

MINUTES
BEECH MOUNTAIN TOWN COUNCIL
Planning Retreat – February 10, 2011

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rick Owen called the Planning Retreat of the Beech Mountain Town Council to order at 1:02 p.m., Thursday February 10, 2011 in the Town Hall Council Chambers. Other Council Members present were Paul Piquet, Rick Miller and Alan Holcombe. Councilwoman Cindy Keller was not present at the beginning of the meeting. Staff members present were Town Manager Randy Feierabend; Town Clerk Jennifer Broderick, Public Utilities Director Robert Heaton, Fire Chief Robert Pudney, Code Inspector Stan Hanna, Tax Administrator Jessica Heaton, Recreation Director Eric Jelinski and Town Planner James Scott.

II. Pledge of Allegiance – All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

III. Adoption of Agenda – Mayor Owen stated the agenda would stand as presented. Mayor Owen informed Council that before them they had actual revenues and expenses from the prior three years budgets as well as information on the actual revenues and expenses of the current budget through January 31, 2011.

IV. New Business –

Councilwoman Keller arrived at 1:10 p.m.

a. Review of February 2010/11 Town Projects – Randy Feierabend – Manager Feierabend stated that the Town was getting good strong leadership from department heads. Manager Feierabend reviewed with Council projects that staff had completed and that were underway. The completed projects were as follows: Town Hall Kitchen Flooring, Toilet Drain Line, Town Hall Chairs, Employee raises (3%), Generator for Buckeye Recreation Center, Computers, Water Department Altitude Values, Spruce Hollow Area and New Council Table. Projects currently under way were as follows: Installation of Radio Read Water Meters, Water Improvements at Greenbriar, Sewer Improvements at Greenbriar, Purchase of Property for Public Works, Gateway Beautification, Pathway for Streetscape. Projects to be completed this spring are as follows: Seal and Stripe Town Hall Parking Lot and Removal of the Perry Park Building.

b. Projected 2011/12 Town Projects – Randy Feierabend – Manager Feierabend discussed with Council possible future projects for the Town. The projects were as follows: Vehicle and Equipment Capitol (all departments), Comprehensive Software Package (inclusive for Administration, Planning and Inspections), Welcome Signage, Council Salaries, Update of Town's Comprehensive Plan, Funding for Continuation of Streetscape Project, Improvement of Sledding Hill, Wildlife Management Program, Overflow Parking at Buckeye Recreation Center, Seal and Stripe Existing Buckeye Parking Lot, Fitness Room Equipment at Buckeye, Canoe/Kayak Storage at Buckeye Lake and Two Paddle Boats, Community Fishing Pier at Lake Coffey, Upgrade Kiosk/ Amenities at Katz Overlook. VHF Radio Repeater Upgrades, Fireworks for July 4th, Visitor Information and Notification System, Fire Department Employee, Trailer Mounted Pot Hole Asphalt Repairer, Tire Balancer, Grassy Gap Sewer

Pump Station Grant, Old Bio-Soils Hauled to Landfill. Public Utilities Director Robert Heaton explained that this bio-soil was sludge that will not compost. Manager Feierabend continued on with projected Town projects; Electrical Service Upgrades for Spruce Hollow and Parkway Water Pump Stations, Outdoor Shed for Parks and Recreation Department and Leak Detectors. Manager Feierabend discussed reconsideration items from the previous year which were the potential installation of showers at Buckeye Recreation Center, insulating Town Hall and a shuttle bus program.

c. Council Prioritization of 2011/12 Budget – Randy Feierabend – Manager Feierabend opened up the floor to Council for additional ideas. Mayor Owen stated that road maintenance and paving needed to be top priorities and that the Town was getting very far behind. In addition the Town needed to look into the potential combination of Emergency Medical Services and Police Officers to see whether or not it makes sense to offer incentives to Police Officers to obtain this type of training. Vice Mayor Piquet stated that money needs to be put aside for water and sewer infrastructure for future needs other than the projects that were already planned. Water and sewer lines in the roadways needed to be replaced before major road resurfacing. These lines are 40 to 45 years old. Manager Feierabend stated that the water and sewer study was supposed to be finished in June. This study will tell Council what the priorities should be for the Towns infrastructure. Councilman Miller stated that his number one priority was the Towns infrastructure, his second priority was paving, his third priority was beautification and his fourth priority was the sign at the bottom of the hill. Councilman Holcombe stated that his main concern was the Towns infrastructure and that the Town needed to get its pride back through beautification. Councilman Holcombe commended the Town Manager and staff of the job they were doing. Councilwoman Keller stated that she would like to look at the Recreation Department. Councilwoman Keller noted that while usage has grown over the years fees have not. Councilwoman Keller felt that the department could support more money making events and wished that the department would sustain themselves a little more and handle themselves as a business rather than that of a non-profit. Councilwoman Keller stated that the Tourism Development Authority needed more funds. Councilwoman Keller felt that Talia Freeman's presentation to Council regarding the potential National Mountain Bike event being sponsored by Ski Beech was a good idea. Manager Feierabend explained that the Town was not able to give Ski Beech public funds to improve their property. However the Town could support the event through labor and help. The funds to assist this event needed to come from the Tourism Development Authority or the Chamber of Commerce. Councilwoman Keller stated that another priority was seeing that Police Officers were cross trained. Mayor Owen asked Council if they were completely opposed to anything staff had proposed. Vice Mayor Piquet stated that he was opposed to the Town getting into public transportation with the Shuttle Bus Program. Councilman Holcombe stated that he did not back the Shuttle Bus Program idea either. Councilwoman Keller inquired as to why the proposed fishing pier site was Lake Coffey and not Buckeye Lake. Manager Feierabend stated that fishing was better at Lake Coffey because it was smaller. Recreation Director Eric Jelinski explained that 75% of the cost for the pier would be paid for by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. In addition the pier would be handicap accessible. Mr. Jelinski was not against the location of the pier being at Buckeye Lake. Councilman Miller asked about employee pay raises. Manager Feierabend stated that this information would be presented to Council at a future meeting.

V. ***Other Business –***

Council Questionnaire – Manager Feierabend informed Council that the questionnaire before them broke down the Town into many different sub-departments rather than the standard departments. Council was directed to prioritize the 25 sub-departments by ranking them with number 1 being the most important to assist staff in gathering direction. Council's survey sheets were tallied. Police Patrol received the top priority with 3 number 1's. The Utilities Department received 2 number 1's. Council's highest priorities were Police Patrol, Utilities, Road Maintenance, Fire, Police Dispatch/EMS, Garbage and Indoor Recreation.

Utilities Department – Public Utilities Director Robert Heaton stated that his departmental vision was to have the department operating to its fullest potential. This could be accomplished by moving water produced to where it should be instead of dumping it in the ground. In addition a fair rate needed to be charged in order for the department to build up the capital fund to pay for some of the upcoming projects. Mr. Heaton commended his staff on consistently improving.

Fire Department – Fire Chief Robert Pudney stated that his vision was to continue this upcoming year with upgrading the department to a 21st century Emergency Medical Service and Fire Department. Major focus right now was working on an incentive program to bring both Police Officers and Town Employees into the department. Councilman Miller asked about hiring another employee and whether or not the department was ready for one. Fire Chief Pudney stated that it was a difficult question. Right now Fire Chief Pudney believed that there would be more benefit for the Town if monies were used to train many volunteers versus just gaining one employee. Councilwoman Keller asked about fire inspections on commercial buildings. Chief Pudney stated that they were in the process of doing these inspections in the spring and that informational meetings were provided for business owners to attend.

Building Inspection – Code Inspector Stan Hanna stated that his vision included a computer program to bring the Town into the 21st century. Improved software would allow contractors to be able to request their inspections online and see a response to their scheduled inspections online. It would also mean that the Town could function off of one database of information in which all departments at Town Hall would have access. Another area of focus was to look into stronger enforcement of ordinances that have been overlooked.

Police Department – Police Chief Jay Hefner stated that the main focus for his department was to continue to train officers and improve his staff's diversity in their training. Police Chief Hefner stated that his department had really enjoyed working with Fire Chief Pudney and the Fire Department and that their departments continue to grow in that relationship. Police Chief Hefner stated that the main priority of his department was to keep the public, officers and properties safe.

Tax Office – Tax Administrator Jessica Heaton stated that her vision for her department was to collect taxes at 100%.

Recreation Department – Recreation Director Eric Jelinski stated that his department was looking to continue on what they have been doing the past 6 years. The program guide has grown from 6 pages to 20 pages. This summer there would be an increase in summer camp opportunities. Mr. Jelinski stated that the Recreation Department was becoming more involved with the community by assisting the Chamber of Commerce with some of their sponsored events. Hiking is a big priority as well as the Emerald Mountain Outback trails. Outdoor recreation staff is attending a trail maintenance workshop at the end of February.

Beech Mountain Parkway Resurfacing – Councilman Miller asked when the North Carolina Department of Transportation was going to resurface the Beech Mountain Parkway and if they would be doing any patching. Utilities Director Robert Heaton stated that the road was resurfaced in 2008. Police Chief Jay Hefner stated that the turnaround time for the State was every 10 to 15 years. Mayor Owen stated that in the future the State may be trying to give some of their roads to the counties and municipalities to maintain their upkeep.

Budget Proposal – Manager Feierabend stated that Department Heads would be putting together their budgets in March. Vice Mayor Piquet informed staff that he did not want taxes raised in this year's budget. In addition Vice Mayor Piquet would like to see the Cost of Living Allowance for employees and merit raises budgeted. Councilman Miller felt the same way as Vice Mayor Piquet. Councilwoman Keller stated that she wanted to see the Town proceed forward with the Streetscape Project. Councilwoman Keller requested that Phase II of the Streetscape Project be ready for presentation to the public for the Towns 30th Anniversary celebration which was to be held May 1st at Buckeye Recreation Center.

Staff was directed to start putting together the budget and to have a budget proposal ready for Councils review at the May 10th 2011 regularly scheduled Council meeting at 3:00 p.m. at Town Hall in the Council Chamber rooms.

VI. Adjourn – Councilman Holcombe motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:37 p.m. Vice Mayor Piquet seconded the motion and the vote passed unanimously.

Minutes approved by Town Council on March 8, 2011.

Mayor

ATTEST:

Town Clerk