

**Minutes  
Spruce Pine Town Council  
Monday, October 26, 2020**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on October 26, 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, Shelley Buchanan, Crystal Young, Michael Briggs, Jeremy Altimus and Michael Hollifield. Others attended, including Katie Willett, Sylvia Buchanan, Amber Briggs, Stacey Lane, and Karen Dobrogosz.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Jackie Rensink moved to approve the agenda. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Rocky Buchanan moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 12, 2020. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**ACTION AGENDA- none**

**PUBLIC COMMENT- none**

**APPOINTMENT**

- Katie Willet, with Williams YMCA, along with Sylvia Buchanan, Amber Briggs, Stacey Lane, and Karen Dobrogosz distributed and presented their ideas for the Riverside Story Trail project. The presentation is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. Following the presentation Council Member James Acuff asked if the permanent displays would not be subject to vandalism to which Ms. Willett replied that it is a possibility and they will be asking for the Town of Spruce Pine's Parks and Recreation Department to assist in the upkeep, maintenance, and protection of these structures. James also asked if any civic groups have been approached to provide funding, to which Ms. Willett responded they wanted to get the response from the Town of Spruce Pine before reaching out to any other groups and also asked for any suggestions our council may have on that. Council Member Rocky Buchanan mentioned he noticed in the presentation pictures there was no hard wiring for the permanent displays, to which Stacey Lane replied that they are completely solar powered. Mayor Darla Harding said she loves the idea and would like the other Council Members' opinions. Council Member James Acuff asked what kind of financial support they are seeking from the Town of Spruce Pine, to which Ms. Willett replied that they will look into grants to fund the major project and look to the Town of Spruce Pine for a match. Mayor Darla Harding asked about Parks and Recreation grants to assist with the project. Richard Canipe advised he will look into those. She also added what a wonderful field trip opportunity it would be for our local students. Council Member James Acuff made a motion to support the pilot project and move forward. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Ms. Willet ended her appointment with an update on the walking classes being held in the park on Tuesdays.

**TOWN MANAGER**

- ✓ Town Manager Richard Canipe cited the Golden Leaf Application has been sent in.
- ✓ Richard advised that he will be advertising the old Ford Explorer at the police department for sale.

**MAYOR/COUNCIL REQUESTS / COMMENTS**

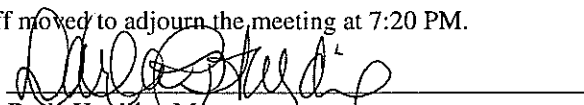
- Mayor Harding inquired about estimates for the sidewalk project on Topaz St. Richard Canipe reminded the Council of the estimate from Miller Construction in the amount of \$13,508.20 and added he is working on estimates from Hopson and Tracey Cox Concrete. He hopes to have the estimates in the next four weeks. Mayor Harding added she would like to see this project complete before bad weather. Crystal Young also added there is money left in the budget from the drainage line item, therefore a budget amendment should not be required.

- Mayor Harding asked the Council for appointment suggestions of committee members for the proposed Appearance Standards Committee. Jackie Rensink suggested that Rocky Buchanan and Darlene Butler be appointed to this committee as representation for the Town Of Spruce Pine. Richard Canipe mentioned the need for a realtor on this committee as well.
- Mayor Harding mentioned she would like for the tennis courts at Brad Ragan Park to be pressure washed, to which Richard Canipe replied that Mike Wood has not purchased a pressure washer at this time but he will make sure it gets ordered.
- Mayor Harding cited the Spruce Pine Kiwanis has opted out of the Christmas Parade for this year due to the uncertainty of the continued Covid 19 pandemic.
- Mayor Harding at this time recognized Captain Michael Briggs and opened discussion pertaining to the police department's request that each officer have a take home vehicle. Town Manager Richard Canipe led the discussion with concerns from the town's attorney, Lloyd Hise. Mr. Hise had cited that this would extend the towns workers comp liability as it extends the officer's work day as well as the fact that it will be a taxable benefit for the officers which the town will have to pay tax and retirement on. Richard Canipe pointed out that Captain Briggs has been an employee of the Town of Spruce Pine for 22 years and does not have a take home vehicle. The council expressed concern as to why, and asked that Richard find out. Captain Briggs cited that whether on duty or not, officers are always on call when a fellow officer needs assistance. Mayor Harding expressed her sincere appreciation for our officers and explained that she is not for each road officer having a take home vehicle, but that as Captain, Michael Briggs should have a take home vehicle. Captain Briggs brought up the possibility of purchasing two additional vehicles and assigning each officer their own patrol car. He stated that this would help ensure vehicles are being cared for and put more personal responsibility on the officers to make sure their assigned vehicle is well maintained. Captain Briggs also inquired about the police department employees being compensated for their meal breaks. He believes this would definitely help morale in the current environment at the police department and that most other surrounding departments pay their officers for that 30 minute meal break. James Acuff asked that Crystal put together the numbers for paying officers this extra 4 hours and revisit this matter at the next council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional discussion, James Acuff moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 PM.

  
 Shelley Buchanan, Town Clerk

  
 Darla Harding, Mayor

  
 Larry McKinney, Mayor Pro Tem

  
 Rocky Buchanan, Council Member

  
 James Acuff, Council Member

  
 Jackie Rensink, Council Member