

## **Town of Lake Santeetlah**

### **Workshop Session:**

January 14, 2020

Mayor Hager explained that each month the Town Council would hold a workshop session to review and discuss agenda items in a casual session. Zoom Meeting will be used to allow those interested in attending to do so in any location. Mayor Hager explained the guidelines for video conferencing workshops:

1. Only one person may speak at a time. Each participant will be allowed up to five minutes per work session. Additional time may be granted by the Chair. Please do not interrupt the speaker who has the floor.
2. Participants wishing to respond to the previous speaker shall raise their hand as described below.
3. Kim Matheson will serve as the host for the meeting. She will recognize participants in the order that they raised their hand (on the Zoom Meeting site under "participants" you can raise your hand electronically).
4. The workshop will last for one hour. If deemed necessary, the Chair may extend the meeting if agreed upon by the Council.
5. The Town Staff will notify through mass email of the meeting time and date along with instructions for joining the meeting via internet.
6. Personal attacks may result in you being terminated from the meeting. Offensive language is not allowed.
7. Video recording through Zoom software is not permitted.

The agenda presented will be reviewed and changed as needed for the Council meeting on January 21, 2020.

### **Minutes:**

December 9, 2019 Workshop Session Minutes

December 10, 2019 Council Meeting Minutes

**Financial/Tax report:** Councilman Predmore suggested that during the workshop sessions only balances be presented and a more detailed report held for the Council Meeting. The monthly reports are posted online prior to the workshop and anyone with questions would be able to ask them specifically at any time.

General Operating Balance: \$53,736.37

Water Operating Balance: \$20,018.75

Tax collection for December: \$56,118.50 The collection fee was \$2,953.61

## Old Business:

- 1. Water System Repair and Upgrades/RFP for Well House Repairs:** Councilman Keith Predmore reported that the RFP received by Randy Welch was difficult for the contractors to follow. Mayor Hager, Councilmember Predmore and Eric Hayes worked together to detail a Scope of Work and provide a clear request to assure that each contractor would understand the proposed project and bid accordingly. Hayes took each contractor to the site to explain details of the project. The Town expects to receive the updated proposal back from at least three local contractors. No deadline has been set. The advertising requirements have been satisfied by the Town and when a proposal is received the Town can vote and award to the chosen contractor. Specific changes include: the chemical house will be rebuilt using block due to chlorine being used in the area. All pipes will be cleaned with a wire brush and repainted. The treatment area will be brass pipes rather than galvanized. There have been two estimates received for painting the water tank. The estimates are very different therefore a third contractor will visit the area on January 29<sup>th</sup> and submit a proposal. Another estimate will be needed to plumb the new tank in. All these items will be necessary prior to going to the LGC (Local Government Commission) for a loan to complete the repairs. Councilmember Carlton suggest there be a deadline set for contractors to submit a proposal. Councilmember Predmore explained that this is a process and it is difficult to rush. Jack Gross stated he felt that the Town had a plan and should simply follow it with no strict deadlines.
- 2. Status Report on Alcohol Sales:** The Town of Robbinsville held a meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss alcohol sales being on the ballot. A group of local citizens have been working together to move forward with alcohol sales in Graham County. The group known as the prosperity committee spoke at the January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. The meeting was moved to the courthouse due to high attendance. There were approximately 100 people there both in favor and against the sale. The Town of Robbinsville attorney, Ellen Davis, was uncertain that the vote could be placed on the 2020 ballot. The item was deferred to February 5<sup>th</sup> for further research. Attorney, Brady Cody, legal representative for the prosperity committee confirmed that the sale could be on the ballot in November 2020. A vote is expected from the Town of Robbinsville in February. The Town of Robbinsville has three alderman and the Mayor. One alderman is openly in favor, another openly against. The remaining vote is unknown at this time. If the Alderman vote in favor there is no petition necessary to place the item on the ballot.

## New Business:

- 1. Town Technician Maintenance Report:** Eric Hayes is on vacation for two weeks. Town Administrator Kim Matheson reported that a new well pump and pipe was installed in Well House #1. All pumps have now been replaced within the last five years.
- 2. Resolution to Set Workshop and Council Meeting Dates for 2020:** Last month the Council confirmed that each month there would be a workshop session on the second Tuesday followed by the Council meeting on the third Tuesday. This schedule conflicts with attorney Craig Justus' ability to attend the meetings. Taking two weeks from each month to hold the meetings can be difficult for staff and Council to plan around. The updated schedule will be: workshop session on the second Tuesday of each month followed by the Council meeting on Thursday of the same week. A Resolution will be approved at the January 21<sup>st</sup> Council Meeting to set these dates. An updated copy will also be posted to the website.

3. **Appoint Finance Officer:** The Council deferred appointing a finance officer at last month's meeting until the full Council had been sworn in. The Finance Officer will be appointed at the Council Meeting on January 21<sup>st</sup>.
4. **Notification to all Santeetlah Lakeside Owners of Public Hearing for Lake Point Investment Variance:** Lake Point Investment Group has submitted a Variance request which will require a Public Hearing on January 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:30. The request concerns a proposed project on Old Lodge Rd. The hearing has been noticed in the Graham Star, posted onsite at Lakeside, mailed to all abutting property owners, posted at Town Hall and on the Website. Councilmember Carlton felt that all Lakeside residents not only those abutting or close nearby should have been notified by the Zoning Administrator.
5. **Vacancy on the Planning Board:** Craig Keith is a member on the Planning Board and now serves on the Town Council. His resignation will create a vacancy. Residents Tanya Capeling and Jack Gross have submitted a letter of interest to serve on the Board.
6. **Vacancy on the TDA:** Two homeowners (Adam McCall and Lucia Case) serving on the TDA Board sold their homes. There are two vacancies on that board. Councilmember Carlton suggested posting the vacancies on the website.
7. **Updating signature Cards:** After the Finance Officer is appointed the signature cards will need to be updated at both First Citizens and United Community Bank with new officers listed.

**Discussion:**

1. **Agriculture Agent to attend Council Meeting to discuss Kudzu removal:** Extension Agent Randy Collins will attend the January 21<sup>st</sup> Council meeting to explain the most effective plan for Kudzu removal. This will be a joint effort in the spring between homeowners who have kudzu on their property and the Town. Councilmember Carlton expressed that the issue is broader than simply needing to know the steps to remove the kudzu but should the Town also have an ordinance in place that would require homeowners to remove the invasive plant from their property. Town Attorney Justus advised (last month) that in order to have an ordinance of this sort there must be a health and safety issue demonstrated. Carlton suggest that Jim Krinner also be invited to attend and report. Krinner recently stepped down from being the CEO of Partners of Joyce Kilmer. He is knowledgeable about chemicals, plants and the threats they can include. Councilmember Simon and Kim Hainge walked the town to identify plants. The invasive plants within the Town limits include: English ivy, Japanese stilt grass and Kudzu. Councilmember Carlton will invite Mr. Krinner to attend the Council meeting on Tuesday.
2. **Status of draft Charter Amendments:** Town Attorney Justus agreed to draft a Resolution of Intent to include proposed charter changes: Transitioning from a five to three member board, staggering and length of terms for Councilmembers, and once on the ballot when would the change go into effect. Councilmember Carlton asked that the attorney be reminded of the Resolution so that the ability to get the changes on the ballot does not pass any deadlines. Resident Jack Gross attended the Election Board meeting and received a list of names that were wrote in at the last election. Gross presented the Council with a list of those names. Gross stated that with four candidates on the ballot and four others who were wrote in, there is proof that it would not be difficult to have five members on the board. Gross disagrees with changing from three to five members and ask the Council to please identify why this change is being proposed. Councilmember Carlton argued that write in votes does not count as willing

participants. Resident Stephanie Danforth also disagrees with going to a three person Council. A three member board does not give the panel an adequate opportunity for input. Danforth stated that moving to a three member Council made her feel uncomfortable and "it didn't sit well." A better balance is needed. Councilmember Predmore stressed that when looking at the number of voters compared to the need for a five member Council, five member TDA, five member Planning Board, as well as other committees it can be difficult to fill those boards with the number of people. Danforth pointed out that the smaller number of members resulted in less balance. The changes being implemented with greater communication could influence more residents to be involved. Resident Tina Emerson pointed out that the requirements to be on the Council are different than those to be on the Planning Board or TDA. The Council requires the candidate to be a full time resident while the other boards are less restrictive. This provides more to choose from for those boards. Emerson is also opposed to a three member board. Councilmember Diana Simon shared that the Town of Robbinsville has 382 voters and only has three alderman and the Mayor. Simon's pointed out that she was not ballot but did express her interest in being a write in both verbally and by email. Danforth feels that we should keep our focus on the Town of Lake Santeetlah and not be concerned with other Towns. She also asked the Council to consider letting the Occupancy tax go back into the County. Jack Gross reminded the Council that they were warned of the potential difficulty of having enough residents interested to serve on the various boards when creating the Planning Board and the TDA. Gross argued that at no point in the Towns history has there not been at least five members interested in serving on the Town Council. Resident Glenn Barnett shared that from the discussion it seems the basic argument is changing to a three member board is necessary due to numbers. Barnett ask if there was a time the Council operated without five members and had no one interested or willing to fill the vacancy. The Council agreed they had always been able to fill the vacancies that have occurred. Councilmember Carlton stated that addressing change and looking at new ideas and suggestions is a good thing. Everything cannot remain static forever. Bringing ideas to discuss is democracy. At this point changing the charter is only an idea. Legal recommendation has been sought and the Council will follow a process listening to public opinion prior to any change. Resident John Chase introduced himself and explained that he did not meet the deadline for filing but did verbally expressed interest in being a write in. Jack Gross asked the Council to carefully review items being discussed in Closed Session. The motion to move into close session only allows certain items to be discussed. The resolution of intent adopted after a Closed Session meeting was read by Councilmember Carlton. Gross asked if the Council discussed the charter change in closed session. According to Gross this was not an item to discuss in a closed meeting. Tina Emerson pointed out the item was not on the agenda to be approved.

Danforth thanked the Council for the efforts to use Zoom meeting and include the residents who are not full time to be involved. Glenn Barnett suggested that keeping the Town Council at a five member board would be more effective than the other boards. Barnett asked about the possibility of reducing other boards to fewer members and leaving the Council at five. Mayor Hager pointed out that by Statute both the Planning Board and TDA must be five member boards. Tina Emerson asked why the Resolution of Intent was not on the agenda. The Council pointed out that legal representation was followed.

- 3. Recycling as Relates to County Solid Waste Study:** Roger Carlton has been appointed to a Graham County Committee studying solid waste. The County loses nearly \$1 million annually on the current system. Lake Santeetlah has the only recycling program in Graham County and the cost will surely increase next budget year. Carlton stated that bottom line is, "the recycling program may be on the chopping block. What used to be a revenue generator is now a loss." Most of what we recycle goes to the landfill. Cardboard is separated out at the County tipping site. Councilmember Carlton will follow up with reports.
- 4. Discussion of US Forest Service danger trees and power/internet service loss:** The latest knock out of power town- wide happened because a forest service long dead tree fell across the wires. It also took out the internet for as long as three weeks. Duke, to their credit, had the power back in less than four hours. Zito in a few days and Frontier was a two week process. We need to have the forest service take down another tree along the main trunk line not too far from the guard house. Town Staff will request the district ranger to come to the February Town Council meeting to discuss their inaction and threat to the security of the Town

**Announcements:**

- The next Council Meeting is January 21, 2020 at 10:00AM
- There will be a Public Hearing, January 21, 2020 at 11:30AM at Town Hall concerning Lake Point Investment Variance Request
- The next Planning Board meeting is January 21, 2020 at 1:00PM

The meeting concluded at 11:37AM.