

Town of Mineral Springs
Town Hall
3506 S. Potter Road
Town Council
Regular Meeting
November 14, 2019 ~ 7:30 PM

Minutes

The Town Council of the Town of Mineral Springs, North Carolina, met in Regular Session at the Mineral Springs Town Hall, Mineral Springs, North Carolina, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 14, 2019.

Present: Mayor Frederick Becker III, Mayor Pro Tem Bettylyn Krafft, Councilwoman Valerie Coffey, Councilman Jerry Countryman, Councilwoman Janet Critz, Councilwoman Lundeen Cureton, Councilwoman Peggy Neill, Town Clerk/Zoning Administrator Vicky Brooks, Attorney Bobby Griffin, and Deputy Town Clerk Janet Ridings.

Absent: None.

Visitors: Hollie Davidson, Ashley Erb, and Kristi Williford.

With a quorum present Mayor Frederick Becker called the Regular Town Council Meeting of November 14, 2019 to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Opening

- Councilwoman Neill delivered the invocation.
- Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Comments

- None.

3. Consent Agenda

- ***Councilwoman Neill made a motion to approve the consent agenda, containing the following:***
 - A. October 10, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - B. September 2019 Tax Collector's Report
 - C. September 2019 Finance Report

and Councilwoman Coffey seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Neill, and Krafft
Nays: None

4. Presentation by Western Union Elementary on the Outdoor Classroom

- Western Union Elementary School Principal Kristi Williford and associates Hollie Davidson and Ashley Erb made a presentation to the council about their outdoor garden learning area and asked how they could partner with the town on that project. Ms. Williford explained the outdoor garden learning area was something the teachers and other staff decided to do to ensure that they were engaging their students to maximize their learning. However, with limited funds within the school, they have had to go outside to find grants and partnerships from community members, businesses, etc. Ms. Williford explained that was why they came to the council to see if they would want to be a partner with them, so they can continue to build this outdoor garden to make sure the students are having a fun, engaging learning environment.
- Ms. Erb explained she was a fourth-grade teacher and she works together with Ms. Davidson on the gardening club (Ms. Davidson is the lead on it). As a classroom teacher, Ms. Erb explained there were some things that they use with the gardening space, every day after lunch now, her students save their apple cores and orange peelings to put in the compost, no matter how cold it is or how wet it is they want to go out and put things in the compost and spin it, so the garden club will have nice rich soil to grow things with. Ms. Erb stated it was really awesome that they have this space that they are able to do hands-on learning, it's pouring into their science lesson, it's pouring into their math, and their language arts is having the kids use the space to go out and write poetry or just having a different space to engage kids, because we are really competing with technology, it's kind of nice to go in the opposite direction. The students are so much more engaged with having something that they are not necessarily exposed to at home.
- Ms. Davidson explained they also have a gardening club they started this year and it has been really great, because they actually grew radishes and the students were able to harvest them (they are still getting radishes) and they think it is really cool. Ms. Davidson has a friend that donated some food for the ribbon cutting and the students were able to give him a little bag of radishes and the students were so proud of the radishes. Some of the kids had never tasted a radish. The students were able to do that from start to finish themselves. Ms. Davidson continued that her kindergarten class has been studying weather in science and they were really concerned/frightened last weekend (after being asked to watch the weather), because it was going to get so cold and kill all of their garden, so they went out and covered it up with big tarps, because of the frost. It was interesting to see what the frost killed and what they were able to save. Ms. Davidson added it was just all aspects: reading, writing, and being engaged. This is exposing a lot of their students that do not get exposure to things like this and it has them taking pride in what they are doing.
- Ms. Williford explained they were able to get a \$5,000 grow grant from the Union County Ed Foundation, which was what jump started the whole project, but when you have to buy the flower beds based on specific guidelines at the elementary level, dirt, and mulch; that is where a lot of their funds went, so that was the "foundation piece". There have been a couple of other businesses that have partnered with it and the PTO provided some funds. They have about \$4,500 raised to save up for the missing piece right now, which is the outdoor shade structure and white board to

add to the learning station where the kids can come out and they can actually have an instruction setting. Of course, they want to continue to add to this project, there are so many things they can add, like the QR readers, magnifying glasses, etc. Hopefully this is not just something for the students, it can be opened up to involve the community, maybe even a farmer's market. The school has lots of big ideas, but right now there are some things that they can't do for lack of enough funds. Ms. Williford asked if the town would partner with them.

- Councilwoman Critz stated, "I would just like to say, I actually encouraged them to come when they had the open house. Councilwoman Krafft, Mayor Becker and myself were there. Councilwoman Coffey and I met with them one day to discuss more details about the possibility of changing the sign and Councilwoman Coffey and I got kind of a sneak peak of the outdoor garden classroom, but I felt like when Mayor Becker and I were there and Councilwoman Krafft, it just seems so, not only the right thing to do, but it just seemed so in tuned to our mantra here in Mineral Springs where we are 'Conservation by Design', so it just felt like, to me, that it was something that, because we have funded one time. We don't feel like it is appropriate for local government to be in a constant funding environment of public education, but we have funded individual projects before and I felt like this would be a really good fit for us to get involved, as a one-time opportunity. So, I just wanted to let everybody know that I did encourage them to do this and I love the outdoors. I have a friend that is an author and writes books, she speaks on learning, children's learning and different environments and right now in the United States there's a problem and I spoke to a couple of doctors to see if this was really true, 'cause I thought, okay, not that I question my friend's fact checking, but they have physicians right now in medical school that can intellectually pass every test, but they have the inability to become surgeons, because they don't know how to use their hands, because they spent almost all their lives indoors in front of computers and some kind of technology device and there's a lack of tactile skills in this nation right now and I'm sure it's in other areas besides surgeons, but you definitely want a surgeon that knows how to use his hands well, but children are not getting outdoors and so this is whetting, you can't obviously keep them outdoors as much as they need to be outdoors, only their parents can do that. You're whetting their appetite for that and so I just wanted the council to know that I really did sort of push them to come tonight and I really appreciate what you are doing and I think it really does fit with, like I said, our whole goal as a council, as a town, as a community."
- Ms. Williford stated, "talking about the conservation, one of the things I have met with is the CTE director for the district and who helps with Parkwood High School and how we can collaborate even with them and so their students coming in and whether it be talking about how to conserve energy, whether it be for solar panels and things like that. So, windmills, which they have access to at the high school, we are really trying to make this kind of a whole school effort from middle to high. Any other questions?"
- Mayor Becker stated, "I have a question just for our attorney, Attorney Griffin, I know over the years we do, Councilwoman Critz mentioned about the notion of schools and funding being a county function versus a municipal and we have in some cases contributed, not to UCPS, but to let's say a booster club or to PTSO. Is there any

technicality we have to be aware of that if the council decides to do some funding? Is there anything that we have to be aware of that we do right”?

- Attorney Griffin responded, “I wish I brought the bulletin that Frayda Bluestein put out a few years ago about a request from nonprofits/other and there are some fine lines there, because this town was not chartered to support education. It was chartered to zone and a few other limited activities this town does and their hearts and minds, they want to spend their money to help you I’m sure, but all other nonprofits who come who have good causes, charitable means about them, but I do think you need to be limited as specific and why. If it were a business, you would have more accountability coming back to you, that the money you have given has been utilized for the purposes that you intended, but small towns don’t usually work that way, a few do. They are required to come in writing, fill out all sorts of information, certify you are this, you’re that and that you in turn will give back information at the end of the period, whatever you desire to get it, that money has been employed for the purpose it was intended. So, in a sense I would just caution you again that the town was not chartered to support public education. There is a school board who has that obligation and there are county commissioners who have that obligation, but it’s happened in the past and it will happen in the future, more and more schools look to what entities to apparently give them what they think is necessary to promote the education that they generally have. So, in the final analysis, it’s your decision and as a board, but I do think you need to be cognitive of what you were chartered for and what your tax resources are collected for. Is it to pass from one public entity to another or are those resources to be deployed for the purpose of which you were chartered and for what your goals are set? Saying that again, it’s your decision”.
- Mayor Becker stated, “and the final question is, depending on what entity the town might or might not elect to support. Is it legal for the town to say ‘I’m cutting a check to Union County Public Schools or Western Union School’ or would you be better served to make it, I don’t know how Principal Williford, how you are internally accounting for funds. Does the PTO take custody and then redistribute? Just to make sure legally we are not writing a check to anyone we are not supposed to write it to. I don’t know how that works.”
- Councilwoman Critz stated, “what we have done in the past was through the PTO and it was a specific project just like this is and I will say we have been called a lot of things, including ‘Santa Claus’ because of giving. I think this board has and Attorney Griffin sometimes I’m sure holds his breath on occasions when we are making decisions and he’s like did they really listen and yes, we do, but we have sort of our litmus test is ‘are we absolutely sure that whoever is coming to us is serving the community’ and we do know in this case that you are. We know there are children that don’t live in Mineral Springs that go there, but we also know that you do have children from Mineral Springs, just like the Council on Aging, Turning Point and all these other places, so I am all for this and I know Attorney Griffin is not surprised on me saying this, but I would like to actually know, like Mayor Becker said, if we could like have a formal request from your PTO as opposed to just the school and go through that so that we can. I don’t know.”

- Ms. Williford stated, "and I was going to say, I actually contemplated if the PTO should come or not cause I knew that so, yes, they will have an account that can be tied onto outdoor garden things like that and they had given us, which you can see."
- Councilwoman Critz stated, "it would be earmarked specifically for that."
- Ms. Williford responded, "specifically for that outdoor garden, yes, through the PTO."
- Mayor Becker commented, "that could be a funding vehicle that we could use and it wouldn't be a payment directly to another government agency, if that, so legal isn't the problem, it's just of philosophy, so it's up to the board to decide and I think there is a fit, there is an outdoor component to what we do in Mineral Springs in terms of the 'Conservation by Design', in terms of our greenway and outdoor recreation pursuits. I think it would be great to have, I just spent yesterday morning doing some invasive plant removal on our greenway. I think invasive verses native plants is something that could be taught. There are so many things that can be taught from kindergarten right on up to our ripe old age."
- Ms. Davidson stated, "we are always looking for things for our garden club to be involved in such as that. Such as beautification of the town. I know we are making things for senior shut-ins and older that can't get out. As the garden club we are always looking to partner with anybody. If you would love to teach or help the kids, they are eager. We had 20 spots for the gardening club and had 40 kids that wanted to do it. Anytime you have anything like that we would love to help in anyway".
- Councilwoman Critz responded, "you should consider the greenway as a source, absolutely."
- Mayor Becker stated, "Councilwoman Coffey, you wanted to ask or say something?"
- Councilwoman Coffey responded, "I do. As in the past, the last time when Western Union came, I believe we gave them \$2,000 for the project that they were here for. The time before that, it was \$1,000 if I'm not mistaken. We have given to Parkwood, but the last time Parkwood came to us, I didn't think that was what we should continue to do, and I have to go on record saying that. We are responsible to the constituents that we serve to use the monies for what we have been directed to do. I believe as I stated the last time and I can't remember what school it was that came before us, anybody on this board that wants to be of benefit to the school and I think it's great. I think you need to pull out that check book and write a check. I don't believe that we as a town can continue to do this, pick and choose, we cannot do this. I am just going on record because we have denied, we have given much, we have denied little, but we have a cut-off point."
- Councilwoman Critz stated, "one of the things, if you remember Councilwoman Coffey and let me just point this out. I do understand where you're coming from."
- Councilwoman Coffey stated, "you do know I am on record for that."
- Councilwoman Critz stated, "I know that, but one of the things that we did stipulate for CATA (for example), number one, wasn't in our community and it wasn't our children from our community aren't filtered into it."
- Councilwoman Coffey responded, "they are, I had a nephew that went there from Western Union School Road."
- Councilwoman Critz stated, "it's the exception more than the rule, whereas the majority of our children are filtered into Western Union and then the majority of our children are filtered into Parkwood and so that was one of the points we made during that conversation."

- Councilwoman Coffey commented, “last time Parkwood came, as a matter of fact, Councilwoman Cureton took on that as a project and she raised over \$1,200 for Parkwood and I think that is a personal thing that somebody should do. I applaud it, but I implore us to really think about what we are doing when we have made the statement and that’s all I have to say.”
- Councilwoman Cureton commented, “well, the band needs money now, I talked to the lady. I raised, the reason I took that project on was because there was a little girl there and her grandmother said it was so expensive for them to play in the band. So, I took it upon myself to raise the money for the band, so I raised over \$1,200 and they were very appreciative, and they need money now, really bad.”
- Councilwoman Critz stated, “the only reason I mentioned this was because I felt like it was in sync with what we stand for. It is the only school that resides within our town limits and this particular project, not everything that you do, but this particular project is in sync with what our community stands for, which is preserving the outdoors, learning the outdoors. We, for how many years, Mayor Becker might remember, we had more land in conservation easements in an eight square mile small community than anywhere else in the whole county and that changed not long ago because Frank Howey donated part of a farm, but prior to that, Mineral Springs had more land in conservation than anywhere else in the county and we’re tiny, so it’s not by happenstance, it’s been a goal, that’s why we say ‘Conservation by Design’, it’s a plan, it’s not just ‘oh we, we hope it happens, let’s hope for the best and flip a coin’, that’s not what we are doing. It’s a plan and that’s what you’re doing is planning an outdoor learning area. I am just letting the council know where I was coming from and why.”
- Councilwoman Coffey commented, “I have a great grandchild there right now, so it’s not that I don’t have anybody there. I have had many to come through there, so that’s not even, I’m making a point though, that it is personal, and it is still my belief that we need to pull out our checkbooks.”
- Councilwoman Critz stated, “well I’m all for everyone giving personally, but.”
- Councilwoman Coffey responded, “I’m just saying.”
- Councilwoman Critz stated, “could you give us some idea what would be helpful, what you would be looking for as far as a donation.”
- Ms. Williford responded, “well any donation is going to be helpful. The biggest project that we are looking for is the actual structure piece for the learning classroom. The total cost of that was roughly about \$10,700 and we have roughly close to half, about \$5,000 to \$6,000 of that. So, but like I said there are other things. Like if you had specific things that you wanted to earmark within the outdoor garden, we are open to that as well. Because we want to be, to ensure that we are holding true to what we say in terms of using the funds and so we have set aside every bit of money has come in that has been earmarked ‘outdoor garden’ in the outdoor garden fund and has been utilized for that. Down from the dirt to the seeds that we buy to the tools and the instruments for the kids to utilize, so if there is anything specific that you want, but any amount is going to be beneficial. I can’t put a limit on that, I would be gracious for any amount that could be given.”
- Councilwoman Critz stated, “Councilwoman Krafft, you were there, do you have anything you would like to say?”

- Councilwoman Krafft responded, “well I have a lot of thoughts, but I was very impressed, and I was shocked that we hadn’t had a request at that point. I commend you for what you have done, and I personally will help you raise some money from outside of the council, because I do think it is exactly what we need, is a total alignment of what our community stands for and total alignment of what I encourage and stand for, whether we are able to do something from the council standpoint, I’m not quite sure yet. I am wrestling with that in my own mind, but I will give you my commitment to help you raise some money.”
- Ms. Williford responded, “thank you.”
- Councilwoman Critz commented, “can we wrestle with this in our own mind and table it to next month’s agenda with the thought in mind of earmarking it specifically for this outdoor project, period, and...”
- Mayor Becker commented, “well some people know where they stand and others may be thinking still, but it’s up to the board obviously if you want to continue debating in your own minds and...”
- Councilwoman Critz stated, “well honestly, I am not wrestling personally, but I want to honor those that are and I would love to see us fund this project and I would love to see us give somewhere, we’ve given \$2,000, we’ve given \$1,000. I was thinking in the tune of \$1,000 and I agree with Councilwoman Krafft and Councilwoman Coffey, I would love to also get involved with helping fundraising in the community as well. We could brainstorm and see what we could come up with, but I do think it would be a feather in our cap for people to know when you’re asking them to fund it to show the other people that have funded it, because it gives it credibility and I think that the fact that we’re behind it would also lend credibility, so that’s the direction I’m leaning in personally.”
- Councilwoman Krafft stated, “I feel like it, the project itself is everything we stand for. It is exactly what we do as a community and of all the schools, our kids go there. My son was supposed to go there, and he didn’t, but I know that it’s a, I saw a lot of really awesome things.”
- Ms. Davidson commented, “since we are trying to raise money for the structure, but also other things, as a teacher to really utilize the space, that structure is going to be very important because you know our weather here, it’s mostly very warm and sunny so up until the last couple of weeks we really needed the shade to utilize the space and bring whole classes out so they could comfortably learn in a school setting and I think that because it is such a community project and we have gotten so many other community sponsors that it could be utilized by the whole community for other events and things like that. I don’t know the technicalities of government and all these other things, but I know we are a welcoming place and we would be happy to have people on our campus to use the space and learn from it just like our students are. I think that having the structure would make it more open to bigger events and things like that.”
- Councilwoman Neill stated, “I just have to say I absolutely hear what Councilwoman Coffey is saying and I respect our attorney’s advice and guidance and it is our decision, but right now I just think that, it’s a wonderful cause, I applaud you, encourage you to continue but then I look at Councilwoman Cureton, all by herself, I look at what she did, what she raised for Parkwood High School so that is on my mind and that’s right now, that’s...”

- Councilwoman Coffey commented, “and don’t get me wrong, I think it is a great project, I applaud what you all are doing. The fact that you have a STEM campus, I think it is great, I know the work that you are putting into it, but I also know the stance on this and where we should be. We cannot vote with our hearts; we have to vote with our heads and along the task lines that we are charged with and that’s where I stand.”
- Councilwoman Critz stated, “I feel I am voting with my head.”
- Councilwoman Coffey responded, “not talking personal.”
- Councilwoman Critz stated, “make to what Councilwoman Krafft said, I love music, my daughter is an opera singer, my oldest son is a residential contractor and my middle son is a Major in the Marine Corps, I am not going to give money to ROTC for that reason, I’m not going to fund your music program cause it is close and dear to my heart. I go back to what Councilwoman Krafft said, this is such a statement of what is in tune to what we stand for as a community, which is the only reason I made this suggestion in the first place. If you had had us for a concert and it was a fabulous concert, or a play and it was an amazing play, I would have applauded you, but I would not have said come to our council and ask for funding, I just wouldn’t have said that. The only reason I said it was because it is exactly what we stand for as a community. So, I am thinking with my head, I think it is dear to all our hearts because we fought for two decades to have what we have here and we all know you step one foot out of Mineral Springs and it’s very different and eventually we are going to have to have helicopters to just come and go so that we can keep our little oasis and it’s sad but it probably is true. I’m going out on a limb here and don’t get me wrong, if our attorney ever told me this is wrong, it’s against the law, it’s not legal but in conversations just like he said before, it’s not necessarily in our job description but it’s not illegal and it is within our parameters of what we consider ethical and we do give to other nonprofits. So, I am going to go out on a limb here and I am going to make a make a motion that we do.”
- Councilwoman Cureton commented, “before you make that motion, I would like to say that I’d be glad to help. We have a park, Western Union Park, we don’t have 100% working with us, but we are doing great. By myself, I have raised over \$2,500 by myself. Asking people for donations, I have had no problem with it. Not everybody, but a lot of people that I ask have given me a donation, no matter where they live, even in DC and places like that. People will help for kids. I am not against this and I will do what I can to help you all. We are in the process of putting a top on our building and I raised a lot of money for that. I raised over \$2,500. I’ve collected over \$2,500 by myself. Usually every month I turn in about \$300.00. I didn’t do anything for the last two months, because I had some things in my way.”
- Councilwoman Critz commented, “and I’m not suggesting that our donations would preclude us from participating in any future fundraising on an individual level, but I’m going out on a limb and I am making a motion that we give \$1,000 to this project and earmark to this project specifically and then what any of us would like to do on any individual level. I would love to speak to them. I would like to bring the book ‘Last Child in the Woods’ and go through parts of it and to meet you when the weather is nicer on the greenway, which my back yard. I’m privileged to back up to the greenway so, yes this is not to say that we don’t get in involved in any other way. This is just to say we are putting our, we are investing that we are responsible for in

a school that serves our community and a specific project that is very absolutely what we stand for here in Mineral Springs.”

- Councilwoman Coffey commented, “please forgive me, but I think we had an opportunity to table this and think this over or was this a motion? Oh, I didn’t know you were going to do that.”
- Councilwoman Critz responded, “would you like to think about it more?”
- Councilwoman Neill responded, “I’m not ready, I’m not sure I am ready quite yet so we probably should.”
- Mayor Becker stated, “then you are going to withdraw your motion?”
- Councilwoman Critz responded, “I withdraw my motion and ask that we table this and come back to it next month.”
- Mayor Becker commented, “we did, I look at the history of our association with our charitable giving, which is one of those areas that is, not everyone has the same point of view about what the municipal government should do on that. There was a time, three or four years ago that we elected to really seriously consider eliminating all support for nonprofits, whether it was PTO, whether it was the Council on Aging, whether it was, just eliminate it across the board and one of the reasons was because we hadn’t really been disciplining ourselves very well and so we would have a community budget allocation; I am the budget officer so I was aware of that and within the charitable contributions sat and we wouldn’t spend the whole community allocation so we always had more money in the charitable subcategory than was originally contemplated and people would come and ‘yeah we can just throw a little more money into it’ and what was happening we didn’t have any control over what we were donating, ‘yeah we can add another \$2,000’, so we came up with a hard cap and what we are going to do is not end it. We are going to come up with a hard cap, this is a line item in our budget now in the budget ordinance for charitable contributions and we have maintained that in there and we have been under that every year since we’ve established that criteria for donations. We wouldn’t say that ‘it’s a good cause so we will just add a little more’. We absolutely would have to do a budget amendment and I don’t think the council would do that if they wanted to contribute more, so every year since we adopted that 3% of the previous year’s budget as our hard cap on all charitable/nonprofit and educational/institutional contributions we have not ever fully expended that line item, but we didn’t say ‘no we are not going to give anything’.”
- Councilwoman Critz commented, “that’s where we came in saying that we focused on the fact that they actually do serve.”
- Mayor Becker responded, “yeah, we have always done that, but always thought it was just a good cause and we could add more. I think what I am getting at, we didn’t say we are going to stop doing it, we just said we are going to be a lot more careful about how we do it and we don’t just be so generous with our taxpayers’ money because it is a great cause, and we did a procedural change in our budgeting process that forced us to have a cap on our contributions every year and therefore within the bounds of our budget and our process it’s, we do have the opportunity to make those sanctions and I know it’s always still a problem, because is outdoor learning at Western Union more important than the work of Turning Point to members of our community? It’s a hard distinction to make, but we’ve done our budgeting in such a way that at least we can make money available without being able to say ‘if we spend

too much we can always give them more at the end of the fiscal year'. We haven't cut them off in terms of what our policy was that we established when we adopted our budget."

- Councilwoman Critz stated, "and I don't think there is any way for us to really, I don't think we can get it into the area of trying to determine which one we are giving actually gives more to the community. It has to be what we decided was we know they give to the community. We know they are giving back to this community so we are making decisions about taxpayer money for people that live in this community and pay their taxes to be sure that what we are supporting is giving back specifically here."
- Councilwoman Krafft stated, "I think particularly this project gives back more, say you give \$1,000, but the reality is that the outdoor learning center is about conservation, which is what the whole community is about so we are teaching our children more about what we are about through that which will then in turn give back to our community tenfold over."
- Councilwoman Critz responded, "years down the road and the next generation."
- Councilwoman Krafft commented, "I think if you make, and whether it is a municipality or a non-municipality, I think that we as a community have to look at what we are trying to do. I think we are trying to preserve and conserve what we have and if a few seed money helps put the baseline down, we are constantly going to have to as a community, not as a council but as a community, we have to continue to give. All they are asking right now is let's get this started, let's get the base on it and once the base is done, and then we are always going to give and those children are going to give back."
- Councilwoman Coffey stated, "well, I am going to make some calls tomorrow, I am going to see if I can get some checks; I know some people in the community."
- Councilwoman Critz commented, "I would like to talk to the Land Conservancy and see what..."
- Councilwoman Krafft stated, "I thought about that too. Why isn't the Land Conservancy..."
- Councilwoman Critz commented, "we all can make some phone calls, but I would still like to come back to the issue of us doing this in December."
- Mayor Becker stated, "it is the will of the council to wait. You've come out in good faith, but rather than be indecisive and telling you no in a hurry, because people are a little leery of it, probably fairer to put it off and that seems to be the will of the council."
- Councilwoman Krafft stated, "I think if we wait a month, I think you might get more than you thought from other areas because I think others will do more."
- Ms. Davidson stated, "anyone is welcome to come visit, garden club meets on Monday, so we would love your help to come out and get in the dirt with us and do some projects and you can bring anyone you want in the community."
- Councilwoman Critz stated, "there are a couple of things I would like you to take away from this and one is that when this council disagrees, they are respectful and polite to one another. You don't find that in a lot of other communities, so please take that away from us as a group."
- Councilwoman Coffey commented, "and I would like to share that you won't see me come up and work because I work until 5:00 p.m., so I wouldn't be coming up but I

will definitely put some calls out and try and get some money for you. I don't have a problem with that and as I see, I may write a check but that's just where I stand on it. I applaud you all 100%, I know the work that you are doing, and it is visible, and it is visible to the children as they are learning. So, we look forward to more of that."

- Councilwoman Neill commented, "for me, I don't know how we say yes to one school and no to another. That's where I am."
- Councilwoman Critz commented, "I think what makes this different is the definition of the project."
- Mayor Becker added, "and there is only one school in Mineral Springs."
- Councilwoman Critz stated, "so take away we are polite, we don't throw things and cuss and yell. We love what you are doing."
- Mayor Becker stated, "we don't need to vote to put it on the agenda for next month."
- Councilwoman Critz commented, "the other thing I would like you to take away from here, I hope you will understand we really do take seriously how we handle the money and in a general sense we all are applauding what you are doing without guarantee of what is going to happen next month. Usually when we all get together, we are usually like the snowball rolling down the hill."
- Attorney Griffin stated, "may I ask her a question? I served on the school board for 12 years and we would have schools to come before us for special needs like that and there is also a board above that school board and that's the county commissioners, do you plan to go before the school board and talk about this program and seek funds from it and do you plan to go to the commissioners? I am a taxpayer too and I like good projects, but do you plan to go to those tax collector entities to seek any funds for this needy project?"
- Ms. Williford responded, "well we hadn't considered the county commissioners, but that is definitely one that we can. As far as the school board, one of the things you saw is a partner in there called 'Out Teach', so just a little bit about that. Out Teach is a program that they provide professional development for our teachers and we have six teachers that have, we have one per grade level. There is someone who comes in and they will come in six or seven times this year and they provide on-hands professional development and we are getting that at one half cost and the school board has agreed to fund the remaining part so that cost is not actually coming to us, but it is a \$20,000 project that they are willing and there are only two elementary schools in the district that is getting that partnership and that is us and Union Elementary and so our teachers are benefitting from this on-campus training and then they are able to share with the other staff members. I have not asked specifically any more for the actual outdoor garden materials because they have agreed to do the Out Teach partnership."

5. Consideration of Purchasing Replacement Banners

- Mayor Becker mentioned the banners downtown are not looking good. The banners are three years old, except for the three that were replaced last year because of hurricane damage, so we have eleven more that need replacement. This is a good time to bring this before the board, because if they decide to do it, Signpro will have time to do them over the winter and put them up after the Christmas lights come down and there won't be a separate installation charge, which is expensive.

- Mayor Becker explained the estimate was in front of the council and there is money in the budget for it; it will be a Capital Expenditure. The banners will be the same banners to match the three that are still in good condition.
- **Councilwoman Coffey made a motion to approve the purchase of the replacement banners (you have already gotten the cost and in the confinements of what you want to spend) and Councilwoman Critz seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:**

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Neill, and Krafft
Nays: None

6. Discussion of the 6th Annual Festival

- Ms. Brooks pointed out the document she placed in front of the council that contained a “round-up” from municipalities around Mineral Springs that have festivals and other different events. Ms. Brooks also pointed out the memo in the agenda packet with the [festival] budget. Mayor Becker commented it [the budget report] was a wealth of information they have never had in one place that summarizes the past six festivals.
- Highlights from the council and staff festival discussions were:
 - Increased advertising in addition to Facebook, WIXE radio, banners, newsletter, flyers going to Western Union Elementary could include reaching out to our neighborhood homeowners’ associations.
 - If the festival is to continue, it should be on an annual basis in order to keep up with the contacts made and people get used to the event happening on an annual basis.
 - One of the most time consuming and expensive things for the past two years has been the Legends of Country Music and the “I Love Lucy” display in the meeting chambers. In terms of that partner [David L Cook], we have done the two core shows that he has, so that is a good excuse not to do it anymore.
 - Staff should be keeping a “misery” journal during the last two weeks of August and the first week of September. Everything gets dropped and all staff can do is the festival, which can be miserable. After time passes, the misery doesn’t seem that bad, because the festival is a good thing and people enjoy it.
 - Comments made by a couple of the vendors proved that they were not making a profit at our festival.
 - Set-up is always difficult between putting up the stage, tents, fencing, banners, etc. and there is a small core of volunteers that will help with that. The town should consider hiring someone to do the set-up.
 - Hiring an outside agency to run the festival is not realistic, because it would be hard to justify the cost of the festival versus the benefit to the community.
 - The council needs to be provided with a realistic view of what a “profit and loss” would look like, in terms of what everything that is needed, including staff, will cost. The festival is not about making a profit, although you want to bring in as much money as possible, it is about doing something for the community.
 - A question was raised about continuing to do the festival or if the council should be working on something that might benefit the town more, such as fixing up the

community center. It was noted the community center was being held up from the lack of sewer/septic and it will be very expensive to renovate.

- Continuing the festival is extremely realistic since it's the only community thing the town does and there is a lot of benefit.
 - The festival should not be so labor intensive; therefore, hiring somebody to do some of the things is acceptable.
 - The council needs an itemized list of necessary things that are labor intensive that should be considered for hiring out with a ballpark figure of what hiring it out will cost, so they know what they are getting into.
 - Changing the date of the festival to later in September, October or the spring due to the hot weather with the current schedule didn't seem to be an option, because later in September was not guaranteed to be any cooler, there are a lot of other local events in October, and there would be more chance of rain for spring festivals. The town needs to stay consistent with the festival date. "Bring on the fans."
- **Councilwoman Cureton made a motion to continue the festival and Councilman Countryman seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:**

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Krafft and Neill
Nays: None

- Mayor Becker stated the burden needs to be on this board to give guidance on funding that will be allowed and on subcontracting.
- Councilwoman Krafft noted the town does need a landscaping company to take care of the park. Mayor Becker responded that was on him, but he has a person he thought would be great.

7. Staff Reports

- There were no staff reports.

8. Other Business

- Councilwoman Critz congratulated Councilwomen Cureton, Coffey, and Neill, and Mayor Becker for their successful re-election.
- Mayor Becker announced we had a visit last week from a very nice lady [Elizabeth Gibson] from the Daughters of the American Revolution. Ms. Gibson presented the town with a certificate, because we have been adopting the resolution and support of Constitution Week every year for the past many years. Mayor Becker noted Ms. Gibson had a picture taken of herself, Mayor Becker, and Ms. Brooks in the council chambers; the picture was posted on their website.

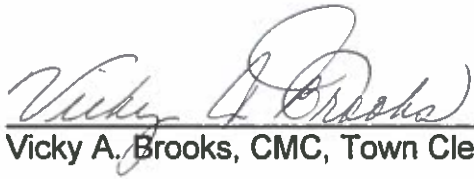
9. Adjournment

- **Councilwoman Coffey made a motion to adjourn and Councilwoman Krafft seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:**

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Neill, and Krafft
Nays: None

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.
- The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, December 12, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. at the Mineral Springs Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by:


Vicky A. Brooks, CMC, Town Clerk




Frederick Becker III, Mayor