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Town of Maggie Valley
Board of Aldermen Agenda Setting/ Monthly Workshop
May 5, 2020
MINUTES

Members Present: Mayor Mike Eveland, Aldermen: Tammy Wight, Phillip Wight, and Twinkle Patel
Members Absent: Alderman Clayton Davis
Staff Present: Manager Nathan Clark, Public Works Director Mike Mehaffey, Chief Russ Gilliland, Finance Director Shayne Wheeler and Town Clerk Vickie Best
Others Present: Reporter Kyle Perrotti, Rob Edwards, and Allen Alsbrooks

1) Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Eveland called the Agenda Setting/Monthly Workshop to order at 9:30 am on Tuesday May 5, 2020 in the Maggie Valley Pavilion (adjacent to Town Hall).

Mayor Eveland stated that Council would review the agenda before discussing other issues.

2) Consideration of Approval: Economic Developing Funding- "Reopening" Marketing

Agenda Setting for May 12, 2020

3) Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes to be approved: April 21, 2020
- b. A/R Report
- c. Budget to Actual
- d. Direct Clerk to For Annexation Sufficiency
 - 1) Resolution 20-5 Collins/Clifford 427 Country Club Drive PIN 7696-49-2847
 - 2) Resolution 20-6 Kyle 28 Julia Drive (Waynesville) PIN 8607-71-8007
 - 3) Resolution 20-7 Planchock 9 Golf View Drive PIN 7697-80-0490

The Resolutions are to Direct Clerk Best to research the sufficiency of the three properties wanting to annex to receive municipal sewer.

4) Public Comment

5) Consideration of Powell Bill Road Project Contracts

- a. Hemlock Loop
- b. Cripple Creek to Airish
- c. Airsh to Rocking Chair

A portion of Hemlock Loop was paved last year up to Cricket Lane. The Maintenance Shop and Police Department are located on the opposite side of the loop from Cricket Lane. This portion of Hemlock Loop is now in need of resurfacing.

The roads within Brannon Forest Subdivision (Cripple Creek, Airish, Rocking Chair Lane) need resurfacing.

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There is \$43,150 in the Powell Bill Fund. (Powell Bill funds are distributed to cities and towns to assist them in maintaining, constructing, reconstructing, repairing, and improving streets or public thoroughfares, bikeways, greenways, and sidewalks within their corporate limits (G. S. 136-41.1 through 41.4))

Custom Paving submitted the lowest quote for paving with asphalt and BST.

6) Consideration of Purchase: Message Board & Arrow Board

The message and arrow boards the Town currently owns are on the verge of dying (17 years old). These boards are shared by the Public Works Department and the Police Department. Maggie Valley received a \$5,000 safety grant from the NC League of Municipalities.

If approved, the new boards will be easier to read, have better programming features, and more manageable when being moved. The boards will also be used during festivals for another layer of traffic safety.

\$15,000 is in the current budget for the "Way Finding Signs" that was to be a county-wide project. That project has continually been pushed back, but now NCDOT has finally approved the project. Due to the current funding issues, the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority (HCTDA) wants to wait till next year to finish the "Way Finding Signs" project. Due to the lack of occupancy tax during the pandemic, HCTDA wants to hold onto the funds on hand.

7) Consideration of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Reauthorization

At the April Board of Aldermen Meeting, Council approved the Levee Project being put into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The funding source, American Disaster Recovery Act, will allocate more points to Maggie Valley for assistance if the CIP is reauthorized with the Levee Project included.

Excerpt from 4/21/20

At the March 2020 Board of Aldermen meeting Council voted to approve Resolution 20-2 that authorizes Town Staff to seek approval from the America Disaster Relief Act (ADRA) (2019) to help fund improvements to the WWTP levee that were caused by the 2018 floods.

Effectively the ADRA is a 75% Town / 25% Federal Government Grant.

A point category on the grant application is: "Is this project on your CIP?"

The recommendation is to add the levee project to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) based upon engineering estimates and narrative. Adding the levee to the CIP does not create a requirement to fund the levee project; regardless if Maggie Valley is awarded or not awarded the grant.

Placing the levee project in the CIP makes it official that at some point the levee does need to be repaired.

Estimated cost of levee repair project is: \$248,000

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Town share = \$186,000 Federal share = \$62,000

ALDERMAN PATEL MADE A MOTION TO PLACE THE LEVEE PROJECT INTO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP). MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The CIP needs to be reauthorized.

8) Budget Amendments

a. Withers- Ravenell / I&I Project

This budget amendment is for funds to pay Withers-Ravenell for the Inflow- Infiltration into the Maggie Valley sewer collection system.

b. Mosca Design / Winterwoods

Staff feels that now is not the time to request funding for the large Winterwoods display to be placed at the intersection of US-276 and US-19. Normally, staff would apply for funding from the HCTDA, but due to the pandemic staff feels HCTDA funding would be best used to advertise Maggie Valley and Haywood County after Haywood County opens to tourists.

Mayor Eveland agreed, Maggie Valley should not be taking funds from HCTDA at this time. Maggie Valley has always had a good working partnership with HCTDA. "We have committed to purchasing the Winter Display and on these types of projects Maggie Valley can stand alone."

9) Department Head Reports

10) Adjournment

Work Session

COVID-19 Open Conversation

Council discussed the State's "stay at home" order ending. Haywood County's order (was stricter than the State's Order) has also ended. Since Maggie Valley, Haywood County, WNC are different from the Piedmont, Outer Banks, and Coastal areas of North Carolina; WNC should not be treated the same. After talking with Haywood County Chairman Ensley, it is advantageous for WNC to be given the authority to make their own decisions. The leaders in WNC realize that the opening of a county will not be like turning on a light switch." Opening will be gradual, but unlike Raleigh or Charlotte with dense populations, Maggie Valley could open.

Manager Clark explained that State Order 121 is still in effect. Council would like to optimize Maggie Valley's position under the Governor's Order. Therefore, Council has the option of emailing written questions pertinent to the current conditions to Manager Clark to bundle those questions and send to Attorney Justus for legal answers. Attorney Justus will provide written answers after his review.

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On May 8th, Governor Cooper will provide an update on his plans for NC. As for making requests, Maggie Valley would get lost in the mix, whereas Haywood County may be able to get better results from the State.

Council discussed signing on with Haywood County. Haywood County is writing a resolution to send to the State.

Alderman P. Wight responded: "We all have learned and value safe practices. We need to open businesses and own the risk. With a 99.5% survival rate, I believe any job that puts food on their family's table is essential. We are more in dire straits than people think."

Alderman T. Wight responded that she would have to read Haywood County's Resolution before signing off on the document.

Alderman Patel added that depending on the data, Governor Cooper may not open the State up for leisure travel.

Mayor Eveland agreed, there are no details about Phase 1 and certain elements to reopening. Restaurants will not open in Phase 1.

Alderman Patel, quoting a statement made by Rob Edwards, "Maggie Valley will be wiped out!" Alderman T. Wight agreed, business owners need to feed their families. It is essential for employees and business owners to take care of their families.

Attorney Justus will need to do more research regarding "What we can do as a Board? Can we have a position that we can stand on? Can we, as a town, make changes to the next steps in opening? What is the punishment for opening?"

Alderman Patel added that Weaverville went against Buncombe County during an Order. Gaston County went against the Governor, but later backed down.

Alderman Patel read the following statement:

How can we group all Counties, Towns, and Communities of North Carolina into one standard?

On size DOESN'T fit all and we cannot compare our community to other towns and counties such as Raleigh and Charlotte.

To our business community- I hear you and I understand your growing concerns. My hope is that every business in this small mountain town overcomes this tragedy. We still need people to take the recommended precautions. We are better educated, and in a better position for better testing, better hygiene, and sanitation, but now we are ready to take the next step. We cannot be afraid any longer.

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We have a lot of retired and elderly citizens and I understand their situation. If you are over 65 or have underlying health conditions, and are vulnerable to the virus, you should stay home. Anyone who does choose to go out, should wear a mask, use hand sanitizer, and maintain six feet of social distancing. Local businesses can limit the number of customers in their stores, ensure that their employees have proper supplies (cleaning & PPE) between customers. Every business has the right to have the same opportunity just like Walmart, Ingles, Publix, and Lowes. We must support our mom and pops and I **trust** our citizens and I **trust** they will take COVID-19 seriously. We must listen to our community and not put these vital businesses into bankruptcy. Forcing us all to close violates our constitutional rights.

Someone posted this online, and I am sorry I do not recall who it was – It is NOT the government's right to call somebody else's means for making a living non-essential.

Mayor Eveland added that there is a big difference between cleaning and disinfecting/sanitizing. There will be changes in tourism post pandemic i.e. the way hotel/motel rooms, cabins and short-term rentals will be cleaned. The word to push forward is that we (Maggie Valley) are open, and we are safe.”

Mr. Rob Edwards stated from the floor that he questioned the Town and businesses providing health advice to the public. The Health Department should provide advice.

Mr. Allen Alsbrooks, a lodging owner, stated that the CDC's guidelines are not that much more expensive, but are time consuming.

As previously discussed, there is \$40,000 in the budget for economic development. Those funds can be used to advertise Maggie Valley. If these funds are used to advertise, the HCTDA will pay the agency fees so that all the funds the Town contributes goes straight into advertising.

Council than reviewed the Maggie Valley Covid-19 Recovery Plan by Crawford Strategies (advertising firm).

- ⊙ As soon as appropriate, use strategic marketing to invite visitors back to support the Town of Maggie Valley and the community.
- ⊙ Demonstrate support for local partners, build local confidence, and renew appreciation for tourism as a positive economic driver for the Town.
- ⊙ Position Maggie Valley as a fresh, but familiar escape that is needed following this unprecedented time of stress and uncertainty.
- ⊙ Drive overnight visits in the short term and position the Town for a strong fall and winter season.

Mayor Eveland was in favor of the advertising campaign stating that now is the time to put the image of Maggie Valley, a small mountain town in people's mind. Bring back the images of memories spent in Maggie Valley. This will be Maggie Valley's campaign not HCTDA. We also need to advertise locally from Brevard to Buncombe County come visit Maggie Valley for our

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restaurants and shops. Come picnic by Jonathan Creek at one of the parks. Mayor Eveland wanted to ensure that Council listens to everyone and lets the residents know Maggie Valley is going to be alright. Restaurants and shops need help.

Alderman T. Wight stated that a minimum amount of money should be spent advertising locally. As for advertising locally, Alderman T. Wight wanted to see the cost of radio spots.

HCTDA will be sending out a message in the Mountaineer and the Smoky Mountain News tomorrow (May 6).

Council then discussed different tools to use to advertise Maggie Valley i.e. Facebook, Instagram, billboards, emails, and Google Ads.

Manager Clark stated that one of the biggest questions is festivals. Rules on congregating will have a huge impact on festivals. If one hundred (100) people are the maximum that can gather; does that mean for the entire day or one hundred (100) can be on the grounds at one time? Unless the verbiage in the order changes, Hillbilly Jam will have a tough time.

Alderman T. Wight asked that Manager Clark get the cost of half and full-page ads for the local advertising. This is the fund that was to be used to explore the waterfalls project, which still needs addressing.

Newspaper ads can run from \$250 to \$800. The weekend edition of the Mountaineer is most read.

Alderman P. Wight felt the money should be spent in other states.

When asked for a vote on the regional and local advertising endeavors Alderman T. Wight was uncomfortable acting at an Agenda Setting Meeting/Monthly Workshop since being disparaged by the Mountaineer Newspaper.

The meeting was advertised in such a manner that action can be taken.

Alderman Patel was not prepared to act until she could review the material.

Soco Road Project Update

NCDOT will be working on site within the next two weeks studying Soco Road.

Budget Update

The FY 2020/2021 Budget Presentation will be held Tuesday May 19, 2020 at 9:30 am in the Pavilion adjacent to Town Hall. There will be severe cuts in revenues i.e. sales tax and franchise tax, etc. due to the pandemic. The budget of 2020/2021 will be a smaller, leaner budget.

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Mr. Rob Edwards addressed Council thanking Aldermen Wights and Patel for their direct conversations and open communication. Mr. Edwards asked that a plan be in place to open Maggie Valley as soon as possible. The Town in a collaborated effort can open Maggie Valley for business. "Open the Town and see where the chips fall."

The Town should refer people to the Health Department for guidelines on sanitation.

Another element hurting Maggie Valley is the Blue Ridge Parkway being closed from Asheville to Cherokee. Cataloochee Valley is also closed.

Manager Clark will inquire. Roadwork is keeping Cataloochee Valley closed. Director Mehaffey informed Council that there was a slide on Little Cataloochee Creek.

As for the State Order, Mr. Edwards asked that Council help Maggie Valley by making some news and taking a strong stance.

Mayor Eveland responded that these are interesting and trying times. Maggie Valley has handled itself in a good manner thus far. "I have broad shoulders and will make a stand side by side with Council, but we must involve the community and be cautious that we speak for all of Maggie Valley, not just the hotels. We do not want a division within the Town."

Mayor Eveland commended the Town Staff for their dedication during these trying times.

**ON MOTION OF ALDERMAN T. WIGHT WITH ALL IN FAVOR, THE MEETING
ADJOURNED AT 11:19 AM.**



Mayor Mike Eveland



Town Clerk Vickie Best, NCCMC, CMC

