin Park school through grant funding and the Town would continue the police officer position at the High School. He further indicated that there had been a miscommunication regarding the situation with the position at Hardin Park school,

which Council Member Furgiuele believed was another example of the lack of communication from the County, and added that perhaps the County should take over traffic control operations at Hardin Park school as well. Discussion ended with Council Member Furgiuele asking that staff address de-escalation training efforts during the upcoming police forum.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 12:43 p.m. Council reconvened at 12:54 p.m.

FIRE, GIS & WIDE AREA NETWORK

Fire Chief Jimmy Isaacs gave a brief overview of department operations, and noted that the department logged over 10,000 training hours last year. He stated that the 1,000 fire hydrants in Town had to be flushed once per year, and that staff notified Public Works when that took place so that they could work to balance water loss in case there was a leak. When asked how much water was lost when these flow tests took place, Chief Isaacs answered that each hydrant used between 200-500 gallons. Mr. Ward noted that staff was working with Public Works on a system to try to project the amount of time the hydrants ran in an attempt to have an idea of how much water was lost during a flow test. Chief Isaacs noted that all equipment testing was done in-house which allowed the department to see a cost savings. He added that the Insurance Services Office rating for the Town was at a 3 out of 10 inside the city limits and 5 out of 10 outside the city limits in accordance to station distribution and water location. Chief Isaacs stated that the Town was scheduled to be evaluated again this year and that he hoped to see a decrease down one point on each side. He indicated that the new fire station would impact the fire rating in a positive way by decreasing response time through busy King Street. Chief Isaacs stated that investigations had increased over the past year and that the department had seven employees who could perform investigations. Council Member Furgiuele asked how long the Town had been receiving a contribution from ASU for fire services. Chief Isaacs answered that the Town had received this funding for approximately 20 years, though it had fluctuated due to the amount of development on campus. Council Member Furgiuele asked whether public-private partnerships affected this funding, to which Chief Isaacs answered that once the property was signed over to the university, the funding would go into the funding pool. Council Member Furgiuele asked whether Chief Isaacs felt the Town was being adequately funded for their services to the university, to which Chief Isaacs answered that he felt the funding was low since the department had answered 210 calls on campus in the past year. Council Member Furgiuele asked about the life span of the specialized equipment and whether there were any electric or hybrid options. Chief Isaacs answered that most of the equipment was in good shape, with the rescue truck being next on the replacement list. (Council Member Ulmer returned from the break at 1:16 p.m.) He indicated that the oldest three vehicles were water tankers that dated back to 2007 and that he expected to get close to 20 years out of them. He further noted that the rescue truck was the same age, but that he did not expect to get the same range of life out of it. Chief Isaacs stated that for the new fire station, a new engine, tanker and smaller rescue truck would be needed, and believed that staff had figured out ways to fund those purchases without causing too much of a financial burden on the Town. Discussion turned back to electric fire equipment, with Chief Isaacs noting indicating that he was unsure if there was the needed level of interest yet for electric equipment to be manufactured. Mayor Brantz wondered if the area's elevation might present problems for electric fire equipment, to which Chief Isaacs responded that he was not familiar enough with the equipment to answer the question. Council Member LaPlaca was of the opinion that fire trucks would be one of the last things to be electrified due to the workings of the pumps and other equipment. Chief Isaacs noted that the department would need to replace two pickup trucks, and added that with the sale of one old truck through surplus, he was typically able to make up the cost to replace one of the trucks. Council Member Furgiuele asked if any progress had been made to the facade at Fire Station One. Mr. Ward stated that staff had reached out to NC Mainstreet staff for assistance with a facade rendering, and were told that they were unable to complete a rendering until the awning was removed from that building and the former Eggers Law Firm building next door. He added that the Eggers building was currently under contract and that Planning staff had met with the purchaser, who was a local business owner, and that their intent was to open a restaurant. Mr. Ward indicated the intent was to do facade renovations and believed that it made sense that staff coordinate the demolition of the awnings together and to go back with facade changes for the fire station and immediately follow up in the spring or summer with streetscape enhancements. Council Member Furgiuele asked whether the Town planned to adhere to the new downtown design standards, which Mr. Ward confirmed. Chief Isaacs noted a need to work on resiliency planning for the Town before discussion turned to a potential new emergency notification system. Mr. Ward announced that CodeRed had been discontinued, and that the County had switched to a service called HyperReach. He was hesitant to use the same service for fear of causing confusion in the case of duplication of messages from the Town and County, as well as

paying for the duplication of services. Chief Isaacs believed that it came down to the level of use. He stated that if Council wanted to utilize the program for emergency notices only, then the program would probably not be a good investment, however, if Council wanted to use the program for other notifications such as water off, or staff call-back notifications, then it may be worth the investment. Chief Isaacs also praised the capabilities of the Ipause system which enabled the caller to block their number which he believed would allow for a better answer rate. Mr. Ward believed that he may be able to tie the cost of the service to the water fund for water off notifications, as well as the enterprise fund for police and fire notifications. He added that the increased fire inspection fees may cover the cost of this new service and asked Council how they wished to move forward. Council Member Furguele was in favor of moving forward with the new system and believed that the Town should remain in full control. Council Member Ulmer was in agreement since the Town was growing in size and population. Council Member Furguele asked whether Chief Isaacs had seen any issues with satellite annexations, to which Chief Isaacs answered no, that the department served them anyway. Discussion then moved to GIS, with Chief Isaacs anticipating the only expenditure to be the yearly software license agreement. Ms. Davis emphasized the amount of work that the Town's GIS Coordinator Chris Miller did with Public Works, Planning and Inspections, the Police Department and E911/Communications. In terms of Wide Area Network services, Chief Isaacs indicated that the Town's spam filter currently filtered out 80% of all emails, and noted that the server network was consolidated down to four which resulted in an energy savings.

PLANNING & INSPECTIONS

Planning Director Jane Shook stated that board members were having difficulty with the previously issued tablets, and that staff hoped to purchase small laptops so that they could view meeting packets more easily, which would result in a decrease in copier charges. Brief discussion followed regarding the purchase of dictation software for use during Town Council meetings and member's difficulty seeing certain things on their monitors during Council meetings. Ms. Shook indicated that it was staff's goal in the coming year to improve their website presence to include an open permits feature, as well as signage for big projects and advertising. She added that she had worked with Mr. Ward and the Parking Department so that on days when staff had available time, parking staff would assist planning staff on scanning. Ms. Shook reported that fees seemed to be running even since many projects were on last year's fee schedule, but that she would report back at the end of the fiscal year.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 2:45 p.m. Council reconvened at 3:00 p.m.

FINANCE

Council Member Furguele asked whether circumstances changed for the deductability of property taxes in the past year had affected the payment rate. Ms. Davis noted that she had not seen that, and indicated that she believed she would be able to stay within her \$488,000 budget. Mr. Ward applauded Ms. Davis and her staff for their work on recent grant applications. Ms. Davis stated that the department had had the same number of staff for twenty years, and that a new staff member would eventually be needed in Utility Billing. Council Member Furguele asked if there was anywhere that could be cut, to which Ms. Davis responded that there was not.

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Ward noted that staff hoped to have most of the Downtown Streetscape knocked out next year. Council Member Furguele asked about the \$10,000 allocated for tree planting. Mr. Ward answered that those funds were set aside for bulb out plantings. He added that he was renewing a conversation at the Bolick property with the NC Forestry Service regarding grove plantings and he would need every bit of those funds for local matches for that project. Council Member Furguele expressed interest in planting trees in downtown parking lots, specifically one shade tree every sixty feet, and asked if staff could work on moving the abandoned bike trailer in the Town -owned lot off Howard Street. Mr. Ward suggested that it may be easier to focus on Queen Street initially. Mayor Brantz asked about the toilet rebate fund. Mr. Ward did not recommend Council add any money to that fund since it could not be moved due to being tied to the water/sewer fund. He added that staff still issued refunds, and that staff would like to hold onto funds in the event an apartment complex did a renovation. Council Member Hicks asked that staff research the installation of hempcrete sidewalks throughout Town as an alternative to concrete. Mr. Miller went over operations for Public Works and Utilities and stated that he was unsure staff could continue to provide the same level of service at the rate they were at now. He added that 4-5 employees were eligible for retirement this year,

though he believed that he did have good employees ready to step up if needed. Mr. Miller noted that Public Works participated in the Watch for Me Campaign, installed traffic medians, traffic signals, paving along New Market to address safety issues and installed 64 new trees. He added that grading and storm water retention were complete at the new skate park, 4 miles had been paved and 35% of the Town's street lights had been converted to LED. Mr. Miller indicated that the department's priorities included the replacement of the building, additional staff or the reprioritization of positions to include another maintenance worker, sidewalk crew member, and plan review person on the street division. Mr. Miller stated that engineers were looking at the 125 road failure at Hunting Hills and that he anticipated that there would be extensive and expensive repairs needed, though he was unsure of an exact amount. Mr. Miller estimated that there was approximately \$165,000 needed to fund the conversion of the remaining street lights to LED and he planned to try to work that into the budget this year. Mr. Ward noted that Deputy Public Works Director Todd Moody had worked with New River Light and Power to secure a new rate for the LED conversion and the Town received a refund check for more than \$21,000 in February which could be used to purchase another 100 LED lights. He further indicated that he may have identified another funding source to help with the funding of a big portion of the remainder of the project, and that Council may consider using sustainability funds. Council Member Furguele asked what staff did with the old lights when they were removed, to which Mr. Miller answered that he was unsure, but that he believed they would be surplus if they were still operational. Mr. Miller stated that staff had identified a need for three signalized pedestrian crossings and announced that staff had begun work on the transition to ADA compliance, though he was unsure of the cost to complete, Council would eventually need to earmark funds to complete. On the water/sewer side, Mr. Miller discussed the need for AMI meter reading equipment and noted that the cost to implement would be approximately \$4 million. Mr. Ward asked whether it would make sense to implement this project in zones, to which Mr. Miller responded that he believed it would be best to approach the project by route. Council Member LaPlaca asked whether automated meters would result in a reduction in staff. Mr. Miller answered that it would not since they would be moved to other projects, and noted that staff were also reading ASU water meters. He stated that New Market remained on the sidewalk priority list, along with Grove Street to the Bolick property. He stated that the Town's portion of the cost share for the Grove Street project was \$500,000 and asked Council to put aside \$100,000 per year. Mr. Miller asked that paving funds be kept at the same amount for the upcoming year. In terms of water and wastewater, Mr. Miller reported that staff had applied for grants, but that he was not looking to do water or wastewater capital improvement projects this budget year, though he was required to do a sewer project and planned on incorporating manhole lining. He indicated that Howard Street sewer utilities would pull separately from the water/sewer fund but that they might meet that requirement. Mr. Miller stated that the recently approved tipping fee increase was implemented and as of January 29 the Town had paid over \$15,000 for that service. He did not see a need to increase that line, but would continue to monitor the situation. Mr. Miller stated that the culvert along Daniel Boone Drive would need to be repaired and the parking lot at Horn in the West Drive needed to be repaved at a cost of approximately \$375,000. He added that a street sweeper needed to be replaced at a cost of \$300,000, but that a hybrid was scheduled to hit the market later this year at a cost of \$600,000. Mr. Ward suggested contracting that service out, with Mr. Furguele expressing reluctance due to the loss of control over how the equipment was being used. Mr. Miller added that the department was also in need of a vac truck at a cost of \$260,000 which would be needed to clean pervious surface, in addition to a half-ton truck, paint machine, dump truck bed, asphalt roller, vehicle equipment scanner, service truck, small dump truck, manhole rehab, and an additional vehicle. Council Member Furguele asked whether any of the vehicles could be hybrids, to which Mr. Miller responded that he would research, though he knew that some would have to be capable of pulling trailers. Mr. Furguele believed that the Town needed to revisit the practice of leaf pick-up before making the purchase of a vac truck. Council Member Furguele asked how much water was being lost on Snaggy Mountain, to which Mr. Miller replied that to his knowledge the usage had not went down. Council Member Furguele stated that he thought that Council should attempt a service district in place there to pay new lines to eliminate this issue. Mr. Miller stated that there were discussions to that effect. Mr. Ward stated that planning projects trumped this matter on Council's priority list. Ms. Davis indicated that the property owner currently had \$86,000 in unpaid water bills. Council Member Furguele believed Council should reinstate the service district discussion so that that issue did not come up any more. Mr. Miller noted that there were several master meters in Town that needed to be reviewed.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Ward began discussion by asked Council's opinion on filling the full-time assistant Town Manager position and directing the duties toward resiliency, sustainability, stormwater and project management. He continued by stating that he originally had hesitation with filling the position, but knowing that there were three department directors that were eligible to retire at any time, he expressed concern about being able to make the right decision. Mayor Brantz believed that the position would be helpful to the Town Manager, with Mayor Pro-Tem Clawson agreeing, though she was unsure the Town would be able to find anyone like former Assistant Manager Jim Byrne. Mr. Ward felt that there were people out there with the right skills who could take the Town where Council wanted to go with sustainability. Council Member Furgiuele believed that Jim was instrumental as a development coordinator for the Town, as well as raising grant funding, and worried that the Town could be missing out on things that might be out there if the Town did not replace him. Council Member Furgiuele also expressed concern at the rising cost of attorney fees and what he viewed as the decreasing pace of work. Council Member Furgiuele believed that the Town was currently paying a full time legal rate for part time representation. Mr. Ward replied that the budget would not allow both positions, and noted that when Mr. Byrne stepped aside, he was able to take over important contacts and continue to chase grant funds. He added that the Town was becoming more dependent on the Council of Government for water, sewer and street project grants and did not believe that the Town should pay an employee to do that work. Mr. Ward stated that his primary concern was the need to implement the work that former Assistant Manager Byrne did. Discussion turned back to the Town Attorney position, with Mr. Furgiuele noting that Council had given direction months ago to the attorney on AirBnB and nothing has been done to date. Mr. Ward replied that Council had approved the attorney's priority list without changing the ordering. Council Member LaPlaca stated that certain issues such as AirBnB and amortization brought citizens out of the woodworks, with Council Member Furgiuele adding that it was his opinion that this was a sign that the Town needed to change its ordinances. Council Member LaPlaca believed that the Town should consider spending resources on sustainability efforts instead of a full-time attorney. Council Member Furgiuele replied that all Council Members gave input to the ordinances, and felt that it should always be a priority of every Council Member to address illegal activity in Town. Council Member LaPlaca asked for the amount spent on the Town Attorney on the last ten years, to which Mr. Ward replied that the numbers would not be easily comparable. Council Member Furgiuele added that for years when he was the Town Attorney he had recommended that Council hire a full time attorney due to the large work load, and stated that he believed that there were too many legal issues on the horizon for the Town to continue to employ a part time attorney. Mr. Ward expressed that his concern was agenda management and that it was already a challenge to get through agendas as they were now. It was the consensus of Council to have staff update previous research on other municipalities policies. Upon a motion by Council Member Ulmer, seconded by Council Member LaPlaca, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:11 p.m.

Nicole Harmon, Town Clerk

Rennie Brantz, Mayor