

**Minutes of the
Mineral Springs Town Council
Regular Meeting via ZOOM
February 10, 2022 – 7:30 p.m.**

The Town Council of the Town of Mineral Springs, North Carolina, met in Regular Session in a virtual meeting via ZOOM, Mineral Springs, North Carolina, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 10, 2022.

Present: Mayor Frederick Becker III, Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Countryman, Councilwoman Valerie Coffey, Councilwoman Janet Critz, Councilwoman Bettylyn Krafft, and Councilman Jim Muller.

Absent: Councilwoman Lundeen Cureton and Deputy Town Clerk Janet Ridings.

Staff Present: Town Clerk/Zoning Administrator Vicky Brooks and Attorney Bobby Griffin.

Visitors: None.

1. Opening

With a quorum present at 7:31 p.m. on February 10, 2022, Mayor Frederick Becker called the Regular Town Council Meeting to order.

Town Clerk Vicky Brooks did the roll call of those present [as shown above].

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Consent Agenda – Action Item

Councilwoman Krafft motioned to approve the consent agenda containing the January 13, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes, the December 2021 Union County Tax Report, and the December 2021 Finance Report and Councilman Countryman seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

4. Consideration of Having the Nonprofits Provide Letters of Request vs In-Person Presentations – Action Item

Mayor Becker reminded the council they discussed this last year and explained it was getting to that time of the year, so Ms. Brooks thought it was a good time to ask if the council wanted to let the nonprofits send the town written documentation/requests for this fiscal year. Mayor Becker noted the council does not know if they will be virtual or real in the next few months.

Councilwoman Critz motioned to accept nonprofits to provide letters as opposed to in person and Councilman Muller seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

5. Consideration of an Outdoor Movie Night at the Downtown Park – Action Item

Mayor Becker referred to the memo from Ms. Brooks and explained he had heard about this last year during his monthly Parks and Recreation meetings. Union County was looking to extend their assistance with movie services. Mayor Becker received an email a few weeks ago, which he passed onto Ms. Brooks. The town would be responsible for promoting the movie.

Ms. Brooks noted it sounded exciting.

Mayor Becker noted he thought there were multiple possible locations on the town property (either side of town hall), the festival side or the kids' play area side to set up.

Councilwoman Critz asked Ms. Brooks if the movie night would be a substitute for the community event or if the town would be jumping off the deep end and doing them both.

Ms. Brooks responded it would be both.

Councilwoman Critz commented she thought the movie night was great, but she was not sure the town was ready for another festival yet. Councilwoman Critz asked Ms. Brooks, since she puts in most of the work, if she had any additional feelings on the festival that weren't in her memo.

Mayor Becker mentioned the festival was the next item on the agenda.

Councilwoman Krafft suggested staying with the movie night discussion first.

Councilwoman Critz stated she would love to do the movie night and asked if the council needed to pick out a time and movie or just say "yes or no."

Mayor Becker responded he would say "yes or no."

Councilwoman Critz asked if the county had given Ms. Brooks or Mayor Becker any idea of how difficult it would be to set up.

Ms. Brooks responded from what she understood, the county would come in and set everything up and the town would just be responsible for advertising and trying to get people to come.

Councilwoman Critz asked if the town would have vendors there for concessions.

Ms. Brooks responded she thought the town would have a couple [vendors].

Mayor Becker mentioned that Seth Pihanich is the Union County Parks and Recreation Activities Coordinator and is the town's contact person.

Councilwoman Coffey asked what the cost was for the license.

Ms. Brooks responded from the email that Seth sent, it did not sound like there was a cost the town would share.

Councilwoman Coffey noted the memo said, "purchasing movie license from SWANK for the movie of your choosing."

Ms. Brooks responded that was under the part of what they [county] provides, but she could be wrong.

Mayor Becker asked for a motion to pursue it [movie night], which could be contingent on that, because if there is a cost, he thought that would need additional consideration by the council at a future time. The council can vote pending confirmation that the county is handling the licensing and the equipment costs.

Councilwoman Krafft motioned that we investigate further about pursuing the possibility of the movie night with the county and find out exactly what the cost may be, and Councilwoman Critz seconded. The motioned passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

Mayor Becker noted he and Ms. Brooks would continue their dialogue with Mr. Pihanich and get the details.

Councilwoman Critz noted she had quite a few blue-ray family-friendly movies, so if the town wants something the county doesn't have, "don't go out and buy it without checking with me first, because I might have it", Councilwoman Critz said.

6. Discussion and Consideration of the 2022 Annual Festival – Action Item

Mayor Becker explained this was the discussion for the council to decide what the plan was for the festival and what they saw as the practical course of action.

Ms. Brooks informed the council that she still had not received an answer from Harris Teeter about whether the town could use their property for parking, which was always obtained in the past. If permission was not granted for parking by Harris Teeter, the town would have to try to partner with the United Methodist Church to pick up some of the parking or to completely rearrange the festival grounds so it could all be done on the town hall property.

Councilwoman Krafft thought the logical thing would be to go with the church and have some type of crossing from there. That is where a lot of the people have parked in the past anyway.

Councilwoman Critz asked Ms. Brooks if this was something she wanted to tackle this year, since she is the one that puts in most of the hours, or would she want to do one or two movie nights to kind of inch her way back into it.

Councilwoman Coffey commented with the Covid numbers being what they are and knowing we have to learn to live with it, but with the inconsistencies with the CDC, the state, the federal government, it was her opinion there were too many variables that are out of our control, and it causes a problem. Councilwoman Coffey personally felt she was not for bringing it back at this time, simply because of the mixed messages that are out there. People are confused and it is too much to attempt to shuffle through at this point. It is in the best interest of the town to go ahead and keep this on hold for now. The town wants to bring it back, but they also want to bring it back successfully.

Mayor Becker commented there seems to be multiple uncertainties: there is the Covid uncertainty, even though it looks to be getting better bit by bit; and there is the uncertainty of the setup and parking areas, the town does not know where that is going to go with the change in management of that property. The town would not need that property for a movie, but we do need it or the church (or both) for a festival.

Councilwoman Krafft commented that Waxhaw did their festival last year and it was well attended. Councilwoman Krafft stated she did not go, because she was fearful of Covid; she is probably one of the most conservative in the group as far as Covid is concerned, but she was game to do the festival if Ms. Brooks thought it was time. Councilwoman Krafft will be in town this year and does have things ready to go for the children's side. Councilwoman Krafft explained she personally does have reservations about Covid, but she would be doing her golf outing on the 21st of September, so "we're getting back to it." Councilwoman Krafft is being cautious with masks and cleaning hands, but she did think it was time for us to try to get back to reality; this is something we are going to have to live with, but that doesn't mean we can't take precautions. Councilwoman Krafft thought by September we should be fine to make the planning.

Councilwoman Coffey commented that it was a short timeframe and she appreciated what Councilwoman Krafft was saying, but the number of variables that we are dealing with as a town, such as the parking situation, and trying to get in touch with these people and do a quick fix overnight. While the town is not bound by what Kroger/Harris Teeter would allow the town to do or not do, Councilwoman Coffey was talking about the amount of misinformation out there and the high percentages of Covid numbers still at this time. There are some serious situations in this county right now. Councilwoman Coffey explained she has been a firm believer since day one that "we have to learn to live with this", but she promised she was not jumping in, because there are too many mixed messages out there; "we need a clear voice, a clear firm voice laying things out, having order and there are too many people that get quickly upset, escalate, beating people up, this is happening, this is real and I will, I promise you, I will not be a party to that, I can't do it." Councilwoman Coffey stated there were too many people suffering/dying; she has a co-worker right now with Covid and it is pitiful. It can happen to anybody, it could happen to Councilwoman Coffey,

there have been an awful lot at her school; almost every day there is an incident that is being reported.

Councilwoman Critz agreed with Councilwomen Coffey and Krafft that we do have to learn to live with it, but that is not really the main thing that is factoring in her decision about the festival. The main thing factoring in Councilwoman Critz's decision is that she is afraid it is a little too much to bite off right yet. The town might want to do a movie night (one or two) to inch their way back into handling crowds and dealing with whatever issues that need to be dealt with in doing that. The movie night would be lesser of a crowd and Councilwoman Critz sees that as a trial run. "At some point, we are going to have to just live with Covid, but putting that aside, there is a lot of work, and I agree with Councilwoman Coffey, we are getting a bit, it would be a lot in a shorter period of time and maybe by this time next year, we would have the information from Kroger or Harris Teeter, or whatever and it would not be as much in a shorter period of time," Councilwoman Critz said.

Mayor Becker commented he noticed the movie nights that the county has available are mostly on Friday nights and he wondered if there could be a combination of the movie with a children's activity afternoon session. The food trucks could get there early, parents could have their dinner at the food truck and then stay for the movie. This way the town can ease into it, not having the whole vendor hoopla and face painting and the Parkwood Band, just a little more scaled back where the town could control the social distancing and the number of people there, with a joint children's fun afternoon moving into the family movie.

Councilwoman Krafft responded she was game with that, but there were two dates she was not able to do anything: the 27th of May and June 10th.

Mayor Becker commented that would be a lot easier in terms of lead time for organizing if the town was able to get a movie date secured by the county. A month or so of prep might be adequate for Ms. Brooks and Councilwoman Krafft to coordinate the children's section.

Councilwoman Critz pointed out the 29th of April was the night before Steeplechase, so the council would need to make everyone aware of that. September 30th might be a better target time as far as time and weather; it would be a little cooler.

Councilwoman Krafft mentioned the kids would be back in school.

Councilwoman Coffey added "Friday night football."

Councilwoman Critz asked if the council wanted to vote on whether they want to do this and then they can hash out the date later.

Mayor Becker responded the council needed to vote on whether they want to do the festival or not. There are a couple council members that have not weighed in on their feelings about the festival.

Councilman Muller stated he was good either way as far as the festival goes and was available to do whatever needed to be done.

Councilman Countryman commented he did not have any problem having the festival, but he is always concerned about the work that is required that Ms. Brooks puts in and whether there is sufficient time to do it. From a Covid standpoint, Councilman Countryman stated it was not an issue for him. The council can vote to have it or not have it, Councilman Countryman would not be upset either way, but he wanted to make sure that Ms. Brooks had the time and support to do what she might need to do if the decision was to have it. Councilman Countryman stated he would be more open to having movie nights in the middle of the summer when it is nice and warm; the movies would have to be held a little later in the evening, but it would not conflict with school or football.

Councilman Muller asked if there was a way the council could vote to proceed with the festival and be able to revisit it before any serious monetary or time investment was done to see if the restrictions will be tighter, lifted, or changed.

Councilwoman Krafft responded it was February, and if the town was going to do it, it is a lot of work.

Councilman Muller asked if the town was almost at the point of no return now.

Councilwoman Krafft responded she would not say "at the point of no return" except for the food trucks; the big thing is the vendors. Councilwoman Krafft stated she did not know about the band part or if the town needed a band, just having the music and stuff. The food vendors are the main thing as far as reserving that part is the hardest part and getting the information out for vendors to start signing up to do the craft show; it takes a little time.

Councilwoman Critz motioned to table the festival for this year and in lieu of a movie night, so that we can ease our way back into crowd management and planning.

Councilwoman Coffey asked about Mayor Becker's suggestion to have the early evening for kids before the movie night.

Councilwoman Critz responded she thought that was going to have to be separate.

Mayor Becker responded it would work either way, the council does not have to commit to doing that. That would be internal (our own personnel). The council can make a quicker decision on that because Mayor Becker just threw that out, he really did not think about it before ten minutes ago.

Councilwoman Critz stated she thought it was a great idea but was thinking the council should have a motion to either go forward with the festival or not and then come back to the combination movie night.

Councilwoman Critz restated the earlier motion, which was just to table the festival for this year and Councilwoman Coffey seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

The mayor and council discussed the dates they were available for the movie night and came up with three possible dates to send to Mr. Pihanich, noting the preferred date was June 24th if it was available. The council will come back next month to decide what they want to do about co-producing a children's activity event that same day if the town can get one of the days that works for Councilwoman Krafft and most of the council members.

Councilman Muller motioned to choose number one, June 24th, number two, July 15th, and number three, August 12th, and Councilman Countryman seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

7. Consideration of Continued Virtual Meetings for the Town Council, Planning Board, and Steering Committee Meetings – Action Item

Mayor Becker asked that the council what they wanted to decide about the March council, planning board, and steering committee meetings. Does the council want to do virtual for these meetings in March?

Councilman Countryman motioned that the meetings remain virtual for the month of March and Councilwoman Krafft seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

8. Consideration of the Deer Urban Archery Season Renewal – Action Item

Mayor Becker noted this item was routine/easy; the council knows what the Urban Archery Season is, and this will be for 2023.

Councilman Countryman motioned to send the Urban Archery off to Raleigh and Councilwoman Krafft seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: none.

9. Duke Energy Update/Discussion

Mayor Becker explained there was nothing to be discussed, he did get a lengthy email drafted to both Martha Wooly and Kendall Blaine (reliability) expressing some concerns about the scheduling of the repair and asked that they get back to him with information/explanations of how that worked. Mayor Becker noted he also brought out some suggestions about sectionalization, some of which have already been implemented, and maybe more would be coming. Mayor Becker has not heard back from his contacts yet but expects to have a final wrap-up on the Duke Power situation for the council next month.

10. Staff Updates

Ms. Brooks reminded the council about the Public Input Meeting on Tuesday, February 22nd at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Brooks also mentioned the updated Comprehensive Plan Draft is on the town website, but if any council member wanted a hard copy, she would get one printed.

Councilwoman Critz mentioned she had not received anything from COG about the meeting tomorrow night via Zoom.

Ms. Brooks responded she did not have any information on COG.

Councilwoman Coffey requested a hard copy of the draft Comprehensive Plan.

10. Other Business

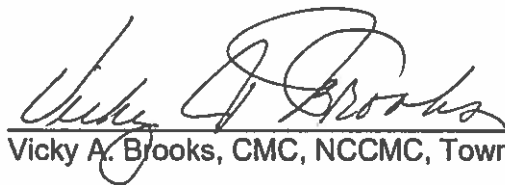
There was no other business.

11. Adjournment – Action Item

At 8:20 p.m. Councilwoman Krafft motioned to adjourn the meeting and Councilwoman Coffey seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call. Ayes: Coffey, Critz, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, March 10, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted by:


Vicky A. Brooks, CMC, NCCMC, Town Clerk




Frederick Becker III, Mayor