

**MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
August 3, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order electronically on August 3, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Rennie Brantz presided. Council members present included Mayor Pro-Tem Connie Ulmer, Sam Furguele, Virginia Roseman and Nancy LaPlaca. Staff members present included Town Manager John Ward, Town Clerk Nicole Harmon, Fire Chief Jimmy Isaacs, Police Chief Andy Le Beau, Finance Director Amy Davis, Planning Director Jane Shook, Cultural Resource Director Mark Freed, Public Works Director Rick Miller, Human Resources Director Dale Presnell, Communications and Administrative Support Specialist Laney Pilkington, and Intern Adam Zebzda. Town Attorney Allison Meade. The purpose of the meeting was to appoint a Council member to fill the vacancy left by Dustin Hicks, and to discuss meeting protocol.

TENTATIVE AGENDA ADOPTION

Ms. Roseman suggested that with students coming back soon, that Council consider placing an item on the agenda at this meeting or at an upcoming meeting to discuss a mask mandate in indoor settings due to the rise in the Covid-19 virus cases. Mr. Furguele indicated that he may support a mask mandate, but was reluctant to add it to the current agenda due to not providing adequate notice to the public, but noted that he would be in favor of scheduling a special meeting before the end of the week to discuss the topic. Mr. Furguele then made a motion to amend the agenda to add an item after the seating of the new Council member to discuss the setting of a special meeting. Ms. Roseman seconded the motion.

VOTE: Aye: Furguele, Roseman, LaPlaca, Ulmer
 Nay: None

Ms. Roseman made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Furguele seconded the motion.

VOTE: Aye: Furguele, Roseman, LaPlaca, Ulmer
 Nay: None

APPOINTMENT OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBER

APPOINTMENT TO TOWN COUNCIL

Both applicants introduced themselves prior to nominations. Ms. LaPlaca nominated Mr. George for the vacant seat on Council. Mr. Furguele nominated Mr. Ray for the vacant seat so that Council members could have the opportunity to consider both applicants. Mayor Brantz then asked each member to cast their vote.

Furguele: George
LaPlaca: George
Roseman: George
Ulmer: George

Mr. George was then sworn in as an official member of the Boone Town Council.

DISCUSSION OF MEETING PROTOCOL

Mr. Ward expressed concerns regarding a recent surge in Covid-19 cases and the decision to return to in-person meetings. In particular, Mr. Ward was apprehensive about the potential turn-out for the August 23 public hearing regarding downtown projects. He noted that staff had reservations about having a hybrid meeting allowing both in-person and virtual attendance possibilities. Mr. Ward projected that board members alone would account for upwards of 30 people, and this did not include staff or public. With the complications of an in-person meeting of that size, Mr. Ward asked that the Town Council revisit and potentially entertain the idea of delaying the public hearing scheduled for August 23. He also asked that Council give further direction to boards and committees since they had previously been given direction to have in-person meetings if they so wished. Mr. Ward noted that some committees expressed a desire for meetings to remain virtual, while others were anxious to resume in-person meetings, and believed that direction needed to be consistent among all boards and committees. Mr. Furguele indicated that he would be in favor of delaying the August 23 special public hearing, as long as the process could be

finished before the new Council was seated in December. Ms. Shook stated that a public hearing could be held as late as October and the process would be finished prior to the seating of the new Council in December. Mayor Pro-Tem Ulmer agreed that the process should be finished prior to the seating of the new Council, and suggested that the public hearing be delayed until September. Ms. Roseman suggested that the special public hearing be scheduled for October since the Planning Department was so short staffed and back-logged on work. Ms. Shook suggested that the special public hearing be rescheduled for September 27, which was when the Planning Commission would hold its regularly scheduled public hearing. Mr. Furgiuele felt that it would be a terrible error to jump the gun after all the progress Boone had made in controlling Covid-19 to return to in-person meetings. Mayor Pro-Tem Ulmer agreed with Mr. Furgiuele's statements on returning to virtual meetings. Mr. George echoed Mr. Furgiuele's sentiments as well. Ms. LaPlaca made a motion to delay the August 23 special public hearing to September 27, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., that the meeting be virtual, that staff would prepare press releases and social media posts to get the word out about the scheduled change, that Town Council meetings and all Town board and committee meetings take place in a virtual setting until further notice. Ms. Roseman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Ms. Roseman requested that members consider scheduling a special meeting as soon as possible to discuss reinstating the mask mandate due to the recent rise in Covid-19 cases locally. Mr. Furgiuele asked that members consider at the meeting what vaccine protocols should be for Town staff. Ms. Meade indicated that, in her view, there were no legal impediments to Council taking action on vaccination or mask mandates. Upon a motion by Mr. Furgiuele, seconded by Ms. Roseman, Council voted unanimously to schedule a special meeting to consider reinstituting the Town of Boone emergency order with possible changes for the community and to the personnel policy for Friday, August 6, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. via WebEx.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Ms. LaPlaca, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Ulmer, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Nicole Harmon, Town Clerk

Rennie Brantz, Mayor