

Town of Mineral Springs  
Town Hall  
3506 S. Potter Road  
Town Council  
Regular Meeting  
July 14, 2016~ 7:30 PM

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Minutes

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The Town Council of the Town of Mineral Springs, North Carolina, met in Regular Session at the Mineral Springs Town Hall, Mineral Springs, North Carolina, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 14, 2016.

**Present:** Mayor Frederick Becker III, Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Neill, Councilwoman Valerie Coffey, Councilman Jerry Countryman, Councilwoman Lundeen Cureton Councilwoman Bettylyn Kraft, Town Clerk/Zoning Administrator Vicky Brooks and Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector Janet Ridings.

**Absent:** Councilwoman Janet Critz and Attorney Bobby Griffin.

**Visitors:** Mayor Alvarez, David Cook and Cindy Grano.

With a quorum present Mayor Frederick Becker called the Regular Town Council Meeting of July 14, 2016 to order at 7:33 p.m.

1. **Opening**

- Councilwoman Neill delivered the invocation.
- Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Public Comments**

- There were no public comments.

3. **Consent Agenda**

- **Councilwoman Coffey** made a **motion** to approve the consent agenda as presented containing the following:

- A. June 9, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. May 2016 Tax Collector's Report
- C. May 2016 Finance Report

and **Councilwoman Cureton** seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill  
Nays: None

#### 4. **Presentation by Artists Music Guild**

- Mayor Becker introduced Dr. David Cook from the Artists Music Guild (AMG). Mr. Cook commented that some people may think that he looks familiar and some people may not know who he is. Mr. Cook is the Entertainer of the Year for Christian Music; his family was the Cook Family Singers who were Grand Ole Opry stars and they traveled for many years with John and June Cash and the Mandrels. Ever since Mr. Cook was five years old he has been on stage, so he hasn't known anything other than being on stage. A few years ago AMG decided to move to Union County, North Carolina, because he was a resident of Union County. In 2014, they brought education for the arts and different arts programs that take Union County "outside of its walls". They do the AMG Heritage Awards here in Union County at the Agricultural Center; that program is aired into 17 million homes across the country. Legends like Chubby Checker, Gloria Gainer and Melba Moore are brought in. This year, the hosts for the program will be Melba Moore and Clifton Davis.
- Mr. Cook explained he wanted to talk to Mineral Springs tonight about how they are pulling all of the municipalities in throughout Union County. Indian Trail Mayor Alvarez was in attendance this evening; Indian Trail is one of their partners. Ms. Cindy Grano was also in attendance, she is a local resident and an artist who has been working with the Artists Music Guild.
- Mr. Cook's presentation included a video from the AMG Heritage Awards last year. The Artists Music Guild is an educational port; they work with the public school systems throughout Union County and they give kids an opportunity to really come out and do some great things. The video showed they deal with over 500 kids in the public schools, which are usually from title one schools. Mr. Cook explained that did something to him the first year they came here; some of these kids would come in with their books (school) in plastic Food Lion bags. Mr. Cook vowed to himself at that point they would make a difference and would not see this if they had the opportunity to make a change and they did. The video showed they made sure every one of these kids that came to the Guild last year walked away with a book bag and school supplies. They fed every one of them and that came out of Mr. Cook's own personal pocket. Mr. Cook stated he didn't know what their religious convictions were, but he believes "To Whom Much is Given, Much is Required".
- Mr. Cook has two Grammy's and seven Emmy Awards, as well as being inducted into three musical Halls of Fame. Mr. Cook's great uncle is Johnny Mercier, who won four Academy Awards, including Breakfast at Tiffany's. Mr. Cook's other uncle is Ray Stevens with the Streak and Ahab the Arab; there are people on medication on the other side of his family! Mr. Cook explained that coming from that kind of heritage it was important that people like him are made to give back and he is not opposed to that, but he needs help. AMG really does want to help and Mineral Springs is part of that program; it is a part and Mineral Springs is just as important as Indian Trail, Waxhaw or Marshville. Mineral Springs is important and in November when they have the big AMG Convention and Heritage Awards, they want Mineral Springs to be represented as well. The AMG brings all of this talent and they would like to bring some of this talent out to Mineral Springs. The AMG would like to come into one of the churches here and bring one of these artists out here to do a big concert and instead of them being paid, people will bring food and clothing that could go to your local homeless shelters. Mr. Cook stated he would

like to see about working with Ms. Brooks and see about maybe putting a concert in the park or something of that nature while they've got one of these artists here. Doing something like that will bring recognition to Mineral Springs, because you are already going into 17 million homes now and they want to put a name to the municipality.

- Mr. Cook explained that they create a curriculum. For example – Chubby Checker, these kids in the public schools do not know who Chubby Checker is, but by the time they are done they do. They will have Chubby Checker Skyping into their classroom or walking into their classroom.
- Mr. Cook asked if anyone besides Mayor Becker had been to the Monroe Mall recently and he invited them to come visit him at their office in the Monroe Mall. One of their partners is Steinway Piano. Inside of the food court/center court, they have a \$150,000 player piano; it is a Steinway Piano sitting there and it starts playing at 9:00 a.m. and plays all day until 9:00 p.m. Mr. Cook explained that he also owns one of the largest memorabilia collections in the country. Around the piano they have already done the “first ladies of country music” and the “first ladies of Motown” and right now they have Hollywood up there. They have gowns from Marilyn Monroe, Liza Taylor, Goldie Hawn, Phyllis Diller and one of the original dresses worn by Vivian Leigh in *Gone with the Wind* (still tattered and burnt like she was at Tara). This gives us the opportunity to have these teachers bring their kids over and AMG gets to educate them on this part of their history. When they had the first ladies of country music and Motown, these schools would bring their kids over and AMG would get to tell them why Dee Dee Sharp was so important to music and about her huge hit “Mashed Potato”. Every kid has watched the movie *Hairspray*, as well as *Sister Act* and *Dee Sharp* is all through both of those movies, and these kids don't know that, but AMG has a chance to educate them.
- Mr. Cook introduced Mayor Alvarez and explained he has been involved with the Guild now for the past two years. Mayor Alvarez shared when he first met Dr. Cook it was really a “no brainer”. When this country started taking the arts out of schools we started to go backwards and his experience with the Guild has been nothing but positive. Dr. Cook has inspired Mayor Alvarez. Mayor Alvarez recalled sitting in Chick-Fil-A having breakfast with David Cook and Chubby Checker and just watching people come up from the Hemby Bridge Fire Department wanting to take a picture with him and how gracious he was. Mayor Alvarez commented with all that's going on in our country today, all the division and all of the perceived blind hate, nothing brings people together more than the arts and music. The arts bring us together as humanity; it brings the world together. It inspires children to learn and it helps in therapy. It inspires children in Union County that otherwise would never have the opportunity to see their inner talents. “These are the kind of heroes that we long for for our children, ones that will raise the bar and set the examples”, Mayor Alvarez said. Mayor Alvarez stated that he was humbled and honored to be part of the Guild and would love nothing more than to have Mineral Springs be “our partners and be our brothers and sisters” in moving forward to help the Guild grow and help the message go out. “We are elected to help the future, you can't change our minds, but children learn what we teach them and we have a chance here to set things right”, said Mayor Alvarez.
- Dr. Cook introduced Ms. Cindy Grano as a freelance visual artist/painter. Dr. Cook explained they have the performance arts down, but he kept saying to himself that they needed something more, because nobody is taking care of our freelance

visual artists or giving them an opportunity. Dr. Cook went to the mall and said "let's do this", so they got space inside the mall and opened up a gallery; artists have their art hanging up inside that gallery (even Mineral Springs' artists). AMG does not charge them a commission if they sell something; paintings have been sold and all of that money goes straight to the artist. AMG does not want anything; they just want to give them a platform and the space, so they can take their work out of the closet and put it up so multitudes can see it. A couple weekends ago, Dr. Cook wanted to do something fun, so they brought in world renowned pianist Peter Wightman from Carnegie Hall and set him down in the middle court and they called the program "Art meets Music in the Round". The round was the food court; they put seats all the way around the piano and Mr. Wightman composed eight completely separate pieces of music. Eight easels were set up around the piano and these artists stood there (never hearing the music before) and when he started playing they started painting and they had to interpret what he was playing, he would play this for 10 or 15 minutes and stop and the artists were told to put their paint brush down and to switch canvas, so they would go clockwise and they would move to paint the canvas another artist was working on previously and they had to start working on that person's interpretation. By the time it was over they had eight canvases with eight different touches, but they didn't stop there, they also pulled in the audience. There was a packed audience (it was very good), but they got their participation, because when the artist would move one way the audience had to get up and move the other way, so that way they got to see all eight canvases coming to life. Needless to say, AMG has been asked to do this program again by the City of Monroe and by the mall, because it was such an impact. The greatest impact had tears in Dr. Cook's eyes that night when painter Stefan Duncan was standing there at his easel and Dr. Cook walked around and noticed that Stefan wasn't painting as fast as the other ones and Dr. Cook looked over and there was a little child that had wandered into the round and Stefan was standing there holding the little child's hand with a paint brush painting. That does something to you and lets Dr. Cook know that his mission was being successful.

- Ms. Cindy Grano stated that it has been an incredible experience reaching out to some of the artists. There is so much talent right here in Union County that most of you (as well as herself) didn't know exactly how much talent we have here and people thrive on helping and getting them recognized. Dr. Cook has given us a platform that no other person or guild or society has ever given artists, which is the opportunity to bring forth our talent and display it. Ms. Grano told everyone if they ever have any time to get to the mall and check out their gallery; you're going to find that it is great and you can sit there outside on the benches and watch people. Everybody goes by and they can't stop looking. Ms. Grano gets calls, because she serves as the curator. The way they have it set up is if somebody is interested they will call Ms. Grano rather than the artist, because she doesn't want the artist getting any crazy calls. Ms. Grano can filter through the calls. It has been an incredible experience; artists are seeking them out now saying "how do we get into the Guild, how do we get involved or I want to hang my painting". Ms. Grano mentioned that she also does mentoring and so that is part of it, so they have some artists that say "hey, you know what I'm thinking about leaving my job, how can I become, you know, maybe dependent on just my art, what do you suggest", so Ms. Grano will work with them, tell them different things, different avenues to pursue, guide them

and mentor them. AMG doesn't charge for that; that's just in their hearts and they want them to succeed.

- Dr. Cook explained this is where the rubber meets the road. AMG has spoken with Mayor Becker and invited him over to the mall and he has been over; he has seen the displays AMG has. Mayor Becker attended their fundraising breakfast where he got to meet Chubby Checker and Dee Dee Sharp. Mr. Cook commented that it was amazing, Dee Dee is one of the sweetest people and he has known her ever since he was a kid. Dee Dee gets up early in the morning (7:00 a.m.), the mayor wasn't happy, but Dee Dee is going "oh baby, I can't sing this early in the morning, I can't do it", so she sits down at the piano and she's like "the smashed potato", she just blew it out. That's the kind of thing that AMG is bringing into Union County. Mr. Cook stated that he could call Dee Dee Sharp on the phone right now and she would tell you the Guild is the best thing and she loves being here in Union County. Ms. Sharp travels all the way from New Jersey to come here anytime that AMG needs her and she never charges them one dime to do it; none of these artists do (Chubby, Gloria Gainer, Melba Moore). They come here because they love being here. Mr. Cook commented "with that being said, we would love to be able to work with Mineral Springs this year for the AMG Convention and many years to come, we have all of these artists coming into town, we would love to be able to work with you Ms. Brooks on finding a place (like a church or the park or something) where we could bring one of these artists in and do arts programs here in Union County or in Mineral Springs". Mr. Cook would like to find a place where they could bring these freelance visual artists out and them working with the kids and learning how to do color palettes and learning how to do painting interpretations and things of that nature; "we have the ability to do that". Mr. Cook explained they are currently working on bringing all the municipalities together for Union Council and they are being very successful at it. Each municipality has given AMG approximately \$2,000, because that's what it costs them to do each municipality. Indian Trail actually rewrote their donation provision, because they were only able to give \$2,000 and they wanted to give AMG \$1,000 more because they felt they deserved it; AMG appreciates that. Mr. Cook stated they weren't going to ask Mineral Springs to do that. Right now they are trying to raise \$8,000 to meet their book bag needs to make sure that each one gets a book bag this year. "If we don't do it, I will pay for it again out of my own pocket, I don't care", Mr. Cook said. These are your kids, this is your town, AMG wants to help the town, they want the town to help them, they want a partnership that's going to go this year and beyond; together we can bring this thing to life. Mr. Cook asked how many of the council have been to the Ag Center and explained that many people do not know that's the Ag Center, because they completely transform that thing. People walk in there and they're like "this is the Ag Center!" It gets put on TV, it's beautiful and AMG wants Mineral Springs' name on it. They want Mineral Springs to be represented just like Monroe, Indian Trail and Waxhaw. Mr. Cook asked the council to please help them by giving them the \$2,000 they will need to help bring this program forth this year, help them to come in here and provide some programming and a partnership where they can expose Mineral Springs to these artists and these artists to Mineral Springs; "let's start building a partnership that we can really grow on". Mr. Cook stated he would be glad to answer questions.
- Councilwoman Cureton asked Mr. Cook if you could just bring your kids up there anytime. Dr. Cook responded "yes ma'am". Dr. Cook passed out his cards and

- Councilwoman Coffey stated she liked what AMG was doing; naturally it being the arts and all genres are covered as well as all socioeconomic boundaries. Councilwoman Coffey explained she went online and looked AMG up to see what was going on and she wanted to congratulate Dr. Cook on what they are doing and to thank him for doing it.
- Councilwoman Neill thanked Dr. Cook and asked if AMG received funding from any Union County agency. Dr. Cook responded they received funding from the City of Monroe. When they started the AMG Heritage Awards, because of who Dr. Cook's family is, being who they were, they decided they were going to take the program to the old PTL in Fort Mill where Jim and Tammy Faye Baker were, mainly because Dr. Cook grew up on the PTL show. Dr. Cook had thought with everything devastating that happened there they would bring something positive back and they found out that Fort Mill didn't want them there. In fact they didn't want anything in that old PTL building; they wanted it to go away. With AMG taking it into 17 million homes Fort Mill thought this thing could cause regeneration and they didn't want that; the town was devastated and it has not gotten over its anger yet. They wanted the high rise taken down. Dr. Cook commented if you go in there now you wouldn't recognize it, even the grand hotel, the barn and the upper room have homes built right up to the parking lots of those buildings and the developer is just waiting. The reason AMG left there was because they had built so many homes around there that the production trucks and buses for the celebrities couldn't get in an out without being encumbered. They had to go through the homeowners association, because some of their programming went later than 9:00 p.m., so they had to get permission. Then the people who had the building lost the building and AMG left, because they didn't want to be a part of it; at that point it became hypocritical for them to be there. Mayor Roberts contacted Dr. Cook and said "David we would love for you to bring this program to Mecklenburg County and we will give you the Halton Auditorium and we will give you offices in Charlotte free of charge if you will bring this program to Mecklenburg County". Dr. Cook explained he prayed about it for a while and then had a meeting with her and said "I am sorry, I can't". The reason he said he couldn't was because he knew that after the "new smell wore off" they would just become another program in Mecklenburg County; they already have the symphony, the opera, the ballet and all of these arts programs and AMG would just become another one. With Dr. Cook living in Union County he went to the City of Monroe and said "if I bring this program here will you help us" and without any hesitation Pete Hovanec (who is over the tourism board) said "absolutely and we will immediately give you \$5,000 to do it". Dr. Cook stated that was a good incentive for him, because that was \$5,000 less that he had to come out of his pocket; the relationship has grown. Last year, AMG's economic impact (starting at the week of the convention and up until the Heritage Awards) was \$518,000 to Union County. Every hotel was booked, every restaurant, gas/retail stores, etc. were being utilized. All of the retail stores in the mall love AMG, because when they do programs their revenues go up with people coming to the mall to see the programs, so they buy things. Councilwoman Neill

explained she asked because the town does support the Union County Community Arts Council in a very small way and she was just not sure if there was room in the budget to go beyond that. Councilwoman Coffey stated the town has also given to both the Parkwood High School Band and Western Union Elementary School this year in those areas. Dr. Cook responded the difference between AMG and the Union County Community Arts Council is AMG's reach is far greater than what theirs is. AMG is taking you out of Union County to a National Platform and that is not something the Arts Council is doing. The Art's Council is not doing hands on programming like AMG is doing; AMG's platform is completely different and it costs a whole lot more money than it costs the Art's Council, because they are involved with the schools and doing art programs inside the school. Councilwoman Neill responded she was sure it is beyond worthwhile and extraordinary, but Mineral Springs is very limited. Councilwoman Cureton stated what Dr. Cook was doing is wonderful. Councilwoman Krafft agreed and explained (coming from an exceptionally musical family and having artists in her family that live here in Mineral Springs) she wished she had known about this four weeks ago, it is phenomenal and she wished it was more well known. Councilwoman Krafft supported helping in any way that the town could with their limited budget. Councilwoman Krafft explained she could speak as being a mother of a child who is very gifted in singing and she can't support music enough; it has done phenomenal things in her life and her family. Dr. Cook commented he appreciated that and his mission was to come here with a request, but if the council can't meet that request, maybe they could meet a smaller one; anything helps.

- Councilwoman Coffey asked what their timeframe was for a decision by the council. Dr. Cook responded they have to get their budget in ASAP, which is why he asked Mayor Becker to put him on the agenda to see if they could meet it. They have to have their budget in for their grants in the next two weeks. The City of Monroe gave \$15,000; the program itself costs a little bit over \$225,000. Dr. Cook explained the only thing he was coming after right now is they want to be able to work with Ms. Brooks to bring some artists out here and they have to meet some of the artists' expenses (hotel/food) and then they have the book bags. Dr. Cook would rather pay the artists' hotel bill out of his pocket and have them here, so they get the exposure and the town gets the benefit of them being here than for them to not be able to help these kids with the book bags; that's the most important thing right now.
- Mayor Becker explained that the town has more short supply on staff resources than cash and asked if the town were partnering with AMG, would AMG bring in volunteers and staffing to do the leg work. Dr. Cook responded that was the exact reason they are asking for the funding, because when these artists come in they are usually bringing their own sounds systems, equipment and buses, which is lessening the town's job. Dr. Cook further explained when they contact Western Union about participating in this years' AMG Heritage Awards they will be creating a curriculum for them. For example, Chubby Checker's biggest hit is the Twist, they have a music director and an educational director that would go score this music out (this is very expensive to do) and then to get Chubby Checker off tour or have him sit in front of a computer to say "Hey Kids, this is Chubby Checker, let's hear what you are doing". That piece of music is sent to the choral/band teacher to teach the kids that piece of music. Chubby and David walk into that class to help the teacher with vocals, techniques, stage presence, etc. that will get those kids

ready for that night. When they come to the convention on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November they will be walking into that program and they will actually be performing that piece of music with the legend. Councilwoman Coffey asked what criteria AMG uses to select the schools that are part of the Guild. Dr. Cook responded they choose the schools based on their academic need; they work with various people on the school board on recommendations as to which schools. Councilwoman Coffey stated she heard him say Western Union and asked how that name got out there. Dr. Cook responded the name came because they were supposed to have participated last year, but the teacher got ill or something, so they had to forgo, but they have another teacher there now. They don't know the teacher, hence the reason he would love for the town to do an interview introduction into that school. Dr. Cook further explained they will contact the teacher/principals and ask them how many kids they have, what their learning scores are, what level are they learning the arts and they will find out if these kids are lagging behind and those are the ones they want to target. If they can create a spectacular learning atmosphere for them then it sparks them.

- Dr. Cook remembered when he was five years old and was already on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry in front of thousands of people, but he didn't know that was what he was going to do for the rest of his life, he just knew that was where his parents told him he needed to be and he was really cute doing it. It wasn't until his second grade teacher Ms. Street gave him clarity of what his life's mission was. Dr. Cook was on a TV show called Electric Company that he was a regular on with Morgan Freeman and Rita Moreno. One day when he went to school, Ms. Street said "we are going to the library", she lined them all up and off they went like little ducks following her into the library, they all had to sit down Indian style on the floor and they had all of these tables that were covered with sheets. As they all got quiet and arranged they started taking the sheets off the tables and it was the set of Mr. Rogers Neighborhood and all of a sudden Fred Rogers walked out and it was at that moment that Dr. Cook had clarity and knew what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. Dr. Cook was born to be an entertainer although he has a law degree, a PhD in Child Psychology, and is an Ordained Minister; he was called to be on stage. If we can offer these kids (just one of those kids) that same opportunity as "heaven sweet and hell high" Dr. Cook will do it and he doesn't care what it costs him or what he has to do. At the Heritage Awards, every one of those kids is like a star, they come in with their little bow tie, white shirt, black pants and everyone else is in formal wear (tuxedos/gowns) and these kids come up the red carpet, they are photographed and people are interviewing them on the red carpet and they really feel important. Councilwoman Coffey asked if everything was provided to the children and their parents weren't expected to come up with any. Dr. Cook responded that the parents have to buy their tickets to the show. Councilwoman Coffey explained she meant as far as the kids are concerned and their participation. Dr. Cook responded no, there is no charge to those parents at all. They have to buy their tickets, but the after party and food for the kids and parents are provided by AMG. Last year, Longhorn fed everybody.
- Dr. Cook commented he knew budgeting was tight, because it is tight for everybody, but at some point we have to sit back and say where do we invest, it may be tight, but these are our kids and if we do not invest, there is a kid that could go wrong. Councilwoman Coffey responded in all honesty as far as she could see it was not a lack of budgetary funding that the town council give to AMG, but it's a

matter of being justified. The town has to justify what they do to the constituents that they serve and to make sure that they can answer for what they do to their constituents; this is the reason she raised the questions that she raised. When Dr. Cook said they were working with kids with academic needs, it sealed it for Councilwoman Coffey, because those are the kids that need it the most. Councilwoman Cureton agreed. Dr. Cook responded that he appreciated the council for giving him this time; it's really important and he would love to see all of them at the Heritage Awards and dancing to the mashed potato. This year they have Orlons coming who did the "Watusi", Peggy March who did "I Will Follow Him", Gene Chandler who was the "Duke of Earl", Melba Moore will be hosting and Clifton Davis from the shows "That's My Mama/Amen" will be the co-host. Barbara Eden from "I Dream of Jeannie" is coming. All of these people roll up their sleeves and get in there to help AMG to do that. Councilwoman Coffey asked what the ticket prices were. Dr. Cook responded \$50 each.

- Mayor Becker asked the council how they felt about this and if it was something they wanted to participate in at this time. Councilwoman Coffey responded it was a given, it is benefitting our immediate community as they are working with and did work with, last year, the students from Western Union Elementary School it is an absolute plus for our town. Dr. Cook clarified that they were supposed to work with them, they had started to, but they had to pull because the teacher wasn't there. Last year, AMG worked with East Elementary, Walter Bickett, Cuthberson, Forest Hills, Wingate Elementary in Union County, Sterling Elementary and Pine Lake Preparatory in Mecklenburg County. Councilwoman Krafft asked if they worked with any home school groups. Dr. Cook responded absolutely, they did bring in the 4H.
- Councilwoman Krafft commented she knew the budget had been approved and asked Mayor Becker where the town stood with the financial part. Mayor Becker responded normally with our nonprofits we have groups that we frequently support, they come at the end of the fiscal year (we just did them for last budget year) and we have come up with a rough idea of what we think we might want to make available to those; there's always a little more money in that budgetary account for things that come up during the year. Last year, when Western Union came and needed money for their PTO that came out of that pot of money and there was enough money for it. Councilwoman Neill commented that two were consolidated. Mayor Becker responded that was last month, he was thinking of the ongoing ones that Councilwoman Krafft was asking about. The Parkwood Band was at the end of the fiscal year, but Mayor Becker thought Western Union PTO came at the beginning of the year and the town was able to fund them. The Optimists have come in the middle of the year in the past and the town would just fund them at that time, so there is money that we have set aside (a few thousand dollars) that is available for those sorts of requests and we have that still this year. Councilwoman Krafft clarified that the money was available. Mayor Becker responded that it was a question of whether the council feels (as Councilwoman Coffey said we are accountable to the constituents) if it's a worthwhile endeavor and how much. As Dr. Cook said if you can't manage the full \$2,000 the town could still participate. Councilwoman Krafft responded since Dr. Cook mentioned Western Union, she felt it was an excellent opportunity for that school and she personally knows several local artists that the town is serving the community that we are here to represent. Councilwoman Coffey mentioned that Dr. Cook has talked about some type of

concert at a church or in a park, but she couldn't see doing it at our park, it would be a bigger venue than we have to offer that you would want more people to come, you want to fill up the church across the street or something with this kind of thing. Dr. Cook emphasized the one thing you have to think about is that they do not have to do this program in November. Let's say that you want to do a program in the park in August, AMG could find an artist to come out there in August. Councilwoman Krafft responded that September would be an awesome time. Councilwoman Coffey pointed out Dr. Cook is preparing for a big event in November, so she was thinking he may not have the opportunity right now to do anything in September. Dr. Cook responded they could find the town an artist in September; they have over 400 people in the Guild, but the weather in November is always questionable. AMG's purpose is to be a year round partner with Mineral Springs (not just in November), so if there is something that the town wants to do AMG wants to be that "go to" organization for the town to supply these artists to the town. Councilwoman Neill asked if there were currently children in Western Union or Parkwood Middle/High School that would directly benefit. Councilwoman Coffey responded of course and Councilwoman Krafft responded definitely. Mayor Becker commented "if we can get that class to participate with Dr. Cook". Dr. Cook responded they don't usually have a problem getting schools to participate and the only cost to the school is when they have their convention in November (at the mall) is to get their bus to get them there. While they are there, AMG will feed them and give them book bags. One of the things that Dr. Cook did not tell the council was that while they are mentoring...for example...dealing with the elementary school students at a certain time, the choral teacher for the middle schools, they have the elementary down in a class on one side, they set up a performance stage down near Belk and those choral classes are down there doing a concert for the patrons of the mall. AMG is taking those kids and the teachers' curriculum and putting feet to it. One of the biggest complaints they hear from the teachers is that there is no outlet, they are teaching the kids, but they have no outlet to take these kids out and let them see what it is that they are doing. This is wonderful because now they can come out here and perform this music to the patrons of the mall; it builds self-esteem and helps the teacher. Councilwoman Krafft commented from an outsider looking in she thought the only thing lacking was more advertisement on a more local level, so they get more people to know what is going on. Dr. Cook responded this is why they decided this year to come to municipalities individually, so town agents, etc. can get this stuff out to the public easier than what AMG can.

- **Councilwoman Coffey** made a **motion** that we make a donation to the Artists Music Guild in the amount of the \$2,000 requested. Councilwoman Coffey stated it's a small amount to pay for them coming up with a curriculum and interacting with our children. **Councilwoman Krafft** seconded the aforementioned motion by Councilwoman Coffey. The motion passed unanimously as follows:

*Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill*

*Nays: None*

- Mayor Becker announced the town would get Dr. Cook a check tomorrow (maybe) and explained he would want to talk to Dr. Cook and the school immediately to make sure something will get started early on. Mayor Becker also commented Ms.

Brooks may be interested in some musicians on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Brooks commented she would also be interested in a small article to put in the newsletter. Dr. Cook responded he would have their Executive Director get in touch with Ms. Brooks. Councilwoman Krafft suggested getting a small advertisement about the upcoming event in November for the next newsletter, so that people will understand that the town is supporting it as a community and also to help AMG get the awareness out to the constituents that we as Mineral Springs are part of this and they are welcome to know that. It would help AMG and it will help Mineral Springs. Dr. Cook stated they don't look at it as a gift; they look at it as a partnership. They will be asking the town to send a copy of their logo, which will be put on the Artists Music Guild's page with a link to the Mineral Springs website.

**5. Consideration of Proposed Nuisance Ordinance Survey**

- Mayor Becker explained that the Nuisance Ordinance was exactly what was presented last month in Ms. Brooks' absence. Ms. Brooks commented that she was asking for council input: is this where they want to be or are there things they don't want to have in there? Councilwoman Neill felt that is was perfect. Councilman Countryman commented that all they were doing now was surveying the people and he thought the survey is more than adequate; anything more would overwhelm them and they wouldn't participate.
- **Councilwoman Coffey made a motion to approve the survey and Councilwoman Cureton seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:**

*Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill*

*Nays: None*

- Mayor Becker asked Ms. Brooks if she was hoping to get the survey as an insert in the next newsletter that was going out in a week or two. Ms. Brooks responded no, a newsletter has to go out immediately. Councilwoman Coffey commented the ordinance survey needs to go out separate from the newsletter. Councilwomen Krafft and Neill agreed. Councilman Countryman commented that if it went out with the newsletter the people that aren't overly thrilled with the newsletter or just chunk it..... Councilwoman Krafft suggested making it on "obnoxious" paper, so that it brings it out as "you need to look at this". Councilman Countryman suggested that you could indicate on the envelope something obvious like "important survey". Councilwoman Krafft suggested "your town needs you". Ms. Brooks asked if they wanted it to be in color. Mayor Becker commented that it would be ten and a half cents per envelope. Councilwoman Coffey responded that was fine. Councilwoman Krafft commented whatever you need to do to make it stand out, so it doesn't hit the dumpster. Councilwoman Neill suggested "immediate response required". Mayor Becker noted that staff would work on that next week.

**6. Consideration of Calling for a Special Meeting to View an Ethics Webinar**

- Mayor Becker explained that the council needed to have a special meeting for the Ethics Webinar, which Councilwoman Krafft was exempt from, because she took the class. Ms. Brooks commented it was for all newly elected or re-elected. Councilwoman Coffey commented she would come anyway just to refresh. Mayor Becker pointed out that it would be him, Councilwomen Cureton, Neill and Critz

that were required to attend. After a brief discussion, the council determined they would hold a special meeting on Monday, August 8, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at the town hall in the meeting chamber.

- **Councilman Countryman** made a **motion** to call a special meeting of the town council for the purpose of viewing the Ethics Webinar at 6:00 p.m., Monday August 8, 2016 at the Town Hall in the meeting chamber and **Councilwoman Neill** seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill

Nays: None

## 7. Review and Discussion of the Mineral Springs Downtown Park Sign

- Mayor Becker explained that he [Vaughan Parish] doesn't like to use the cedar anymore; it's gotten so expensive. Mr. Parish is not doing many signs anymore and he is leery of doing one small sign where he has to buy a 4 X 8 sheet of material, because it would be more expensive per square foot. Mayor Becker stated that he has not got a firm price for doing it that way, but it will probably be in the \$700 range if it was all by itself. Included in the agenda packet was a draft picture of the sign; Mayor Becker noted that it wouldn't be that font shown, it would be the font that is on the town hall sign. The prices have gone up every year, we paid \$823 for the town hall sign, then three years later (in 2012) we paid \$1,542 for the greenway trailhead sign and now we are talking about a sign that is roughly half the size of that and it would be about half the price. Mayor Becker explained that our existing welcome signs are 16 or 17 years old and now that he is doing his volunteer mowing down near one of them he has taken a closer look at it and it's awful. Mr. Parish would repaint signs for \$150 to \$200, but those signs are not cedar or foam core, they are a material called graphicore that they were using back then. It is more like balsa wood and they have stopped using it, because it is not durable and if you get any defects in the paint it starts to rot. Mayor Becker stopped on his way home and looked at the sign toward Monroe and noticed there were some rotting areas; once that starts we may need two new signs. Mayor Becker mentioned that to Mr. Parish (not that it was part of the proposal) and he misunderstood and gave a proposal for doing those two signs over again and the park sign for \$2,560 (plus tax) for the three of them. Councilman Countryman stated that it sounds like a bargain. Mayor Becker continued that Mr. Parish is buying all the materials at once and using it all; he has no leftover material, he is using it all up and he wanted to do it that way. The only catch is that it is not cedar, it's a foam core material, but it is a synthetic so it doesn't rot. The only problem with foam core - the Methodist Church signs that Mr. Parish did were done with foam core - it looks like sand blasted wood, but since then he has improved on his technique and takes a Dremel Tool and does some scoring with it to take more of a grain affect, because the foam core gives you a more uniform stippled affect. Mr. Parish synthesizes a grain affect now, so it really is beautiful; it's just like wood, but it's cheaper and lasts forever. Councilwoman Krafft commented she stopped and looked at the sign up here and thought they need to be kept up, because it's an impression on our town, especially with Steeplechase coming in every year. It makes sense to do it at one time if it's going to be cheaper. Councilwoman Neill commented we don't want them rotting. Mayor Becker noted they are going to need replacing within the next year. Councilwoman Neill responded it made sense

and she thought we should do it. Mayor Becker explained he didn't want to throw out to the council and blindside them and say "you've got to spend \$2,500 on all three signs, that wasn't our original intention, but in the investigation that did come out as a possibility and of course he jumped on that, because he said he could do that for \$80 a square foot across the board, because he is buying all the materials at once and his overhead is low on that and so he is willing to it for that price; if you want me to go ahead with that". Mayor Becker stated the only other suggestion (if we do it), if the council remembers what our signs look like now, they have a big spring painting logo and he mentioned to Mr. Parish to just modify it by what we have on the town hall sign where we had the logo a little bit smaller and have the words "Conservation by Design" under it. Councilwoman Coffey responded that we might as well be consistent. Mayor Becker noted that it doesn't change the price to do that. Councilwoman Krafft responded that it is better; it gives you more of a branding.

- **Councilwoman Coffey** made a **motion** to purchase those signs and **Councilwoman Krafft** seconded. Ms. Brooks asked about the little sign that says "Home of the Queens Cup". Mayor Becker responded he could continue to put that on top of the sign; he could send that to Mr. Parish to get it repainted; that's cedar and it's not rotting, but it will probably cost a little more. Councilwoman Krafft responded it can't be that much more and it is good housekeeping. Mayor Becker restated the motion by Councilwoman Coffey to get the two signs replaced and get the new sign made for \$2,560 and Mayor Becker will figure out a way without costing too much more to get the other sign repainted. *The aforementioned motion by Councilwoman Coffey passed unanimously as follows:*

*Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill*

*Nays: None*

#### 8. **Consideration of an Hourly Employee to Hand Weed the Downtown Park**

- Mayor Becker explained Ms. Brooks had not heard back from Ms. Taylor; however, we needed to have some hand weeding done [in the park]. We have lost plants to Roundup and we can't let them [Taylor and Sons Landscaping] continue doing that. They can still do selective work, but they cannot go into our beds of perennials with Roundup. Councilwoman Coffey asked if they had replaced what they destroyed. Mayor Becker responded that was going to happen; that's expected. Mayor Becker explained Ms. Brooks emailed Ms. Taylor to see if they want to do a separate little contract on an hourly basis and just bill the town their "loaded" cost for an employee on an as needed basis (several hours a week), but Ms. Brooks hasn't heard back from her yet.
- Before staff had thought of that, Ms. Brooks had suggested that we may want to put an ad in the newsletter and make it a permanent part-time seasonal job. They would be on the payroll, we don't have a problem, because the worker's compensation and payroll would be very inexpensive; there wouldn't be any benefits involved except Social Security. The town could actually have that employee under Ms. Brooks' supervision if the council decides or if we can't get anything out of Ms. Taylor. Does the council think that's a good idea to try? What kind of an hourly rate would they want to offer those people for weeding, plant maintenance (dead heading) during the season? Councilwoman Coffey responded they have some programs in our schools that might benefit from this; Sun Valley

and another school has the Horticultural course and it might be worth asking about before doing this. The town would be benefitting the school. Mayor Becker commented that it would cost the town less. Councilwoman Coffey mentioned we wouldn't have any taxes or anything. Mayor Becker responded he would be happy to do it anyway we can. Councilwoman Coffey added she knew we needed a quick response, some of the staff may be back at work already, but she knew August 1<sup>st</sup> there should be more people that could be contacted about this. Councilwoman Coffey thought that would be the way to go on this versus hiring an employee and having to pay all of the other stuff. Mayor Becker responded he is willing to avoid an employee if we can, but as a stop gap if we can't get somebody next week and we can get Ms. Taylor to send somebody and we pay them \$15 an hour to start doing some hand weeding next week on a contract basis would that be worth doing. It's bad and it needs to be done as long as we are authorized to do that as needed, but try to get a long term thing out of the schools. Councilwoman Krafft commented she thought we would probably have a hard time getting something out of the school right now, because school is not in session, so if we needed a short quick fix, yeah contact..... Mayor Becker continued that statement with "see if Ms. Taylor will send somebody". Councilwoman Coffey responded "I say quick fix, but I am not willing to say \$15 an hour weeding". Mayor Becker offered that he didn't know what Taylor and Sons would charge.

- Councilwoman Krafft asked if there was a scout troop that needed to do community service real quick. Mayor Becker responded he didn't know, but there was Sabrina's girl scouts. Councilwoman Krafft suggested he call and ask. Mayor Becker responded it was just horrible and it is starting to look unsightly; it is out of control. Even though we don't get much rain the weeds don't seem to need any rain to flourish. Councilwoman Coffey commented she would put some calls out as soon as she gets in and see what she can come up with; then people will have time to run down here and look around and see what it entails and they should get back with a yes or no. Mayor Becker commented the council did not need to vote on that aspect, because we are not spending money yet. If we do have to spend a little bit, we've got a maintenance budget where if staff decides that on a one shot thing it's reasonable, they could pay that.

## **9. Staff Reports**

- Ms. Brooks informed the council that Wanda Moore resigned her position on the planning board, so we are now in search of a new planning board member. Ms. Brooks stated she would put it in the newsletter that was coming up and she has already put in on the website.

## **10. Other Business**

- Councilwoman Coffey asked Ms. Brooks if we had Waxhaw Creamery for the upcoming festival. Ms. Brooks responded no ma'am we do not, we have Bruster's. Ms. Brooks was very excited about Bruster's, because Waxhaw Creamery couldn't be here. Mayor Becker commented we thought Bruster's was not going to be able to serve ices, but Ms. Brooks was doing the "happy dance", because when he came he said he was going to have Italian Ices and ice cream.

11. **Adjournment**

- **Councilwoman Krafft** made a **motion** to adjourn and **Councilwoman Coffey** seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:

*Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill*

*Nays: None*

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.
- The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, August 11, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. at the Mineral Springs Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Vicky A. Brooks, CMC, NCCMC, Town Clerk

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Frederick Becker III, Mayor