

**Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council
Monday, October 12, 2020**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on October 12, 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, Shelley Buchanan, Phillip Hise, Crystal Young, Libby Phillips, Bill Summerlin, Kasey Cook, Michael Briggs and Michael Wood. Others attended, including Russell Lankford, Tim Kearns, T.J. Kearns, Anna Davis and Juliana Walker (Mitchell News-Journal).

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

Rocky Buchanan moved to approve the agenda as presented. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Larry McKinney moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 14, 2020. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Jackie Rensink moved to approve the minutes of the closed session of October 05, 2020. Larry McKinney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Larry McKinney moved to approve the minutes of the special meeting of October 05, 2020. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Parks & Rec

- Parks Supervisor Michael Wood updated the Council on park work for September. He distributed an updated work order list. He stated that the pool has been winterized and closed.
- He advised that Harris Middle School has a new baseball coach that is interested in the ball field at Riverside Park and would like to make some improvements, such as a batting cage.
- Mayland Community College/ Early College plans to use the tennis courts and basketball courts for physical education.
- Michael distributed some information about a grant for the tennis courts. He noted that he and Crystal have been approved to start the next steps for the grant.
- Council member James Acuff asked again about dealing with the kudzu at the train mural on Oak Avenue. Richard noted that it is private property and that permission from the owner would need to be secured. James advised that he would talk to Junior McIntyre about permission.

Water & Sewer

- Veolia Project Manager Russell Lankford distributed and presented the Veolia Monthly Operations Report for September, which is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.

Public Works

- Public Works Director Phillip Hise distributed open and closed work orders. There were 8 open and 100 closed orders.
- He noted that the street sweeper is back in service and that the new blower works great.
- The brush truck is out of commission until the motor is received and installed, a minimum of three weeks.

Main Street

- Main Street Director Libby Phillips distributed and presented the Spruce Pine Main Street Director's Report, which is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.
- Mayor Harding requested the sharing of the Mitchell-News post regarding trick-or-treat downtown when available.
- Libby noted that the Ice Cream Shop is still in the plans.

Police Department

- Police Chief Bill Summerlin updated the Council on his officers who are on administrative leave. He noted that they are doing well, and are eager to return to work.
- Bill is worried about losing officers to outside agencies, and would like to offer them take home vehicles. It would require the purchase of three additional Durango vehicles. Council Member Rocky Buchanan stated that he is 100% against take home vehicles, particularly since most officers live outside city limits. Manager Richard Canipe stated that he had heard nothing about the proposal, and that it should be studied before voting. Finance Officer Crystal Young advised that the police department will be \$160,000 under budget due to the COVID funds for wages, and that sedans would be cheaper. The issue will be revisited at the next Council meeting.
- Mayor Harding expressed her appreciation for all the police department has done.
- Chief Summerlin commended the performance of his new officers.

Finance

- Finance Officer Crystal Young presented first quarter financial worksheets for the general and water/sewer funds. She also presented an Analysis of Current Year Tax Levy. The tax collection rate for FY 20/21 is 7.5 %. Said reports are incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.
- Crystal advised that 203 cutoff letters have been sent. The cutoff period does not include the 6 months that were not subject to cut-off or penalty during the COVID-19 period of March through July.
- Around 70 applications for the utility clerk position have been picked up..
- Crystal described some proposed changes to the water bill layout that could save time and money.

ACTION AGENDA

Jackie Rensink moved to provide water at outside rates with no annexation to Thomas A. Kemp, at 137 Pack Drive. Larry McKinney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Jackie Rensink moved to provide water at outside rates with no annexation to Mike McKinney, at 901 Henredon Rd. Larry McKinney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

James Acuff moved to provide water at outside rates with no annexation to Maria Tehandon, at 252 and 304 Pine Run Ridge. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

James Acuff moved to appoint Luther Stroup to the Avery-Mitchell-Yancey Regional Library Board. Larry McKinney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS - none

CONSENT AGENDA - none

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tim Kearns approached the Council about a proposed mountain bike trail at Brad Ragan Park. Richard Canipe described a proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Spruce Pine and the Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association (SORBA). Attorney Lloyd Hise had previously inspected the memo, and requested one change that would require that the plans be approved by the Town Council before funds were expended. The Town's insurance would cover a family-friendly bike path. Mr. Kearns noted that they were proposing a multi-use trail, including a pump track. Richard Canipe noted that the project could be a good one for a PARTF grant. Council Member Rocky Buchanan suggested that Mr. Kearns also check into property owned by Todd Sweeny.

TOWN MANAGER

- ✓ Town Manager Richard Canipe presented the Mitchell Giving Gardens Memorandum of Understanding between NC Cooperative Extension-Mitchell County Center and the Town of Spruce Pine, NC. Larry McKinney moved to adopt the Memorandum of Understanding. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Said memorandum is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.
- ✓ Richard presented a price of \$13,508.20 from Miller Construction for the replacement of the Topaz Street sidewalk. Rocky Buchanan requested that at least one additional bid be sought.
- ✓ The Capital Improvement Plan kickoff meeting with Withers-Ravenel was on Wednesday of last week.
- ✓ Work on the Headworks Analysis has begun.
- ✓ Richard noted that the Mitchell County EDC has produced a Housing Needs Analysis.

- ✓ Incoming Town Manager Darlene Butler presented Shelley Buchanan, who has been promoted to Town Clerk, to the Council. Both Darlene Butler and Richard Canipe expressed confidence in the job Shelley will do.

MAYOR/COUNCIL REQUESTS / COMMENTS

Mayor Harding noted that the representatives from the YMCA/Penland Story Trail project will attend the next Council meeting.

Mayor Harding requested that Council members revisit appointments to the proposed Appearance Standards Committee for next meeting.

Council Member Rocky Buchanan cited a need to revisit regulations addressing large or lighted signs.

ADJOURNMENT

Jackie Rensink moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 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