**Town of Lake Santeetlah**

**Council Meeting Minutes (Zoom)**

**January 13, 2022**

Mayor Connie Gross called the meeting to order at 5:30PM. Councilmembers Diana Simon, Tina Emerson, Jim Hager and Ralph Mitchell were present for the meeting. Town Administrator Matheson and Town Clerk Emily Hooper and Attorney Craig Justus were also present.

**Approval of the Agenda:** Mayor Gross asked for amendments to the agenda. Gross asked that New Business #1: Initial Offer to Purchase be moved to Old Business #3. New Business #8: Liability Issues at Front Entrance be moved to #1. New Business #6: Changes to Public Comment Policy & #7: Covid Relief Funds – Staff Bonus be moved to Discussion Items #4 & #5. Councilmember Simon asked for New Business #1: Initial Offer to Purchase be moved to Old Business #1 instead of #3 as Gross had suggested. Emerson recommended that the item be split into two parts: Initial offer to purchase the 3ft. strip #1(a) and offer to purchase parking area #1(b). Councilmember Emerson made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mitchell seconded. Hager and Simon opposed. The motion passed three to two.

**Approval of the January 6, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes:** Councilmember Emerson made a motion to approve the January 6, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes as presented. Mitchell seconded. Hager asked why the December 9, 2021 Council Meeting minutes were not on the agenda for approval. Emerson stated, those minutes were approved at the January Special Meeting for the purpose of updating signature cards. Hager and Simon opposed. The motion passed three to two.

**Financial/Tax Report:** Tax collection for December was $68,406.75. Matheson explained that the office phone and internet had been down all last week. The router was destroyed by possible power surge and had to be replaced. A new router was installed yesterday. Matheson stated she had not been able to balance accounts and complete financial reports. She will complete next week, and post on the website and send by mass email.

**Request for Public Comment:**

**Diana Simon**: At the December 9, 2021 Tina Emerson commented that she had rescinded her residence in Mathews NC. Simon stated that Emerson had been in Lake Santeetlah only three days since November 21st and asked that she resign from the Town Council immediately. Simon stressed, according to NC Statute 160a-59 a Town Council member must reside in the district they represent.

**Kevin Haag:** Asked for an updated plan for proceeding with the front entrance. Haag urged the Council to move forward in a timely manner.

**Old Business:**

1. **Initial Offer to Purchase: Thomas & Jane Brickell:**
2. **3ft. strip.** Emerson shared her concern that the Town does not own the lake front property to have the ability to sale to another property owner. After discussion Gross made a motion to move forward with the sale of property (.002) to Mr. & Mrs. Brickell for $750.00. Hager seconded. Emerson and Gross opposed. The motion passed three to two.
3. **Parking area.** Emerson made a motion to send the (.004) property back to Mack Tallant for approval pending the reservation of a utility easement. Gross seconded. All others approved. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Update for Front Entrance Progress:** Kamps shared an update that the water lines had been located and no water lines were in the area of the footers. The new survey was completed and confirmed that the plans were all within Town property. Kamps suggested that contractor Scott Hatch remove rock to push the wall back farther away from the water valve. Kamps spoke with Hatch about the cost for the additional work and Hatch provided a verbal estimate of approximately $1,000. If approved Kamps will contact Hatch about completing the work. The Aldridge Brothers do not have the equipment on site to remove the rock and Hatch is working in the area and can use his equipment. Emerson asked if the wall would be higher if it is moved back. Kamps said there would be no change in the height of the wall. Kamps will contact the Aldridge Brothers to confirm they agree with Hatch completing the additional work. Simon made a motion to follow through with Hatch to complete the additional digging to move the wall back farther away from the water lines. Hatch will need to have proper insurance and sign a release of liability waiver. Justus suggested that a construction note change order be completed explaining the changes and have the initial contractor to sign prior to proceeding with the work as planned. Mitchell seconded. All others approved. The motion passed unanimously.
5. **Break Down of Budget funds for Front Entrance Project:** Emerson shared a break down of brick donations $35,985.00 collected by the TPOA.

**New Business:**

1. **Liability Issues at Front Entrance:** Simon stated, according to the contract with the Aldridge Brothers there is a safety clause and a release of liability waiver should be signed by another contractor working on site not employed by the Aldridge’s. Simon explained that a waiver should be signed by anyone performing work on a Town work site that is not under contract. If Town assets are damaged by an individual not under contract, such as water pipes and meters it could be difficult to recover damages. Simon stated that there should also be a conflict of interest with Council Members requesting services of family members. This would be considered unauthorized expenses.
2. **Motions made by Council should be read back for clarification by Town Clerk prior to final vote:** Gross explained that when a motion is made the Clerk will read the motion back prior to final vote. This will make it easier to be certain that the correct motion was recorded by the Clerk.
3. **Update Booklets: Local Government Board Builder, 4th edition:** Gross stated that this book would be ordered, and all Council Members would receive a copy.
4. **Ethics Course for Town Council:** This course is offered in the spring and will likely be online. The Town Council will be notified when to take the Ethics Course and receive a certificate after completion.
5. **Code Red Emergency Weather Alerts:** Graham County offers a Weather Alert system called Code Red. This system sends calls and texts to alert of weather in the area. Anyone interested in signing up can find a link on the Town website and sent by mass email.

**Discussion:**

1. **New Software for the Financial System, Water, Real Estate Tax:** The financial software system (Quickbooks) the Town currently uses is outdated. Emerson has contacted other Towns and Individuals knowledgeable of Accounting Software for recommendations. Emerson explained that she has four companies that can hopefully do a demo and provide more information and the Town can discuss and decide which would be the best fit for our needs. Edmunds Gov Tech, provided a detailed demonstration with Town Staff, Emerson and Gross of the capabilities of their software. Edmunds can pull all information from previous systems into one software. Emerson explained that Edmunds would allow the Town to start with the programs needed and can expand later if we wish to do so. Edmunds specializes in local government finance. Emerson will continue to update the Council as more information is available.
2. **End of Life for other systems – water meter reader & Scada:** Emerson explained the Town has a water software than is different than the financial software. The idea is to find one system that could communicate and perform both payments and maintain reports and other detail. Emerson stated she will continue to research and report updates as she has them. Matheson explained that the Trimble, water meter reader, is outdated. If support is needed for the Trimble it is difficult to receive, there are no further upgrades. When the Trimble was purchased, the Town was informed it would not last for a long period of time. When planning ahead a new reader will be needed. The Scada is the system that sends the message from the tank to the pumps to tell when to send water to the tank. That system was installed by Carolina Technical. A representative from Carolina Technical informed Scott if the Scada defaulted in any way it could not be replaced. It would have to be completed manually until a new system was installed. Kamps stated it should be a high priority to update this system to avoid running the pumps to long causing the tanks to overfill, things that could occur when doing it manually.

The Town truck bed has a hole in it from salt. A new bed is approximately $8,000. A used bed can be around $3,500. The beds are hard to locate. Kamps is looking for a bed and has talked with others to help him. Emerson stated the truck is a 2015 with 86,000 miles on it so it should be considered when planning of how much to spend on a bed.

1. **Long Term Water and Road Planning:** Emerson shared it would be helpful to have a schedule of each road within the Town and label when each road was paved last. Make a priority list of which road would need repair first. This would help to have as a guide when budget planning and moving forward. Emerson would also like to continue locating water lines within the Town. Forming a mapping guide by using a phone or computer would be helpful in the future. Emerson asked for others to share their ideas and work together to plan long term.
2. **Changes to Public Comment Policy:** Gross explained that an updated policy is bring drafted that would allow more flexibility with public comment during meetings.
3. **Covid Relief Funds – Staff Bonus:** Gross explained the American Rescue Plan Act has funds that can be used for those effected by Covid. Gross would like for Emerson to gather financial details when looking at the budget and see if the Town could provide a bonus for Town Staff. Simon suggested to put this item on the February agenda for further discussion.

**Announcements:**

* The next regular scheduled Council Meeting will be held February 11, 2022 at 5:30PM. This meeting will be held via Zoom, unless otherwise notified. Information will be sent out at a later date.

Jack Gross suggested that it is helpful to have a spotter when water lines are being located. Gross stated this helps with safety and he would assume the operator feels more comfortable with a spotter. Kamps agreed it is helpful when locating lines to have an assistant. Gross agreed to sign a waiver any time he would be assisting.

Haag asked the Town Council to consider a generator for those at the top of the mountain who have water issues when the power is out. Emerson agreed to look into this.

Susan Robinson agreed that having a liability waiver is a good idea for the Town. Robinson also suggested that public comment be at the end of the meeting as well for public input about items discussed within the agenda.

**Motion to Adjourn.**

Councilmember Mitchell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Emerson seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:49PM.

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Connie Gross, Mayor Emily Hooper, Town Clerk