



MINUTES

Regular Town Council Meeting

4:00 PM - Tuesday, December 10, 2024
Council Chambers

The Regular Town Council of the Town of Beech Mountain was called to order on Tuesday, December 10, 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 December 10th Town Council meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

1.2. Mayors Message:

On Thanksgiving, a group from Seaboard North Carolina came to our area with 40 mobile kitchens and provided 6000 meals to the Avery County community. One of the gentlemen within the same ministry group heard of the Beech Mountain Shop with a Cop event and the Lions Club of Seaboard donated \$6000.00. The Police department had a \$3000.00 goal for this event, and we exceeded that goal. A Christian Ministry group based in Beech Mountain is another substantial donor to the Shop with a Cop event. I want to thank each person and group that has donated to this great cause.

Senior Vice President of Lowe's Home Improvement contacted me after the storm and said he would like to provide Christmas to several families in Avery County. Yesterday I went to Lowe's where they provided two families with their Christmas wish list. It is gratifying to see the amount of outpouring generosity from our community.

I had the opportunity to meet the new Appalachian State Football Head Coach- Mr. Dowell Loggains. He has been invited to Beech Mountain and I look forward to potentially seeing him at the next Town Council meeting in January.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

- 2.1. Mayor Abernethy requested a motion to amend and adopt the agenda, adding Martin Marks Board Application Form to item 8.1.

3. INVOCATION- DEWEY CYCLONE BRETT

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

- 5.1. Fred Pfohl of 501 Beech Mountain Parkway- Thank you to the Beech Mountain Community for your donations to our organization Friends of Beech Mountain. We have received over \$100,000.00 and I can remember a time when we only had \$1,000.00 and the idea behind this organization is to help people on Beech Mountain and folks that work here that needed help. The outpouring of generosity has been special. Living on Beech Mountain is wonderful.

Every day I pass the sign that states "Conserve Water". This is a serious matter and part of my concern is educating residents and visitors of this matter. I am offering any assistance we at Fred's Mercantile can do such as handing out informative flyers.

Sean Royall, Parks and Recreation Director-

Angel Tree Program- I want to give a special thank you to our town residents. 10 years ago we restarted this angel tree program and this year we partnered with High Country Caregivers. The Recreation Center had 35 angels and residents called in asking to fill more angels. Yesterday we sent out 4 cars full of gifts and it was really impressive, as a parent I'm sitting here looking at this and thinking of kids who wouldn't have Christmas if it wasn't for our town. Thank you to our town and community.

Next Thursday, December 19th at 3:00 P.. please join us and line the streets for our Annual Christmas Parade.

I would like to publicly thank the TDA- they have given us a substantial amount of funding one of which provided more Christmas Lights. As you leave you will notice the Town Hall building, a walking trail of lights, and many other areas in the town. The Parks and Recreation crew handles the lights and decorations throughout the town.

- 5.2. Town Manager Mr. Pudney- I would like to take a moment to recognize a town employee. Mayor, Council, and public with the storm Helene we had many employees who went above and beyond and did some spectacular things. The town had a dispatcher who worked 72 hours straight, we had helicopters moving employees around, and numerous other events. I want to recognize Josh Cordell specifically for what he did and all the employees who just went above and beyond. Mark and Cathy Brown who live on Sweetwater Road sent an email to myself and the Council that I would like to read to you today. Josh has been employed with the town for 9 years working in utilities at the Water Plant. I'm going to read verbatim what Mark Brown wrote in his email, "So we returned this week and have been truly amazed at what the town has done in such a short time to make the area safe, accessible, and livable. We have driven around much of the town and the road repair, cleanup, and water

availability have been phenomenal.”

“On the day after the hurricane, Cathy and I were walking up Buckeye Creek Road trying to see if there was any way we could get out (there was not), and we saw someone walking toward us. It was Josh Cordell. He told us he had parked at the dump and walked several miles down Buckeye Creek Road to try to get to work at the Water Plant. He had to climb over and through about 50 trees along the way, and then hike behind what was left of Shane Park to use the same footbridge we used to get to the Water Plant.

He told us he was determined to get to work so he could help everyone on Beech Mountain. He promised to tell others about our situation and not to worry, help would come.

You have a fine employee in Josh. When faced with the daunting task of what to do when the hurricane hit, and the impossibility of any vehicle getting him to work, he literally hiked mile after mile in dangerous conditions to get to his job to pitch in and help us as well as all town residents.” “He is to be commended for his efforts and concern”

Josh reflects the type of employee we have here in the town, many employees worked throughout the storm not knowing if their home and family were safe. Police Dispatchers, Officers, EMS personnel, Public Works employees, Town Hall and Visitor Center employees, and Parks and Rec all worked tirelessly to serve the town.

We thank Josh for being recognized by our community for a job well done!"

I just want to say on behalf of all the town employees you epitomize what it means to be here on Beech Mountain. I appreciate everything you've done and I wanted to recognize you in front of the Town.

Josh Cordell took a moment to thank the council and the town for providing a stable work environment that employees can look forward to coming to each day. Josh thanked Mr. Pudney and the Council for his recognition but wanted to express that all town employees went above and beyond and each employee deserves the same recognition.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- 6.1.** Adoption of Minutes
- 6.2.** 2025 Town Council & Boards' Meeting Schedule Calendar
- 6.3.** Tax Release
- 6.4.** RFP # 102024-3 - Proposal for Disaster Recovery Services

Motion

Art Beckmann made a motion to approve the consent agenda Alan Villanova seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

7. OLD BUSINESS

- 7.1.** Ordinance to Amend § 154.141 Kitchens and Guest Suites, and § 154.006

Definitions

Motion

Kelly Melang made a motion to approve the Ordinance to Amend § 154.141 Kitchens and Guest Suites, and § 154.006 Definitions M.W. Stanford seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

- 7.2.** Ordinance to Amend §154.132 Off-Street Parking and § 154.133 Off-Street Loading and Unloading

Motion

Kelly Melang made a motion to approve the Ordinance to Amend §154.132 Off-Street Parking and § 154.133 Off-Street Loading and Unloading Art Beckmann seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

- 7.3.** Lake Coffey Engineering Presentation- Presented by Benjie Thomas

I am writing to provide an update on the Drought Mitigation Project as it relates to services being provided by West Consultants, PLLC. Many tasks are underway, and here is the status of some of the more significant ones.

1. We and our subconsultant, Grimes Engineering, PC, coordinated with Geotechnologies, Inc. on the soil investigations. The report was completed and delivered to the Town on January 9, 2024. Some chief results of the investigation were the identification of poor soils and of extensive rock. Seepage control was noted as being a major issue to address.
2. The Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) required for the FEMA/NCDPS grant application process has been updated. Further refinement of the BCA may be required. A grant contract with NCDPS has been executed and we are assisting with the ongoing tasks required by that contract.
3. Topographic surveying is complete except for a short section between Red Fox Lane and Hawthorne Lane. (That section was delayed until the wetlands delineation could be completed and reviewed by USACE). The remainder will be completed this year.
4. The delineation of streams and wetlands within the footprint of the project, including the force main route, has been completed by Ecosystem Planning and Restoration (EPR). The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has concurred with the delineation. Refer to the attached documentation dated 9/20/2024.
5. EPR has consulted with environmental agencies, as part of the Clean Water Act 401/404 permitting work, and is of their understanding that multiple records of multiple federally protected bat species exist near the proposed project. Therefore, it is recommended that surveys for potential hibernaculum be performed to avoid potential project delays.
6. Preliminary design drawings have been developed for the dam, reservoir grading, and force main. One significant design decision not yet determined is the method of seepage control. A full geosynthetic system would be advantageous by providing an impermeable layer across the entire reservoir surface. But such a system significantly increases costs, and it is at risk of

failure if punctured due to dredging operations or other events. This is further outlined in the enclosed information from Grimes Engineering.

7. The volume of earth and rock to be removed from the site has been estimated to be 100,000 cubic yards (refer to the enclosed cut-fill report/map). Finding suitable locations to waste this material will be a significant factor in the total project cost. Likewise, repairing potential damage to roads between the project site and the waste sites will be another cost associated with the project.

8. Preliminary pump sizing has been completed, for transfer of water from Lake Coffey to the Buckeye Lake water treatment plant (calculations are enclosed). The Town will need two vertical turbine pumps with a capacity of 1,050 gpm each. Motor size will be approximately 150 hp each. The existing Resort and Beech Mountain Club pumps will need to be moved into the new pump house.

9. The total project cost opinion has not yet been updated. Some cost opinion information is included in the draft preliminary engineering report by Grimes Engineering (enclosed). Please note that this cost information does not include all project costs, such as the intake pump station, force main, and wasting of excess material. The purpose of the Grimes' cost information is to compare the two seepage-control options under consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with the Town of Beech Mountain on this important project.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. Board and Committee appointments

Mayor Abernethy requested the Council to nominate to the various Boards and Committees.

Motion

Alan Villanova made a motion to re-appoint Tyler Hunter and Tim Holland to the Planning Board for a three-year term expiring December 2027 and Kelly Melang seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

Motion

Art Beckmann made a motion to re-appoint Fred France, Jennifer Lavrack, and Therese Barry to the Board of Adjustment for a three-year term expiring in December 2027 and Kelly Melang seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

Motion

Weidner Abernethy made a motion to appoint Martin Marks as 1st Alternate of the Board of Adjustment for a three-year term expiring December 2027 and M.W. Stanford seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

Motion

Kelly Melang made a motion to re-appoint Fred Pfohl, Barbara Piquet, Kathy Bubash, and Carol Beckmann to the Recreation Committee for a three-year term expiring December 2027 and Art Beckmann seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

Motion

Alan Villanova made a motion to appoint Dawn Dalglish as TDA Chair and Fred Pfohl as TDA Vice Chair and Kelly Melang seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

9. TOWN MANAGER AND STAFF REPORTS

9.1. Town Manager Report-

- 1.The financial audit has been completed and submitted to the state LGC by December 1st as required.
- 2.Water restrictions – currently at stage 2 (10%). Due to the decrease in the storage capacity of Buckeye Lake. Expect restrictions for several months.
- 3.Buckeye Lake – engineers have been hired (Mattern and Craig) and have been onsite, subcontractors for underwater surveying start tomorrow (Wednesday) to map the impact of the storm on the lake as well as to map the solid debris in the lake.
design for repairs to the water plant intake structure is underway.
Analysis of damage to the spillway and dam release mechanism is underway.
- 4.The well has been impacted to a reduced flow (25k per day). Working to understand what exactly happened.
- 5.FEMA funding – Category A (debris) received 1.9 million and Category B (emergency response) \$826,247.00 is expected. DEQ \$3 million utility grant in progress.
- 6.Debris cleanup – Southern Disaster Recovery (SDR) has been a disappointment. As of yesterday, only 374 loads representing 15,200 cubic yards have been removed. (70 days). Complaint filed with the state.
- 7.Charter Hills Road – engineers are on site developing a repair solution. Will require detailed specifications, bidding, and hiring a contractor. Expect repairs to be underway in early summer.
- 8.Lake Coffey – The presentation tonight, with the impact on Lake Buckeye it makes Lake Coffey that much more important. A bat study is underway, notices are being mailed to 4000 property owners.
- 9.Ski Resort – opening day we counted almost 4000 vehicles passing by Town Hall. Spoke to Ryan Costin, and good attendance has been experienced.
- 10.Sledding Hill using Snowmax with good results, using new grooming equipment.
- 11.The Christmas Parade is December 19th at 3:00 pm snow or shine. Contact the Recreation Center for more information.

9.2. Finance and Budget Report October 2024

- 9.3. Fire Department Monthly Report
- 9.4. DOI Report for November 2024
- 9.5. Planning & Inspections Monthly Report 2024-11
- 9.6. Police Department Monthly Report
- 9.7. TDA Report December 2024
- 9.8. November 2024 Recreation Report

10. TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

10.1. Councilmember Alan Villanova-

Thank you to all town employees who continue to work towards recovery after Helene.

Thank you, residents of Beech Mountain, our community has come together in this time of need.

Councilmember Art Beckmann-

Season to be grateful. We are in a position that most people aren't, count your blessings.

Daniel Davis is here tonight and I would like to thank him for coming out and for all of the day-to-day duties he handles.

I believe this council has the town's best interest in mind and we will continue to strive forward. I am wishing everyone a great Holiday season.

Councilmember M.W. Stanford-

Be patient. Things are not 100 percent recovered.

Thank you to all involved in overcoming this disaster and getting the town to this point and being able to welcome visitors to come this season.

Vice Mayor Kelly Melang-

Patience is key not only this time of year but all year.

I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. 2025 is our rebuild.

Mayor Weidner Abernethy-

I would like to thank everyone who has served on a committee or Board, we have a small pool to choose from.

I think we have great people that serve on our committees but it is a thankless job. I want to mention Destin Hall North Carolina House of Representatives who was voted in as NC Speaker of the House and wish him well in his new role.

We have a strong Council with everyone's best interest at heart. We have been making a lot of progress with a long way to go.

I spoke with a visitor who mentioned they haven't been to Beech Mountain in several years and she said Beech Mountain looks as if it has had a facelift. I take pride in the appearance of Beech Mountain.

11. ADJOURNMENT

11.1. Mayor Abernethy requested a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:21 PM.

Motion

Alan Villanova made a motion to adjourn at 5:21 PM and Kelly Melang seconded the motion. CARRIED. unanimously.

Town Clerk

Mayor, Town of Beech Mountain