

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Meeting
July 9, 2024

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street Blowing Rock, NC. Present were Mayor Charlie Sellers, Mayor Pro-Tem Doug Matheson, Council Members Cat Perry, David Harwood, Melissa Pickett and Pete Gherini. Others in attendance were Town Manager Shane Fox, Town Attorney Tucker Deal, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, IT Director Thomas Steele, Finance Director Tasha Brown, Emergency Services Director Kent Graham, Interim Police Chief Nathan Kirk and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner, who recorded the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sellers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Mayor Sellers verified attendance via roll call.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTE APPROVAL

Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson made the motion to approve the minutes from the June 11, 2024, regular and closed session meetings, seconded by Council Member Gherini. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Gherini made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 25, 2024, Mid-Year Retreat meeting, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved.

REGULAR AGENDA ADOPTION

Council Member Pickett made a motion to approve the regular meeting agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Annual Tax Report and Order of Collection**
- 2. Fireworks Permit – Blowing Rock Chamber**

Council Member Perry made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

None

PUBLIC HEARING

1. TDA Ordinance Amendment

Town Manager Shane Fox stated at their June 4, 2024 meeting, the TDA Board voted to request Town Council consider holding a Public Hearing to discuss a text amendment change to Section 2, Appoint of Membership within the TDA establishment ordinance. The request was specific to Group One, Lodging. The TDA Board voted to request of the Town Council to consider adding language to the current TDA Ordinance to allow for lodging owners to appoint a designee to represent their business and serve the TDA Board, i.e. a General Manager of the hotel, motel, lodge etc.

Manager Fox further stated the current ordinance reads as follows:

Section 2. Appointment of Membership.

The Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority shall consist of five (5) members who shall be appointed and approved by the Town Council, shall also be voting residents and/or taxpayers of the Town, and shall be selected as follows:

Group One (Lodging) – 2 appointees.

Two members shall be individuals who are affiliated with the businesses that collect occupancy tax.

The TDA Board would ask the Town Council to consider adding the language “or their appointed designee. If a designee is appointed, they must be approved by the Town Council prior to assuming the seat” to end of the above section 2, Lodging.

TDA Executive Director Tracy Brown explained the reason this was brought up to the Board at their last meeting was because TDA staff is seeing a change since this ordinance was written. The majority of hotels, motels and lodges are no longer owned by individuals that live and work here, but instead by absentee owners who have a general manager operating the day to day business. He further explained the request of the TDA is for Council consider re-writing the language in the ordinance to reflect lodging representatives: *“two members shall be individuals who are affiliated with the businesses that collect occupancy tax”*.

Mayor Sellers opened the Public Hearing. With no questions or comments Council Member Gherini made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Council Member Perry. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Gherini made a motion to approve the ordinance amendment as presented, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson. Unanimously approved.

OFFICIAL REPORTS & COMMENTS

- Mayor Sellers – Thanked the citizens for attending the 4th of July festivities,

thanked staff for all their hard work making sure everything went smoothly for the 4th of July, thanked the public works department for their hard work replacing a broken water line at Chetola on Sunday, July 7th, Planning Board will meet July 11th at 5:30 pm and Council will have a special meeting on July 23rd at 6:00 pm.

- Council Member Perry – Thanked public works and all staff for their hard work.
- Council Member Harwood – Thanked staff for their hard work to make the parade so successful. He expressed he felt it was the biggest parades with ninety (90) entries.
- Council Member Pickett – Echoed the rest of Council’s comments. She mentioned the Town has the best staff and the Town couldn’t do without them.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson – Thanked staff for their hard work for the successful parade and hard work keeping Town clean during the busy 4th of July week. From the NC League, look for insurance to go up significantly in the next couple of years.
- Council Member Gherini – Echoed what everyone said about the parade and staff. It was a wonderful event.
- Town Attorney Tucker Deal – None
- Town Manager Shane Fox – Thanked staff for their hard work for the 4th of July parade, thanked staff for their hard work on the water leak at Chetola on July 7th, thanked Al and Velda Shackelford for providing lunch for Town staff. Gave an update on the Main Street project and the Summer Council Retreat. With the current drought conditions and the reservoir being five (5) feet below a Stage 1 Voluntary Water Conservation will be issued on Wednesday, July 10th.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:25 PM Council Member Perry made a motion to go into closed session, **NCGS 143-318.11.(A)(3) – Attorney/Client privilege**, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:55 p.m. the Council returned to open session and with no further business, Council Member Harwood made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Council Member Perry. Unanimously approved.

MAYOR _____
Charlie Sellers, Mayor

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

Attachments

Annual Tax Report and Order of Collection – Attachment A