

Town of Lake Santeetlah

Council Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2017

Mayor Jim Hager called the meeting to order at 10:00AM. Council Members Connie Gross, Karen Anderson, Bob Wehr and Keith Predmore were present for the meeting. Town Administrator Kim Matheson and Public Works Technician Eric Hayes were also present. Town Clerk Emily Hooper was unable to attend.

The first order of business was the approval of the agenda. Councilwoman Connie Gross asked to add the shrubbery that encroaches Town property on Santeetlah Point to Old Business #3. Gross made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Councilman Bob Wehr seconded. All others approved, the motion carried.

After review of the May 16, 2017 Council Meeting Minutes there were no additions or changes necessary. Councilman Bob Wehr made a motion to approve. Councilwoman Connie Gross seconded. All others approved, the motion carried.

After review of the May 24, 2017 Special Meeting Minutes there were no additions or changes necessary. Councilwoman Connie Gross made a motion to approve. Councilman Bob Wehr seconded. All others approved, the motion carried.

After review of the May 27, 2017 Special Meeting Minutes there were no additions or changes necessary. Councilwoman Connie Gross made a motion to approve. Councilman Bob Wehr seconded. All others approved, the motion carried.

Financial Report: Town Administrator Kim Matheson reviewed the balance sheet through May 31, 2017. The balance in the General Operating Checking is \$59,721.42; Water operating \$19,002.47. The balance in the General Operating Checking reflects a \$64,000 transfer to the UCB Savings account for road resurfacing. The reimbursement from the Sewer Study grant has not been received at this time and should be approximately \$11,000. This will be added to the Water Operating Balance.

Request for Public Comment:

Jack Gross explained that his wife, as a Councilwoman, was in Town Hall requesting copies of a topic in which she was doing research and was informed that Town Hall was not her personal office and would be charged for copies in the future. Gross stated that with the history of minutes being removed from the website it was necessary to visit Town Hall for copies of old records.

Dick Eyestone shared his concerns about Occupancy Tax and how it seems that we are lacking necessary factual information to make formal decisions regarding the tax. Eyestone suggested that someone be appointed whether a Council Member or interested resident to research exactly what the funds collected can be used for and approximately how much will be received from Occupancy Tax (which will be somewhat difficult to fully and accurately conclude). A report with these facts would help those with differing views to make better decisions.

Eyestone referenced past Mayor Harding Hohenschutz form of composure when Meetings became somewhat "heated." Hohenschutz was strong with the gavel to gain the attention of those present and reminded them that the Council consisted of retired individuals who were basically volunteering their time and doing the best they could for the Town. Eyestone suggested that those involved at the meetings keep that in mind in the future and attempt to disagree in a more civil manner.

Stephanie Danforth suggested that both the Council Members and those interested in Occupancy Tax should come together and discuss the facts. Each individual reads and interprets things differently and sitting down to discuss

these differences would be a positive step forward. Danforth felt that it was premature to vote on the Resolution today as there are mistakes in the document.

Frances Mills asked if the funds collected from Occupancy Tax could be separated from General funds as it would be a fluctuating amount from year to year and it should never be considered in the General Budgeting process. Stephanie Danforth explained that the funds regardless of the amount could never be placed in the General account. There are requirements as to how the money can be spent and the money would always be separated with its own budget. The TDA board makes decisions regarding all expenditures of Occupancy Tax funds.

Old Business

#1 Cochran, Anderson, Mathews, and McNally Property on Santeetlah Trail: Surveyor Terry James completed a preliminary survey of the proposed property the Town is interested in selling to the four interested homeowners. The survey is lacking the points for Johnny Cochran's property. Town Administrator Kim Matheson will request a survey from Cochran to assist Terry James in completing the survey. Dana Jones, appraiser, will provide the Town with a certified appraisal once everything is complete. An offer to sale will then be presented to the homeowners. The funds received from the sale will potentially be used to fix the washout areas beneath the roadway near those properties. A more extensive report regarding this land sale will likely be available at the July Council Meeting.

#2 Approval of Resolution of Intent to Adopt Procedures for Occupancy Tax and Travel Development

Authority/Schedule Public Hearing: This Resolution will not be voted on at this time. There are necessary corrections to be completed by Attorney Ellen Davis. A special meeting can be called to adopt the Resolution if needed. There will be land transfers (regarding the three foot strip homeowners must purchase from the Town per Brookfield requirements) ready for approval within the next two weeks which could be approved at a special meeting as well.

#3 Shrubbery Encroaching Town Right of Way: Town Technician Eric Hayes and Mayor Jim Hager went around Town after receiving a complaint of overgrown shrubbery on Santeetlah Point making it difficult for neighbors to turn cars around in the area. Just as the case in this area there are similar situations throughout the Town; including rocks, bushes, shrubbery, fences, and walls. If the Town Council were to enforce the encroachment in this area there would be hundreds of other areas within the Town in compliance. Robert Mills, homeowner on Santeetlah Point, has trimmed the shrubbery back as requested. If the shrubbery needs further removal in accordance to HMC paving company which will be in the area within the next two weeks the Mills can be notified at that time. Councilwoman Connie Gross made a motion to require Robert Mills to cut the shrubbery back to his property line. Failure to do so would mean that the Town accept liability for any damage done to cars attempting to maneuver in the area. The motion received no second.

New Business

#1 Options for Public Lake Access/TPOA: The Town owns property at two locations that residents have shown interest in making a "public access" spot. The Town Council agreed that this would be a project for the TPOA. The TPOA held a meeting Monday afternoon and the topic was briefly discussed. There are strong opinions regarding the use of these strips for public access both in favor and opposed. Joe Simons, a resident interested in using the area for lake access agreed to further research what can be done with the amount of land available. The TPOA will report back to the Council with a recommendation when available.

#2 Approval of TOLS Budget for FY/2017-18 & Budget Ordinance: The Special Meeting was held May 27, 2017 where the budget was presented and reviewed. Minor changes and updates were made combining the donations from TOLS. The line items were combined for all donations given annually. The \$600 obligation for the Occupancy Tax audit has been removed as it must come from the TDA (Tourism Development Authority). Councilwoman Connie Gross is opposed to the \$30,000 allotted for the front entrance. She feels those funds could likely be used for other necessities. Gross explained that the existing crossties could be replaced with other minor changes

estimating only 1/8th of the current projected cost. The FY2017-18 budget has \$30,000 set aside to place in reserves and \$32,000 for the DOT road resurfacing that is scheduled for July 2017. With no further changes suggested to the Budget Councilwoman Karen Anderson made a motion to approve. Councilman Bob Wehr seconded, Councilman Keith Predmore approved, Councilwoman Connie Gross opposed. The motion passed three to one.

#3 Deadline for Candidacy for TOLS Town Council: Those interested in filing for TOLS Town Council must do so beginning July 7, 2017 at 12:00pm with the deadline being July 21, 2017 at 12:00pm. Candidates must file at the Graham County Board of Elections Office.

#4 Sewer System Survey/Committee: The TOLS Sewer Study has been completed by Tetra Tech. The study produced useful information for residents regarding personal septic system solutions. Tetra Tech recommended four main communal septic stations that could be used by dividing the Town into four areas. Dick Eyestone, member of the Sewer Study Committee suggested that we consider the recommendation from Tetra Tech and plan to install the piping for these four areas in ten years (estimated figure) when the roads are re-paved. This would be a project for the future however would require funds to be set aside for several years for preparation. The Town could apply for additional grant funds to assist with such projects. Mayor Jim Hager suggested that a survey be sent in a mailing to all residents gathering more information from each homeowner of personal septic systems and the interest of pursuing the next step for sewer solutions. This would help allow the Town to determine the desired direction in moving forward. Vic D'Amato was contacted concerning the survey and proposed that \$480.00 would be the cost for Tetra Tech to create the survey. \$410.00 to administer the survey and \$600.00 to review the results and recommend the next steps. The total cost for Tetra Tech to complete the survey is \$1,490.00. This seems like an expensive addition to the \$57,400 already paid to Tetra Tech and unless the survey could be done at no additional charge the Town could compose a survey and send to residents. A committee of those interested has agreed to create a survey that will be mailed with the September 30, 2017 water bills. Dick Eyestone, Steven Poole, Jack Gross and Kevin McNally agreed to be part of the committee. Councilman Bob Wehr suggested that Alicia Parham, Graham County Health Director, become involved as the County mandates and approves all sewer systems within the County. Parham will be provided a copy of the study and asked to report her recommendation of moving forward. The Health Director will be asked to provide a presentation prior to creating a survey. Town Administrator Kim Matheson will contact Parham concerning this request.

#5 Establishing a Council Advisory Committee: Councilman Bob Wehr has suggested that an advisory council committee would be helpful to the Council to relay ideas, suggestions and recommendations. The committee could include individuals who do not qualify for a Council position; however are respected residents within the community. The committee would be very informal and could address things such as Occupancy Tax, Sewer Study and other on-going issues within the Town. The discussion of these individuals could occur by phone call, emails, no meetings would be required.

#6 Approval of placement of Pet Waste Stations: The TPOA is interested in purchasing Pet Waste Stations and would maintain and mandate the station. The Town would need to approve where the stations would be placed and the two benches around the circle are the recommended locations. Town Technician Eric Hayes will install the stations at the approved locations. Councilwoman and TPOA member Karen Anderson has agreed to manage the waste systems. Councilwoman Connie Gross made a motion to approve the recommended locations for placement of the pet waste stations. Councilman Bob Wehr seconded. All others approved, the motion carried.

#7 Approval of Resolution for DOT to complete work for TOLS: In order to proceed with the DOT work scheduled in July the Town must approve the Resolution and submit to the DOT. The AST Double Seal is scheduled to be completed in early July. Councilwoman Karen Anderson made a motion to approve the Resolution for DOT. Councilwoman Connie Gross seconded. All others approved. The motion carried.

#8 Planning Meetings: The Planning Meeting on Thursday June 15, 2017 involved disagreements between residents that caused the meeting to become contentious, out of control and not productive. Mayor Jim Hager recommended that until further notice the Planning Meetings be suspended. If at some point the Planning Meetings are reinstated they will be conducted in a more formal manner. Public Comment will be held at the end of the Planning Meeting and would be offered again at the beginning of the Council Meeting just as it is now. Hager stated that Public Comment is important however must be done in a civil manner any time it occurs. Councilwoman Karen Anderson made a motion to suspend Planning Meetings. Councilman Keith Predmore seconded. Councilwoman Connie Gross disagreed with the suspension as she feels the public needs the opportunity to voice their ideas and opinions regarding the topics on the agenda. Gross was opposed to the motion. The motion passed three to one.

Discussion Items

#1 Tax Report 2016: \$1,336.96 is the remaining total to be collected. This includes a past due balance of \$49.51 from 2014 and \$492.47 from 2015. The Town of Lake Santeetlah's collected percentage for 2016 as of May 30, 2017 was 99.5%.

Announcements:

Mayor Jim Hager announced that the Council Meeting July 18, 2017 both at 10:00AM.

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

Meeting Adjourned

Jim Hager, Mayor

Kim Matheson, Town Administrator