

**MINUTES - SPECIAL MEETING
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
AUGUST 20, 2008**

A special meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order at 5:08 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 1500 Blowing Rock Road. Mayor Loretta Clawson presided. Council members present were Mayor Pro-Tem Lynne Mason, Liz Aycock, Rennie Brantz, Janet Pepin and Stephen Phillips. Town Attorney Sam Furgiuele was also present. Staff members present were Town Manager Greg Young; Town Clerk Freida Van Allen; Assistant to the Manager Jim Byrne; Police Chief Bill Post; Fire Chief Reggie Hassler; Development Services Director John Spear; Public Works Director Blake Brown; Public Utilities Director Rick Miller and Program Coordinator Andrea Gimlin.

The purpose of the meeting was to join the Watauga County Commissioners and discuss two specific matters. Representatives of the County included Commission Chairman Jim Deal and Commissioners John Cooper, Winston Kinsey and Mary Moretz. Staff present were County Manager Rocky Nelson, County Clerk Anita Fogle, Assistant County Manager Deron Geouque and Planning Director Joe Furman.

DISCUSSION OF WATER AND SEWER ISSUES

County Commission Chair Jim Deal said he hopes the Town will be a part of a joint effort to construct an affordable housing complex near the Brookshire Park. Mr. Deal said supplying water and sewer service to the site is crucial in order to offer homes at an affordable house. Council member Aycock questioned what type of rules will determine affordability. Mr. Deal said that rules have not yet been developed. Council member Mason said the Town needs to formulate an extension plan for future water connections, pointing out that the Town currently does not extend into rural growth areas. Council member Mason also indicated that it is sometimes difficult for municipalities to provide public funds for housing. Mr. Deal said other communities face the same affordable housing problem and somehow manage to solve the problem. Mr. Deal said even though there are no firm plans at this time, the County would like to move ahead with the planning process for the complex and that water and sewer service is a key component. Council member Mason pointed out that the Town is beginning the process to upgrade the water plant and construct a new intake, an action which will cost approximately \$21 million. Mr. Deal emphasized that the County will not ask the Town to accomplish a financially irresponsible task. Council member Mason then asked how much it will cost to extend water and sewer service to this property. Public Utilities Director Rick Miller responded that it will cost about \$600,000 to complete the entire project or about \$170,000 to complete the front portion of the property. Council member Mason suggested that Joe Furman and the County's Affordable Housing Task Force meet with the Lawrence Group during the charette week scheduled for October to receive input from the County on the Town's land use plan update. As discussion concluded, both boards agreed that both the Town and the County Affordable Housing Task Forces meet to discuss the proposed housing complex.

County Commission Chairman Jim Deal said he is unsure of the role the County Commissioners should play in helping with the Town's new water intake. Mr. Deal inquired as to whether or not the Town is planning to ask the County to support the project. Mr. Deal also asked if County residents will be allowed to connect onto the line once it is completed. Town Manager Greg Young responded that the Town is beginning an educational process to inform Boone citizens and the surrounding communities about the new water intake. Town Manager Young said he would be happy to make the presentation at a future County Commissioners' meeting. Council member Mason explained that the Water Study projected future connections with Blowing Rock and out in the County so that the County's support of the project is welcome. Council member Mason pointed out that connections to the line are impossible since the line will distribute raw water, not treated water. Mayor Clawson explained that the entire water intake process will require over five years and that construction will not occur within the next two years. After discussing a new water classification for the New River, both boards agreed that the Town will make a presentation to the County Commissioners regarding the new water intake.

DISCUSSION OF RECREATION ISSUES

County Commission Chairman Jim Deal stated that in the past the Town of Boone has funded the Parks and Recreation Department \$44,500 until Council decided to cut funding for FY 08/09. Mr. Deal said he wanted to address the rumor that the County cut the amount of funding to the Boone Fire Department because the Town cut the Parks and Recreation Department allocation. Mr. Deal explained that the County recently administered a tier system in order to allocate additional funds to fire departments that do not receive much funding or do not have any fund-raising opportunities. Mr. Deal said the Boone, Blowing Rock and Foscoe fire departments each received \$19,000, the next tier received \$24,000 with the lowest tier receiving the most money. Mr. Deal said because the Boone rural fire district has a 2-cent tax increase the Boone Fire Department will actually receive an additional \$225,000 in funding. Fire Chief Reggie Hassler explained that the additional funds were used to hire three more firemen. Council member Aycock said she understood that the County did not cut funding to the Fire Department because of the Parks and Recreation cut; however, she felt that the Outside Agency Funding Committee recommended cutting Parks and Recreation funding due to double taxation. Mr. Deal commented that his business in downtown Boone pays County, Town and DBDA taxes and that he does not complain. Mr. Deal said that historically municipalities provide their own recreation department. Council member Mason said the Town provides several recreation areas in town that are used for the “good” of the whole community, not just Town residents. Council member Aycock reiterated again that Town citizens, who pay County taxes, should not have to subsidize another allocation to a County Parks and Recreation Department. Council member Mason pointed out that the Council did not cut the funding in a “mean-spirited” way and that the Town simply did not have the funds to allocate. Council member Mason said if the Town residents are using Parks and Recreation facilities disproportionately (only 22% of Town residents these facilities), she would recommend that the Town provide an additional funding supplement. Commissioner Mary Moretz asked if the Town might consider funding the Parks and Recreation Department in the future. Council member Brantz said the Town may reconsider funding.

County Commission Chairman Jim Deal thanked the Town Council for having an open, frank discussion about these issues.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Town Clerk

Mayor