

Council Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2018

Prior to the Council Meeting Mayor Jim Hager asked if the audience would oppose allowing Sherriff candidate John Lovin to speak and answer questions so he would not be required to sit through the Council Meeting. Each Candidate for Sheriff was invited and Lovin was the only candidate to attend the meeting. There were no objections therefore Lovin spoke to approximately twenty Lake Santeetlah residents of his concerns for Graham County and his plans for change if elected as Sheriff.

Mayor Jim Hager called the meeting to order at 10:20AM. Council Members Karen Anderson, Keith Predmore, and Bob Wehr were present for the meeting. Town Administrator Kim Matheson, Clerk Emily Hooper and Public Works Technician Eric Hayes were also present. Councilman Patrick O'Donovan was not available.

The first order of business was the approval of the agenda. There were no necessary additions or changes necessary. Councilman Keith Predmore made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilwoman Karen Anderson seconded. All others approved, the motion carried.

After review of the March 9, 2018 Council Meeting Minutes, there were no additions or changes necessary. Councilman Keith Predmore made a motion to approve the Council Meeting Minutes. Councilman Bob Wehr seconded. All others approved, the motion carried.

After review of the March 30, 2018 Special Meeting Minutes, there were no additions or changes necessary. Councilman Keith Predmore made a motion to approve the Council Meeting Minutes. Councilman Bob Wehr seconded. All others approved, the motion carried.

Financial Report/Tax Report: Town Administrator Kim Matheson explained that the balance sheet presented displayed the balances as of March 31, 2018. The general operating balance is \$96,310.51 and water operating \$12,230.22. The tax revenue from Graham County for February is \$2,386.35. The general account balance does not reflect this income. The remaining tax collections will be charged a 10% collection fee from Graham County. Approximately \$10,500 remains outstanding for Lake Santeetlah taxes at this time.

The large water line break on Thunderbird Trail is being repaired and will result in expense from the Water Operating Checking. The Town is following all recommendations from the insurance company while completing the repair. According to Town Technician, Eric Hayes, "it's fixed better than it ever has been."

The Occupancy Tax account at United Community Bank has \$49.06. The rental season is not started yet and payments will begin to increase. Resident Tina Emerson asked that Town Administrator Kim Matheson confirm that the Occupancy Tax funds could be deposited into an account using the Town of Lake Santeetlah federal tax ID number. Emerson felt that it should have its own. Matheson will confirm the requirements. Connie Gross asked if Town Staff was completing tasks for the TDA during time working for the Town of Lake Santeetlah. Gross stressed that this would be considered "double dipping." Town Administrator Kim Matheson explained that at this time there had been two possibly three deposits that came in and was taken to the bank and deposited.

Councilman Bob Wehr made a motion to approve the financial report as presented. Councilman Keith Predmore seconded, all others approved. The motion carried.

Request for Public Comment:

Tina Emerson: Emerson would like the Council to consider changing the water billing method from quarterly to monthly. When the water has been turned off or not used for one month or possibly two it is difficult to track water usage. Emerson suspects that someone could have occupied her rental home on occasion during the winter

months but has a hard time tracking monthly usage when only provided with a quarterly usage chart on each invoice. Emerson understands the increase in postage the Town would incur from this change, but would like the idea to be considered. Mayor Jim Hager suggested that Tina Emerson discuss this during the May budget meeting when more residents are available to provide input. Resident Zach Anderson recommended that the Town attempt to notify residents on a regular basis that emailed invoices are available and would reduce postage despite the decision of monthly or quarterly billing. Many residents may not be aware of this service.

Emerson explained that she had recently submitted a public record request for the name/names of the bidder for parcel 4&5 on Santeetlah Trail. Emerson would also like to know when the bids were received by the Town. Emerson reached out to the Attorney General and the NC School of Government and was informed that the information requested had all been public and should be released. According to Emerson if the Town of Lake Santeetlah attorney spoke otherwise then she had provided false information and the Town should consider hiring a new attorney. Emerson requested that if the attorney did say to withhold the information she would like to see this in writing. Emerson stressed that as a resident any Town records requested must be provided that are considered public. Town Administrator Kim Matheson reassured Emerson that she would request the statement in writing.

Jean Kinney: Kinney has lived in the Town of Lake Santeetlah just over a year and is concerned why the bidder's name cannot be released. Kinney has shown an interest in purchasing a parcel along Santeetlah trail which would allow her to have a lakefront lot. Kinney shared that she didn't like all the trouble and arguing that seems to go on within the Town.

Mayor Jim Hager explained the process for land sale within the Town is strictly followed according to the Resolution. There has been no information withheld during the preparation to divide the lots on Santeetlah Trail and preparing a price. The item has been on every agenda since May 2017.

Diana Simons: The Tourism Development Authority will be having a meeting this Saturday, April 14, 2018. At this time there isn't a detailed budget to display or report on. The rental season is approaching and funds will increase. When a budget is developed the office staff will receive compensation for administrative duties completed for the TDA. Simon shared a few of the projected plans for the funds received: The TDA hopes to conjunct with the TPOA (Thunderbird Property Owner's Association) and plan boating activities and parties, a website will be developed and maintained that will list and promote events within the community. The idea of improving the walking area around the Town has been discussed, possibly hiring a landscaper to plant bushes in certain areas, while trimming and cutting back in others. At this time approximately thirty homes are rented within the Town. Mayor Jim Hager stated that one particular homeowner had enough rentals this season that were already booked to supply the Town with \$1200.00.

Zach Anderson: Anderson asked for an explanation of how the price was determined for the land sale on Santeetlah Trail. Anderson stated that his home on Lake Santeetlah had been in his family over twenty years and he had no plans of selling, but the price seemed excessive that Anderson will be required to pay in order to keep his dock. Mayor Jim Hager explained that Erma Phillips, had provided the tax value and suggested that the Town receive a minimum of fifteen percent of the appraised value for each parcel. The attorney, appraiser, and Town Council were all involved with the determination of the final proposal. The cost for the survey and appraisal was split between each parcel increasing the cost by \$1,890.00. Anderson suggested the Council re-visit the price and consider accepting a more reasonable (5%) offer. Mayor Hager stated if the parcel was not sold at the proposed price it would be his right as a citizen to confront the Council with another offer that could be accepted.

Jack Gross: An email from Councilman Keith Predmore was sent to fellow Council Members and two Town residents in response to numerous public records request over the past two weeks. The email explained the difficult environment that Town Staff deals with on a regular basis and his intent to "tamp down" on it within the coming year. Resident Jack Gross provided a copy of this email to those in attendance at the meeting and asked

the Town Council repeatedly if they agreed with Mr. Predmore's email. Gross stated that if the Council failed to respond in opposition he would consider that as an agreement. Councilman Bob Wehr asked Mr. Gross to explain his point in asking for their opinion of Mr. Predmore's email. Gross received no other feedback from the Council. Gross stated that the email was sent due to public records request made by himself and Tina Emerson. The requests were legal and legitimate and his right as a citizen. The emails back and forth have become a "game." The requests were not "maliciously" sent choosing to re-ask the same information but they were forced to do so as the information requested was not provided. Gross re-affirmed that if the Council neglected to oppose to Mr. Predmore's email he would consider their response affirmative.

Town Administrator Kim Matheson explained that according to the Town of Lake Santeetlah Public Record Policy, Town Staff has 72 hours to respond to each request. According to the attorney the name of the bidder, copy of the check, or other documents that include the bidders name is not public information. All other questions have been answered within the time frame.

Old Business

#1 Lakeside Guardrail Proposal – Stable Guy/Clean Cut Tree Service Estimate: Scott Kamps has been notified of the additions to the proposal but has not submitted a new bid at this time. There will be no action on this matter until both bids are received on the same scope of work. At that time additional funds may be requested from Lakeside to cover the expense. \$4,500.00 remains in the account from the Lakeside road turnover, however the guardrail is expected to exceed this amount.

#3 Zoning Regulations/ZBA Board: The Zoning Regulations will become effective June 1, 2018. The Board of Adjustments must be appointed and approved by the Council by the May Council Meeting. Each Council member should have any nominees interested in being on the board submit an acknowledgement of interest in writing to the Town. All nominations will be reviewed and approved by the Council. Town Staff will send a mass email and post a message on the Town website to notify as many residents as possible.

#4 Review of Front Entrance: Mike Donnell, Landscape Architect and Lake Santeetlah Homeowner, agreed to complete drawings for the front entrance. Donnell recently had shoulder surgery and requested five or six more weeks to complete the project as he takes time to recover. This will be re-addressed when the drawings are received.

#5 Approval of Town Hall Use Policy: The Town Hall Use Policy recommended by Attorney Ellen Davis has been reviewed by the Town Council. The TPOA typically uses Town Hall for meetings at 7:00PM and according to the policy this would need additional approval. The policy states that Town Hall could be used during the hours of 8:00AM – 7:00PM. The Council delayed action to discuss options with the TPOA or edit the policy prior to approval.

#6 Approval of Credit Card Policy: The State Treasurer's office recommended the Town create a Credit Card Use Policy and abide by it accordingly. The policy has been distributed for Council review prior to the meeting. Councilman Keith Predmore made a motion to approve the proposed policy. Councilman Bob Wehr seconded. All others approved. The motion carried.

New Business

#1 Town Technician Maintenance Report: The thrust block has been installed as recommended by Core & Main and the insurance company after the major water break on Thunderbird Trail. The project was completed Thursday, April 5th.

#2 Donation: Stecoah Valley Center Arts & Crafts Drive About: Stecoah Valley Center has requested a donation of \$100.00 for this yearly event that attracts both locals and tourists. The event allows many locals artists/craftsman to display their work. Councilman Bob Wehr made a motion to donate \$100.00 to Stecoah Valley Center. Councilman Keith Predmore seconded. All others approved. The motion carried.

#3 Steven & Patricia Oweida, 114 Cherokee Trail, Purchase of Town Property abutting the 1817 Contour Line of Lake Santeetlah: Councilwoman Karen Anderson made a motion to approve the land transfer from the Town of Lake Santeetlah to Steven & Patricia Oweida as presented. Councilman Bob Wehr seconded. All others approved. The motion passed.

Announcements:

Mayor Jim Hager announced that the next Council Meeting is May 11, 2018 at 10:00AM at Town Hall.

With no further business at this time Councilwoman Karen Anderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Keith Predmore seconded, all others agreed. The motion carried. Mayor Jim Hager adjourned the meeting at 11:15AM.

Meeting Adjourned

Jim Hager, Mayor

Emily Hooper, Town Clerk