

TOWN OF BURNSVILLE
Special Meeting
November 17, 2015

On November 17, 2015, the Town Council, with members Mayor Theresa Coletta, Judy Buchanan, Ron Powell, and Bill Wheeler present, held a special meeting at the Burnsville Town Center. Also in attendance were staff members Leslie Crowder, Anthony Hensley, and Jeanne Martin; town attorney Heather Hockaday; and visitors Robert Branch, Gerald Presnell, Wanda Proffitt, and Jimmy Ray. Absent from the meeting was Councilor Ruth Banks. The Mayor, who presided, stated that the purpose of the meeting was to conduct a work session to consider and possibly take action on the following:

- Economic development
- Branding
- Health coverage issues
- Contract for public utilities
- Employee Christmas luncheon

Economic Development – A group comprised of Robert Branch, Gerald Presnell, Wanda Proffitt, and Jimmy Ray was present to ask Council for assistance with funding for water service connections to a newly-designated industrial site located in a former hosiery mill west of town. Jimmy Ray, speaking on behalf of Winter Star, a non-profit connected to the Economic Development Commission, explained that the town’s application to GoldenLeaf for funding of an expansion of the town’s water line to the hosiery mill included Winter Star’s commitment to provide the match of \$24,470. Mr. Ray told Councilors that they had encountered unanticipated environmental issues with the property, and approximately \$130,000 has already been invested just to get the building ready for tenants. At least \$40,000 remains to be spent on the building, and assistance from the town is being sought in order to keep the project moving forward and satisfy the requirements of the GoldenLeaf grant.

During discussion, Councilor Ron Powell said that economic development incentives should not solely be the responsibility of the Town, but should be shared with the County. He reminded Councilors of new sales tax revenues that are anticipated and earmarked for economic development, and suggested that assistance for this project could come from this source. The mayor reminded Councilors that after project completion, the Town will own the expanded infrastructure and the industrial site will have water, an advantage for both parties.

After discussion, Judy Buchanan moved to prepare a Resolution, an Agreement, and budget amendment to provide a grant for \$24,470 from the water/sewer capital outlay line to Winter Star for an economic development project at the former Ellis Hosiery Mill property. Theresa Coletta seconded the motion. Voting was as follows:

Ayes

Judy Buchanan
Theresa Coletta
Bill Wheeler

Noes

Ron Powell

Branding – Denise Cook updated Council on recent activities to establish a “brand” for our area, which is comprised of two counties, three towns, the Penland School, the hospital system, etc. She described the process, which included the selection of a branding company (North Star Destination Strategies), stakeholder interviews, community surveys, etc.

Ms. Cook discussed the status of the plan for gateways to the town. She said Jack Mackie has been designing, developing concepts, and working with the D.O.T. regulations. Councilors were shown conceptual examples. The mayor said she would like Shannon Peterson, the town's newly elected town councilor, to see a presentation of the proposed gateways before a vote in December.

Contract for Public Utilities – Because the issue for discussion involved a public utility customer, Judy Buchanan moved to enter closed session. Ron Powell questioned whether a public body could enter closed session if the possibility had not been included on the meeting notice. Judy Buchanan then withdrew her motion.

Attorney Heather Hockaday discussed a contract she drafted in accordance with a discussion between town staff and representatives from Mountain Air. Ms. Hockaday explained that title to the pump station is not being discussed any longer because of current ownership issues. She summarized the proposed agreement, mentioning that the term will be for one year with an option for extension, and *Mountain Air Utilities* is being added as a party to the agreement. Other issues remain to be addressed; Council will see a preliminary agreement in December.

Employee Christmas Luncheon – December 17th has been set as the date for the employee Christmas party at the Town Center at 11:30 a.m.

There being no further business, Judy Buchanan made a motion to adjourn, which carried.



Jeanne Martin, Town Clerk



Theresa Coletta, Mayor