

**MINUTES – WORKSHOP/RETREAT
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
June 5, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order on Monday, June 5, 2023 at 9:08 a.m. in the Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road in Boone. Mayor Tim Futrelle presided. Councilmembers present included Mayor Pro-Tem Edie Tugman, Todd Carter, Virginia Roseman, Dalton George and Becca Nenow. Staff present included Town Manager Amy Davis, Communications Specialist Laney Pilkington, Cultural Resources Director Mark Freed, Sustainability and Special Projects Manager George Santucci, Human Resources Director Dale Presnell, Police Chief Andy Le Beau, Fire Chief Jimmy Isaacs, Finance Director Guy Miller, Director of Public Works Rick Miller, Deputy Director of Public Works Todd Moody, and Planning and Inspections Director Jane Shook.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Futrelle asked if anyone was in attendance to provide public comment. With no one in attendance, the Boone Town Council moved to the next item.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Futrelle asked if there were any announcements to be made. Ms. Amy Davis informed Council that there was a typo in the budget message for the water and sewer fund. The current message states that the water and sewer fund represents \$9,6711,335, or 26.4% of the total budget. She explained that there is an extra '1' in the number, and it should state \$9,671,335. After the clarification, the Boone Town Council moved to the next item.

DISCUSSION REGARDING BUDGET EXPENDITURES FOR FY 2023/24

Ms. Davis explained that the proposed budget shows a 1.5¢ increase to the property tax rate, which would increase the rate to \$0.375 per \$100 valuation. She went on to explain there is a small revision to the dental expenditures line item, however, the proposed budget remains the same as it was proposed previously. Mayor Futrelle stated that he believed during the last budget retreat, it was consensus by Council to use 1¢ of the tax increase towards housing. Ms. Davis said that the current line item for housing, which has \$218,00 currently, could be used for a new position. However, that was the decision for Council. Councilmember George voiced his concern of creating a position dedicated to just affordable housing. He would prefer if the position focused on neighborhoods and housing in general, in order to justify the tax increase for all property owners.

Ms. Davis apologized, and asked Council if a brief discussion in regards to the Doc and Mural Watson mural on Howard Street could be had. She explained that flowers were added to the background of the mural, which was not a part of the rendering. In addition, the artist had not followed all of the Historic Preservation Commission's recommendations. The artist was set to finish at 12:00 p.m., so she wanted to discuss with Council if revisions needed to be made. Ms. Shook added that no updated rendering was given to the Commission members; however, no member had raised a complaint. Councilmember George expressed his support of the mural. Councilmember Roseman added that in passing, a Commission member made note that they thought rhododendron flowers would be nice in the background, however, it was just a thought. Councilmember Nenow stated that while the leaves looked like rhododendron leaves, the flowers did not. Discussion ensued. Mayor Futrelle stated that he would like to move on with the meeting, saying that it was artistic liberty. Ms. Davis said that Council would need to make a call. Councilmember Carter said that while in the future, artists need to follow the recommendations. However, the mural looked beautiful, and was a good asset to the Town. Mayor Futrelle asked if there was consensus for allowing the artist to finish the mural. The Council expressed consensus to allow the artist to finish the mural. Ms. Davis thanked Council, and discussion returned to the possible housing position in Planning and Inspections.

Discussion resumed regarding the possible housing position. Councilmember George reiterated his idea for the position. Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman asked if they were discussing using the line item for housing as a way to pay for this potential position, in which Mayor Futrelle said it was an idea. Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman added that she would like this position, if created, to help Ms. Shook with her current workload, adding that she liked the idea of the potential position help with neighborhoods and the neighborhood conservation program. However, she added that

she was not sure there was enough currently for the position to be considered full time. Ms. Shook read a preliminary description for the potential position, and Councilmember Carter said he liked it. Councilmember Carter said that with the creation of Mr. Santucci's position, the Town had been able to reach goals faster than expected. He went on to say that this could be the case with a position focused on housing. Councilmember Roseman clarified that the proposed tax increase would cover the step pay plan for Public Works and the creation of an Emergency Manager position, as well as go towards the housing line item. Ms. Davis agreed. Councilmember Nenow asked Council what the concerns were for this potential position after hearing what Ms. Shook had planned. Councilmember George reiterated that he would like to see this position work with neighborhoods and housing in order to justify the increase. Ms. Davis added that at the beginning of the next year, she would like to discuss make the housing line item into a Capital Reserve item, which Council expressed support for. Councilmember Carter then agreed with Councilmember George's sentiments. Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman asked if this position would do code enforcement as well, which Ms. Shook said no. Ms. Shook went on to say that she would like to see this position work with our Grants Coordinator, which Council felt was valid. Councilmember Roseman said that if the position is cause for support for a 1¢ increase, she was on board. Councilmember George said that he would not support a 1¢ increase if there is no tangible result. Councilmember Roseman asked Ms. Davis if a vote was needed, in which Ms. Davis said yes. Councilmember George made the motion that money from the property tax increase be set aside for the position from the housing fund to preserve the current housing stock and put towards further housing needs. Councilmember Carter asked to make the friendly amendment that the portion for workforce housing be taken out of the current line item, with the rest taken from another fund. Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman seconded the motion. Before voting, Councilmember Nenow explained she liked the position because it is the ecosystem for housing. Ms. Shook thanked Council, and asked that they keep in mind that results will not be tangible immediately with the position. Council agreed.

Upon the amended motion of Councilmember Carter, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman, the motion to approve the position for Planning and Inspections that will focus on housing, with the knowledge that part of the salary will be drawn from the housing line item, was passed.

VOTE: Aye: Tugman, Carter, George, Nenow
Nay: Roseman

Councilmember Roseman stated that she was in support of the position, however, with not have a dollar amount for the position she did not voted yes.

BREAK

Mayor Futrelle called for a break at 10:24 a.m.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING OUTSIDE AGENCY FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

Mayor Futrelle resumed the meeting at 10:41 a.m. Ms. Davis explained that the Council had \$115,000 to allocate to the outside agencies who applied for funding. Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman asked if there was any additional money available in the budget to apply to the outside agency funds, which Ms. Davis replied there was not. Councilmember George noted that he would like to, in the future, separate the arts agencies and the human services agencies for funding, which Council agreed would be good. Discussion ensued regarding the outside agency funding. The following allocations were discussed:

- Appalachian Theatre of the High Country: Allocated \$10,000
- Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture: Allocated \$13,000
- The Children's Playhouse: Allocated \$6,000
- Daniel Boone Native Gardens: Allocated \$0
- F.A.R.M. Café: Allocated \$18,000
- Friends of the Watauga County Public Library: Allocated \$4,000
- High Country Caregivers: Allocated \$0
- Hospitality House of Northwest North Carolina: Allocated: \$24,000
- Hunger and Health Coalition: Allocated \$0
- Immigrant Justice Coalition: Allocated \$6,500

- Mediation and Restorative Justice Center: Allocated \$0
- Mountain Alliance: Allocated \$8,000
- Opposing Abuse with Service, Information, and Shelter, Inc. (OASIS, Inc.): Allocated \$12,000
- Southern Appalachian Historical Association (SAHA): Allocated \$0
- Watauga Food Council: Allocated \$0
- Watauga County Humane Society: Allocated \$1,500
- Watauga County Project on Aging: Allocated \$3,000
- Western Youth Network: Allocated \$9,000

Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman reiterated that agencies that applied late or asked for funding which was not sustainable i.e. a position, they did not receive funding. Councilmember Roseman also noted that the agencies, which did not receive funding, the SAHA, the Daniel Boone Native Gardens, and the Mediation and Restorative Justice Center, would be supported or continue to be supported in other avenues by the Town. With no further discussion, Council moved to the next item.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING ALLOCATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDS TOWARDS WATAUGA LAND TRUST PURCHASE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000

Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman explained that the Watauga Community Housing Trust has the opportunity to purchase a property in the Junaluska neighborhood. She went on to say that the Trust would need to raise \$55,000 in order to cover closing costs, renovation fees, and six months of rent for the tenant. This property would be put into a trust, where it would then be sold to a resident of the Junaluska community. If the individual who purchases the house wishes to sell the property, due to it being in a trust, it could not be sold above the cost of living index. Mayor-Pro Tem Tugman then asked Council to consider pledging \$5,000 to the Trust, if the Trust was able to raise the remaining \$50,000. Councilmember Roseman asked if the applications would be available to children of Junaluska residents who want to move back but are unable to afford to, which Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman responded yes. Ms. Davis asked if the property was within Town limits, because Town limits cuts directly through the area. Mayor Pro-Tem said she was pretty certain that it was, however, due to the nature of the project she did not know the address. Councilmember George asked if the Junaluska residents knew of the potential project, which Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman responded yes. She went on to say that W.A.M.Y. had committed to helping with the renovations of the property. Councilmember George stated that he is comfortable making a pledge of \$10,000, once Council learned the address of the property. Councilmember Carter agreed, and added that it was the first concrete opportunity for affordable housing in Boone. Ms. Davis said that she needed to make sure that it was feasible for the Town to pledge the money if the property was not in town limits, due to the nature of tax dollars. After a briefly discussing the project further, Councilmember George made the motion that the Town of Boone pledge \$10,000 to the project, contingent on if the Watauga Community Housing Trust raises \$45,000, if the inspection of the property comes back clear, and that the Town Council learn the address of the property in order to see if the property is within Town limits or not.

Upon the motion of Councilmember George, seconded by Councilmember Roseman, Council voted unanimously to pledge \$10,000 to the project, with the contingency that the aforementioned criteria are met.

CONSIDERATION OF WATAUGA COUNTY/HUNGER AND HEALTH COALITION PAVING PROJECT

Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman thanked Council for the previous discussion, and then asked Mr. Miller to discuss the paving project at the Hunger and Health Coalition parking lot. Mr. Miller said that after reviewing the property, he estimated that the cost of materials and labor would be roughly \$5,000-\$6,000. Councilmember George noted that the property is not in town limits. Councilmember Roseman agreed with Councilmember George, however, she wanted to help the people who utilize the program and space. Mayor Futrelle agreed. Councilmember Roseman made the motion that the Town of Boone would pay for the paving of the Hunger and Health Coalition parking area in order to make the property safe for residents who utilize the programming offered, with keeping the cost below \$6,000. Councilmember Carter seconded the motion. Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman offered a friendly amendment to the motion to include that the property is not in town limits, and is in fact a Watauga County building. Councilmember

Roseman agreed to the amendment.

Upon the amended motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman, and seconded by Councilmember Carter, the motion to approve the paving project of the Hunger and Health Coalition parking area, though the building is outside of town limits, in order to provide safe access to the residents who utilize the services, with the contingency that the project does not exceed \$6,000, passed.

VOTE: Aye: Tugman, Carter, Roseman, Nenow
Nay: George

DISCUSSION OF UPDATING THE PLANNING AND INSPECTIONS FEE SCHEDULE

Ms. Shook began by discussing that as discussed during the Planning Retreat, the Planning and Inspections Department would discuss updating the Planning and Inspections Fee Schedule. She went on to say that she has given Council three options to choose from; 60% cost recovery, 80% cost recovery, and 100% cost recovery. With the new software for Planning and Inspections for virtual permitting, she explained that the software would be double the cost of the previous software used. Councilmember George asked if they could go through the handout, and discuss which fees to change. Ms. Shook agreed. Mayor Futrelle asked if Council could discuss the fee schedule during the next meeting. Ms. Davis said that since the next meeting would be the public hearing for the budget, they could not. Ms. Shook asked if the Council would considered rounding the fee to the nearest five, in order to make it easier for applicants. Council agreed. After a brief discussion, Council recommended the following fees:

Section 1: Board/Hearing Fees:

- Board of Adjustment (Plus APO Letter Charge):
 - o Special Use Permit/Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat Approval: Increase from \$770 to \$1,192
 - o Variance (per each request to vary a standard): Increase from \$506 to \$604
 - o Appeal of Administrative Decision: Increase from \$440 to \$995
- Planning Commission/Public Hearing (Plus advertising and APO Letter Charge):
 - o Text Amendment- Base Fee: Increase from \$440 to \$875
 - o General Use Zoning Map Amendment- Base Fee: Increase from \$374 to \$765
 - o Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment- Base Fee: Increase from \$842 to \$1,092
- Historic Preservation Commission (Plus APO Letter Charge):
 - o Certificate of Appropriateness: Remained at \$374
 - o Historic Landmark Designation: Remained at \$374

Section 2: Subdivision Fees:

- Exempt Division of Land: Increased from \$83 to \$145
- Minor Subdivision: Increased from \$149 to \$180
- Major Subdivision Final Plat: Decreased from \$253 to \$245

Section 3: Annexation Fees:

- Voluntary Annexation Petition- Base Fee: Remained at \$231

Section 4: Zoning Fees:

- Single Family and Duplex (Use 1.06):
 - o New Construction and Additions with < 1 acre of land disturbance- Base Fee: Remained at \$236
 - o Other Improvements and Repairs (Sheds, Yard/Parking Improvements, Open Decks, etc.): Remained at \$191
- Commercial/Other Residential:
 - o New Construction, Additions, Accessory Structures
 - § ≤ 2,500 building square footage: Increased from \$517 to \$545
 - § > 2,500 building square footage: Increased from \$880 to \$1,010
 - o Change of Use or Renovation, no site plan review required: Remained at \$121
 - o Change of Use or Renovation- Site plan review required (Tier 1): Increased from \$220 to \$254
 - o Change of Use or Renovation- Site plan review required (Tier 2): Increased from \$330 to \$385
 - o Change of Use or Renovation- Site plan review required (Tier 3): Increased from \$440 to \$585
 - o Other Improvement and Repair: Increased from \$165 to \$254

If triggered, the following fees shall be assessed in addition to the base fee set forth above

- § + Land disturbance ≥ 1 acre, per acre or part thereof: Increased from \$303 to \$305
- § + SFHA Complex Review: Increased from \$226 to \$315
- Small Cell Wireless Facility (per NC SL 2017-159)
 - o Technical Fee (applied to first facility in each batch after 25): Decreased from \$500 to \$405
 - § + Facilities 1-5 (in the same batch): Remained at \$100
 - § + Facilities 6-25 (in the same batch): Remained at \$50
- Wireless Transmission Facility:
 - o Co-location or Eligible Facility Modification: Increased from \$187 to \$310
 - o All Others: Increased from \$675 to \$1,265
- Other Zoning Fees:
 - o Annual Short-Term Rental: Increased from \$500 to \$530
 - o Home Occupation: Remained at \$100
 - o Neighborhood Conservation District Parking Sticker: Remained as “No Charge”
 - o Special Flood Hazard Area- Map Revisions/Amendments: Increased from \$300 to \$640
 - o Statement of Conformity (Historic Landmark and Historic District): Remained at \$100
 - o Pavement Sealant: Decreased from \$128 to \$97
 - o Temporary Sign Registration: Remained as “No Charge”
 - o Zoning Confirmation Letter: Increased from \$132 to \$160

Section 5: Building/Construction Related Fees:

- Single Family and Duplex (Use 1.06):
 - o New Construction up to 2,500 square feet: Increased from \$491 to \$498
 - o Addition, Renovation, Repair; separate charge for each inspection trip: Increased from \$94 to \$148
- Commercial/All Other Residential:
 - o New Construction and Additions Base Fee: Increased from \$622 to \$755
 - o Renovation and Repair:
 - § 1-5,000 square feet total building square footage: Increased from \$187 to \$245
 - § 5,001-20,000 square feet total building square footage: Decreased from \$314 to \$295
 - § 20,001+ square feet total building square footage: Decreased from \$622 to \$370
 - o Change of Occupancy- no modification to building necessary: Increased from \$127 to \$230
- Other Building/Construction Related Fees:
 - o Equipment Change out; per unit charge; includes 1 inspection: Increased from \$132 to \$165
 - o Contractor Change: Introduced new fee at \$10
 - o Total Demolition/Moving: Increased from \$132 to \$300
 - o At Risk Special Footing/Foundations: Increased from \$215 to \$230

Section 6: Combination of Zoning and Building Fees:

- ABC Compliance Inspection: Increased from \$193 to \$250
- Construction Trailer (Inclusive of Zoning Review): Increased from \$143 to \$255
- Manufactured Home in Park (Inclusive of Zoning Review): Decreased from \$308 to \$218
- Permanent Sign, per sign: Remained at \$182

Section 7: Planning and Inspection- All Other Fees and Penalties:

- Miscellaneous: Remained at \$83

Section 8: Fire Inspection Fees

- Multi-Family and Commercial Zoning- Site Plan Review: Increased from \$75 to \$115
- Emergency Responder Radio Systems: Introduced new fee at \$150

Section 9: Public Works and Public Utilities Fees:

- Building Permit- Pre-treatment Review: Increased from \$75 to \$115
- Building Permit- Utility System Review: Increased from \$75 to \$115
- Zoning Permit- Site Plan Review for Utility Connections: Increased from \$75 to \$115
- Zoning Permit- Site Plan Review: Increased from \$75 to \$115
- Encroachment Agreement (per encroachment agreement): Increased from \$50 to \$75
- Sidewalk/Greenway Fee-in-Lieu:

- o Per linear foot of concrete sidewalk (5' width): Increased from \$92 to \$110
- o Per linear foot of asphalt greenway (10' width): Increased from \$65 to \$80
- o Per linear foot of curb and gutter: Increased from \$33 to \$40
- o Wheelchair ramp: Increased from \$1,350 to \$1,620

Ms. Shook thanked Council for their review, and said that she would update the fee schedule and send it to Ms. Shook for further review. She reiterated that the aforementioned fees would be rounded to the nearest five, which Council agreed. Mayor Futrelle asked if there were any further comments. With no comments, Mayor Futrelle asked for a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon the motion of Councilmember George, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Tugman, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the June 5, 2023 Budget Workshop of the Boone Town Council adjourned at 1:09 p.m.

Nicole Harmon, Town Clerk

Tim Futrelle, Mayor