

Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council
Monday, February 22, 2021

A meeting of the Town Council was held on February 22, 2021. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members Larry McKinney, James Acuff and Rocky Buchanan. Staff in attendance included Darlene Butler, Crystal Young, Michael Wood, Kelly Johnson, and Shelley Buchanan. Corey Spiers (Mitchell News-Journal) was also in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Darla Harding called the regular meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Rocky Buchanan 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 with all present in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Rocky Buchanan moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 8, 2021. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

APPOINTMENTS - NONE

ACTION AGENDA

Finance Officer Crystal Young presented the audit contract for the fiscal year 2020/21. She advised the cost of the audit will be the same as last year at \$23,500. Rocky Buchanan asked if she recommended they approve, to which she answered yes because Combs, Tennant, and Carpenter PC have done a fantastic job in the past. Audit contract is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. Larry Mckinney moved to approve the audit contract for fiscal year 2020-21. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER

- ✓ Town Manager Darlene Butler updated the Council on the PARTF grant for the improvement of Brad Ragan Park. Crystal Young presented the Council with a project description/ justification plan for the grant. Ms. Butler added that Brad Ragan is a beautiful park that is not adequately utilized. Crystal also advised the grant submission is due in April and a decision will be made in late summer or early fall. Crystal stated there is currently \$180,000 in the fund balance and Town should have no problem with the \$100,000 payout for the grant match due to no contributions being made to the bridge project or Mayland project in the next year's budget. The Council commended Darlene and Crystal on the excellent work done towards making this grant submission happen so quickly, and their consensus was to proceed. Said project description/ justification plan is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. Mayor Darla Harding asked Michael Wood about the renovation of the bathrooms at Brad Ragan Park. Michael responded that Miller Contracting and Mcgee Brothers are currently working on the concrete siding, gutters, concrete around the structure, and more. This work will be completed soon and funds were included in the current budget year.
Council Member James Acuff asked how many tennis courts will be left at Brad Ragan with improvement plan. Darlene advised there will be a new pickle ball court, two tennis courts, and a dog park will replace the back two courts. She went on to say that Michael Wood has been instrumental in getting community support for the project. Mayor Harding praised the efforts of everyone involved and urged that they move forward with the next steps in seeking the PARTF grant. Darlene added that if the Town is not awarded the grant we could still look at some improvements that could be done within the budget.
- ✓ Darlene stated there needs to be a public hearing during the second Council meeting in March to get community support for the Brad Ragan improvement project.
- ✓ Darlene shared with the Council that after consulting with Lloyd Hise, it is his determination that the gentleman from Berry Street is correct in saying the Town of Spruce Pine is indeed infringing upon his property. Her recommendation is that the street be taken up and possibly ask for a right of way for the driveway belonging to the property at the end of the street.

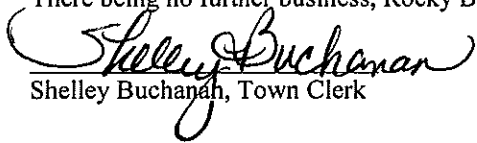
- ✓ The sewer line rehab project for 19 E and Locust St will be beginning soon and final completion is expected August 14th. The 19 E portion will be done first.
- ✓ Darlene noted that she had a conversation with former Town Manager Richard Canipe concerning the drain tile and sink hole issue at First Baptist Church. Per Richard, in 2015, Richard was present when James Phillips (Phillips Grading) made Roger Hinshaw and James Schortinghouse aware that the tile the town replaced was tying into a rotting, rusted drain on the church's property, and there would be future problems. Darlene is going to draft a letter to the church stating this.
- ✓ Darlene announced the funeral services for Mr. Ernest Canipe will be held graveside on Wednesday, February 24th at 3:00pm for anyone who would like to attend.

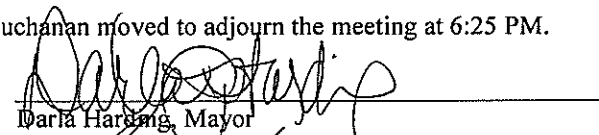
MAYOR/COUNCIL

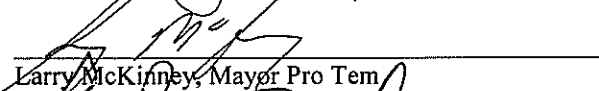
- Mayor Harding updated the Council on the Riverside Story Trail. They have received a grant and will soon be implementing more permanent fixtures. She asked that Ms. Willett be allowed to attend the second Council meeting in March to give an update.
- The Appearance Standards Committee was discussed and it was decided they will move forward with an initial meeting including the Town's attorney Lloyd Hise. They currently have seven committee members but will continue to seek out someone in the real estate field to serve on the committee.
- The next topic of discussion was the joint meeting held at the Mitchell County BOE building with the Town of Bakersville and the Board of Commissioners. Mayor Harding expressed she thought the meeting went well with a lot of good discussion and ideas, but is struggling to see where the Town of Spruce Pine fits into their plans. James Acuff noted his take away from the meeting was we need to do a better job of promoting Mitchell County and the need for new signage coming into the county. He also asked if the newly formed Appearance Standards Committee could be tasked with some of these ideas.
- Mayor Harding noted some of the good ideas from the meeting were updates maps and new signage, the Adopt a Highway program, the use of technology to promote the county, as well as incentive programs.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Rocky Buchanan moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 PM.


 Shelley Buchanan, Town Clerk


 Maria Harding, Mayor


 Larry McKinney, Mayor Pro Tem


 Rocky Buchanan, Council Member


 James Acuff, Council Member

Absent
 Jackie Rensink, Council Member