

MINUTES
BEECH MOUNTAIN TOWN COUNCIL
June 10, 2008

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rick Owen called the regular meeting of the Beech Mountain Town Council to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers. Other Council Members present were Gil Adams, Pete Chamberlin, Randy Corn and Alan Holcombe. Also present were Town Manager Michael Boaz, Town Attorney David Paletta, Public Works Director Riley Hatch, Interim Planning Director Bobby Dziewulski and Danielle Hagerman. There were a number of interested parties in the audience.

II. Invocation – Charlie Burluson opened the meeting with a prayer.

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

IV. Adoption of Agenda – The Agenda was accepted as presented to the Council.

V. Approval of the Minutes – Councilman Corn moved to approve the May 13, 2008 Regular Meeting, Special Budget Meetings of May 19, 2008, May 26, 2008, May 27, 2008 and May 29, 2008 as amended. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

VI. Public Comment –

a. Nancy Raymond, 519 Pine Ridge Road, addressed the Council with concerns over the road striping on Beech Mountain Parkway. The pavers had only striped the areas that they patched, leaving areas of the Parkway with old striping. Mayor Owen indicated that he would contact Mrs. Raymond regarding the issue.

b. Renee Castiglione, 104 Wild Turkey Lane, thanked Mr. Hatch, Mr. McKinney and Mr. Railing for their prompt, professional response to the water issue at Holiday Beech Villas and Mr. Boaz for helping with the billing issue. Mrs. Castiglione also noted that Charles Frisbie was doing a very good job at the recycling center.

VII. Old Business –

a. Appointment to the Tree Board – Mayor Owen announced that the Tree Board would consist of 5 individuals and opened the floor for nominations. Councilman Holcombe nominated Renee Castiglione, Peter Patton, Marge Bailey and Rory Ellington to the Tree Board. Councilman Corn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Councilman Adams nominated Cindy Porter to the Tree Board. Councilman Corn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

VIII. New Business –

a. Adoption of Fiscal Year 2008/2009 Budget – Mayor Owen indicated that the 2008-2009 Budget Ordinance reflected a 5¢ increase in the current tax rate. Councilman Corn stated that he was not pleased with the proposed Budget Ordinance and recommended that the Town raise taxes sufficiently to pay for the needed motor grader, as opposed to financing the motor grader, and to maintain the Town’s appearance as a premier destination for visitors and residents. Councilman Holcombe indicated that the debt needed to be addressed. After further discussion, Vice-Mayor Adams moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2008/2009 budget as presented. Mayor Owen seconded the motion. The motion failed with Councilman Corn, Councilman Chamberlin, and Councilman Holcombe voting nay. After further discussion, Councilman Corn moved to amend the Budget Ordinance to include a 9¢ tax increase, recommending that the additional funds be used toward the motor grader. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion. The motion passed 3 to 2 with Councilman Corn, Councilman Chamberlin and Councilman Holcombe voting yea. Mayor Owen and Vice-Mayor Adams voted nay.

b. Job Description Approval – Mr. Boaz presented the job descriptions for the right-of-way maintenance worker at a salary grade of 7, building maintenance worker at a salary grade of 9 and public works administrative assistant at a salary grade of 11. After a brief discussion, Councilman Chamberlin moved to approve the three job descriptions as presented. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

c. Budget Amendments – Mr. Boaz reported that the first Budget Amendment in the amount of \$13,860 would appropriate monies from the Cool 5 Race toward the Leather’s and Associates bill for design work at the Buckeye Playground. Councilman Chamberlin moved to approve the Amendment as presented. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Mr. Boaz indicated that the second Budget Amendment would transfer funds to the Phase II Water and Sewer Fund for design, surveying and construction of the Phase II System Improvements. Councilman Chamberlin moved to approve the Budget Amendment in the amount of \$146,500. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

d. Adoption of Capital Project Ordinance – Mr. Boaz reported that the proposed Capital Project Ordinance was for the Phase II System Improvements including the upgrade to Grassy View Pump Station, installation of two pressure reducing stations and half of the East Mid Range improvements. Councilman Corn moved to approve the Capital Project Ordinance as presented. Councilman Chamberlin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

e. Approval of Engineering Agreements – Mayor Owen indicated that Town had received the engineering agreements from Hobbs, Upchurch regarding the Phase II System Improvements. Councilman Holcombe moved to approve the agreement to furnish professional engineering services for the Grassy View Pump Station Upgrade and East Mid-Range Water & Sewer Improvements. Councilman Corn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

f. Appointment of Planning Board Member – Mayor Owen indicated that Adolfo Sanmartino had resigned his position on the Planning Board. After a brief discussion, Mayor Owen moved to appoint Brian Barnes, Beech Mountain Club Manager, to the Planning Board. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

g. Change date of July Council Meeting – Councilman Chamberlin moved to reschedule the July 8th to July 15, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. Councilman Corn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Councilman Holcombe asked that the Council consider holding the meetings at the Recreation Center.

h. Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance – Councilman Chamberlin moved to set a public hearing for July 15, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers on the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Sign Regulations Sections 1906 and 1909 and appendix A, and Water Supply Watershed management Regulations, Sections 601.04A and 601.04B. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

X. Town Manager's Report – Michael Boaz – 1) Mr. Boaz reported that a new mechanic, Gary Hicks, had been hired as well as two new police officers, Dustin Beam and Jason Lolie. A new dispatcher, Wendy Hicks, has also been hired. 2) Mr. Boaz requested that another Public Hearing be scheduled for the loan for Phase I. Councilman Corn moved to schedule a Public Hearing on the Loan for Phase I for July 15, 2008 at 6:05 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

XI. Closed Session Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (c) 6 – On a motion by Councilman Holcombe, seconded by Councilman Corn, the Council voted to go into closed session at 6:45 p.m. to discuss matters related to Personnel. Councilman Chamberlin moved to come out of closed session at 7:05 p.m. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. No action was taken.

XII. Other Business – Councilman Corn moved to set the Town Manager, Michael Boaz, salary at \$62,000 per year. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

XIII. Recessed – Having no other business to come before the Council, Councilman Corn moved to recess the meeting at 7:10 p.m. to be reconvened on June 17, 2008 in the Town Hall Council Chambers. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

XIV. Reconvened – Mayor Owen reconvened the meeting of June 10, 2008 on June 17, 2008 in the Town Hall Council Chambers at 2:00 p.m. Mayor Owen addressed the Council and audience with a statement concerning the tax increase being discussed by the Council. “I applaud our community for their interest, for wanting their voices heard, for speaking up and speaking out. We are all aware of the outcry over the Budget and I share some of your concerns. But I think it is important to note that the Town Council has worked hard to come up with a Budget and it did not just start last Tuesday Night. We have held numerous Budget Meets, a Public Hearing and discussed it at length at our yearly Planning Retreat; all of these meetings are open to the public. I for one am almost always available to discuss Town issues, on the phone or in person. While I

feel the ground swell to cut, change or edit the Budget that is proposed I feel that it would not be realistic for the citizens to think that will happen at this point. A 5¢ tax increase will do everything that is in the proposed budget this year. The 9¢ increase will also do everything that is in the proposed budget and reduce the amount of any future increase by 4 cents. The Budget as proposed in the Managers Message to the Council was adjusted with the Council, Staff and interested parties that gave input during the Budget process. While a tax increase will probably never be desirable it is a part of the Proposed Budget and the Council has been unanimous that some increase would be needed. The question that the Council has become spilt on is how much to increase and when. I feel it only fair to share my thought that changes to the Budget are probably limited to the question of 5¢ or 9¢”.

XV. Budget Ordinance – Mayor Owen indicated that the Council would accept comments from the public on the increase in the tax rate. Lee Wittman, 102 Rainbows End, stated that the Council had discussed the sign ordinance for four months before making a decision and felt everyone should be more responsible. Mr. Wittman noted that he felt the 9¢ increase was too high. Jane Miller, 242 Greenbrier Road, indicated that she had mixed emotions with regards to the paving of Greenbrier Road. John West, 136 Greenbrier Road, stated that he would appreciate the paving of the road and thanked the Town for all that it did. Renee Castiglione, 104 Wild Turkey Lane, noted that she did not agree with the 9¢ increase in property tax, however, she felt the 5¢ increase would have been justified. Barry Schorr, 205 Foxgrape Hollow Road, felt the 9¢ increase was too high and, perhaps, the Town should do assessments, not increase the tax rate. Peggy Coscia, 100 Hemlock Circle, stated that cross training should be practiced by the Town in addition to getting tough on the employees. Ms. Coscia indicated that the public works employees should utilize their time more effectively. William Kennedy, 112 Ski Way Circle, noted that the increase was out of line. Susie O’Connell, 132 Grassy Gap Loop Road, expressed her concern over the Buckeye Recreation Center and stated that she had heard the taxpayers had to subsidize \$1,500 each to support the center. Leslie Hayhurst, 225 Upper Grouse Ridge Road, reported that Genesis Wildlife Sanctuary would be moving off the mountain and she felt the Town was losing a great resource. Mayor Owen closed the public comment segment of the meeting calling for a vote on the 2008-2009 Budget Ordinance at a tax increase of 5¢. Vice Mayor Adams seconded the motion. Vice Mayor Adams stated that the Council hired a Manager and staff to make recommendations and he felt the Council should approve the recommended 5¢ increase. Chairman Corn stated that the 5¢ increase did not provide the necessary funds for projects. Mayor Owen called the motion. The motion failed with a vote of 2 to 3, with Councilman Chamberlin, Councilman Corn, and Councilman Holcombe voting nay. Councilman Corn moved to approve the 2008-2009 Budget Ordinance for at a tax increase of 9¢. Councilman Holcombe seconded the motion. The motion passed 3 to 2 with Councilman Chamberlin, Councilman Corn, and Councilman Holcombe voting yea, Mayor Owen and Vice Mayor Adams voted nay.

Town Manager Boaz reported that a memorial service would be held at Lee’s McRae’s Evans Auditorium for Officer Dan Jennings on Saturday, June 21st.

XVI. *Adjourned* – Having no other business to come before the Council, Councilman Holcombe moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:55 p.m. Councilman Chamberlin seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Minutes approved by Town Council on July 15, 2008

Mayor

ATTEST:

Town Clerk