

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

The Town Council of the Town of Mineral Springs, North Carolina, met in Regular Session at the Mineral Springs Town Hall located at 3506 Potter Road S, Mineral Springs, North Carolina, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 10, 2022.

Present: Mayor Frederick Becker III, Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Countryman, Councilwoman Valerie Coffey, Councilwoman Janet Critz, Councilwoman Bettylyn Krafft, and Councilman Jim Muller.

Absent: Councilwoman Lundeen Cureton.

Staff Present: Town Clerk/Zoning Administrator Vicky Brooks, Attorney Bobby Griffin, and Administrative Assistant/Deputy Town Clerk Maurice Norman.

Visitors: Dr. Delice Coffey and John Tillman.

1. Opening

With a quorum present at 7:31 p.m. on November 10, 2022, Mayor Becker called the Regular Town Council Meeting to order.

Mayor Becker announced that Councilwoman Cureton was sick and not able to attend the meeting.

Councilwoman Critz delivered the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Consent Agenda – Action Item

Councilwoman Coffey motioned to approve the consent agenda containing the October 13, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes, the September 2022 Union County Tax Report, and the September 2022 Finance Report and Councilwoman Critz seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, and Muller. Nays: None.

4. Consideration of Approving the Lighting Plan for God’s Temple of Zion’s Soccer Field – Action Item

Mr. George McKinney, accompanied by Zoning Administrator Vicky Brooks, introduced his plan to install privacy lights around his soccer field at 5902 McNeely Road.

Councilwoman Critz asked about the regulations for athletic lighting.

Mr. McKinney assured the council that privacy lights are not the old lights. Now all stadium lights have lids on them, so they only shine on the field and 12 feet around the field.

Councilwoman Coffey commended Mr. McKinney on his adherence to the regulations of the Mineral Springs Council and having Duke Energy involved in his planning.

Councilwoman Critz asked Mr. McKinney if the soccer field was turf or artificial.

Mr. McKinney responded it was some turf and some artificial.

Councilwoman Critz asked Mr. McKinney if the soccer field was just through the church or if it would be for community and others.

Mr. McKinney responded it was for the community.

Mayor Becker noted that the privacy lights were set up with Duke and they now have a program where they have a timer on the lights where they can't be on.

Mr. McKinney further explained that the lights will automatically shut off at 10:00 p.m.

Ms. Brooks asked Mr. McKinney when the lights would come on and if they would be on every night.

Mr. McKinney responded no, they have to be cut on.

Ms. Brooks asked Mr. McKinney if he would have the opportunity to turn the lights back off.

Mr. McKinney responded they would automatically cut off at 10:00 p.m. regardless.

Councilwoman Coffey motioned to approve item four on the agenda for the lighting of the soccer field and Councilwoman Krafft seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows: Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Krafft and Muller. Nays: None.

5. Consideration of Granting Funds to the D. Coffey Foundation for Athletics and Education for an After-School Program – Action Item

Mayor Becker explained that Councilwoman Coffey made a request to be recused, because of the way her family was structured, that she could be in a position to benefit from activities of the D. Coffey Foundation.

Councilwoman Coffey commented for absolute transparency, it was imperative.

Councilwoman Critz motioned to allow Councilwoman Coffey to recuse herself and Councilman Muller seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows: Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

Mayor Becker introduced presenters Delice Coffey and John Tillman who would be giving the council some background on the after-school program for social-emotional readiness. The presentation included a PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Delice Coffey stated, "before I introduce myself, just a little bit of statistics. Did you know over 50% of our children are struggling academically, mental health-wise, and socially? That statistic, it was bad before the transition, before the pandemic, but we didn't really talk about it, but now that the pandemic has happened, and we're in it, it has gotten even worse, but what I'm more concerned about is that the need is so high now, qualified professionals, we can't keep up. We can't keep up with the demand and that's why Mr. Tillman and I are here today. We're here today because we put together a social-emotional readiness program to help meet this need. I am Dr. Delice Coffey. I have 36 years of experience in psychology, and I'm here today to share that with this community. Before we get into it, of course, Mr. Tillman will introduce himself."

Mr. Tillman stated, "it's hard to follow that. I'm not a doctor. My name is John Tillman. I'm an educator, a sports coach. I pretty much mentor any kids that I've come across. I've worked in mental health myself. I've worked with tutoring. And just thinking that while I'm around, I just want to do whatever I can, especially in this community. I am a native of Union County, born in Waxhaw, went to Western Union Elementary School, graduated from Parkwood High School, and really proud to be here. And just have to do what we can to help."

Councilwoman Critz asked if Dr. Coffey (being from Durham, North Carolina) had done this program in Durham, North Carolina.

Dr. Coffey responded, "I have not done this particular program here because we kind of customize it to bring it to Union County. I have a private practice. I've been in my private practice state for over 36 years and in my private practice I have done bits and pieces of this with different individuals. So, in Durham, I've done, like I said, bits and pieces, and what Mr. Tillman and I have done, we've put our experience together and then we created this program and since I am too a native of Waxhaw, North Carolina, I wanted to do it here first."

Councilwoman Critz corrected Dr. Coffey by saying, "Mineral Springs."

Dr. Coffey stated, "yes, it is Mineral Springs. My age. Yes. Mineral Springs and I may slip every now and then, because when I was here it was Waxhaw. It was zoned while I was away. I still kind of struggle to remember."

Councilwoman Critz stated, "and the mailing addresses are still Waxhaw, on the postal. But I just want to say one thing that's really blessed me. I've been in this community for 23 years now and one thing that's really blessed me is how so many people from this community that become successful in whatever way, even if they leave, they tend to come back. Some of them don't leave and some people leave and come back so that they can continue giving to the community that they grew up in and I've not seen that or heard that anywhere else. I think it's something very special that we have going on here."

Dr. Coffey stated, "I actually went to Western Union in the first and second grade, so I was so excited when that's going to be our first area to focus on. The social-emotional readiness program is a program, as I shared, that Mr. Tillman and I put together and part of the program we're using the 'Character Strong' curriculum. We chose the 'Character Strong' curriculum because it's backed by research, and it's been around for several years and have gotten a lot of amazing success with various schools and different ages. So that's the foundation, or that's one part of the program and the program is focusing on five core competencies. You have self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsibility decision skills. We believe that we can teach these skills to our children. We can help them be better people and succeed in school, in life, and then, of course, then afterwards as well. Next slide, please. So why does this matter? That's a question that I'm pretty sure you have in mind and it's something that we would like to address because it's important that you know why this matters. We want to teach these skills to the, to the students because it would improve their academics, by addressing these competencies, the research shows that it does increase performance, and in one study, it increased it by 11 percentile. Next slide, please. It also improved behavior. Behavior is important because if a kid is not having good behavior in the classroom, it's hard for them to focus and it's hard for them to do well. So, our program will help them improve class behavior. It will help them to manage their stress and depression, as I've already stated, that's on the, on the incline and it will also help them have better attitudes about themselves, others, in schools. Next slide, please. It improves short term thinking. Children when they're really young, in middle school and high school, some struggle with short-term thinking, because they're not really taught how to utilize that skill. And this is another research, I'm showing you a lot of research here because it's important that we see that this is not new as far as the results that we're going to do. What Mr. Tillman and I've done, we added on to it to make it more robust, so we can get better results. So that's why I'm so excited, because we're building on something that's already solid. So, the World Economic Forums, they identify six of the ten skills that were, that were involved in the social and emotional competency. Then you see that 92% of executives say that problem solving and communication is clearly equal to or more important than technical skills. Next slide, please. In long term thinking. Long term thinking is just as important as short-term thinking. And the beauty of this is it has an impact not just right now, but it has an impact for years to come and the research is showing up to 18 years in academic, conduct problems, emotional distress, and drug use, and Mr. Tillman is going to take it from here."

Mr. Tillman stated, "okay, so we talked about or, or Dr. Coffey talked about the research, but families understand and educators understand and believe that social and emotional learning is just as important as the teaching that we do. As a teacher myself, I can tell you, if, if a young person comes

to school, and they don't know how to behave, they don't know how, they're not feeling good about themselves, how can I expect them to really engage and learn? I can't. I can't. So, it's critical. Parents know, as well. So, 81% of parents believe that social and emotional readiness is just as important as academic learning. Next slide. So, who is it for? It's really for everyone, elementary, middle, and adults. We need social and emotional learning and Dr. Coffey mentioned that companies I work at in high school, and companies that are recruiting, they say all the time, 'we can teach you how to build. We can teach you how to turn the nuts and bolts, but you need to know how to show up on time. You need to know how to deal with conflict, how to work in a team, those types of things.' So of course, it's for every age. Okay, so this is the real challenge. We have to make, we have to tick all the boxes. Research. We've already done that. We found something. We found a tool, materials, that's already been researched. It's been used before. But that's important. That's important for funders. That's important to Dr. Coffey and myself because we want something that's been tried and true. I'm sure that's important to you. You don't want us just going off the top of our heads. But it may not be that important to the kids. So, if it's not, if it's not something that's relevant to the kids, then, you know, we're missing the boat. So, we have to find both something that's research based, that's dealing with reality. We don't want to have something that's designed for high school and we're working with elementary. It's got to deal with where they are and it's got to be relevant to their lives. So that's our challenge, to make sure that we have the intersection of all three of those and if we do that, then these are the outcomes that we can expect. Well-being, we want young people to be healthy. We want them to feel good. We want them to be socially adjusted, they call it. So that's one of the outcomes. Belonging. They need to feel like they're a part. They need to feel like that they're not in this world by themselves. They don't have to figure out every problem out about themselves. Yes, and in fact, we are becoming in this program, a part of that village that you hear about. It takes a village to raise a child. We're a part of that village, and if you support this program, then you're saying to the young people as well, 'you belong to us. You're a part of our community. It's only been a couple of years and you've struggled because of the pandemic, and you belong to us, so we're taking care of you.' And engagement. So many young people today do feel isolated, even though they're sitting in a class with lots of other young people, they can still feel isolated. So, if they learn the skills. If they learn how to reach out. If they feel good about themselves, and they're more willing to take a risk and meet a new person. Meet a friend or deal with, you know, interpersonal skills. Those are the outcomes that we're working towards in this program. So how do we get there? Well, it's a process. We start with understanding, emotional understanding. How we feel. But we don't stop with just how we feel. We help the young people understand and be able to verbalize. 'Okay, I'm feeling this way.' But now, how we act? So, what is the behavior that I want? What's the outcome that I want? So how do I take out knowing how I feel and then go to the emotional regulation, so in all down the line. Empathy. What we understand. So, it starts with knowing, but our program has to teach them not just to know something but how to use it. How to do it. How to be. How to act, so it goes there and if we do those two correctly, then we get to the outcomes we're looking for."

Dr. Coffey added, "and if the program, the program gets more robust. The core program, it addresses the mental health issues in a general sense, but what we want to do, we want to dig a little bit deeper because I know it's a lot more serious than just general, general issues when it comes to the children and improving their academics. The rate of anxiety and depression. We've already talked about that. That's on the rise and I think most of us kind of know that because we see it with children. We know. And we see it within the school, but one thing that you may not know is the suicide rate, or suicide ideations, that's also increasing. These young children, these babies, they don't want to be here anymore, they're sad about something, so my thinking is, are they just sad? Or is it something a little bit deeper? Once you start talking about suicide, it's always something deeper, so with this program (since I am a psychologist), I'm able to know that. I'm able to recognize the signs and then I'm able to deal with it on a deeper level where they can be successful, because if they don't deal with the clinical issues, they can't be successful in school. They can be an A-student years ago, but now if they have these clinical issues, they cannot focus, they cannot, they cannot be successful, so we'll be able to dig a little bit deeper there. And then you see the statistic there for the elementary school children, being mild to severely depressed, mild

to severely depressed. Children. And we would think they're kids. They have nothing to be depressed about. They don't have any bills. They don't have anything. Our children are depressed. They really are depressed and we need to know why. And that's why John and I are here to dig deep in this program to figure out how we can save our children so they can grow up and be healthy adults. And then 44% of high school students, I wanted to put that, that, that there as well. Right now, we're focusing on elementary, but it's important that we be informed and be aware that this is a problem everywhere; this is a problem on all levels and eventually we must address it. So, the high school students, they're focusing. They're having issues as well. Next slide, please. Back to you, sir."

Mr. Tillman continued, "so what we hope to do with the program is to, not every child will need tutoring, but some might. Some while they're there after school, they may need some help and then, you see, some academic help. So, our program will be flexible like that. If the child needs help with homework, if the child needs that help to get more organized with their homework, or if they're struggling with math or reading, then we'll be set up to provide that. It won't be necessary that everyone has it, but we'll have it available for those who need it. And I think that's about it."

Dr. Coffey concluded, "that is our program. Thank you so much for allowing us to come and letting us introduce this to you and if you have any questions, we're open to answer any questions you may have."

Councilwoman Critz stated, "I have a, something I'd like to add, and, and ask a question about it as well. I homeschooled my three children for 19 years and for 3 years from '92 to '95, I was on the North Carolina Board of Directors for home education, and I've traveled all over the state and one of the huge benefits that I've seen consistently for decades is that children have a lot of different learnings types. Not everyone learns, and you know this, you're shaking your head, not everyone learns the same way; however, schools pretty much teach a unified front in education, and so, one thing I noticed, in the years that I was teaching my own children and then involved on state level, was children that, who could have the extra advantage of the extra time of someone understanding their learning style, and then giving them the information, made a world of difference. I mean, you could watch children come alive. You could see that blank look turn into a light bulb moment. So I guess my question here is, I think a lot of behavioral issues can be rooted in the fact that these children are lost in their understanding, and therefore, they're in a, in a group of kids in a classroom where they cannot grasp the information they're being given. So my question is, can you, are you going to have the ability to identify some of this, and address some of it, not only in your tutoring offering, but also to the teachers in the schools where it can be reinforced? I realized that they can be torn in a dozen different directions, but so how do you see that and what is your sort of solution?"

Mr. Tillman responded, "in my classes, you see it every, every year, every semester, every grading period, there's some students that just don't think they're smart, right? They just don't, and they may have a friend that is able to sit in class and just listen and take no notes and do really well, and what, what I do is, every student that I teach, I do a learning styles assessment. I want them to understand what their learning style is, because there's some students that are auditory learners and that's how they, their brain works. When they hear it, they got it, but others are more hands on, you know, they're different learning styles, and so, I do a, I do a, a presentation, and I show them the various types of learning styles, and then I help them to understand if you're in a class and the teachers are talking all the time, but you need some action, there's some things you can do. You can write. That's an action. You know, you can, you can do a mind map. There's a lot of things that you can do to use your learning style, so that you don't think that you're not smart. It's just that you learn differently, and so that, I'm glad you brought that up, and that's something that we can do. There's some very simple assessments that don't take, don't take a lot of time, but the more important thing is that you help them understand just because you don't learn the way someone else learns, doesn't mean you're not smart. You may be brilliant, and I've had students that were absolutely brilliant. Brilliant, but never thought they were, but once you show them, this is what's going on. It's not that Johnny was born with more brains than you, it's just that Johnny learns this way, you learn that way, so now you need to know what to do to learn the way you learn, and when

you can, when that light bulb goes off, it makes, it makes a world of difference. And so that's absolutely something that we can do, teach them, help them understand how they learn, show them their learning style and how to take whatever environment they're in, even if they're just, the teachers passing out papers, they need to hear it. Take the paper. Read it out loud to yourself. Then you're hearing it. Then your brain processes it differently, but that's unfortunate that we don't teach this in school."

Councilwoman Critz asked, "will you have access to or are you qualified to do actual, you know, evaluations during your tutoring time, as an educational therapist would do, if they could spend time with children?"

Mr. Tillman responded, "I don't do educational therapy. I would leave that to Dr. Coffey. The tests that I do are very simple to show you how to learn. We are going to teach you how to use that style, and it just makes a world of difference. I have different resources, different learning disabilities that might require a more comprehensive study, but you can help so many because all of us are different. We all learn differently, but if you took, if you're in the class and you believe that you're not smart. Then guess what? You're not going to, you're not going to be smart, you're not going to try, you're gonna think that I just didn't get it, I just wasn't given that, and then it's just going to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, so that's so important. That is really critical, and I'm a coach too, so I mean my natural inclination is to see talent and help people develop."

Dr. Coffey added, "to answer your question, there are some educational tests that we can get like the Woodcock, Woodcock-Johnson. I'm licensed as a psychologist in the state of North Carolina, so I can administer those tests, and here again, having me on the team, you know, that's one of the benefits of our program. Whatever need we see, we can, we can address that. That's why we added the academics and the tutoring together, because in Durham, another, another way that this came about putting it all together, in Durham, I would work with the teachers. I would be in my office doing my thing then I'd try to get with them and you know, kind of help them bridge the gap, and I had one kid that they were telling me he wasn't turning to his homework, he was failing, and the kid was, was, well, an average kid; he shouldn't have been failing. So, I took time out at the end of our sessions, at the end of the therapy session, we did the homework. So that went on for a month, and they're still, then when the report came out, he wasn't turning in his homework, and I'm at the point now where I'm like, okay, I know he did his homework, because we did it together, but he wasn't turning in his homework. What happened? To make a long story short, he would put his lunch in his book bag, and he would have pears, (he loved pears) so he'd always have pears and probably some chips, he would also put his homework in the bag, and it gets messed up, and he was embarrassed. So, we had to spend time, I had him first cleaning out the bookbag. Here, again, whatever it takes to move the child forward. That's what we're about. So, we spent time cleaning up, cleaning out his bag. Then I had to teach him organization skills, he didn't know how to stay organized, so and then once he got that, everything was just fine; he just moved forward. So, putting together clinical and academic and these core competencies. You can't separate it, you can't separate it, but the teachers, they are busy. The classrooms, and most classrooms are big, and they're doing the very best they can because they have all these different learning styles, and they don't have the time to kind of individualize things. So that's kind of what we're hoping, we can kind of bridge that gap and help out a little bit with this program."

Mayor Becker commented, "I think if you do the math based on your, your, your, your target enrollment, and your number of student teachers, in addition to the program director, you're gonna have a 6:7 student to teacher ratio, so you really have a lot of opportunity to..."

Councilwoman Critz asked, "what is your imagined staff size?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "yes, so we're, we're staffed easily to do 7, 8, and then we have floaters, and what the floaters are, if we see somebody that just kind of struggling a little bit in the group, we have the ability to kind of pull them apart to give them that extra help. Alright, so our groups are, they're small. Then we have the extra people to give them the extra help, and the way it's also structured, it's not like we're pulling you away because something is wrong. We're going to make it creative.

Make it fun, and make it look, you know, wonderful as you get a, you know, pulled away to get this extra help. So yes, it's very small. And that's another thing that, that we've learned, you know, small groups, you know, of course you just get more attention and then you get more help and it's just, it just works out."

Councilwoman Critz stated, "my youngest child is my only daughter, and we had to put her in with an educational therapist with the Woodcock-Johnson, so I'm very familiar, and she had an auditory processing deficit, and so they had to teach me how to work with her, which I, honestly, at times thought it was going to kill me. I thought she's not going to survive this and neither am I, but yet, I was in a position to give her more individual attention. She now has an undergraduate degree from Furman University and a double master's from Peabody Conservatory, and if you had told me when she was 10 years old that that would happen, I would have laughed out loud, so I'm, I have a lot of personal assurance of how these things work."

Councilman Muller asked, "has space been allocated already?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "yes, we do have space."

Councilman Muller asked, "and how many students do you figure you'll be able to take on? What's your projection?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "our goal is 50."

Councilman Countryman asked, "and where are you going to be conducting these activities?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "we're going to do it at Coffey Courts and Events Center in Mineral Springs."

Councilwoman Critz asked, "is that across from Western Union?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "it's on Lee Massey Road."

Councilman Countryman asked, "and will there be a cost to the students?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "no, it'd be totally free to the students, with your help."

Councilman Countryman asked, "how do they get selected? How do they, do they apply to come to this?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "well, it's going to be open to all students. They don't have to apply and get selected. It's going to be open to all students, because the core competencies, the five core competencies, they benefit every type of child. It doesn't matter the race or the economic, the economic status; that doesn't matter. Every child needs these skills, so we'll be open to all. What we're going to do on the front end, we're going to do an assessment to see where they are, and to see more specifically what the needs are, and then that's when we're going to kind of individualize and taper off a little bit."

Mayor Becker asked, "I didn't get a chance to ask you, but what if it gets that you have, because you're going to obviously promote through the, through the classroom teachers, it's just, 'this is available, call, contact the program director if you want to enroll your child.' So, it's going to be promoted to all the students in grades K - 5 that are in Mineral Springs. If you get oversubscribed is there going to, would, would we, what do you think we would do? Have you got a..."

Councilwoman Critz added, "Plan B."

Mayor Becker continued, "if we get massively oversubscribed."

Councilman Countryman asked, "what if 250 kids sign up instead of the 50?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "unfortunately, we will have to do a waiting list, and we will have to pray that we get more money, but right now, based on the, based on, based on the budget that we presented, it'll hold 50 kids."

Councilwoman Critz asked, "can your facility hold more if you were in need, if you did need to expand?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "the facility can hold a whole lot more."

Councilwoman Critz commented, "okay, well, good to know. I wasn't aware of that."

Councilwoman Krafft asked, "are you going to be here? Are you going to be in Durham?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "I'm going to be in both places, so I'll probably come down here as needed. In the beginning it'll probably be a lot just because I'm excited and I want to be here, and then we're also going to have a virtual component, so I will be, the virtual opponent, I think we're gonna do it every week. I can't remember. Every month. So, so, that will be the teachers, Mr. Tillman, and myself, and the students having a live virtual conference, so it will be hands on as well. And then I know the month of January, I'll probably be down here a lot. Durham is two and a half, three hours."

Councilwoman Critz asked, "so Mr. Tillman, you're the on-site leader?"

Mr. Tillman responded, "yes."

Councilwoman Krafft asked, "and what grade do you currently teach?"

Mr. Tillman responded, "me, I teach high school. 9 - 12."

Mayor Becker asked if there was anything else and stated "well, that's, that's really the guts of the program and a little bit of a, how it operates, which I didn't know the answer to. I was sort of looking at, at the background and the dollars and anything else. I did, I did, you know, tell Attorney Griffin, I said 'I'm sorry to throw another seven pages of boilerplate at you, but the, the, you don't see red flags if the council wants to go through with that.' That, that agreement looks fairly straight."

Attorney Griffin replied, "I'm sure, it's legal if you want to venture into this area as a municipality, yeah."

Mayor Becker stated, "and especially I think in light of the fact that this fund, we kind of got caught in the middle. I talked to Mr. Tillman, as I said in my memo, or Mr. Tillman talked to me back when I was meeting in Monroe. I was meeting with Union County leaders and indicating social services and the City of Monroe, how are we going to spend the ARPA money? Are we going to be able to partner with nonprofits because nobody knew how to spend it on the things that we were being required to spend it on, and so that was sort of well, this is maybe one way to do that, and that, the program was in its infancy. I hadn't even talked, I never heard of Dr. Coffey's name. I knew who she was, but in conjunction with this, we had been talking about it briefly with, with Mr. Tillman, and then things changed, but our philosophy was, well, you know, that was kind of the impetus, because this is, this is something that was sparked. Any of these learning problems that every kid has were exacerbated by, by lack of in-person learning for a year or more for some of the kids and I did take the time, I will say, I mean, full disclosure, I, before I even met at any length with Dr. Coffey and Mr. Tillman, I talked to Kristi Williford, the principal of Western Union School. I said, 'what is the situation? What do you got boots on the ground, what's happening?' And she said, 'it's, it's profound and all of our teachers are seeing a much, a noticeable problem with, with some of the social emotional components that, that are trickling down into academics.' So, she said 'it's very real' and she said 'it's not predictable, as to other factors that you might think would lead to it, it's not, it's not economically or demographically predictable. That some of your most well-off most well-supported students may be the ones having the worst problems.' So, you're nodding your head Delice because you see it in your practice, I'm sure. So, everything is, you know, nothing new under the sun. This is what's happening across the board, and, and Mrs., Mrs. Williford was, certainly understood that

this is something that would be very helpful. I mean it's not part of the school but she certainly would welcome students in her school having the opportunity to, to get this enrichment after school. That the problems are real."

Councilwoman Krafft stated, "so Rick, I did have one question to you. Back before or right after the funds were opened up, it seems like to me that we had some discussions on what we might do with that money. Has, I mean, can you refresh, I tried to get back on."

Mayor Becker responded, "well, before, before the Treasury said, 'we give up, you can use it for anything if you're a small town, if it's less than 10 million, you can just take it,' because they were finding that small towns couldn't, couldn't do the things that, and also couldn't meet federal guidelines. I talked to, after I had talked to Dr. Tillman a little bit about this, I dug a little. I said, 'well, if we're really going to, if you're going to make a presentation to the council.' I said, 'I better look and see what kind of, what kind of, reporting and oversight requirements we have to have ourselves as a recipient of the federal grant,' and that was when the 18-page agreement came up and the, the massive audit requirements and oversight requirements and consultants we'd have to hire too soon. It would cost more to implement, right? So that scared me back when we, still we're gonna have to use the money for things that we don't do anyway. That's why I said maybe we give it to the county and the county puts it into a pool. We didn't know. So, we didn't really have any ideas. The only thing that, that we were contemplating using it for when it was not wide open was just revenue replacement based on a formula where we would only end up getting about 20 or \$30,000 out of it. Where that was, that was the only piece of open ended funding we had at the beginning. Everything else, if we weren't doing remediation of COVID-related community detriment, if we weren't doing that, well, then we couldn't, we couldn't use the money. So, in a sense, it's the US Treasury has done two things. It's let us use the money for anything we want, so we don't have to do a program like this anymore. I mean, this, this is not something, as I said in my memo, after school programs and social enrichment and child development are not things we've, we've historically done, and we're still not doing it. We are basically issuing a grant. Now there'll be quite a bit of oversight, as you can see from the write up. I mean, that was recommended by the School of Government that if, whether or not it's federal funding, formally federal funding, or not. Obviously, we shouldn't just write checks to, to foundations and just walk away, so that's why we're asking Dr. Coffey, Mr. Tillman to do a financial report every month, and, but so yeah, we don't have to spend the money on something like this. And therefore, we could just say, we can just, we can spend it for capital needs in the town, or we can go to the spirit and say, '20% of the money, let's give it a shot because it seems like a valuable possible program.' So that's sort of my position, and I said, 'you guys need to talk to the board about this, because, I, you know, they're the guys who really need, you know, sell them. They, they have to understand this is something that we could make a difference doing or not', but yeah, so there, there was very little we could have spent the money on except for something like this and then we would have had to, I think, if there was a way to pool the funds from different municipalities to a bigger, a bigger, county wide organization or nonprofit, maybe we could have done that. But, but, we changed the plans before it came to that."

Councilman Countryman stated, "I'm curious, obviously, you have the program. You're very committed to the program. Sounds like a great program, but like any program, in my mind, how are you going to evaluate how successful the program is? You're going to get some students in there and work with them, but the bottom line is, how do you determine, at some point, how successful you've been? Help me understand that."

Dr. Coffey responded, "we have several things that we can do. So, we're going to do a pre-assessment, we're going to do a pre-assessment, so before they start, they'll fill out this assessment form that we have, and then at the end of the program it's a post-assessment. So that would show us how much they have, how much they improved, so that's how we're going to measure how effective the program is."

Councilman Countryman asked, "now is this done on a student by student basis?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "yes."

Councilman Countryman asked, "and are you going to bring that information back to us?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "if you want us to, we will, and that was already in my plans."

Councilman Countryman stated, "I would love to see it, because, we're expecting to give you \$56,000 and typically when I spend money for something, I expect to get something in return. I want to see the results. Not only statistically, but, but hopefully I want to see it in the community. You know, I want to see some kids that, you know, learn how to pull their pants up and wear them over their butt. And do some things that, you know, socially would be somewhat more acceptable. So, it isn't just a matter of statistics. To me, it's a matter of looking at really, how have we improved the community, and I'm hopeful that, I mean I think the program's great, and if you can bring that back to us, and show us those successes, not just numbers. I think that'd be a great way to do it."

Dr. Coffey responded, "okay, you got it."

Mayor Becker commented, "Dr. Coffey, in fact, you know, building on, I don't think I ever mentioned this, and maybe I did mention this to you, it would be great if you had a family or two who were willing to go public and come, come here with a, with a, with a grateful parent. I mean, we'd love that. I mean, that stuff is just really..."

Councilman Countryman stated, "we'd like to see some testimonials. I hate to interrupt the mayor when he has the floor. I have a daughter who is an educator and has been for nearly 30 years and I hear this every day, about what she has to contend with, and she's in the grade school level, you know, K – 5, and you know, the education of our children today is not what it was when I was a student for sure. It's sad, and the reports that we're getting back, you know, I listen to the news, and I'll pick on Charlotte Mecklenburg and CMS because, you know, the report just came out of how deficient they've been over the last several years. So, programs like this, if they can be beneficial, and help lift a lot of things, not just the educational level, but the emotional level and the, the rearing of children to make them good citizens would be well worth the expenditure, so I applaud you for that, but then on the flip side of the coin, I want to see some results, and see some of those nice kids that you've helped. So, if you can get some, get some families to come in, like Rick said, some testimonials and say, 'yeah, this really helped my child.' You can come back to us again."

Mayor Becker stated, "and we've got the midpoint of the program in the summer."

Councilwoman Krafft stated, "well, I was just gonna say that kind of in support of the program in some aspects. I work with high school students and college students all across North America and in Canada, I work with them. I have a nonprofit foundation. I teach printing and run an international skills competition for our high school students and our college students. I'm also a homeschool mom that just graduated my, my child. Went to public school until the end of third grade, and pulled him out because he was AIG, and was getting very bored. I'm also very familiar with the testing that you were talking about. We've, we did that too, and many other things, too. Now he's in college, and he has five A's and a B, so I think we did okay, but what I do see, and I do hear, and I do visit a lot of schools. The kids are affected and have been affected by COVID. There's a lot of issues with them interacting and not interacting, more so than not. I think that it is something that would be beneficial; however, I also believe that there's an accountability to it and there's, there is a need for some kind of assessment to make sure that we're on right, on the right track and that we are identifying those students and where they started from and where they ended up. I know that one of the things that I learned through my homeschooling journey was constant testing and constant evaluation of where you're at and where you need to go, was critical to achieving our goals. And I didn't realize that when I was, when my son was in regular school, just how important that was and how deficient they are in public school, and how they don't do that, and how they don't evaluate each kid. Both my parents were public school teachers, and the first thing that my father said to me was, 'one day, you're going to homeschool him,' and I'm like, 'What are you talking about?' But he was right. I did, and that was not in my, in my wheelhouse. That was not something I thought I was going to do. And I was going to become a public-school teacher myself, and when I was in college, he said, 'oh, no, you're not, you're not going there,' and here I am with, I work with about 50 different

schools, so I ended up doing the one thing he said I wouldn't do. But I commend you for what your, your, your game plan is. I think it's well thought out. I'm a little concerned in the fact that I think that based on your game plan, you need to be as much involved as anybody. I think that it is, it's admirable."

Councilwoman Critz asked, "when you say that you're talking to her being out of town?"

Councilwoman Krafft stated, "yeah, that concerns me. Okay, only because, nothing against you by any stretch of the imagination, but if this is presented as a team effort, and in, and those kids need a lot of help right now, and I have been to Western Union. In fact, when the vice principal over there was the vice principal at the school that my son went to, before she went to Western Union. So, and I love and adore her, but I know there's a need; there's a big need. So, I don't know that once a month is gonna do it, I think you're gonna need to be here more than that in the midst."

Dr. Coffey responded, "I didn't say I'd come here once a month, I said as needed. But one of the things that we know for sure when COVID hit, one of the things that we know when COVID hit, everything went online, and we were successful; we made a lot of progress. Now was it 100% perfect? We don't know, but it worked. One thing that we know, in the clinical world, telehealth picked up. A lot of the therapists and psychologists and psychiatrists now, they did not go back to the brick and mortar, because it's working. So, as I had shared earlier, Mr. Tillman is totally capable. We're gonna hire and train capable teachers. If I need to be here on a regular basis, I can be. I'm my own boss, thank God, so I can, I can travel as much as I want. It's only three hours, two hours and a half. So, if I need to be here, I will be here. I can come and stay two weeks straight. Or I could come every Friday. My schedule is so flexible. I don't think my being here or not being here on a predictable schedule would hinder the program at all."

Councilwoman Critz asked, "and did I understand you to say that you would be here the entire month as it got off the ground?"

Dr. Coffey responded, "I will be here as needed, and I haven't, I haven't made my schedule yet. Simply because I didn't know."

Councilwoman Critz stated, "because I thought I heard you say you would be here for all of January."

Dr. Coffey responded, "I will be, I didn't say I will be here all of January; however, if it's needed, it's possible. I haven't done my schedule because I didn't know what was going to be decided here."

Mayor Becker stated, "the program is being built."

Dr. Coffey responded, "exactly. Exactly right. Once you all approve it, I'm speaking it into existence. Then, then I will go back and work on my schedule. John and I will get together. We'll see what we need. I already know if you approve it today, I'll be here the rest of the weekend. Today is Thursday. I'll be here Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday because now I want to start getting just the foundation of things in place. So, I'll be here as needed; however, Mr. Tillman probably is better than me. Just as equally as good."

Councilwoman Krafft stated, "I will give you a little bit of insight on the virtual realm from a student's perspective. Kids didn't like it. They didn't respond to it. They still don't like it. I hear that every day. I spent probably three hours today talking to App State kids. They didn't like it."

Dr. Coffey asked, "the educational, the educational part of things?"

Councilwoman Krafft responded, "the educational part of things. Interacting with people."

Councilwoman Critz asked, "you're talking about just the administrative things?"

Councilwoman Krafft agreed.

Dr. Coffey responded, "I'm talking about therapy. As far as the academic part, that would be face to face."

Councilwoman Krafft stated, "yeah, they, they didn't respond well. They didn't understand things well. They didn't get the hands-on attention that they needed and a lot of them are lost and, and from what I understand. And I'm set into countless, countless advisory board meetings where people give facts and data about what's going on with the kids right now. From, and most of the time I concentrate on middle school to high school and college kids. They're saying it's about a five-year workout of COVID. It's going to be about five years before we get these, these kids through this COVID problem that they have. Getting them re-socialized, so they can talk to each other, so they're not totally, you know, they, they don't even know how to have communication right now. I mean, that's, it's a tough thing, and I, you know, what I do, I, I forced the kids to do presentations and work together as a team, and that hadn't gone real well in the last couple of years. But it's going better, but it's, still, it's very real, it's very real."

Dr. Coffey commented, "now the academic part of thing, all of that would be face to face, that won't be online. Yeah, yeah."

Councilwoman Critz commented, "get that, just so we can get you on, recorded."

Mr. Tillman added, "I certainly understand what you're saying because I did the teaching online, and it's tough. You're introducing new information, and you're trying, you're trying to see, a lot of times the kids are not even showing their face, and so teachers have to read and, you know, there's a lot to it. But I've also done coaching, you know. I've done counseling, coaching, athletes and life coaching online, and it goes a lot better. It's, it's totally different. You're not introducing academic material that they've never seen before. You're actually drawing them out. You're talking, you're having conversations. You're engaging them. And that goes a lot better online. Matter of fact, I think it was 1999, from 98 to 2009, I had a mental health company myself and we did, we did online, telehealth. We piloted that, and that works really well. That's very convenient. It's, you know, because a lot of times you can't get professionals. A lot of schools are trying to hire professionals into the schools, but they're busy. They're doing their own practices. There are other places and you just can't get them. But when you have that technology, and you can see a child face to face, or an adult, and they can have those conversations and work through problems, it's very effective that way, and it's a lot more convenient. It's a lot more cost effective. Because then we can have Dr. Coffey. She can be working in her office, and then give us a couple of hours virtually, and we still have her. So..."

Mayor Becker commented, "but you will, but you John will always be there every, every session, every after-school session. You and your teaching staff will always be there in person. All the time. It's all gonna be in person."

Dr. Coffey responded, "and then the beauty of it, of this, if we need to adjust, we can. Like let's say the first month, it's like, oh, you need to be here, then I will be here, you know. So, but the first month, you know, everything's going with, with my, whatever schedule I might have and that's what it is, so we do have the flexibility to adjust. We will be mindful of that, because what are you saying, it's true. It's real, and we don't know exactly where they are right now today. So yeah."

Councilwoman Critz stated, "if I could piggyback just for a second off of a couple of things Bettylyn said and then address the actual grant funding. It's sort of unusual, I think, for any board like this to have two homeschool moms. Sometimes it's unusual to have just one homeschool mom, but Bettylyn gets out there like she said, and she's involved with high school and college aged kids. And I've been the liaison multiple times for Mineral Springs and public education on a county level for different county projects. And, and when you walk in the room, and they, someone inevitably in the rooms or someone knows enough about you to know you're a homeschool mom, they're thinking, why in the world are you here, and it's because you have insight that, you know, that can't necessarily be practiced in a classroom. But we're also both intelligent enough to know that the vast majority of our constituents are not homeschool moms and they're not homeschooled children

and homeschool families, and so, this is where we need to be involved if we have any desire or hope of making a difference. So just to give you, sort of, we sort of have a same pulse on that one. But down to the actual funding. We do not, we don't get involved in public education funding. We've been warned off so many times by our attorney and, and so, and I say that, just to say, because I would like to, for, on public, to make public record just for those that don't know that this grant money is specific money. It's not tax, taxpayer money, it's specific, and it was allocated to, to communities all across the nation because of COVID issues. The issues that we have right now, and the reason that they're either intensified or multiplied is because of COVID. So, there is not a challenge for any of us to make a connection between this being a COVID, it may not be an isolated COVID problem, but an intensified COVID problem. So, the pandemic made whatever there was out there in this area worse and there are needs, maybe that didn't exist before it, that are now. Children that have fallen behind are struggling, that might not have if there, if the pandemic hadn't happened. So, I don't think it takes any stretch of the imagination on our part to understand the connection. And just for the sake of, you know, our constituents, this isn't taxpayer money."

Mayor Becker clarified, "well not property tax money. It's federal money, allocated for this type of thing. It is taxpayer money."

Councilwoman Critz continued, "yeah, well, no, I appreciate you pointing that out, but I meant as in it's not coming from the tax pool from the community as the, as is there by property tax. But Rick is right. It didn't just come out of the air from the federal government. The backing is taxpayer money. And we have a huge responsibility, I think, to do the best and the most that we can. And to be honest, this is the only program that has come to our attention that benefits our community in this way. So as for me, I have no problems understanding the connection here and that it's a direct connection to issues that the pandemic either created or intensified. So, I just wanted to clarify those two things to you. And I'm really just saying what I'm saying about the grant money for the sake of, on public record, so that everyone doesn't come running to us and say, well, you gave money here for that. It needs to be understood, it was, it was allocated money from our community to that, that is specifically helping our community. So, it's a unique thing. It's not like we're, we're supporting the local elementary school financially."

Mayor Becker stated, "and that's important for constituents to know. I think I could say I can never speak for a future council, but I did tell Dr. Coffey and Mr. Tillman, it's understood this is a 'one-off', this is, this is a specific grant that we got. So that we're going to be making a specific grant to a nonprofit. But it's unlikely, I would say very unlikely, that we're going to have a council that says, 'I think we need to raise property taxes in the future, so that we can do this every year with...' I don't think, I don't think it's going to be a function of the Town of Mineral Springs and that's understandable. That's not really what we do, but we have an opportunity to put some of this federal money to work, and I think that's the distinction that you're making. And I agree."

Councilwoman Critz stated, "and just to close my talking, because I love to talk. When Alexander Graham Bell created the telephone, he was being interviewed and one of the questions was, 'do you see any negative side to this?' And he said, 'oh, yes' and it concerned him deeply, and that it would be so much other, easier to be deceitful and or lie because you did not have to look someone in the eye to speak to them on the phone. And we've taken it to a new level on the internet and we know how easy it is for things to either be totally deceptive, or to not be recognized. Like if you're zooming with an individual, you only see a limited amount of their body language. And so I'm agreeing with something that Mr. Tillman said, you know, that, that, that one on one with the kids, you'll, you'll not only be able to look them in the eye, but you'll be able to, to recognize their body language and to see, catch an expression that they might hide from you if you're on a computer and if, if they don't want you to see. So, I applaud your recognition of that because I think it's something in today's world that's very much overlooked and underestimated. Thank you."

Councilman Muller commented, "yeah, I'm going off of what Mayor Becker had just, just mentioned. I see the numbers. Is this a one year only program and if so, you got a Plan B for future funding?"

Councilwoman Critz stated, "once you have this pilot program, which is what this is, and you have your results and stuff, and I'm assuming you're going to use that as a means for fundraising for staying here futuristically, as well as expanding? Is that correct? I wanted to be sure I understood."

Dr. Coffey agreed.

Mayor Becker stated, "I know they'll figure out being ongoing. They're a big foundation. If it's a valuable program product that can be expanded, I certainly hope so."

Councilwoman Krafft stated, "and that's totally not out of the reach. They do a lot of, I'm working with a program right now, academy-based learning, and it was funded by Bill Gates in the beginning, and we have now done our second school with academy-based learning for graphic communications. And yeah, it's totally cool."

Councilwoman Critz stated, "my understanding is that there are grants out there that none of us are, even have a clue exists."

Councilwoman Critz motioned that we do give them this, this one-time support from the grant money we've received on a federal level and with our blessing and that we look forward to not only accountability of your updates, but the excitement of your updates and Councilman Muller seconded.

Mayor Becker stated, "okay, we have a motion by Councilwoman Critz to approve the grant funding application from the D. Coffey Foundation and a second by Councilman Muller. And that would be to approve the agreement that is included in your agenda packet?"

Councilwoman Critz responded, "that is correct. Would you like me to read the amount? Because I know, I..."

Mayor Becker responded, "Yeah, just read the dollar amount and, just, for the record, but the agreement is its own document."

Councilwoman Critz responded, "\$58,000."

Mayor Becker clarified, "it's \$56,000. Yeah, the new one."

Councilwoman Critz responded, "all right. So, I'll make, I'm gonna make a motion that we..."

Mayor Becker clarified, "\$56,194."

Councilwoman Critz clarified, "implement \$56,194 to, gotta go back to make sure I'm saying your thing correctly."

Mayor Becker stated, "per the terms of that agreement."

Councilwoman Critz clarified the motion, "to the D. Coffey Foundation for Athletics and Education for the pilot, pilot program in Mineral Springs."

Mayor Becker stated, "so we had the motion by Councilman Critz and the second by Councilman Muller. Any other final questions to Dr. Coffey, or Mr. Tillman, or each other? Because if not, I'll call for a vote. All those in favor, please signal aye."

The motion passed unanimously as follows: Ayes: Countryman, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

Mayor Becker stated, "I would vote yes too, if I had a vote. I believe in, in this program. I think that, I think that it has potential to do some very important things in our community and then maybe elsewhere, but right now, I'm focused on our community. I think that these are people who can, who grew up in this community, grew up in Mineral Springs, grew up 100 feet from the Coffey Center

where this program will take place, so I think that Dr. Coffey is very, very committed to what this community is doing for its children.”

Mayor Becker stated, “council, I think that that’s a very, a very, a very wise move. I think this will be really worthwhile.”

6. Consideration of Project Ordinance (O-2022-05) – Action Item

Councilman Countryman motioned to approve the project ordinance and Councilman Muller seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows: Ayes: Countryman, Critz, Krafft and Muller. Nays: None.

The ordinance is as follows:

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
TOWN OF MINERAL SPRINGS

PROJECT ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO THE D. COFFEY FOUNDATION FOR ATHLETICS AND EDUCATION FOR A SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL READINESS PROGRAM

O-2022-05

Pursuant to section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following project ordinance is hereby adopted:

Section 1: The project involves implementation of a program called “Social-Emotional Readiness” by the D. Coffey Foundation for Athletics and Education, to be funded by a grant from the Town of Mineral Springs in an amount not to exceed fifty-six thousand one hundred ninety-four dollars (\$56,194.00).

The project consists of an after-school program combining social-emotional learning, mental health, and academic tutoring for Mineral Springs children in Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. The program will run from February 2023 through December 2023 in two semesters of twelve weeks each with a targeted enrollment of fifty students per semester. A grant agreement for this program was approved by the Mineral Springs Town Council on November 10, 2022.

Section 2: It is estimated that the following revenues will be available to complete those projects described in section 3:

General Fund Balance	<u>\$56,194.00</u>
Total	<u>\$56,194.00</u>

Section 3: The following amounts are appropriated for the Social-Emotional Readiness Project fund:

Project implementation	<u>\$56,194.00</u>
Total	<u>\$56,194.00</u>

Section 4: The Finance Officer is authorized to make periodic payments to the D. Coffey Foundation for Athletics and Education for implementation of the program based on the reporting and payment schedule set forth in the agreement between the town and the foundation.

Section 5: The Finance Officer is hereby directed to maintain within the Social-Emotional Readiness Project Fund sufficient detailed accounting records for the project authorized.

Section 6: The Finance Officer is directed to report the financial activity of the Social-Emotional Readiness Project Fund as a part of each regular monthly Mineral Springs Finance Report in any month that such activity takes place.

Section 7: The Finance Officer is authorized to transfer funds as required, not to exceed the total amount authorized by this ordinance, from the General Fund balance into the Social-Emotional Readiness Project Fund.

Section 8: Copies of this Social-Emotional Readiness Project Ordinance shall be filed with the Town Clerk and the Finance Officer.

ADOPTED this the 10th day of November, 2022.

Frederick Becker III, Mayor

Attest:

Vicky A. Brooks, Clerk

Councilman Countryman motioned to reinstate Valerie in her chair and Councilwoman Critz seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows: Ayes: Countryman, Critz, Krafft and Muller. Nays: None.

7. Consideration of the 2023 Town Hall Holiday Schedule – Action Item

Councilman Countryman motioned to approve the calendar as it was presented and Councilwoman Krafft seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

8. Staff Updates

There were no staff updates.

9. Other Business

Mayor Becker announced that on Saturday, November 19th at 10:00 a.m. (meeting at the trailhead), the Monroe branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints would be volunteering to do trail work (another group from this church volunteered on a Saturday last year). The volunteer group will be working with the Carolina Thread Trail and the Conservancy, planting more native riparian plants at exactly the halfway point on the trail.

10. Adjournment – Action Item

At 8:46 p.m. Councilman Muller motioned to adjourn the meeting and Councilwoman Critz seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, December 8, 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

