MINUTES - SPECIAL MEETING
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
APRIL 2, 2012

A special meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order at 8:45 a.m., Monday, April 2, 2012, in the Council Chambers, 1500 Blowing Rock Road. Mayor Loretta Clawson presided. Council Members present were Mayor Pro-Tem Jamie Leigh, Andy Ball, Lynne Mason, Rennie Brantz, and Allan Scherlen. Staff members present were Greg Young-Town Manager, Kimberly Brown-Town Clerk, Police Chief Dana Crawford, Fire Chief Jimmy Isaacs, Finance Director Amy Davis, Blake Brown-Public Works Director, Assistant to the Manager Jim Byrne, Human Resources Director Peri Moretz, Planning Director Bill Bailey, Public Utilities Director Rick Miller, Downtown Development Coordinator Pilar Fotta, and Administrative Support Specialist Christine Pope. Town Attorney Sam Furgiuele was also in attendance.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold the Town's Annual Retreat. Mayor Clawson welcomed all in attendance.

TENTATIVE AGENDA ADOPTION

Town Manager Greg Young presented the following changes to the agenda:

1. Addition of Closed Session for consideration of the following items:

   -Legal Advice – Coffey Settlement Agreement.
   -Legal Advice – Litigation on Noise Ordinance.

Mayor Clawson asked that Closed Session be added to the agenda after the lunch break. Upon a motion by Council Member Brantz, seconded by Council Member Scherlen, Council moved to adopt the agenda, as amended.

VOTE: Aye – All
Nay – None

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

- **Downtown Development/DBDA**

Downtown Development Coordinator Pilar Fotta presented the Downtown Development Annual Report. **(Copy of report permanently on file in the 2012 Annual Town Council Retreat packet.)** Brief discussion ensued regarding the issue of parking in downtown Boone including discussion of the reintroduction of parking meters and possibly the use of parking stations in areas where parking meters are not feasible.

- **Finance Department**

Finance Director Amy Davis presented the Finance Department Annual Report. **(Copy of report permanently on file in the 2012 Town Council Annual Retreat packet.)** Council Member Ball stated he would like to see wireless internet access for the public in Town buildings. Council Member Mason stated she would like to see Council meetings steamed live for the public to view.

- **Fire Department**

Fire Chief Jimmy Isaacs presented the Fire Department Annual Report. **(Copy of report permanently on file in the 2012 Town Council Annual Retreat packet.)** Brief discussion ensued regarding the replacement of the Tower 1 Aerial fire truck.

- **Police Department**

Police Chief Dana Crawford presented the Police Department Annual Report. **(Copy of report permanently on file in the 2012 Town Council Annual Retreat packet.)** He stated that radio communications are an issue at new high school which constitutes a safety issue and necessitates the need to transfer to the statewide VIPER system.

- **Public Utilities Department**

Public Utilities Director Rick Miller presented the Public Utilities Annual Report. **(Copy of report permanently on file in the 2012 Town Council Annual Retreat packet.)** He pointed out that the Water and Wastewater Capital Improvement Plan includes the need for upgrades in storage tanks and that an upgrade in the wastewater storage tanks is mandated this year by the state.

- **Public Works Department**

Public Works Director Blake Brown presented the Public Works Annual Report. **(Copy of report permanently on file in the 2012 Town Council Annual Retreat packet.)** Discussion ensued regarding improved visibility for cross-walks and pedestrian safety.

Special Assistant to the Manager Jim Byrne informed the Council that in regard to FEMA reimbursement for the claims for the ice storm in 2009, the process was slowed due to several reasons but that the Town will probably receive reimbursement within the next 30 days. Regarding the Army Corps project, a preconstruction meeting in was held in January. He anticipates a signed contract being returned to the Town in the near future.

Mayor Clawson declared a break at 10:12 a.m. Council reconvened at 10:24 a.m.

PRESENTATION OF CAPITAL PROJECT/BUDGET REVIEW

Town Manager Greg Young began a power-point presentation **(copy of power-point permanently on file in the 2012 Annual Town Council Retreat packet)** and presented information regarding the following issues:

- Property Tax Collection as of February 2012
- Tax Exempt Property Valuation & Tax Exempt Property Map
- Current & Prior Year Sales Tax Collections
- Budget Issues for the Fiscal Year 2012/2013
- Priority Review for the Fiscal Year 2011/2012 including projects that have been completed such as the Blowing Rock Road building generator, Town Calendar, and the monthly funding of the WCAC folklorist.
- USPS – King Street Building – Timeline:
  -April 3, 2012 – drawings available
  -April 17, 2012 – pre bid conference
  -April 26, 2012 – bids due
  -Anticipated Completion – 8 to 10 months
- NC DOT U-4020 Project
- Greenway Expansion – Wilson Drive:
  -Council Member Mason asked if a crosswalk could be installed at the intersection of Wilson Drive and Highway 105. Public Works Director Blake Brown stated that would have to be approved by the NC DOT.
- Howard Street Project – Right-of-Way Proposal
- E-911 Consolidation:
  -Town Manager Greg Young stated that his recommendation is to utilize the existing committee to analyze the proposal presented to the Town by Watauga County officials.
- USDA-Aerial Fire Truck Purchase
- Water Intake Project
- Housing Market Analysis:
  -Council directed the Town Manager to send out the Request for Proposals (RFP), which was previously sent out to the public, to the Council for review. It was the consensus of the Council to send the RFP's a second time with a narrower scope than what was provided previously.
- Town of Boone Website Initiative
- Town of Boone Fund Balance Data

- Brown Building:
  -It was the recommendation of Town Manager Greg Young to appropriate the remaining fund balance of $700,000 for a new Public Works/Public Utilities facility. Additionally, he recommended that the remaining fund balance from the Clawson-Burnley Park and Horn in the West appropriations be designated for this purpose. He pointed out that these funds, along with funds allocated in the FY2-11/2012 budget in the amount of $300,000, would total approximately $1,115,000 in reserve. Discussion ensued regarding what services might be consolidated and included in the new facility. Council discussed which government services would remain downtown. It was suggested that appraisals be performed for the Brown building property, the Blowing Rock Road building property, and the current Town Hall building property. Furthermore, it was the consensus of the Council that smart-growth principles and high-efficiency building methods be used in the renovation of or construction of any town facilities.

- Parking Validation Program:
  -Town Manager Greg Young presented a recommendation from Steve McLaurin of McLaurin Parking, to cap the amount of validations used downtown. Council discussed the benefits of using parking meters downtown.

COUNCIL ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- **Staffing needs/Public Relations/Community Outreach:** Council Member Ball stated that he would like to see a new position for a public relations person. Council discussed the need to make sure that all town information and news is distributed to the public and media. Council directed Town Manager Greg Young to make a recommendation for a new staff member for public relations in the upcoming budget.

Mayor Clawson declared a break for lunch at 12:25 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

Upon a motion by Council Member Brantz, seconded by Council Member Ball, Council moved to enter in to Closed Session at 1:05 p.m., pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) for the following:

Legal Advice - Coffey Estate Settlement
Legal Advice - Litigation regarding Noise Ordinance.

VOTE: Aye – All
Nay – None

Upon a motion by Council Member Brantz, seconded by Council Member Ball, Council moved to exit Closed Session at 1:55 p.m.

VOTE: Aye – All
Nay – None

COUNCIL ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION – CONTINUED

- **Discussion of Cultural Resources Board**

Council Member Brantz introduced the following information on the need for a Cultural Resources Board:

Rationale: *The Town of Boone currently owns and supports a number of cultural resources and facilities that help to define and enrich our community. These include the Jones House, Horn in the West, downtown Post Office, Rivers' House, Appalachian Theater, and several parks and monuments. Additional properties may be transferred to the Town in the future. At present, each Town-owned or –sponsored program or facility operates under a different, sometimes outdated or unstated, set of rules and procedures. This situation often produces confusion or uncertainty about operating procedures, scheduling, planning, coordination, communications, resource allocation and purpose. As a result, neither Boone's numerous* *cultural organizations, the community at large, Appalachian State University, nor visitors are fully aware of the extensive cultural opportunities sponsored by the Town of Boone. We need a new approach.*

Purpose: *The goal in creating a Cultural Resources Board, supported by a director of cultural affairs employed by the Town, will be to promote cultural programs that improve the quality of life in Boone, and also encourage tourism and economic development. It will accomplish this goal by recommending policies and programs to Boone's Town Council that support, coordinate and evaluate Town-supported cultural activities and facilities.*

Membership: *The Cultural Resources Board of nine (9) members will be appointed by the Boone Town Council. Two nominations each will be invited from the following organizations: Appalachian State University, Downtown Boone Development Association (DBDA), Boone Historic Preservation Commission, Southern Appalachian Historical Association (SAHA) and the Watauga Arts Council. Nominees must be familiar with the organization that nominates them, but may not currently be members of that organization's board or governing body. The Jones House Advisory Board, whose functions will be taken over by the Cultural Resources Board, will also be invited to submit two nominations from its current board membership. The Town Council will select one person from each organization's nominations to represent that organization or viewpoint. Nominations for three open seats will also be invited from other cultural interest groups such as the Daniel Boone Native Gardens or Blue Ridge Community Theater.*

Initial appointments will be for two (3 members), three (3 members) and four years (3 members), with all subsequent appointments being for three years. Members may serve two consecutive terms. Thereafter, a member may be reappointed following a one-year period of non-membership.

Responsibilities of Cultural Resources Board

1. *Recommend general policies for Boone's cultural facilities and events that comply with local, state and federal regulations.*
2. *Assume the management responsibilities of the Jones House Advisory Board, making that board unnecessary.*
3. *Create and administer a Cultural Enrichment Allocation Program funded by the Town.*
4. *Develop and recommend an annual cultural affairs budget for the Town Council.*
5. *Coordinate cultural events for the benefit of the entire community.*
6. *Develop and publish a calendar of community cultural events in the local media and on the Town Web site.*
7. *Coordinate cultural grant writing for the Town of Boone.*
8. *Encourage, support and coordinate public art projects.*
9. *Develop a Cultural Master Plan to be incorporated into town planning.*
10. *Work closely with ASU in planning cultural events.*
11. *Monitor and prioritize maintenance needs for Boone's cultural facilities.*
12. *Encourage the development of cultural partnerships locally, regionally and nationally.*
13. *Present an annual Cultural Activities Report to Town Council.*

Process: *The town manager will advertise the creation of the Cultural Resources Board, invite nominations from the groups listed above, and present Town Council with a list of nominees at its June meeting. Appointments will be effective July 1, 2012. Meetings and operational procedures will be determined by UDO rules and the Town Code.*

Upon a motion by Council Member Brantz, seconded by Council Member Leigh, Council moved to create a Cultural Resources Board as outlined in the information presented by Council Member Brantz. Council Members Brantz and Leigh accepted the following amendments to the motion:

1. Subsequent boards are subject to the open application process.
2. The number of representatives from any one organization will be limited to two membership positions.
3. The board will create a list of all specific properties and facilities related to cultural activities.

VOTE: Aye – All
Nay – None

Council Member Leigh presented the following information in regard to the creation of a Cultural Resources Director:

Rationale: *Currently, Boone's cultural facilities and programs are administered and supervised by different organizations, individuals and procedures. As a result, it is often difficult to keep track of diverse programs, procedures and needs. Planning is piecemeal, utilization of resources inefficient, maintenance priorities unclear, and program coordination almost accidental. It is almost impossible for the Town, public and University to know what cultural opportunities are available. At the same time, it is not always clear to the Town Council where Town resources are being expended for cultural purposes.*

Purpose: *The director of cultural resources will provide leadership, oversight and support for Boone's cultural life. As an employee of the Town of Boone, this person will be responsible for implementing cultural programs recommended by the Cultural Resources Board and approved by Town Council. The cultural resources director will be responsible for communicating board recommendations to the Town Council, managing the Town's cultural facilities, reporting regularly on cultural activities to the Town Council, developing an annual work plan, and encouraging cooperation between the Town and other cultural facilities.*

Process: *The town manager will make recommendations to us about how to specifically describe, accommodate and budget for a cultural resources director at our upcoming budget workshop.*

Council Member Leigh made the following motion: *In conjunction with the creation of a cultural resources advisory committee, I propose that we create a new Town position for a cultural resources director whose general duties will include, but are not limited to working directly with the new cultural resources advisory committee and overseeing all Town cultural facilities, including acting as a director of the Jones House Community Center. I propose that we direct Greg Young to develop a detailed job description, to propose a staffing method that would accommodate the creation of such a position, and to recommend a way to fund the position by using moneys that have historically been budgeted for outside contract services for Jones House Administration as well as other budget sources if needed, and to present those recommendations to us at our upcoming budget workshop. I propose that we create this position effective July 1, 2012, to coincide with the beginning of our new fiscal year, and that we make every attempt to fill the position by that date or as soon as possible thereafter. I further propose that, during this Jones House administration transition period, we continue the same level of financial support for our current Jones House administration contractor, the Watauga Arts Council, on a month-to-month basis, through Sept. 30, 2012, with the expectation that there will be a high level of cooperation between the Town and the Arts Council to ensure a smooth transition, and that Greg Young should incorporate that temporary continued financial support in his funding recommendations for the new Town position.* The motion was seconded by Council Member Brantz.

VOTE: Aye – All
Nay – None

- **Discussion of E911 Consolidation**

As there are still many questions regarding this issue, Council directed Mr. Young to create a list of questions that need to be considered by the E911 Consolidation Committee.

- **Discussion of Howard Street and other Downtown Improvements**

Council Member Mason began discussion by pointing out that the Howard Street project has nts been a long-term project, those businesses and property owners also pays taxes and are in MSD. She stated that the street is dangerous in that there are no sidewalks. She stated that the Council either needs to revisit the plan of obtaining needed rights-of-ways; to decide on some type of scaled-down version of the project; or to decide not to proceed with the project at all. She maintained that this area deserves same attention as King Street. Council Member Mason stated that both the DBDA and the TDA are in support of seeing Howard St. project completed. Council Member Leigh stated that she could agree to move forward with some type of scaled-down version of the project, possibly making a wide sidewalk area with grass and trees. LM-safety issues, basic amenities, make it attractive. Council Member Ball agreed and stated that this area is a perfect area in which to have a pedestrian thoroughfare. Mr. Young stated that the funds reserved for easement negotiations could be applied to a scaled-back version of the project. Town Attorney Sam Furgiuele stated that the town will need to have the approval of those property owners who have already signed over easement agreements for a scaled-back version. Public Works Director Blake Brown stated that several years ago he and Jim Byrne produced designs for a scaled-down version of the Howard Street project. Council directed Mr. Brown to present that design at the April regular meeting.

Council Member Ball asked that the town explore the costs and feasibility of installing more lighting on the north side of King Street. Council Member Leigh asked about installation of lighting in other areas of the downtown area. Council Member Mason stated that she would like to see additional lighting on Howard Street. Council discussed the need for more sidewalks and maintenance of existing sidewalks in the downtown area. Public Works Director Blake Brown stated that he can explore the installation of additional lighting in the downtown area, as well as a plan for the sidewalks to present to the Council.

- **Discussion of Downtown Parking Needs**

Council discussed the need for more parking in the downtown area and ways in which this may be achieved.

- **Discussion of Sidewalks and Bike Lanes**

Public Works Director Blake Brown stated there will be full bike lanes on the new 421 project and that the NC DOT will be trying to put in new bike lanes on Highways 321 and 105 when restriped.

- **Discussion of Greenway Expansion & Greenspace**

Public Works Director Blake Brown informed the Council that the Greenway Committee is considering areas to expand greenway and will forward recommendations to Council.

- **Discussion of Policy Enforcement**

Council Member Mason stated that she would like to see better enforcement of the Town's smoking ordinance, specifically in the downtown area. Council directed Mr. Brown to install signage so that the public is aware of where smoking is prohibited.

- **Discussion of Enhancement of Town's Tree Canopy**

Council Member Leigh stated that she would like the Town to establish a tree bank/rebate program for residential areas; expand downtown tree planning; attempt to extend trees along the full length of King Street, including side streets, and along the paved median on Queen Street; set aside funds to expand tree planting along Highway 421 Project U-4020; inventory on town-owned property ; to develop incentives for trees in develop regulations contained in the UDO; and to relax requirements for tree board membership.

- **Discussion of Toilet Rebate Program**

Public Utilities Director Rick Miller stated that this program has proved to be very successful and that he plans to include more funds in the toilet rebate program in the upcoming budget.

- **Presentation of TDA Report**

Wright Tilley, director of the Boone and Watauga County TDA presented a report containing highlights for the past year, a copy of the year-end occupancy tax collection chart, a fiscal year occupancy tax chart through February 2012, and an updated copy of the TDA's marketing spreadsheet that outlines current marketing and advertising plans through the end of the fiscal year. **(Copy of report permanently on file in the April 2012 Town Council meeting file.)**

SCHEDULE ZONING CASE FOR MAY QUARTERLY PUBLIC HEARING

Upon a motion by Council Member Brantz, seconded by Council Member Ball, Council moved to place Case 20120175 Town of Boone Water Treatment Plant Rezoning on the May Quarterly Public Hearing agenda.

VOTE: Aye – All
Nay - None

PRIORITIES

It was the consensus of the Council that the main priority for the upcoming year is to reserve funds for a new Public Works/Public Utilities Facility to replace operations at the Brown building.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Council Member Ball, seconded by Council Member Leigh, Council moved to adjourn at 5:09 p.m.

______________________________ ______________________________

Kimberly S. Brown, Town Clerk Loretta Clawson, Mayor