

Town of Lake Santeetlah (The Town)

Council Meeting Minutes

October 22, 2019

Mayor Jim Hager called the meeting to order at 10:00AM. Councilmembers Keith Predmore and Roger Carlton were present for the meeting. Attorney Craig Justus, Town Administrator Kim Matheson, Clerk Emily Hooper and Public Works Technician Eric Hayes were also present.

The first order of business was the approval of the agenda. Councilmember Keith Predmore made a motion to amend the agenda to remove Item #3: Domicile vs. residency from Discussion. Councilmember Carlton seconded. All approved, the motion carried. Councilmember Carlton made a motion to move Item #2: Budget Amendment for Legal fees under New Business to Item #2 after the closed session. Councilmember Predmore seconded. All others approved, the motion carried. Councilmember Predmore made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, Carlton seconded. All approved, the motion carried.

After review of the September 9, 2019 Council Meeting Minutes, there were no additions or changes needed. Councilmember Predmore made a motion to approve the Council Meeting minutes. Councilmember Carlton seconded. All others approved, the motion carried.

After review of the October 8, 2019 Special Meeting Minutes, there were no additions or changes needed. Councilmember Predmore made a motion to approve the Special Meeting minutes. Councilmember Carlton seconded. All others approved, the motion carried.

Financial Report/Tax Report: Town Administrator Matheson presented reports as of September 30, 2019. The general account balance is \$62,558.94; the water operating account balance is \$16,304.05. The revenue from the most recent water billing is not reflected in this balance. The bills were mailed at the end of September. Tax collection for September was \$9,511.65. This is after the fee for collection was deducted. Councilman Carlton asked for the past/current year balance sheet to be presented at the next Council Meeting. Councilmember Predmore made a motion to approve the financial report as presented. Councilmember Carlton seconded, all others approved. The motion carried.

Request for Public Comment:

Jackson Townsend: Expressed his concern about the total voice blackout that recently occurred with Graham County.

Stephanie Danforth: Informed the Council that a recent guest had stated that she would not purchase a home within the town due to the Kudzu problem. Danforth also asked how the town determined to pay the legal fees for Mayor Hager and Former Councilmember Bob Wehr and what is the amount paid to date to both attorneys.

Jack Gross: Reminded the Council that the rules adopted to follow states that any vote not spoken/recorded would be an affirmative vote. Gross questioned why there had been no email sent

from Town Hall regarding Council vacancies, and asked when the items Mr. O'Donovan and Mrs. Williams voted on would be revisited.

Old Business:

#1: Water System Repair and Upgrades: Mayor Hager reported that the RFP will be published in the Graham Star this Wednesday regarding the repairs to the buildings that house the Town's water infrastructure. The Town Council is waiting on an estimate to bring in a temporary or potentially a permanent storage tank to be used while the main tank is being painted. This should be received within the next few weeks. Councilmember Predmore referred to the three components of TOLS water system: acquisition, treatment and distribution. Predmore developed a report that can be used to plan and budget for the future to help adequately maintain the water system to avoid facing these same issues in the years ahead. Councilmember Carlton asked for a more detailed report in November, Predmore agreed.

New Business

#1: Town Technician Maintenance Report: Hayes reported that one of the steel water tanks at the well house has been drained. Scott Icenhower, the contractor that will be completing the project plans to begin work next Monday or Tuesday (October 28th or 29th). Icenhower will bring the estimate for repairs to the other tank at this time. There were no issues when the tank was drained, all valves worked properly.

The road will be closed Thursday October 24th from 9:00-5:00 for tree removal on Thunderbird Trail. Scott Kamps has rented a crane and the removal and clean-up will require most of the day. There will be signs to re-route traffic. An email will also be sent for notification.

#2 Eradication of Kudzu within the Town: There are several areas within the Town that has an issue with kudzu. Some homeowners are addressing the problem and following the steps to remove/kill the plant. Others who avoid treatment have allowed the growth to spread onto nearby properties. Kudzu can decrease property values and should be removed. The Town Council would like to identify all areas with a problem and possibly join with homeowners to share the cost of treatment. Mayor Hager asked that anyone who knew specific areas with Kudzu to please report to Town Hall. Hager suggested that Town Staff contact Randy Collins, Graham County Cooperative Extension Agent, to determine the steps for removal. Scott Kamps also removes Kudzu for some homeowners and could be contacted. Councilmember Carlton asked attorney Craig Justus to research if a mandatory agreement could require property owners to remove kudzu from their property. Justus agreed to research and report in November.

#3 Resolution in support of Alcohol Sales: Anne Hager, chairman of a local committee of concerned citizens, made a presentation to the Graham County Board of Commissioners last week urging them to put the sale of alcohol on the ballot. Graham County voted to be dry 71 years ago and the citizens stressed to the Commissioners that times have changed since then. The Town Council followed up with a Resolution in support of Alcohol Sales. Councilmember Carlton suggest that the Resolution be sent to the Town of Fontana as well as the Town of Robbinsville so they might follow the same steps of support.

Councilmember Carlton made a motion to approve the Resolution. Predmore seconded. All approved, the motion carried.

#4 Consider Donation to Graham County Yuletide Helpers: The program supports children and families in need during Christmas within Graham County. The local women who have managed the group for over twenty years recently reported that they would not be able to continue due to age and health issues. Last year the program supported 270 children within Graham County for Christmas and supplied meals to their families for the Holiday. There is an application process for those requesting assistance. Smoky Mountain Foundation, will be taking over the program and is looking for donations and support from the community. All donations are kept within the County and 100% will be given to the children. Councilmember Keith Predmore made a motion to donate \$500.00 from the Town of Lake Santeetlah. Councilmember Carlton seconded. All approved. The motion carried. An email will be sent with further information for private donations to this cause.

Discussion:

#1: Further discussion of legislative efforts on broadband: Our State representative filed a bill to allow cities, local governments and counties to build their own fiber systems. This is being resisted by providers such as ATT&T and Verizon. The bill will allow Towns to build the system and lease out to a private operator for ten years and this would offset what was spent to build. When local government gets involved in broadband it often pushes providers to makes changes, improving signal. Councilmember Carlton will continue to monitor and report on this issue and the progress being made.

#2: Report of steps to Complete TOLS Water Repair: Councilman Predmore asked that this item be deferred until more information is gathered. A report will be provided at the November meeting.

Motion for Closed Session: Councilman Predmore made a motion for the Town Council to go into closed session to receive advice from the Town attorney. Councilmember Carlton seconded. All others approved. The motion carried.

#1: Action from Closed Session: Councilmember Carlton read a Resolution of Intent to change the number of Councilmembers on the Lake Santeetlah Town Council from five to three. This will require an amendment to the Town Charter. A public hearing will be held December 9, 2019 at 10:00 at Town Hall. Councilmember Carlton made a motion to approve the Resolution, Predmore seconded. All approved, the motion carried.

#2: Budget Amendment for Legal Fees: Councilmember Carlton made a motion to defer this item until the November Council meeting. Councilmember Predmore seconded. All approved, the motion carried.

Announcements:

The next Council meeting will be November 18, 2019.

With no further business at this time Councilmember Predmore made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Carlton seconded, all others agreed. The motion carried. Mayor Hager adjourned the meeting at 11:22AM.

Meeting Adjourned

Jim Hager, Mayor

Emily Hooper, Town Clerk