

**Minutes of the  
Mineral Springs Town Council  
Special Meeting  
April 13, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.**

The Town Council of the Town of Mineral Springs, North Carolina, met in Special Session at the Mineral Springs Town Hall located at 3506 Potter Road S, Mineral Springs, North Carolina, at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 13, 2023.

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

**Absent:** None.

**Staff Present:** Town Clerk/Zoning Administrator Vicky Brooks and Administrative Assistant/Deputy Town Clerk Sharelle Quick.

**Visitors:** None.

## **1. Opening**

With a quorum present at 6:01 p.m. on April 13, 2023, Mayor Becker called the special meeting to order.

Mayor Becker explained the council will be discussing capital projects, meeting protocols, downtown park/town hall maintenance needs. Mayor Becker further explained he gave the council a head start, most of the items the council knows about, these are things they have been talking about for five, ten, fifteen years on capital. There are no prices, because things are so up in the air, it is more like priority, feasibility and most important to have discussion on some other ideas that might come up that staff had not thought about and then something can be put together for a future meeting to start narrowing things down and start pricing things.

Mayor Becker announced the town will probably have in the neighborhood of \$1,400,000 in fund balance by the end of this fiscal year, of which the town would never want to spend down below about \$300,000 or so. One year's budget is the guideline. The LGC requires a lot less than that, approximately two months, which may work for a huge municipality, but not for a small town. Mayor Becker recommended keeping a year's worth of funds, so the town probably has \$1,000,000 to spend on the capital and some of these big maintenance and upgrade needs that have shown themselves to be more evident than he thought.

## **2. Discussion of Capital Projects**

### Community Center (Agriculture Building Renovation)

Investigate the possibility of getting a sewage easement from Harris Teeter from Highway 75 to the rock building, because the town has a goal for the building to be a community center, which would be an asset to the community. Consider an official letter from the council.

It was noted that there is a shortage of sewer capacity in Union County right now.

There is no parking for the facility; the town was counting on roads coming in from the Harris Teeter project to provide on-street parking. Additionally, if the site was being developed and it had residential, the developer would have to give the town some property, which would allow the town to expand its facilities.

If the community center turns out to be a high priority capital item, the council will have to be careful about taking on a \$1,000,000 community center that will need someone to staff it (taking reservations, security deposits, cleaning, locking/unlocking doors) and all the maintenance needs it will have.

#### Downtown Sidewalk Engineering / Downtown Sidewalk Construction

The town is going to have to do something about sidewalks to serve some of these downtown areas as businesses are opening. It would be nice if you could walk from GEMCO to Caffeind; right now, it is horrible. From an engineering standpoint, Highway 75 sidewalks will be difficult in that area because of the way the ditches are deep and there are lots of trees. It will probably have to have stormwater piping put in, so that could be another \$1,000,000 project, just like the community center; it may be too much. The town may be able to do some easier ones, like Potter Road, extend the sidewalks in both directions. That would be a lot cheaper and a lot less engineering.

Mayor Becker mentioned obtaining a grant from CRTPO for a planning grant for a downtown pedestrian plan. Often that is a \$20,000 or \$30,000 project where there is mini-grant money available from the CRTPO. Mayor Becker stated he did not know how competitive it was or if there was a required match. This would be the first step, because if the town had a pedestrian plan, the town would more likely be able to get some grant money to construct the sidewalks.

Ms. Brooks noted the town no longer had the 50/50 sidewalk agreement [in the ordinance]; it was phased out when the downtown overlay was removed.

Mayor Becker will talk with someone about a planning grant if the council is interested.

#### Potter Road/Highway 75 Intersection Project – DA Funding and/or STIP Inclusion

Mayor Becker reminded the council of the Potter Road/Highway 75 intersection project and explained if the town wanted to get Direct Attributable Funding (federal funding) that cycles every year, the town would have to put up at least 20 percent and possibly - in order to be competitive - 25 to 30 percent. That is a \$5,500,000 project, so the town would need to come up with a minimum of \$1,100,000, which is more than the town has available or, to be competitive, \$1,500,000. There can be NCDOT grants that you are allowed to stack, maybe another \$500,000 could come that way, the county might put up a \$200,000. It could still take the town five years to get that process to go through. Mayor Becker explained in talking to Bjorn Hansen, who is the county transportation planner, the official technical coordinating committee member, and the liaison to CRTPO, he had asked if the town needed to do a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) amendment. Mayor Becker backtracked and explained what he had not known was the NCDOT recently started putting larger intersection projects onto the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

Mayor Becker mentioned that Mr. Hansen had brought it up at a ZOOM meeting he was at about something else. Mr. Hansen said if you look at some of these big critical intersection projects, like Mineral Springs, which is \$5,500,000 and is 10 to 15 times the town's annual budget, it is not practical to expect to get a reasonable match. Being such a strategic intersection, the NCDOT is now programming bigger intersections like that into the STIP, still small scale, not interstate interchanges, on an every-three- or four-year long-term plan where things get funding. Mayor Becker will be asking Mr. Hansen how the town can do that.

#### Downtown Park Additions: Permanent Stage, Band Shell, Storage

The town does not own much property; there is a road easement in effect until Harris Teeter sells the property and possibly the easement would come back to the town.

The town could conceivably build a permanent stage (approximately 30 x 20) to the left of the community center with some storage. It could be a \$100,000 project. The council may want to see how the festival goes again this year.

Currently the community center is being used for storage.

Sidewalks are more important than a bandstand, although they may not be achievable.

Mayor Becker will talk to Union County about sewer for the community center and Harris Teeter about a sewer line easement on their property.

### Broadband Service

Some of the community could benefit with some type of broadband service enhancement, because kids don't have internet at home (not everybody can afford it), so they must travel to remote places for a connection to Wi-Fi.

North Carolina State Law does not allow municipalities to create their own broadband systems. The State is getting a lot of money from the Federal Government for statewide broadband.

### Access to Water Taps for Downtown Homes/Churches

Town should check to see if the downtown homes/churches have access to the water tap if the home/church chooses to connect to water.

Most homes/churches are on county water now.

Mayor Becker will check with Union County Public Works to see who the water customers are on Highway 75; however, that information is probably confidential.

Areas close to Potter Road where there were underground tanks that had contaminated groundwater were cut off from having wells. As you get farther away from Potter Road there is no health hazard.

### Capital Project Priorities

1. Downtown Sidewalks
2. Sewer Availability for the Community Center
3. Broadband Availability
4. Current Situation on Downtown Water Customers

Mayor Becker will be following up on this list of projects.

### **3. Discussion of Meeting Protocols**

Under the agenda item "Other Business" at regular meetings, the discussions should be relative to town business and the constituents the council serves.

Discussions should not be about personal information.

Meetings can run long, so the council needs to remain a little more focused.

The council does not need to adopt a policy on meeting protocols.

### **4. Discussion of Town Hall/Downtown Park Maintenance Needs**

The town hall building is 60 years old; the renovation was done 15 years ago.

It is time to consider having the interior repainted, which becomes a cascading thing, because there has been damage to the carpeting in the lobby and hallway (part of it is damage from cleaning supplies used by the cleaners); therefore, the flooring and base molding should be replaced.

The parking lot is getting bigger cracks. The council will need to consider the expensive process of replacing the asphalt or having it resealed one more time to prolong replacement for three to four years.

Downtown Park plantings have turned into something that is an ongoing nightmare. Most of the plants are dead, except for some of the shrubs (due to the lack of care and the landscaper over-spraying Roundup on the good stuff); nobody weeds. The town needs a landscape gardener, as opposed to a turf management company, to replace the landscaping, till the soil, put in new stuff, and then come up with ongoing maintenance.

The council could consider having mostly native shrubs (some flowering) and trees.

Laney Hill Nursery was suggested for the good prices and being connected to the county's agricultural community; they only carry things that are indigenous to our area.

Pike's Nursery was also suggested for helping design, prepare the property, and plant.

The town could consider hiring a 20-hour a week part-time person to tend the park or find a company that could do it. This would be in addition to the turf management company.

The shrubbery at the town hall is terrible and needs to be replaced.

The "Welcome" signs need to have something new, because the current landscaping has gotten old and tired.

Mayor Becker will review and report back to the council at the next meeting with an update.

Town Hall security cameras are a must and need to happen right now.

The carpeting should be replaced, and the interior painting should be done.

Sherwin Williams was suggested for the interior painting. There is a \$25 fee for a design consultant.

The town may consider luxury vinyl plank instead of carpeting, noting the maintenance needs would be different, because it would have to be mopped and swept properly.

The bathroom flooring needs to be looked at; possibly replacing it with ceramic flooring.

The council might consider having the council bench lowered, because it is approximately six inches too high. In addition, having side tables built (for staff) might be a good idea.

Staff was asked to get a plan and bring it back to the council with the costs. A general contractor may be necessary.

The council was given a homework assignment to bring back some ideas for replacing the fountain in the park. The fountain no longer works, and it has become a focal point for children to put mulch and rocks in.

There could be a small garden area to plant flowers in away from the playground, maybe toward the front.

Exterior pressure washing needs to be done.

Mayor Becker will research cameras and what type of public record the recordings would be.

**5. Adjournment** – Action Item

At 7:19 p.m. Councilwoman Critz motioned to adjourn the meeting and Councilman Muller seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

Respectfully submitted by:

The seal of the Town of Mineral Springs is circular with a green border. The text "TOWN OF MINERAL SPRINGS" is written along the top inner edge, and "MINERAL COUNTY, N.C." is written along the bottom inner edge. In the center, it says "EST. SEAL 1999" with two small stars on either side.

  
Vicky A. Brooks, CMC, NCCMC, Town Clerk

  
Frederick Becker III, Mayor