

BANNER ELK TOWN COUNCIL

**February 13, 2017
MINUTES**

The Banner Elk Town Council met Monday, February 13, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the Banner Elk Town Hall for their regular scheduled meeting.

Council Members present: Mayor Brenda Lyerly, Charlie VonCanon, Allen Bolick, Mike Dunn, Robert Tufts and David Lecka.

Staff present: Town Manager Rick Owen, Cheryl Buchanan, Chief Byron Clawson and Attorney Four Eggers.

Call Meeting to Order

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Lyerly called the regular monthly meeting of February 2017 to order.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Lyerly led those in attendance with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Council Member Bolick opened the meeting with prayer.

Approval of the Minutes

Mayor Lyerly asked if there was a motion to approve or amend the January 9, 2017 Town Council Minutes. Council Member Tufts motioned to approve the January Town Council Minutes as written. Council Member Dunn seconded the motion. All were in favor. No one opposed.

Approval of the Stated Agenda

Mayor Lyerly asked for a motion to approve or amend the February 2017 agenda. Council Member Dunn motioned to approve the February 2017 agenda as stated. Council Member VonCanon seconded the motion. All were in favor. No one opposed.

Public Comments

Mayor Lyerly reported that on the first Monday of every month she goes to the Banner Elk Elementary School to present certificates to the “terrific kids” at the school which is sponsored by the Banner Elk Kiwanis Club. She noted that the children get so excited and that this is a good program for the school.

Waterline Replacement Project

Mr. Owen reported that Council approved staff requesting plans and bids for work to the proposed waterline replacement project. This project would replace approximately 425 ft. of waterline from the caboose in Town south toward the Mill Pond. He noted that it will coincide with the sidewalk extension project at the same area. Mr. Owen stated that the Town also has a possible water leak located approximately at the Mill Pond where the culverts cross the road which would require specialized assistance in the repair. He noted that this project is a way to

get an old water line out of service, add extra valves in the line and repair the leaks. David Poore prepared the plans and the Town put the job out to bid. Mr. Owen reported that the Town received two bids last week. He presented Council with a letter from Mr. Poore in which he has reviewed the bids and recommends the contract be awarded to Iron Mountain Construction Company, the lowest bidder. Mr. Owen stated that the total bid price is \$59,717.00. He noted that also attached to the letter is a Budget Amendment if Council approves moving forward with this project. It would cover the construction cost, the engineering and a contingency. The budget amendment would reflect this increase to the revenue in the Enterprise Fund and expense to the Water & Sewer Fund. Mr. Owen noted that the project is worthwhile and recommends Council approving this project. Council Member Tufts questioned the Capital Outlay figures of \$66,000. Mr. Owen stated that the figure was for the bid plus the contingency and the professional services figure of \$7,000 was for the engineering of the project. Mr. Poore estimated that his time from the beginning of the design phase through the inspections involved during the project would amount to \$7,000. Mayor Lyerly asked if there were any further questions. Council Member Lecka motioned to approve the bid and the budget amendment. Council Member Tufts seconded the motion. All were in favor. No one opposed.

Notice to Advertise Tax Liens

Cheryl Buchanan reported that state statute requires that the Tax Collector prepare a report of delinquent taxes on real property. The report is to be presented to Town Council in February for advertisement in the local paper in March. She noted that taxpayers are given a 30-day notice in order to pay their taxes. They have till March 14th to pay or their names will appear in the local newspaper. Ms. Buchanan stated that no action is required from Council.

Pay Study Proposal

Mr. Owen reported that during last year's budget process, he proposed to Council the possibility to review the Town's pay plan, job classifications and personnel policy. He noted that approximately eight years ago, Council adopted a new plan. Since then, many things have changed in regards to staff and job requirements. The Town had more positions in Public Works, Staff in Town Hall were performing different jobs and the personnel policy needed review. Mr. Owen stated that the pay component is another issue because the Town is then compared to other municipalities. The last time the study was done it was costly to the Town because the Town got behind the curve for the market so there was a lot of money involved in implementing the study once completed. Mr. Owen doesn't anticipate that this study will have the same effect. The importance in this study is the reclassification of jobs and job descriptions relating to the market along with personnel policies. Mr. Owen stated that money is in the budget to fulfill the study costs which is estimated to be approximately \$8,300 which includes travel expenses incurred. The proposal that Council has comes from the NC League of Municipalities and the MAPS group, which is a private consulting firm operating through the League. He prefers to go through the League because of the Town's relationship with them and it is another opportunity for the Town to do something through the League which has done a lot for the Town at little cost to the Town. Mr. Owen noted that the MAPS group does suggest that this type of review be performed every five years due to changes in the development growth of the Town and changes in expectations of staff and the job markets around us. Mayor Lyerly asked for a motion. Council Member VonCanon motioned to proceed with the pay study proposal. Council Member Dunn seconded the motion. All were in favor. No one opposed.

Historic Banner Elk School Project Updates

Mr. Owen reported that two clients want to rent space in the Historic Banner Elk School and lease details are still being worked out. Common Grounds, the non-profit group, will be leasing a room. Carolina Mountain Life magazine has moved into their space. Mr. Owen noted that he is working with a potential third tenant who is interested in a non-renovated space and who would like to renovate the room on her own. He asked her to pull together a list of costs on the likely renovations. Mr. Owen noted to Council that in earlier discussions regarding renting non renovated spaces, the Town would consider taking the renovations off the rent price. He is working with Council Member Bolick on putting together some estimates similar to the Book Exchange standards. Mr. Owen reported that Ensemble Stage has not been working much on site, but more behind the scenes (i.e. meetings with the Mayor, working on plans, etc.). Their future presence is fueling a lot of excitement.

Mr. Owens presented to Council a “calendar” he put together regarding events that will occur at the school and the property in front of the school in 2017. He noted that this calendar is more of a visual to give Council a better idea of the activities taking place during this year (excluding the Farmers’ Markets held on Thursday afternoons). Mr. Owen stated that from this calendar Council will see the number of activities and the specific activities that the Town is interested in which will ensure that the rental will cover their costs to hold the event. Mr. Owen shared with Council his thoughts: fair market value, the Town charging a base rent per event, a per vendor cost to use the field, etc. He stated that he has no clear cut recommendation on moving forward because there are several different scenarios involved with each event and is asking for feedback from the Council. Discussions continued among Council Members and the Town Manager. Council indicated that they would provide the manager feedback and together they will discuss possible options.

Mr. Owen reported that he will be meeting with Derek Goddard (Blue Ridge Environmental) to go over the preliminary plans for the stormwater project. Mr. Goddard is aware that this project needs to be completed by the spring. Mr. Owen stated that his goal is that when the project is completed there will be a gravel parking lot behind the fire department which will be accessible for events held on the school property and open up new questions and possibilities for its use.

Discuss Dates for Budget Workshops

Mr. Owen reported that last year on May 12th and June 16th the Budget Workshops were held. He also noted that two years ago, Council conducted a Planning Session in which we met to review Town’s needs, projects, costs involved, etc. Mr. Owen stated that if Council is interested we could hold the Planning Session in March or April prior to the Budget Workshops. Dates and times were discussed among Council Members. The Planning Session will be held on Monday, March 27th at 5:30 p.m. The Budget Workshops will be held on Monday, May 22nd at 5:30 p.m. and Monday, June 26th at 5:30 p.m.

Manager’s Update

Mr. Owen reported that included in Council Member’s packet are the police report, planning, zoning, tax collection report and the financial report for 7 months ending 1/31/17. Also attached is a copy of the February 6, 2017 Planning Board Minutes and December 8, 2016 High Country ABC Board Meeting Minutes. Mr. Owen noted that if there were any questions regarding these reports to let him or staff know.

Mr. Owen noted that on the police report, there is a note from Chief Clawson that Officer Petty was elevated to Sergeant and Fred Schrader retired at the end of January.

Mr. Owen stated that it is the Town's intention that the Stormwater Project that we discussed earlier will be completed this spring in time for summer.

Mr. Owen reported that he received the final set of plans for the Sidewalk Project. Council Member VonCanon is reviewing them and will offer his feedback so that they can be presented to the property owners who are involved with the easements for this project. The Town will then go back to DOT for a second encroachment agreement. Mr. Owen stated that his intension is to get the water line started in approximately 60 days and get the sidewalk approvals back in that time period so that with the appropriate funding this project can move forward.

Mr. Owen stated that the Stormwater Mapping project that was approved by Council last year will be getting underway. Jessica Welborn with the High Country Council of Governments will be managing the project and hopes to begin in April.

Mr. Owen reported that Habitat for Humanity will be holding a golf tournament on May 5th. They are approaching local municipalities and agencies to help sponsor teams. He told Habitat that he would present it to Council to consider sponsoring a team (\$200 a player or \$800 for a team) and would get the word out in Banner Elk.

Mayor Lyerly asked if Stewart Gray is aware of the changes being made to the Historic Banner Elk School. Mr. Owen stated that he has talked with Mr. Gray and has given him floor plans for the stage and seating in the gymnasium. He noted that Mr. Gray has spoken with the State handling the historical registry and stated that he did not foresee any issues resulting from these changes being made to the school. Mr. Owen will continue to see that Mr. Gray is aware of any changes made to the Historic Banner Elk School.

At 6:26 p.m. Council Member VonCanon motioned for Council to proceed to closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11. Council Member Tufts seconded the motion. All were in favor. No one opposed. Mayor Lyerly thanked everyone for coming.

Council returned to open session at 7:04 p.m.

Other Business

There being no further business, at 7:04 p.m. Council Member Tufts motioned to adjourn the February 2017 Town Council meeting. Council Member Lecka seconded the motion. All were in favor. No one opposed.

Adjourn

The Town Council meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Mayor Brenda Lyerly

Attested

Approved: March 13, 2017