

**MINUTES – WORKSHOP/RETREAT
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
February 17, 2016**

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2016 at 8:46 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, Jennifer Teague and Charlotte Mizelle. Staff members present were Town Manager John Ward, Town Clerk Christine Pope, Assistant Town Manager Jim Byrne and Administrative Support Specialist Nicole Worley. Public Works Director Rick Miller and Cultural Resources Director Pilar Fotta also attended the meeting as needed.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold the second day of Town Council's annual retreat.

PUBLIC WORKS (STREETS, WATER, WASTEWATER, SOLID WASTE, FACILITIES)

Public Works Director Rick Miller presented his annual report of accomplishments, priorities and goals for the upcoming fiscal year. He provided a brief summary on the success of the consolidation of the Public Works and Public Utilities Departments, stating that operations are going well after one year. Discussion ensued regarding needed replacement of the water tank at the Deck Hill water treatment plant. Mayor Brantz said that many citizens have voiced concern over the possibility of lead in Town water after the recent event in Flint, Mich. Mr. Miller assured Mayor Brantz that the Town has a system in place for checking Town water on a regular basis. Discussion ensued regarding the replacement of water lines located at Pinnacle Drive as well as the utilities on Howard Street. Paving was discussed next, with Council Member Mason recommending that the Town continue to work with the Safe Routes to School program as well as referencing the Bike and Pedestrian Plan already in place. Discussion ensued involving the legalities as well as pros and cons of renaming streets. Mr. Miller offered that since the Town cannot rename a state-owned street, one option might be a dedication instead, which Council was interested in as a possibility. Discussion ensued on different ways to enhance King Street while addressing traffic issues that currently exist in the downtown area. Mr. Miller's next topics of discussion included the Town's availability fees with Council agreeing the fees should stay as they currently are. Mr. Miller finished with discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of single versus multiple water meters for a single development as well as the Town's hardship policy for water usage waivers. Council was in consensus that Mr. Miller and Mr. Ward should work on clarifying the hardship policy to bring to Council for consideration.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 10:56 a.m. Council reconvened at 11:08 a.m.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural Resources Director Pilar Fotta presented her annual report on accomplishments, priorities and goals for the upcoming fiscal year. She noted she would like to have direction on budget needs and concerns, especially focusing on Daniel Boone Park and the Rivers property. Council Member Teague expressed strong feelings about increasing the number of events in Boone and further enhancing some of the events the Town currently has. The possibility of various festivals in Town was discussed, as well as departmental priorities. Priorities included possibly increasing fees at the Jones House to cover staff time and noted that this change has already been discussed by the Cultural Resources Advisory Board. July 4th festivities were discussed at length, with Council agreeing that they would like the celebration to have more of a festival feel than it currently does, and they support an increase in the cost of fireworks, suggesting that the Town reach out to other groups (including food trucks) to help offset the cost. Discussion ensued regarding additional, enhanced events in the downtown area.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 12:44 p.m. Council reconvened at 1:15 p.m.

ADMINISTRATION

Town Manager John Ward highlighted some of the changes that have taken place in the last year in Administration, including the transition to a new Mayor and Council. He discussed the successes of the financial and administration department, as well as the success of the new meeting software. Parking decks were briefly discussed, with the main concern being height limitations. The progress of the Howard Street project and the Middlefork Greenway project were discussed next. Mr. Ward stated he would like to continue to improve citizen and media relations, as well as to expand the intern program.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mayor Brantz offered that he would like to see the greening of Boone become a priority and asked Council to remember this as they consider departmental priorities. Town Manager Ward encouraged Council to support the Police Department reserve program and it was unanimously agreed that would be a priority in the next year. Brief discussion followed concerning the Town taking over parking and custodial services which are currently contracted out. Council Member Clawson expressed that she felt the services are fine as they are now. Others agreed that it was worth at least looking at. Council Member Clawson asked that staff look into handicap accessibility for the top floor of Town Hall. Council Member Mason noted she would like to see a part-time employee at the Jones House and discussion ensued on the cost for an additional employee at this location. Town Manager Ward stated that he would like to see the Town have a vehicle replacement plan in the future, but asked that Council make the replacement of ageing vehicles a priority for now. Mr. Ward noted he would like to work on accessibility at Town Hall as well. He stated he would like to continue the work that has already been accomplished on the proposed parking deck next to Town Hall and all were in agreement. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the height requirements for structures in downtown and how the addition of elevators adds an additional floor to any structure one is installed in. Discussion followed concerning Outside Agency Funding and different ways to collect money for these funds and to also help alleviate the panhandling issue. Town Manager Ward suggested that staff could explore a round-up program with water and sewer bills that would allow customers to round their bill up to support a certain fund or cause. Everyone expressed interest in further exploring this program. Discussion ended with the coordination of the Planning Retreat which was tentatively scheduled for March 11, 2016, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Town Council Chambers. Staff indicated they would add two items to the Feb. 18, 2016, Town Council meeting for Council's approval: scheduling of the planning retreat for March 11 and sending the revisions to the public hearing process to the April 4 special public hearing.

With no further discussion, Mayor Brantz adjourned the meeting at 2:48 p.m.

(All departmental memoranda, capital improvement plans and handouts are permanently on file in the February 2016 Annual Retreat meeting file.)

Christine Pope, Town Clerk

Rennie Brantz, Mayor