

**MINUTES – WORKSHOP/RETREAT
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
May 24, 2016**

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order Tuesday, May 24, 2016, at 8:34 a.m. in the Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road. Mayor Rennie Brantz presided. Council members present were Loretta Clawson, Jeannine Underdown Collins, Jennifer Teague, Charlotte Mizelle and Lynne Mason. Staff members present were Town Manager John Ward, Assistant Manager Jim Byrne, Finance Director Amy Davis, Intern Kate Hayes and Administrative Support Specialist Nicole Worley.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold a budget work session.

DISCUSSION OF FY 2016/17 PROPOSED BUDGET

Council began the discussion by reviewing the recommendations of the Outside Agency Funding Review Committee, as well as the proposed budget submitted by Town Manager John Ward and Finance Director Amy Davis. (Copy of materials permanently on file in May 2016 meeting file). Mr. Ward presented the following proposed budget highlights:

- Maintain current tax rate of \$0.41
- No increases in water or sewer fees
- Maintains current service levels with no additional positions
- 2.5% Cost of Living Adjustment for employees
- Municipal Vehicle Tax of \$30 with the revenue from the \$25 increase funding \$100,000 in additional paving

The proposed \$25 increase in the Municipal Vehicle Tax was discussed at length, with concerns coming from Council members that the proposed increase would be too much, although the Town is in great need of additional funds for paving. Mr. Ward continued to review the proposed budget, noting that he'd like to revisit permit fees for the Planning Department in the near future, as well as the issues and costs involving the newly acquired Boone Cemetery. There was discussion regarding the parking meters and the fees associated with that service. Mr. Ward indicated that in addition to other changes he hoped to see in the future, he would work with the street department to bring in additional signage in the pay station lots.

OPEN COMMENT PERIOD

Mayor Rennie Brantz introduced Clyde Burleson and Carson Sailor with the Southern Appalachian Historical Association. Mr. Burleson relayed to Council that SAHA has been a staple in the Town for 65 years and brings jobs, educational opportunities and entertainment to the area and that it is the only true tourist attraction in the town. He continued to say that if the Council decided to allocate funding for SAHA, he would like to lengthen the operation period as well as enhance the museum. After Mr. Burleson and Mr. Sailor answered various questions from Council members, Mr. Sailor read a short presentation (Copy of materials permanently on file in May 2016 meeting file) in support of the \$30,000 funding request presented by SAHA.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 10:42 a.m. Council reconvened at 11:06 a.m.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED BUDGET

Mr. Ward continued to summarize the remainder of the proposed budget and there was discussion on items such as the vehicle lease program and maintenance on Town buildings. Mr. Ward noted that boring samples were recently completed on the property of the new municipal complex and that the project would be moving forward.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 12:03 p.m. Council reconvened at 12:49 p.m.

Discussion ensued regarding the vehicle take-home policy for certain Town employees. Members of Council did express concern with the fact that many employees who benefit from this incentive live out of county and advised Mr. Ward that they would like for him to research the original policy, specifically the acceptable distance for which an employee drives to and from work with a Town vehicle. Council moved on to suggest that they would like to see some changes made to the special event permitting system. Specifically, members would like to have staff

restructure the application to include a place for applicants to indicate their 501(c)(3) status. Employee benefits were discussed, with all members in support of the proposed 2.5% cost of living adjustment for employees. Mr. Ward also stated that the Town would be able to offer a \$500 per employee health credit which could be used for co-pays, glasses and other health-related items.

The Cultural Resources Department budget was discussed at length, with strong support of the Town offering more festival-type events. It was suggested that members of the Cultural Resources Advisory Board could help to enhance the programs the Town already has, but there were time concerns for Cultural Resources. Mr. Ward offered that it would be helpful to decide exactly what the enhanced/additional programming would be before the Town moves forward.

Mayor Brantz declared a break at 2:54 p.m. Council reconvened at 3:10 p.m.

MOTION REGARDING MUNICIPAL VEHICLE TAX

Council members Clawson and Teague stated that they believed a \$25 increase in the Municipal Vehicle Tax would be too much. Council Member Mason commented that a \$20 increase would be more appropriate and Council members Clawson and Teague suggested a \$15 increase. Upon a motion by Council Member Teague, seconded by Council Member Clawson, Council moved to authorize a \$15 increase to the Municipal Vehicle Tax for a total Municipal Vehicle Tax of \$20, with \$5 continuing to go toward sidewalk improvements and \$15 going toward paving. Council Member Mason noted that she would like for this issue to be re-evaluated next year.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jennifer Teague, Council Member
SECONDER:	Loretta Clawson, Council Member
AYES:	Mason, Clawson, Mizelle, Teague, Collins

MOTION TO APPROVE SAHA FUNDING

Discussion continued regarding SAHA and the improvements and enhancements needed at the facility. Upon a motion by Council Member Mason, seconded by Council Member Clawson, Council moved to authorize funding of \$20,000 for SAHA programming in coordination with Cultural Resources, and to have Town staff evaluate the property and make any needed repairs.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Lynne Mason, Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER:	Loretta Clawson, Council Member
AYES:	Mason, Clawson, Mizelle, Teague, Collins

MOTION TO RE-ENCUMBER FUNDS

Town Manager John Ward asked Council for direction regarding Tourism Development Authority expenditures. Upon a motion made by Council Member Underdown Collins and seconded by Council Member Clawson, Council moved to authorize the Town to re-encumber funds that would go toward Howard Street and advised Mr. Ward to make this recommendation to the TDA.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jeannine Underdown Collins, Council Member
SECONDER:	Loretta Clawson, Council Member
AYES:	Mason, Clawson, Mizelle, Teague, Collins

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Upon a motion made by Council Member Clawson, seconded by Council Member Underdown Collins, Council moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Loretta Clawson, Council Member
SECONDER:	Jeannine Underdown Collins, Council Member
AYES:	Mason, Clawson, Mizelle, Teague, Collins

Christine Pope, Town Clerk

Rennie Brantz, Mayor