

TOWN OF NEWLAND  
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING

April 5, 2022

6:00 PM

**PRESENT:**

**MAYOR:** Derek Roberts

**ATTORNEY:** Dean Grindstaff

**ALDERMAN:** Kenny Caraway, James C. Johnson, Lauren Turbyfill (via zoom), Gail Haller,  
Christie Hughes

**GUESTS:** Clara Dickson, Ken Walker, Glenn Johnson, Lois B. Johnson, Dale Sleight,  
Patricia Young, Bobbie Grammar, Anne Winkelman, Edward Dean, Kenan Foxx,  
Teresa Foxx, Dena Morris, Cindy Aldridge, Kyler Johnson, Daryl Smith,  
Neal Falvery (Avery Journal)

**STAFF:** Chief Byron Clawson, Sandy Lewis, Jessica Buchanan

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The Mayor then led the audience in the Pledge to the American Flag.

Dena Morris spoke to the Board members about her sewage line and the issues she has been having. Ms. Morris is tapped on with two other individuals, however her line is the main one. Damage was done to the line when a neighbor brought in a backhoe to do some work after flooding had occurred in the area. Ms. Morris does pay for water and sewer through the town and the Mayor mentioned tapping her into the main street. The town will provide the tap, and then the plumber will take care of everything else. James made a motion to waive the single tap fee for Ms. Morris. Gail seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

Glen Johnson came to the Board members with a few things he wanted to discuss with them. Mr. Johnson asked if the town had hired any employees for the public works department. The Mayor stated we have three now and trying to hire a public works supervisor. Mr. Johnson voiced his concern about all the trash and abandoned vehicles he sees throughout the town. He asked the board if they had the authority to do anything about this. James asked Chief Clawson if he could stop by the individual's home and speak with them first. If that doesn't help, then the town can send letters out to the individuals. Mr. Johnson was not feeling well and stated he needed to sit down. James made a motion to let Mr. Johnson rest and continue speaking later during the meeting. Christie seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

James made a motion to adopt the agenda. Gail seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

James made a motion to approve the minutes from the March meeting. Gail seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

Chief Byron Clawson gave the police report. Chief Clawson went over notable calls. Officer Lazlo assisted in two drug arrests. Chief Clawson stated he had ordered the equipment the department needed with the GCC grant. James asked Sandy if there was enough in the budget for two openings for the police department. Sandy stated yes. Chief Clawson will be meeting with someone soon to hopefully fill one of the positions.

Sandy Lewis gave the finance / town administrator report. We received the 2021 SPAR report, which is our review for the treatment plant. The treatment plant did very well this past year and had no violations. Sandy gave the finance report. When we received the ARP funds, they were put in the general fund account. They need to be moved into a separate account. James made a motion to open a separate account for the ARP funds. Christie seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

Mr. Johnson left the meeting due to not feeling well.

The Mayor opened the floor for public comments. The Mayor said he agreed with what Mr. Johnson said and asked how we go about cleaning up the town. James mentioned possibly looking into buying our own street sweeper. And/or creating a community 'beautification' committee. The Mayor stated he would speak to the mayor of Banner Elk to see if we could borrow their street sweeper.

Ms. Dickson has several questions. She said she pays more town taxes than county taxes and asked where her tax money is going. James stated she gets 24/7 police protection. Ms. Dickson stated the town used to provide trash pickup and does not anymore. She told the board members they really need focus on the issues the town has and resolve them. The Mayor asked the board what they needed to do to act quickly, instead of prolonging these issues out for 6 months to a year.

Ms. Dickson stated she had asked one of the employees from the public works department to look at a hole on her street. The employee who looked at the hole told her it was on her driveway. Mayor Roberts said he would come by to look at it the next day. Mayor Roberts asked when the board could have a special meeting to discuss some of the issues and come up with resolutions. Christie stated she did not think a special meeting was needed; the town just needed to make some phone calls. Lauren mentioned speaking to Autumn McNay, who paints the tunnels at the Riverwalk, about helping with a beautification committee. We could also use some people who are willing to help throughout the community. James stated changing out the lightbulbs and cleaning out the gutters fall back on our public works department, but understands we are shorthanded. After discussion the board agreed to move forward with upgrading the streetlights and Christmas lights. James asked Sandy to get a catalog to look at different streetlight options and upgrading our Christmas lights.

Ms. Dickson stated her husband was on the town board years ago. She stated she thought the town had just gotten worse over the years. She said the board members needed to work together for the citizens of Newland. The Mayor told Ms. Dickson they are working with several individuals who own different pieces of property throughout the town to improve the way the town looks. The Mayor stated he is working with Anna from Banner Elk to move different festivals to the town as well.

Bobbie Grammar is not officially a citizen of Newland; however, she lives in the Mountain Top community. She said she wrote a letter to the board several months ago because the gentleman who owns most of the lots in Mountain Top was interested in doing a spot annexation. She explained most of the citizens who lived there were not interested in doing the spot annexation. The Mayor stated he and James met with Phillip Barrier about how they could obtain County funds for the annexation. When they met with him, they spoke about all of Mountain Top being accessible. Mrs. Grammar asked if anything changed that we would contact them. James said we would contact them because they would have to come in and sign legal documents if something like this was to go through. She said if they have working water and sewer, they are not interested in doing this.

Teresa Foxx and her son moved to Newland last year. She is very disappointed with all the trash she sees throughout the town as well. She said she would like to be involved in some of the beautification process and is very excited to hear about this committee. She said she hopes the Board will take quick and proper action. Ms. Foxx stated she has very strong ideas and would like to participate on the beautification committee. James made a motion to close public comments. Gail seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

Christie made a motion to accept the sealed mow bids. James seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye. The Town Clerk passed around the two bids that were turned in. Kenny made a motion to excuse James from voting since he works part time with one of the bidders. Christie seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye. Attorney Grindstaff went to another room to read both bids off to Lauren since she was unable to physically attend the meeting. Lauren had some questions for Kyler Johnson and his bid. She asked if he and his company would be willing to do all the other things mentioned in the contract other than mowing, such as weed eating, leaf pick up, edging, etc. Kyler stated yes. They were going to go around with the public works department to make sure they would take care of everything that needed to be done. Attorney Grindstaff asked if he had an insurance policy he could provide. Kyler stated yes. Kenny asked the Mayor if Kyler worked for him. The Mayor stated yes. The Mayor stated he was not bidding on the mowing contract, Kyler was. The Mayor said he cleared it with Attorney Grindstaff before Kyler submitted the bid. Attorney Grindstaff replied it depended on how it was structured and should be discussed further in a closed session meeting. Attorney Grindstaff asked the Mayor if he would be making money if his bid was accepted. The Mayor replied yes. Attorney Grindstaff asked the Mayor if he had anything to do with the bid process. The Mayor replied no. Kenny made a motion to go into a closed session meeting. Gail seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

Upon returning from closed session, Kenny made a motion to excuse Lauren from voting due to her feeling as if it was a conflict of interest. Christie seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye. Lauren explained her family had a contractual agreement with G&S Trees for their Christmas trees. Kenny made a motion to accept the proposal from G&S Trees for mowing. Gail seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

Lauren mentioned the Spring Fling event on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. This will be a very low cost to the town, if any cost at all. She said she would have signs directing people to the bathrooms at the park to save money on porta johns. James asked Lauren how much she was charging per vendor. Lauren stated \$20 per vendor. James said to go ahead and get a couple of porta johns because the vendor fee should cover them. He thanked Lauren for doing the event.

James asked what the status was on the water / sewer for the building on Sokassa Street. He asked Sandy if she had heard any updates on the concrete floor. Sandy stated she had not heard anything. The Mayor said he had been in contact with a few concrete finishers asking them for a bid. The Mayor stated he would not be submitting a bid due to how things went this evening with the mowing bid. He said he would step away and let the board figure it out for themselves. Sandy said she will get with James Clark tomorrow to see who they can contact about the concrete floor. James stated everything would need to be re-done including the plumbing and electrical work. He said contacting a contractor may be best to get all the work done. The Mayor stated it was not the best option because we would pay a contractor double the money. Sandy asked if she could contact a contractor or individuals to do the work. Sandy asked if a sealed bid needed to be put out for the contractors. James stated yes. Lauren asked if they had promised the contracting job to anyone else over the past few years. Christie stated no. Kenny stated a licensed contractor needed to be contacted and let him use his sub-contractors. The Mayor also asked Sandy to contact concrete finishers for a price. After much discussion, the Mayor ask we get prices from everyone. Attorney Grindstaff agreed the best idea would be to get general prices from everyone to get the best price. Then put out bids for a contractor, concrete finisher, plumber, and electrician. +69 Kenny made a motion to adjourn. Christie seconded the motion. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:35 pm.



Mayor, Derek Roberts



Clerk, Jessica Buchanan