

**Minutes  
Spruce Pine Town Council  
Monday, November 25, 2019**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on November 25, 2019. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members Larry McKinney, Rocky Buchanan and Jackie Rensink. Staff in attendance included Richard Canipe, Crystal Young, Kelly Johnson and Darlene Butler. Others attended, including John Keen, David McPherson, Tim Kerns, Bill Wygand, Claire Wygand and John Pendley.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Larry McKinney moved to approve the agenda, adding public comment after the action agenda. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Jackie Rensink moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 28, 2019. Larry McKinney seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING**

Mayor Harding opened a public information meeting to seek comments from the public and discuss the purchase of several town vehicles through the USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program. Finance Officer Crystal Young stated that the application almost complete for 2 patrol vehicles and one public works vehicle. The interest rate for a loan is 3%. A decision should be made within 30 business days. The vehicles would replace existing aged vehicles. There were no comments from the public.

**APPOINTMENTS**

John Keen addressed the Council regarding 4.5 acres next to Stroup Rd. owned by the Town of Spruce Pine. The property is largely in the flood plain. He suggested improving the property with picnic tables and canoe put ins. Council member Rocky Buchanan stated that flea markets and farmers markets would be a good use of the property. Town Manager Richard Canipe stated that the town has a survey of the property, as well as a preliminary engineering report for extending a walking path from Riverside Park to the property. He also advised that since the property is in a flood plain, only flow-through structures like picnic shelters or pavilions could be built. John Keen asked that the Council study and not shelve the project.

David McPherson and Tim Kerns addressed the Council regarding a multi-purpose trail and pump track (urban track) at Brad Ragan Park for walking and biking. The pump track would be located at the old putt-putt area. The existing old trail would be improved with added footage. A pump track is a place to begin developing skills in mountain biking. Overall, they are suggesting a flowy, safe trail. Council inquired about liability insurance ramifications. Council also questioned the compatibility with the possible donation of property for a YMCA. Richard advised that the two projects would be compatible. Grant money may very well be available for the project, with the next opportunity to apply in May. John Keen asked if grant money would be available for the Stroup Rd. property. Richard answered that grants might be available. Consensus of the Council was to pursue grant funds for the bike trail.

**ACTION AGENDA**

Finance Officer Crystal Young described a property tax release for Irvin Barksdale for \$61.48. Rocky Buchanan moved to release the 2019 property taxes in the amount of \$61.48 for Irvin Barksdale. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor. Said release is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.

**FINANCE**

- As of today, the Town has a 41% property tax collection rate.
- The auditors will present the 2018/19 Audit on the December 9 meeting.
- Jackie Rensink moved to donate \$500 to Shop with a Cop. Larry McKinney seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.
- On line payments are up and going on the town website.
- Consensus of the Council was to charge actual cost of materials and labor for 2-inch and larger water taps.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Claire Wygand asked about the Downtown Appearance Ordinance. Richard advised that Attorney Hise should be at the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting to work on the ordinance.

John Pendley addressed the Council. He addressed four concerns:

1. Hampshire Hosiery - when will the clean up be completed? Richard advised that he cannot answer that question. The remaining material must go to the landfill. He will contact the owner.
2. A large pothole near the parking lot behind the Mitchell News-Journal exists. Richard will create a work order to patch the hole.
3. Topaz Street needs a street sign and parking spots repainted. Richard stated that the sidewalk needs to be made narrower, with the street wider.
4. Trash cans on the sidewalks on Topaz Street block the sidewalk and look unsightly. The Downtown Appearance Ordinance will address this. Also, the street sign on Forest Hills Drive needs repairs.

TOWN MANAGER

Richard Canipe noted that he believes Mitchell County needs a demolition permit process, which would expedite site clean ups such as the old Hampshire Hosiery building. Bill Wygand questioned why not test for asbestos and enforce state regulations on asbestos. Richard will check with owner Keith Johnson about clean up. Officer Kelly Johnson will look into whether the vehicles parked on the property violate the junked vehicle ordinance.

The employee Christmas lunch will be on Wednesday, December 11 at noon.

Council agreed to cancel the regular meeting of December 23rd due to the Christmas holiday.

The Kiwanis Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday at 6:00 PM.

Ethics training will be offered in Boone on December 10th for newly elected officials. Mayor Harding and Council Member Rocky Buchanan plan to attend. Staff will check with Council member James Acuff.

Richard will ask the Mitchell County Building Inspector to inspect the old house on Ward Street, which is literally falling down.

MAYOR/COUNCIL

Mayor Harding stated that a notice of violation was sent to the owner of 141 Pine Street and that he has 10 days to begin clean up.

Mayor Harding asked Manager Richard Canipe to contact the YMCA again.

Mayor Harding read a thank you card from Council Member Rocky Buchanan, and welcomed him back after his hospitalization.

ADJOURNMENT

Jackie Rensink moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:34 PM.

Darlene Butler  
Darlene Butler, Town Clerk

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Darla Harding, Mayor

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Larry McKinney, Mayor Pro Tem

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rocky Buchanan, Council Member

absent  
\_\_\_\_\_  
James Acuff, Council Member

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Jackie Rensink, Council Member