



MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
JULY 8, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order at 9:05 a.m. at the Boone Town Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road in Boone. Mayor Dalton George presided. Town Council members present included Mayor Pro-Tem Todd Carter, Virginia Roseman, Adrian Tait, Anne Pruitt, and Anitra Ball. Town Staff present included Town Clerk Nicole Harmon, Grants Coordinator/Communications Laney Wise, Deputy Planning Director Brandon Wise, Jessica Mitchell, Public Works Director Todd Moody, Planning Director Jane Shook (remote), Finance Director Guy Miller, Sustainability and Special Projects Manager George Santucci, Police Chief Daniel Duckworth, Downtown Boone Development Director Lane Moody, and Town Attorney Allison Meade.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A brief moment of silence was observed.

TENTATIVE AGENDA ADOPTION

Upon a motion by Council Member Roseman, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Carter, Council voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Approval and Presentation of Resolution – B. Bond

Mayor George read the following resolution into the record:

TOWN OF BOONE RESOLUTION HONORING THE SERVICE OF

DR. ELIZABETH "BETTIE" BOND

~~Ç ÇÇÊÇÆI~~ Dr. Elizabeth “Bettie” Bond has been a pillar of the community, serving on the Town of Boone’s Historic Preservation Commission and on other community boards for many decades;

Γ ***Σ*** ***Ε*** ***Ε*** ***Α*** ***Ε*** ***Ι*** Bettie Bond has served on the Historic Preservation Commission since its inception in 2007 through 2026, leading with a lively spirit and an unending passion for preservation as the Chairperson from the Commission's beginning and also guiding as the Vice-Chair during her years of service;

~~G ÇÊÇÆI~~ Bettie Bond, among her Commission peers, advocated for the preservation and dedication of the Downtown Boone Post Office, along with other local historic landmarks and markers, contributed to the Historic Preservation Commission's recognition of the Junaluska Community, and supported the designation of the Downtown Boone Local Historic District in 2021;

~~§ 87(2)(b)~~ Bettie Bond influenced many minds during her tenure at Appalachian State University from 1973 to 1996 in the History Department, supporting the efforts of the Belk Library, and was recognized in 2005 with Appalachian State University's Outstanding Service Award;

~~G ÇÊÇÆI~~ Bettie Bond has contributed insurmountable hours in the Boone community supporting and representing, among many, the Watauga County Historical Society, the Digital Watauga Project Committee, the Watauga County Community Foundation, the Board of the Appalachian Theatre of the High Country, the Watauga County Public Library, Appalachian State University's Belk Library, and Horn in the West;

~~G C C E C A E I~~ Bettie Bond has been recognized for her achievements with the accolades and recognition of being included on the Watauga County Historical Society's Hall of Fame in 2022, the Town of Boone's 1872 Award in 2024, and being bestowed the honor of The Order of the Long Leaf Pine in August 2024; and

~~Ç ÇÊÇÆI~~ Bettie Bond continues to remain a fixture, an invaluable advocate, and creative champion for the Town's historic preservation efforts, instilling her preservation goals and desires among her Commission peers and among Town Staff partnerships;

Ē Ē Ğ I Ġ Ċ Ĉ Ċ Ĉ Ė Ć Ą Ć Ĭ Ė Ć Ě Ė Ć Ć Ć that the Town of Boone recognizes and expresses its deepest gratitude to Ms. Bettie Bond for her countless contributions to the Historic Preservation Commission, where she brought her energetic and lively spirit that influenced all those she has

worked with, and for her lasting legacy that has forged the historic preservation efforts that the Town has today.

PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION – BRC TRAILS MONTH

Mayor George read the following proclamation into the record:

A PROCLAMATION DECLARING JULY 2026 BRC TRAILS MONTH

WHEREAS, the Town of Boone recognizes the initiative to connect Blowing Rock to Boone with a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly greenway through the Middle Fork Greenway, AND the initiative to connect downtown Boone to Mount Jefferson with a hiking trail and several spur parks through the Northern Peaks State Trail, both projects of Blue Ridge Conservancy;

WHEREAS, residents and visitors of the Town of Boone need safe access for people of all ages and abilities to recreate, which is beneficial for promoting physical activity, lowering stress, and improving emotional health;

WHEREAS, green corridors along the Middle Fork Greenway and Northern Peaks State Trail filter and buffer run-off to help stabilize the banks of a key tributary of the New River and water supply of the community, and protect the unique biodiversity of the Amphibolite Mountain range;

WHEREAS, greenways, pocket parks, and hiking trail systems provide economic value to communities, as shown by studies of projects in the region such as the Virginia Creeper Trail;

WHEREAS, Blue Ridge Conservancy is partnering with Watauga County and the towns of Blowing Rock and Boone to seek state and federal grants, which require matching funds;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Councilmembers of the Town of Boone, North Carolina, encourage all High Country businesses to participate in the July 2026 BRC Trails Month project to raise private funds to leverage government funding for the construction of the Middle Fork Greenway and the Northern Peaks State Trail;

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED that the Town of Boone Council members encourage every visitor and citizen patronizing participating Town of Boone businesses to Round Up their bill to the nearest dollar to go toward the Middle Fork Greenway and Northern Peaks State Trail construction.

ADOPTED by the Town Council of the Town of Boone on this 8th day of July, 2026.

Jordan Sellers thanked Council Members for their support of the project.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BOARD VACANCIES

Mayor George announced the following board vacancies:

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Three alternate positions

DOWNTOWN BOONE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

One Council-appointed position

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Two regular positions, one student position

PLANNING COMMISSION

One regular position

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

One regular position, two student positions

PUBLIC COMMENT

Hannah Woodburn of Mountain True spoke in favor of the stormwater improvement plan on the agenda for consideration and encouraged Council members to support it.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA

Upon a motion by Council Member Tait, seconded by Council Member Pruitt, Council unanimously approved the following items on the consent agenda:

- Resolution – NCDEQ Grant Recipient
- Paving Recommendation (Moretz Paving)
- Rivers House Restroom Recommendations (TM Woodcock Construction, LLC)
- Minutes
 - June 24, 2026 Regular Town Council Meeting

COUNCIL MATTERS

TRC STORMWATER PRESENTATION

Luke Baker with TRC Engineers, Inc., presented information on a proposed stormwater Capital Improvement Plan for Boone. Council members discussed the Town's stormwater infrastructure inventory and asked for clarification on the differences between inlets, pipelines, and maintenance responsibilities. Mr. Baker explained that ownership and maintenance responsibilities are often difficult to determine due to aging infrastructure and limited historical records. Council members also discussed the proposed stormwater utility fee structure, including how fees would apply to single-family residences, multifamily developments, commercial properties, and Appalachian State University, noting that a future rate study would further narrow down the fee methodology.

Mr. Baker and Mr. Santucci provided a brief overview of Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements, explaining that although the Town has not yet been designated as an MS4

community, the State has indicated that such a designation is likely in the future. Mr. Baker noted that the Town would have five years to achieve compliance if designated and emphasized that proactively mapping infrastructure, developing plans, expanding public education efforts, and improving existing stormwater management practices would ease the transition. Council members expressed support for a proactive approach rather than waiting for a state mandate and discussed the potential long-term benefits of establishing a stormwater utility to fund needed infrastructure improvements. Council members also expressed interest in exploring strategies to reduce stormwater runoff at the source, such as on-site retention and incentives for private property owners.

Council Member Tait asked how the Town could incentivize landowners to install rainwater collection systems. Mr. Baker noted that some municipalities offer grant programs, even for private homeowners, and while individual systems may seem insignificant, the cumulative impact can be substantial. Council Member Roseman requested that waterway cleanups be conducted along U.S. 321. Mr. Moody responded that the areas in question fall under NCDOT's jurisdiction and that staff would notify the agency, while Mr. Wise also noted potential liability concerns if Town staff were to clear these waterways.

Mr. Baker recommended moving forward with the initiative, stating that it would be easier to fund through the water enterprise fund, and emphasized that completion of the rate study remains the highest priority. Mr. Santucci added that maintaining a current Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is important for securing grant funding.

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Carter, seconded by Council Member Tait, Council voted unanimously to approve the proposed Town of Boone Stormwater Management Plan and the Capital Improvement Plan as presented.

Presentation and Request for Direction Regarding Land Conservation Bond

Ryan Olson with the Trust for Public Land presented information regarding a proposed land conservation bond, referencing favorable polling data previously shared with the Mayor and Council members. He noted that the Town had received permission from the LGC to move forward and explained that while portions of the timeline are legally mandated, Boone still has more than a month to refer the measure to the Board of Elections. Mr. Olson added that waiting until 2028 would require restarting the entire process.

Mayor Pro-Tem Carter expressed support for pursuing the bond and stated there was a clear need and intended use for the funding. Council Member Roseman stated that if the Middle Fork Greenway Connector were the primary project funded, she would support the measure, but otherwise was not prepared to do so. Mayor George questioned whether the proposed bond language accurately reflected what would be presented to the public. Council Member Roseman

stated that the language was currently too broad, while Mayor Pro-Tem Carter cautioned against narrowing the language to a single project, preferring to maintain flexibility.

Mayor George referenced staff concerns regarding the workload during implementation. Mr. Olson responded that the required work would not fall solely on one or two staff members but would be distributed across multiple departments, with the Trust for Public Land providing assistance throughout the process. Ms. Meade stated that she had not been heavily involved in the discussions but had concerns that the decision was being made without input from a new Town Manager. She cautioned against overselling what a \$5 million bond could accomplish, noting that infrastructure costs could quickly consume the available funding. She worried that creating unrealistic public expectations could ultimately lead to voter cynicism. Mr. Olson acknowledged those concerns, agreeing that it is easy to overstate the impact of a \$5 million bond. He noted, however, that similarly sized communities have successfully leveraged comparable bond funding to secure additional state grants, and that the typical six- to nine-month period before projects begin would allow a new Town Manager to participate in implementation.

Council Member Tait agreed that there was a risk of overselling the proposal but stated that several worthy projects, including the Bolick Farm bridge and the Middle Fork Greenway Connector, could benefit from the funding. He noted that other communities have successfully leveraged similar bonds into significantly larger investments and supported placing the measure before voters. Mayor Pro-Tem Carter agreed, stating that the proposal would introduce the concept to the public and could provide a foundation for pursuing a larger bond in the future if successful.

Council Member Roseman reiterated that the Middle Fork Greenway Connector was the most reasonable project and requested that a portion of any bond proceeds be allocated to it. Mr. Olson responded that he did not believe that level of specificity was desirable and recommended allowing future Councils to establish project priorities after the bond's approval. Council Member Pruitt stated that the Town has spent years working through decisions made by previous Councils and expressed concern that dedicating bond proceeds to specific projects could similarly limit future governing bodies and undermine voter confidence. Council Member Tait acknowledged that input from a new Town Manager would be valuable, but believed that moving forward now would provide that individual with the resources to tackle major projects upon arrival. Ms. Meade stated that if Council elected to proceed, she would work with staff to navigate the process.

Mr. Olson concluded by reading the proposed bond language and reviewing the required timeline. He stated that the Town must submit the referendum to the State Board of Elections by the end of July and hoped to finalize the bond amount and language by that date. While extensions can sometimes be granted, he noted they are not guaranteed. He explained that the next step would be to publish a notice that the Town intends to apply to the Local Government Commission, followed by a 10-day notice period before the referendum can be formally referred. Ms. Meade

asked whether the final bond language must be completed before publication, and Mr. Olson confirmed that it must, adding that the language must be sent to the Board of Elections within three days following a vote.

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Carter, seconded by Council Member Tait, Council voted unanimously to move forward with the land conservation bond process in collaboration with staff, the Town Attorney, and the Trust for Public Land.

Mayor George declared a break at 10:32 a.m. Council reconvened at 10:46 a.m.

Appointment to Human Relations Commission

Council Member Roseman nominated Brian Juneau to serve on the Human Relations Commission. Hearing no further nominations, Mayor George called for a vote.

VOTE: Aye: All
Nay: None

Appointment to Sustainability Committee

Mayor George announced that current member, Michael Weiss, was unaware that his term was about to expire and was currently traveling. In order to allow him time to apply for reappointment, Mayor George asked that this vote be delayed until the August 8 regular Town Council meeting.

Appointment to Tourism Development Authority

Council Member Roseman nominated Tara Brossa for reappointment to the Tourism Development Authority. TDA Liaison and Mayor Pro-Tem Carter asked whether Ms. Brossa's current working relationship as a contract employee would hinder her service. Ms. Meade confirmed that it would not be an issue. Hearing no further nominations, Mayor George called for a vote.

VOTE: Aye: All
Nay: None

Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair to Tourism Development Authority

Council Member Roseman nominated TDA Member Crutchfield as Chair and TDA Member Brossa as Vice-Chair. Hearing no further nominations, Mayor George called for a vote.

VOTE: Aye: All
Nay: None

Mayor Report

Mayor George expressed support for having Interim Town Manager/Human Resources Director Dale Presnell move forward with pursuing the Family Forward Certification for the Town.

He also discussed a proposed sweet potato milk manufacturing facility, noting that the company's first production facility is planned for Boone and could potentially employ between 100 and 200 people. Mayor George reported they are working with the Economic Development Commission to arrange a tour of the facility.

Town Manager Report

Town Clerk Nicole Harmon updated Council members on the following topics:

- Rygid AV will present information on the Council Chambers audiovisual upgrades at the August 8 regular meeting
- Sustainability staff have been working with representatives from the Audubon Society to address the Mile-a-Minute weed at Clawson-Burnley Park that has been growing since Hurricane Helene. Staff will also be hosting an event to release 5,000 weevils, which are a small bug that only eats this invasive weed
- The new sign for Council Chambers with the updated logo is scheduled for completion by the end of this week
- Public Works:
 - Horn in the West- Phase II Improvements: Phase II of the Horn in the West has been completed just in time for the beginning of the season. Improvements include a new restroom facility, stormwater improvements, hazardous tree removal, an ADA-accessible concrete path, along with new asphalt from the parking lot to the top of the amphitheater, and many other items to improve safety and accessibility
 - CDBG-I - Deck Hill Water Tank Replacement Project: This project is now complete with the new 500,000-gallon water storage tank in service. This project was made possible through a \$2,000,000 grant from the Community Development Block Grant - Infrastructure (CDBG-I) program, administered by NCDEQ-DWI. Special thanks to McGill Associates and High Country Council of Governments for their many efforts to bring this project to a successful completion
 - Winkler's Creek Reservoir - Walkway Replacement Project: The access walkway at our water reservoir located on Winkler's Creek Road was critically damaged and rendered fully inoperable during Hurricane Helene. Following the engineered design and successful bidding process, the project is slated to begin this month. This project is made possible through various funding sources, including FEMA, NCSRF, and OSBM.

- Winkler's Creek Intake - Dredging Project: The raw water intake area located below the water treatment plant was filled with rocks, sand/silt, and other debris, and rendered effectively inoperable as a result of damage from Hurricane Helene. Staff have engaged with an engineer and developed a plan for restoration, and plan to solicit bids for this project this month. Funding for this recovery project is made possible through FEMA.
- Hurricane Helene Resilience Projects – Water: Staff has engaged design professionals for work associated with projects related to flood mitigation at our South Fork raw water intake, a solar project at the water treatment plant, and partial funding of our aforementioned reservoir walkway project. The funds made available are 100% principal forgiveness for \$3,780,806.00 through NCSRF
- Hurricane Helene Resilience Projects – Wastewater: Staff has engaged design professionals for work associated with projects related to a New River Hills, sanitary sewer lift station, portable generators, and portable sanitary sewer pumps. The funds made available are 100% principal forgiveness for \$2,686,374.00 through NCSRF
- Fairway Drive and Hospital Area Improvement: The need for a new public water main along Fairway Drive was identified as part of our recent Capital Improvements Plan - Phase 2, which was adopted by Town Council at their regular June meeting. \$1,789,650.00 in grant funding was recently made available for this project through S.L. Appropriations Act Directed Projects. Solicitation for project engineering is planned for this month
- Public Works received a letter last month from the secretary of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources designating the State Champion Trail at Rivers Park as a segment of North Carolina's Northern Peaks State Trail

Mayor Pro-Tem Carter noted that all of the items discussed during this update were a direct result of Hurricane Helene nearly two years ago. He expressed gratitude for the grant funding, emphasizing that these are necessary improvements to allow the Town to move forward with repairs from the storm.

Board Liaison Reports

Council Member Pruitt updated Council on the following Downtown Boone Development Association topics:

- Reported that Boonerang will take place beginning on June 18th next year, with Cultural Resources Director Mark Freed expected to provide an update next month
- Noted that planning has begun for the Howard Street ribbon-cutting ceremony
- Reported that graffiti cleanup remains on hold due to water restrictions, but all locations have been mapped for future cleanup

Council Member Roseman updated Council on the following topics:

- Did not attend the most recent Human Relations Commission or Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meetings
- Noted that the Cultural Resources Advisory Board will meet in August
- Reported that the Historic Preservation Commission lost a longtime member in Bettie Bond, whose term expired, calling it a significant loss. She indicated there are now three vacancies and encouraged Council members to help recruit applicants, as the lack of a quorum could delay commission business
- Provided updates on Southern Appalachian Historical Association operations, including opening night and the opening of the new restrooms

Mayor Pro-Tem Carter updated Council on the following topics:

- Reported on Disability Pride events sponsored by the Human Relations Commission. He noted that a list of upcoming event dates will be provided for posting on the Town website
- Announced the participation of AppalCart's double-decker bus in the July 4th parade
- Reported that approximately \$900 will be spent on the Disability Pride event from the \$5,000 budget
- Expressed appreciation to Town staff, Watauga County, and everyone who assisted with the Pride parade

Council Member Tait updated Council on the following topics:

- Reported that the Economic Development Commission discussed a new sweet potato milk business in the area, with consensus that the Town should support the project, however possible. He noted that a representative will provide an overview at the next meeting. He added that the business has received grant funding to help bring the product into a marketable format

CLOSED SESSION

Upon a motion by Council Member Roseman, seconded by Council Member Tait, Council voted unanimously to enter into closed session at 11:13 a.m. pursuant to the following:

1. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.11(a)(1), to review, approve, and seal closed session minutes from Council's prior closed session(s).
2. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.11(a)(3), to consult with the Town Attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the Town Council, and obtain legal advice, consider, and/or give instructions to the attorney concerning one or more potential legal claims.
3. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.11(a)(6), to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee.

ADJOURNMENT

Without objection, members exited the closed session, and Mayor George adjourned the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

Nicole Harmon, Town Clerk

Dalton George, Mayor