

Town of Lake Santeetlah

Initial Draft Subject to Council Approval

Special Called Meeting Minutes

May 24, 2017

Mayor Jim Hager called the meeting to order at 10:00AM. Council Members Bob Wehr, Karen Anderson and Connie Gross were present for the meeting. Councilman Keith Predmore was available by conference call. Town Administrator Kim Matheson and Clerk Emily Hooper were also present.

The first order of business was the approval of the agenda. Councilman Bob Wehr made a motion to approve. Councilman Keith Predmore seconded. The motion passed three to one. Councilwoman Connie Gross opposed.

New Business:

#1 Occupancy Tax Collection for Lake Santeetlah: Councilwoman Connie Gross expressed her concern with the agenda for today's meeting. The topic of Occupancy Tax Collection was tabled at the May 16, 2017 Council Meeting and moved to the June 20, 2017 meeting. Mayor Jim Hager explained that there were two reasons for the Special Called Meeting to be held. Cherokee Realty was instructed by John Garland prior to his passing to add the 3% tax collection to all rentals for the Town of Lake Santeetlah. Molly Thomas, Secretary for Cherokee Realty, recently called to notify Town Hall staff of these funds coming in. Therefore the Council needed to address the tax urgently to advise Thomas of what should be done with the collected tax. Attorney Ellen Davis has since clarified that the money collected will need to be refunded as the Town has not completed the steps necessary to implement the tax. Also, Attorney Davis explained the procedures and steps necessary to proceed with the approval of Occupancy Tax. Hager stated the steps were different than what he was aware of therefore a meeting was needed today to make a motion to proceed. This would not be a decision to collect but simply a motion to proceed, then the item would be discussed and a resolution presented at the June Meeting. At that time if the Resolution passed a Public Hearing would be held in July. Councilwoman Karen Anderson agreed that there should be no discussion of the tax until June as stated in the May Council Meeting. Karen stressed that The Town of Lake Santeetlah is not a tourist Town. Councilman Bob Wehr presented a map recently funded by the Graham County TDA and explained that projects such as this would be possible if we proceed to collect. Councilwoman Connie Gross shared her concern of how we would identify rentals within the Town and worries that implementing the tax will cause more trouble within the Town among residents. Keith Predmore explained what tourism means and identified that Lake Santeetlah is listed as one of the top 10 lakes in the United States. Despite what some argue Lake Santeetlah is already a tourist location. Obviously the topic has various views, both positive and negative and will need more discussion and input. The estimated income to be received from the Occupancy Tax is \$20,000. No decisions are needed today simply a motion to proceed according to Attorney Ellen Davis. Councilman Bob Wehr made a motion to proceed with the discussion of Occupancy Tax collection for Lake Santeetlah. Councilman Keith Predmore seconded. The motion passed three to one. Councilwoman Connie Gross was opposed.

Announcements

Acting Mayor Jim Hager announced that the Memorial Day Ceremony will be held May 27, 2017 at 9:30AM followed by the Budget Workshop at 10:00AM and the Sewer Study presentation at 11:30AM.

With no further business at this time Councilman Bob Wehr made a motion to adjourn, Karen Anderson seconded. All others approved. The motion carried. Mayor Hager adjourned the meeting at 10:25AM.

Jim Hager, Mayor

Emily Hooper, Town Clerk