

**Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council
Monday, August 24, 2020**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on August 24, 2020. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members James Acuff, Rocky Buchanan, Jackie Rensink and Larry McKinney. Staff in attendance included Richard Canipe, Darlene Butler, and Courtney Garland. Others attended, including Keith Moir and Jimmy Hinshaw.

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

Jackie Rensink moved to approve the agenda, adding a closed session after the Town Manager's report. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Larry McKinney moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 08, 2020. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

ACTION AGENDA

Larry McKinney moved to provide water at outside rates with no annexation to Crawford and Frances Parrish at the lot adjoining 915 Biggerstaff Road. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Jackie Rensink moved to provide water at outside rates with no annexation to Tom Stokes at 1039 Biggerstaff Road. Larry McKinney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

James Acuff moved to provide water at outside rates with no annexation to Carl Sillman at 85 Sunshine Drive. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Keith Moir, of 91 Lynn Street, approached the Council about the condition of his street. He stated that he has been trying for over 4 years to get the street maintained. He stated that the patching done today will not stay in the potholes. He noted that he has personally kept the street ditches open. Consensus of the Council was to have the public works director get a price on re-paving the street. The repairs may require a budget amendment.

Jimmy Hinshaw updated the Council on plans for the Toe Jam Festival, planned for October 24, from 10 AM to 10 PM. He outlined the location and hours at Riverside Park. He described COVID-19 precautions of preadmission screening and face masks. He outlined security plans, including off duty officers, bag search, and weapon prohibition. He asked for the Council's permission to hold the festival at Riverside Park. The consensus of the Council was to approve the use of the park if North Carolina has moved into stage 3 of COVID-19 restrictions and allows gatherings of that type. Jimmy noted that if state restrictions are not reduced by the next Town Council meeting of 9/14, plans for the festival will be cancelled. Jimmy requested an appointment at the next Council meeting to address the Council about a surveillance camera proposal.

TOWN MANAGER

- ✓ Town Manager Richard Canipe described the proposed contract with Veolia to operate the water and sewer plants. He noted that the monthly cost is \$68,146.00, and that legal counsel has gone over the contract. Larry McKinney moved to enter into the contract. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- ✓ Larry McKinney moved to enter into a NC Statewide Emergency Management Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Said agreement is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.
- ✓ Larry McKinney moved to reappoint Matt Miller to the local ABC Board. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- ✓ Richard distributed a list of tasks given to Parks & Recreation, noting open and completed tasks. Council member James Acuff asked if the bench in the Clock Park could be repaired and replaced. Richard advised that it was destroyed by the rock slide.

- ✓ James Acuff asked about the status of the Toe River Service Station, which was partially destroyed by a rock slide. Richard answered that he thinks the owners are interested in selling the property. If the town were interested in purchasing the property, the liability and insurance issues should be investigated beforehand.
- ✓ Mayor Harding asked if the Town could purchase some plants to maintain the landscaped area at the intersection of Hwy. 226 and 19E.
- ✓ Richard stated that he attended a virtual Transportation RPO meeting and presented updates on local NCDOT projects. He noted that the four-lane extension from near Stamey's Grocery to Avery County is still funded, with right-of-way acquisition scheduled for 2023. The Micaville section is slated to be completed in September. The widening of Hwy.226 from Summit Avenue to the Parkway is still planned, with right-of-way acquisition scheduled for 2021.
- ✓ Most of the water/sewer capital items have been purchased. The police department's Dodge Durangoes have been purchased and are at Dana for upfit. Public Works has purchased the F250, but no F450's are available. The existing brush truck is at Murphy Auto for engine replacement.
- ✓ Richard asked Council permission to contact the Mitchell County Building Inspector to address the remains of the burned home at 116 S. Dale St. Condemnation of the property may be required. The consensus of the Council was to proceed.
- ✓ Richard updated the Council on the status of the sewer line project for part of 19E and Locust Avenue.
- ✓ The auditors have completed their field work. Tax files are at Southern Software for conversion, and we hope to issue bills by mid-September.

MAYOR/COUNCIL REQUESTS / COMMENTS

- Mayor Harding stated that she has had conversations with Katie Willett of the YMCA. Although COVID-19 disruptions have slowed plans, the YMCA is still working on its Mitchell County presence. A local goal is addressing chronic illness, and the YMCA hopes to have an event at Riverside Park. Richard noted that any organization planning events at town parks should include a memorandum of understanding and list the Town as additional insured on the planner's insurance.
- Plans for the Community Garden are progressing. Quartz Corporation has built and will install raised beds. Again, the Town needs the garden organizers to provide a memorandum of understanding and list the Town as additional insured on their insurance.

CLOSED SESSION

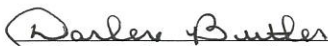
Mayor Harding asked for a motion to enter into closed session, citing NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6): To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of and individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee. James Acuff moved to enter into closed session. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Council requested that the Town Manager and Town Clerk remain for the closed session.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

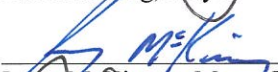
Town Manager Richard Canipe announced that he will be retiring on December 31, 2020. He expressed his gratitude for the years he has worked with the Town. He advised that he would be willing to contract after retirement for special projects or filling in. The Council expressed gratitude for the job Richard has done through the years, and noted that he will be hard to replace.

ADJOURNMENT

Rocky Buchanan moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 PM.


Darlene Butler, Town Clerk


Darla Harding, Mayor


Larry McKinney, Mayor Pro Tem


Rocky Buchanan, Council Member


James Acuff, Council Member


Jackie Rensink, Council Member