MINUTES - SPECIAL MEETING
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RETREAT
MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2008 5 P.M.
CHETOLA INN & RESORT APPALACHIAN BLUE RIDGE ROOM
BLOWING ROCK, NC

Boone Town Council: Lynne Mason-Mayor Pro-Tem, Janet Pepin, Rennie Brantz, Liz Aycock, and Stephen Phillips (arrived at 5:38 p.m.)

Boone Town Staff: Greg Young-Town Manager, Kimberly Brown-Deputy Town Clerk, Rick Miller-Public Utilities Director, Ricky Hurley-Planning Supervisor, Bill Post-Police Chief, Reggie Hassler-Fire Chief, and Sam Furgiuele-Town Attorney

Blowing Rock Town Council: Mayor J. B. Lawrence, Bobby Ball, Phil Pickett, Albert Yount, Keith Tester, and Tommy Klutz

Blowing Rock Town Staff: Scott Hildebran-Town Manager, Sharon Greene-Town Clerk, Eric Brown-Police Chief, Doug Chapman-Town Engineer, Erica Cline-Human Resources Director, Kent Graham-Emergency Services Director, Johnny Lentz-Public Works Director, and Kevin Rothrock-Planning Director

Seven Devils Town Council: Richard DeMott-Mayor Pro-Tem, Kathy Copley

Watauga County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Jim Deal, Billy Ralph Winkler-Vice Chairman, John Cooper, Mary Moretz, Winston Kinsey

Watauga County Staff: Rocky Nelson-County Manager, Deron Geouque-Assistant County Manager, Anita Fogle-Clerk to the Board, Joe Furman-Planning Director

Appalachian State University: Dr. Loren Baumhover-Chief of Staff Chancellor's Office, Dayton Cole-ASU Attorney

Facilitator: Tom Westall-Lead for Life

Guest Speaker: Debbie Hamrick-Specialty Crops Director, NC Farm Bureau

CALL TO ORDER, MEETING PURPOSE, INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. Mr. Westall stated the purpose of the meeting is to discuss water issues, a consolidated E911 dispatch system, and the acquisition of a ladder fire truck. Brief introductions were made by all persons in attendance. Mr. Westall began by soliciting ideas of desired outcomes from the meeting. The following list was created by the group:

1. To work together.
2. To create an action plan.
3. To create a shared plan.
4. To develop a plan for consolidated EMS dispatch.
5. To know where we stand.
6. To have a clear definition of a regional water system.
7. To have honest dialog.
8. To include factual information on the pros and cons of the issue discussed.
9. To open a dialog on the question of whether bigger is better.
10. To acquire knowledge about hydrology and the ability to meet water needs now and in the future.
11. To look at the needs of the entire region.

Mr. Westall then reviewed the operating guidelines for the meeting:

12. Everyone should participate.
13. There are no wrong answers.

14. Everyone has wisdom/something to contribute.
15. Everyone's wisdom results in the wisest outcome.
16. We will seek creative ways to solve problems.
17. We will agree to disagree, but will establish shared consensus on key issues.
18. We will support the decisions of the group going forward.

WATER ISSUES

Debbie Hamrick, of the NC Farm Bureau, presented a power-point presentation entitled "Water: The Big Picture" (**copy of presentation permanently on file**).

Following Ms. Hamrick's presentation, Mr. Westall asked each entity for an update on local water interconnection activities. Boone Town Manager Greg Young informed the group of plans for a water interconnection with ASU. He stated that this connection could help alleviate peak water usage especially during the month of October. He explained that the Town of Boone is pursuing plans for a water interconnection with the Town of Blowing Rock at the cost of $4 million. Mr. Young stated that the Town of Boone is seeking additional funding such as grants to help alleviate the project cost. He noted that the water interconnection with Blowing Rock would be for emergency use. Mr. Young further stated that the Town is in the process of acquiring land for an additional water source. He stated that acquiring a new water intake is also being pursued.

Speaking on behalf of the Watauga County Board of Commissioners, Chairman Jim Deal listed the following as issues being of concern to Watauga County:

1. The problem of water storage.
2. A water quality and quantity study for the entire county.
3. Economic issues such as the effect of a lack of water on businesses, industry, etc.
4. The effect of possible development along interconnection lines and a water line from a new water source.
5. The combined capacity of the Town of Boone, Town of Blowing Rock, ASU, and Watauga County.

Dr. Loren Baumhover stated that ASU is anticipating controlled growth for the student population over the next several years. He stated that the interconnection system between ASU and the Town of Boone should not be considered a solution to the water problem but a temporary effort to help the water situation.

Mr. Richard DeMott, of the Seven Devils Town Council, stated that a water study is currently being conducted to determine future water needs and population growth.

Mayor J. B. Lawrence of Blowing Rock stated that the water needs for the Town of Blowing Rock are reaching a critical point especially during the heavy tourist season in the months of July, August, and October.

After a lengthy discussion of the water situation in the region, a list of short-terms goals was created:

1. Determine the combined capacity of each entity and understand demand (seasonal, combined, etc.)
2. Continue to stress conservation and investigate water efficiency measures such as low-flow toilets.
3. Explore regional solutions.
4. Create a political action plan for a unified voice for the entire area.
5. Create a communication group to meet within the next 45 days.

It was decided that each group represented should appoint a representative to serve on a subcommittee to discuss each short-term goal and report back to the entire group.

E-911 CONSOLIDATED DISPATCH

Mr. Westall stated that this issue involving the Towns of Boone and Blowing Rock and Watauga County includes routing emergency calls appropriately and efficiently. He asked for input from

each of the groups involved. Boone Police Chief Bill Post stated that other options than a central dispatch should be explored. He offered that the fire department might be better served by a central dispatch center. Blowing Rock EMS Director Kent Graham stated that the Fireman's Association is in favor of a central dispatch center. Blowing Rock Police Chief Eric Brown listed logistics and the loss of autonomy as concerns of having a centralized dispatch system. Watauga County Board of Commissioners Chairman Jim Deal stated that if a centralized dispatch system is used, the County would want feedback from each of the agencies as to the efficiency and effectiveness of a new system. After further discussion, it was the consensus of the group to have each Town bring recommendations from their respective governing boards to the county officials to present to the EMS Advisory Board.

LADDER FIRE TRUCK ACQUISITION

Boone Fire Chief Reggie Hassler informed the group that the current ladder truck used by the Town is 21 years old. He stated that a ladder truck with a 100 ft. ladder is needed and that the cost for a new truck ranges from $850,000 to $900,000. Chief Hassler stated that currently there are no structures within the Town of Boone that require such equipment other than buildings on the ASU campus. Town Manager Greg Young stated that the Town intends to file for special legislation to acquire a new ladder truck. He stated that the Town of Boone would like to request support from the other local agencies by way of adopting a resolution of support for a new ladder truck. It was agreed that a resolution of support would be forwarded to each attending agency for consideration by their respective boards.

OTHER ISSUES

Common economic issues shared by each of the involved entities was suggested as a topic for further discussion at a future meeting.

With no further items for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

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Deputy Clerk Mayor