

**MINUTES – WORKSHOP/RETREAT
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
June 6, 2018**

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order on Wednesday, June 6, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road. Mayor Rennie Brantz presided. Council Members present were Mayor Pro-Tem Loretta Clawson, Lynne Mason (arrived at 9:09 a.m.), Sam Furgiuele, Connie Ulmer and Marshall Ashcraft. Staff present included Town Manager John Ward, Assistant Town Manager Jim Byrne, Town Clerk Nicole Worley, Finance Director Amy Davis, Fire Chief Jimmy Isaacs, Police Chief Dana Crawford, Cultural Resources Director Pilar Fotta, Planning Director Jane Shook, Human Resources Director Dale Presnell and Town Intern Syrena Travis.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed budget for FY 2018/19.

Mayor Brantz opened the floor for public comment. Dr. Scott Elliott of Watauga County Schools thanked Council for the recent Police Public Forum and for their continued support of the school system. He asked Council to consider working toward an additional school resource officer position for Hardin Park School and reported that the same request had been made to County Commissioners.

Christina May addressed Council as Chairperson of the Hospitality House Board of Directors. She stated that she was aware of differing political views with providing assistance to people in need and reminded Council that people served by the Hospitality House needed help rebuilding their lives, which is what the Hospitality House does so well.

Todd Carter and Tina Krause spoke on behalf of the Hospitality House and asked Council to reconsider the funding allocated to the organization stating that the Town has been an integral part of the success of the Hospitality House since 1984. Mr. Carter noted that a condition of certain federal funding is that the organization matches funds awarded, and without additional monetary support from the Town, the ability to be eligible for these grants was at risk. He added that the decrease in funding received from the Town would mean 22 fewer people would receive services from the Hospitality House. Ms. Krause stated that in cutting funding to the Hospitality House, she believed citizens would see the impact of homelessness in Town. She asked Council to reconsider funding the Hospitality House at the level allocated in the past.

Dawn Wicklow of Ashe County spoke as Hospitality House volunteer to remind Council that people who utilize services at the Hospitality House did not choose the situations they were in and stated that she did not want to see people sleeping on King Street.

Dean Gropper spoke in support of the Hospitality House as a member of the First Presbyterian Church, stating that their congregation of just over 300 people funded Hospitality House in the amount of \$20,000 and hoped that Council could find a way to fund the organization at the previous level.

Rev. Ted Henry stated that he believed humans were called to reach out and help people and hoped that Council would continue to fund the Hospitality House.

Clyde Burleson spoke as property manager of New Market Center stating that homelessness was already present in Town and that he just dealt with a homeless person sleeping in the parking lot of New Market Center last week.

Frank Borkowski told Council of a young mother he encountered who was a resident of the Hospitality House and had no where else to go.

Carson Sailor of Southern Appalachian Historical Society thanked Council for their consideration in the upcoming budget year and added that he was excited about upcoming changes including free historical programming for Watauga County Schools and invited Council to attend the kick-off of the 2018 season on June 22nd.

DISCUSSION OF FY 2018/19 PROPOSED BUDGET CONTINUED

Town Manager John Ward continued with the review of the Fire Department portion of the budget with Fire Chief Jimmy Isaacs asking that Council consider splitting the Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal position into two separate

positions. He stated that the administrative demand was becoming more prevalent, with more inspections and fire marshal duties due to the increase in construction throughout town. Chief Isaacs continued to say that due to increased workload on this position, training and other needs were falling by the wayside. Mr. Ward explained that although the Town lost its extraterritorial jurisdiction authority, the Town still served the fire needs of approximately 40 square miles of the County, which is where rural fire funding comes from. Council Member Furguele stated that he was reluctant to split the position until after discussions with the County in respect to the sales tax issue, considering the rural fire benefits and others. Chief Isaacs expressed concern with picking and choosing which duties get done. Mayor Brantz declared a break at 10:07 a.m. Council reconvened at 10:20 a.m. After speaking with the rural fire board, funds were reallocated to allow for the funding of the additional position created by splitting the Assistant Chief and Fire Marshal duties. Discussion moved to the Town's current fee schedule, with Mr. Ward suggesting adopting a Town-wide fee ordinance.

Mr. Ward moved on to the discussion of the Planning and Inspections budget with Planning Director Jane Shook noting that although the Town lost its etj authority, the percentage of work in the etj was small in comparison and that the loss only allowed the department to maintain a standard line instead of decreasing the work load. Ms. Shook stated that the department oversees nine boards, with a fair amount of staff time being used for administrative duties of the committees. The need to modify the existing Traffic Impact Analysis was discussed, as was the desire to update the Tree Master Plan. Mr. Ward noted that the responsiveness and public perception of the department had turned for the better in the past year and that staff would continue to work on projects to improve. Council Member Furguele inquired as to the possibility of holding Board of Adjustment meetings every other month. Ms. Shook responded that the volume of cases sent to the board had been slow recently and that she believed meetings could be held on a bi-monthly basis.

A brief discussion followed regarding staffing needs at the Cultural Resources department and what to do with the structures on the Bolick property, with members agreeing that before anything was done on the property that a public hearing would be held specifically for the issue. Discussion of Public Works ensued with Council Member Furguele stating that after driving on various streets throughout Town, he wished to revisit Council's decision to repave New Market Boulevard. He added that he believed paving priorities should be entirely a staff decision and questioned whether the Transportation Committee should continue to give input on such matters. Council Member Mason stated that staff did work with the Transportation Committee to pull together recommendations adding that she felt the role of the Transportation Committee was to get input and different perspectives. Mr. Ward asked for Council's guidance on the New Market project due to its large size, with Mr. Miller noting the need for a traffic island at Hardin Park School and for a crosswalk at Boone United Methodist Church, but added that if approved, the New Market project would not equal a "complete street" even with these improvements. Council Member Furguele added that while he was in support of funding for paving, he did not believe it should be earmarked for a specific project. Council Member Mason agreed and asked that when the New Market project was reached that the Bike and Pedestrian Plan be reviewed and that the strong community support to make Boone more walker and biker friendly be taken into consideration. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding paving priorities, with Council reaching the consensus to allow staff to determine paving priorities and to bring an estimate back to Council for the re-stripping of New Market Boulevard. Mayor Brantz declared a break at 12:02 p.m. Council reconvened at 12:30 p.m.

Discussion ensued regarding the usage of Powell Bills funds and the needs of the Fleet Maintenance department. Town Manager John Ward applauded staff in the Facilities Maintenance department for their hard work on the Veteran's Memorial and noted a need for funds to replace playground equipment at Junaluska Park. Council was presented with a cost comparison for garbage and recycling pick up options with Republic Services. Mr. Ward noted that the proposed budget reflected the transition to bi-weekly pick up service with larger containers as well as the option to include cardboard. Council requested that a strong education component accompany the transition to the increased service options. Discussion followed regarding the possibility of removing the recycling site at Daniel Boone park, with Mr. Miller stating that although the cost for emptying the containers was approximately \$21,000, he felt that the site was not being used by those it was intended for. It was the consensus of Council to move forward with the recommended proposal for bi-monthly recycling with larger containers. Council Member Furguele stated that although he was in favor of recycling, he was agreeable to removing the drop off bins at Daniel Boone Park, especially now that residents would have access to bi-monthly pick up. It was the consensus of Council to remove the drop-off containers at Daniel Boone Park. Council Member Ashcraft suggested that the removal of the recycling facility at Daniel Boone Park be postponed until after the new recycling schedule commenced.

E-911 was discussed briefly before moving on to System Development Fees and potentially removing funds from the Low-Flow Toilet program to offset the overage for the cost of hybrid vehicles. The DBDA budget was discussed, with Council Member Furgiuele expressing concern with the boards mention of using billboards in Town. Mayor Brantz declared a break at 2:28 p.m. Council reconvened at 2:44 p.m.

The condition of the structures on the Bolick property was discussed, as was the poor condition of the Public Works building. Plans for the future municipal site were discussed briefly with Council Member Clawson requesting that when trees must be cut on the property for construction, the old apple tree be preserved. Council Member Furgiuele added that solar panels and efforts to build a carbon neutral building should be incorporated into the concept planning phase of the complex. Outside Agency Funding recommendations were discussed at length, with Council Member Furgiuele explaining that he believed the committee decided to decrease funding to the Hospitality House due to the organizations large cash reserves and the use of funds received being used in part to fund a receptionist position for WeCan. Council Member Mason expressed concern that OASIS received more funding than the Hospitality House but served fewer people. It was the consensus of Council to direct staff to offer to share costs with the Watauga County School Board for a school resource officer at Hardin Park Elementary School. Stormwater and sustainability efforts made within the Town and the possibility of installing solar panels on property surrounding the water intake and at the Bolick property were briefly discussed. It was the consensus of Council to include the following adjustments in the FY 2018/19 Budget:

- Skateboard Park - 25,000
- State Farm Road Bridge Replacement - 218,000
- Waiver of Fees for Special Events - 12,000
- Removal of Bolick Property Structures - 25,000
- Solar Project - 100,000
- Stormwater Study - 180,621
- Bolick Property Site Improvement Plan - 100,000
- Fire Station 1 Building Repairs - 25,000
- Town Hall Repairs - 25,000
- Outside Agency Funding - 115,000
- Fire Station 2 Paving - 22,000
- Front Desk Window at Planning and Inspections - 2,000
- Mural Screen at Downtown Post Office - 7,000
- Police Department Radios - 284,298
- Fire Truck - 350,000
- Powell Bill (Paving) - 160,000
- Junaluska Park Equipment - 50,000
- Capital Outlay Downtown Payment - 102,045

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Council Member Ulmer, seconded by Council Member Clawson, Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:22 p.m.

VOTE: Aye: All
 Nay: None

Nicole Worley, Town Clerk

Rennie Brantz, Mayor