

Town of Lake Santeetlah (The Town)

Council Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2019

Mayor Jim Hager called the meeting to order at 10:00AM. Councilmembers Mary Williams and Keith Predmore were present for the meeting. Town Administrator Kim Matheson and Clerk Emily Hooper were also present. Councilmember Patrick O'Donovan was available by phone for the meeting.

The first order of business was the approval of the agenda. Councilmember Predmore made a motion to amend the agenda by introducing Troy Wilson, NCDOT representative as the first item of business followed by Jim Hyde visiting from the Graham County Sheriff's office to address security issues. Councilmember Williams seconded. All others approved.

Mayor Hager introduced Troy Wilson, NCDOT Division 14 Corridor Development Engineer. Wilson's position is to work with rural counties with upcoming projects and felt it would be beneficial to visit Lake Santeetlah and provide his contact information for any concerns or questions the Town may have. Wilson stated that he is new to the position and is committed to helping in any way he can.

After review of the December 14, 2018 Council Meeting Minutes, there were no additions or changes necessary within the minutes. Councilmember Williams made a motion to approve the Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Councilmember Predmore seconded. All others approved, the motion carried.

After review of the January 3, 2019 Special Meeting Minutes, there were no additions or changes necessary within the minutes. Councilmember Predmore made a motion to approve the Special Meeting Minutes as presented. Councilmember O'Donovan seconded. All others approved, the motion carried. Councilmember Williams did not vote as she was not present for the Special Meeting.

Financial Report/Tax Report: Town Administrator Matheson presented reports as of December 31, 2018. The general account balance is \$24,654.85; the water operating account balance is \$4,345.28. Tax collection for October was \$55,315.31, but the Town has not yet received these funds from Graham County. Matheson noted that the budget amendments approved at the December Council Meeting were not yet included in the budget. Councilmember Predmore made a motion to approve the financial reports as presented. Councilmember Williams seconded, all others approved. The motion carried.

Mayor Hager reported that he and Councilmember Predmore met with Sheriff Joseph Jones and four deputies last week. Hager discussed with Sheriff Jones the security needs for Lake Santeetlah and asked if he felt the officers would be interested in the additional hours. After a staff meeting Friday afternoon, Jones reported there were several officers interested in the extra work at a rate of \$22.00 per hour.

New Business

#1 Motion to Open Public Hearing: Councilmember Predmore made a motion to open the public hearing. Councilmember Williams seconded. All others approved. The motion carried.

#2 Water Rate Public Hearing: Mayor Hager opened the public hearing by explaining the financial situation of the water account. Last year the water fund lost \$4,000. Approximately 4,000,000 gallons of water were sold in 2018,

bringing in \$12,000 in revenue. Since July 1, 2018 the Town has spent \$17,590.05 in long term maintenance and supplies & equipment (line items in the budget) due to water breaks and repairs. This does not include the \$10,000 paid from the General Fund to repair the roads due to water breaks. There are several projects that need to be completed that must be paid by the water account and the funds are not available at this time. The outside and inside of the water tank needs to be painted. The insurance company is requiring a fence be installed around the tank. Lamar Williams has asked for a transmitter that will allow him to detect the tank levels of each tank from the pump house. This has been in the budget for two years but due to other repairs needed it has not been purchased. Town Administrator Matheson looked into a one-time assessment that would help to pay off the water meters. There are several steps to completing an assessment and would require several months to complete. According to Matheson, it is difficult to budget for water due to the aging system and on-going breaks and repairs. When the system was installed there were "shortcuts" taken that are now becoming evident and costing large amounts of money to repair.

Mayor Hager presented several options for increase of base rate and rate per 1000 gallons. After discussion the Council and those present at the meeting opined that the water fund needed additional funds. The Town could choose to take a stair step approach and raising the rate slightly, then having to do the same in the near future, or just to choose the highest option presented. Changing the rate will increase revenue by approximately \$27,067.00. This will be an average annual increase of \$138.00 for each resident. Currently the rate is 103.75 (base rate) and 3.00 per 1000 gallons. The proposed rate would be \$125.00 (base rate) and 6.00 per 1000 gallons. If approved this would help to build the revenue in the water fund and would allow the Town to complete the necessary projects.

In addition, the Water Reserves need additional funds to comply with State requirements. If the water main breaks and repairs continue at the same rate even the increased water revenue will not be sufficient. An assessment to pay off the water meters would allow the Town to put additional funds into Water Reserves.

Councilmember Predmore made a motion to increase the Town of Lake Santeetlah water rate to \$125.00 per quarter for a base rate and 6.00 per 1000 gallons and to begin the necessary steps to complete an assessment to build reserves. Councilmember Williams seconded. All others approved. The motion carried.

#3 Motion to Close Public Hearing: Councilmember Predmore made a motion to close the public hearing. Councilmember Williams seconded. All others approved. The motion carried.

Request for Public Comment:

Tanya Capeling: Capeling shared her concerns with the public hearing not having been advertised in a manner to inform all residents. Capeling felt that notice of the hearing should have been sent with the most recent water billing so that all residents were informed of the need to increase water rates. Capeling stressed that she was fully supportive of the rate increase.

In addition, Capeling requested that the Town distribute an updated directory. The last directory was printed in 2017 and is now outdated. Town Staff plans to work on an update and have a new one available for the spring. There were different options discussed of possibly offering an online version only rather than a printed copy. This will be further discussed when the directory is updated and ready to be published.

Diana Simons: The TDA held its quarterly meeting on Saturday. On-going projects for the TDA include the electric car charging station within the Town and the partnership with GREAT installing new signs throughout Graham County as well as Lake Santeetlah. The anticipated revenue for the year was \$10,000 for the TDA and that was slightly surpassed this month.

Jack Gross: Gross was present at the TDA meeting and pointed out that three of the five board members were on the phone and not physically in attendance for the meeting. Gross presented Councilmember and TDA Board Member Predmore with research regarding the rules for meetings. Gross noted that with only two members present it's possible that it wasn't considered an official meeting.

New Business (continued)

#5 Graham County Historical Association Donation Request: The Graham County Historical Association is seeking donations in order to continue the on-going projects to help revitalize Main Street in Graham County. The Association is working together to renovate the Old Snider Building on Main Street which is the location of the new Graham County Historical Museum. The Town of Lake Santeetlah partners with Graham County and needs to show support when such requests are submitted according to Councilmember Williams. Town residents can also be encouraged to donate privately. A mass email will be sent with the form attached. Williams made a motion to donate \$100.00 from the Town of Lake Santeetlah. Councilmember O'Donovan seconded. All others approved. The motion carried.

#6 Bill Smith, Purchase of Parcel 2 on Santeetlah Trail/Follow-up: The remaining balance of \$16,971.00 was paid on Monday morning for Parcel 2. This purchase is complete and Mack Tallant will be notified to finalize the recording.

#7 Consider/Appoint Vacant Council Seat: There were two applicants for the vacant council seat: Connie Gross and Roger Carlton. Councilmember Predmore made a motion to appoint Roger Carlton to fill the vacancy. Having no other nominations being made, Councilmember Williams seconded. All others approved. The motion carried.

#8 Robbinsville High School Shooting Sports/Donation: The Town of Lake Santeetlah supports Graham County Schools and has donated to other departments upon request. The Robbinsville Middle/High School Shooting team submitted a donation request. Councilmember Predmore made a motion to donate \$100.00. Councilmember Williams seconded. All others approved. The motion carried.

Old Business:

#1 Update of Revised Zoning Regulations: Councilmember Williams completed a red-lined draft of updates suggested by Attorney Bill Brazil. Williams would like to review and finish any changes needed. Williams will then circulate to the other councilmembers and will target to post a draft on the website by the February council meeting. A public hearing will be scheduled when everyone has had adequate time to review.

#2 Security Review: Jim Hyde, from the Graham County Sheriff's Department attended the meeting to answer any questions regarding security. Hyde explained the new sheriff has a new structure and new direction. The officers are visible and doing routine patrols throughout Graham County including Lake Santeetlah. These patrols are logged and those with a scanner can hear that the presence of law enforcement has increased within the Town since the new sheriff took office in early December. Hyde confirmed that there were several deputies interested in the extra work and Sheriff Jones would like to be in charge of scheduling the patrols to distribute the hours among his deputies fairly. At this time there are no patrols on the water, however they do patrol the boat ramps within the County and report any suspicious activity in those areas. Hyde explained that Sherriff Jones has new ideas, projects and behind the scenes work going on that will be impressive when it is made public. Mayor Hager commented that he had heard nothing but positive comments about the Sherriff since he took office.

Raymond Williams has worked as the Security Officer for many years. The Town Council noted that a uniformed officer in a patrol car would offer enhanced security. Councilmember Williams will work on a contract with the Graham County Sheriff's Office to identify the security needs and scope of work for an officer. Councilmember Williams made a motion to terminate the contract with Raymond Williams. Councilmember Predmore seconded. All others approved. The motion carried. Mayor Hager will draft a letter to terminate the current contract with Raymond Williams.

#3 Replenishing Gravel along road in Lakeside/One Way Drive: Estimates were received from Darrin Lail and Scott Kamps for the gravel work on Lakeside. Mayor Hager would like to talk with those who bid to ask about the type of gravel quoted in the estimate. There is gravel in the area now and the homeowners would like it to be the same type. A decision on this item is postponed until next month.

Discussion:

#1 Sewer Study Report/Keith Predmore: The website has been updated with general information concerning sewer systems, common issues and repair options. There is a drop down option titled sewer study where these articles will be posted. According to Councilmember Predmore, being familiar with the type of system we have, and common problems will help when deciding how to move forward.

Announcements:

Mayor Hager announced that the next Council Meeting is February 11, 2019 at 10:00AM at Town Hall.

With no further business at this time Councilmember Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Predmore seconded, all others agreed. The motion carried. Mayor Hager adjourned the meeting at 11:28AM.

Meeting Adjourned

Jim Hager, Mayor

Emily Hooper, Town Clerk