

BANNER ELK TOWN COUNCIL
February 8th, 2010
MINUTES

The Banner Elk Town Council met Monday February 8th, 2010 at the Banner Elk Town Hall for the regular scheduled meeting of the Town Council.

Council Members present: Mrs. Lyerly, Ms. Draughon, Mr. Tufts, Mr. Phillips and Mr. Hahn. Mayor Tate was absent.

Staff present: Town Manager John Mejaski, Chief of Police Bill Burleson, Assistant to the Town Manager Cheryl Buchanan, and Steve Smith.

Others present: Tom Burleson of Avery County Economic Development Committee, Grant Holder, John Cantadore, Susan Brown, Marsha McManus, Allison Phillips, Mike Halus, Jim Swinkola, Erica Possner, Mrs. Mari-Liis Smyth of the Avery Post, Charles and Penny VonCanon, Kevin Holden of the Avery Journal, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Silver.

Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly called the regular monthly meeting for February 2010 to order at 7:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Councilmember Tufts opened with prayer.

Approval of the Minutes

Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly asked Council for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 2010 meeting of the Town Council. Councilmember Phillips motioned to approve the minutes of the January 2010 meeting of the Town Council as written. Mr. Tufts provided a second to the motion. There was no discussion. Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly called for a vote of approval. Ms. Draughon, Mr. Hahn, Mr. Tufts and Mr. Phillips all approved. There were none opposed.

Approve the Stated Agenda

Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly asked Council for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Draughon motioned to approve the agenda as stated. Mr. Hahn provided a second. Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly called for a vote of approval. Ms. Draughon, Mr. Hahn, Mr. Tufts and Mr. Phillips all approved. There were none opposed.

Citizens Concerns

Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly recognized Mr. Ted Silver. Mr. Silver updated Council on the bike committee meeting. Mr. Silver told Council about formation and makeup of the committee, goals and purpose of the committee.

Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly recognized Mr. Jim Swinkola of Grandfather Home for Children. Mr. Swinkola spoke to Council about the two articles found in the local newspaper. The first being the partnership between Appalachian State and the Town of Boone on water issues that affect both and the other being a similar partnership between the towns of Boone and Blowing Rock. Mr. Swinkola stated that Grandfather Home is your neighbor and the Home is in ETJ of Banner Elk. Mr. Swinkola spoke about some upgrades to the Home's water system which included a new third well which the Cannon Foundation helped pay for. Mr. Swinkola also explained how the refilling of Wildcat Lake help boost water levels in their reservoirs through hydrostatic water pressure. Mr. Swinkola closed by inviting Council to remember their friendly neighbor, who would love to discuss similar partnership such as the Town of Boone has created.

Possible Re-development of Banner Elk Elementary School

Mayor Pro Tem Lyerly introduced the subject to Town Council and recognized Mr. Tom Burleson Director of the Avery County Economic Development Committee. Mr. Burleson in turn introduced Mr. John Cantadore and Mr. Grant Holder. Mr. Cantadore and Mr. Holder introduced a concept they have for the future vacant Banner Elk Elementary School property. The International Culinary and Wine Institute would provide year around attraction for both tourist and locals. The two men would like to purchase and remodel the old school in a way that would both modernize the building and at the same time retain the charm and historical aspect of the building. Mr. Cantadore explained that it would be Banner Elk's building in that they would incorporate the things people want such as a community center space. Mr. Holder spoke of the vision that the two men have for the project, how and why it came about and why it is needed. Mr. Holder spoke of the history of making moonshine in North Carolina and the new industry of wine production in the state and this project would combine all this and much more. Mr. Holder and Mr. Cantadore asked Council to be a supportive partner in the project. There was no formal action taken by Council on this matter.

Energy Audit Presentation

Mr. Mejaski introduced the next agenda item. Mr. Mejaski stated that the American Recovery Act provides for energy grants for small to medium sized businesses and that part of the application process was an energy audit. Mr. Mejaski stated that the Town had an energy audit conducted on the Town Hall Police Dept. and the Maintenance building. Mr. Mejaski introduced Ms. Erica Possner of the ASU Energy Center. Ms. Possner touched on issues of energy and energy savings and conservation measures. Ms. Possner spoke about the audit on the three building and some of the recommended energy savings such as upgrades to lighting and weather striping on doors and windows. Also discussed was the need for programmable thermostats. There was no formal action taken by Council on this matter.

Review Audit Contract

Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly introduced the financial audit contract for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 2010. The current audit is conducted by the firm of Martin Starnes and Associates of Hickory. Mr. Smith told Council that this will be the fifth year for Martin Starnes and that the price has increased over last year by five hundred dollars from seventeen thousand five hundred to eighteen thousand. Mr. Hahn asked if there were any other changes to the audit contract. Mr. Smith stated that there were not and that these contracts are standard Local Government Commission contracts used and that

the LGC reviews each contract to make sure every requirement of the audit is spelled out. Mr. Tufts asked at what time do we look for a different audit firm knowing that five to six years is about the term for an audit firm. Mr. Smith stated we could send out request for proposals next September after the 2010 audit is completed. Mr. Phillips motioned to approve the contract for audit services with Martin Starnes and Associates for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 2010. Mr. Tufts seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly called for a vote of approval. Ms. Draughon, Mr. Hahn, Mr. Tufts and Mr. Phillips all approved. There were none opposed.

Appoint Donna Dicks to the High Country ABC Board Term to Expire 2012

Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly asked Council members for a motion to appoint Mrs. Donna Dicks to the High Country ABC Board. Council decided to combine the next agenda item into one motion. Ms. Draughon motioned to appoint Mrs. Donna Dicks to the High Country ABC Board and select Mrs. Robin Dunn as an alternate to replace Mrs. Dicks in that position. Mr. Phillips seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly called for a vote of approval. Ms. Draughon, Mr. Hahn, Mr. Tufts and Mr. Phillips all approved. There were none opposed.

Select alternate to High Country ABC Board

See preceding agenda item.

Resolution of Municipal Bridge Inspection Agreement

Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly asked Council for a motion to approve the Municipal Bridge Inspection Agreement. Mr. Hahn motioned to approve the resolution and Mrs. Draughon seconded the motion. Ms. Lyerly asked the town manager to explain the matter. Mr. Mejaski stated that the resolution merely sets out an agreement between the Town and NCDOT for bridge inspections of Town bridges. The NCDOT will be the inspecting agency. There was no further discussion of the matter. Pro-Tem Lyerly called for a vote of approval. Ms. Draughon, Mr. Hahn, Mr. Tufts and Mr. Phillips all approved. There were none opposed.

Manager's Update to Council

The town manager updated Council on matters of concern. These included the Mill Pond Manor development and Comprehensive Land Uses Plan.

Closed Session

Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly asked Council for a motion to move into closed session. Mr. Hahn motioned to move into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(8) Personnel Matters. Pro-Tem Lyerly called for a vote of approval. Ms. Draughon, Mr. Hahn, Mr. Tufts and Mr. Phillips all approved. There were none opposed.

Return to Open Session

Council returned to open session.

Adjourn

At 9:02pm Mr. Phillips motioned to adjourn the February 2010 meeting of the Town Council. Mr. Hahn seconded the motion. Pro-Tem Lyerly called for a vote of approval. Ms. Draughon, Mr. Hahn, Mr. Tufts and Mr. Phillips all approved. There were none opposed.

Mayor Pro-Tem Lyerly

Steven R. Smith Clerk/Finance Officer

March 8th, 2009
Approved