**Town of Lake Santeetlah**

**Council Meeting Minutes**

**February 9, 2023**

Mayor Connie Gross called the meeting to order at 5:30PM. Councilmembers Tina Emerson, Diana Simon, and Jim Hager were present for the meeting. Town Administrator Kim Matheson, Town Clerk Emily Hooper and Town Technician Scott Kamps were also present. Attorney Bo Carpenter was available by Zoom. Councilmember Ralph Mitchell was not present.

**Approval of the Agenda:** Councilmember Emerson made a motion to add an invocation and pledge after the approval of the agenda. Emerson also requested that Shannon Dennison be added to the agenda to provide an updated report on the audit. This will be added after the approval of the November 10, 2022 Council meeting minutes. Emerson requested that Discussion item #2, TPOA Report be moved to Old Business 1A. Emerson made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mayor Gross seconded. All approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Scott Kamps offered an Invocation and Jack Gross led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of the November 10, 2022 Council Meeting Minutes:** Councilmember Emerson made a motion to change the spelling of “Innovation to Invocation.” Councilmember Simon made a motion to approve as amended. Emerson seconded. All approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Shannon Dennison presented the changes made in the audit. On page 9 in the statement there was an update in the over budget description explaining the donation from TPOA for the front entrance project and how it should have been recorded. Page 15 the audit findings for TDA spending funds inappropriately was removed. It was determined that there was flexibility in the categories, promotion of tourism and tourism related expenditures therefore the violation was removed. To provide clarity these figures were broken down on page 12. Page 27 provides a description of the categories and what the funds can be used for. This is directly from Session Law 2015-102. There was an addition labeled: Related Party Transactions that explain the TDA and Town are affiliated. Dennison explained all changes and noted the update had been submitted to the State.

**Financial/Tax Report:** Matheson reported the tax collection for November was, $64,241.17. December, $69,465.33 and January, $26,715.42. The general account report shows an overage in workman’s comp insurance. There was an overcharge so this amount will be refunded.

Finance Officer Emerson asked anyone with ideas for the upcoming budget to please share them with her. Budget planning has started.

**Request for Public Comment:**

There were no requests at this time.

**Old Business:**

1. **A. TPOA Report:** Betty LoBue stated that copies of the winter newsletter should have been received by mail. The TPOA is working to inform members of developments and concerns of the Town by meetings held in person and via Zoom, personal contact and by newsletter. Only one newsletter is sent by mail each year all others are emailed. If you need to update your email please do so by contacting Betty or other TPOA officers. The TPOA recently completed a fundraising project by selling commemorative bricks for the newly renovated front entrance. The TPOA recently completed their 33rd year of liter pick up with the NC Adopt a Highway program. The group joined the community in participation of Lake Santeetlah clean up. This was done from the shoreline, and by boat. The TPOA has donated to several Graham County services and charities through the green elephant fund. There were two social events last year at Chalet Village with more planned for the upcoming year. The election procedure for TPOA is handled by a selected nominating committee who presents a slate of officers for upcoming term. Once determined the slate is presented to the members at the September meeting and any additional requests are submitted for consideration by a certain deadline. All nominees are placed on the ballot. Membership forms and ballots are mailed to each household with one ballot per household. Members send completed forms, dues and ballots to the post office address provided. Ballots are immediately separated and taken to Town Hall by the TPOA treasurer to be tallied in the presence of Town Staff. Board members are currently reviewing other options of collecting and counting ballots to replace this 30 year old procedure. Councilmember Emerson asked if ballots and donations can be mailed in separately. LoBue confirmed that this can be done with a note that dues have been paid. Ballots are only accepted from those who have paid current membership dues.

**B. Updated Water Policy (action needed):** Emerson explained that she made changes to the old policy incorporating the suggestions from previous meetings. The policy was reviewed by the Town Attorney who made further changes. The policy presented includes the water connection fee that was passed last year charging the homeowner the actual cost of services, material, and equipment to connect to the water system and not a specific flat fee. Simon asked about #3 under water connection, a fee to start water service. The description states that it is on the schedule of fees, however Simon could not locate it. This fee is when someone sells the home and a new owner moves in. The meter is still in place just must be read and the information for the new owner added. This will be a $25 fee, called a transfer fee. It will be added to the schedule of fees. Hager made a motion to approve as amended. Simon seconded. All approved. The motion passed unanimously. Simon also asked about a homeowner having the ability to turn off their water. Matheson explained that the policy encourages homeowners to install a shut off valve on their side of the meter to avoid turning it off and on and at the set. It eventually wears out the shut off valve causing a leak.

1. **Planning Board/Appoint new Board Members (action needed):** Mayor Gross stated that Tanya Capeling sold her home and moved. Capeling was a Planning Board member leaving a vacant spot. Glenn Barnett was the alternate member. Matheson spoke with Barnett and he is willing to become a voting member. Simon made a motion to appoint Barnett as a Planning Board member. Emerson seconded. All approved. The motion passed unanimously. Hager suggested a mass email be sent out seeking anyone who may be interested in becoming an alternate member A new member can be appointed at the March Council meeting.
2. **Policy for Parking on Town Property:** Emerson created an “idea” page for others to share ideas of what would be needed in a parking policy. A common concern seems to be enforcing such a policy with a large amount of suppliers and contractors coming and going with very little parking options. The equipment originally causing this item on the agenda is no longer parked on Town property. Emerson stated the bigger concern is simply to avoid any traffic from moving through the Town (emergency vehicles, mowing the side of roadways). After discussion this item will be tabled for further discussion and ideas.
3. **Water pipe detection project:** Kamps has worked with Bailey Hall, Graham County Employee, two different days on pipe detection. Kamps estimated he has 1/3 of the pipes located and mapped. Kamps is marking what side of the road the pipe is on and using nails and washers to locate where the pipes cross the roadway. Kamps stated that Hall is good at using the equipment and seems to get very close to the pipes that he (Kamps) knows the location of. Kamps hopes that this will be completed sometime in the spring.
4. **Set-up of Edmunds financial program:** Matheson reported that Finance Officer Emerson along with Town Staff has monthly meetings working towards the transfer. This month there will be dates planned for Staff training. Emerson explained the training will likely be two hour slots possibly five days in a row. The office will be closed during those times so there are no interruptions. The dates will likely be determined at the meeting with Edmunds on Wednesday. A sign will be posted on the door during those times. Emerson explained there was a delay getting the water software transferred but that has recently been taken care of. The plan is to go live with the new software in July.
5. **Council member Ethics Training:** Mayor Gross encouraged all Council members to complete the Ethics training. Councilmember Hager is having issues logging on. Matheson will look in to it.
6. **ARPA Funds Resolutions (action needed):** Emerson completed a training concerning the ARPA funds and presented a detailed list of the nine steps we must follow in order to receive the funds and use them while complying with federal and state law. Number one on the list (Adopt and Implement policies) is the Resolutions that need to be approved today so that we can move forward with the list. Matheson explained that the Resolutions were drawn from the League of Municipalities and have been reviewed by the Town Attorney. Emerson made a motion to approve the Conflict of Interest Policy, Eligibility Use Policy, Non-Discrimination Statement Policy and Records Retention Policy for the RCSLFRF Award Grant money. Hager seconded. All approved. The motion passed unanimously.

**New Business:**

1. **Scott Kamps Class C Water Certification Training:** Kamps explained that there are two certifications with water (Distribution and Treatment). Lamar Williams is certified for the water treatment. Kamps completed a three day virtual class and will take the test in Hickory May 25th. The class was very informative and has helped Kamps have a better understanding of what the Town is responsible for. After passing the test Kamps will have a class C certification. Matheson will be taking a class in Chapel Hill in February on Water Finance.
2. **Water Reader Replacement:** The trimble (water reader) is outdated and has issues completing water reads each time. Kamps has talked with Mike Wallace, from Core and Main, who plans to visit Town Hall to explain options for upgrades that would be best for the Town. Kamps will follow up with him to try and get a specific date he can come. Emerson suggested that he come while preparing the budget so that we may have numbers to use when planning.
3. **Change date for May 2023 Council Meeting (action needed):** Mayor Gross has grandkids graduating in Florida during the May 11 Council meeting and would like to change the date to May 4th if that works with the other Councilmembers schedule. Hager has a conflict at 5:30PM but could be available on the 4th at 10:00AM. Emerson made a motion to change the May 11th Town Council meeting to May 4th at 10:00AM. Simon seconded. All others approved. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **New Agreement with Town Attorney Allen, Stahl & Kilbourne (action needed):** The current agreement has expired (January 31, 2023) with Attorney Allen, Stahl & Kilbourne. Carpenter explained the changes on the agreement presented. The agreement would renew on subsequent years unless the Town chose to terminate. The representation is only for one meeting per month. Carpenter explained if the Council chose not to renew the contract, their firm would no longer be representing the Town and they would need a Town Attorney in order function as a Municipality. Emerson confirmed that the fee was the same as the previous year. Simon and Hager shared concern with the attorney only attending one meeting each month. Attorney Carpenter agreed to discuss this concern with his partners and follow up. Carpenter also stated that the firm had recently ran a report of time spent on the Town and more than $25,000 (yearly fee) was spent in time last year on matters related to the Town and representation. The way the agreement is written the firm has the right to charge a $300 hourly fee for attendance of a Special Meeting. Carpenter isn’t sure how strict they would be about that. He has attended both the Special meeting and Council meeting in February but will not be charging an additional fee since the Special Meeting was very brief. Simon asked if the firm would continue to represent by Zoom or be in person for the meetings. Carpenter stated that they would continue to be available by Zoom. Emerson made a motion to approve the engagement as written with the date change. Attorney Carpenter suggested an extension to March 31st if all Councilmembers were not comfortable with approval. Hager made a motion to extend the fee agreement through March 31, 2023. Emerson seconded. All approved. The motion passed unanimously. An updated agreement will be presented at the March Council Meeting.
5. **Donation to Knight’s Pantry (action needed):** The Knights Pantry is a program in Graham County Schools that supplies students with snacks during the school day and bags sent home in the afternoons and weekends for children in need. Emerson reported that there is $600 left in the donation line item this year. Hager made a motion to donate $600. Simon seconded. All others approved. The motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion:**

1. **Update Website:** Mayor Gross explained that the website needs updated and some old information removed. Matheson plans to work with Miranda Buchanan (a teacher at Robbinsville High School who designed the website) as she is available to make the updates.
2. **TPOA Report:** Moved to item #1.
3. **Christmas Parade – Pictures:** Pictures were displayed of the Town’s participation in the 2022 Christmas Parade.

**Final Public Comment:**

Diana Simon asked for an update for those homeowners who live at the top that would like a resolution for their water loss when the power goes out. Kamps explained that he is working on a solution. He has met with several individuals and gathered preliminary data but until both tanks are fixed and working we couldn’t get a full assessment to determine the best solution. Kamps stated we are on a list for tank repairs.

Kevin Haag mentioned Frontier wires that are on the roadway. Kamps and Matheson informed him that they had notified Frontier multiple times but would do so again.

Simon and Haag discussed upcoming planting at the front entrance.

**Announcements:**

* The next regular scheduled Council Meeting will be held March 9, 2023 at 5:30PM. This meeting will be held at Town Hall and by Zoom.

**Motion to Adjourn.**

Councilmember made a motion to adjourn the meeting. seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:58PM.

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Connie Gross, Mayor Emily Hooper, Town Clerk