

Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council Planning Session
April 26, 2021 – 5:30 PM

A regular meeting of the Town Council was held on April 26, 2021 in the Board Room of Spruce Pine Town Hall at 5:30 PM for the purpose of budget planning and discussion. Present were Mayor Darla Harding, and Council Members Rocky Buchanan, Jackie Rensink, James Acuff, and Larry McKinney. Staff in attendance included Darlene Butler, Crystal Young, Shelley Buchanan, Ella Edwards, Kasey Cook, Phillip Hise, Bill Summerlin, Libby Phillips, and Michael Wood. Also attending was Russell Lankford with Veolia.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Harding called the planning session to order at 5:30 PM.

INVOCATION / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Rocky Buchanan asked the blessing on the meal and the meeting. Larry McKinney led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Larry McKinney moved to approve the agenda as presented. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Larry McKinney moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 12, 2021. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Larry McKinney also moved to approve the minutes from the public hearing held on April 26, 2021. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION WITH DEPARTMENT HEADS

Public Works Director Phillip Hise thanked the Council for everything they have done for his department. He presented a handout listing his capital requests, which includes a new tractor. The handout is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. The tractor is an M606HD 4WD Kubota with a 74" sickle mower to replace the Farmtrac they are currently using that is worn out. Phillip advised the Council that if he can provide Parker Farm Service a purchase order before May 1st they will honor the price on the quote provided and not raise it the expected 2% they indicated to him. After reviewing the quote of \$53,892.25 with a trade in allowance of \$4,500.00 for the Farmtrac mower, Rocky Buchanan moved to give Phillip a purchase order to buy the new Kubota tractor. Larry McKinney seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor. Additional requests are for a new roof for the maintenance shop, 96 water meters to replace old ones that stop working, new tool box for the shop, and new rain suits for the maintenance crew. He presented a quote for repaving Fairground Street, Creed Pitman Road, Boone Street, Valley Road, Kim Thicket Road, and Spruce Avenue, which is attached to these minutes.

Parks and Recreation Director Michael Wood thanked the Council for their support. For the upcoming budget, he requested new office technology to assist him and his employees better do their jobs and for training purposes. He is requesting a smart TV with a wall mount and HDMI, a new lap top and desk top computer for the pool office, and a new printer. He is estimating these items will cost around \$2,550.00. He also noted that he needs a new push mower to mow in places he is unable to use a riding lawn mower. He asked that the Council consider repaving the 50 foot section of the walking trail at Riverside Park that broke off a few years back as he has been receiving complaints from residents. Pool requests include 3 drain covers which are required to be replaced every five years. The main pool will need two covers costing \$594.00 each and the wading pool will need one cover costing \$74.00. Michael added that he was approached by a local diver willing to install these covers at no charge to the town. Lastly Michael presented a quote from Trent Keller to replace the Brad Ragan Memorial Park welcome sign at the entrance to the park. This quote is attached to these minutes.

Veolia Project Manager Russell Lankford expressed his appreciation for the Town and the Council for being so good to him and his department. He then presented the items he is requesting to be budgeted for water and wastewater, which are incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. These items include a new well pump, a new PLC for the Spyder SED basin, and a new flow meter. For the wastewater operation, he described his requests for a new lift pump station at Beaver Creek, new sulfur dioxide scales, and new flooring in the lab.

Libby Phillips of Spruce Pine Main Street thanked the Council for their support. She presented Main Street Budget requests for 2021-2022, which include an increase in operating expenses due to an increase in insurance. She also asked that she still be allowed to offer the entrepreneur grant program, as this has been a wonderful resource. She then requested funds to host the ice skating rink in town in December.

Police Chief Bill Summerlin expressed his appreciation for all the Town Council has done for his department the last year. Chief Summerlin's budget requests include \$4,000 to allocate to vehicles, \$5,000 for ammunition for the officers to qualify with, \$4,000 in miscellaneous funds for detectives uses, three E-citation printers for the new police vehicles at \$500.00 each, and one lap top at

\$750.00. He again shared his sincere gratitude for the support he receives from the Council and how much he loves the Town of Spruce Pine. And that he is committed to making our Town our safer place.

Town Manager Darlene Butler requested that the Council consider repainting the parking spaces downtown and at Town Hall, as they have mostly all faded. She received a quote of around \$5,000.00 to get this done later on in the summer.

Finance Officer Crystal Young distributed worksheets on Budget Considerations for 21/22, noting increases in state retirement employers contribution and cost-of-living. She advised a 2% decrease in dental insurance and no change in medical. A potential sales tax revenue increase is expected. For water and sewer, she defined increases in the Veolia Contract of \$15,000.00. She recommended no changes to the late penalties/reconnect fees and a \$0.50 increase to the minimum water and sewer rate. Crystal suggested a push to get customers to allow us to email their water bills to save on postage. She and Ella will be in contact with Southern Software to set up that option for water billing. We have received a quote on two new computers for Town Hall at \$2,000.00. Larry McKinney made a motion to approve the purchase of the new computers at Town Hall. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried with all in favor. She also presented the Mitchell County Chambers request for \$5,000.00 for the next year to help provide services to small businesses in our community. Also requested is an increase of \$4,875.00 for the Spruce Pine Public Library budget request. Crystal advised the Council of the need for a third handheld meter wand for the public works crew to be able to read water meters efficiently every month. She explained that one of them stays torn up all the time it seems. Larry McKinney made a motion to purchase a third handheld. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried with present in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned by motion of Council Member Jackie Rensink.

Shelley Buchanan, Town Clerk

Darla Harding, Mayor

James Acuff, Council Member

Rocky Buchanan, Council Member

Larry McKinney, Council Member

Jackie Rensink, Council Member