

**TOWN OF VALDESE
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 4, 2024**

The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Monday, March 4, 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.

OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENT:

RECOGNITION OF THE HERITAGE EAGLES CHAMPION WRESTLING TEAM Mayor Watts shared that the two coaches for the wrestling team are Town employees and thinks that this speaks highly of our staff. Coach Matthew Smith shared that the 2023 Heritage wrestling team completed their season with a 901 record, outscoring their components with a combined total of 662 points to 327. Coach Smith said that at the conference tournament, 16 out of 18 wrestlers made it to the semi-finals, and 11 of them got the opportunity to wrestle in the championships. In the championship round, six finished in the conference championship, five got second, and two individuals finished in third place. Coach Smith said that he is very proud of their accomplishments.

TOWN COUNCIL – JENNY HUDSON, 412 FAET ST NW, VALDESE: Ms. Hudson provided a copy of her public comment to the Town Clerk:

Tonight I am here to discuss transparency. It seems to be a big buzz word amongst WHO supporters, which I struggle to understand because Government is regulated to be transparent. Now, no one is going to serve up town business to you on a silver platter, you may have to know where to get the information or who to ask but most of it is public knowledge. Which is what I have for you tonight, just a little glimpse of transparency for the citizens of Valdese.

This email is dated January 9th from Councilman Harvey to the Mayor, Council & acting Town Manager. In the essence of time, I'll summarize, ~~but, for the record, will submit a copy of the full email.~~

This email is basically a threat analysis of the town citizens who spoke at the January 8th council meeting.

First topic, the pool, Mr. Harvey berates all the citizens that spoke in support of the pool, dwelling on semantics of how we addressed the pool as a bubble issue vs. the actual heater problem, and about how our comments were 8-13 years too late. He then goes on to deflect responsibility of the pool solely to the incumbent members of council. But the best part is how he specifically calls out a few speakers by first, backhandedly calling them eloquent speakers and then discrediting them for various personal reasons. Specific mention was made of a speaker by calling her out as the sister of a previous council member and owner of the problem he inherited and then goes on to say "If I were a betting person, I would put at least a Bennie on the two sisters being organizers of the hour-long parade." As part of that parade, Mr. Harvey, you're incorrect. Neither one of those ladies organized our comments, in fact, it was not organized at all. We are merely concerned citizens with like-minded interests who have a true desire to see the pool benefit the town and its citizens for years to come. Apparently, I am an eloquent speaker as well, however, my comments could be dismissed because you haven't met me and believe my parents to be "strong WHO supporters".

First, if you're going to speak about me or my family in documents that become public knowledge get your facts straight. Secondly, you know what happens when you assume. I suggest you speak with my parents personally, about specifically who it is they support, ~~because it's not you.~~

And the comments don't end there. He insinuated the speakers were not interested enough to stay for the full meeting, again, incorrect. I stayed for the whole meeting. He then wraps up his pool rant by asking about pool data that's been provided before and categorizes the pool expenditures as squeaky-wheel.

March 4, 2024, MB#32

The remainder of the email discusses various topics and town citizens, like Valdese Hospital, and Jim Rostan, Paul's buddy, Jon Mercer, Tim Skidmore, the Rock School Renovation and the "babbling bureaucratic" architect and how the council praised Morissa when in actuality she yelled and spoke over him and had arrogant arguments. Then there's "The Other Nonsense" category where he calls out Kevin Farris "ripping" Eddie Perrou and himself, and Facebook pages he disagrees with specifically numerating "about 100 posts" and how the Mayor has "liked" them. He calls Brady Linkous irrational, blasts the presentation by McGill regarding the water plant and then proceeds with a rant about a divisive town council and how council member Mears and Lowman have not accepted the results of the election.

He finally wraps up this disgusting email by accusing the Mayor of leaking messages, which are public knowledge, to The Paper and how he is going to censure the perpetrator.

You call yourself a professional. A businessman, yet I've never seen such a lack of emotional intelligence. Is this how a public servant serves the town citizens? By calling them out by name in emails, by misstating facts about citizens, by arrogantly owning voters, by dismissing their opinions given during public comments, by talking about town employees and current and previous council members? This is how you're spending your time as a councilman? This is how you're wasting the time of the other council members, the Mayor, the town manager and the town lawyer?

This is absolutely disgusting. Do better, Mr. Harvey, the people deserve better.

TOWN COUNCIL – RICK MCCLURD, 408 GARROU AVE, VALDESE: Mr. McClurd shared that during the campaign season, in campaigning for the WHO, he was privileged to speak to close to 700 people. Mr. McClurd said that each was adamant about the high tax rate and pledged to lower it if the WHO was elected, which happened. Mr. McClurd said that Bo Weichel said it would not be a problem if you lowered the tax rate to 41.5 cents per 100. Mr. McClurd shared that today, Mr. Weichel and the Interim Manager both think we should leave the tax rate at 51.5 cent, and neither live in the Town of Valdese. Mr. McClurd would like to know what has changed. Was it the pool cover, Rock School, Public Safety Building, or the Water Plant? Neither is included in the 2023-2024 budget totals. Mr. McClurd believes none of the previous managers put money in the budget for these categories. Mr. McClurd said that in the next ten years, we would be spending more money on our water bill from what McGill has proposed.

TOWN COUNCIL – TIM BARUS, 998 LAUREL ST NE, VALDESE: Mr. Barus said that on February 8, he submitted a request to have two weeks of Town Council emails sent to him and said that he would be willing to pay for a fee. Mr. Barus stated that during his tenure on the Town Council, we never charged anyone

for a records request. Mr. Barus received an email reply from the Town stating that there would be a \$150.00 fee for the IT vendors time plus a possible additional fee if needed. Mr. Barus said it could be a total of \$260.00 for a taxpayer to receive information that is already considered public. Mr. Barus asked if that was an equitable fee. Mr. Barus asked the Town Council what they were hiding and where is the transparency now. Mr. Barus said that the main reason for this email request is that many citizens are concerned by how this Council uses the term transparency.

CLARITY & PRIORITIES – JEAN-MARIE COLE, 705 BERTIS ST, VALDESE: Ms. Cole shared that she knew the Council was going to have a special meeting and called the Town Hall and asked when the meeting was going to be held and they told her Friday at 6:00 pm twice. Ms. Cole showed up on Friday at 6:00 pm, and the building was locked, and no one showed. Ms. Cole said that she had read in the paper about the meeting a few days later and was sad because she would have liked to have been there. Ms. Cole asked if the people who answered the phone could be in the loop regarding the meeting schedule. Ms. Cole also believes that the two most important things to take care of now are the pool and the public safety building.

COMMITTEE – BRENDA SHUPING, 600 CAROLINA ST, VALDESE: Ms. Shuping shared that she is speaking in support of Angela Hoffman, who has expressed a desire to serve Valdese on the Valdese ABC Board. Ms. Shuping said that Angela has been a citizen for 31 years, is a Valdese homeowner, a Teacher's Assistant at EBHS, a tennis teacher, and is very interested in public affairs. Ms. Shuping shared that Angela is good at accounting and serves as the bookkeeper for Ramsey's Service Center for the past ten years. Ms. Shuping believes Angela Hoffman exceeds the qualifications to fill a seat on the Valdese ABC Board and would do an excellent job.

MOVING HERE – GERARD GUZMAN, 143 GRANDFATHERS PASS NW, VALDESE: Mr. Guzman shared that he moved here in October, which was supposed to be an enjoyable time building a house, but it has been a nightmare. Mr. Guzman said the building stopped during the pandemic, and the bank would take the property. Mr. Guzman said that there was no recourse. Mr. Guzman said that, fast forward, the HOA sent him threatening letters for debris and plan changes, and they have fined him. Mr. Guzman said the new HOA for Lake Rhodhiss Estates is still waiting for him to fix the road. Mr. Guzman said the paving company said there was no damage to the road. Mr. Guzman is in unfamiliar territory and wanted to see if the Town had a contact for new owners to handle situations like this.

OLD COLONY PLAYERS – JIM JACUMIN, 3690 MILLER BRIDGE RD, CONNELLY SPRINGS: Mr. Jacumin shared that he came across a family history book of the Waldensians who came here. Mr. Jacumin said that he never thought alcohol would be sold at Old Colony Players and that he and his wife would pay what the profit from the alcohol is so that they do not have to sell it. Mr. Jacumin said that we need to get concerned about the future of our roots, and if we keep moving in this direction, we will not have a country. Mr. Jacumin said that the Trail of Faith would never have alcohol and asked that it's not sold at the Old Colony Players.

POOL – RICH ERICSON – 2142 W PARADISE HARBOR DR, CONNELLY SPRINGS: Mr. Ericson provided a copy of his public comment to the Town Clerk:

Hello, my name Rich Ericson and I am a member of the Valdese Masters Swim Team. I retired to this area in 2019. I do enjoy the pool and fitness center here in Valdese, though that is not what I would like to discuss.

I am also a Stroke and Turn Judge for high school and summer league swimming. It is a great sport that encourages everyone to participate. In high school swimming I have seen everything from excellent swimmers to kids who began the season barely able to swim, to special needs children. This also holds true especially for summer league.

Currently 2 high schools (East Burke and Draughn) use the Valdese pool for workouts and meets. There is no other pool for these schools to use as the other pools are already busy.

With these considerations believe a permanent structure over the pool is essential. I am happy to see the steps the council is taking to make this happen. I hope it does result in a permanent structure where the high schools and other swimmers will have access to a pool in our colder months.

ABC BOARD – JOHN HEILMAN, 500 CAMPBELL AVE, VALDESE: Mr. Heilman provided a copy of his public comment to the Town Clerk:

Thank you for allowing me a few words. My name is John Heilman and I'm vice-chair of the Valdese ABC Board. As a recap to the letter I sent out I would like to remind council that since WT has been on the board:

ABC Sales have doubled to \$2,000,000.

Our growth rate is over twice that of neighboring counties.

By the year's end, over \$800,000 in total distributions will have been made.

Why the success?

The Board, with WT on it, has taken care of the store's staff, especially during the pandemic. In turn, our staff now takes care of our customers, leading directly to increased sales as they continue to excel at customer service.

WT played a pivotal role in hiring Chris Leonhardt, our general manager. As Karen had before him, Chris has the full confidence of the board and has been given latitude to try different things, all of which has been successful to store growth.

The third area WT is good at is oversight of the store and the general manager position. The ABC business is heavily regulated with all sorts of restrictions that limit how we can do business. ABC stores cannot advertise. ABC stores cannot market themselves or independently place products on sale to gain business. Stores become successful by having good management and relying on good guidance from their board. If mistakes are made, they can cause long lasting pain because we have so few options available to us to recover from it. That makes WT's 60 years in the workforce extremely valuable in avoiding these pitfalls.

Stability of the board. Our board has had zero turnover while I have served on it until December when Seth left. Again, the sales numbers and distributions to the town reflect that stability. All of the staff know the board members and know that we have their backs, creating a safe working environment for them and allowing for store growth.

When you are a board of only three members, it is very disruptive when one member is gone and replaced with one that has little to no ABC experience. That is not meant to be disparaging against Bryan. In this particular case though, since Bryan is only a temporary hire, he, in turn, will be replaced in the coming months by someone else who, in all probability, will not have any ABC experience either.

If WT were not to be re-appointed, that would leave the board with only one member, myself, who has any experience. Additionally, we have a general manager, who is very good, but he only assumed that position 6 months ago. Now is not the time to introduce more uncertainty into running the store by making wholesale changes to the board.

WT is a proven leader on the board, he is knowledgeable on how the board works, he is knowledgeable about how city government works, he has good business sense and is, without doubt, a great advocate for the store and town. There is just no way to make up for that experience with a new person.

In my eyes, the ABC store is a business. We treat it and run it as a business. We make our decisions like it is a business. In this case and to everyone's credit, this business has been successful. WT has been a large part of that. Some of you on council have been in business and know what it takes to be successful. It's not always easy, is it?

Replacing 2/3 of the governing body of a thriving store with those with lesser to no experience (remember WT's 60 years of work experience) will only negatively impact a profitable business and is not a good idea for the store or for Valdese.

Pure and simple, re-appointing WT to the board is a good business decision. Doing so will hopefully allow the ABC board to continue making distributions to the town of around \$200,000 a year. Think about that. \$200,000 is the equivalent of a four-cent tax decrease to the Town of Valdese which, I'm sure will be welcomed by Council.

Thank you

ABC BOARD – KAREN CLARK-CARUSO, 805 MICOL AVE, VALDESE: Ms. Clark-Carusio provided a copy of her public comment to the Town Clerk:

"Mayor and Council, I am Karen Clark-Carusio, at 805 Micol Avenue, and I was the Valdese ABC's general manager since it opened until my retirement last October. I care deeply about the success of the store and you should too since its profits come to the Town. That's why I am before you tonight and ask that you reappoint Mr. WT Sorrell to the ABC Board.

What I am not here to do is disparage anyone else. I do not know Ms. Hoffman and only know of her work experience as a teacher assistant, a noble and often thankless job, and that she's a bookkeeper for a small business. What I do know is that if she's Rick and Judy McClurd's daughter, then she is bound to be a very fine person.

I am willing to work hard for something I believe in, as Councilman Harvey can attest, when we both served on the referendum committee to bring alcohol sales to Valdese. And I am especially grateful for the privilege of having been hired by the first ABC Board to be its general manager.

I believe in North Carolina's local control ABC system as the best system to benefit all citizens, whether they choose to consume alcohol or not. Just as your most important decision as a Council is the hiring of a Town Manager, the most important decision for the oversight of the ABC store is your decision to appoint members to its Board. Unlike an Advisory Board, the ABC Board is a governing body, much like the Council, that must abide by rules and statutes. Their oversight and decisions have real bottom line consequences.

Let's face it, despite a very rocky start, the Valdese ABC has turned into the cash cow that was promised during the referendum drive. It took longer than expected but to ensure the steady increase in sales and the profits that go to the town, a qualified ABC Board is essential. The statutes require that ABC Board appointees have the basic attributes that make up any good board: interest in public affairs, good judgment, knowledge, ability, and good moral character.

Unlike Advisory Boards, the ABC Board oversees a 2 million dollar retail operation but is also a governmental entity. By law it functions separately in every way from the Town including financially. It functions to send its profits to the Town. It needs Board members with a retail background and/or business ownership, those with a strong understanding of finance and accounting, and those with an understanding of the workings of government. These are essential Board attributes to successfully oversee the operations of the store.

WT Sorrell has more than 45 years of local government experience. He is the most experienced member with eight years on the Board and has contributed greatly to its success through his wise governance and council. Local ABC Boards typically have little turnover if they aren't politicized. Mr. Bill Davis served more than 50 years on the Morganton Board and the only churn they've had since our store opened was replacing him when he resigned.

Experience and continuity matter. The current ABC Board already has one new member and from all accounts Mr. Steen is doing a great job as its Chairman. But his Board seat is as temporary as his Interim Town Manager status if Council continues with the tradition of appointing the Town Manager as ABC Board Chairman. If Mr. Sorrell is not reappointed, it will leave only one experienced member to shepherd two new Board members in fulfilling their responsibilities for a highly regulated business. It would be a shame not to honor Mr. Sorrell's expressed desire to serve one more term to help the new Town Manager in his or her role as ABC Board Chairman.

Mr. Sorrell counts among his greatest accomplishments the hiring of Chris Leonhardt to succeed me and I wholeheartedly agree. Chris has consistently exceeded the Board's expectations. The Town is very fortunate to have this young man leading the team and handling the complex responsibilities required of a general manager.

I ask that you vote for experience and continuity and do what is in the Town's best interest by reappointing Mr. WT Sorrell to one more term to the ABC Board. Thank you for your time and attention."

ABC BOARD – DAVID WIESE, 3318 MONTANYA VIEW DR, VALDESE: Mr. Wiese has heard great things about both candidates for the ABC Board. Mr. Wiese asked what are we looking for in people on the ABC Board and shared people with good character, high integrity, and dedicated to public service. Mr. Wiese gives Mr. Sorrell and Ms. Hoffman a check on those. Mr. Wiese believes that Mr. Sorrell has more experience in business. However, Mr. Wiese feels that a woman's influence is important and gives a different perspective. Mr. Wiese encouraged the Council to go with the newcomer, Ms. Hoffman.

CONSENT AGENDA: (enacted by one motion) Councilman Harvey requested to remove one item 6 H, Approval of Request from Old Colony Players to Sell Alcohol, from the consent agenda.

Councilwoman Lowman asked if the Baker Tilly agreement fee is \$17,000.00 and if the manager they recruit leaves within a year, we would still have to pay the full price again to find another manager. Town Attorney Tim Swanson said yes, that was correct.

APPROVED AGENDA REVIEW MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 29, 2024

APPROVED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 5, 2024

APPROVED CLOSED SESSION MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 5, 2024

APPROVED STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 15, 2024

APPROVED SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2024

APPROVED LEASE AGREEMENT AT THE OLD ROCK SCHOOL WITH DR. KYLE BARNES Lease agreement with Dr. Kyle Barnes for rental space at the Old Rock School, in the amount of \$58.00 per month.

APPROVED FY 24-25 AUDIT CONTRACT – LOWDERMILK CHURCH & CO., LLP Audit contract for FY 24-25, in the amount of \$17,900.00. The fee reflects a \$600.00 increase. A copy of the audit contract can be obtained by contacting the Clerk’s office.

APPROVED ORDINANCE DECLARING ROAD CLOSURES FOR THE TOWN OF VALDESE 2024 ANNUAL EVENTS

WHEREAS, the Town of Valdese desires to schedule an Independence Day Celebration, Annual Waldensian Festival; Treats in the Streets; and the Annual Valdese Christmas Parade; and

WHEREAS, part of US 70/Main Street in Valdese will need to be closed for each of these special events; and

WHEREAS, G.S. 20-169 provides that local authorities shall have power to provide by ordinance for the regulation of the use of highways by processions or assemblages;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Valdese pursuant to G.S. 20-169 that the following portion of the State Highway System be closed during the times set forth below:

2024 Independence Day Celebration (*Description of Closure: 1.19 mi. US 70 Main St from Hoyle St to Eldred St*) on June 28, 2024 from 5:00 PM until 12:00 AM.

2024 Waldensian Festival Kickoff Celebration (*Description of Closure: 1.19 mi. US 70 Main St from Hoyle St to Eldred St*) on August 9, 2024 from 5:00 PM until 12:00 AM.

2024 Waldensian Festival Celebration (*Description of Closure: 1.19 mi. US 70 Main St from Hoyle St to Eldred St*) on August 10, 2024 from 5:00 AM until 8:00 PM.

2024 Valdese Treats in the Streets (*Description of Closure: 1.19 mi. US 70 Main St from Hoyle St to Eldred St*) on October 31, 2024 from 3:30 PM until 6:30 PM.

2024 Valdese Christmas Parade (*Description of Closure: 1.19 mi. US 70 Main St from Hoyle St to Eldred St*) on December 7, 2024 from 9:30 AM until 12 Noon.

Signs shall be erected giving notice of the limits and times of these street closures as required by G.S. 20 169. THIS, the 4th day of March, 2024.

/s/ Charles Watts, Mayor

ATTEST:
/s/ Town Clerk

APPROVED BAKER TILLY AGREEMENT FOR TOWN MANAGER SEARCH

February 19, 2024

Mayor Charles Watts
Valdese Town Council
Town of Valdese
102 Massel Avenue South West
Valdese, NC 28690

Baker Tilly US, LLP
205 N. Michigan Avenue, 28th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601
United States of America

bakertilly.com

Delivered electronically to mayor@valdesenc.gov, GHarvey@valdesenc.gov, bsteen@valdesenc.gov, timothys@hickorylaw.com

Dear Mayor Watts:

This letter agreement (the "Agreement") documents the Town of Valdese's ("you/r" or "Client") engagement of Baker Tilly US, LLP ("we" or "Baker Tilly") to conduct an executive search for a Town Manager (the "Project"). This Agreement defines the parties' respective obligations for the Project. Our proposal dated February 8, 2024, attached hereto as Exhibit A, is incorporated by reference.

Scope, Objectives and Approach

The scope and phases of this engagement are set forth in Exhibit A.

Project Timing and Budget

1. The Project will commence upon your execution of this Agreement and will remain in effect for the period necessary for successful completion of the Project.
2. If you terminate this Agreement before completion, without cause, Baker Tilly shall invoice you for any unpaid portion of the total fee set forth in Exhibit A. Notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, in the event of termination of this Agreement for cause, Baker Tilly shall only be entitled to any unpaid portion of the total fee set forth in Exhibit "A" that is earned based on percentage of work completed as of the date of termination. For purposes of this Agreement, cause shall mean Baker Tilly's material breach of any provision of this Agreement, including Exhibit "A" incorporated herein by reference, if such breach cannot be cured or is curable and remains uncured for a period of fifteen (15) days following receipt of written notice thereof detailing such breach.

Client's Obligations

1. You agree that you are responsible for candidate selections and that you will not discriminate against any candidate on the basis of age, race, creed, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, marital status, or any other basis that is prohibited by federal, state or local law.
2. If you decide to not hire a candidate as a result of a criminal or credit history report, you agree to comply with the FCRA with regard to any pre- or post-adverse action notices and requirements.
3. You agree to respond to drafts of documents and reports in a timely manner. Failure to do so on your part will protract timelines and can negatively influence the outcome of the process.

Management's Responsibilities

It is understood that Baker Tilly will serve in an advisory capacity with Client. The Client is responsible for management decisions and functions, and for designating an individual with suitable skill, knowledge, or

experience to oversee the services we provide. The Client is responsible for evaluating the adequacy and results of the services performed and accepting responsibility for such services. The Client is responsible for establishing and maintaining internal controls, including monitoring ongoing activities.

The procedures we perform in our engagement will be heavily influenced by the representations that we receive from Client personnel. Accordingly, false representations could cause material errors to go undetected. The Client, therefore, agrees that Baker Tilly will have no liability in connection with claims based upon a failure to detect material errors resulting from false representations made to us by any Client personnel and our failure to provide an acceptable level of service due to those false representations.

The ability to provide services according to timelines established and at fees indicated will rely in part on receiving timely responses from the Client. The Client will provide information and responses to deliverables within the timeframes established in this Agreement unless subsequently agreed otherwise in writing.

The responsibility for auditing the records of Client rests with the Client's separately retained auditor and the work performed by Baker Tilly shall not include an audit or review of the records or the expression of an opinion on financial data.

Terms and Conditions

1. To the extent allowed under applicable law, the aggregate liability (including attorney's fees and all other costs) of either party and its present or former partners, principals, agents or employees to the other party related to the services performed under this Agreement shall not exceed the fees paid to Baker Tilly under the portion of this Agreement to which the claim relates, except to the extent finally determined to have resulted from the gross negligence, willful misconduct or fraudulent behavior of the at-fault party. Additionally, in no event shall either party be liable for any lost profits, lost business opportunity, lost data, consequential, special, incidental, exemplary or punitive damages, delays or interruptions arising out of or related to this Agreement even if the other party has been advised of the possibility of such damages.
2. Each party recognizes and agrees that the warranty disclaimers and liability and remedy limitations in this Agreement are material bargained for bases of this Agreement and that they have been taken into account and reflected in determining the consideration to be given by each party under this Agreement and in the decision by each party to enter into this Agreement.
3. Neither this Agreement nor any rights or obligations hereunder shall be assigned or delegated by Baker Tilly without your prior written consent. This Agreement shall be modified only by a written agreement duly executed by you and Baker Tilly. Should any of the provisions hereunder be found to be invalid, void, or voidable by a court, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.
4. Copies of all hard copy documents associated with the recruitment will be retained for three (3) years from the anniversary date of the hiring of the candidate. Retention of records beyond three (3) years must be requested in writing before the conclusion of the Project.
5. Subject to the express acknowledgement by the parties that the Client is a public body under North Carolina law and is therefore subject to the North Carolina "Public Record Act" and "Open Meetings Law", the Parties agree to maintain the confidentiality of all applicant information in accordance with G.S. 160A-168.
6. Baker Tilly US, LLP is an independent member of Baker Tilly International. Baker Tilly International Limited is an English company. Baker Tilly International provides no professional services to clients. Each member firm is a separate and independent legal entity, and each describes itself as such. Baker Tilly US, LLP is not Baker Tilly International's agent and does not have the authority to bind Baker Tilly International or act on Baker Tilly International's behalf. None of Baker Tilly International, Baker Tilly US, LLP, nor any of the other member firms of Baker Tilly International has any liability for each other's acts or omissions. The name Baker Tilly and its associated logo is used under license from Baker Tilly International Limited.

[Signature Page to Follow]

Acknowledgment

If this Agreement correctly sets forth your understanding, please sign below and return one copy to us for our files. We look forward to working with you on this important project.

Sincerely,

Anne Lewis, Practice Leader | Managing Director

Client Signature:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

APPROVED RESOLUTION AMENDING THE 2024 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

TOWN OF VALDESE

RESOLUTION AMENDING 2024 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 2-1011 of the Town of Valdese Code of Ordinances, there shall be a regular meeting of the council at the town hall, on the first Monday in each month, at 6:00 p.m., unless another place, date or time shall be designated.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Valdese Town Council adopts the following Meeting Schedule for 2024:

<i>Council Chambers, Unless Noted</i>			<i>Council Chambers, Unless Noted</i>	
2024 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS			PUBLIC FORUMS AND REVIEW MEETINGS (Informal review of agendas/town news)	
January 8			January 29	Review Feb Agenda
February 5			February 26	Review Mar Agenda
March 4			March 18	Citizen Budget Priorities (WPCOG Strategic Planning Results)
April 1			March 25	Review April Agenda
April 22	Council Budget Review		April 29	Review May Agenda
May 6			May 29	Review June Agenda
June 3				
June 24	2024-25 Budget Hearing		(June 24 for July Mtg. is a Public Meeting)	
August 5			July 29	Review August agenda
September 9			Sept 4	Review Sept Agenda
October 7			September 30	Review Oct Agenda
November 4			Oct 28	Review Nov Agenda
December 2			Nov 25	Review Dec Agenda

This 4th day of March 2024.

/s/ Charles Watts, Mayor

APPROVED REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS(RFQ) FOR PERMANENT POOL STRUCTURE Staff will submit an RFQ for the Jimmy C. Draughn Aquatic Center Structure.

APPROVED BUDGET AMENDMENT - BAKER TILLY FOR THE TOWN MANAGER SEARCH

Valdese Town Council Meeting

Monday, March 4, 2024

Budget Amendment #

11-10

Subject:

Town Manager search

Description:

This amendment covers the cost of the Manager search by Baker Tilly

Proposed Action:

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the Town of Valdese that, pursuant to Section 15 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following amendment is made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024:

Section I:

The following revenues available to the Town will be increased:

Account	Description	Decrease/ Debit	Increase/ Credit
10.3990.000	General Fund Balance Appr.		17,000
Total		\$0	\$17,000

Amounts appropriated for expenditure are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
10.4200.040	Professional Services	17,000	
Total		\$17,000	\$0

BA

Section II:

Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board, to the Budget Officer and the Finance Officer for their direction.

Councilman Harvey made a motion to approve the aforementioned items on the Consent Agenda minus Item 6 H(Approval of Request from Old Colony Players to Sell Alcohol), seconded by Councilman Ogle. The vote was unanimous.

End Consent Agenda

ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA: One item 6 H, Approval of Request from Old Colony Players to Sell Alcohol

APPROVED REQUEST FROM OLD COLONY PLAYERS TO SELL ALCOHOL Councilman Harvey asked to remove this and wanted to know where they would be selling the alcohol. Edyth Potter, General Manager of Old Colony Players, shared that they have been selling alcohol at some of the shows in the past and have never had a problem with it. Ms. Potter said that they monitor people according to the ABC guidelines

and, stop selling after intermission, and can only sell one drink per person at a time. Ms. Potter noted that the request to sell alcohol was sent by the board of the OCP for the following events:

- Jimmy Buffet's Escape to Margaritaville showing April 25-27 and May 2-4, 2024, at the Fred B Cranford Amphitheatre
- From This Day Forward showing Fridays and Saturdays from July 12-August 10, 2024 at the Fred B Cranford Amphitheatre
- Assassins, a dinner theatre showing 23, 24, 25, 30, 31 and September 1, 2024, in the Waldensian Room at the Old Rock School
- The Legend of Sleepy Hollow showing October 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 31 and Nov 1 & 2, 2024 at the Fred B Cranford Amphitheatre
- The Last 5 Years, a dinner theatre showing February 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 2025, in the Waldensian Room at the Old Rock School.
- Something Rotten, April 24-26 and May 1-3, 2025, at the Fred B Cranford Amphitheatre.

Ms. Potter would not be opposed to removing the sale of alcohol at From This Day Forward, but she knows that there are patrons who want to have a glass of wine while they are watching the show. Councilman Harvey asked what kind of alcohol was sold and how much they cleared in sales. Ms. Potter shared that they sell beer, wine, and cider; during Shrek, they made around \$100.00, which is not a lot. Councilman Harvey asked if you had the same amount contributed instead of selling the alcohol would that help? Ms. Potter said that they decided to sell alcohol because it was a request from the patrons, as many other theaters do in the area, not to make money by selling it. Ms. Potter said they do not sell alcohol at children's and Christmas shows.

Councilman Harvey made a motion to approve the request from Old Colony Players to sell alcohol, Councilwoman Lowman seconded.

Councilwoman Ward noted that if anything is sold on the property where the Trail of Faith is, she will have to say no. Ms. Potter said that the Town property is leased to OCP and Trail of Faith, which is two separate entities.

VOTE: Councilwoman Lowman – Yes, Councilman Harvey – Yes, Councilman Ogle – Yes, Councilman Mears – Yes, Councilwoman Ward - No. The motion carried.

OLD COLONY PLAYERS Edyth Potter, General Manager of Old Colony Players presented to Council a year in review:





The mission of Old Colony Players is to preserve Waldensian cultural heritage, promote quality theatre, and celebrate diverse artistic expression.

Old Colony Players is a 501-c3 non-profit corporation



Beauty and the Beast Jr

At the Old Rock School
January 2023
30 amazing Actors
All under the age of 18
18 of which were new to OCP
or to the stage
2109 Patrons who came to see this show
Over 60% were from outside of Burke
County

OUR 2023 SEASON

Crazy Little Thing Called Death

A murder mystery done in conjunction with
Waldensian Heritage Venues
February 2023
2 sold out performances
Locally written



Shrek, The Musical

April 2023
At the Fred B Cranford Amphitheatre
30 performers, 7 new to OCP
or to the stage
1006 patrons
Over 70% of audiences were from
outside of Valdece



From This Day Forward 2023

56th consecutive season
At the Fred B Cranford Amphitheatre
Making us the longest consecutively running
outdoor drama in NC
2 rain out nights
Over 600 patrons and volunteers attending
From many places across the country.
35 cast and crew- 11 new to OCP
Our only "Paid" show for actors.

OCP Summer Camp- You in the Spotlight June 2023

25 students, 6 amazing teachers
In music, dance and drama
Hoping to expand our reach to the
youth of the community
Subsidized with a grant from the
Community Foundation of Burke



"Psych"
September 2023
A hilarious dinner theatre experience in the Waldensian Room
3 dinner performances, 1 matinee
150 attendees
50% from out of Burke County



Young Frankenstein, the Musical
October 2023
At the Fred B Cranford Amphitheatre
6 performances/ 500 patrons
19 performers- 4 new to OCP





It's a Wonderful Life
Dec 2023
At the Old Rock School
7 performances –
700 patrons and volunteers
17 performers- 8 new faces




The Little Mermaid, Jr
January/February 2024

1300 Patrons
37 youth under the age of 18 performing
13 of whom had either never performed or never performed with OCP



The Diary of Anne Frank
Runs March 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, and 16
Performed in Pioneer Hall
At the Waldensian Presbyterian Church



- We are proud to be the only continuously running community theatre in Burke County and to find ways to bring people to Valdese to enjoy not only our shows but the rest of the wonderful things Valdese has to offer.

- Where do our audiences come from?

Over 75% of our audiences are from outside of Valdese, making OCP a destination attraction for those who do not know our wonderful town.

For the Outdoor drama, we have had people from all over the country and even overseas.

For our other productions, patrons regularly come from as far as Asheville, Winston Salem and Charlotte and every point in-between.

- Where do our actors come from?
Our actors are a diverse group.

Actors travel from Hickory, Lenoir, Boone, Marion, Cherryville, Lincolnton, Shelby and Statesville as well as many people in our local acting community.

We have a wonderful core group who work with almost every show, but we have had 45 people this year alone who have joined our casts and crews who had never worked with Old Colony Players before.

As a community theatre, all actors and most of the crew are volunteers. Each of them give at least 150 hours of their time at the theatre per production.

From This Day Forward is only production for which actors are paid. Pay range is from \$150-\$400 for the whole summer

- How much does it cost to put on a production?

Depending on the production, the rights run anywhere from \$120-\$285 per performance.

The average cost of rights/music for a major musical is over \$4500.

Add to that the cost of production staff, costuming, sets, musicians, and props, and productions cost anywhere from \$3000- \$10,000 to produce.

On top of show costs, of course the regular costs of doing business still apply.

Revenues from shows only pay a portion of our operating costs, so we are incredibly dependent and grateful to our community for support.

We are grateful to our members who give freely to enhance our mission, and to the businesses who we partner with to generate mutually beneficial revenue.

What's new at OCP

- We have done a major upgrade to the amphitheatre stage structure thanks to a generous grant from Rostan Family Foundation and continue to upgrade our sound system for our patrons.



- We were the recipient of the "hometown neighbors" grant from Bimbo Bakeries of Valdese.

They added a beautiful concession stand for the amphitheatre and a concrete pad around the bottom of the tech shack.



- We are continuing to attract actors and audiences from outside our immediate area and are excited about all the new people we bring into our community.
- We are seeking to continue to bring quality theatre and a well-rounded season that brings our community together and attracts new people to Valdese to enjoy not only our shows, but the rest of what Valdese has to offer.
- We are looking forward to the upgrades at the Old Rock School which will bring in new excitement for our facilities

What's Next?

 <p>JIMMY BUFFETT'S <i>Escape to Margaritaville</i> Presented by Old Colony Players April 25, 26, 27 & May 2, 3, 4 - 2024</p>	 <p><i>From This Day Forward</i> Presented by Old Colony Players July 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27 and August 2, 3, 9 & 10, 2024</p>	 <p><i>ASASIB</i> A musical dinner theatre experience by Sondheim. Rated R for content. August 22, 23, 24 & 29, 30 & 31, 2024</p>	 <p><i>THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW</i> October 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 31 and November 1 & 2, 2024</p>
 <p><i>34TH STREET THE MUSICAL</i> Dec 6-8 and 12-15, 2024</p>	 <p>A Fantastic Disney, Jr. Production Still to be announced. Jan 23-25 and Jan 30- Feb 2, 2025 Geared to our youngest audiences and performed by a cast of performers 18 years old and younger.</p>	 <p>February 2025 <i>10 YEARS</i></p>	 <p><i>SOMETHING ROTTEN!</i> April 24-26 and May 1-3 2025 At the Fred B Cranford Amphitheatre</p>



Old Colony Players

Thank You
To the Town Council,
The town employees
The Old Rock School and Tourism department Staff
And especially, our community for all your support.
Without you, our "Dreams" would not be possible
and our stories would remain silent.
YOU are the community in community theatre.
OldColonyPlayers.com

ARBOR DAY PROCLAMATION Mayor Watts read the following proclamation:

ARBOR DAY 2024 PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, in 1872, J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees; and

WHEREAS, the holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, 2024 is the 152nd Anniversary of the holiday and Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world; and

WHEREAS, trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cut our heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce life-giving oxygen and provide habitat for wildlife; and

WHEREAS, trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires, and beautify our community; and

WHEREAS, trees, wherever they are planted, are a source of joy and spiritual renewal; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Valdese has received the prestigious Tree City USA award for the past 36 years.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Charles Watts, Mayor of the Town of Valdese, North Carolina, do hereby proclaim Friday, March 15, 2024, as the 152nd Anniversary celebration of; and

FURTHER, I urge all citizens to plant trees to gladden the heart and promote the well-being of this and future generations.

This 4th day of March, 2024.

/s/ Charles Watts, Mayor

APPROVED WPCOG CONTRACT TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN Alison Adams, WPCOG Community & Regional Planning Director, said that nothing has changed with the presentation that was presented at the pre-agenda meeting and only moved the date on the contract so they could hit the ground running on July 1. Councilman Harvey asked if it would still cost \$23,000, and Ms. Adams said that was correct. Councilwoman Lowman thought this was approved at the February 16, 2024 meeting. Mr. Swanson said yes, it was approved subject to his review, which has been completed, and revisions have been accepted by WPCOG, however, there was a request to put it on the agenda. Mr. Swanson said the Council could move on to the next item if there were no other questions.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AND
TOWN OF VALDESE
FOR THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
VALDESE PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING
MAY 1, 2024 – JUNE 30, 2025

This AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") is made and entered into on this the ____ day of _____, 2024, by and between the Western Piedmont Council of Governments ("Planning Agency") and Town of Valdese, North Carolina ("Local Government") (each individually a "Party", and collectively, the "Parties").

WHEREAS, the Planning Agency is empowered to provide technical assistance by the North Carolina General Statutes and by resolution passed by the Planning Agency on April 17, 1972. Technical assistance shall consist of the provision of services as described in **EXHIBIT "A"**, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference; and

WHEREAS, the Local Government has requested the Planning Agency to provide such technical assistance to the Local Government; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Agency desires to cooperate with the Local Government in every way possible to the end that the proposed activities are carried out in an efficient and professional manner.

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties hereto do mutually agree as follows:

1. **Purpose of Agreement.** The essential purpose of this Agreement will be to identify the current state of the parks and recreation facilities in the Town of Valdese and make reasonable recommendations to address the current and future parks and recreation needs of the Town of Valdese. The master parks and recreation plan contemplated in this Agreement will only be completed after a thorough inventory by the Planning Agency of existing parks, facilities, research on current park and recreation trends and standards, and input from the public, staff and council.
 2. **Personnel.** That during the period of this Contract, the Planning Agency will furnish the necessary trained personnel to the Local Government to accomplish the purpose of this Agreement outlined in Section 1 above within the time for performance outlined in Section 6 below.
 3. **Travel/Printing.** Normal travel and training for Planning Agency staff is included in the scope of services provided under this Agreement and no additional travel is expected unless requested by the Local Government. The Local Government will pay for expenses related to conferences, conventions, seminars, or other unexpected expenses related to the Local Government's planning program, or if it is beneficial to both parties, the costs will
-

be shared on an agreed-upon ratio.

The Local Government will also pay for expenses related to printing of report(s), mailing other costs not related to normal travel and staffing costs associated with personnel furnished by the Planning Agency.

4. **Compensation.** The Local Government will pay the Planning Agency an amount of \$23,000 (twenty-three thousand dollars) for all services related to administration of the project as defined in the attached Scope of Services, **EXHIBIT "A"**. It is expressly understood and agreed that total compensation shall not exceed the sum specified without prior approval of both agencies. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the work will be completed each quarter. The Planning Agency will invoice the Local Government after July 1, 2024, within the fiscal budget year of 2025, at a rate of \$5,750 (Five thousand, seven hundred and fifty dollars) per quarter based on percentage of work completed.
5. **Termination/Modifications.** The Local Government may terminate this Agreement, with or without cause, by giving the Planning Agency a thirty days' written notice. The Planning Agency may terminate this Agreement for default under Section 4 of this Agreement if such default is not cured within sixty (60) days from the Local Government's receipt of written notice specifying such default and demanding that the same be cured. In the event this Agreement is terminated, all finished or unfinished documents, data, studies, surveys, drawings, maps, models, photographs, and reports prepared under this Agreement shall, at the option of the Local Government, become its property, and the Planning Agency shall be entitled to receive just and equitable compensation for any satisfactory work completed on such documents and other materials in direct proportion to the extent of services actually completed.
6. **Time of Performance.** The Planning Agency shall ensure that all services required herein should be completed and all required reports, maps, and documents submitted during the period beginning May 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025. Time is of the essence.
7. **Interest of Members, Officers, or Employees of the Planning Agency, Members of the Local Government, or Other Public Officials.** No member, officer, or employee of the Planning Agency or its agents; no member of the governing body of the locality in which the program is situated; and no other public official of such locality or localities who exercise any functions or responsibilities with respect to the program during his tenure or for one year thereafter, shall have any financial interest, either direct or indirect, in any contract or subcontract, or the proceeds thereof, for work to be performed in connection with the program assisted under this Agreement. Immediate family members of said members, officers, employees, and officials are similarly barred from having any financial interest in the program. The Planning Agency shall incorporate, or cause to be incorporated, in all such contracts or subcontracts, a provision prohibiting such interest pursuant to the purpose of this section.
8. **Nondiscrimination Clause.** No person in the United States shall on the grounds of race,

color, national origin, or sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination with any program or activity funded.

9. **Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended.** No qualified person shall on the basis of age be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity which receives or benefits from federal financial assistance.
10. **Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.** No qualified disabled person shall, on the basis of handicap be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity which receives or benefits from federal financial assistance.
11. **Access to Records and Record Retainage.** All official project records and documents must be maintained during the operation of this project and for a period of three years following closeout.
12. **Amendment.** This Agreement and each of the terms and provisions hereof may only be amended, modified, waived, or supplemented by an agreement in writing signed by each parties.

Signatures Appear on the Following Page.

March 4, 2024, MB#32

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Planning Agency and the Local Government have executed this Agreement as of the date first above written.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:
THE TOWN OF VALDESE,
a North Carolina Municipal Corporation

ATTEST: _____ (Seal)
CHARLES WATTS, Mayor

JESSICA LAIL, Town Clerk

This document has been pre-audited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.

BO WEICHEL, Chief Financial Officer

PLANNING AGENCY:
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF
GOVERNMENTS

ANTHONY STARR, Executive Director

WPCOG Board Chair

EXHIBIT "A"

**TOWN OF VALDESE
PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING
SCOPE OF SERVICES - WORK PROGRAM
MAY 1, 2024 – JUNE 30, 2025**

The following work program and budget are presented as descriptive of the work and dollar amounts requested in the Agreement concerning planning activities by the Western Piedmont Council of Governments ("WPCOG") for the Town of Valdese.

Work Program Process:

1. WPCOG will locate and clearly identify existing park and recreation facilities and, with citizen, staff and council input, evaluate and make recommendations regarding priorities for the improvement and/or expansion of these facilities. The inventory of existing parks and recreation should be developed in GIS data sets. The data sets will be used to generate maps within the master plan.
 2. WPCOG will identify, analyze, and make recommendations on how the Town of Valdese might partner with other agencies and municipalities to maximize and leverage resources for the Town's citizens and programs.
 3. WPCOG will identify and evaluate current utilized property and undeveloped facilities or open spaces owned by the Town of Valdese and make recommendations as to potential for utilization to serve the community through further recreation services and provide general cost estimates for these projects.
 4. Using relevant data from the existing parks and recreation plan and input from citizens, staff and council, WPCOG will develop objective criteria, evaluate, and make recommendations for future priorities for new land acquisition and park/facility construction. Recommendations should include prioritization of both land acquisition and facility construction.
 5. WPCOG will identify potential greenway connectors along right-of-ways and provide cost estimates for these projects.
 6. WPCOG will evaluate current and projected demographic, sociological, and equity factors pertinent to the Town of Valdese, including population composition, population growth projections and trends, economic factors, and land use patterns and attempt to identify trends that might affect the delivery of recreation and leisure services in the Town of Valdese and make recommendations on how to address them.
 7. WPCOG will identify existing programming, events, tourism, and maintenance operations and will identify growth trends related to current and future programming, events, tourism, and maintenance operations and make strategic recommendations on how to navigate enhancement or expansion of these services.
 8. WPCOG will identify personnel benchmarks and growth patterns, provide prioritization, and need justifications for each personnel addition, and provide analysis on how the Town can elevate revenue resources directly related to the essential job function of each position.
 9. WPCOG will administer a digital survey that measures the public interest in Parks and recreation as well as the public's desire for future recreational opportunities. WPCOG
-

will meet with Parks and Recreation staff to finalize the digital survey content prior to release.

10. WPCOG will collect the results from the public input survey.
11. WPCOG will hold two public input meetings. The first meeting will be used to collect information from citizens, staff and council. The second meeting will take place after the plan has been developed and will be used to obtain input about the plan and its recommendations. The Town will secure the location and will publicize the public input meetings. In addition, WPCOG will schedule and hold such other meetings with staff and council (or its committees) to obtain the input and feedback necessary to identify future needs, such as new or modified facilities, programs, and/or events and to develop the plan.
12. WPCOG will write the plan as outlined in the scope.
13. WPCOG will review the draft plan with the Recreation Director and staff to address any concerns or needed changes.
14. WPCOG will present the final document to the Town Council. After reviewing and providing input, the Town Council will be asked to adopt the plan.

The scope of 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:

- 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 the Council's review).

-
- One final presentation to Council for adoption
-

CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE/BOARD APPOINTMENTS Mayor Watts went over the rules of nominating a candidate. Mayor Watts said that he would announce each nomination as received, one at a time.

Facilities Review Committee – Councilman Harvey nominated Mr. Greg Refour – 1-year term, Councilman Harvey nominated Mr. Jerry Hyde – 2-year term, Councilman Harvey nominated Ms. Tessa Collinson – 2-year term, Councilman Harvey nominated Mr. Roger Heavner – 3-year term, and Councilwoman Ward nominated Mr. Glenn Harvey – 3-year term.

Councilman Ogle made a motion to accept all the nominees for the Facilities Review Committee, seconded by Councilwoman Ward. The vote was unanimous.

Drug and Homeless Advisory Task Force(1-year terms) – Councilwoman Ward nominated Rev. Josh Lail, Councilwoman Ward nominated Sgt. William Beck, Councilwoman Ward nominated Ms. Annette Skidmore, Councilwoman Ward nominated Mr. Mark Queen, and Councilman Harvey nominated Councilwoman Heather Ward.

Councilman Harvey made a motion to accept all the nominees for the Drug and Homeless Advisory Task Force, seconded by Councilman Ogle. The vote was unanimous.

Efficiency Task Force(1-year terms) – Councilman Ogle nominated Mr. Rick McClurd, Councilman Ogle nominated Mr. Tim Page, Councilman Ogle nominated Mr. Eddie Perrou, Councilman Ogle nominated Mr. Steve Perry, and Councilman Harvey nominated Mr. Gary Ogle.

Councilman Harvey made a motion to accept all the nominees for the Efficiency Task Force, seconded by Councilman Mears. The vote was unanimous.

Valdese ABC Board – Councilman Harvey nominated Ms. Angela Hoffman, and Councilman Mears nominated Mr. WT Sorrell.

Councilman Harvey made a motion to appoint Ms. Angela Hoffman to the ABC Board, seconded by Councilwoman Ward. Councilman Harvey – Yes, Councilman Ogle – Yes, Councilwoman Ward – Yes, Motion carried and Angela Hoffman was appointed to the Valdese ABC Board.

APPROVED CAPITAL PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCE – WATER PLANT UPGRADES PROJECT

Assistant Town Manager/CFO Bo Weichel presented the Capital Project Budget Ordinance for the Water Plant upgrades project. Councilman Harvey shared that they met with one of our local manufacturers recently that had concerns about their water. Councilman Harvey wanted to go on record that they were heard and that we would be addressing this. Water Resources Director Greg Padgett said the Water Plant upgrades have nothing to do with the concerns Councilman Harvey is speaking of. Mr. Padgett said it was a distribution issue and that staff is making process changes to address it. Councilman Mears shared that this grant will take care of many future expenses the Town would have had to take care of, which is a blessing to receive. Councilman Harvey asked when we would get the money. Mr. Weichel said they would not give us the money until we started the work, and then it would be reimbursed quarterly. Mr. Weichel noted that we must spend the money first and then get it back.

TOWN OF VALDESE
 WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES PROJECT
 CAPITAL PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCE
 DWI PROJECT NO.: SRP-D-134-0038

Be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Valdese that pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following project ordinance is hereby adopted.

Section 1. The project authorized is the **Water Treatment Plant Upgrades Project (SRP-D-134-0038)** consisting of the construction or alteration and improvement of raw water pumps, raw water piping and control valves, modification of the flash-mix basins and replacement of the flash mixers, replacing the existing flocculators, modification of the existing chemical feed systems, adding tube settlers to the sedimentation basins, rehabilitation of the existing filters, adding an air-scour system to the existing filters, process and sample line piping, miscellaneous site work and all related appurtenances. This project's scope of work is intended to improve the viability of aged existing treatment facilities and in conjunction with a corresponding project for a water line interconnect with the City of Lenoir.

The project is funded through a North Carolina State budget appropriation of \$7,000,000 to be administered by the Division of Water Infrastructure (DWI). DWI charges a 3% mandatory fee to appropriate the funding which is taken upfront and reflected in this project ordinance.

Section 2. The officers of this unit are hereby directed to proceed with the capital project within the terms of the program ordinance and the budget contained herein.

Section 3. The following revenues are anticipated to be available to contribute to this project:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Assigned Account Number</u>
State Appropriation	6,790,000	54.3480.000

	<u>\$ 6,790,000</u>	

Section 4. The following amounts are appropriated for the project:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Assigned Account Number</u>
Construction	\$ 5,357,900	54.8100.760
Contingency	479,100	54.8100.900
Design	488,000	54.8100.040
Bidding & Award	28,000	54.8100.043
Funding Admin	40,000	54.8100.041
Construction Services	397,000	54.8100.045

	<u>\$ 6,790,000</u>	

Section 5. The finance officer is hereby directed to maintain within the Project Fund sufficient specific detailed accounting records to provide the accounting to town council required by the program procedures, loan agreement(s), grant agreement(s) and state regulations.

Section 6. Funds may be advanced from the Utility Fund for the purpose of making payments as due.

Section 7. The finance officer is directed to report quarterly on the financial status of each project element in Section 4 and on the total revenues received or claimed.

Section 8. The budget officer is directed to include a detailed analysis of the past and future cost and revenues on this project in every budget submission made to this board.

Section 9: Copies of this project ordinance shall be made available to the budget officer and the finance officer for direction in carrying out this project.

Adopted this 4th day of March, 2024.

Charles Watts, Mayor

Jessical Lail, Town Clerk

Councilwoman Lowman made a motion to approve the Capital Project Budget Ordinance DWI Project No.:SRP-D-134-0038, seconded by Councilman Mears. The vote was unanimous.

FY 24/25 BUDGET PREPARATION DISSCUSSION Interim Town Manager Bryan Steen shared that you have a certain amount of money to work with and have to find a way to go as far as possible. Mr. Steen noted that we are waiting for information on the health insurance premiums and retirement contributions, as well as the Strategic Plans and things you would like to see move forward.

MOTION: Councilman Harvey made a motion for the Town Manager to apply the following guidelines in the development of the Town of Valdese FY budget 2024-2025: 1. The Town of Valdese shall levy ad valorem taxes on property at a rate not exceeding 41.5 cents per \$100.00 of assessed value, 2. The budget shall be prepared such that there is no reduction in essential services; 3. The budget shall implement and account for a definitive fee differential between Valdese residents and non-residents for all fee-based services offered by the Town of Valdese. Seconded by Councilwoman Ward.

DISCUSSION: Councilman Harvey shared that we have had a lot of review of the Towns budget and taxes over the past year. Burke County did a reassessment, the revenue neutral rate for Valdese was 41.5 cents, the average property assessment went up about 43%, and then Valdese sets the tax rate. Councilman Harvey said that our Council set the rate at 51.5 cents, 24% higher than the revenue-neutral rate. Councilman Harvey talked to hundreds of people and it has been very difficult for them. Councilman Harvey noted that at last year's budget retreat, staff explained that we needed \$395,000 of new revenue that would

come from the 51.5 cent tax rate to pay for paving, new entrance signs, and part-time lifeguards and firemen. Councilman Harvey said that Burke County is doing a good job of collecting taxes, and it turns out that we will end up with over \$600,000. Councilman Harvey said the extra \$220,000 was enough to pick up the Town's make-up portion of the cost overrun at the Old Rock School. Councilman Harvey reminded everyone that the Council has agreed to go through with some kind of permanent pool structure, which will be paid for out of reserve funds. Councilman Harvey also said the Town has been saving and allocating \$407,000 yearly to pay the debt service on a 7.2 million USDA Loan that was preliminarily approved, but now that has been canceled, so we have that money we can use for repaving. Lastly, we have \$150,000 a year of Powell Bill funds from the State that can be used for repaving. Councilman Harvey stated that we are in good shape, do not have to cut services and have a good tax rate we are proposing.

Councilwoman Lowman said that we are going to have to do something to the Public Safety Building, so we will need some money to do that. Councilwoman Lowman asked Mr. Steen his thoughts. Mr. Steen said that until we get hard numbers, it is speculation. Councilman Harvey said that we have a fund set aside for the Public Safety Building. Mr. Weichel shared that we have 1.5 million in the project fund, but if we take away the \$407,000, we will not have anything for future payments. Councilman Mears feels it would be wise to keep contributing to that fund to build up those reserves. He supports lower taxes for our citizens as long as we do not cut essential services. Councilman Harvey encouraged citizens to send the Interim Manager ways the Town can save money and reminded everyone that we now have an Efficiency Task Force to help find ways to save money.

Mr. Steen asked for consideration in amending the motion to include a two-day budget workshop towards the end of April. Councilman Harvey is not in favor of amending the motion and it is clear that the Town Manager's responsibility is to bring a budget. Councilwoman Lowman feels we need a budget retreat and asked staff to send some dates.

VOTE: The vote was unanimous.

Councilman Mears made a motion to add two days to our calendar to discuss the nature of preparing this budget for 2024, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman.

DISCUSSION: Councilwoman Ward would like to have the session but would like the retreat to be more discussion vs. just listening. She feels it would provide her with a better understanding.

VOTE: Councilman Ogle – Yes, Councilwoman Ward – Yes, Councilman Mears – Yes, Councilwoman Lowman – Yes, Councilman Harvey – No, Motion carried.

BUDGET RETREAT DATES: Councilwoman Ward made a motion to set the dates for the budget meetings as dictated by the Town Manager, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman.

VOTE: Councilman Ogle – Yes, Councilwoman Ward – Yes, Councilman Mears – Yes, Councilwoman Lowman – Yes, Councilman Harvey – No, Motion carried.

INTERIM MANAGER'S REPORT: OCP Production: The Diary of Anne Frank, Show Dates March 7, 8, 9, 14, 15 & 16, 2024, 7:30 p.m.; visit www.oldcolonyplayers.com for more information and to purchase tickets.

Next Council Meeting – Citizens Budget Priorities(WPCOG Strategic Plan Results), scheduled Monday, March 18, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Council Chambers, Valdese Town Hall

Next Agenda Review Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 25, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Council Chambers, Valdese Town Hall

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS: Councilman Harvey shared his comments to the Town Clerk: "ON BEHALF OF THREE NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS – A BRIEF, STATE-OF-THE-ART REPORT FOR THE 1ST QUARTER OF 2024. IN A WORD – "CHANGE!"

- SIX FIRST-TERMERS – THE FIRST TIME SINCE VALDESE BECAME A TOWN
- JESSICA LAIL - LONGEST SERVING BUT YOUNGEST
 - ATTENTION TO DETAIL - EVERY CHALLENGE WITH A SMILE - DOES EVERYTHING ON TIME – PUBLISHED 281-PAGE BOOK ON FRIDAY
- ATTORNEY TIM SWANSON – STEADY AND COMPETENT HAND ON THE TILLER
 - KNOWS THE LAW – ENSURES SMOOTH AND ORDERLY MEETINGS
- INTERIM MANAGER STEEN – MENTOR TO YOUNGER STAFF – BUDGET!!
- WE APPRECIATE MAYOR WATTS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS LOWMAN AND MEARS FOR WELCOMING AND TOLERATING US NEWCOMERS
- THIS ENTIRE NEW COUNCIL INHERITED CHALLENGES, IGNORED FOR 8-10 YRS
 - PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING - STRUCTURAL ISSUES REPORTED IN 2010
 - 24-YR OLD POOL BUBBLE - TOO ROTTEN TO INFLATE IN 2024
 - ORA RENOVATION BIDS - \$500,000 OVER ALLOCATION
- WE THANK ALL CITIZENS OF VALDESE FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND PARTICIPATION IN HELPING THE FIRST-EVER CITIZEN-BASED STRATEGIC PLAN.
 - TUNE IN TWO WEEKS FROM TONIGHT WHEN THE FINAL RESULTS ARE PRESENTED AS GUIDANCE WITH THE FISCAL YEAR 20-25 BUDGET.
- ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE COUNCIL, A SPECIAL THANKS TO SIXTEEN INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE STEPPED FORWARD TO SERVE ON TOWN COMMITTEES.
- IT IS MY PLEASURE TO REPORT THAT THE FACILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE, WILL MEET IN FULL THIS WEEK, TO GET TO WORK ON A MODERN AND SAFE STRUCTURE FOR OUR POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS, FURTHER...
- THREE MEMBERS STARTED JOINED A SPECIAL, INFORMAL MEETING ON FEBRUARY 1ST WITH THE STAFF AND ARCHITECT TO REVIEW THE OLD ROCK SCHOOL RENOVATION PLANS.

AS COUNCILMAN MEARS AND MR STEEN WILL ATTEST, IT WAS AT THAT MEETING THAT THE TOWN RECEIVED THE GUARANTEE TO ENSURE THAT \$150,000 WOULD BE RAISED TO COVER THE NEW AUDITORIUM SEATS. THE REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE PLANS, LED TO A FURTHER COST REDUCTION OF OVER \$130,000.

IN SUMMARY, THE ORS RENOVATION AND THE POOL BUBBLE FIX ARE UNDERWAY. NOW OUR TOWN CAN GET ON WITH A REDUCTION IN PROPERTY TAXES, ADDITIONAL STREET REPAVING, AND A FIX FOR THE PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING.

THANK YOU EACH AND EVERY CITIZEN FOR ALL YOU DO TO HELP ENSURE THAT VALDESE WILL ALWAYS BE THE GREATEST SMALL TOWN IN NORTH CAROLINA!"

ADJOURNMENT: At 8:10 p.m., there being no further business to come before Council, Councilwoman Ward made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Ogle. The vote was unanimous.

The next regular Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 1, 2024 at Valdese Town Hall.

Town Clerk

Mayor

jl