

**TOWN OF VALDESE
TOWN COUNCIL PRE- AGENDA MEETING
MARCH 25, 2024**

The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Monday, March 25, 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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA REVIEW MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2024

APPROVAL OF CLOSED SESSION MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2024

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2024

APPROVAL OF CITIZENS BUDGET PRIORITIES MINUTES OF MARCH 18, 2024

APPROVAL OF VALDESE ABC BOARD TRAVEL POLICY

REQUEST FROM WALDENSIAN STYLE WINES TO SELL ALCOHOL

REQUEST FROM AMERICAN LEGION LADIES AUXILIARY TO SELL ALCOHOL

REQUEST FROM BURKE SUNRISE ROTARY CLUB TO SELL ALCOHOL

RESULT: ALL ITEMS MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

NEW BUSINESS

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES: Mayor Watts shared that we will have new employees introduced at the April meeting.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR CDBG WATER PROJECT: Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director of Western Piedmont Council of Governments, said that we would hold a public hearing at the next meeting to seek citizens' input regarding a CDBG of 3 million dollars for the Berrytown Community. Ms. Long shared that the project would provide 6-inch waterlines and fire hydrants to approximately 81 households. Ms. Long noted that we did not receive the funds last time, but the State has encouraged us to resubmit the grant application. Ms. Long said the request is for 3 million dollars with no local commitment, and we should know by early fall if the project is funded.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR CDBG FUNDING FOR BERRYTOWN WATER PROJECT Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, said that this resolution would need to be approved after the public hearing is closed should the board choose to authorize the grant submission.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

FOOTHILLS BROADBAND INSTALLATION UPDATE Zachery Chiz, COO of Foothills Broadband, presented the Council with the company's history, the current build plan, and progress made so far and identified ways that problems have been fixed.

Valdese Update – March 2024

Fiber for the people, by the people!

Zachary Chiz - COO



Foothills Broadband

Foothills Broadband - Confidential

Meeting Itinerary

- Our Story and Team
- Current Build Plan – Valdese and Beyond
- Current Progress – Through Q1, 2024
 - Infrastructure Update
 - How Foothills Supports the Town

Buy Local, Stay Local, Family!

Foothills Broadband - Confidential

Why Did We Choose Valdese?

Zachary and Jodi Chiz grew up in Drexel, NC. Jodi's parents now reside in Valdese, NC up on Flat Gap Mountain. For the last several years, the unavailability of internet access on the mountain has proven to be a challenge that only continues to be more evident. Jodi's parents don't have internet access or cell phone service where they live.

In 2021, both of her parents got COVID and were very sick. With no way to check-in on them, the last resort was driving almost 2 hours to physically lay eyes on them to make sure they were okay. Add to that, Zachary and Jodi have two small children who LOVE Nana and Papaw. Being that they have never lived in the same town, Facetime and being able to have that relationship and connection with them over long-distance has been essential to everyone's well-being. It may seem silly to some, but until you live in a place in today's world where you can't just answer the phone when it rings, or connect to Wi-Fi so that you can be in touch with the world around you, you realize how disconnected and isolated that can feel.

Zachary and Jodi chose Valdese to be able to connect their family to the world. To provide the opportunity for young kids to Facetime their grandparents. To provide access to make sure people can call for help if they need it. It's bigger than just surfing the world wide web. It's reconnecting people to people, and providing basic levels of access for safety, security, and support. They look forward to helping your family get and stay connected to their loved ones and the world around them!

Our Story

Foothills Broadband - Confidential

Buy Local, Hire Local!

- Small, but capable and dedicated!
 - 7 total employees, ramping to 15+ in 2024
- 45 years+ of industry knowledge
 - Construction, Engineering, and Manufacturing
- Contract Labor is local as well!
 - Local to North Carolina

Our Team

Foothills Broadband - Confidential



Foothills Broadband

Current Build Plan – Valdese & Beyond

Utilizing Gold Standard Technology

- Truly 100% Fiber To The Home design
- Passive Fiber Network bringing Reliability and Future Proof Investments!
- Utilizing XGS-PON Technology
 - 1-box Home Solution Capable of 10gbps+!
- Best in Industry Manufacturers
 - Nokia Optics
 - Juniper Routing & Switching Core
 - Corning Fiber

Foothills Broadband - Confidential

Fair pricing that won't increase!

Foothills Pricing Plans for Homes and Businesses

*Terms and Conditions Apply

<p>Home</p> <p>\$65</p> <p>PER MONTH</p> <p>100Mbps</p>	<p>Home +</p> <p>\$95</p> <p>PER MONTH</p> <p>1Gbps</p>	<p>Home Pro</p> <p>\$115</p> <p>PER MONTH</p> <p>2Gbps</p>	<p>Business</p> <p>\$95</p> <p>PER MONTH</p> <p>500Mbps</p>	<p>Business +</p> <p>\$145</p> <p>PER MONTH</p> <p>1Gbps</p>	<p>Business Pro</p> <p>Custom Quote</p> <p>2Gbps</p>
<p>Home</p> <p>Perfect for customers with basic service needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic web browsing • Fewer than 10 devices • Occasional streaming 	<p>Home +</p> <p>Perfect for working remotely or for school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10x to 50x faster than cable • Up to 200 devices • Experience HD video & audio like never before. 	<p>Home Pro</p> <p>Perfect for gamers and home businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supercharge your internet! • Heavy streaming, gaming, and browsing • Multiple users during peak hours 	<p>Business</p> <p>Perfect for small businesses!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut the cord for cable! • Most affordable fiber internet option • Support your customers like never before 	<p>Business +</p> <p>Supercharge your business!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built for large file transfers • Ideal for frequent backups 	<p>Business Pro</p> <p>Let us provide the perfect internet package.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full customizable package • Upgrade your credit card processing

Foothills Broadband - Confidential

Current Build Area – Q4, 2024 Completion



Current Progress

- ~1,800 Home Passings to date
 - ~4,000 by end of April
- ~130,000ft or ~24miles of pipe built
- Downtown testing complete! Ready for installs!



Supporting the Town

- Restoring the Ground
 - We always restore the ground if we disturb it
 - If residence are not satisfied, we address same day
- When issues arise, we are always on site
 - Above and beyond with repairs
 - When at fault, Foothills pays 100% of the bill
 - Working side by side with town employees
- What we're doing to help
 - Call before we dig on all roads (NC 811)
 - Permitting through NC DOT on DOT Roads
 - Purchase of Ground Penetrating Radar Technology

Foothills Broadband - Confidential



Foothills Broadband - Confidential



Closing Comments

- We are a local company
 - Local people
 - Local knowledge
 - Love for Valdese!
- Building a network that is future proofed
 - Fiber To The Home
- Community Focused!

Councilman Harvey asked why the Public Works Department has to follow up and repair the broken waterlines rather than a subcontractor. Mr. Chiz said that when there is a service line in the yard to the house, Foothills Broadband can prepare those, but when it comes to the Town's infrastructure, Public Works is the best to repair it because it is completed to the correct standard. Mr. Chiz also said a subcontractor would not get here as fast to repair. Councilman Harvey is concerned about the additional workload that Public Works is doing. Councilman Harvey asked when the repaving would be completed. Mr. Chiz shared that when you disturb the ground, you must let it settle before the patches are repaved. Mr. Chiz will use a local company to complete the paving.

RESULT: ITEM WAS REMOVED FROM THE APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) FOR HOYLE CREEK Parks & Recreation Director David Andersen reminded the Council that the Town accepted 2.2 million dollars in grant funds from the State of North Carolina earlier in the year to restore Hoyle Creek along Lake Rhodhiss Drive. Mr. Andersen said the RFQ is to get the project started.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

- i. **Recommendation from the Parks & Recreation Commission** – Scott Compton, Parks & Recreation Commission chairman, shared that the Commission has been visiting different pool house facilities and called a special meeting of the Parks & Rec Commission on March 11, 2024, and out of that, has a recommendation for the Council to make a motion for the Commission to proceed with seeking the ADA Parks grant. Mr. Compton shared that the Commission also has a recommendation for the pool structure, a fixed aluminum framed structure with removable sides, and will ask the Council to proceed with an RFQ for an architect.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

- ii. **Efficiency Task Force** – Eddie Perrou, Chairman reviewed the past two meetings:

March 25, 2024, MB#32

Date: March 11, 2024
Time: 11:30am
Place: Valdese Town Hall Community room

IN ATTENDANCE

Eddie Perrou, Rick McClurd, Steve Perry, Gary Ogle (Member absent: Tim Page)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

This was an organization meeting of this committee. No prior minutes to approve.

INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS/CHAIR APPOINTMENT

All members were introduced by Councilman, Gary Ogle, organizer of the committee. Eddie Perrou was asked and agreed to serve as the Chairperson.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF TASK FORCE

Preliminary discussion was held regarding the establishment of the committees' goals and objectives. It was agreed that specific goals would be set after the budget is determined and the committee has the opportunity to review it.

NEXT MEETING

The meeting was adjourned and the next meeting will be held March 21, 2024 at 11:30am in the Valdese Town Hall Community room.

Date: March 21, 2024
Time: 11:30am
Place: Valdese Town Hall Community Room

IN ATTENDANCE

Eddie Perrou, Rick McClurd, Steve Perry, Tim Page, Gary Ogle

INTRODUCTION OF BO WEICHEL

Bo Weichel, Asst. Town Manager and Finance Officer, was introduced to the group. He spoke about the general fund and water, sewer, and utilities funds. He explained what is paid out of each fund. Members of the committee asked questions regarding the tax rate set by the Council (41.5%) and how it will work in the '24-25 budget. No specific plans were given.

At the next meeting, Mr. Weichel will provide the committee with hard copies of the '23-24 budget to study and analyze.

NEXT MEETING

The meeting was adjourned, and the next meeting will be held April 4, 2024, at 11:30am at Valdese Town Hall (room to be determined).

March 25, 2024, MB#32

Mr. Perrou does not anticipate reporting anything during the next two Council meetings because it will take a lot of thought to develop specific goals for the Town, and he said all the members want the best for the Town.

RESULT: ITEM WAS REMOVED FROM THE APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

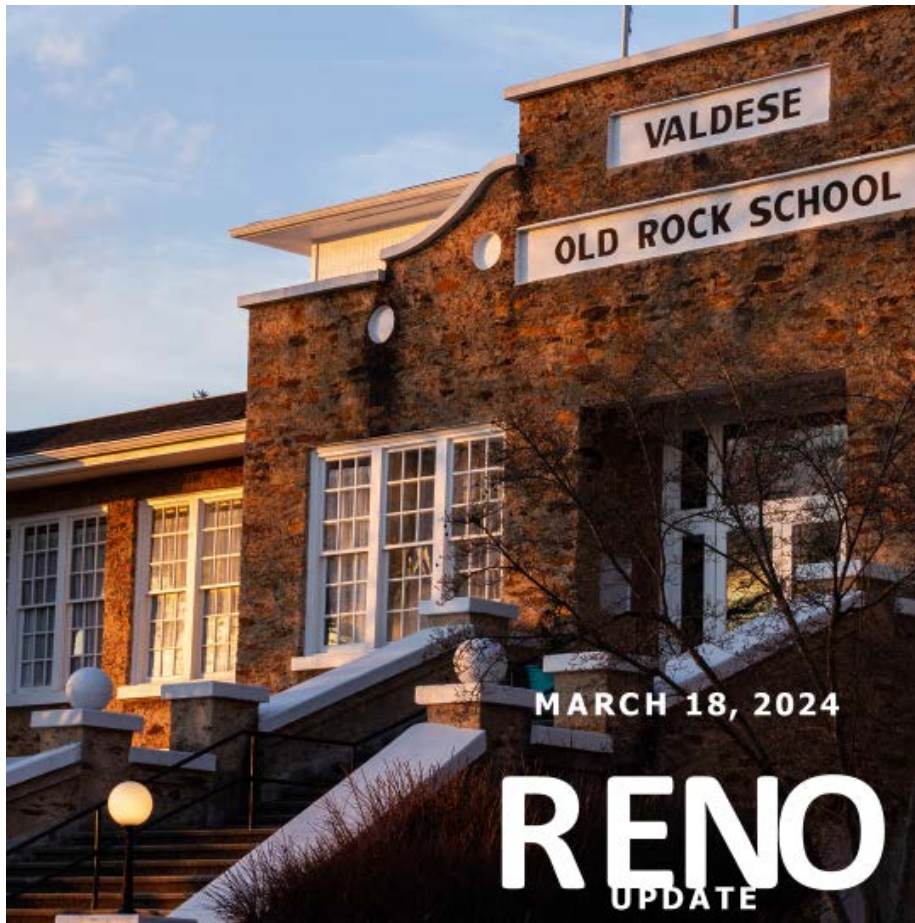
- iii. **Drug and Homeless Advisory Task Force** – Councilwoman Ward shared that the Homeless & Drug Task Force will meet for the first time tomorrow evening at 7:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church in Valdese.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

- iv. **Facilities Review Committee** – Councilman Harvey shared that the Facilities Review Committee has met twice and is in the process of reviewing the eight proposals received in response to the RFQ the staff sent out for the Public Safety Building. Councilman Harvey said that the committee is interviewing three of the firms this week, with possible repeat interviews, and hopes to recommend a firm at the April 15th Budget Retreat and invite them to submit a contract that can be approved at the May 6th, 2024 Council meeting.

RESULT: ITEM WAS REMOVED FROM THE APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

OLD ROCK SCHOOL RENOVATION PROJECT UPDATE Community Affairs Director gave an update on the status of the ORS renovations:





MARCH 18, 2024

AUDITORIUM UPDATE



MARCH 18, 2024

BATHROOM EXPANSION UPDATE



MARCH 18, 2024

BOX OFFICE

UPDATE



MARCH 18, 2024

FRONT LOBBY

UPDATE



MARCH 18, 2024

TRAINING ROOMS UPDATE



MARCH 18, 2024

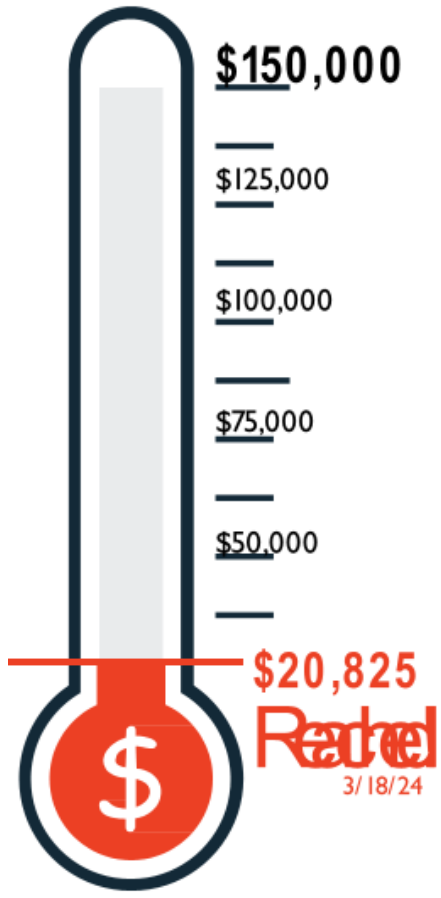
STAGE LIFT UPDATE



MARCH 18, 2024

STAGE LIFT

UPDATE



Thank you to the wonderful donors for supporting this renovation!

DIAMOND SPONSORS:

BROWN FAMILY CHARITABLE FUND P

LATINUM:

KELLEX SEATING

GOLD:

**KEVIN & TINA FARRIS
UNC HEALTH BLUE RIDGE**

SILVER:

**REXANNA LOWMAN
CHRISTINA NAYLOR
MARK BUFF**



BRONZE:

**NANCY & GENE TUCKER
SUSAN SHERLOCK
MERIDIAN SPECIALTY YARN GROUP**

IVORY:

**ROSE & WILL MUELLER
DAN & SARAH HOYLE
EMMA DRAUGHN
BRIAN THOMPSON
WILLIAM PHILLIPS, JR.
ELSIE WHISENANT
DAVID FLETCHER M
ILDRED FLETCHER
RENEE & MICHAEL LA CORTE
KATIE & SCOTT STILLWELL
SPENCE & JAYNE BORDEN
PHILIP BRENDEL
GRETCHEN COSTNER**

Make your donation today at visitvaldese.com



DONATE TO

HISTORIC VALDESE FOUNDATION

501 C-3 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

MAIL TO:
PO BOX 655
VALDESE, NC 28690

ONLINE AT:
[GOFUNDME.COM / F / ROCK-SCHOOL-RENOVATIONS](https://gofundme.com/f/rock-school-renovations)

*ALL DONATIONS ARE GREATLY
APPRECIATED!*

VISITVALDESE.COM

Old Rock School Renovation - *Potential Phase Two?*

New monies to apply for:

Rural Downtown Economic Development Grants

\$12,500 per job created or retained (330 within 1 block of ORS)

5% match (Town of Valdese funds)

Deadline April 1st with panel review April 18th - decisions shortly after

Requirements:

Project items must have been included in the original grant application with RTFG (May 2022)

- ADA & NC Fire Code Improvements
- Efficiency
- Safety

Application will focus on:

- New HVAC (fan coil units) = Efficiency
- New Fire Doors & hardware = NC Fire Code
- Flooring (removing trip hazards) = ADA

Goals:

To keep same timeframe for construction & further current project impacts

TOTAL GRANT REQUEST
= \$480,000

PHASE TWO

RENO
OLD ROCK SCHOOL

March 25, 2024, MB#32

Councilman Mears asked if this new grant was completely separate from the first grant, and Ms. Angi said yes. Ms. Angi said the second grant they put in place for gap funding and the Rural Downtown Economic Development asked the Town to apply for it and thought it would be a good fit. Councilman Harvey asked if residents wished to donate to the Town by check, and they would receive a letter from the Town stating their contribution. Councilman Harvey also wondered if they would be recognized with similar levels of recognition. Ms. Angi said there would not be a problem with that; she would need to work with Bo to make sure she knows who donated. Ms. Angi said they would still need to fill out the same form.

RESULT: ITEM WAS REMOVED FROM THE APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

FY 2024-2025 PAVING PRIORITIES Public Works Director Allen Hudson shared that traditionally, the Paving Committee meets once a set number is budgeted for the next FY street paving. Mr. Hudson has streets identified from the paving assessment that was completed in 2022. Mr. Hudson shared that ten streets were approved and completed for \$444,225 last year. Mr. Hudson said we needed to wait until the budget was adopted to see how much money we had to use for street paving. Councilwoman Lowman asked how much we get in Powell Bill funds. Assistant Town Manager/CFO Bo Weichel said we get \$125,000. Councilman Harvey asked Mr. Hudson to look into DOT working with the Town to provide engineering and paving services as they did for Pilot Mountain.

RESULT: ITEM WAS REMOVED FROM THE APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

TAX COLLECTION UPDATE Assistant Town Manager/CFO Bo Weichel shared an update on the current tax collection and compared it to the prior two years. Mr. Weichel noted that the 2023-24 numbers are slightly scud due to the reval year.

Tax Collection Update	
Tax Year	Collected
2023-24 (July - February)	2,643,251
2022-23 (July - February)	2,070,436
2021-22 (July - February)	2,000,679

Tax Collection 2023-24 Budget Summary		
Budget Amount	Amount Expected to Collect	Over (Under) Budget
<i>per Burke County Estimated Values</i>	<i>Actual Billed Values</i>	
2,440,668	2,659,207	218,539

2023-2024 Budget Allocation GENERAL FUND REVENUES		
FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED	10-3990-000	238,279

20*

Councilman Harvey discussed the \$400,000 monies the Town has set aside for the Public Safety building/debt service. He asked if the Council could re-allocate that money for different uses. Mr. Weichel said that was correct.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING UPSET BID PROCESS FOR THE SALE OF TOWN-OWNED PROPERTY – 104 ROLLER ST. SW Assistant Town Manager/CFO Bo Weichel shared that the Town has received an offer from Barktopia Stay & Play Pet Resort & Daycamp, LLC, for \$35,000 for the property.

March 25, 2024, MB#32
2.09 Acre Tract at 104 Roller Street SW



Councilman Harvey asked how that Town came into procession of the property. Mayor Watts believes the Town got it back in the 80s when the structure on it burnt. Councilman Harvey saw that someone bought it in 2012 for \$300,000, and then the Town took it over in 2013 for \$0 and was curious about the history. Councilman Harvey feels that the Facilities Review Committee needs to consider all the options for a Public Safety Building before the Town disposes of any parcels and does not feel it is a good offer or timing.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENTS Assistant Town Manager/CFO Bo Weichel shared two Budget Amendments:

i. To transfer \$6,500.00 from the General Fund Balance to cover Recreation concession sales Parks and Recreation primary concession stand is closing in on the revenue target for the current budget year. This means we will also expend more than planned for concession supplies. The sales revenue is a direct correlation to the amount of items sold. This amendment increases the sales revenue and expense line for more supplies.

ii. To transfer \$30,000.00 from the General Fund Balance to cover the salary for Town Attorney fees Attorney fees included in the budget are based on historical need of services billed on an hourly basis. The last few months have had triple the amount of use and associated fees. This results in shortage of funds to pay the Attorney for the final three months of this fiscal year.

March 25, 2024, MB#32

Councilman Mears asked the Council why we have the additional increases in attorney fees. Town Attorney Tim Swanson said the hourly rate is the same; it is just more hours due to requested tasks. Mr. Swanson has been more involved in projects, public records, email requests, and meetings. Councilwoman Ward feels that we should look into fees for public records requests. Councilwoman Lowman does not think charging fees is what we should do; the citizens have a right to our emails. Mayor Watts cautions the Council to tread lightly with the First Amendment Rights for our citizens and the open meetings law.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 1, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M.

INTERIM MANAGER'S REPORT:

Annual Budget Retreat is scheduled for April 15 & 16, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Valdese Town Hall

Council Meeting – Council Budget Review, scheduled Monday, April 22, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Council Chambers, Valdese Town Hall

OCP Production: Jimmy Buffett's Escape to Margaritaville, Show Dates April 25, 26 & 27 and May 2, 3 & 4, 2024, 7:30 p.m.; visit www.oldcolonyplayers.com for more information and to purchase tickets.

Next Agenda Review Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 29, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Council Chambers, Valdese Town Hall

Next Regular Council meeting scheduled for Monday, May 6, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Council Chambers, Valdese Town Hall

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:34 p.m., there being no further business to come before Council, Councilwoman Lowman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Mears. The vote was unanimous.

Town Clerk

Mayor

jl