

Town of Mineral Springs
Town Hall
3506 S. Potter Road
Town Council
Regular Meeting
April 13, 2017 ~ 7:30 PM

Minutes

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, April 13, 2017.

Present: Mayor Frederick Becker III, Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Neill (arrived at 7:34), Councilwoman Valerie Coffey, Councilman Jerry Countryman, Councilwoman Lundeen Cureton, Councilwoman Bettylyn Krafft, Town Clerk/Zoning Administrator Vicky Brooks and Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector Janet Ridings.

Absent: Councilwoman Janet Critz and Attorney Bobby Griffin.

Visitors: David L. Cook and Cathy Reese.

With a quorum present Mayor Frederick Becker called the Regular Town Council Meeting of April 13, 2017 to order at 7:32 p.m.

1. Opening

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

2. Public Comments

- There were no public comments.

3. Consent Agenda

- Town Clerk Vicky Brooks pointed out a correction on the top in the title where it says, "Regular Meeting" it should have said "Public Hearing/Regular Meeting", so she would like to add "Public Hearing". Mayor Becker stated, "we are asking as part of the consent agenda to approve the minutes and those two reports with the "public hearing" added to the title page of those minutes as the clerk has directed".
- **Councilwoman Coffey** made a **motion** to approve the consent agenda with the corrections that the clerk noted, "regular meeting and public hearing" on the top of the report, which contained:

- A. March 9, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. February 2017 Tax Collector's Report
- C. February 2017 Finance Report

Councilwoman Cureton seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton and Krafft

Nays: None

4. Union County Arts Council – Barbara Faulk

- Mayor Becker explained that Barbara Faulk had talked with Clerk Brooks and was a little under the weather and couldn't make it today, so she was going to be moved on another meeting. Ms. Brooks explained that Ms. Faulk asked if the council needed her to come to another meeting. Mayor Becker responded that's up to council if they need to see her, we have her report. Councilwoman Coffey responded the report is good and asked if the council agreed. Councilwoman Krafft agreed the report was good and thorough. Mayor Becker clarified the council wouldn't worry about demanding her back. Ms. Brooks stated she would let Ms. Faulk know and stated that Ms. Faulk apologized.

5. Artists Music Guild

- Mr. David L. Cook thanked the council for having them tonight and explained that he would show the council the highlights of last year's show that they helped Artists Music Guild (AMG) to underwrite/finance. Before the highlights, Mr. Cook let the council know that Ms. Cathy Reese was one of the teachers here in the town location, her school was involved in this event and he will let Ms. Reese share with the council what her experience was with the Guild and how her kids reacted to what it was they did for them. AMG is looking to expand that and do bigger and better things this year. Mr. Cook explained that AMG was involved with Mineral Springs last year with the festival and everything; all of the artists had a great time. They heard from some of the people from the public who said that they really appreciated the artists that AMG brought and things of that nature. Mr. Cook stated that AMG thought they brought a financial value to the Town of Mineral Springs. As the CEO of the AMG, Mr. Cook wanted to tell each council member how much AMG appreciates what they did for AMG last year. Without support it's very hard for AMG to help these teachers and schools like Ms. Reese's that have problems with financially obtaining access to these kinds of programs. AMG wants the council to know what this money goes for; this year every one of these kids walked out with a brand-new book bag, they walked out with school supplies, they were fed, they gave them water for everything for the whole time they were there and for the night of the Heritage Awards (they were taken care of and fed for that night as well). Mayor Becker was at the Heritage Awards and there were 537 kids there from Union County. Mayor Becker mentioned that "our" clerks were there too. Mr. Cook responded yes and they were dressed to the nines. Mayor Becker stated he was in a tuxedo and there was photographic evidence of that. Mr. Cook agreed there was photographic evidence and it would be seen on the video. Mr. Cook showed the highlights of the video and mentioned that he used his own song for it, so he didn't have to pay royalties to anybody else for doing it. Mr. Cook pointed out Ms. Reese's class when they performed on the video with a 76-year-old performer [Frieda Payne] and Clifton Davis who was one of the hosts (he is currently on "Amen" and "Madame Secretary"). After the video, Councilwoman Coffey commented it was absolutely wonderful to see all of those children benefiting from what Mr. Cook does; his work is phenomenal.

- Mr. Cook talked about the town impact for Mineral Springs. What AMG did during the time of the Heritage Awards was that they put internet trackers on local websites (i.e. the pizza place and gas station, etc.) and they saw an increase in web traffic for Mineral Springs of about 42%, which means people from the Heritage Awards were coming and eating at local places, because AMG had artists in this area. They were buying gas here, they were doing things at the school and things of that nature, so they know there was an economic impact to the town itself. During the time of the town festival they also used trackers to see what people were looking at and one of the biggest Google things was Richard Kiser, Mineral Springs. People wanted to come see Richard Kiser; he is a big star. Richard Kiser has been on Hee Haw and the Grand Ole Opry, etc., so we were very fortunate to have him to be able to come here and to be with everyone in Mineral Springs and he loved it too; he had a great time.
- Mr. Cook asked Ms. Cathy Reese if she would come and explain to the council and share her feelings of what the impact was from the Guild, if the council would allow her. Mayor Becker responded please step forward and speak with them. Ms. Reese explained that she left another elementary school in Union County as a regular classroom teacher and was blessed to be hired at Western Union as their music teacher. Ms. Reese got through her first year, got acclimated to becoming a music teacher and was getting ready to start her second year in the beginning of August when she received a message from her principal, Kristi Williford saying that Mayor Becker had contacted her and would like the two of them to go meet with David L. Cook and learn about the AMG and what they could bring to her classroom. When they met with Mr. Cook, he shared information about the AMG Heritage Awards and how her students could benefit from being involved with the AMG, so at the beginning of the school year her Eagle Chorus comprised of 4th and 5th graders began rehearsing once a week in preparation for the show. Mr. Cook went to two of those rehearsals and he and Ms. Reese co-directed her students; it was a lot of fun. The students got to meet someone who was in the music industry, had “question and answer” time with Mr. Cook; it was really fun to see him working with her students. As a new music teacher, Ms. Reese learned a lot from Mr. Cook. The students learned from him, they got to hold one of his Emmy Awards; “what nine and ten-year-old gets to hold an Emmy Award and gets to pose with a celebrity?” It was a big thing for them to realize what impact music can have on real people. As they prepared for the show, the students had to follow a certain dress code, they had to be dressed up, they knew that it was a Saturday commitment and they would be busy all afternoon/evening. The Awards show was a fantastic experience for Ms. Reese and for the students; they could not wait to meet Gene Chandler. Ms. Reese had showed them some videos of him to help introduce him, because they are nine and ten, they don’t know who Gene Chandler is, but once they went home and told their family who they would be singing with, their parents and grandparents knew who Gene Chandler was, so it became more real for them. The AMG Heritage Awards show was aired on television for 17,000,000 viewers, so Western Union Elementary Eagle Chorus was on television for 17,000,000 viewers. There was a beautiful write-up in the Union County Weekly, a reporter interviewed Ms. Reese and Mr. Cook and gave great coverage to Western Union and to her kids. Ms. Reese stated, personally, she is looking forward to having another year with this experience with the AMG and with Mr. Cook; they have already talked about the upcoming award show this November

and Mr. Cook is willing to come in once again and work with her students. In the upcoming weeks, hopefully they will have a keyboard player come in and be involved with (probably) her second grade students, because in her second-grade music curriculum they study musical instruments and they just attended the Fred Ingold Music Festival at Marvin Ridge High School, in which they learned about musical instruments to go along with their music unit. Bringing in an actual keyboard player for the students will be a fantastic experience for them as well and the support that they had from AMG and Mr. Cook has been a real treat for the kids. They know who Mr. Cook is when he walks into the school, they get excited, they want to see him, they want to hug him, it's just a real treat for them, he has become a familiar face at Western Union Elementary and Ms. Reese looks forward to continuing that relationship. Ms. Reese asked if the council had any questions about what impact the AMG has had on the students at Western Union Elementary. Councilwoman Neill thanked Ms. Reese and commented she was just overwhelmed; it's just wonderful. Ms. Reese explained she was really glad it happened in her second year as a music teacher, because she would have been too overwhelmed in her first year. In her second year, she was willing to try anything and anything new and that was the advantage of being reenergized as a teacher and being open to new ideas. Mayor Becker noted that the music program (independently of AMG) has grown rather substantially at Western Union since Ms. Reese came on board and he mentioned at last month's meeting that they did have their "Pirates 2", a second installment of their musical, which was a delight; it is amazing what they are doing at Western Union. Mayor Becker referred to Ms. Reese and commented "it's a testament to you and I think it was great to have the opportunity to get Mr. Cook in there too and really that was a big selling point to me". Mayor Becker didn't necessarily think Mr. Cook would get to double dip with Western Union, because he has a lot of schools he is serving, so if he is willing to partner again with Western Union, "we are doubly fortunate, Mr. Cook". Ms. Reese commented her students are the ones who benefit from it and that's actually what she was going to say, Mr. Cook did attend one of the performances of Pirates 2 and she had 72 students in the cast and for those students to see Mr. Cook walk in with an interest in seeing them perform was just a real treat and a real bonus for them. Ms. Reese thanked Mayor Becker for attending as well.

- Mr. Cook clarified that all of the schools they served weren't all Mineral Springs schools, but they look forward to reaching further into Mineral Springs and affecting other schools and affecting other businesses and things like that, because as they grow, they grow into the community and the only way they can grow into the community is to have the support of the municipalities to be able to do that. AMG asked to be put on the agenda so that they could come and of course ask for funding, because they need book bags and they need school supplies and things like that. Mr. Cook explained that he talked with Ms. Brooks earlier today and it says they are requesting \$2,500, which is actually incorrect, they were coming to ask for \$4,000 to \$5,000 due to their shortage. Last year, they came up short by \$6,800, so he ended up having to write it out of his own pocket. AMG went through all of the people who were partners and they tried to balance it out as to what they were going to ask for from the municipalities. Of course, they will take anything that the council feels that are deserving of. One of the things Mr. Cook was asked to touch on was the partnership that they have with Mineral Springs and what they bring to the table for Mineral Springs. One of the partnership benefits that they

have is (like last year with the festival) the music that was played out there. If you go online and you Google licenses, the minimal amount of licenses will come up. To just get a license is anywhere from \$300 to \$500 just to be licensed with the company, that does not include the material, that doesn't include the songs that you want to get, it doesn't include a performance license versus a playing license. If somebody who is performing a piece of music you have to have another license for that. You have to have a license if you are going to play it on... there is so many people attending; things like that. Mr. Cook referred to Mayor Becker and commented that he thought he found the minimal license. Mayor Becker responded, "the absolute bare minimum musical license, the blanket license, three something per...". Mr. Cook explained that they just dealt with another municipality who got called from Harry Fox and they were presented with a bill for \$6,400 for their festival; they had a hundred songs, they went and they got the bare license, but Harry Fox happened to just have one of their representatives in town and they found out that they were playing Garth Brooks and they found out they were playing Faith Hill and they didn't have a license to play Garth Brooks and Faith Hill, so they got hit with a \$6,400 bill. Under our partnership, the AMG owns these licenses, they have performance licenses, because of the Heritage Awards and things, so anybody that they are partners with under that guideline are covered under the AMG license, because they are involved. It's AMG actually helping to present the program, so if the Town of Mineral Springs was to go and buy these licenses they are looking at thousands of dollars per se to go and obtain these licenses, but they don't have to do that with AMG, because they are in place for the town and as long as AMG is involved they've got the town covered. That is why AMG is asking for the amount of money they are asking for. The licenses are not what AMG is worried about, Mr. Cook is worried about making sure that every one of these kids walk out of there and they walk out... it does something to you when you see a kid walk in carrying their book bag in a BiLo or Food Lion shopping bag, because their parents can't afford a book bag and "as heaven sweet and hell high it will never happen again as long as I'm the head of Artist Music Guild", whether the town gives him money or not, he is going to make sure it happens. Mr. Cook stated he hopes the town will consider giving AMG the \$4,000 to \$5,000 they are asking for, but whatever they do decide to give (if anything) they will be very thankful for and will continue to appreciate Mineral Springs.

6. Consideration of Re-Appointing and Appointing Board of Adjustment Members

- Mayor Becker explained there were two Board of Adjustment members (a reappointment and a new member) for the council to appoint. Ms. Carter is not here, but she's already expressed the interest. The council met Mr. Rutland last month. Mayor Becker asked the council if they needed to say anything, or if Mr. Rutland needed to say anything further or if they were ready to appoint those two members. Is there anything about the terms that they are replacing or anything? Does Ms. Brooks have any technicalities the council needs to know? Ms. Brooks responded no, they will work the terms out. One technicality that the council needs to know is they just recently had a Board of Adjustment member resign and asked if the council wanted to discuss that here or later. Mayor Becker responded "later, that can be a staff report". Ms. Brooks agreed and explained there was one member who had not communicated with her at all on being reappointed and his term expired three years ago, so she was going to say he does not want to be

reappointed; therefore, if the council appoints Mr. Rutland, that will give us four members, so we are still looking for at least five and they also need two alternates to go with that. "We are still short a member and two alternates". Mayor Becker asked if Ms. Brooks recalled the last time the Board of Adjustment met; it meets very infrequently. Was it the gravel exemption for the park parking lot in 2011? It doesn't meet that often, but there could be a variance coming up (it's not etched in stone yet). It's a very infrequently-meeting board. Mayor Becker explained it was simple, reappoint Ms. Carter and appoint Mr. Rutland to the Board of Adjustment. Ms. Brooks has just put the word out that we still want more. Ms. Brooks referred to Councilwoman Coffey and stated she could in fact apply to be on the Board of Adjustment. Councilwoman Coffey responded "okay".

- **Councilman Countryman** made a **motion** to reappoint Sharon Carter and Michael Rutland as a new member of the Board of Adjustment and **Councilwoman Krafft** seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill

Nays: None

7. **2017-2018 Budget – Proposed Departmental Appropriations**

- Mayor Becker explained nothing is that different from previous year, although he has suggested moving a few things around. Artists Music Guild is here and they talked about it last year when Mr. Cook started; it wasn't so much a contribution (it is a nonprofit, they are operating on donations), but it really functions with us more as a partnership, because of the musicians that are provided for our festival and are available for other events (we could have had more if we had had an event for them), the licensing is something that we really didn't know about. Mayor Becker and Ms. Brooks had been talking about licensing, before they ever heard of David L. Cook, because after our first-year festival the topic came up and by the second year they knew they were going to have to do something about it; people are checking out these small-town festivals and are issuing fines and bills for unpaid royalties. It turned out to be something they didn't even know the Artists Music Guild was going to benefit the town for, but it has been a big financial benefit. It is a minimum of \$1,100 plus for music. Just off the top that the town would have to pay out and not have the kind of full coverage that we get, so it's a benefit, it an actual partnership benefit. Therefore, Mayor Becker recommended moving AMG to the special events category under community instead of the nonprofits, because it is a partnership; it is a support entity for our special events. Mayor Becker added that he wasn't recommending an increase in money at the time, because he didn't know there was an increase that was being sought, but he did recommend putting it into that category. Mayor Becker explained everything else was nonprofits and he came up with a formula and recommended putting it as a line item in the ordinance. If the town was going to continue, the formula would be based on 3% of previous year's budget as your figure; it's not a subjective way to come up with that number and put it as a line item in the budget ordinance, so the council can't do what they have been doing, which there is nothing wrong with what they have been doing, it's just that within the community appropriation, the community appropriation would have unexpended funds. We might have budgeted \$10,000 for nonprofits, but there was \$15,000 in unexpended funds in the community appropriations, so the council would just say "let's just give them an extra \$1,000,

give them an extra \$500", it was a little too easy for the council not to have discipline necessarily, so if it's in the budget ordinance as a line item they could still add more, but they would have to do a budget amendment. There is nothing hard about doing that, but it's a step to make sure the council understands that they really have to be committed to increasing our funding for an organization if they felt there was a reason for it. Mayor Becker believed those were the only two changes in the budget presentation and everything else was very close to last year. Mayor Becker stated he wanted to get some advice from council and then mentioned that he did pencil in 3% on salaried employees. Even though it doesn't go in the budget at this time, if the council decided they were going to approve that, they can approve any increase if they want to in the hourly rate for the hourly employee; that can be done at this time in the budget process. Those are the three things the council has to do; determine the salary and hourly figures for next year; decide on whether they want to include these changes; and if there is anything else the council wants to do.

- Councilwoman Coffey stated she was in agreement with the 3% salary, that's pretty standard and that's what they have always recognized; this is still a good thing. As far as the hourly goes, Councilwoman Coffey thought they need to have a standard that they are dealing with on that as far as an increase; hourly people are people too and we need to have base in place for that. Councilwoman Coffey asked why they can't just use the same 3%. Mayor Becker responded that was what the council did last year and have been doing. Councilwoman Coffey suggested making that a standard. Mayor Becker responded, "if you feel that is what we should do"; he does like to confirm that with the board. Mayor Becker pointed out he would make a list of the recommendations and the council will vote to accept them with the changes and the finance officer will present the budget next month. Councilman Countryman explained that he wanted to make a statement about the 3% increase, which he is in support of, but it does need to be noted that this year the cost of living increase nationally is only about 1.2%, so 3% is a pretty significant pay raise. Councilman Countryman knows this because it affects him personally; when you look at Social Security and the Federal Government, his cost of living adjustment is based on the national index, so just from an understanding standpoint 3% is a very fair increase consideration. Mayor Becker replied, as a staff member as well, he does appreciate this board giving staff 3% each year; it is a really generous gesture on the part of this board as a salaried employee. Councilwoman Coffey stated that she believed their people work hard and always have. Councilman Countryman clarified this wasn't meant as a dispute, it was meant as a piece of information. In addition, Councilman Countryman really liked the part about beginning a very defined way to continue supporting all of the agencies they support, because he thought as much as some of them want to be a part of that, that they don't let their hearts speak to the budget; it makes much more sense to be very logical about it and not emotional about it. Councilman Countryman felt it demonstrated that they're trying to be financially responsive to the community and being good stewards of those resources and are not just doing it on a whim, because they think it's a good idea. Councilwoman Coffey concurred. Mayor Becker suggested at a later date the council can also tweak their methods for dealing with the nonprofits to maybe not have as many personal appearances and request more documentation, to get 990's from all of them, so they have a better handle on how their funding is handled

internally; that might be something that the board can do to streamline their process here, but also to give the board more information. The council can work on that over the next few months, perhaps budget amounts in there in advance and say, "this is what you are going to get based on what we see you are doing". Mayor Becker has talked with Catawba Lands Conservancy about the funding levels they have. Margaret Brantley and Mayor Becker are trying to work out a good presentation on how that works and what they could bring back to the town as an additional service. Those are some things that will come in future discussions when the council wants to talk about what they are going to give to individual entities.

- Mayor Becker stated that he was "up-in-the-air" on funding amounts as they move onto Artists Music Guild (AMG) and whether to move them out of donations and into a service partner is a good way to present it. Councilman Countryman commented he thought it was more logical that way and it's more justifiable from an increase standpoint to understand that the community is benefitting directly from that increase as a partnership in support of our festival. To continue the festival without that partnership, the town would have to actually bear the cost of all the licensing fees and without having some type of entertainment you really don't have a festival; you can't even play records. It goes beyond just making contribution to any agency, it demonstrates the agency is giving back, not only to the community, but to our local schools and other schools in the area and support our children. Councilman Countryman thought it was a very viable thing to do and he was all for it. Councilman Countryman asked Mayor Becker what it would cost the town to buy all those fees; realistically. Mayor Becker responded it was very hard to say, but it would probably be a couple of thousand dollars minimum. Mr. Cook explained if you have a 100-song license under ASCAP alone, it would cost you \$1,252 and then you have BMI, Harry Fox and SESAC, so there are four of them; you are looking at almost \$4,500 alone for a onetime license. Councilwoman Krafft commented that didn't include what he is doing with the schools. Mayor Becker added "or the performers at the festival and other events". Councilwoman Krafft referred to moving them under the special events and pointed out that part of that was the festival, but there is also a charitable part, which has to do with support of the schools. Mayor Becker responded the only reason he didn't want to split it, they could, there is nothing..., they could say "well we are going to make this donation, plus we are doing this as a partnership", there is no reason not to. Councilwoman Coffey stated she thought it may "muddy the waters" and it may not be as clear to their constituents; it may look like something is not right. Councilwoman Krafft shared that the only reason she said that was because in her association they do have to have a split; it was recommended by their attorney (for clarity reasons) to do that. Councilwoman Coffey suggested that may be something they need to see Attorney Griffin about. Mayor Becker allowed Mr. Cook to make comments since he was part of this discussion. Mr. Cook shared that the AMG in their Texas location has three municipalities that have done exactly this; they moved them under sort like a technical, a partner with the town, because of what they bring and even though they are supplying things to the schools and things of that nature, the overall benefit was to the town. They are not really looking at what AMG is using the money for as much as they are to what the benefit they are bringing, because in the end of it, it really doesn't matter if they are taking the money and buying book bags with it versus if they are buying music

licenses with it. The town is benefitting, so they didn't ask for anything to be split, they just put them under a partnership. Mayor Becker asked if their legal staff and partners all figured it was okay to do it that way. Mr. Cook responded they put it all to their legal department and everything else and the towns put it through theirs and they came out to say it was better for AMG to just move them out of the nonprofit category and into a line item that showed how it was benefitting the municipality. Mr. Cook added that it could be explained to the town council's constituents, because anybody who came out here and they don't see somebody shutting down the festival, the council can say "well the AMG supplied us with licenses, so we don't have to worry about that". Mayor Becker commented that it looks like they are okay to just keep it in that department, but the question is the amount; he had penciled in \$2,000, which is the same as last year. Special events was \$1,000 and Mayor Becker upped it to \$3,000 with the \$2,000 being earmarked for AMG. The question is, is it worth it for the council to bump it up a little bit just because it is doing great work and the town is getting a good tangible financial benefit from it. Mayor Becker was asked by Councilwoman Krafft what the budget for the \$1,000 was. Mayor Becker explained it was just for other things for special events, if we are having a meeting where we are serving food, that all comes out of that budget thing. This year we had \$1,000 and it wasn't used, but that is the way it is in the budget. Mayor Becker's proposal for next year's budget under miscellaneous special events was \$3,000. After some discussion by the council about believing in music, seeing what AMG does for the children and how they benefitted, the music licensing for the festival and the performers for the festival and possibly other events, the council ranged from \$3,000 to \$3,500 to \$3,750 to \$4,000 as the figure for AMG; the council settled on earmarking \$4,000 to go to AMG.

- Mayor Becker recapped the proposed departmental appropriations discussion. If the council makes a motion to approve these preliminary figures and direct the budget officer to draw up the budget (hopefully we will have enough revenues to meet this), they will be approving it based on the number presented with the following changes: 3% increase in the salaries and hourly; the movement of the items into different categories is approved (the nonprofits and AMG being moved), and the special events amount being bumped up from \$3,000 to \$5,000 (earmarking \$4,000 for AMG).
- Mayor Becker noted for the record that he wrote down \$4,568 for records management, they were doing a 5% increase, so he rounded to the nearest dollar, it would have been \$4,567.50, but when he got the final invoice from them it was \$4,570 (they round to the nearest \$5). When the budget is presented there will be a \$2 difference. Mayor Becker noted sometimes he had to change figures a little bit. If the council is satisfied with the numbers in the gray column with a total operating budget of \$297,120, which is up from \$286,836 and then adding the \$3,000, it will be \$300,120. Councilwoman Krafft questioned the festival budget of \$4,500. Mayor Becker explained the festival itself went up (it's on its own line) to \$5,700. We are at \$4,500 now, which Ms. Brooks has not spent, she was way under budget spending only \$2,881. Ms. Brooks herself suggested taking an entire newsletter and charging it to the festival rather than to the newsletter budget, because it's all festival, which is one of the reasons for going from \$4,500 to \$5,700 was just to bear the cost of that newsletter in the festival budget. Councilwoman Krafft stated we were under it on the festival budget last year. Mayor Becker

responded we were under it and now Ms. Brooks has some ideas and Councilwoman Krafft has some ideas, there will be some more things that will cost, but we've got the money to spend. Mayor Becker reminded the council that the money Ms. Brooks spent (\$2,881) was net; we had a lot of support (sponsors/vendors), which was very helpful and enabled Ms. Brooks to operate well under budget. We are asking for \$5,700 including net of vendor income and including the additional newsletter charge. Councilwoman Krafft stated that she was already working on sponsorship and she thought we might be able to take some of that money and it will cover the additional that we just did. Mayor Becker responded, "we are happy to budget \$5,700 and then the festival nets out at \$2,000, because we got so much income, everyone is happy, that taxpayers are happy, this board is happy". We are budgeting the festival basically as if there were no sponsors and the sponsors just keep bringing that down, as do the vendors. Councilwoman Krafft stated she thought our festival might have more people at it this year.

- Mayor Becker asked if there were any other questions about these recommendations. The council will get the formal budget next month based on these changes. Mayor Becker asked for a motion to include, the 3%, with the movement of the AMG and the nonprofits, the increase to \$4,000 for AMG and everything else he suggested.
- **Councilwoman Krafft** made a **motion** to approve with the 3%, with the movement of the AMG and the nonprofits, the increase of \$4,000 for AMG and everything else he suggested and **Councilwoman Coffey** seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:

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

- Mayor Becker announced this is not adopting the budget, this is the first step of three steps, next month there will be the proposed budget with the revenues and in June the council will have the budget hearing and adopt the budget; it's a three-month process.

8. Consideration of Purchasing New Banners for Downtown

- Mayor Becker stated we have money in the budget for them [banners], so that doesn't amount to anything, because that comes out of capital.
- Ms. Brooks referred to the agenda packet and explained there was a picture of what was currently up, which could be replaced at \$120 apiece. Ms. Brooks asked Signprofx to redesign the banner, because the council seemed to like the other one so much; the price for those would be \$80; however, that would be the size of the Steeplechase banners, which is 2 x 4 (small). The setting could be rearranged a little bit to get it back up to the 2 x 5, but the price increases to \$120. Mayor Becker explained that he and Ms. Brooks thought the Steeplechase banners were awfully small and we should probably stick with the five-foot size. The new design could be stretched down, maybe move the horse down, and maybe add "Welcome" to make it a 2 x 5. Mayor Becker asked the council if they wanted to keep the 2 x 5 size instead of the small Queen's Cup size and if they wanted to go with 14 alike. The current banners were split up and the greens ones tended to fade more. The council has the option of using some of the new design and some of the old design.

They could make them all blue, because the green background didn't have good longevity. After some discussion of which banners to use and whether to mix them, the council choose to go with 14 of all the same 2 x 5 #3 blue banners.

- **Councilman Countryman** made a **motion** to buy 14 of #3, the vertical blue and **Councilwoman Krafft** seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill

Nays: None

- Ms. Brooks mentioned an advertisement she had seen and thought it was a great idea for banners; they could be made to say, "we proudly honor" or say "Mineral Springs honors so and so – U. S. Army", etc. and their picture goes on the banner. We could put them up in the month of July, because November (when you would be honoring them) would be a short month. It could be something that we could have people purchase their own banner (to honor a veteran in the family for example), kind of like what we did with the bricks. Councilwoman Krafft suggested putting it in the newsletter. Ms. Brooks asked if the council wanted to discuss that sometime in the future. Mayor Becker suggested Ms. Brooks make copies of the advertisement to let the council really see what they look like; they are cool.

9. **Consideration of Approving a Contract with Plyler Asphalt Sealcoating Solutions, LLC**

- Mayor Becker explained the town hall parking lot was seal coated in October four years ago. Time has flown, but we had planned to have it redone after all the construction took place and everything got scuffed up and cracks have gotten bigger. Mayor Becker went back to Adison Plyler; his bid this year is \$300 less than it was four years ago (including striping). "We were very happy with his work". Mr. Plyer came out to look at it and gave us a proposal for \$1,565 for crack filling, cleaning, seal coating and restriping. Mayor Becker asked if the council wanted to approve that contract.
- **Councilwoman Neill** made a **motion** to approve the contract with Plyler Asphalt Sealcoating Solutions, LLC for \$1,565 and **Councilman Countryman** seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill

Nays: None

10. **Consideration of Authorizing Town Staff to Terminate the Contract with Jan-Pro and Seek Bids for Cleaning Town Hall**

- Ms. Brooks commented that her memo was fairly self-explanatory if everyone has had an opportunity to read it. We've had Jan-Pro since we came into the town hall; we haven't always been very happy with them; however, the only way that you can stop a contract is to notify them 30 days before our contract expires. It seems to be a really busy time of the year for Ms. Brooks and she always forgets, so she thought she would get "on the stick" this year and ask for approval way before she needs it.
- **Councilwoman Coffey** made a **motion** to approve to terminate the contract and notify Jan-Pro of it and seek bids for new service and **Councilwoman Neill** seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill

Nays: None

11. **Consideration of Authorizing the Purchase of New Office Equipment**

- Mayor Becker explained there were two pieces of office equipment staff would like to get. A desk size fireproof file for the finance officer; Mayor Becker is out of drawer space and the newer computer he has is so big it doesn't fit in his drawers. This was the best price (\$1,155) Mayor Becker could find that includes lift gate delivery (it weighs 350 pounds), which is from Digitalbuyer.com. Councilwoman Neill asked if it would be charged to Capital Outlay. Mayor Becker responded it was Capital Outlay. Mayor Becker explained that Ms. Brooks' computer was past its depreciable life and has had some service problems. Since Ms. Brooks is 100% dependent on 100% reliability, there are some new features that would be coming on that one that we don't have; it is going to a solid-state drive for better reliability and faster speed. Everyone is going to solid-state drives; there is a cost associated with that, but it is where we are going. Mayor Becker noted if the council went over the bid they would notice there is no license for Microsoft Office 2016, which is an additional \$399. Mayor Becker explained they have come out with Office 365 for a user group like ours, which is good for five computers of different users, we only have three, but we could have some additional units; it's \$150 a year for five stations. Mayor Becker thought it would be crazy not to do that; we are constantly fighting the upgrade cycle, we get a new computer and we're getting a new license and we're going from [Office] 7 to 10 to 16. Ms. Brooks has talked to the fire department and they are using the 365 subscription service and it works exactly as we interpreted it from the Microsoft advertisement. Office 365 is separate from the new computer; it's \$12.50 a month if you pay annually. The new computer is \$1,784.84 with tax and everything.
- **Councilwoman Coffey made a motion to approve the purchase of new equipment that's desperately needed for the town hall (fireproof file cabinet, computer and the 365) and Councilwoman Cureton seconded.** Councilman Countryman asked what happens to the old stuff. Mayor Becker responded, "it's hanging around". Ms. Brooks will continue to keep this one as a backup; it's a pretty good computer, but the stuff that he buys really should get taken to the electronics hut at Parkwood, because he buys them used from Dell refurbished, because he doesn't have anywhere near..... Councilwoman Coffey commented Mayor Becker was talking different things, Councilman Countryman was talking about right here on #11; there is no replacement of the file cabinet, it's needed for more storage space, there is nothing going on the lap top. Councilman Countryman commented "the old computer". Mayor Becker responded the old computers, believe it or not we have back to the first computer that we bought, it's obsolete and we could throw it away, it's off the depreciation schedule; the auditors have him handle those that way. They are literally in cabinets here, we have these 12-year-old pieces of equipment that could have their hard drives pulled and sent to the Parkwood electronics hut, Mayor Becker thought. So far, we have not thrown those away, they are just sort of stored. *The aforementioned motion by Councilwoman Coffey, seconded by Councilwoman Cureton was voted on and passed unanimously as follows:*

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill

Nays: None

12. **Staff Reports**

- Ms. Brooks reported there were four nuisance ordinance complaints and pointed out that she had provided the council with an email chain from the first complaint received. Ms. Brooks explained that Donna Sherrin complained and Ms. Sherrin was on the Board of Adjustment, but after these emails were received, she went ahead and resigned based on what she felt was harassment from one of our residents. Mayor Becker commented that the complaint is in the process independent of that resident. Ms. Brooks noted that you can't withdraw a complaint once you complain. Mayor Becker explained that Mr. Ganus has made two inspections and has met with the property owner and their attorney; it's in the process of what they do. Ms. Brooks noted Mr. Ganus has inspected three of the complaints, but she received one on Tuesday, which he hasn't acted on as of yet. Councilwoman Coffey asked if had acted on the other. Ms. Brooks responded he has acted on the first three. Ms. Brooks pointed out that she was in need of another Board of Adjustment member. Councilwoman Coffey volunteered. Mayor Becker explained the only time that board member would have to recuse herself would be if the Board of Adjustment was in certiorari over a town council matter. Mayor Becker commented that would be put on the agenda for next month to approve that Board of Adjustment member.

13. **Other Business**

- Councilwoman Cureton asked if the house of Ulysses Howard was sold, because it was still on the paper as the taxes were due. Ms. Ridings responded that Union County foreclosed on that piece of property and the attorneys are now having trouble getting in touch with the man who gave the highest bid, which is why it is still on there [taxes owed list]. Ms. Ridings explained she was in contact with the assistant in the attorney's office; they usually email about once a week. Councilwoman Krafft referred to the people on the list that haven't paid (some of it is a nominal amount) and asked what goes on with it now. Ms. Ridings responded after 10 years it drops off; by state law. Councilwoman Krafft asked what causes the county to foreclose on a piece of property. Ms. Ridings responded, "someone is interested in purchasing the property and the taxes that are owed to the county, as well as to us, they are the ones that begin that process, we don't". Mayor Becker explained we are not owed enough to make it worthwhile, but the county is owed 20 to 30 times what we're owed based on what tax rates are, so if someone owes us \$100, they probably owe the county \$3,000. Ms. Ridings added "somebody comes in, says "I am interested in purchasing this property", they look into what is due, tax wise, and then they begin foreclosure". Councilwoman Coffey added there are listings at the court house of properties that are up for sale by the county; public listings.

14. **Adjournment**

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

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Cureton, Krafft and Neill

Nays: None

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.
- The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, May 11, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. at the Mineral Springs Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by:



Vicky A. Brooks
Vicky A. Brooks, CMC, NCCMC, Town Clerk

Frederick Becker III
Frederick Becker III, Mayor