

**Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council
Monday, July 25, 2022**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on July 25, 2022. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members James Acuff, Rocky Buchanan, Larry McKinney and Jackie Rensink. Staff in attendance included Darlene Butler, Shelley Buchanan, Libby Phillips, Kasey Cook, and Crystal Young. Others attended, including Chad Donnahoo, Lori McIntyre, Dori Settles, Lynn Holler, Michael Holler, Cynthia Sciacca, Sherry Sautner, Tommy Pendley, Heather Pendley, Cecil Polly, Mandi Polly, and Phillip Hise.

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

Larry McKinney moved to approve the agenda with the addition of a closed session citing NC G.S. 143.318.11a (6) and (3). Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

James Acuff moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 11th, 2022. Larry McKinney seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

APPOINTMENTS

Sherry Sautner of Spruce Pine Southern Shows approached the Council with a request for their blessing to hold an event downtown in June 2023. She explained this event would be the Spruce Pine Space Festival and would require that upper street and subsequent side streets be closed to thru traffic. She is working with NC DOT on permission to close the street. She elaborated the festival would include food trucks, guest speakers, costume contest, local artists and crafters, alien themed merchandise sales, along with inflatables and games for kids. She noted this would be a great way to bring people and money to the downtown businesses as they will need gas, food, and lodging. Her attendance expectation is 10,000 to 15,000. Ms. Sautner thanked the Council for their time and consideration. Mayor Darla Harding thanked Ms. Sautner for her presentation. She suggested that Ms. Sautner coordinate dates with SPMS and the Chamber, and finalize at the next Council meeting.

ACTION AGENDA

Darlene presented a Resolution Requesting the Services of the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center for the Town of Spruce Pine. Said resolution is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. Jackie Rensink made a motion to adopt the Resolution Requesting the Services of the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center. Larry McKinney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Darlene presented a Memorandum of Understanding for the Spruce Pine Downtown Ordinance Review and Recommendations Planning Report Project. Said memorandum of understanding is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. Larry McKinney moved to enter in to Memorandum of Understanding for the Spruce Pine Downtown Ordinance Review and Recommendations Planning Report Project. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mayor Harding asked for discussion concerning the proposed Moratorium for Discharging Privately Hauled Sewage into the Town of Spruce Pine's sewer system. She explained, if adopted, the moratorium banning all discharge would begin September 1st and would be in effect for one year in order to give the Council time to rectify the situation. Darla made it clear this action was not intended to hurt any business but is necessary for the good of the Town. Tommy Pendley with Mayland Septic commented that his septic pumping business is his livelihood as well as that of his two employees. He stated that it is a necessary service for the citizens of Mitchell County. Phillip Hise noted that these businesses will be required to provide the Town with paperwork for each haul dumped, according to Stephanie Williams at the state of NC. Darlene Butler recommended the Council require the entire operation to be based in Mitchell County, charge per truck size at .05 cents per gallon for regular and .07 cents per gallon for commercial waste, and possibly limit dumping to one location that could be better monitored. After some discussion it was the consensus of the Council to table the discussion until the next meeting and directed the town manager to create a new policy that clarifies the requirements of sewage dumping in the Town system with these updates. The Council thanked Tommy and Cecil for attending the meeting, voicing their concerns, and being understanding of the stance the Town is being forced to take.

Crystal Young showed a slide show presentation of the proposed splash pad at Riverside Park and the proposed new playground at Brad Ragan Park. She noted that Darlene, Michael Wood, and herself had done a lot of research and site visits over the last three months. She advised there is a 20-24 week lead time on the materials and she hopes both will be operational by Memorial Day 2023. She presented quotes on both projects from Carolina Parks and Play. Larry McKinney made a motion to accept the proposal from Carolina Parks and Play for the splash pad at Riverside Park. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor. Larry McKinney made a motion to accept the proposal from Carolina Parks and Play for the playground at Brad Ragan Park. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor. Darla thanked Crystal and Darlene for their hard work and diligence on these projects.

Darlene presented a Resolution revising the Employment of Relatives Section in the Town of Spruce Pine's Personnel Policy Manual. She explained the current policy is too restrictive and vague for the size of Town we have. James Acuff asked if we were having problems with this. Darlene replied we had not but the current policy is contradictory. Said resolution is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. Larry McKinney made a motion to adopt the Resolution revising the Employment of Relatives Section in the Town of Spruce Pine's Personnel Policy Manual. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Harding asked for a motion to enter into closed session. Larry McKinney made a motion to enter into closed session citing NC G.S. 143.318.11a (6)(3). Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Upon return to open session Darlene initiated a discussion on a proposed 5% increase in salaries for the police department, including the police chief. James Acuff asked if we would have to dip into the fund balance for this increase. Darlene answered she thought that was the case and that there would also have to be a budget amendment. Rocky Buchanan made a motion to stay at the 3% cost of living increase and not give any additional. James Acuff seconded the motion, which failed to carry. Darla Harding, Larry McKinney, and Jackie Rensink voted in opposition of this motion. Larry McKinney moved to approve a 5% salary increase to all employees in the police department. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried with three board members in favor and two against. Rocky Buchanan and James Acuff voted in opposition of the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT- none

TOWN MANAGER

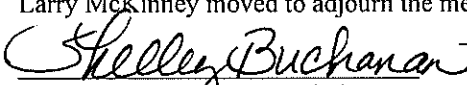
- ✓ Libby and Darlene will be attending the fifth and sixth classes in Boone for the Rural Community Capacity Building grant.
- ✓ The EDC has hired Matthew Ward as the new EDC Director and he begins August 1st.
- ✓ Darlene noted she has finished quarterly reporting for the SCIF grants. Also, a six month report for the PARTF grant has been given.
- ✓ Darlene and Libby visited West Jefferson and Newton NC for advice on a successful street scape plan.
- ✓ David Whitson is providing quotes on replacing the bridge lights in Town.
- ✓ Hickory Striping has been asked to replace striping on Locust Ave as well as remarking for the Montessori school. Darlene noted she asked Michael Vance if he would allow the Town to stripe the portion of the theatre parking lot he owns and he declined.
- ✓ The Public Works department is working on several patching jobs and Moretz Paving will be starting on Mchone Road. She also asked Moretz for a quote on paving the rest of Walnut Ave and Pine St.
- ✓ Darlene complimented Crystal on the wonderful presentation of the splash pad and playground projects.
- ✓ She updated the Council on the new restrooms at Riverside Park. She is waiting on a revision of plans from Stan Cook making them usable year-round.


MAYOR/COUNCIL REQUESTS / COMMENTS

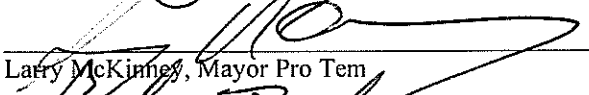
- ✓ Jackie Rensink asked if we had received any applications for the Public Works Director position currently available. Darlene answered that she has received around 10 applications so far and will be taking them through July 29th.

ADJOURNMENT

Larry McKinney moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 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