

**Minutes of the  
Mineral Springs Town Council  
Regular Meeting via ZOOM  
March 10, 2022 – 7:30 p.m.**

The Town Council of the Town of Mineral Springs, North Carolina, met in Regular Session in a virtual meeting via ZOOM, Mineral Springs, North Carolina, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 10, 2022.

**Present:** Mayor Frederick Becker III, Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Countryman, Councilwoman Valerie Coffey, Councilwoman Janet Critz, Councilwoman Lundeen Cureton, Councilwoman Bettylyn Krafft (arrived at 7:54 p.m.), and Councilman Jim Muller.

**Absent:** None.

**Staff Present:** Town Clerk/Zoning Administrator Vicky Brooks, Attorney Bobby Griffin, and Deputy Town Clerk Janet Ridings.

**Visitors:** None.

**1. Opening**

With a quorum present at 7:34 p.m. on March 10, 2022, Mayor Frederick Becker called the Regular Town Council Meeting to order.

Town Clerk Vicky Brooks did the roll call of those present [as shown above].

**2. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**3. Consent Agenda – Action Item**

Ms. Brooks noted on item 11 of the February 10, 2022 draft minutes Lundeen Cureton was shown as an “aye” in the adjournment and that needed to be removed.

Councilman Countryman motioned to approve the consent agenda as amended containing the February 10, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes with the correction on page 85, the January 2022 Union County Tax Report, and the January 2022 Finance Report and Councilwoman Coffey seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, and Muller. Nays: None.

**4. Consideration of Revising the Schedule of Fees – Action Item**

Ms. Brooks explained it had come to her attention that since minor subdivisions go up to ten (10) lots, the fee schedule should be revised to make it look more to the scale of a major subdivision to count the amount of lots that are involved in the subdivision. Ms. Brooks pointed out she made zero to ten lots \$100, the preliminary plat goes up to \$175 per lot, then a reduction on the final plat from \$150 to \$50. Ms. Brooks noted the correction of “Conditional Use Permit” changing to “Special Use Permit”.

Councilwoman Critz asked if that was not a typo, but a change.

Ms. Brooks responded Conditional Use Permit should be Special Use Permit. In addition, Ms. Brooks noted “Recombination” was added next to “Exempt Subdivisions”, because the fee for a recombination is \$50, but it wasn’t listed on the list.

Mayor Becker commented it looked like that covered everything unless the council had another discussion or questions.

Councilwoman Critz motioned to approve the revised schedule of fees and Councilwoman Cureton seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, and Muller. Nays: None.

#### **5. Consideration of Moving Forward with the Outdoor Movie Night – Action Item**

Mayor Becker mentioned Ms. Brooks had done a comprehensive memo on the movie night, which the council looked at last month. There are several topics for discussion if the council wanted to iron out the details. There is a large number of family and children's movies available under the county's license contract. Mayor Becker stated he did not know if there was anything the council was looking for in terms of the type of movie.

Ms. Brooks commented the council did not have to pick a movie tonight, but she would like to know where to start looking. Would it be a cartoonish type of movie or something that is parental guidance?

Councilman Countryman suggested a PG movie or something from the Disney collection.

Councilwoman Critz mentioned there were some movies that have had sequels come out recently. For example, Sing II is out and it is a cartoon, but there is some appropriate humor that could appeal to more than just young children; it is upbeat, musical, and interactive for children.

Councilwoman Coffey asked if there would be a list of movies to choose from.

Ms. Brooks responded it [the list] was extensive and explained Mr. Pihanich referred her to SWANK and when she went to the website there were so many movies to choose from. Ms. Brooks explained that was why she was trying to narrow it down, so she could provide the council options based on what they were looking for.

Councilman Muller mentioned when he was with the scouts, they would have a movie night about once a month and they would show things like Camp Beverly Hills or Bushwhack: lighthearted, funny, family-friendly-type movies.

Councilwoman Critz added that Disney has expanded quite a bit, such as the Pirates of the Caribbean, which would be appropriate for some children, but when the pirates turn into skeletons in the dark, it was going to scare young children. Councilwoman Critz stated she did not think the youngest of the youngest were going to be out that late. Councilwoman Critz offered to look at the list with Ms. Brooks to give her an overview, because she has four granddaughters and is versed at this point.

Mayor Becker mentioned he did not know what kind of turnout the town would get from the neighborhoods, Copper Run has a lot of children that are generally pretty young but there are not a lot of high-school-aged children. "We're a little bit in the dark as to who the audience is going to be, young, pre-teen, or teen."

Councilman Muller thought the audience would depend on the selected movie.

Mayor Becker mentioned the library engagement, which came up after the last council meeting. The library knows that Union County Parks and Recreation is doing this cooperative thing with the municipalities, so they have "learning with crafts" they could do an hour before the movie, and it sounds great. This could tie in with any potential children's section, although Councilwoman Krafft was not present to weigh in on it.

Councilman Countryman and Councilwoman Critz thought it was a good idea.

Mayor Becker commented it was good to get the partnership with the county and he thought it helped with the library engagement. Director Carlton said the library would promote the movie night at the library with their children's program, which is one more way to get the word out.

Councilman Countryman mentioned a comment in the memo that said the county takes care of everything with the exception of food trucks and such. Councilman Countryman stated he did not think the town needed to be extravagant, but it would be nice to have some type of operation to have popcorn and beverages available. Other than that, Councilman Countryman did not think the town needed a lot; "it's not like we are going to a county fair."

Councilwoman Critz agreed; people can bring stuff.

Councilman Muller suggested reaching out to the Boy Scouts, they have a popcorn maker they could bring.

Ms. Brooks responded that was her plan.

Mayor Becker asked if there was anything else Ms. Brooks needed to know.

Ms. Brooks asked the council if the date was acceptable and if they wanted to confirm it. Ms. Brooks mentioned the children's activity would not be confirmed until Councilwoman Krafft finds out when she would be taking Jordan to college.

Councilwoman Coffey motioned to confirm August 12<sup>th</sup> as movie night and confirm the library participation and Councilman Muller seconded. The motioned passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton and Muller. Nays: None.

#### **6. Consideration of Continued Virtual Meetings for the Town Council, Planning Board, and Steering Committee – Action Item**

Mayor Becker explained the only background he could give from looking around the region was that it was a better situation and a lot of the large jurisdictions (like Mecklenburg County) have resumed in-person and mask-free activities. Union County is not requiring masks, which is why Mineral Springs stopped requiring masks for the day-to-day operations at town hall. Mayor Becker noted the Union County website, as of last Friday, showed 13 hospitalizations, 732 active cases countywide, and a 7.3% positivity rate, which is a little bit high in the scheme of things. Mayor Becker commented all of these are improvements, but the council could wait a month to see what happens with April.

Councilwoman Critz stated she would like to see the town start meeting in person starting with the March 22<sup>nd</sup> Steering Committee meeting and any future meetings.

Ms. Brooks noted Councilwoman Krafft had arrived at the Zoom meeting.

Councilman Countryman noted his opinion was that he did not care [referring to in person or Zoom meetings].

Councilman Muller added he had started going back into his office a couple days a week and could go everyday if he chose to, but he prefers to work from home, because he does not need to commute, but the company he works for has relaxed their restrictions and it feels good to get back to a sense of normalcy. Councilman Muller's company did leave in place wearing a mask and social distancing if a person chooses to. Councilman Muller is in favor of going back to in person town hall and steering committee meetings.

Councilwoman Krafft commented she was personally okay with continuing with Zoom or she could go back to in person, but she would be wearing a mask. Councilwoman Krafft is trying to get back into a normalcy; however, she does believe there is another wave coming, which is the talk from within the medical groups, so she is cautiously trying to keep social distance and masked.

Councilwoman Critz commented the council could ask Ms. Brooks to set up the table with the seating the way she did before so the council is naturally social distanced by the seating arrangement and then the council could wear masks, whoever felt comfortable with that and so both would be in place.

Councilwoman Cureton noted she would continue wearing her mask.

Mayor Becker referred to the comment Councilwoman Critz made about keeping the tables set back and the room spread out if the council decides to go forward with it. Some of the council can wear masks, they will be six feet apart still, and there will be few attending Mayor Becker suspected. If the council could make a motion, they could talk about whether they were going to stick with that distance seating.

Councilwoman Krafft noted it would be easy for the town council to social distance, but for the steering committee meeting, would it be possible if there were going to be other people. "How many people can you fit in the room and still keep social distancing", Councilwoman Krafft asked.

Mayor Becker asked Ms. Brooks if the steering committee would be like the big public meeting that was held virtually, because it would be back to a traditional steering committee meeting where public is invited, but a huge turnout is not expected.

Ms. Brooks responded possibly yes.

Mayor Becker noted the town would not be sending postcards out and having another large public involvement meeting. Members of the public are more than welcome to attend, but it would still predominantly be the steering committee members.

Ms. Brooks responded "right". When the town had the [online] public input meeting, Mr. Epley said several times the town was not finished, people could come to the steering committee meeting and the public hearing when the Comprehensive Plan gets adopted. There were several people at that public input meeting that could follow through with coming to the steering committee meeting, but Ms. Brooks could not answer that.

Mayor Becker agreed there was no way to tell and referred to Councilwoman Krafft stating it would not be promoted as heavily as the last one was.

Councilwoman Krafft responded she suspected there would be more people there than those that attended a regular steering committee meeting. Councilwoman Krafft thought there would be additional people there, so her question was "could everybody be kept social distanced enough in that meeting," because it is still important. Councilwoman Krafft mentioned being at the Mayo [Clinic] where they suspected people needed to keep social distancing and masking.

Mayor Becker noted the council could err on the side of caution for one more month to see if the numbers continued downward or there was a shift, even though they would like to have as much normalcy as possible.

Councilwoman Critz commented she did think something was lost when the council is not face-to-face, but at the same time she did not want to throw caution to the wind.

Councilwoman Critz motioned to once again to go back to in person meetings starting with the March 22<sup>nd</sup> Steering Committee and do the social distance seating that Ms. Brooks had arranged for them, and people wear masks if they would like. Councilwoman Critz did not anticipate, based on the last steering committee she attended, she thought everyone was present as part of the committee and there were maybe four or five visitors, and they were all social distanced during that and it worked fine. Councilwoman Critz stated obviously, the council could not know for sure how many visitors there would be, but she thought at some point the council has to make this choice and move back to normalcy. Councilwoman Critz would like to see the council do that with the few caution things in place.

Mayor Becker stated there was a motion by Councilwoman Critz to begin with the 22<sup>nd</sup> with in-person with distancing as much as possible.

Councilman Muller seconded the motion made by Councilwoman Critz. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

Ms. Brooks referred to the section of the motion where people could wear masks if they wanted to and asked if that was for audience members as well.

Councilwoman Critz responded absolutely, anyone that is more comfortable wearing a mask should feel free to do so, uninhibited.

Ms. Brooks expressed concern for the one [committee] member that she knew was immunocompromised.

Councilwoman Critz asked if there was a steering committee member or council member who wasn't feeling well and they were not sure what they had, could they Zoom the meeting even though the meeting is in person.

Ms. Brooks responded no.

Ms. Brooks explained her earlier concern about a member that is immunocompromised (not that this person is sick), but this person could become extremely ill if someone else gave him the virus.

Councilwoman Critz responded she would like to make it clear somehow if someone is unwell, they should stay home and then with social distancing and masking, that person should be fine. Councilwoman Critz added she did not think anyone had any guarantees in either direction, but she did think there should be a statement, "please if you are unwell, please stay home."

Mayor Becker suggested posting a notice saying, "please don't come if you feel sick."

Councilwoman Critz suggested that notice be on the website or on memos that are sent out to the council and steering committee saying, "we are going to start meeting in person with the cautiousness of social distancing and people are free to wear a mask that are more comfortable doing that and if you are unwell, please stay home."

Ms. Brooks mentioned that people do not know that they are spreading a virus when they are, because they are not sick yet.

Councilwoman Coffey suggested that masks be mandatory for the first meeting (steering committee), since the town was going to have so many potential people from the public.

Councilwoman Critz responded absolutely.

Councilwoman Coffey motioned that the March 22<sup>nd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting that is going to be in person be mask mandatory as well as our observance of keeping our distance and Councilwoman Critz seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

Attorney Griffin asked Mayor Becker how mandatory masking would be enforced.

Mayor Becker responded he guessed if the people did not want to put a mask on, they could not come in. Mayor Becker asked Attorney Griffin if that was legal and if the town should call the sheriff.

Attorney Griffin responded he was asking the question, "have you thought through what you are going to do if somebody shows up without a mask".

Mayor Becker responded he would probably call the sheriff.

Councilwoman Critz commented if the town has masks to hand out at the door, and someone volunteered to hand them out, and she asked Attorney Griffin if that would be enough enforcement.

Councilwoman Krafft suggested putting a sign on the door and strongly encourage and go from there.

Councilman Muller suggested roping off a corner of the room for people who refuse.

Councilwoman Critz volunteered to stand at the front door and hand out masks.

Councilwoman Coffey asked Attorney Griffin if there was a person that refused should the town just let them in and that is okay or is there a recourse such as having the sheriff come in and put them out.

Attorney Griffin responded he thought that was the town's right if they have an ordinance to be enforced, but this is on a motion for a meeting rather than an ordinance.

Attorney Griffin asked if the council was not going to mandate it for the council meeting, it was just for this one [steering committee], then why not just strongly encourage it and have the masks there and strongly encourage people to wear them. Attorney Griffin was not sure how the council could go about enforcing it if they were not going to enforce it against themselves.

#### **7. Consideration of Purchasing a Steeplechase Race Program Advertisement – Action Item**

Mayor Becker explained the Queen's Cup was on this year, so for the first time in two years, the town can do the race program advertisement again. The prices have not gone up, it is still \$300, and it is in the budget.

Councilman Countryman motioned to buy the advertisement for the Queens's Cup Race Program for \$300 and Councilwoman Krafft seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

#### **8. Duke Energy Update**

Mayor Becker reminded the council this had been discussed since February; it has been a month and a half to two months since the long power outage. Mayor Becker received a lot of input from Duke Power (email/phone conversations) to get ironed out what they did and did not do and things they have done that Mayor Becker did not know about. Mayor Becker had a Q&A from Mr. Worth, which was helpful. One example of what Duke Power did while they were waiting for some additional materials for the line repairs was to put those cutouts in downtown, which explains why Mayor Becker saw the trucks downtown the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup>. The cutouts proved invaluable for future things. Mayor Becker believed Duke Power was aware the town needed them to do what they could and to go the extra mile, because it is a vulnerable circuit.

The council thanked Mayor Becker for the great job.

Mayor Becker commented Duke Power was forthcoming with their explanations and discussions.

#### **9. Staff Updates**

There were no staff updates.

#### **10. Other Business**

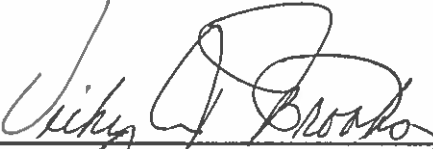
Councilwoman Cureton thanked everybody who gave her a donation for the park; "blessings come by giving." Councilwoman Cureton explained she was supposed to raise \$1,500, but she raised \$5,000.

#### **11. Adjournment – Action Item**

At 8:22 p.m. Councilwoman Coffey motioned to adjourn the meeting and Councilman Muller seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Critz, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, April 14, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. at the Mineral Springs Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by:

  
Vicky A. Brooks, CMC, NCCMC, Town Clerk



  
Frederick Becker III, Mayor