



MINUTES

Regular Town Council Meeting

4:00 PM - Tuesday, October 8, 2024
Council Chambers

The Regular Town Council of the Town of Beech Mountain was called to order on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 4:00 PM, in the Council Chambers, with the following members present:

COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Weidner Abernethy
Vice Mayor Kelly Melang
Councilmember Alan Villanova
Councilmember Art Beckmann
Councilmember M.W. Stanford

COUNCIL EXCUSED:

STAFF PRESENT: Attorney Stacy Eggers, IV
Town Manager Bob Pudney
Town Clerk Emily Haynes

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.1. Mayor Abernethy called the October 8th Town Council meeting to order at 4:00PM.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2.1. Mayor Abernethy requested an amendment to the agenda to add item 6.6-Hagerty Consulting, Inc. Proposal for Consulting Services to the consent agenda.

Motion

M.W. Stanford made a motion to approve the agenda with amendment Kelly Melang seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

3. INVOCATION- DEWEY CYCLONE BRETT

4. MAYORS MESSAGE

4.1. Mayor Abernethy took a moment to thank everyone involved in the town's storm recovery. The town has rebounded very well however we still have a long road of recovery ahead. Remain positive!

5. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

- 6.1. Tajah Harrison of 126 Village Cluster Road- The Town of Beech Mountain community has been nothing short of wonderful during this disaster. I would like to suggest a "town bulletin board" and would like to volunteer if needed to organize.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1. Adoption of Minutes
- 7.2. Adoption of Closed Session Minutes
- 7.3. North Carolina Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Grant Agreement
- 7.4. Resolution to Donate Surplus Emergency Relief Supplies
- 7.5. State of Emergency Declaration
- 7.6. Hagerty Consulting, Inc Proposal for Consulting Services

Motion

Alan Villanova made a motion approve the consent agenda M.W. Stanford seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

8. OLD BUSINESS

- 8.1. Public Hearing for consideration of paving Beech Mountain Parkway

Motion

Weidner Abernethy made a motion to cancel the Public Hearing for consideration of paving Beech Mountain Parkway Art Beckmann seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- 9.1. Police K-9 Proposal

Motion

Art Beckmann made a motion to approve Police K-9 Proposal M.W. Stanford seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

- 9.2. Public Hearing on proposed amendments to Kitchens and Guest Suites

Motion

Kelly Melang made a motion to have a continuance of the public hearing to the next regular meeting of the Town Council on Tuesday, November 12, 2024. Alan Villanova seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

9.3. Public Hearing on proposed amendments to Off-Street Parking and Loading

Motion

Kelly Melang made a motion to have a continuance of the public hearing to the next regular meeting of the Town Council on Tuesday, November 12, 2024. Alan Villanova seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

10. TOWN MANAGER AND STAFF REPORTS

10.1. Town Manager Report-

Skiloft – faired very well, the town met its commitment on the temporary construction easement, early 9/27/2024. We are hoping to schedule the final paving before cold weather.

Helene 2024

I can report that Buckeye Lake is full! (the drought is over) full of debris however, we are issuing an RFQ for engineering to assess the damage and develop a plan to dredge the lake. Conservation is key to making the limited source water work for the town.

Event timeline – 12th-day post event

9/26 First weather - rain

9/27 Helene hit measured 20+ inches of rain at fire station 1.
state of emergency signed 9-26-24 1200 hours

Impact

power outages – 100%

tree damage-severe

water and sewer line breaks

rushing water

tree falling

no potable water pressure

boil water notice issued

sewer stream crossing breaks

sewer plants severely overflowing.

road damage

culvert crossing

tree and power line crossing.

wires and power poles blocking roads

severe limits on emergency vehicle access

fire and EMS

police

public works

Buckeye Lake – severe debris and silt filed limited source water supply.

Shane Park destroyed

Town access cutoff:

Beech Mountain Parkway two road breaks
Buckeye creek road major failure at pinnacle Ridge intersection at stream crossings.
Elderberry ridge road passable with 4x4.
No access to hospitals
Landing zones inoperable
weather – fog and rain

Communications

complete failure
telephone service
911
transferred to Watauga
internet

Employees

limited number of employees available
travel access
communication
skill positions limited
unable to check on families

Volunteers

limited to who was on the mountain at the time of the incident.
volunteer fire department
communication for emergencies w/o power
generators

Road Contractors

limited to RC excavation due to no access.
cut the road to the equipment yard to access equipment and materials.

Rescue

three homes severely damaged by wind, trapped occupants.
rescued by the fire department and police department.

Financial

cash flow
payroll
storm impacted in middle of pay period
no communications with financial institutions
directed last payroll to be repeated.

records and reporting
FEMA

Response

EOC established 0600 9-28-2024

Pudney IC

T. Holland search, rescue, Ems and fire

D. Davis utilities

T. Barnett operations

S. Smith finance

P. Yates planning, mapping and damage assessment

A. Garcia Public Information Officer, distribution

operations periods x2 @ 12hrs. 0700-1900-0700

Directed all purchasing be paused for any non-essential items or services.
Contacted town attorney regarding existing contracts.

Jointly agreed to a 30-day pause on the construction of Town Hall /
Visitor Center project.

counties and state emergency operations-
failed

unable to communicate

no liaison

two county issues identified

unable to request or receive emergency resources

decision made to work outside the system

communications

airdrop of satellite phone and Garmin sat comm device.

Starlink is flown in by a private entity, established comms.

Hired RC excavating to repair Beech Mountain Parkway outside town limits to
gain road access for emergency response.

Held and treated medical patients until transportation could be established.

One trauma patient was flown by private helicopter to Cannon Memorial
Hospital.

Beech Mountain Parkway access was obtained 9-29-2024 at 1800 hr.

Water and MRE's delivered by private helicopters from Hickory base until
stopped by FAA.

Weather a problem at landing zones

Large helicopters landed at Buckeye landing zone.

water and MRE's

Search and rescue

Beech Mountain Volunteer Fire Department

Beech Mountain Police Department

Tennessee Task Force 1

Every residential structure was visited and accessed. (see map)

generators sourced privately

Ashwood tank pump station

Fire Station 1 and 2

fixed generators failed

Fred's

distribution point

existing generator failed

Fuel

unable to source fuel

diesel or gasoline

temporary gravity feed established

D. Beckman

pipe failure overnight

6,600-gal spill of gasoline

state notified

fire department mitigation efforts

water and dish soap.

2000 gal per day diesel burn rate

water and sewer plants

pump stations

public works

LP

unable to access town with LP trucks

Beech Mountain Parkway

NC 194

NC 184 at Dobbins Rd.

Town Hall / EOC generator.

fire stations (x2)

buckeye shelter

fuel deliveries resumed after road repairs

unable to source fuel from the county or state em.

Food and Water

established distribution point at the new Visitor Center

storage in the wash bay at Public Works

roads sign boards established

public information branch established

radio 1620 am accessed

posting written notices

local radio

website

social media
welfare checks and direct distribution
Beech Mountain Police Department
Beech Mountain Fire Department
Tennessee Task Force 1

Federal Outreach

Virginia Foxx

State Outreach

Ray Pickett
visited EOC x2
brought supplies

Counties Outreach

Braxton Eggers-Watauga
Phillip Barrier-Avery visited EOC

Road clearing

Beech Mountain VFD chainsaw teams
Public Works
heavy equipment

Town Officials

Villanova

Tree, road clearing and search and rescue with Beech Mountain VFD. His wife- Janet Villanova volunteered in admin, public information and distribution.

Stanford

mobile fuel truck
air damage assessment 10-4-24

Beckmann

drove a dump truck with materials for Beech Mountain Parkway repair.
picked up private generators x2 from Maiden, NC.
assisted with roof repairs of responders.

Abernethy

generators purchase and delivery
chemicals for water plant picked up in hickory
liaison with state officials

Employees

Limited personnel during the storm, unable to travel for 5 days.
Unable to check on family or home.
Off mountain employees unable to leave home
Some employees walked / hiked to work great distances.

Consolidated workforce.
Established work teams with skills we had.
One dispatcher worked 72 hours continuously

Debris Management

Signed a notice to proceed with a state debris contractor and monitoring firm.
Southern disaster recovery – debris tech.

NCDOT – met with Michael Poe who assured me NCDOT will reimburse the town for the parkway repairs. Est. \$85,000

Issued two RFQ's for Buckeye Lake and dam analysis, plan for dredging. And Charter Hills Road landslide engineering.

I am the single person who is to be held accountable for the actions taken by the town and employees, no one else. I ordered employees and volunteers to perform well outside their scope of employment and comfort levels, I assured them that I would be accountable should anything go wrong.

We have a long way towards recovery, the town is committed to rebuilding and obtaining all available funding and reimbursement. The council can expect to review all budget impacts going forward.

Thank you to all employees, volunteers and elected officials for pulling together to perform above expectations on behalf of the town.

10.2. Police Department Monthly Report

11. TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

11.1. Councilmember Villanova- We are truly blessed to live in the wonderful community. Thank you to each person who has had a hand in the storm relief efforts.

Councilmember Beckmann- What an experience this has been. Thank you to everyone who has worked to get the community through. The EOC is being run magnificently. I do ask to not spread the cocktail party rumors, and come to the Council or Town Manager for correct information.

Councilmember Stanford- Task Force 1 that came to the community is a FEMA search and rescue task force. Their mission was to come in and do a damage assessment. Once we get to a point where we can look into and identify what the failure was in communications. Thank you to Jeff Burks who brought his aircraft and I went up and did an aerial assessment of damages to the canopy. Thank you to everybody for all your storm relief efforts.

Vice Mayor Melang- You have complete communication through the Council, please reach out to us for information. One thing that came to my mind during this storm was "Mountain Strong."

Mayor Abernethy- I would like to recognize Capitan Holland on the Volunteer

Fire Department he has put in countless hours in the recovery process.

12. ADJOURNMENT

12.1. Mayor Abernethy requested a motion to adjourn at 5:35PM.

Motion

Kelly Melang made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:35PM Alan Villanova seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

Town Clerk

Mayor, Town of Beech Mountain