

**Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council
Monday, June 28, 2021**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on June 28, 2021. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members James Acuff, Rocky Buchanan, and Jackie Rensink. Staff in attendance included Darlene Butler, Shelley Buchanan and Crystal Young. Others attended, including Michael Vance, Marjorie Rogers, Laura Mitchell, Jennifer Hagood, Wendy Smith, Peter Franklin and Ariana Maniatis (Mitchell News-Journal).

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. Rocky Buchanan 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 June 14, 2021. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2021/2022 BUDGET

Mayor Darla Harding opened the public hearing to hear comments on the proposed budget for fiscal year 2021/22. Crystal Young gave a synopsis of changes to the budget. She noted that the proposed budget for the General Fund is approximately 7% less than the 2020/21 fiscal year. The tax rate will remain at \$0.51 per \$100 valuation. The budget includes a water and sewer rate increase.

Marjorie Jones asked why there was a decrease in the budget amount given to the Toe River Arts Council. James Acuff responded that the council simply wanted to contribute the same amount as given to the Mitchell County Chamber which is \$5,000. This is a decrease of \$1,000.00.

Laura Mitchell asked if the proceeds from the sale of the water shed had been put into a separate savings account and if there was a portion of these funds allotted for the downtown area. Crystal explained that these funds are part of the fund balance and to her knowledge there had not been a specific allotment for downtown.

With no further comments, the public hearing was closed.

The Council expressed their appreciation to Crystal for her hard work on the budget.

Rocky Buchanan moved to approve the budget as it stands. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor. Said budget is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.

ACTION AGENDA

Crystal Young presented Budget Ordinance Amendment #4 to the Council. After some discussion Rocky Buchanan made a motion to adopt the amendment. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor. Said Budget Ordinance Amendment is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.

Crystal presented a resolution to adopt the Federal Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and establish the ARPA Special Revenue Fund. James Acuff made a motion to adopt the resolution. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor. Said resolution is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.

Crystal presented a tax release notice for Natalie Sparks and Nena Cole for a boat they say they no longer own. James Acuff moved to approve the release as presented. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, with all present in favor. Said tax release is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.

Jackie Rensink moved to provide water at outside rates with no annexation to William Burleson at 646 Beaver Creek Road. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Mitchell stated that a few years ago she had approached former Town Manager Richard Canipe and the Council concerning flooding on upper street from heavy rainfall. She wanted to follow up on this request. Both Mayor Harding and Darlene Butler agreed that this issue had been addressed by opening up storm drains on Phillip Frye's property. Ms. Mitchell also asked about annexing in her property on the golf course, to which Darlene said she simply needs to request annexation in writing and send it to Town Hall. This is the old Fairway Inn and she is looking to put it on the National Historic Registry.

Jennifer Hagood advised the Council she plans to open her ice cream shop on Oak Avenue in the next couple of months.

Michael Vance addressed the Council concerning the zoning issues brought up in previous meetings. Mr. Vance shared that he had hired a law firm to get a second opinion on the zoning requests he had made and the recommendations given by our town attorney Lloyd Hise. Mr. Vance distributed a letter from the law firm he hired, which is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. Darlene Butler advised the Council after she had skimmed over the letter she did not see anything contradictory to what our attorney had already said. Which is basically that the Council can move forward regardless of the Planning and Zoning Board's recommendation if they choose to do so. Mayor Harding conveyed to Mr. Vance they have not decided to change their stance on this zoning issue at this time. Mr. Vance made it clear he would like the Council to reconsider this with urgency as he has a lot of time and money invested in a new business in town. The Council expressed their frustration with Mr. Vance's methods of communications. He in return shared his frustrations with the Council.

TOWN MANAGER

- ✓ Darlene gave an update on the major water leak on Humpback Mountain Rd. She advised the break has been uncovered at 20 feet deep and maintenance hopes to have it repaired in the next few hours.
- ✓ The Blue Ridge Boutique Hotel will be having their grand opening tomorrow, June 29th, from 5:00-7:00 pm.
- ✓ Darlene advised Parks and Rec are still waiting on the pump for Brad Ragan pool.
- ✓ Work on Locust St sewer line continues and hopefully will be completed in August.
- ✓ She has put out a request for qualified engineers for the Hwy 226 water line replacement project.
- ✓ The fireworks display is still on schedule for Saturday, July 3rd at dark. Also, the Kiwanis club will having a parade through town celebrating the working men and women of our community.
- ✓ Darlene presented a request to the Council from the resident at 361 Parkwood Hills to help cover the cost of replacing their pressure pump. The most recent water outage in their area resulted in their new pump being burned up. Darlene suggested we at least pay half of the cost to replace the pump. It was consensus of the Council to pay half of the cost to replace the pump. She will send a letter stating this is the only time we will do this and they need to also purchase a safety shutoff for the unit in case of a water outage, as we do not guarantee contact.

MAYOR/COUNCIL REQUESTS/COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

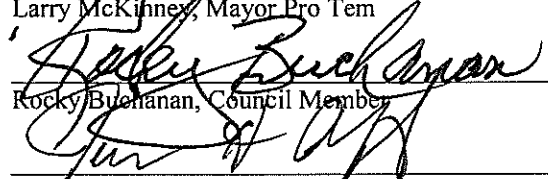
With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by motion of Jackie Rensink at 6:30 PM.

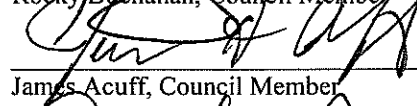
Shelley Buchanan, Town Clerk

Darla Harding, Mayor

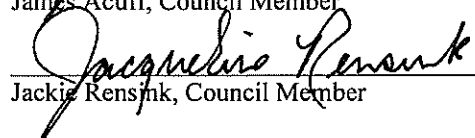
Absent
Larry McKinney, Mayor Pro Tem



Rocky Buchanan, Council Member



James Acuff, Council Member



Jackie Rensink, Council Member