

Town of Mineral Springs
Town Hall
3506 S. Potter Road
Town Council
Public Hearing / Regular Meeting
June 8, 2017 ~ 7:30 PM

Minutes

The Town Council of the Town of Mineral Springs, North Carolina, met in Public Hearing and Regular Session at the Mineral Springs Town Hall, Mineral Springs, North Carolina, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 8, 2017.

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

Absent: Councilwoman Bettylyn Krafft and Attorney Bobby Griffin.

Visitors: Charles Bowden, Sheila Crunkleton and Ashley Lantz.

With a quorum present Mayor Frederick Becker called the Regular Town Council Meeting of June 8, 2017 to order at 7:31 p.m.

1. Opening

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

2. Public Hearing – 2017-2018 Proposed Budget

- Mayor Becker opened the 2017-2018 Proposed Budget Public Hearing at 7:32 p.m.
- There were no speakers.
- Mayor Becker closed the 2017-2018 Proposed Budget Public Hearing at 7:33 p.m.
- Mayor Becker explained that the budget would be deliberated later in the meeting.

3. Public Comments

- Patti Lemmond – Mineral Springs Resident/Business Owner – read by Town Clerk Vicky Brooks.
- Charles Bowden – 6409 Pleasant Grove Road.

4. Consent Agenda

- **Councilwoman Coffey** made a **motion** to approve the consent agenda which contained:

- A. May 11, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. April 2017 Tax Collector's Report
- C. April 2017 Finance Report

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

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton and Neill

Nays: None

5. American Red Cross – Sheila Crunkleton

- American Red Cross Representative Ms. Sheila Crunkleton thanked the council for having her each year and updated the council on the Red Cross. 2017 is their centennial year in Union County and they are kicking off celebrating 100 years of service in this community and they are excited about it. They will be doing a lot of things over the next year (all mission-related). Ms. Crunkleton doesn't have the staff to do a lot of things outside of mission-related things, but they've got a lot of volunteers and they are going to keep it very, very mission-centric. They had two chapters formed in Union County in 1917; one on June 26th in Union County and one on July 4th in the City of Monroe, so they had two chapters, so they are kind of a little bit unique in that way. What was going on in 1917 – World War I. They had the troop trains coming through and Camp Sutton was a huge drop-off location for the troops. They would come in and the Red Cross nurses would be there to greet them to make sure that they had something to eat, to make sure they were sent off with family to have a good night's sleep, then they were brought back the next morning to be put back on the trains and were sent out to go to their final destinations. Today, the Red Cross is continuing their service to our military men and women, which has continued for over 100 years. One hundred years here in Union County, but 136 across the country, because they were 136 years as a nation.
- Disaster – the Red Cross continues to serve people; they are there for those family house fires, as well as, for the nationwide disasters. This past year they had a huge disaster in the State of North Carolina with Hurricane Matthew. Ms. Crunkleton was at an event the Saturday that Matthew hit; everyone thought Matthew was going to hit Florida hard, maybe Georgia and South Carolina and it was going to come up on North Carolina and go out to sea. That is not what happened, it came up high in Florida, hit Georgia, South Carolina and put a wallop on the Eastern part of the state in North Carolina. Ms. Crunkleton was deployed to the Rocky Mount area where she spent seven days working at Tarboro High School with Edgecombe County, Tarboro and Princeville meeting some of the nicest people she could ever meet. Ms. Crunkleton got to see firsthand, it was her third deployment on a large national disaster, but this one was unique, because it was not too far away from Union County and it really made her step back and see all of the things that could happen right here in our community. Ms. Crunkleton emailed the emergency management director while she was gone and said, "when I get back, we are sitting down and having a cup of coffee and we are going to talk". Ms. Crunkleton knows we have a great plan here, but some of those things you can't wait until a disaster happens to start your preparedness. Ms. Crunkleton thinks they do well in Union County as they talk preparedness and they make sure families know what to do in case of a fire, but they also need to be prepared for those disasters. We know here what can happen when a train derails. Imagine a tornado coming through - we had an EF1 tornado touch down a couple weeks ago

here in Union County; thank goodness it chose a rural part of the county and didn't come right through one of the major cities.

- The Red Cross is working hard on blood collection nationwide; there is a severe appeal right now for blood. Ms. Crunkleton encouraged anybody who was eligible to be a donor to donate. There will be a centennial blood drive on July 19th, which Ms. Crunkleton supplied flyers for; they are trying to collect 100 units of blood on that day to celebrate their 100th birthday. The blood drive will be at the Old Armory in Monroe.
- Preparedness means knowing first aid, CPR and what to do in a disaster; all of those are keys and are things Red Cross does right here in this community. If you do not have smoke alarms you can call Chief Gaddy of the Mineral Springs Fire Department and he will make sure you have them and the Red Cross will supply them for you, because they want to make sure you have them. Check your smoke alarms, they are only good for a max of 10 years. If you have the ones that have nine-volt batteries you should get rid of those and get the ones with the 10-year lithium battery; they are definitely better for your protection of your family, because you have less than two minutes to get out of your home after a fire and this is best-case scenario, so you want to know what to do and you want to get as much lead time as you can.
- Ms. Crunkleton thanked the council for what they do for the American Red Cross and she mentioned back in 1917 they had these little flags that people would display in their windows to remind people; it's a patriotic thing to do to support your troops through the American Red Cross – join the roll call. Ms. Crunkleton invited the council to join their roll call and have these flags that she was going to leave with them, as well as the centennial blood drive information.

6. Turning Point – Ashley Lantz

- Ms. Ashley Lantz of Turning Point explained she was here to give the council an update; the council has been a great supporter of the work that Turning Point does. The mission of Turning Point is to end domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse, now that they have taken on those new programs. Turning Point has continued to serve Union County as best as they know how; last year they ended up working with 1,043 victims of domestic violence through their program, that is both at the domestic violence shelter and out of the shelter. Those numbers are astounding, they continue to increase each year, Ms. Lantz doesn't think that it's happening more often, but she does think that people are learning about the services that are available in their community and finding the courage to come forward and seek safety at Turning Point.
- The year before last, Turning Point was blessed to take over the Tree House Children's Advocacy Center and the Sexual Assault Research Center and they couldn't be happier about having all three of those programs together. They served 116 sexual assault victims last year in Union County; every once in a while, they get some folks who come across from the Pageland area, because they come to CMC Union in Monroe or CMC Waxhaw, but the majority of those are Union County folks. They had 235 children some of which are from this area, Ms. Lantz knows because they go to school with her kids at Western Union Elementary. Having to listen to their stories of things that they go through in their own homes and knowing that (thank goodness) we have a place they can come to and talk

about that and be able to get some help with all of that makes her heart happy every day that Ms. Lantz goes to work.

- Ms. Lantz explained that she is one of the certified forensic interviewers for their agency and they have had a couple of people out sick and she had to do the interviews today and the stories that she heard when sitting through those interviews impacts her in a way that she could never really explain, but she wants the council to know that the support Turning Point gets, not just from the town, but also from individuals in the community who support them at their events, who come out and donate diapers when they post it on Facebook (they were almost out at the shelter), all of that means so very much; “you’ll never know the impact that has on a family”. Ms. Lantz really wanted to come here tonight to thank the council; without them they wouldn’t be able to serve these 1,500 people in our community.
- Ms. Lantz commented because of Turning Point there are a lot of people that see a light, from a sort of lighthouse that Turning Point shines out, as much as they can, so they can find their way out of those abusive and unhealthy relationships. Ms. Lantz thanked the council for allowing them to continue to serve their community.
- Councilwoman Neill thanked Ms. Lantz for the Waxhaw Boutique, because she donates there and shops there. Ms. Lantz responded she is happily guilty of that as well; she takes bags of clothes there and then ends up shopping the same day. Councilwoman Critz commented she thought the council has always expressed appreciation for what Ms. Lantz does, but it goes so much farther than that, it’s really hard to truly let her know how grateful the council is for her service to the community; it is a blessing for the council to know that Ms. Lantz is there. Ms. Lantz responded thank you; one in four families in Union County are impacted by this type of violence and abuse in their homes.

7. Consideration of the 2016-2017 Non-Profit Contributions

- Mayor Becker pointed out the council had the spreadsheet and noted that he knew there was some concern about either leveling off or cutting back some of our contributions; he has given the council the usual information about what has been appropriated and what remains available. The council is free to make contributions up to that \$13,440 level, because that’s what will be left in the community appropriation after the rest of the bills (mowing, sign maintenance, banners) are paid, which is more than they really need. Mayor Becker just wanted the council to start discussing it in the context of some of the things they were talking about [previously]. As Councilman Countryman had earlier requested, Mayor Becker did get the information on Catawba Lands Conservancy in regard to what was the difference in funding levels. It is a little bit like a lot of those organizations where there really is a \$1,000 level and a \$2,500 level; you are recognized that way. Mayor Becker reminded the council that they heard from Ms. Brantley last month, if the town stays at the \$2,500 level they would provide those three events. There are five nonprofits the town hasn’t accounted for yet: Red Cross, Turning Point, Catawba Lands Conservancy, Council on Aging and Community Arts Council. The council is now in a position to do what they want to do with those people. Councilwoman Coffey asked if the gray areas were in the total at the bottom [of the spreadsheet]. Mayor Becker responded yes and the gray areas are a little lower for a couple of them than they had been; a couple of them had bumped up in the past year or two. The gray numbers are just a base line to give the council a starting point. Councilwoman Critz noted the council takes a serious look at their

nonprofit giving for multiple reasons and had decided they really wanted to hold fast to not expanding and increasing, but also not to drop out of giving altogether. Councilwoman Critz explained the council asked Mayor Becker (as the finance officer) to look at areas where they could possibly cut back a little without harming the support they were giving to the different organizations, as well as the criteria they have set, as a council, to be sure they are taking these taxpayer dollars and putting them back into organizations that are truly servicing this community. Like Councilwoman Critz has said before, she has never met one constituent that has ever said anything to her, but “thank you for being involved in this way”, because they feel like that it’s a good spending of their tax dollars. Councilwoman Critz has never heard any different, it may be out there, but she just never heard it. Councilwoman Critz stated they take very seriously their giving and handling of tax dollars and try to line it up with the community direct and she appreciated Mayor Becker for doing this, because he brought the percentage down a little bit to where they were more comfortable with what they were outgoing. Mayor Becker commented next year it would be formulated a little bit different; they pulled one out and reallocated it and Councilwoman Cureton was very successful at a private fundraising for one organization, which might be another model for the upcoming fiscal year. For now, Mayor Becker thinks they can “juggle the money” and hopefully make what they have spread out to those nonprofits that haven’t gotten their grants yet.

- **Councilwoman Critz** made a **motion** that we accept the presentation from the finance officer with the allocations that are here for us totaling \$11,300 at a 3.4% of our total budget for giving to nonprofits. Mayor Becker noted they have a motion to use those suggested numbers, which he will point out while the motion hasn’t been seconded yet. It does represent slight cuts, even some of these guys, which they will talk about, but that’s the motion that we have right now and is a total of \$11,300 for eight agencies covering this past fiscal year. Councilwoman Neill commented she thought that was fair and reasonable; Mayor Becker did a good job. *Councilwoman Neill seconded the aforementioned motion by Councilwoman Critz.* Mayor Becker read for the record the motion was Catawba Lands Conservancy - \$2,500, Council on Aging - \$1,500, American Red Cross - \$1,500, which is a reduction from last year (it’s back to the two year ago level), back down to the historical level of \$500 for Community Arts (down from \$600), \$2,000 – Turning Point, because that is a midpoint between the \$1,500 and the \$2,500, which was all to juggle the Safe Alliance work, \$300 – Literacy Council, \$1,000 – Western Union PTO and \$2,000 – Artists Music Guild, which is going to be handled as a different type of organization next year. Mayor Becker stated that was the \$11,300 and that was what the motion was by Councilwoman Critz, which was seconded by Councilwoman Neill. *The motion passed unanimously as follows:*

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton and Neill

Nays: None

- Mayor Becker explained for anybody who was cut, they didn’t want to cut anybody, but they really did have quite a bit of deliberation over the course of the year about their nonprofit obligations and he thought the voice of the council was that they really want to do what they can to try to hold on to their core organizations that really directly benefit citizens in our community. Mayor Becker hoped they could

continue to do that and were very grateful for the ones who were here tonight and the ones who have been here previously.

8. Consideration of 2017-2018 Proposed Budget

- Mayor Becker explained he didn't think there was a one cent change in the budget this time from what was proposed, the only thing he did change was that the budget ordinance number has changed from what it was in the proposed budget reflecting the fact that the council adopted a couple other ordinances between then and now, so it is O-2017-04. The total amount is \$343,310.00, which is identical to what was presented last month.
- **Councilwoman Coffey made a motion to adopt the budget as presented O-2017-04 and Councilman Countryman seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:**

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

- O-2017-04 is as follows:

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
TOWN OF MINERAL SPRINGS

**AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A BUDGET
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018
O-2017-04**

Be it ordained by the Council of the Town of Mineral Springs, North Carolina, the following:

Section I. Appropriations. The following amounts are hereby approved in the General Fund for the operation of the Town government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning 7/1/2017 and ending 6/30/2018, in accordance with a Chart of Accounts to be established for the Town:

ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL GOVERNMENT: \$299,122.00		
Advertising	\$1,800.00	
Attorney	\$9,600.00	
Audit	\$4,720.00	
Charities and Agencies	\$9,850.00	
Community Projects	\$24,900.00	
Contingency	\$3,000.00	
Employee Overhead	\$27,500.00	
Fire Protection	\$12,000.00	
Office and Administrative	\$138,546.00	
Planning and Zoning	\$52,956.00	
Street Lighting	\$2,000.00	
Tax Collection	\$2,950.00	
Training	\$3,000.00	
Travel	\$3,600.00	
 CAPITAL:		\$44,188.00
Capital outlay	\$44,188.00	
 TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS:		 \$343,310.00

Section II. Estimated Revenues. It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the General Fund for the fiscal year beginning 7/1/2017 and ending 6/30/2018:

Property taxes	\$65,200.00	
Interest	\$1,200.00	
Other income	\$3,000.00	
Sales taxes	\$263,900.00	
Vehicle taxes	\$7,010.00	
Zoning fees	\$3,000.00	
 TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES:		 \$343,310.00

Section III. Project Ordinances. Capital Project Ordinance O-2014-02 authorizing the design and construction of a park adjacent to the town hall was adopted during the 2014-15 fiscal year and was amended by O-2015-01 on October 15, 2015. This Capital Project Ordinance was amended and closed out by O-2017-02 on May 11, 2017. As authorized by O-2015-01, this project was funded by means of up to \$240,000 in transfers of fund balance from the General Fund into the Capital Project Fund. Total expenditures for this capital project were \$227,796.54, which were funded by transfers from the General Fund during FY 2014-15, FY 2015-16, and FY 2016-17. Since this project has been completed and closed out, no transfers will be made during FY 2017-18.

The Mineral Springs town council may approve additional multi-year capital projects during the 2017-18 fiscal year and adopt Capital Project Ordinances to authorize expenditures for those projects. Such projects may be funded either by transfers from the General Fund into a Capital Project Fund, or through other revenue sources such as grants.

Section IV. Property Tax Levy. A tax in the amount of \$0.025 per \$100.00 of assessed valuation is hereby levied on property within the Town of Mineral Springs which was listed for property taxes in Union County, North Carolina as of January 1, 2017.

ADOPTED this 8th day of June, 2017. Witness my hand and official seal:

Frederick Becker III, Mayor

Attest:

Vicky A. Brooks, Clerk

9. Consideration of an Audit Contract with Kendra Gangal CPA, PLLC

- Mayor Becker reminded the council of the three-year projection that Kendra Gangal had proposed and explained the audit contract was the exact amount she had proposed at \$4,720 for this one. Mayor Becker noted he was very happy with Ms. Gangal's work, she came here and was able to go over the records, being much more "hands on". Mayor Becker was confident that Ms. Gangal was getting all the information she needed and liked the fact that she was doing it that way. Mayor Becker recommended [approving the contract].
- **Councilman Countryman made a motion obviously initiate this contract with Kendra Gangal for last (2016-2017 audit) year's budget and Councilwoman Coffey seconded. The motion passed unanimously as follows:**

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

10. Staff Reports

- There were no staff reports.

11. Other Business

- Councilwoman Critz explained this was concerning the Nuisance Ordinance and she would take the bullet for this one. In addition to the fact that Councilwoman Critz made a commitment to this council to follow through with the Institute of Government on how to re-approach this issue. Councilwoman Critz noted she would try to contact Patti Lemmond to update her with this. Councilwoman Critz called the Institute of Government right after the May meeting to make an appointment to meet with a couple of their staff that deal directly with ordinances and the receptionist said, "you don't want to come anywhere near here, it's graduation and it's Chapel Hill" and she agreed. Councilwoman Critz got back in touch with them and by far the lady that she needs to focus on primarily is Kara Millonzi, she is an attorney and she specializes in working with ordinances. There is also a lady by the name of Susan Austin that Councilwoman Critz is hoping to

meet with. Ms. Millonzi has taken this opportunity to have some personal time off and will be coming back the second week in August. Councilwoman Critz was encouraged by other staff members she spoke with at the Institute of Government to wait on Ms. Millonzi to return; she was worth waiting for. What Councilwoman Critz is planning to do at this point is to have Ms. Brooks fax or email Ms. Millonzi a copy of the ordinance, as well as the emails concerning the complaints. Councilwoman Critz stated she would like to remind everyone here and for public record, as well as for the sake of Ms. Lemmond's concern, they tried to make it very clear when they repealed the ordinance; she and Mayor Becker had talked at length with Attorney Griffin and he cautioned them against trying to retro-fit and troubleshoot; he felt like the only way to really do this right was to repeal it and to start over if they felt like it was doing more harm than good. Attorney Griffin wasn't telling the council what to do as far as their decision on whether they believed it was doing more harm than good, he was saying "if you believe it's doing more harm than good then the better option is to repeal it, go back to the table and see what, if anything can be done". Councilwoman Critz felt, with just a brief conversation that she had with the few people at the Institute of Government that they are going to have options and that this council was going to be able to make improvements, so she will be following through with this in August. Councilwoman Critz has already sent Ms. Millonzi a personal email just to let her know that she will be following up with her in August. If Councilwoman Critz needs to make an appointment to go there to meet face-to-face, so she can talk to several of them at one time then she is certainly willing to do that. Councilwoman Critz stated for the record that "the ball has not been dropped, we didn't repeal this to do away with it or ignore it, this is an attempt to correct an action done with an interpretation that was not intended by this council and to see how we can rework this to possibly prevent future happenings". Councilwoman Critz added they will never be able to prevent everything from happening in the future, but if there is a better way they can do this then they would certainly like to make sure they are doing it.

- Councilman Countryman commented that the council continues to be slammed as a council and as a mayor for their unwillingness to do anything in the downtown area, particularly with some buildings that are in question and have been for a long, long time. The council has had some open discussions about those buildings and the fact that they belong to individuals, they are not public property, they are private property. From that standpoint, at least at this point the council really doesn't have any say in what happens to those buildings. Councilman Countryman has had some conversations with some people in law enforcement and he would like the council, mayor and attorney to take a look at the legal aspect of what can be done to challenge the existence of those buildings and what they might need to do as a community in cooperation with, or maybe not in cooperation with the people that own those properties in ensure that through public safety regulations or whatever can be done legally to see how they might be involved in somehow facilitating the improvement of the downtown area. Councilman Countryman stated he frankly was getting tired of these comments; we've got people that have lived in this town their entire life who don't seem to be willing to do anything to assist except to complain and rather than be part of the problem they ought to be part of the solution. If it takes the town to do it, at some point, if that has to happen then it has to happen and we may need to revisit how we utilize our resources and instead of saving and planning for a community center, the council may need to save and

plan for the destruction of some buildings that are very toxic and that are going to require a lot of effort to be removed one way or another. Councilman Countryman thought the council needed to get Chief Gaddy involved and he thought the community needs to understand these are not just old buildings, these are toxic buildings that are going to require a significant amount of work for their removal by whoever does it; that never seems to come up in the discussion. Councilman Countryman thought the council needed to look into what ways they could be involved although he couldn't speak to the legality of it, but either they have to get the cooperation of the property owners or they have to find a way as a government agency to do what they need to do to remove those from our premise. "They are an eyesore in the community, they are a thorn in the side of a lot of people in this community, they are certainly a thorn in my side, because I have sat on this council for 20 years and I have heard this stuff for 20 years and it's driving me nuts and it's time to either fish or cut bait and get something done", Councilman Countryman said. Councilwoman Critz added to what Councilman Countryman said by explaining "one reason that the council has gone about this so cautiously is there is not one person sitting on this council that wants big government to take over personal property owners' rights. This is a really fine line here that we all respect, so it's a legitimate problem that we are trying to deal with. At the same time, I don't think any of us wants to be big brother crossing over on people's personal property decisions, so it's a very fine line we're walking here. We are hoping, this is one reason we are trying to do it carefully, so carefully", Councilwoman Critz said.

12. Adjournment

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

Ayes: Coffey, Countryman, Critz, Cureton and Neill

Nays: None

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.
- The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, July 13, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. at the Mineral Springs Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by:

Vicky A. Brooks, CMC, NCCMC, Town Clerk

Frederick Becker III, Mayor