



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN
OF LAKE LURE ABC BOARD**

MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2024
3:30 P.M.

THIS MEETING WAS HELD AT LAKE LURE TOWN HALL.

Present: Richard Sayles, Chair
Bob Cassano, Vice Chair
Peter O'Leary, Board Member

Trent McGuire, Store Manager
Rhonda Cook, Accountant

Absent: Trace Boswell, Board Member
Esther Lusk, Board Member

Others Present: Mayor Carol C. Pritchett (Filling in as Town Council Liaison)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Richard Sayles called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

II. AGENDA ADOPTION

Mr. Bob Cassano made a motion to adopt the agenda, as presented. Mr. Peter O'Leary seconded. All board members voted in favor.

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

There were no conflict of interest.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 18, 2023 REGULAR ABC BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Cassano a motion to approve the December 18, 2023 minutes, as presented. Mr. O'Leary seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

V. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. ***Make a Recommendation to Town Council Regarding Board Member Appointment***

The Board recommended re-appointing Mr. Peter O'Leary.

B. ***Update on Garbage***

Mr. McGuire explained that he heard back from Hope Wittmer who informed him that she would charge the store \$226 per month to use her dumpster. Mr. McGuire detailed that after receiving this information, it is his plan is to remain using the current dumpster and figuring out a solution to managing garbage. Ms. Cook noted that she heard that there is a new garbage services company around the area. Mr. McGuire stated that the store will use the current dumpster until they can get a larger one. Chair Sayles asked if anyone would haul the garbage Bills Creek Convenience Center or noted that the store could use his dumpster until the peak season begins. Mr. McGuire reiterated that he will manage it until there is a better solution. Mr. McGuire noted that he thinks that the best solution is to build a lock box behind the store. Chair Sayles explained his issues with having to rebuild boxes due to bears damaging them. Mr. O'Leary explained that Chimney Rock Village's new garbage cans were purchased for \$1200 each and they come from the same company that Chimney Rock State Park uses. Mr. McGuire noted that regardless of the type of dumpster the store gets, the garbage services company will need quick access. Mr. O'Leary stated that he will send link for the trash bins that Chimney Rock Village purchased.

C. ***Update on Windows***

It was detailed that the store got new windows with the correct type of tempered glass and that they put boards up on the inside. Mr. McGuire asked the board how to cover the windows from the outside so the boards are not visible. Mr. McGuire added that the landlord can paint the glass, tint it for \$900, or install curtains. It was noted that the current plywood doesn't look great. Board members recommended that the landlord paint the glass black.

D. ***Discuss ABC Store Operations***

Mr. McGuire noted that Chair Sayles needs to complete the required ABC Ethics training and that he will send him link.

Mr. McGuire reported that the store is completely staffed right now. It was noted that two part-timers were hired recently and that they seem to be a good fit. Mr. McGuire added that two individuals are on retainer.

It was noted that there was not a truck delivery today.

Mr. McGuire explained that store employees received shirts in the past and recommended that the store switch to aprons. Mr. McGuire further explained that aprons are \$17 and the shirts are \$40. Mr. McGuire added that another benefit is that employees can wear their choice of attire with the apron over it. Mr. McGuire expressed that he thinks aprons would look nice. Board members expressed support for switching from shirts to aprons. Mr. McGuire explained that the aprons will stay in the store after shift to prevent any issues people not returning uniforms when they leave.

Mr. McGuire reported that the store recently switched to Spectrum internet and ridded of PANGAEA and AT&T. It was detailed that this switch decreased the monthly costs from \$255 to \$78 dollars. Mr. McGuire expressed satisfaction with the amount of time it took Spectrum to get the internet up-and-running. Mr. McGuire noted that the store has a battery backup through Spectrum, which will allow them to use the registers when the power is out. Mr. McGuire expressed that he would like to look into having another battery backup on the computers. Ms. Cook stated that she received the first bill from Spectrum bill and noted that she can set up auto payments, but Mr. McGuire must download invoices for bank statements.

Mr. McGuire informed the Board that there is an upcoming general managers' meeting in Greenville, NC. It was detailed that the registration fee is \$200. Mr. McGuire expressed that he would like for Assistant Manager Patricia Crain to attend the managers' meeting in the fall. Chair Sayles expressed that he thinks that it would be great for both of them to attend as long as the store is covered.

It was noted that Mr. Quinn Woolard with the ABC Commission sent a 702T Form and Ms. Cook completed it and submitted it.

E. Review Financial Report

Ms. Cook explained that she sent Board members the financial report via email and did not receive any questions. It was noted that there was a profit for the year. Ms. Cook reported that she paid the Town a portion of its payment, but will have to pay more next quarter. Mr. McGuire asked about including a computer for the Assistant Manager in the budget and it was determined that this will not be done at this time. It was noted that the fiscal year is almost half way over. Board members discussed that there was not a profit in past years due to penalties. It was further discussed that there are still some penalties that the Board continues to receive letters about, but Ms. Cook has sent payments and has attempting to get in contact with the state to inform them of this. Ms. Cook stated that she has been metering the mail for proof and that it is unfortunate that these specific documents cannot filed online. Mr. Cassano expressed that he feels that the profits are lower than he expected. Mr. O'Leary noted that there are expenses that occurred this year that will not occur next year, so the next budget should include greater profits.

Chair Sayles noted that the Board should begin discussions in regard to moving the store to be located in the Ingles plaza. It was noted that this will not be accomplish for at least four years, but the Board should begin planning. Mr. Cassano recommended that a good

first step is to speak with managers for ABC stores that are located next to Ingles plaza. Mr. O'Leary asked if Mr. McGuire can informally conduct a survey as to where the store's customers are visiting from. Mr. McGuire noted that a lot of people drove to the store on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day because other stores were closed. Mr. O'Leary expressed that having the store located by Ingles would be beneficial because people use the Ingles for all of their grocery shopping when visiting the area. It was noted that it would also be beneficial because Ingles is located adjacent to Hwy 9, Hwy 64, and Hwy 74, and Rumbling Bald. Mr. Cassano explained that when he managed Ingles, he had a stick pin map of where customers mentioned they were from. Mr. O'Leary noted that the only pushback that he could see coming from the move to Ingles is most of the restaurants being further away. It was noted that many restaurants go to Ingles to get items anyways, so it should not be an issue. Mr. Cassano noted that he will get a contact with Ingles' real estate and hold discussions with them about other stores that are located in Ingles plazas. It was noted that there is a loading dock on the back of Ingles, which will be necessary. Mr. McGuire noted that whatever they plan for should include a loading dock. Mr. Cassano stated that he would try to speak with Ingles prior to the next meeting and Chair Sayles stated that he is happy to help with coordinating discussions with Ingles.

Ms. Cook noted that the auditor's company is merging with another company and asked if everyone has Terryjean Moody's contact information. Mr. McGuire asked if this will impact the costs of their auditing services and Ms. Cook expressed that she is not certain if it will or not. Ms. Cook noted that Ms. Moody has done the store's audit for a long time and that many companies charge higher rates.

Mr. McGuire noted that employees are still punching in their time and expressed that there is a great crew right now.

Mr. McGuire noted that sales were up 4% from last December.

Ms. Cook asked if she can email the financial reports rather than attending meetings during tax season. Board members agreed that this would be acceptable. It was noted that Board members will email Ms. Cook with any questions they have ahead of the meeting and will discuss them during the meeting.

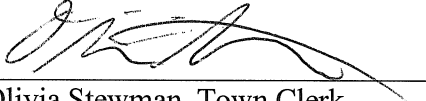
Chair Sayles noted that Lured Market had a whiskey tasting recently and that it turned out well. Mr. McGuire noted that it really did not impact the store, but the in-store tastings have gone very well. Mr. McGuire noted that there have been a lot of canned drink purchases and recommended having those companies attend the store to hold a tasting.

Mayor Pritchett expressed that the Council is thrilled with the improvements that have been made. Mr. McGuire expressed that the Board members are great.

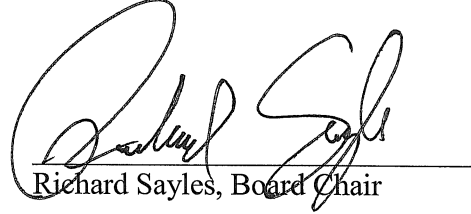
VI. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Mr. Cassano made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. O'Leary seconded and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

ATTEST:



Olivia Stewman, Town Clerk



Richard Sayles, Board Chair