

Draft
MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Meeting
November 13, 2018

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, November 13, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock, N.C. Present were Mayor Charlie Sellers, Mayor Pro-tem Albert Yount and Council Members Sue Sweeting, Doug Matheson and Virginia Powell. Others in attendance were Town Manager Ed Evans, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Doug Chapman from McGill Associates, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Finance Officer Nicole Norman, Public Works and Utilities Director Mike Wilcox, Fire Chief Kent Graham, Police Captain Aaron Miller, Building Inspector John Warren, Parks & Recreation Director Jennifer Brown and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner, who recorded the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sellers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Yount. Unanimously approved.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

1. America in Bloom – Susan Sweet

Ms. Susan Sweet advised America in Bloom is a National organization that encourages beautification in cities and towns across America. She further advised during this year's entry the Town was given three (3) honorary awards to: The Blowing Rock, Rurple Memorial Church and the Inn at Ragged Gardens.

Ms. Sweet stated she and Ms. Annie Tarbutton went to Kentucky to the America in Bloom award ceremony and Blowing Rock received special recognition for the Town's flowers. She further stated Blowing Rock is now an "America in Bloom City" and the town has a sign to display as well as a framed certificate to display in Town Hall and the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Sweet thanked everyone for their help in making this possible.

Manager Evans recognized members of the Parks and Recreation Landscaping Department and thanked them for all their hard work.

2. Ed Evans – Retirement

Mayor Sellers recognized Manager Evans for his upcoming retirement and presented him a plaque.

3. Mike Wilcox – Retirement

Manager Evans recognized Public Works Director for his upcoming retirement with thirty-five (35) plus years of service and presented him with a plaque.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Pro-tem Yount made a motion to approve the minutes for the regular meeting held on October 9, 2018, with the following correction: ***on page 7 Mayor Pro-tem Yount advised research showed him that there were more of these in North Carolina County Seat Towns.*** Council Member Matheson seconded the motion, unanimously approved.

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the minutes for the closed session meeting held on October 9, 2018, with the following correction: ***Council Member Sweeting made a motion to adjourn from closed session at 8:00 p.m., seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.*** Mayor Pro-tem Yount seconded the motion, unanimously approved.

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the minutes for the special meeting held on October 15, 2018, seconded by Council Member Steele. Unanimously approved.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount made a motion to approve the minutes for the special meeting held on October 22, 2018, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the minutes for the special meeting held on October 29, 2018, seconded by Council Member Steele. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the minutes for the closed session meeting held on October 29, 2018, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

None

CONSENT AGENDA

Town Manager Ed Evans presented the following consent agenda items:

1. Tax Releases

Various tax adjustments over time become apparent and present themselves in the form of requests for releases (adjustments). Two (2) tax releases totaling \$4,647.40 have been identified for Council approval. **Tax Releases - Attachment A**

2. Mayview Madness 5K – Request to hold date

We have received a request from the Blue Ridge Relay to use our pool parking lot on Friday, September 6, 2019 from 3:00 pm to 9:30 pm as one of their exchange zones along the race route. This is their 15th annual road race that begins at Grayson Highlands Park in Virginia and ends in downtown Asheville. They have used the pool parking lot the past four years as

an exchange points and it has worked out very well. The pool parking lot is adjacent to the race route which runs from 321 to 221 and past Grandfather Mountain.

They have also referenced the possibility of using the restrooms at the pool again this year. There would not be a scheduling conflict because the pool will close for the season on Monday, September 2, 2019. If using the pool restrooms is not approved, then they would like to set up approximately 6 port-a-johns for the runners during the exchange time only.

The Blue Ridge Relay had a very low impact on the pool parking lot and restrooms the past four years. The entire area was clean and well taken care of.

3. Budget Amendments – Ordinance, Financing Proposals, Bids – FY 18-19 Capital Equipment

Budget Amendment Ordinance to account for various items. **Budget Amendment Ordinances - #2018-15 – Attachment B**

Council Member Steele made a motion to approve consent agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Miller Condemnation – Request for approval of demolition

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock advised the attached draft ordinance authorizes the Building Code Official to have the Miller house and other structures at 712 Possum Hollow Road to be demolished and hauled away. The property has been condemned and staff has received no response from the property owner after multiple attempts.

Mr. Rothrock further advised if approved, the ordinance would authorize the Building Code Official to have the structures demolished and hauled away. If the property owner does not complete by December 10, 2018, the Building Code Official will have the demolition completed. Mr. Rothrock explained that the funds spent to demolish the property will go as a lean against the property.

Council Member Matheson made a motion to approve the ordinance to authorize the Building Code Official to have structures demolished and hauled away, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Sweeting asked Mr. Rothrock to contact Ms. Louise Greene and let her know what the plan is for the property. Mr. Rothrock advised he would do so.

2. Park Avenue – North Side

Manager Evans advised Town Council approved and allocated money in the FY 2018-19 Town Budget to make improvements on Park Avenue which included new sidewalks,

curb and gutter, new drainage pipes, and repair of asphalt adjoining these areas on the south side of the street. That construction and planning began on October 15.

Manager Evans further advised a request was made from the Blowing Rock Chamber to consider adding curb and sidewalk to the north side of Park Avenue from the Chamber's eastern-most driveway to the corner of Park Avenue and Main Street.

Initially, the Chamber had requested permission to add sidewalk and curb from their eastern-most driveway to the driveway at Blowing Rock Market at their own expense. This fell through due to the Chamber not having adequate financial resources, so that option was never requested of Council. The Chamber has now asked the Town to consider this portion of the north side of Park Avenue.

Manager Evans advised, if Council were to consider the north portion, we will need to confirm there are no right-of-way issues and confirm the property boundaries of the Blowing Rock Market. However, initial research reveals the road is on town property and the ROW is established and belongs to the Town of Blowing Rock. Therefore, we don't think there is a problem with these concerns. If Council approves moving forward with the project, staff will get a legal opinion.

The south portion of Park Avenue quote and projected cost is \$91,500. The total approved in the FY2018-19 budget was \$123,250. The difference is \$31,750. Iron Mountain, Inc. has provided a quote for the work on the north side of Park Avenue and it is \$14,820. This would provide a sidewalk and curbing. With this addition, the remaining funds after working on the south and north side is estimated to be approximately \$22,700 after both sides are complete. This leaves a reserve for any unforeseen issues that should arise.

Manager Evans advised he felt we would be well within budget to do this additional eighty (80) feet. Iron Mountain Construction, Inc. has already told us they can do the north side of Park Avenue job while they are here if we notify them in time before the completion of the south side of Park Avenue.

The Chamber receives frequent visitors. Currently, most people walk on Park Avenue instead of on the existing sidewalk. With the improved sidewalk on the south side of Park Avenue, our hope is that people will stop walking in the road. Visitors to the Chamber will either have to cross the road at the Chamber, perhaps necessitating a cross-walk, or have a sidewalk on the north side of the road, or both.

Council Member Matheson asked if adding the curb and guttering in front of the Chamber would push the parking spots out any further. Manager Evans advised it would not. Council Member Matheson further asked if lines would be able to be painted on the road. Manager Evans advised he anticipated doing a center line on the road.

Council Member Steele asked if the \$9,000 contingency would be enough in case something was to happen during construction. Manager Evans advised he felt it would be.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount advised he initially he wasn't in favor, but after looking at it further he felt it was a safety issue.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount further advised the owner of the Blowing Rock Market, David Barker asked him to pass along to Council that he was concerned about his loading zone area and asked Council to consider waiting until the South side is finished and then see how it works out before doing the North side. Mayor Pro-tem Yount stated for the record he was not advocating for Mr. Barker, he was simply passing on the information on behalf of Mr. Barker since he could not be at the meeting.

Council Member Sweeting questioned the side area by the Blowing Rock Market. She explained the loading zone was put there originally because loading and unloading was being done on Main Street and Council requested the loading zone be on the side of the building on Park Avenue. Council Member Sweeting asked if they would still have a full loading zone and not have to be on the side walk. Planning Director Kevin Rothrock explained trucks aren't typically fully in the loading zone, although they try to get over as far as they can but are still a bit in the street. He further explained it's not as much of an issue on Park Avenue as it is on Main Street and he tries to prevent any unloading on Main Street. Mr. Rothrock advised he didn't feel adding side walk would cause an issue.

Council Member Steele stated he felt it would look nice.

Council Member Powell made a motion to add the North Side of Park Avenue from Main Street to the West Side of the Chamber's driveway, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount asked that Mr. Barker be involved in this project. Council Member Sweeting asked Mr. Rothrock to get the Police Department involved to help with the loading zone issue. Mr. Rothrock advised he had already talked to Police Captain Aaron Miller and would also be talking to Mr. Barker, but just hadn't been able to do so yet.

3. Clean Energy Presentation

Mr. David Harwood, President of Sketchline Architecture advised at the March 13th Council Meeting, Dr. Harvard G. Ayers presented a resolution establishing "a transition from fossil fuel-based economy to a 100% clean renewable energy for all energy sector-based economy, by January 1, 2050 or sooner to avoid climate catastrophe, to promote job creation and economic growth, and to protect the Earth for current and future generations from climate catastrophe. Achieving this goal would result in the total phase out of fossil fuels by 2050 for energy use." This resolution was adopted by Council as a goal.

Mr. Harwood advised the Town of Boone adopted the same resolution and are currently moving forward with implementing it. He advised the Town of Blowing Rock had adopted the resolution as a goal, but it didn't have a lot of "teeth" in it.

Mr. Harwood further advised he would like to give a few suggestions. He explained he does work for 4 Forty Four, a local company in Blowing Rock. In March of this year the company was able to go 100% to clean energy for their office. He explained they were able to do it two ways; one, they installed twelve (12) solar panels on the roof of their building and provide 50% of their total power needs. Second, they get the other 50% of their power needs from participating in the community solar program through Blue Ridge Energy.

Mr. Harwood explained his purpose was to provide some general education to move forward with a clean energy future for the Town.

Mr. Kevin Troyer from 4 Forty Four advised clean energy provides two aspects, financial benefits as well as good will and that both held a lot of value. Mr. Troyer explained the solar panels located on his building are an American made product, the panels also come with a twenty (20) year warranty and will pay for themselves in seven (7) years. He further explained there is approximately a thirteen (13) year window of “free energy” which provides a financial value.

Mr. Harwood advised Blowing Rock has an opportunity to play a significant role in the clean energy revolution while being fiscally responsible to its citizens. Mr. Harwood gave the following four (4) suggestions:

- **Lead by example with solar panels on public buildings and electric vehicles for Town use** – Blowing Rock can save on electricity bills by installing solar projects on public buildings and replace fossil fuel automobiles with electric cars.
- **Set ambitious goals for clean energy adoption** – Goals provide a shared vision and create a base planning.
- **Develop financing options and publicize them** – The Department of Energy’s Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (PACE) allows local and state governments to loan money to home and business owners for energy improvements, which they repay over time through property taxes. This can reduce the initial cost for clean energy projects.
- **Guarantee solar rights** – Solar access ordinances guard homeowners’ right to generate electricity from sunlight that shines on their property, regardless of homeowners’ association policies. Blowing Rock should also offer clear zoning regulations that allow solar energy installation on residential and commercial rooftops. Consider changing town codes to remove barriers to installing rooftop solar or limiting their quantities.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount advised he has solar panels on his house and it currently produces about half the electric he uses at his house.

Council Member Powell asked if Planning Board had looked at this and if it would be ready for Council by the Retreat. Mr. Harwood advised Planning Board hadn’t yet but could do so.

Mr. Harwood concluded the purpose of his presentation was to give Council information and thanked Council for their time.

4. Speakers from the Floor Discussion

Mayor Pro-tem Yount reminded at the February 13, 2018 Town Council meeting, Council discussed the current "Speakers from the Floor Policy" which was adopted in August of 2005.

Council approved to leave the Speakers from the Floor Policy as is and to move Speakers from the floor to the first item after approval of the minutes on the agenda.

Council also approved allowing the public to speak for thirty (30) minutes, a maximum of three (3) minutes each, on non-agenda items.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount advised all he was doing was bringing up some constituent's questions and concerns on why they cannot speak to items on the agenda.

Mayor Sellers advised he felt as Mayor and Council it was their job to listen to their constituents and bring their concerns to the table. Mayor Sellers further advised he had spoken with other cities to find out how they handle the same issue and found they handle this issue the same way as the Town of Blowing Rock does.

Council Member Steele asked Council to think of what the pros and cons are of changing what the Town currently has.

Council Member Powell advised a pro is a Council Meeting is the time for people to be able to speak to the Council as a whole at the same time with concerns they have and felt it was a great thing.

Council Member Sweeting advised the question for her is why Council is not allowing citizens to talk about items on the agenda. That is the part she would like to change.

Council Member Matheson advised he personally did not want to see it go to allowing citizens to speak to items on the agenda. He explained he felt Council needed to concentrate on one item at a time and just deal with the items as they come to it on the agenda, otherwise it could cloud judgement and wouldn't prove to be an effective approach.

Council Member Matheson further advised he felt the Mayor has always been gracious to allow people to speak on an item they felt strongly about.

Mayor Sellers advised he has let people speak even though he doesn't have to because Mayor and Council work for the Public and if it's a contentious issue he wants to hear what the Public has to say.

Council Member Sweeting advised she didn't feel Council was allowing them to talk about what they really want to talk about. Council Member Matheson advised in his opinion people have a lot of time between the meeting to talk to a Council Member.

Council Member Sweeting explained she didn't think all the Council Members were accessible. She further explained the agenda comes out on Wednesday or Thursday before the meeting and she didn't feel Council was always available to the Public prior to the meeting. Council Member Sweeting further stated she felt it would be nice to hear what the public has to say.

Council Member Steele advised he felt it was like he has always listened to the citizens and just wants to know why it's necessary to change.

Manager Evans stated that almost every municipality in the state and everyone that he knows of does it the way Blowing Rock does, they do not allow people to speak to items on the agenda. He further stated there must be a very good reason it's done this way.

Manager Evans advised he would caution Council from making any change until this topic has been fully discussed with the School of Government, the North Carolina League of Municipalities, Attorneys, anyone who has additional information and fully find out why this is the way it is before making a decision.

Council Member Steele advised he and Council Member Matheson will be going to a NC League meeting in a few weeks and would like to speak to some people and gather information on this topic and bring it back to the rest of Council.

Council Member Sweeting would like to table this until the December agenda and discuss further.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount stated for the record that he would only support if it would include a sunset clause.

5. Presentation of the Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown advised in 2004 McGill and Associates and the Parks and Recreation Director, Jamie Saitta, created a Comprehensive plan for Parks and Recreation. During the January 11, 2005 Town meeting the Master Plan was adopted.

The Master Plan is now thirteen (13) years old and there have been a lot of changes that has occurred in the past thirteen (13) years. Mrs. Brown advised the Town would like to apply for grants to help with the costs on all the needs of Parks and Recreation and by having the Master Plan updated, it can help the success rate at receiving the grants.

McGill and Associates along with the Recreation Oversight Group that was approved during the May 15, 2018 Town Council meeting, have worked on updating the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. McGill set up during two events to get feedback and take a

survey on what people would like to see in Blowing Rock. McGill also created an online survey that was sent out by email, Facebook, put on the Town's website, and gave out cards with the link to take the survey. A joint meeting was held with McGill, Town Council and the Recreation Oversight Group to discuss the draft plan.

Jim Ford with McGill and Associates reviewed the master plan via PowerPoint.

Council Member Powell advised Council needs an updated Master Plan in place to get matching grants. Council Member Powell thanked Mr. Ford for extending the deadline for the survey and was appreciative for the additional voices heard.

Council discussed and agreed the Master Plan is the road map to goals.

Council Member Powell would like to adopt the plan and continually every six (6) months at the Council Retreats discuss a part of the plan, have a set of goals and meet them.

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the Parks and Recreation Master plan as a guideline to improve the Town's Parks and Rec program, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved. **Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Attachment C**

MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Evans gave a brief report to Council:

- The Town sold several small assets on GovDeals.com. All together they assets generated \$1,312. These surplus assets included an augur and blower for a tractor, basketball goals, old chain link fence, a concrete mixer, and two old gas heaters. All sales have been paid for and all, but one has been picked up from the Town.
- Work on Sourwood Lane water line project (which includes Green Hill Woods and a small amount of sewer work on Green Hill Woods) began on October 1, 2018. The Green Hill Woods section was being completed first and is now complete with paving done last week. Selected recipients of Code Red messages are being sent alerts out to alert as locations and days of work change.
- Park Avenue road/sidewalk/curb and gutter construction began on October 15. The project is well underway.
- The stop signs and warning signs for the stop signs at Greenhill and Greenhill Circle have been installed. A Code Red message was sent to alert residents in the area that the sign was installed.
- The engineering for Sunset Drive is on schedule and moving along well.
- The "NO DUMPING" sign has been erected at the end of Skyland View.

- Our Memorial Park donor tree is named “Giving Tree” and installation is complete.
- The “Own a piece of history” road sign sale has generated \$2,450.50. A few signs remain.
- Withers Ravenel continues to work on acquisition of rights-of-way for the Bass Lake Sidewalk project. They are currently working with the NC Department of Transportation with mandatory requirements and those the NCDOT would like to see met, but not mandatory. It is a long process working with requirements from both the federal government and state government. This month McGill was able to reach agreement with NCDOT to allow an alternative directional ramp style at Main Street and Morningside Dr intersections that has eliminated all but one of the previously required ROW impacts for the project. Revised plans and updated ROW exhibit have already been completed and issued to NCDOT last week.
- Christmas in the Park is scheduled for November 23. Lighting of the Town will begin at 5:45 p.m. Other festivities such as Santa and games begin at 1p.m.
- Christmas Parade is 2p.m. on November 24.
- There will be a Special Town Council meeting on Monday, November 19 at 3:30 p.m. at Town Hall. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the town manager recruitment process.
- Town Hall will be closed on November 22nd and 23rd in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:30 p.m. Council Member Sweeting made a motion to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (5) – Discussion of potential property acquisition and NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3) – Attorney-Client Privilege- Occupancy Tax Delinquency, seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved. Mayor Pro-tem Yount made a motion to adjourn from closed session at 9:00 p.m., seconded by Council Member Steele. Unanimously approved. Action taken: Council directed Manager Evans to do further research for the topic discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Council Member Steele made a motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m., seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

MAYOR _____
Charlie Sellers

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

Tax Releases - Attachment A

Budget Amendment Ordinances - #2018-15 – Attachment B

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Attachment C