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Town of Maggie Valley
Board of Aldermen Budget Retreat
March 8, 2021
MINUTES

Members Present: Mayor Mike Eveland, Aldermen: Twinkle Patel, Tammy Wight, Clayton Davis, and Phillip Wight

Staff Present: Manager Nathan Clark, Planning Director Ron Hancock, Public Works Director Mike Mehaffey, Chief Russ Gilliland, Finance Director Shayne Wheeler, and Town Clerk Vickie Best

Others Present: Reporters Kyle Perrotti and Hannah McLeod (at 10:12 am)

Mayor Eveland called the Budget and Goal Setting Retreat to order at 9:34 am in the Town Hall Boardroom on Monday March 8, 2021.

Manager Clark asked that Council be mindful that until the final numbers (Census, Sales Tax, Revaluation) come in, staff is speculating on the revenues.

The Town's Mission Statement: It is the mission of the Town of Maggie Valley to provide quality services and protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens, while exercising stewardship of its human and natural resources. As both a community and resort town, the Town of Maggie Valley supports economic prosperity, cultivates community spirit, and honors its heritage and culture.

Council felt staff was fulfilling the mission statement through the increased services provided. A great example is the yard waste pickup. Also, it is amazing the response both Council and staff receive about participating in road improvements on private roads.

In the past, there was not enough money in the Non-Powell Bill Streets line item for residents to make a request for assistance. Council agreed that this program should continue and began budgeting funds for Non-Powell Bill streets. The proposed Rocky Top Road improvements has been years in the making.

All road improvements are done under Public Works Director Mehaffey's oversight to ensure that both the residents and the Town get top quality work and a road with at least a 20-year life.

Staff was commended for giving people prompt and efficient answers to questions. Keeping everything paid off and keeping a watchful eye on spending.

Even in the depths of the pandemic, staff was able to maintain services and keep up the tax collection rate.

The goal for both Council and staff is to plan for the future and have the funds available to secure that future.

The Town's people know and trust the Town. Staff and equipment have allowed the Town to help trouble shoot problems for the citizens. Public Works helps with all sewer customers located inside the corporate limits or not.

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Alderman Davis stated that he is extremely proud of the staff we have and commended the Public Works Department on how they trimmed the Maple Trees in front of Town Hall. Alderman P. Wight commended staff for trimming the trees in-house rather than hiring someone.

Director Mehaffey informed Council that they may have noticed Public Works Employees trimming trees at Rippling Waters Campground across the street. Because of Public Works willing to trim the trees at Rippling Waters, the Rocky Top Road Project will save approximately \$4,000. The trees had to be trimmed/cut to align utilities after the poles at the entrance to Rocky Top Road are changed.

Council and Staff want to cultivate community spirit.

Manager Clark would like to provide the commercial district more options to stay open later/longer. The more tourist/money coming to Maggie Valley helps the commercial district to reinvest in and grow their businesses.

The discussion then began addressing the loss of "our mountain" heritage through the loss of members in our community that has lived the mountain culture. "We are losing stories, artifacts, pictures of our historical connections." Council discussed options for displaying artifacts. Alderman Davis has a substantial collection of artifacts; everything from agriculture tools to skinning knives. People would enjoy seeing those items from so long ago.

The Board of Aldermen's Mission Statement: It is the mission of the Board of Aldermen to empower the citizens of Maggie Valley to proactively plan to meet the future needs of the valley in an equitable and efficient manner. This mission shall be accomplished with respect, competency, and compassion toward all.

Council believed that they have operated within the statement, but as with all aspects of life, we all can grow and redefine.

What are the top five action items do you want to see the Town accomplish?

1 Year - 3 Years- 5 Years

Alderman P. Wight has wanted a Veteran's Park at Town Hall for several years. Alderman P. Wight sent Manager Clark the following picture of a Veteran's Statue that he likes.

Alderman P. Wight desires to keep a small government. It has been said that a little extra help could be utilized in the Planning Department/Code Enforcement. It is hard to justify hiring additional employees if the Town is not growing.

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Mayor Eveland would like to redo the Town Hall Park and build a storage building for Public Works to store the Winter Woods Lighting/ decorations. Under normal times, the Pavilion is used a lot. The Pavilion needs to be updated badly.

Manager Clark asked that Council remember that the pavilion was built using "old school" techniques. The pavilion is limited in electricity. Heat and the ceiling being lowered was done in-house by staff.

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The Civic Association pays the bills associated with the kitchen in the pavilion, so they prefer no one uses the kitchen without their permission. The Health Department inspects the Kitchen annually.

Manager Clark and Director Mehaffey will work on some ideas to improve the pavilion. Pavilion upgrades could be made during the winter months, while Public Works is not mowing/weed eating.

Alderman T. Wight would like to continue the Beatification Program. "We need to move forward to find storage and continue with the Winter Woods Lighting Program." Create and display artifacts/ historical items under Alderman Davis' assistance. Create a Veteran's Park and do something with the waterfall in some capacity. The Plot House on Moody Farm Road would make an excellent museum to show mountain heritage, culture, and the love of what makes Maggie Valley the Town she is. Maggie Valley needs to attract more tourist related businesses. The Town needs to help Ghost Town anyway possible. Alderman T. stated that visitors love Jonathan Creek; so, we should utilize the creek as much as possible.

A brief discussion ensued about the power poles and how the Town could get underground power a little at a time. Staff has always been told that it is approximately one million dollars per mile to remove poles and install underground electric.

Alderman Patel wants more winter events/concerts. The local people enjoy the 4th of July Fireworks Show that should continue and possibly grow. Alderman Patel also would like to see a veteran's Park, and the Pavilion updated. Alderman Patel agreed that Ghost Town is part of Maggie Valley's history and we should help any way possible.

Speaking of saving Maggie Valley's heritage, Manager Clark stated that "we" should get the conversations started and see what we get. People love Maggie Valley and would be willing to share pictures/items. Manager Clark will work on getting the campaign to share our history started. Alderman T. Wight added that Maggie Valley is also known for its music i.e., bluegrass, gospel, and country.

As for the Veteran's Park, it has been pushed back because of the Soco Road Project and not knowing how the front of Town Hall will look after the project's completion.

Alderman Davis informed Council that the cost of steel has increased four times in the past two months, so the storage building needs to be built as soon as possible. The Rocky Top Road Project should be completed even if the Town must give land. "The road project in Horseshoe Cove increased my property value by \$10,000 to \$15,000."

There have been discussions about aiding the Black Bear Ridge Homeowners' (Cub Trail) proposed road project. The HOA has determined that they are afraid that they cannot pay their share of the cost at this time. Valley Creek Run did their road project last year with the Town's assistance. The Town will never take over the roads in Valley Creek Run, The Overlook, or Black Bear Ridge because of the bridge crossing into the subdivision and the grade of the roads.

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Create a museum with a curator to say what is right or wrong. Maybe have agriculture tools, arrowheads, and guns from years past on display.

Provide parking and help maintain the road in the golf course community leading to the waterfalls even if limited work is done. The Town could get more out of the property if there were parking. Alderman Davis would like to see walking trails at the waterfall site.

Mayor Eveland stated that he would like to see some upgrades within Town Hall, a room at a time, over the next few years. The cafeteria needs work as well as the entrances to Town Hall. Also, a growth plan needs to be created for the areas surrounding the corporate limits with incentives provided for economic growth. The areas would be annexed because of the need for municipal sewer.

Council agreed that providing State Insurance to the employees was one of the best moves because now the employees have consistent insurance without having to switch insurance companies every year. The costs of health coverage remains comparative.

Mayor Eveland added that he contributes the evolution of Council for a lot of the good things that has happened in Maggie Valley. Council should want to get more people interested and ready to step forward to serve the Town. "In ten years, we will be a footnote."

Mayor Eveland went on to say that Maggie Valley has become a leader in Haywood County rather than a follower. Council has a standard message in the newspapers and that is because we show respect for each other.

Technology

The Town often gets complaints from promoters/vendors having difficulties with the Wi-Fi at the Festival Grounds. The Wi-Fi needs to be upgraded.

The Police Department Server is 55% of total technology needs. There is a 6–8-year life span for servers. All the Town's emails run through the Police Department's server.

Windows 365 Upgrade

Computer Replacements

Website Update

The Security Cameras need to be upgraded to cameras with better facial recognition as well as the ability to read vehicle tags.

Total estimated cost for Technology: \$66,000.

Maggie Valley Town Hall Improvements

- Entrance / Common Area Improvements (\$31,000 FY21)

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- Cafeteria
- Maggie Valley Pavilion Improvements
 - Constructed 1995, no improvements since
- Maggie Valley Police Department Improvements
 - Front Porch Post & Beam Repairs
- Maggie Valley Festival Grounds Improvements
 - Wi-Fi Network
 - Current System Wi-Fi 3 – industry standard Wi-Fi 6
 - Current Installed FY2013
 - Traditional Grass/Gravel Mix v/s GrassPave2
 - GrassPave2 material adds material cost of:
 - \$32,500 for 300 x 20
 - \$65,120 for 300 x 40

Council decided to continue with the grass gravel mix rather than the GrassPave2.

Maggie Valley's New Parking Lot

The Sweet Briar property will close within a few months of this fiscal year ending. A site plan will be created that will meet all Town guidelines for parking lots. This will be an example of how parking lots are supposed to look.

In the short time, the planter and some of the trees will be removed to make the property more efficient for parking. Alderman Davis loves trees but after he looked at them, he too agreed they need to be cut down.

The survey for the Sweet Briar property will be completed by March 22, 2021.

Waterfall Park

As for the proposed waterfall Park, the Maggie Valley Country Club Estates POA will provide a presentation on Tuesday April 6, 2021 during the Agenda Setting/ Monthly Workshop that begins at 9:30 am.

For this property to benefit Maggie Valley, either a park/trail system needs to be created or the Town should sell the property. There are probably three available building lots off Old Still Road.

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Alderman T. Wight reminded Council that the land was donated to the Town on the basis that the Town would keep it up. "The residents kept it up when they had it."

If a trail system is incorporated into the site it would be earth and rock, not wooden steps.

Some people not associated with Old Still Road and Country Club Drive do not want their taxes to go toward the waterfall project.

Alderman T. Wight stated that people want to see waterfalls, and parks increase property values. "Ask the people what they want."

July 4th Celebration

Current Backyard 4th Format since 2014

\$15,000 Town's Cost for Fireworks

Police Department provides small concession.

Former July 4th Versions – Red White & Boom with a Carnival, Vendors, Concerts, Fireworks at a cost to the Town \$150,000 +/-

Discussion Items

What can July 4th be?

What do we want July 4th to be?

Economic thoughts to consider.

Cost Benefit

Marginal Utility (The benefit gained from consuming one additional unit of a good or service)

Due to popularity and the high quality of the fireworks show, the Town cannot handle many more people attending the July 4th celebration. Due to Burton Edwards' generosity in letting Maggie Valley use his property (hillside) to shoot the shells; people find the fireworks astonishing shot at that height.

As for the Police opening the concession stand, it is more about community interaction than money. The Police Association clears around \$200 in profit. The Police Department opening the concession stand is getting more complex for the department. Chief Gilliland stated he would be happy for someone else to do the concessions.

Manager Clark reminded Council that adding vendors would take up viewing space for attendees.

A brief discussion ensued about the fireworks themselves. Due to the tree canopy from where the shells are shot, the number of shells has maxed out.

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Council directed Manager Clark get the cost of having music that goes along with the fireworks.

Basis of idea: Create a space that honors Veterans within Maggie Valley

Appears as a partially funded budget item in FY17-18; but then was put on hold.

Proposed to be located between existing Town Hall Flagpole and Town Hall Sign

Phase I Features 8 Flags, "remembrance chimes," brick and native stone, red, white, blue flowers
Project Cost: \$25,000 (budgeted /estimated)

Phase II (unfunded) commemorative statue

Placed on hold due to Soco Road Project, because of possible relocation of crosswalks in front of Town Hall.

Early Drafts of the Proposed FY20-21 Budget included a Sewer Rate Increase to both minimum and over the minimum rates.

- Rate increase is justified to offset expenditures associated with Inflow & Infiltration repairs.
- Maggie Valley ranks 7th Cheapest System out of 45 WNC Systems.
 - Maggie Valley: \$16.00 minimum
 - WNC Average: \$25.11 minimum
 - WNC Median: \$22.87 minimum
- Artificially Low Rates disqualify Town when seeking grant funding.
 - Reinforced in written comments section of failed AIA grant from the State with the most recent being the Levee at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

- Collection System Cleaning & Video Inspections
- Repairs to Collection System
- Sewer Use Ordinance Update
- Replace Undersized Lines
- US 276 Sewer Crossings
- GIS System Mapping
- Levee Repair

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Facility Improvements Eliminated from the CIP are: 1) Parallel Sewer US 276 at a cost of \$1,816,400 2) Fox Run Road Sewer Line Extension at a cost of \$301,650.

The Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) (study) will be completed by mid-April.

The sewer user fees will gradually increase over a three-year period. This way residents/businesses will know what to expect and how that money will be spent. If user fees are not increased now, there will be a time when the Town cannot catch up.

It costs the Town \$41,000 annually for the state mandated system cleaning and inspecting.

Because of having to bore the road, removing the two sewer creek crossings will cost approximately \$60,000 per crossing.

Employee Pay Class Study

Ongoing issue that desperately needs to be resolved

Best addressed in 4–5-year blocks of time.

If addressed now, can be resolved in FY23.

Considers multiple factors.

Current Pay Class Adopted in 2015

Board Adopted Pay Grade Structure

Board Adjusted Salary for Current Employees

Proposed Pay Class Issued in 2019 was not adopted.

Board Adjusted Salary for Current Employees (THE HARD PART)

No additional adjustments needed for current employees.

Having a Pay Grade Plan helps with recruitment & retention.

Consumer Price Index

\$1 in 2015 = 1.10 in 2021

\$27,408 in 2015 = \$30,248 in 2021

\$1 in 2015 = \$1.14 in 2023

\$27,408 in 2015 = \$31,261 in 2023

Manager Clark reiterated that no current adjustments will be needed if the pay grade is adopted. Council will not have to address the pay class again until FY 2023/2024.

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Mayor Eveland stated that the Town of Waynesville is the only town hiring at a higher rate than Maggie Valley for Police Officers.

Waynesville's starting pay is \$36,700 with the same benefits as Maggie Valley. Haywood County's starting pay is \$32,000. Waynesville's hire-in rate is \$6,000 more than Maggie Valley.

Chief Gilliland prefers not to hire straight out BLET because of the expense of the required 440 hours of training. The same applies to a Wastewater Treatment Plant worker that must be trained.

Legislators are discussing \$15 per hour minimum wage. This would not affect the current employees because grade 14 is \$15 and all employees are above or slightly above that figure.

Mayor Eveland stated that Council wants to alleviate the need to play catch-up. "The pay grade gives Council a line to go by so that things just don't go crazy and get out of line."

One problem that Public Works has is finding seasonal help. There is a great improvement in finding new hires after getting the family health coverage back.

Being able for Maggie Valley to get on the State Insurance Plan helped the Town get back to the 80% for family coverage.

Economic Development:

Economic Development Primer

Seasonal Population Analysis

Façade, Signage & Landscape Grant Program

Ghost Town

The National League of Cities suggest the following for small towns:

- Build your civic infrastructure.
- Leverage municipal resources to support and grow local businesses.
- Inspire local entrepreneurs to dream and implement.
- Use placemaking demonstrations to implement permanent ideas.

Get out of the way of community ideas!!

An example of letting your community be the driving force i.e., the Maggie Valley Chamber of Commerce's Rise and Shine held the first Tuesday of each month in the pavilion. A lot of good ideas/actions have come from this group.

Staff continues to seek grant funding whenever possible.

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North Carolina's economic development and incentives are based upon Department of Commerce's Tier System

JOBS, JOBS, JOBS

Currently Haywood County is a Tier II

5 out of last 8 years Haywood County has been a Tier III

Examples Benefits of Tier II

JDIG (industry)

90% for Tier II, 75% for Tier III

One NC

1:2 Grants Tier II, 1:1 Grants Tier III

State Rural Grants Infrastructure Program: Tier II Counties Yes; Tier III Counties No

Complex not Complicated

Another example of Economic Development is Elevated Mountain Distillery. Mr. Angel won a competition from the Haywood County Chamber and staff reached out to Mr. Angel to see if he would be interested in the Carolina Nights property. Now Maggie Valley has a distillery.

Another place maker will be the Town's new public parking lot, located across from the Festival Grounds. This parking lot will be done to town standards per the ordinances. This property will show people what a parking lot should and can be in Maggie Valley.

The overall community population is much more than just those who inhabit the corporate limits twelve months a year- Seasonal visitors and part-time residents along with the Town's permanent residents and those living in the surrounding vicinity are all crucial members of Maggie Valley.

Council briefly discussed the previous Ghost Town partners. With the help of McGill and Associates Ghost Town Partners were able to get grant funding for sewer. The grant was executed, but the Ghost Town Partners did not have their share of the cash. There are grants and opportunities with the right planning, application, and details available.

There have been discussions about bringing an Urgent Care to Maggie Valley, but is Maggie Valley big enough to support an Urgent Care year-round? The seasonal population has always been a moving target.

Maggie Valley is growing at a faster rate than any other municipality in Haywood County. Slightly over 15,000 visitors are the max for Maggie Valley at peak times.

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Manger Clark will further investigate the Town offering grants for improvements to commercial businesses. Façade funds could make a huge difference in appearance. This topic will be further discussed in a work session.

Identify & Build on Existing Assets

Create Incentives for Redevelopment & Encourage Investment in the Community

Currently \$25,000 in FY20-21 Budget for Program

- a. Restoration, repair, or replacement of windows, doors, exterior walls, chimneys, or other architectural elements
- b. Exterior painting
- c. Awnings, marquees, and related exterior lighting and electrical fixtures
- d. Masonry repair and cleaning
- e. Non-flat roof repair for portion noticeable from the public line of site
- f. Exterior work necessary for conversion to a retail or entertainment storefront.
- g. Removal of modern facades, to restore back to vintage quality.
- h. Restoration of vintage elements
- i. Removal of deteriorated building materials, such as plywood or metal
- h. Property improvements, including landscaping, fencing, screening, and paving.
- j. Parking lot improvements

How Does Ghost Town Fit into Other Aspects of Economic Development?

Mr. Frankie Wood has a 23-unit project that has been approved off Moody Farm Road as well as the RV Park to be built beside the Citgo.

Department Head Reviews:

Public Works:

New Storage Building: \$125,600 5,000 sqft (50'x 100') ASDR Compliant

Town Hall Park Basketball Court and Greenway Trail will be relocated.

Salt Storage Bin Extension: \$6,000. Increase storage of salt to prevent periodic shortages.

Mower Rotation: Purchase one (1) new mower every other year: \$11,000.

Snow Removal Equipment: Small Salt Spreader: \$6,000 FY22-23, Large Salt Spreader: \$9,000 FY24-25

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- **CIP Year One**

Sewer Use Ordinance & Extension Policy \$10,000

Increase M&R Lines; Cleaning; Repair Video \$20,000 +/-

- **What do you do with biosolids?**

Landfill v/s Land Application

Land application is stabilized with lime and can be used on farms, lawns, etc. There is no one taking all that is produced at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The state has increased testing requirements by 300% therefore, increasing the cost to about \$10,000 just in testing. The cost of landfilling some of the sludge is \$54.60 per ton. That is an increase of about \$5,000. The WWTP Department is looking at doing a mix of landfilling and land application. It takes more manpower to get the sludge ready for land application because it must be stirred several times per day.

- **CIP Year 3-5 (Capital Improvement Plan)**

- Facility Improvement

Drying Shed-Bar Screen Dumpster Area-Roll Off Area \$80,000

- Levee Repairs

Non-CIP

F-150 (replace 2011) \$45,000 (same truck/same specs \$28,000 in FY11)

F-350 (replace 2014) \$55,000.

CIP Year 3-5 (Capital Improvement Plan)

Police Department:

Policy & Procedure Manual

Landscape is changing rapidly. "Best Defense" \$7,000-\$10,000

Due to the George Floyd Justice Policy Act, police reform and mandated changes on processing and procedures are ever increasing. Police Officers will be mandated to wear bodycams. Looking for use of force will be closely examined. Officers will receive training sessions on many topics and records of attendance must be kept on file.

The Reform Act will mandate training on racial and religious differences on an annual basis. The Act will teach officers to use force as a last resort and what techniques to use first. The Act will affect/ban immunity for law enforcement within the law and within the Constitution. This all will have an impact on getting grants and reporting to the Federal and State Governments.

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K-9 Program Enhancement: 1 Dog Per Shift

Existing Staff: Need an additional administration person. Ms. Murphy is now the Evidence Tech and that takes up more and more of her time. The new position would be for a customer service person.

DAR Funding

In Car Camera System: \$50,000

Transparency: needed now more than ever.

NC Crime Commission Grant Funding

Patrol Cars:

(1) AWD V-6 Charger

(1) AWD Durango

No car purchases in FY20-21

- **Patrol Car Rotation**

One (1) Car Purchase = FY 23

Two (2) Car Purchase = FY 24 FY 25 FY 26

- **US 19/ US 276 Intersection Camera**

Crime Control & Public Safety grant funding

- **Body Warn Armor**

Replacement of Existing Armor: End of Useful Life- No Warranty/No Support

50:50 Grant Funding with NCLM

- **Administrative Staff**

Customer Service / Records FY 26

Planning:

1) Within 5 years help provide a business and development environment that is attractive for high quality investors who are willing to use their expertise and capital to improve the Town's commercial sector in a meaningful way.

2) Within 5 years assist in the development of affordable housing on a scale that will significantly benefit the workforce development needs of the area.

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- Within 3 years develop a new comprehensive plan for the Town taking into consideration changing conditions and growth opportunities.

Last Comp Plan 2004; Land Use Plan 2007

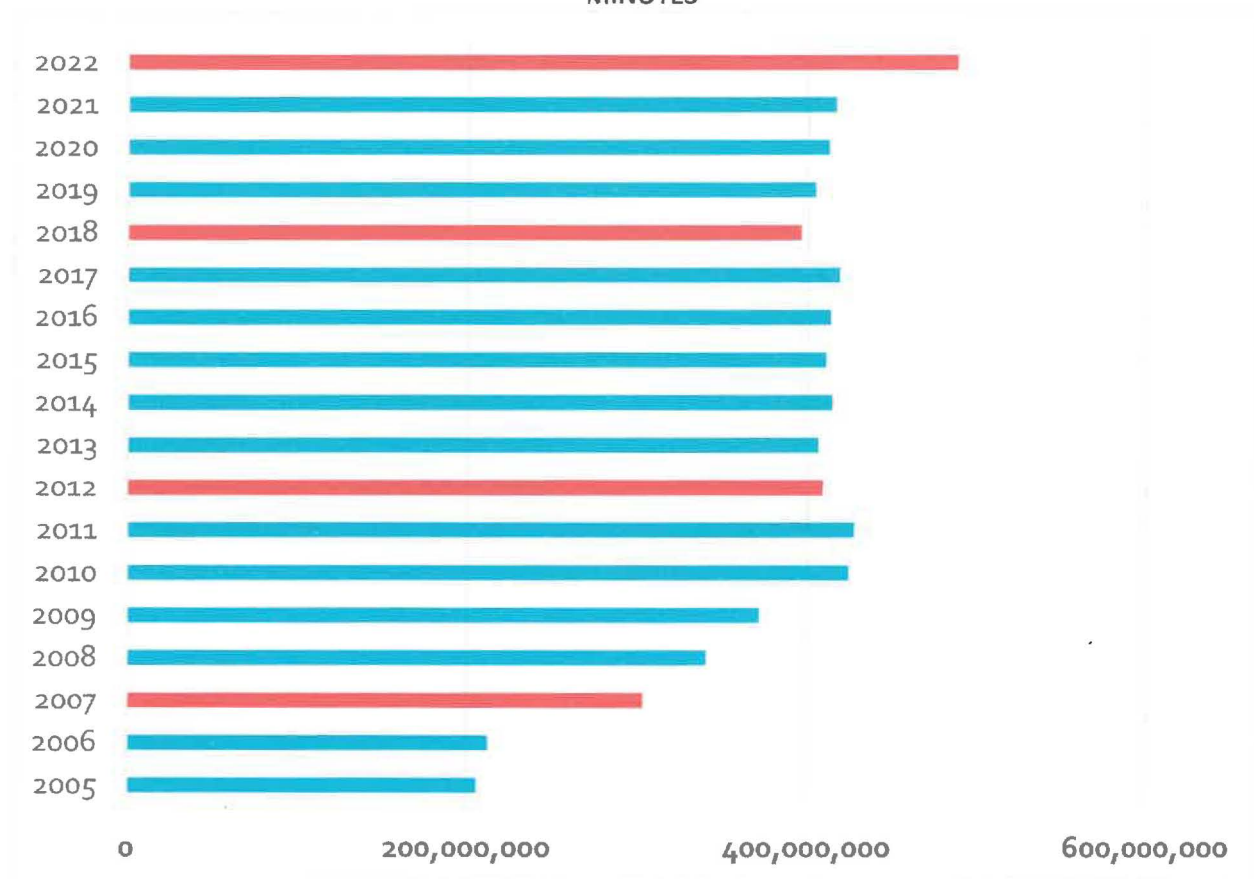
Suggest Update 10 years; New Plan 20 year

- Within 3 years improve the Town's park and greenway network to include extensions and expansions that are integrated with County and regional efforts.
- 1) Within one year present to the Aldermen a well-formed Unified Development Ordinance that is ready for adoption and then implement the UDO to maintain a coherent development pattern in Town using the tools and techniques made available through the new regulations.
 - 2) Within one year create and implement a commercial property improvement incentive policy for façades, signs, and landscaping that will assist at least three businesses.
 - 3) Within one year gather information and create a database indexing all the HOAs and POAs in Maggie Valley to better serve the needs of the residential neighborhoods.

Financial Background & Forecast

The Chart below shows Maggie Valley's Total Tax Value from FY 2004-2005 to FY 2021-2022.

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In the Chart below you will see Maggie Valley's Total Assessed Tax Revenue
FY 2004-2005 through FY 2021-2022

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As stated, several times, the 2021/2022 budget has several varying factors such as Census Count, revaluation, and sales tax disbursements.

Once the numbers come in staff can better forecast what tax rate would be revenue neutral.

2010 Census FYE2011 1602 Population

FYE2012 1156 Population Loss 446

Revenue Loss -\$60,800

2020 Census

FYE2020 1436 Population

FYE2023 1036 Population Loss 400

Revenue Loss -\$123,457

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2.7 Cents on Tax Rate

Town Manager's Thoughts:

Without Parcel Data, it is hard to make informed recommendations.

Tax Rate Will Likely Be Reduced from \$0.43.

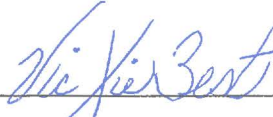
Based upon current info \$0.41-\$0.39 are logical recommended rates.

Recommendation is to have another pre budget workshop once parcel data becomes available to better gauge Board's goals v/s revenue/expenditure streams.

ALERMAN PATEL MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 4 PM WITH ALL IN FAVOR.



Mayor Mike Eveland



Vickie Best, CMC, Town Clerk