

Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council
July 11, 2016 5:30 PM

A meeting of the Town Council was held on July 11, 2016. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members James Acuff, Larry McKinney, Jackie Rensink and Rocky Buchanan. Staff in attendance included Richard Canipe, Darlene Butler, Dave Lindsey, Phillip Hise, Billy Summerlin and Michael Wood. Others attended, including Libby Phillips, Russell Lankford, Randy Virnelson, Bill Slagle, Tommy Westall, Jimmy Phillips, and Brandon Roberts (Mitchell News-Journal).

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Darla Harding called the regular meeting to order at 5:30 PM. James Acuff gave the invocation. Larry McKinney led the Pledge of Allegiance.

SWEARING IN OF JACKIE RENSINK

Mitchell County Magistrate Randy Virnelson administered the oath of office to new council member, Jackie Rensink. Said oath is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. Mayor Harding welcomed Jackie.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Rocky Buchanan moved to approve the agenda adding Bill Slagle under public comments. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Rocky Buchanan moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 27, 2016. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS - none

CONSENT AGENDA - none

ACTION AGENDA - none

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Water and Sewer

- Russell Lankford distributed a water and sewer report for June. Said report is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. He noted that we are fortunate to have three good sources of water. His company, American Water, has almost 20 years without a lost-time accident.

Parks & Rec

- Michael Wood updated the Council on the parks for June. He noted that everything is going well. His crew has been taking care of the new sidewalk leading to Brad Ragan Park. The two parks had around 50 shelter reservations for June. The department is getting ready for the Rotary BBQ festival at Riverside Park.
- The pool at Brad Ragan Park has had slow days and busy days.
- The playground equipment for Riverside Park is due to ship on the 15th.
- Rocky Buchanan asked that Michael's staff sandblast and paint the downtown trash cans when weather cools.

Public Works

- Phillip Hise distributed open and closed work orders. He has 13 open ones.
- His crew has been dealing with several water and sewer issues over the past weeks, and is still working on the downtown sewer issue. Five sewer lines are emptying into a discovered manhole that had been paved over. Repairs are complicated by the gas line location and that the Dellinger's and Johnny Pendley buildings go under the alleyway. Phillip hopes to resolve the sewer issue for Twisted Laurel Gallery by digging until he finds the sewer line, then put a cleanout on it and take other lines off that line. The line appears to be two-foot sections of terra cotta.
- Phillip filled the vacancy in his department with Ronnie Letterman, and will introduce him to the Council at a future meeting. He finds Ronnie to be a good worker.

Police Department

- Chief Bill Summerlin noted that it has been a busy month. He welcomed Jackie Rensink to the Council.
- He has hired David Beam. He noted that Officer Seth Miller has moved to the SBI, which leaves another vacancy in the department. He is covering hours with reserve officers.
- The chief noted that N.C. General Statute has changed some criteria for building searches. Subsequently, if officers check a business's doors after hours and find a door open, officers cannot enter the building without written permission.
- He is trying to identify a flower thief, who is stealing flowers from merchants and those planted by volunteers. Cameras would assist in the endeavor.

Main Street

- Libby Phillips distributed a Main Street Report for the month of July. Said report is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.
- The walking bridge project is underway, which includes replacing hand rails and building ramps on the park side of the bridge. Lighting and a tread plate on the sloped section are also planned.,
- The Main Street board will begin implementation of sidewalk plans at their next meeting.

Finance

- Dave Lindsey noted that staff is getting ready for the auditors, who are expected the first week of August. Other tasks include changing water rates, writing some new policy and procedures, and getting set up for the new budget year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Slagle approached the Council, representing the Mitchell County Economic Development Commission. He mentioned an ARC grant for free WIFI for downtown. If the Town is interested, the deadline is in about 2 weeks. Council discussed the match required, and who would fund the cost after the grant expires. Mayor Harding advised that she would like for Main Street to apply.

Mr. Slagle addressed *Mitchell Works: An Economic Development Strategic Plan for Mitchell County, NC*. Work on the plan began about 2 years ago, with strategy meetings with partners. The EDC board and Mitchell County Commissioners have adopted the plan. They want the towns of Spruce Pine and Bakersville to buy into the plan. Rocky Buchanan noted that he has not had a chance to read over the document. Mayor Darla Harding moved to adopt the plan. Larry McKinney seconded the motion, which carried with four in favor, Rocky Buchanan against. Councilman Buchanan advised that he voted against it because he wanted time to look it over. Said plan is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.

MAYOR/COUNCIL REQUESTS / COMMENTS

Mayor Harding asked to revisit selection of a mayor pro tem. James Acuff moved to make Larry McKinney Mayor Pro Tem. Larry expressed his agreement to serve. The motion was seconded by Rocky Buchanan, and carried with four in favor, Larry McKinney abstaining.

Mayor Harding discussed the meeting schedule, and Council decided to cancel their second meetings in July and August. On September 26, merchants will be invited to attend. On October 24, residents will be invited to attend.

TOWN MANAGER

- ✓ Richard Canipe updated the Council on the status of the re-work of the 19E/226S intersection landscape. NCDOT has awarded the project to Ingall and Son, and clean up should begin in August with construction this fall.
- ✓ Richard attended an Appalachian Regional Commission meeting in Asheville regarding grant application requirements. Our current grant pre-application for the bar screen project has been approved.
- ✓ He requested permission to solicit engineering proposals for a preliminary engineering report for the sewer system on Lower St., to provide a needs and cost estimate. Consensus of the Council was for Richard to move forward with soliciting proposals.
- ✓ The Rotary BBQ festival is coming together. It will be held this Friday and Saturday, with clean up on Sunday.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM by motion of Larry McKinney.

Darlene Butler, Town Clerk

Darla Harding, Mayor

James Acuff, Council Member

Rocky Buchanan, Council Member

Larry McKinney, Council Member

Jackie Rensink, Council Member