

**MINUTES – WORKSHOP/RETREAT
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
February 10, 2017**

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order at 8:40 a.m. in the Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road. Mayor Rennie Brantz presided. Council members present were Mayor Pro Tem Lynne Mason, Loretta Clawson, Jeannine Underdown Collins, Charlotte Mizelle and Jennifer Teague. Staff present included Town Manager John Ward, Assistant Town Manager Jim Byrne, Town Clerk Christine Pope and Administrative Support Specialist Nicole Worley. Finance Director Amy Davis, Human Resources Director Peri Moretz, Police Chief Dana Crawford, Assistant Fire Chief Mike Teague and Planning Director Jane Shook also attended the meeting as needed.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold the annual Town Council retreat.

TOWN-WIDE COUNCIL DISCUSSION ITEMS

Town Manager John Ward began the meeting by outlining the items on the retreat agenda.

Agenda Development/Meetings/Agenda Presentation

Mr. Ward announced that 285 agenda items were addressed in 2016. The use of a timer during the public comment portion of Council meetings was discussed and Council noted that the current meeting system is working well.

Communications/Information Distribution

Mr. Ward noted that he plans to direct staff to issue more press releases in the upcoming year, with Mayor Brantz noting that he would like to highlight services offered by the Town.

Town Logo/Signs

All were in agreement that since the current Town logo can sometimes be difficult to see and to replicate, the official Town logo should feature only solid primary colors.

Existing Services/Town Department Feedback

Mr. Ward outlined the recent changes implemented in the planning department and announced the plans to hire an additional planner. Councilmember Mason mentioned that she would like for planning to find a way to communicate upcoming commercial projects to members of Council. Police Department needs and their excellent case closure rate was also discussed.

Committee Effectiveness/Needs Discussion

Mr. Ward asked Council for feedback on committee effectiveness and shared his concerns that staff is spending a significant amount of time preparing meeting minutes. Everyone was in agreement that it would be more efficient to have a committee/board member take minutes instead of staff members. Mr. Ward noted that a link on the Town website could be created to post committee and board meeting minutes.

FINANCE

Finance Director Amy Davis presented her annual report and stated that despite tax cuts, she expects that the Town will remain within its budget. Sales tax cuts were discussed at length, including how tax monies are spent throughout the area. Everyone agreed that an official letter to the County regarding sales tax re-distribution was a top priority, and it was noted that the letter should be presented publicly. New water/sewer bill production and online bill payment software was discussed, as was the switch to fiber for internet services for Town of Boone functions.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 10:15 a.m. Council reconvened at 10:30 a.m.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural Resources Director Pilar Fotta presented her annual report and spoke about the success of the music lessons offered at the Jones House. Ms. Fotta noted that she felt like it would be beneficial if the Jones House were open to the public on Sundays. She stated that the expansion of programming is difficult without extra staff, but did go on to say that the ASU Pep Rally was a success and that the department hopes to do the same this year on a larger scale. Mayor Brantz stated that he would like for the Town to consider hosting more events at the Daniel Boone Park/Horn in the West in the future since the Rail Jam was such a success. The utilization of volunteers, merging websites between the DBDA and the Jones House and screening the mural at the post office were also discussed.

POLICE

Police Chief Dana Crawford showed a brief video demonstrating the benefits of body cameras and what police officers deal with on a daily basis. Chief Crawford reviewed department accomplishments for the past year as well as needs for the department, specifically the need for additional staff.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 12:04 p.m. Council reconvened at 12:19 p.m.

FIRE

Assistant Fire Chief Mike Teague began by announcing that Fire Chief Jimmy Isaacs was in Gatlinburg, Tennessee as part of a federal team who are investigating the recent wildfires. Discussion ensued regarding the impact of the recent loss of the Town's ETJ powers, as well as the department needs for the upcoming year which include radios, pay study, vehicles and various repairs and improvements. The splitting of the Assistant Fire Chief position and the Fire Marshal position was also mentioned as a priority of the department.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 1:08 p.m. Council reconvened at 1:16 p.m.

PLANNING AND INSPECTIONS

Newly appointed Planning Director Jane Shook gave a general overview of the recent reorganization of the planning department, the value of permits issued in the past year and the progress of the new permitting software. Discussion ensued regarding the updating of the fee schedule, energy efficient vehicles and zoning signs. It was also decided that the meeting date for the Wellness District be moved from March 29, 2017 to April 5, 2017 and April 26, 2017 to May 3, 2017.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 2:27 p.m. Council reconvened at 2:33 p.m.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Director Peri Moretz presented a brief department overview and stated that there was no insurance increase last year and that it would be possible for the Town to offer its employees the \$500 Wellness Card this year as it did last year. Ms. Moretz also noted that instead of paying a large amount of money for a pay study, the department would be working on doing its own study.

PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Director Rick Miller presented a department summary and noted that most of the items listed as needs by his department were repeats from last year. Mr. Miller noted that the water meter replacement program was progressing, and estimated that switching meters throughout the Town would take approximately one season. Councilmember Clawson mentioned that members of the community have been inquiring about the status of the Water Committee. Councilmember Mason stated and all agreed that the need for Water Committee meetings should be revisited.

ADMINISTRATION

Town Manager John Ward outlined the accomplishments of the department in the last year. Discussion ensued regarding various goals for the upcoming year.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION ITEMS

Councilmember Clawson stated that the cemetery project was moving along well. She also noted that she believed the Rivers House is being underutilized and that it could be a wonderful project for the Town. Councilmember Teague voiced concern with the Town allocating money to SAHA since there are so many department needs that remain underfunded. Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of partnering with ASU on a parking deck in the future, and different opportunities for the Bolick property.

With no further discussion, Mayor Brantz adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

(All department memoranda and handouts are permanently on file in the February 2017 Annual Retreat meeting file.)

Nicole Worley,
Administrative Support Specialist

Rennie Brantz, Mayor