

**Draft Minutes of the
Mineral Springs Town Council
Regular Meeting
March 14, 2024 – 7:30 p.m.**

The Town Council of the Town of Mineral Springs, North Carolina, met in Regular Session at the Mineral Springs Town Hall located at 3506 Potter Road S, Mineral Springs, North Carolina, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 14, 2024.

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

Absent: None.

Staff Present: Town Clerk/Zoning Administrator Vicky Brooks, Attorney Bobby Griffin, and Administrative Assistant/Deputy Town Clerk Sharelle Quick.

Visitors: None.

1. Opening

With a quorum present at 7:31 p.m. on March 14, 2024, Mayor Becker called the regular meeting to order.

Councilwoman Critz delivered the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Consent Agenda – Action Item

Councilwoman Coffey motioned to approve the consent agenda containing the February 8, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes, the January 2024 Union County Tax Report, and the January 2024 Finance Report as presented, and Councilman Muller seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

4. Consideration of Accepting the Audit Report – Action Item

Mayor Becker explained that once again he got a last minute call from Kendra Gangal who had another audit due on the 15th and had a lot of work to do on it to finish it, so she had to back out at the last minute. The council has seen the report, which was approved by the Local Government Commission and the auditor was paid. Ms. Gangal asked to be put on the agenda in April. Mayor Becker stated that the council could accept the audit contract by motion.

Councilwoman Coffey motioned to approve the audit report and Councilwoman Krafft seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

5. Consideration of Approving a Contract with Plyler Asphalt Sealcoating Solutions, LLC – Action Item

Mayor Becker explained this contract was to patch, sealcoat, and restripe the parking lot. This has been done twice by Plyler Asphalt Sealcoating Solutions, LLC, and they did a very good job. It hasn't been done for seven years. The price is \$3,956 for the three aspects of the job: precleaning, sealcoating, restriping.

Councilman Countryman motioned to approve the contract with Plyler Asphalt Sealcoating and Councilwoman Cureton seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

6. Consideration of Approving the Installation of an Outdoor Camera System for Town Hall/Future Community Center – Action Item

Mayor Becker pointed out some recent slight modifications to the camera placement proposals and a price from Sonitrol that was in front of the council. Veragy Solutions proposed three cameras for \$6,887 and Sonitrol proposed four cameras for \$8,203.33. Mayor Becker stated that his only question was whether there were other ramifications of cameras. Mayor Becker pointed out there were some concerns about water being stolen; all of the spigots have now been locked, including the ones on the building. There were concerns about the urban campers on adjoining properties, and they are gone. It is unclear if they are coming back. There were some concerns about suspicious activities in the parking lot. Mayor Becker pointed out the downside: what is the end goal, if every time something moves a camera is recording somewhere, when do we review that footage, what are we looking for, that struck Mayor Becker as being a concern. It is not so much protecting the workers here during the day. Mayor Becker explained that video surveillance footage is generally, with very few exceptions, considered a public record across the board. There are very narrow exceptions, nothing that Mayor Becker thought would apply to what he thought the installation would be trying to accomplish. The records retention schedule that the town signs off on every couple of years, is thirty days, it is short state required retention schedule, but that means every thirty days anybody can say “we need you to burn us DVD’s or upload gigabytes of data”, so there is a concern about having to meet a lot of public records requirements. Mayor Becker asked if the council thought it was useful. Everything seems like a good idea at the time. It is not a tremendous amount of money, but we don’t want to waste one cent of tax money. Either proposal could be taken.

Councilwoman Krafft asked what the original thought was behind this, was it just because the urban campers being around and there was some uneasiness about them being around. Councilwoman Krafft pointed out there was an alarm system, so other than a little bit of juice for a cell phone or a little bit of water, was there something else people could steal?

Ms. Brooks responded, not at town hall itself, but she has had neighbors complain that things are going on in the parking lot at night. Ms. Brooks also mentioned that she had witnessed what she believed to be drug deals going on behind the ag center in the daytime.

Mayor Becker clarified where the proposed cameras would be located: one camera would be behind the ag center, one on this corner of the building to cover that corner of the property, and one or two cameras for the parking lot.

Councilwoman Critz asked Ms. Brooks if she had spoken to the police about what she thought she had observed and if any deputies had checked into it.

Ms. Brooks responded that she had not, it only happened twice, and it was different people. Ms. Brooks noted that staff does walk around behind the ag center to make sure that nothing is out of place as far as the back of the building. Staff has not seen anything other than the urban campers had been back there on the adjoining property, because there was trash back there, as well as a tarp.

Councilwoman Coffey felt that it was imperative that there are cameras on this property, most businesses have them these days. Having cameras is safety, if something were to happen, somebody has got something to look at, something to go back to and say this happened at this point in time.

Councilwoman Critz agreed.

Councilman Countryman questioned if someone would be monitoring the cameras, or would they just be recorded and then at some point if there was a concern you look back and see. What are these cameras supposed to be, Councilman Countryman asked.

Mayor Becker responded that both of the proposals would include a phone or PC app associated where someone could log into the server to see the cameras, monitors would not be set up in real time. The cameras would be triggered by motion.

Councilman Muller asked about motion activated lights, because even the best cameras were not going to pick up something in the middle of the night.

Councilman Countryman commented that the infrared cameras would.

Attorney Griffin asked the council what they were trying to accomplish. Are you trying to create security or prevent theft or damage or observe who comes on your property when you are not around?

Councilwoman Coffey responded to create security.

Attorney Griffin asked if a small town like this was in need of security. What are the other towns doing, not that Mineral Springs needs to do what they are doing, but what are you trying to protect or prevent? Are you trying to create a problem when there isn't one by installing all of these cameras and then somebody is going to look at them every month to see somebody has walked across your property. What is the council trying to protect at night?

Councilman Muller noted there was an alarm system in the building.

Councilwoman Critz asked if the video cameras were installed, would the footage have to be retained at a minimum of thirty days.

Ms. Brooks responded yes and that anyone could ask for them, which presents another problem with getting the public records to whoever asks.

Councilwoman Critz stated she agreed with Attorney Griffin, if the town had a problem and the cameras would create a solution, but it sounded like it would create more trouble for staff unless there is a really good reason.

Councilwoman Coffey stated she agreed with Attorney Griffin also, because he never misleads the council.

Councilman Countryman asked Mayor Becker what was the purpose and the benefit of having cameras.

Mayor Becker responded that was what he asked the council and then pointed out when the council had an omnibus meeting of priorities of town hall renovation, park renovation, redecorating, that security of cameras was touched on. Veragy Solutions approached the town and then staff went to Sonitrol for a second proposal.

Councilwoman Krafft commented that she thought it would be a good idea to get a security motion light in the back of the ag center.

Councilman Countryman pointed out that a security light or a camera was to act as a deterrent, but the security light would act as a deterrent at a far greater savings than the cameras would. The cameras are good after the fact to see who was there and what happened, much like the police, the police aren't there to help you, they are there to investigate what happened to you. If a light or two could be put on the back of the building, even one on the corner of this building, it would be done at far less expense in taxpayer savings, equally as much of a deterrent, and if that didn't work, then the council could look at it again.

Mayor Becker commented if the lights were vandalized or shot out, then the town would know it attracted attention, then it would be time to get some cameras on it.

Councilman Countryman commented that he did not see spending \$6,000 or \$8,000 unless there is really a need, that there is something the town is really aware of, and they really want to get a handle on it.

Councilman Countryman motioned to get a couple motion lights (one on the back corner, one on the back of the “haunted house”) and Councilwoman Krafft seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

7. Consideration of Approving a Contract with Blackmon’s Landscaping, LLC – Action Item

Mayor Becker reminded the council that the town successfully had everything cleared out and some major cutting back of brush. This will be a replacement of much lower maintenance vegetation. In the future the council will have to begin looking to rebid the landscaping contract, because it will be a different scope of services that will be required after the re-vegetation. We need to get people who understand what the expectations are, and they are being paid a fair price.

Councilwoman Critz asked Mayor Becker if the cost was reasonable.

Mayor Becker responded that he thought it was and then pointed out that Blackmon’s was the one whose bid the council took to do the major overhaul and their work process was very professional and impressive. It is a well-established firm. This bid is focusing on a couple additional trees, flowering shrubs minimizing the ground level flowers that require so much maintenance, there will be a few, but it will provide a lower maintenance for the landscaping plan for the park and the building.

Councilwoman Critz asked about the fountain and if it needed to be removed, because of the rocks and mulch being thrown in it.

Mayor Becker responded that once he got it operating for the festival, it had been operating with less stuff thrown in it for whatever reason. The water levels were being maintained until it started freezing and it was turned off. With spring approaching, the fountain will be turned back on.

Ms. Brooks noted that may be when mulch, sticks, and rocks, because the children will be back.

Mayor Becker mentioned the new pump is better than the old one in that it has a float level sensor, so that when it runs dry the pump will stop.

Councilwoman Coffey motioned to accept Blackmon’s landscaping contract for the work that needs to be done around the town hall, because we know we are going to be in better shape and Councilman Muller seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

Ms. Brooks thanked Matt Humphreys for coming out and assisting with what needed to be done out here for no charge.

Mayor Becker reminded the council that Matt Humphreys also coordinated the preliminary process last fall as a community service project.

8. Consideration of Appointing a Delegate for the Election of the NCLM 2024-2025 Officers and Board of Directors – Action Item

Councilwoman Coffey motioned that Councilman Muller be elected as our delegate and Councilwoman Cureton seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

9. Staff Updates

There were no staff updates.

10. Other Business

Councilwoman Critz wanted to know who changed the font on the agenda.

Ms. Brooks responded it was changed two years ago.

Councilwoman Critz asked for it to be enlarged.

11. Adjournment – Action Item

At 8:06 p.m. Councilwoman Coffey motioned to adjourn the meeting and Councilman Muller seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton, Krafft, and Muller. Nays: None.

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. at the Mineral Springs Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by:

Vicky A. Brooks, CMC, NCCMC, Town Clerk

Frederick Becker, Mayor

