

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL ROUND TABLE MEETING OF THE LAKE LURE TOWN COUNCIL HELD TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2023, 6:00 P.M. AT THE LAKE LURE MUNICIPAL CENTER

PRESENT: Mayor Carol C. Pritchett
Mayor Pro Tem David DiOrio
Commissioner Scott Doster
Commissioner Jim Proctor

William Hank Perkins, Jr., Town Manager
Michael Dydula, Project Manager
Dean Lindsey, Public Services Director
Stephen Ford, Finance Director
Laura Krejci, Communications Director

ABSENT: Commissioner Patrick Bryant

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Carol C. Pritchett called the round table meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. AGENDA ADOPTION

Commissioner Jim Proctor made a motion to adopt the agenda, as presented. Commissioner Doster seconded and all voted in favor.

Commissioner Proctor announced the passing of Dick McCallum and provided details in regard to his service. Commissioner Proctor recognized the positive impacts that Mr. McCallum had made on the community.

III. TOWN UPDATES WITH TOWN MANAGER HANK PERKINS

Town Manager Hank Perkins and Project Manager Michael Dydula provided attendees with updates regarding staffing and staffing development, the sewer and funding, maintenance and

technologies, Sunset Cove, the HDD Project, Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) & WWTP master planning, water system master planning, water meter replacement, Firefly Cove water system, dam and funding, drain valve installation, North Carolina Department of Transportation plans for the existing dam bridge, dredging, AT&T cell tower, Morse Park master plan and grants, Green Space master planning, pedestrian connectivity between the Town of Lake Lure and Chimney Rock Village, and Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget preparation.

Finance Director Stephen Ford explained the current status of the County property value re-evaluations and how the County will impact the Town's budget process. Director Ford explained the concept of revenue neutral and the requirements to show revenue neutral. Director Ford also explained how the mill rate will be calculated. It was noted that budget public hearing will take place in June.

IV. PROJECT UPDATES WITH PROJECT MANAGER MICHAEL DYDULA

There were no additional updates from Project Manager Dydula.

V. TOWN COUNCIL UPDATES

There were no updates from Council.

VI. COMMUNITY QUESTION & ANSWER

An attendee expressed concern regarding prioritization and funding for all of the various projects. The attendee added that the fire house is a priority for them as a full time resident. Manager Perkins agreed and noted that he would like to be prepared for future projects, even if they are not a current priority. Commissioner DiOrio noted that there is a hierarchy to prioritizing the projects, citing that infrastructure projects, maintenance of existing infrastructure, and public safety are the top priorities. Commissioner DiOrio added that recreation comes after the top priorities and that that for recreation, the Town is relying heavily on grants and Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) funds. Commissioner DiOrio explained the operations of the TDA and their relationship with the state and tourism dollars. Commissioner DiOrio noted that the only way that the Town can generate recreational revenues is through lake use fees and explained how the Parks, Recreation, and Lake Department has a self-sustaining budget. Commissioner DiOrio expressed the importance of being good stewards of Town money.

An attendee noted past discussions on the Morse Park Plan process and the lengthy timeline for accomplishing the plan. The attendee expanded that the Town will have 3 years to complete the current phase with the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant, but estimated that it will take at least nine years to finish the complete plan. The attendee stated that the Town will have to take time to plan for the green space and will have to acquire funding. The individuals asked if it will take at least 12 to 15 years for a shovel to get into the ground with the green space plan. Commissioner Proctor explained that the Morse Park Plan has been evolving for years, and that there have been many aspects of the plan accomplished. Commissioner Proctor added that Morse Park is updated based on plan details about every two to three years, and that he expects that the

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Green Space would be no different. Another attendee asked if the Town plans to finish the Morse Park Plan before starting the Green Space Plan. Commissioner Proctor expressed he does not think so, and recommended a town wide recreation plan and making simultaneous improvements to multiple recreational amenities.

An attendee expressed that she would like for the Town to consider or at least discuss a community center. The attendee noted that community organizations are growing and need a place to gather that can accommodate the growth. Mayor Pritchett noted that there have been many mentions of a community center and that it would be good for the Town.

Mayor Pritchett read a statement sent from Nancy McNary on April 19th:

I attended the Roundtable meeting last night and found it very informative. It was comprehensive and I certainly have a better understanding about many of the town issues.

There was a discussion about the use of the town golf course property. We have all thought that since this is a centrally located tract of land, that it's logical that it be used for town recreation activities geared to the residents, ...a dog park, pickle ball courts, ball fields and a desperately needed Community Center. For years we had town Pot Luck Suppers in what is now is the Chamber building, we had ball parks where the children had Little league sports teams sponsor by local groups. That area is now the parking lot for the Marina. For years many various civic and social groups met in the back room of the old golf club house. It was where the Lake Lure Bridge Club met. And other civic groups held meetings there. It wasn't until the town stopped operating the golf course and leased it out that it was remodeled in to the one big room needed for retail sales and it was no longer available to be used for civic gatherings.

In making plans for the land use of the old golf course, I would appreciate you all giving some thought to adding spaces for the residents to gather and share fellowship and activities with their friends and neighbors

Commissioner Proctor explained that the existing Welcome Center used to be a community center. Commissioner Proctor also noted that he had been visiting other current and former municipal golf course and noticed that the former Highlands Lake Golf Course, which is now the Park at Flat Rock, is a great example of how a former golf course can be transformed. Project Manager Dydula stated that the Town has to prioritize infrastructure projects, but these projects can take many years to complete, so the Town must continue to improve the community in the meantime.

An attendee asked how far the sewer HDD pipes will be from the dam. It was noted that they will be 24 feet to the dam. The resident asked why a different location is needed for the new WWTP. Project Manager Dydula explained that the Town and Schnabel Engineering are in the process of determining if the current location can house the new WWTP, but new regulations such as flood zone restrictions have been established since the current plant was built and the Town must ensure that the current location abide by any regulations.

An attendee asked for a cost estimate for the WWTP and it was noted that an engineering report estimated \$52 million. The attendee noted a similar project that costed over \$90 million.

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The attendee about a projected end date for the collection system and Project Manager Dydula estimated five to six years. The attendee asked if the lake will be lowered each year and it was noted that the Town will only drain the lake when needed. The attendee asked when the lake would be lowering it each draw down year. Commissioner DiOrio expressed that the framework with contractors is about five months, noted it takes longer for the lake to actually get back to full pond, and that the Town is trying to develop a concept that allows the lake to begin filling up while allowing contracts to continue to work during the five month period. The attendee noted unintended consequence such as shoreline structure.

An attendee asked if there are any plans for the ABC property. Commissioner Doster explained that the Town is looking into plans and Council wants to ensure the best use for that property.

An attendee noted the financial consequences of lowering the lake and expressed the importance of strategic drawdowns. Council members agreed. Commissioner Proctor noted that the Council is very mindful of being precise and concise with drawdowns. The attendee suggested that they are very familiar with various lake operations and that they have some equipment that they are willing to donate.

An attendee asked if there is capacity to bring in additional equipment and workers on the lake bed during drawdowns to be more efficient. Project Manager Dydula explained that the Town cannot ensure that contractors can increase their workforce due to shortage, qualifications, and other issues. Project Manager Dydula added that the Town has asked the contractor, Ruby Collins, to try to increase their crews.

An attendee asked if there is any thoughts as to shift crews from sewer and dam between drawdowns. The attendee expressed that they think there this might increase incentives in order to obtain more crews. Mayor Pritchett noted the WWTP and dam valve installation will not require a drawdown. Project Manager Dydula noted that there are specialist contractors that would not be able to work on both dam and sewer, but the Town could look into shift crews if an opportunity presents itself.

Another attendee suggested housings crews in local bed and breakfasts.

An attendee noted that they had learned a lot by watching operations. The attendee also noted that when they first moved to Lake Lure, they thought that it may have been a mistake because of the infrastructure issues. The attendee thanked Council for making progress on these and asked for them to continue to keep the residents in mind.

Commissioner DiOrio explained that the mobilization and de-mobilization that took place in the recent drawdown was a learning experience and that the Town understands the importance of a good working relationship with the contractors. Commissioner DiOrio noted that the Town is evaluating how to improve process in the next drawdown. Commissioner DiOrio added that the Town's strategy is to have multiple projects in progress per drawdown and complete as much as work as possible with available funding and permitting.

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An attendee noted that if there another big flood event, it will flush the major sediment build up in the same manner that it did in 1996 when the Town had to complete the big dig. Mayor Pritchett noted that dredging is a major project that will be ongoing forever.

Mayor Pritchett noted the drawdown schedule is usually determined in June. An attendee recommended that Council gauge the rising of the lake and share the findings with residents.

An attendee asked about state agency involvement in the major project and how they have created barriers. Commissioner DiOrio cited relations with North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and Fish and Wildlife. Commissioner Doster added that the State Historic Preservation Office has delayed the cell tower. The attendee asked how the state senators are helping and Commissioner DiOrio answered that the Town has a great relationship and communication with state officials. The attendee asked if the Council think that the census underestimates the Town's size. Mayor Pritchett noted that the Town's census numbers increased and many other locations did not increase. Mayor Pritchett also noted that it depends on how many people participate in the census.

An attendee asked if the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is the reason that the Town is not operating a hydroelectric plant in the new dam and noted that there are ways to avoid some FERC regulations. Commissioner DiOrio explained that the dam design is going to allow for a hydroelectric plant to be installed, but it is not yet decided if it will be utilized.

An attendee asked if there will be excavation dredging in the next drawdown. Project Manager Dydula answered that he is in the process of soliciting bids for dredgers and that he hopes to accomplish this in the next drawdown.

An attendee questioned how the community can create money and expressed that if the Town has opportunities to increase revenues, they should do so. The attendee shared their thoughts on the green space and applauded the Council for how they are addressing the Green Space and golf course proposal. The attendee that proponents of the golf course proposal have expressed that the Town should approve the proposal because it will take time to accomplish other plans and questioned what would happen if the proposal firm started the project and quit without finishing the project, which would create expenses for the Town. The attendee mentioned that one of the firm's requests is a 10 year lease and expressed that it is ludicrous. The attendee added that they are a business owner who is experienced in taking risks and expressed major concern with firm's request for \$1 rent if the green space is leased to them rather than fair market price.

An attendee detailed their past experiences with the YMCA initiatives and struggles with covering ongoing expenses. The attendee noted that they understand that the golf course proposal firm has good intentions, but recommended that if they do begin operating a golf course, they should require three to five year memberships to cover ongoing expenses.

An attendee expressed that Lake Lure is a tourist community and that the Town is competing with other tourist communities. The attendee expressed that master plans cost money and that some of that money could be spent improving the existing Town amenities, instead. The attendee noted that the Chamber would like to help, but there are some small expenses that could

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be utilized to improve the Town rather than paying for master planning. Mayor Pritchett thanked the attendee and asked Manager Perkins to detail some the initiatives that the Town is taking to make improvements to existing Town assets. Manager Perkins detailed that the Town had painted Town Hall, pressure washed sidewalks and courts, and is currently in the process of rehabilitating the tennis court. Manager Perkins added that the Town also re-painted the gazebo, re-mulched and re-planted, and that hanging baskets should be visible within the next two to four weeks. Manager Perkins agreed with the need to enhance and maintain curb appeal.

An attendee mentioned that some individuals are unaware of what the Town does and does not own, and that some individuals assume that the Town owns the Arcade Building which is in need of major improvements. Mayor Pritchett explained Town Center.

Another attendee expressed that the community can work towards improving the community as well, through volunteer work.

It was noted that the Chamber had previously proposed the formation of a beautification committee, which incorporates Town staff input.

An attendee, the ABC Board Chair, asked that the community have patience with the ABC Store as they transition to a new store location.

An attendee noted that he had heard about a presentation regarding the firm proposing the golf course revival and asked for the status of the proposal. Manager Perkins explained that the Town is hoping to receive additional information from the firm and noted that it is a big decision and options are being weighed. Another attendee noted that Luke Davis, the proposer, had additional information and would like to set up a meeting with Council to share it. The original attendee expressed they would like to see some progress on something.

Another attendee expressed that they would also like to see progress made by the Town and that they have been waiting 16 years for a dog park.

Manager Perkins explained the firm's request for a lease exceeding 10 years and that it would be a long process and it might take a long time to arrange.

An attendee suggested a disc golf course on the Green Space property. Commissioner DiOrio noted that the Green Space can be used as a disc golf course, as is, and it would not take long to set up a course. The attendee expressed that they would like for a disc golf course to remain on the space year round. The attendee also expressed concern regarding the cell tower and lack of cell service hindering public safety, especially on the lake. The attendee recommended setting up CV radio systems as an interim solution. Mayor Pritchett explained that the Town had continuously expressed to the state that the lack of service is a public safety issue and added that this is an extremely important issue. Commissioner Doster suggested the Town can contact AT&T about possible interim solutions until the tower is constructed. Commissioner Doster added that because of delays through SHPO, AT&T rolled the project into their future budget which should take place in the first quarter of the next calendar year. Commissioner Doster noted that the Town has

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increased training for Law Enforcement on the lake and that the lake should be increased patrol on the lake this year.

An attendee noted that Bills Creek recently held a CPR class and that the EMS at the class shared that even when cell service is not available, 911 calls should always go through. Mayor Pritchett recalled the tragedy involving a drowning in the Broad River last year and the issues that were experienced with multiple agencies call re-routing. Commissioner Proctor recalled a recent occurrence with calling 911 and it not working. An attendee noted that in the past, Lake Lure Tours had radios and that they were advised to stop and check on boaters that seemed to be in distress. Commissioner DiOrio added that per Lake Use Regulations, all individuals on the lake must help other boaters in distress.

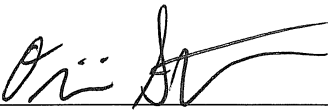
An attendee noted the County's request to the state regarding the property value re-evaluations and asked if the County had received any updates. Mayor Pritchett explained that the County passed a resolution in 2019 to conduct re-evaluations every four years and that they are now hoping to postpone this year's re-appraisals which would conflict with their former resolution. Mayor Pritchett added that the state had not made any decisions and that the County's request was submitted past the deadline for a local bill. Mayor Pritchett explained that if the state does not uphold the request, the current re-evaluation numbers will stand. Director Ford noted that the County is preparing their budget as if the bill does not pass.


VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pritchett thanked all in attendance.

With no further business, Commissioner Doster made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Commissioner DiOrio seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

ATTEST:


Olivia Stewman, Town Clerk


Mayor Carol C. Pritchett

