

Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council
Monday, August 23, 2021

A meeting of the Town Council was held on August 23, 2021. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members James Acuff, Rocky Buchanan, Jackie Rensink and Larry McKinney. Staff in attendance included Darlene Butler, Shelley Buchanan and Crystal Young. Others attended, including Lloyd Hise, Carl Whitson, Mable Whitson, Elihu Brown, Oliver Corbin, Sammy Wright, Ariana Maniatis (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

Larry McKinney moved to approve the agenda, adding a closed session after the Town Manager's report. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Larry McKinney moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 9, 2021. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Sammy Wright attended the meeting to ask the Council to help with the water coming down onto his property and his neighbor's (Oliver Corbin). He says there is no culvert there and the water is destroying his driveway. There is also an issue of sewer running down an embankment from another neighbors' house in the area. Darlene advised that Phillip Hise had been up there several times to look the problem and spoke to Mr. Wright. Phillip says that the neighbor above Mr. Wright (David Manis) needs to change the curvature of his driveway to or put in something to help carry the water to our ditch. Rocky and James concurred that the sewer issued needs to be taken to the either the Mitchell County building Inspector or Health Department. Rocky Buchanan told Mr. Wright they would have Phillip Hise meet with him to see what could be done.

ACTION AGENDA

Town Attorney Lloyd Hise presented the Council with an order permanently closing a portion of the public alley way on Hazel Avenue. Said order is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. Larry McKinney made a motion to adopt the order to permanently close the alley. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER

- ✓ Darlene presented information on the DEQ Merger/ Regionalization Feasibility Grant for the Council's consideration. This study would evaluate the cost and practicality of connecting the water and sewer systems of Spruce Pine, Burnsville, and Bakersville.
- ✓ There was a meeting at the county discussing the CDBG Revitalization Grant, which provides new doublewides to qualified persons who currently live in dilapidated homes.
- ✓ Darlene spoke to Tommy Winchester, who requested that legal counsel write letters to the property owners of the 2 properties the Town wishes to have condemned, giving them ten days to respond.
- ✓ Public Works poured concrete for the posts at Riverside Park for the Story Trail.
- ✓ Residents of Carpenter Island are moving debris from the bridge then will call to have public works re-gravel our side.
- ✓ Darlene updated the Council on the Police Department. They are still working diligently to make drug arrests. Billy is still working on getting portable cameras.
- ✓ The library did not flood after last week's torrential rain.
- ✓ We are still waiting to hear from the PARTF grant. She hopes to hear soon.
- ✓ Darlene is currently working on a list of mowing and weeding responsibilities for Parks and Rec and whoever gets the bid to do the contracted mowing and landscaping.
- ✓ Brad Ragan Pool will be open for 2 more weekends.
- ✓ Darlene reminded the Council of the High Country COG Banquet on September 10th.

MAYOR/COUNCIL REQUESTS / COMMENTS

- Mayor Harding and Council Member Rocky Buchanan asked Lloyd Hise if he had considered giving the Town a recommendation for a successor to take his place after his retirement in January. Lloyd advised he had not but he would be happy to talk to a few of his colleagues to see if there was interest and he would report back the Council.
- Darla asked who is responsible for making sure the restrooms at Riverside Park are clean. Darlene responded that parks and rec employees clean the restrooms under Michael Wood's supervision. Darla and Jackie both said there have been complaints that the women's restroom at Riverside is very dirty and needs attention.
- James Acuff asked that Darlene speak to Dr. Boyd as to the outside appearance of the Blue Ridge Boutique Hotel. He said it is dirty and not at all appealing and we as a Town have a large investment in that project.

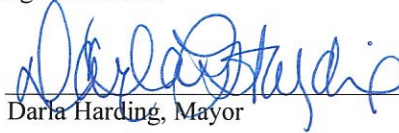
CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Harding asked for a motion to enter into closed session, citing NCGS 143-318.11(a) (6): ...to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee. Jackie Rensink moved to enter into closed session. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Council requested that the Town Manager, Town Finance Officer, and Town Clerk remain for the closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

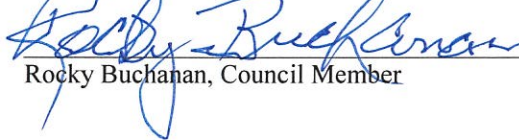
Jackie Rensink moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 PM.

Shelley Buchanan, Town Clerk



Darla Harding, Mayor

Larry McKinney, Mayor Pro Tem



Rocky Buchanan, Council Member

James Acuff, Council Member



Jackie Rensink, Council Member

DEQ Merger/Regionalization Feasibility Grant

DEQ offers competitive grants in its Merger/Regionalization Feasibility Study program. The program provides grants of up to \$50,000 to local governments to hire consulting engineers to study the challenges, benefits, and implications for the utilities to merge (in part or in whole); to regionalize; or some combination thereof.

The program and potential grant was discussed during discussions with local officials in Mitchell and Yancey Counties about joint industrial sites. Spruce Pine and Bakersville's cooperation during emergency situations also illustrates the value of this type of study.

The Town of Burnsville has agreed to be the applicant for the grant. High Country Council of Governments has attended the DEQ application training and can prepare the application and assist the town with administration if they are funded.

If awarded, the study will evaluate the cost and practicality of connecting the water and sewer systems of Burnsville, Spruce Pine, and Bakersville. Burnsville's water system currently extends east to Micaville. Spruce Pine's water system currently extends north to Ledger.

If funded, the three Towns will procure, through an RFP process, a civil engineer who will conduct the study.

High Country COG will be in communication with Burnsville, Bakersville, and Spruce Pine regarding the grant application. A letter from Spruce Pine and Bakersville will be required for the application. Applicants and partnering towns are not bound to act on the study's recommendations. The Town will have 3 years to conduct the study and the application requires no match. Applications are due in the DEQ office by 5:00pm on September 30, 2021.