

**Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council
Monday, February 11, 2020**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on February 11, 2020. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members Rocky Buchanan, James Acuff, Larry McKinney and Jackie Rensink. Staff in attendance included Richard Canipe, Darlene Butler, Libby Phillips, Tiffany Williams, Bill Summerlin, Phillip Hise, Crystal Young and Michael Wood. Others attended, including William Wygand, Christy Hemenway, Betsy Biaga, Jacquelyn Hinshaw, Lynn Holler, Claire Wygand, John Boyd, Florence Grant, John Hartom, Lori McIntyre, and Corey Spiers (Mitchell News-Journal).

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Jackie Rensink moved to approve the agenda as presented. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Rocky Buchanan moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 27, 2020. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Water & Sewer

- Veolia Project Manager Russell Lankford distributed the Veolia Monthly Operations Report for January, which is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.
- One gear box is out in the oxidation ditch. Kemp Inc. will repair it this week.

Public Works

- Public Works Director Phillip Hise advised that his crew completed 89 work orders since his last report, and has 5 open work orders remaining.
- The street sweeper was repaired by Public Works Equipment under warranty, but has broken down with an electrical issue. The vendor will be here Thursday to diagnose the problem.

Main Street

- Main Street Director Libby Phillips presented the Spruce Pine Main Street Executive Director's Report for February, which is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.
- Libby distributed a 2020 Calendar of Events for Downtown Spruce Pine.
- March 10-12 is the date for the Main Street conference, which is at New Bern.
- The S.P.A.C.E. Festival is scheduled for June 27, and will be organized by Christy Hemenway.
- Central Park concerts have been changed to Saturdays this summer, from 7-9 PM.

Police Department

- Police Chief Bill Summerlin stated that his department is working some break-in cases.
- They have made some arrests for methamphetamines using the drug dog.
- His officers have been watching the Pinebridge buildings under renovation. Trespassers will be charged.
- The Chief described a mentorship he is doing through Greenlee School.

Finance

- Finance Officer Crystal Young presented Financial Reports Ending January 31, 2020 for the General Fund and Water/Sewer Fund. Said reports are incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.
- She also presented the Analysis of Current Tax Levy through January 31, showing the property tax collection rate for 2019 at 94.7%. Said report is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.
- A Tax Delinquent by Year report was distributed, which is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.

- Rocky Buchanan moved to approve a personal property tax release in the amount of \$33.96 for Roger Burleson. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.
- Larry McKinney moved to approve a property tax release in the amount of \$49.98 for Gregg Henline . Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.
- Crystal advised that she has researched 2 companies offering phone tree services for town information and emergencies. A company recommended by our telephone provider, Call Fire, offers 30,000 minutes for \$950/year. Unused minutes roll over to the next year. Rocky Buchanan moved to engage this company. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Parks & Rec

- Parks Supervisor Michael Wood updated the Council on park work for January.
- He noted that seasonal tasks include mulching, playground inspection, ball field preparation and clean up at Riverside Park.
- At Brad Ragan Park, he is working on re-sanding the playground.
- He advised that on rainy days, he closes the restrooms at the end of his shift and has no evening attendant.
- Mayor Harding recommended the use of a pre-emergence treatment for weeds at the Library. Town Manager Richard Canipe stated that the treatment had been tried by Harding Landscape before without good results. Mayor Harding requested that we try again, perhaps using a heavier application.
- Richard advised that the proposed bicycle route at Brad Ragan Park has been walked. Our property insurance will cover a family-type bike bath, but not a full mountain bike trail with obstacles.
- Richard contacted Avery YMCA's Trey Oakley, who advised that they have not decided on a location for a Mitchell branch.

APPOINTMENTS

Florence Grant addressed the Council about the possibility of starting a community garden in Mitchell County for food provision to individuals who are food insecure. She wondered if the town would make the old trailer park property beside Riverside Park available. She advised that the plan is to work with local organizations to distribute produce raised in the garden. She would anticipate using raised beds. John Hartom shared with the Council some of what he has learned in establishing a community garden in Yancey County. The consensus of the Council was to grant permission to use the property beside Riverside Park.

Dr. John Boyd addressed the Council. He distributed a architectural plan for the renovations to the Pinebridge Center. He described the progress both there and at the Pinebridge Inn. He noted that the Dark Sky Observatory is going very well. He talked about facility capacity and possible uses.

Claire Wygand expressed concern that advertising she has seen claims the observatory as a Burnsville site.

Lynn Holler asked if there was a plan for increased traffic on Summit. Dr. Boyd said no concrete plan was in place..

CONSENT AGENDA - none

ACTION AGENDA - none

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jacquelyn Hinshaw asked if there were any town-sponsored Good Friday events. She expressed an interest in a group carrying crosses through town, ending at a place to pray. The event would be non-denominational. Richard Canipe suggested walking from Central Baptist to First Baptist.

Lynn Holler asked about the progress on the appearance ordinance. Mayor Harding advised her that they are still working on soliciting members for the appearance committee. Ms. Holler also stated that no town council minutes since November are on the Town's website. She requested also that meeting agendas be posted on the town's Facebook page on the day of the meeting.

TOWN MANAGER

- ✓ Town Manager Richard Canipe noted that a letter has been signed and is ready to send for the Pine Avenue garbage nuisance.
- ✓ He noted that the EDC will be partnering with Allen Cook at Mayland and will offer a \$1000 marketing grant.

- ✓ GDS has stopped picking up commercial garbage cans downtown. The town does not provide commercial pickup. Some businesses place their garbage in the Town's sidewalk cans, which is not the cans' purpose. McKinney Garbage will contract for commercial pickup.

MAYOR/COUNCIL REQUESTS / COMMENTS

Mayor Harding described starting the appearance standards process. She noted that the Town Council must appoint a standards committee with a minimum of 7 people. These individuals must live in the city limits. The Council has recommendations for and agreements from 5 members. They would like someone from the real estate world. She hopes to have the committee in place by the first meeting in March.

Council Member James Acuff advised that Dr. Townsend's new dentist office is coming along well.

ADJOURNMENT

Jackie Rensink moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 PM.

Darlene Butler
Darlene Butler, Town Clerk

Darla Harding
Darla Harding, Mayor

Larry McKinney
Larry McKinney, Mayor Pro Tem

Rocky Buchanan
Rocky Buchanan, Council Member

James Acuff
James Acuff, Council Member

Jackie Rensink
Jackie Rensink, Council Member