

**TOWN OF VALDESE
TOWN COUNCIL PRE-AGENDA MEETING
FEBRUARY 26, 2024**

The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Monday, February 26, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall, 102 Massel Avenue SW, Valdese, North Carolina. The Council meeting was live-streamed on YouTube @townofvaldese. The following were present: Mayor Charles Watts, Mayor Pro Tem Gary Ogle, Councilwoman Rexanna Lowman, Councilwoman Heather Ward, Councilman Glenn Harvey, and Councilman Paul Mears. Also present were: Interim Town Manager Bryan Steen, Town Attorney Tim Swanson, Town Clerk Jessica Lail, and various Department Heads.

Absent: None

A quorum was present.

Mayor Watts called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He offered the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Watts identified an item that needed to be added to the Consent agenda: Old Colony Player Request to Sell Wine, at six of their events.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO BE ADDED TO THE CONSENT AGENDA AT THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Watts suggested that if there were an item on the agenda that could be placed on the Consent agenda, it would save some time during the March meeting.

OLD COLONY PLAYERS: Mayor Watts shared that Edyth Potter, Director of Old Colony Players, will provide the Old Colony Players annual update.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

ARBOR DAY PROCLAMATION: Mayor Watts will read the Arbor Day Proclamation.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

RECONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF WPCOG CONTRACT TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN Alison Adams, WPCOG Community & Regional Planning Director, talked more in detail about the Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Plan. Ms. Adams shared the following presentation:



PURPOSE

- To create a Comprehensive Recreation Plan which will assess the Town's existing recreational facilities, programs and special events and identify new opportunities based on the plan's recreation needs assessment.
- Conduct an online public needs assessment to identify opportunities for recreational improvements, programing expansion, and new facilities.
- The Comprehensive Recreation Plan will allow the Town of Valdese to apply for grant funding to support the identified initiatives, recommendations and goals outlined within the Plan.

PROCESS

1. WPCOG will draft a digital survey and meet with Parks and Recreation staff to finalize prior to release.
2. WPCOG will collect the data from the public input survey and analyze the results.
3. WPCOG will hold a public input meeting to collect information from participants. The Town will secure the location and will publicize the public input meeting.
4. WPCOG will work with Town staff to assess existing facilities (centers, parks, and connective infrastructure), programs, and events.
5. WPCOG will work with Town staff after obtaining public input results to identify future needs such as new facilities, programs, and events or modifications to existing.
6. WPCOG will write the plan as outlined in the scope.
7. WPCOG will hold a second public input meeting to obtain feedback about the plan and its recommendations.
8. The Town will secure the location and will publicize the second meeting.
9. WPCOG will review the draft plan with the Recreation Director and staff to address any concerns or needed changes.
10. WPCOG will present the final document to the Town Council. After reviewing and providing input, Town Council will be asked to adopt the plan.



SCOPE

The plan will include:

- An introduction summarizing the plan's purpose and goals and the recreation roles of the Town and other recreational providers
- Population trends and projections
- Inventory of existing parks, facilities, programs and special events
- Review of the recreational needs assessment –
 - Public input analysis
 - State and National assessment (trends and needs)
 - Identification of recreation facilities and park types (educational component)
 - Evaluation of park land needs and facility needs
- Goals and recommendations
 - Proposals/recommendations
 - Priorities
- Action Implementation Plan
 - Economic development initiatives
 - Funding opportunities, strategies and sources
 - Operating budget/Capital improvements program

DELIVERABLES

The Town of Valdese will receive the following:

- A recreation public input survey and results
- A Comprehensive Recreation Plan that will address all items included in the scope
- A Capital Improvements Program that includes recommendations and associated costs
- A list of grant funding, partnership and resource opportunities
- Maps showing parks, facilities, and connections to park related opportunities
- Drone photography of key locations associated with the Recreation Plan
- Two to three renderings of a proposed improvement identified during the plan's development
- Two public input meetings – one at the beginning of the process and another at the end (prior to Council's review).
- One final presentation to Council for adoption



CONTRACT

The cost of the Comprehensive Plan is \$23,000, including all of the processes and deliverables outlined in this presentation. A private consultant would most likely be three times the cost.

WPCOG is owned by the 24 local governments in the four-county area (Catawba, Burke, Caldwell and Alexander).

WPCOG is here to serve our local governments with little to no profit. We are a regional government agency that was established in 1968 to aid with the collective planning efforts of our region.

The project is slated to begin July 1, 2024 with a completion date of June 30, 2025.

The adoption of this plan will allow WPCOG to support the Town by developing grant applications for projects identified in the plan.

Councilman Harvey asked the Town Clerk to add the last Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan to the agenda packet for informational purposes. Councilman Harvey noticed that the previous plan had short-term and long-term recommendations and that most of the items were not completed. Councilman Harvey noticed that the last plan cost \$10,000.00, and after checking the US inflation index since 2013, \$1.00 in 2013 is now \$1.32, so \$10,000.00 in 2013 might cost \$13,000.00 in 2023. Councilman Harvey wants to know why this new plan is \$10,000.00 more. Ms. Adams said she had to pay her staff, and the rate of pay in 2012 was very different, and it was in a different department at the COG. Ms. Adams noted that the document you see in 2012 does not have the level of detail the new one will have due to updated technology. Ms. Adams has a team of staff that will take part in this versus one person that completed the last plan. Councilwoman Ward thanked Ms. Adams for all the details provided.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE DECLARING ROAD CLOSURES FOR THE TOWN OF VALDESE 2024

ANNUAL EVENTS Community Affairs Director Morrissa Angi reminded Council that the road closures are for four events, and some of them have been going on for at least 50 years and are routine. Ms. Angi said that annually in April, Community Affairs goes downtown and talks with every business owner, providing them with street closure maps, road closure dates and times, and has conversations about how the Town can partner with them with these events. Ms. Angi also sends out a Code Red before the road closures and posts maps and event calendars on our website and social media page. Councilman Harvey noted that this item was postponed until the March 4 meeting, when the Police and Public Works department reviews the details of this plan with the impacted merchants. Councilman Harvey has heard concerns from the Merchants affected and will ask again to discuss this with them in advance. Councilwoman Lowman asked Councilman Harvey to share who those merchants are so that we can make sure they are contacted. Councilman Harvey said it would be any Merchant that has a place of business that will be closed off. Ms. Angi shared that she heard that there were merchants on Bobo Street who were concerned, and she reached out to them. The only one she heard back from was Rusty Antiques, who said they do close their store because they do not get traffic during major events. Ms. Angi said that Bobo Street is not closed during our events. Councilman Mears heard from a Merchant who said they were OK with the road closure and had not had any complaints. After a brief discussion, Councilman Harvey thanked Ms. Angi for what she had done and said she did exactly what was asked.

RESULT: PLACED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA AT THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS Mayor Watts shared that all of the information for each appointment will be included in the March 4 agenda packet.

- i. **Approval of Reappointment to Valdese ABC Board**
- ii. **Approval of Appointments to the Facilities Review Committee**
- iii. **Approval of Appointments to Drug and Homeless Advisory Task Force**
- iv. **Approval of Appointments to Efficiency Task Force**

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE BAKER TILLY PROPOSAL FOR TOWN MANAGER

SEARCH Councilman Harvey shared that we received seven proposals from search firms, the team narrowed it down to three, completed reference checks, and narrowed it down to Baker Tilly who is an international firm. Councilman Harvey shared that Baker Tilly most recently completed two Town Manager searches for Brevard and Morehead City. Councilman Harvey stated that he misspoke regarding the guarantee if the Manager leaves within two years. That is not part of the proposed fee.

RESULT: PLACED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA AT THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) FOR PERMANENT POOL STRUCTURE

Parks & Recreation Director David Andersen said this was a straightforward RFQ request. Mr. Andersen noted that this would not bind us to any financial obligation; it would just be put out there to see what we get to start the process.

Pool Structure
Timeline

Target Date	Event
March 4th	Approval to Release RFQ
Early April	Interview Firms
May 6th	Present Contract for a Design Firm
July 1st	Release bid package
July 25th	Formal Bid Opening
August 5th	Approve Contract to Licensed GC
November 1st	Pool Structure complete/ opened

RESULT: PLACED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA AT THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

FY 24/25 BUDGET PREPARATION DISCUSSION Interim Town Manager Bryan Steen shared that departments are now reviewing their budgets in preparation for FY24-25. Mr. Steen said we are looking at potential cost increases and will incorporate the items identified from the Strategic Planning sessions and will have more information at the next meeting. Councilman Mears asked if the Council would have an opportunity to hear from Department Heads like in previous years and asked Mr. Steen's opinion. Mr. Steen said that he has had budget meetings and has not had them but currently, we do not have anything scheduled on the current calendar. Councilman Harvey would like to see what comes out of the Strategic Plan and then review a draft of the budget presented by the Manager at the April 22 meeting. Councilman Harvey said that if we need to add a meeting later, we could call a meeting as needed. Councilman Mears feels it was a valuable exercise to hear from the Department Heads and will request additional meetings.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION AMENDING THE 2024 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE Mayor Watts shared that a few dates need to be changed and a few added.

RESULT: PLACED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA AT THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF CAPITAL PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCE – WATER PLANT UPGRADES PROJECT Water Resources Director Greg Padgett shared that this project has been previously approved; this is just moving money into a project ordinance so it can be spent.

RESULT: PLACED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA AT THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENTS Mayor Watts shared that Mr. Weichel will discuss these at the March 4 agenda.

- i. To transfer \$17,000.00 from General Fund Balance to cover expense for the agreement with Baker Tilly for the Town Manager Search
- ii. To transfer \$23,000.00 from General Fund Balance to cover expense for the agreement with WPCOG for Master Park Plan

RESULT: PLACED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA AT THE NEXT MEETING ON MARCH 4, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

INTERIM MANAGER'S REPORT: No report

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS: Councilman Harvey feels that we are getting more people involved with Strategic Planning. He suggested that we give our local ministers the opportunity to deliver the invocation at the beginning of the meeting. Councilman Harvey also suggested having a veteran step up to the lecture to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CLOSED SESSION: Mayor Watts called for a motion to recess into Closed Session under NC General Statute 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney retained by the Town in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the Town attorney and the Town Council, which privilege is hereby acknowledged. At 6:56 p.m., Councilwoman Lowman made a motion, seconded by Councilman Ogle. The vote was unanimous.

At 7:10 p.m., Councilman Ogle made a motion to return to Open Session, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman. The vote was unanimous.

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ADJOURNMENT: At 7:12 p.m., there being no further business to come before Council, Councilwoman Lowman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Ward.

The next regular Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 4, 2024 at Valdese Town Hall.

Town Clerk

Mayor

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