



Workshop of Town Council - September 17, 2024 - Minutes

Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Town Council Chambers, Town Hall

1. CALL TO ORDER

Council members present: Mayor Patrick Fitzsimmons, Vice Mayor John Chase and Council members Doug Jackson, Catherine Cordell, Michele Wood, Peter McGuire and Dee Lawrence.

Staff members present: Interim Town Manager Scottie Harris, Town Attorney Jennifer Jackson, Finance Director Tonya Dozier, Planning Director James Eller, Town Clerk Tamara Mercer, Community Center Manager/Recreation Coordinator Sarah Myers, and Finance Assistant Cassidy Holcombe.

Mayor Fitzsimmons stated that the review and presentation of the Community Center Annual Report by Sarah Myers, Community Center Manager/Recreation Coordinator would be followed by Town Council member discussion and direction to Staff.

2. Community Center Annual Report

Ms. Myers provided the Weaverville Community Center Annual Report, including private rental usage and updates on the programming previously managed by the independent nonprofit, Weaverville Center for Creative and Healthy Living.

The building continues to experience a 50/50 split between private rentals and community programs. It was agreed that the community programming and special events at the Community Center are largely successful, valuable, and growing in popularity and number. Private

3. Community Center Programming and Operations

See attached PowerPoint Presentation. Discussion, highlights, and consensus include the following:

3.1 Private Rentals

Ms. Myers provided information on the operation of private rentals and the rental agreement.

Ms. Myers asked Town Council to revisit their initial decision to prohibit nonprofits from hosting fundraisers at the Community Center. Town Council was open to allowing nonprofits to rent as private renters and host fundraisers, as approved by Town Manager.

3.2 Weaverville Community Programming and Arts (WCPA, formerly WCCHL)

Staff is now overseeing more than 20 regular programs, plus additional music, theatre, and storytelling special events.

Highlights of this review included

- the development of a volunteer ad-hoc steering committee,
- the implementation of participant waivers, data collection measures, and an online calendar of events,
- concerns around the sustainability of the volunteer driven model. During WCCHL management, donations were encouraged, but classes were free. That policy has not changed. The Town may elect to monitor and update this policy so that programming and instructor costs are better covered and long term sustainable.

3.3 Facility Management/Maintenance

Ms. Myers presented the challenges associated with post-rental cleaning needs - staff time varies with the number and duration of private rentals. While Public Works supports some maintenance of the Community Center, Ms. Myers indicated a need for someone on staff to support the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the building.

3.4 **Outdoor Recreation Complex**

Ms. Myers and Town Council discussed

- The historical use of the space as an outdoor community pool.
- The value that has been added through free beginner pickleball clinics taught by certified instructors and volunteers.
- The mitigation Town Staff has completed in response to residential noise complaints and concerns, including fabric sound barriers, tree planting for noise abatement, modifications of rules and procedures, additional noise mitigation such as prohibiting music on the courts, modifying the playtime hours (summer: 8am – 8pm and winter: 8am – 6pm), and exploring the possibility of equipment modifications (quieter balls and paddles).

Town Council encouraged staff to continue searching for solutions to the pickleball noise, and stressed the hopes that the growth of the newly planted trees will provide more noise abatement, and the development and use of new, quieter pickleball products could have a positive impact on this issue.

3.5 **Dry Ridge Historical Museum**

Ms. Myers reminded Council that the Dry Ridge Museum lease was recently updated and renewed, and that the space is lovingly cared for by a dedicated Board and volunteers. The Museum has given Ms. Myers a seat on their board and has invested in programming and operations improvements. Ms. Myers drew attention to the concern around balancing the sustainability of the free space the museum occupies with the planned growth for the Town.

3.6 **Weaverville Tailgate Market**

The Weaverville Tailgate Market lease was recently updated and renewed. The Market is popular and now takes over the entire building on Wednesdays from 12pm – 8pm. Ms. Myers drew attention to the fact that the Market closes the Community Center to programming during that timeframe, creates some traffic and

parking challenges, and has done a small amount of damage to the facility over time.

The Buncombe County Board of Elections and early voting will take over the space October 15 – November 5. The Tailgate Market re-locates during that time. Ms. Myers asked Town Council to consider relocating the voting to lessen the programming disruption.

4. Current and Future Staffing

Ms. Myers stressed the need for succession planning in the face of continuing growth. This includes the need for additional staff on site at the Community Center in order to properly and sustainably manage the demands of the community programming, private rentals, and recreation complex.

5. Goals/Benchmarks for Community Center Usage

Council members agreed that it is not necessary for the Community Center to turn a profit for the Town, and that the value the community programs add is more important.

Town Council recognized that there is a need to balance the private rental use of the Community Center in order to support sustainability of staff management. Council discussed placing limits on the number of private rentals per weekend, and suggested that staff present a plan for this.

6. Other Discussion or Direction to Staff

Staff was asked for data on the number of private rentals that are residents versus out-of-town, if possible.

It was noted that the Community Room at Town Hall is underutilized. Staff was encouraged to explore renting the space, given the use does not further tax or inconvenience other staff.

There was consensus to continue supporting the Community Programming.

There was consensus to generally allow non-profits to utilize the space for fundraisers and requested the staff to update the rental agreement to reflect that.

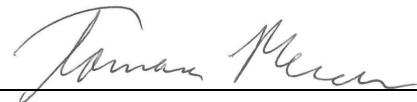
Staff is to consider a recommendation on whether to limit the number of private rentals and how best to do so.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business and without objection, Mayor Fitzsimmons adjourned the workshop at 6:48 p.m.



Patrick Fitzsimmons, Mayor



Tamara Mercer, Town Clerk