

Town of Lake Lure – Utilities Board

- Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting – July 2, 2019

The Utility Advisory Board held their regular meeting at the Town of Lake Lure Municipal Center on Tuesday, July 2, 2019.

Members Present:

Richard Glassen
David Diorio
Don Cason
John Chapman

Bob Cameron – Liaison

Others Present:

Shannon Baldwin – Town Manager
Linda Ward – Board Clerk
Brad Burton – Community Dev.

Members Absent: Wayne Hyatt

General Meeting Actions

Call to Order – Co-Chairman Richard Glassen called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

Town Manager Shannon Baldwin asked the board to consider adding an item to the Old Business as ‘a’ on the agenda concerning Wi-Fi. David Diorio made a motion to add Wi-Fi to Old Business, John Chapman seconded the motion which carried 3- 0.

Consider Approval of the June 4 Regular Meeting Minutes – David Diorio made a motion to approve the minutes, John Chapman seconded and the motion carried 3 - 0. (Don Cason came after the minutes were approved)

Old Business

a. Wi-Fi – Town Manager Shannon told the board that he asked Brad Burton to come and bring the board up to date on what he has been working on concerning Wi-Fi in the downtown area, including the RFP that the Town sent out recently.

Mr. Burton briefed the board about the ongoing problem with Town Center Wi-Fi issues. He mentioned that he met with Keith Conover, who works with the State of NC IT Department and represents the Western part of the State in assisting local municipalities and non-profits to enhance their IT services. Specifically in context of their Wi-Fi, broadband, and so forth to bring these into hard to reach areas. Mr. Burton said that the meeting with him was very beneficial in finding out

what was available in this area. He said that Mr. Conover referred to Lake Lure as an untapped gem. That there was potential here for plenty of enhancements and opportunities, and grants to be written enhancements here. Mr. Burton said he let Mr. Conover know that our biggest concern is being able to provide citizens and visitors with 21st Century ability to communicate, with things as simple as locating a restaurant. He let him know that our service right now is very sporadic and we don't know where to start to find the services we need. Brad said he is also working with Matthew Will, Project manager for Dewberry Engineering, who is working with ATT First Net, which is a federally mandated post 911 program that facilitates emergency communications. They are actively working on placing a facility here and currently working on easements for a certain site. It is complicated and not sure when that is going to happen. Mr. Burton said that he sent out an RFP to see what we can find and the interest we can generate, trying to get something going, now.

Mr. Baldwin explained to the board that an RFP is just asking for information, it is not a contract or agreement. Just responses to specific goals and objectives in the RFP. We get educated when we send out RFP's, and have been advised to send out this one. He explained to the board that the Town is looking at the current contract with the current provider to be sure that we are not in violation of that. Pangea, Skyrunner, and Northland Cable are the providers that received the RFP that was sent out to. Shannon said we are just trying to figure out how to provide these services to our town and visitors of it as quickly as possible. Once we get the information, it will be collated and brought back to the UAB Board.

Bob Keith got up and spoke to the board briefly about the Chamber working right along and steadily concerning this subject and would like to see a spirit of cooperation in this with the Town and the Chamber, as the Chamber wants better service just as the Town does.

Mr. Baldwin mentioned that the Town had an agreement and gave the chamber \$10,000 and then were to give another \$10,000 to the chamber for them to help assess the town's needs and enter into an agreement to secure specific goals and objectives. He said that the Chamber's Executive Director Laura Doster had been in a couple of times to see what some of the Town's needs were, in which Wi-Fi was one of them. But that was as far as that went. He said that this RFP is just to gather information and that we are focusing on Morse Park, Beach, and Town Center area.

Russ Pitts spoke briefly about the problems with Broadband and also what Pangea can do. He apologized for not keeping the board up to date on what they are and have been doing to help with this issue. He mentioned that the RFP does have some things that are not about Wi-Fi and are directly against the agreement with Pangea which goes through 2021. He said that Pangea does not want to be a hindrance to the town but would like to work with the Town on this project.

David Diorio said that there are actually three different things we are talking about. One is the public Wi-Fi for the whole Town, second is a cell tower for cellular service, and third is the public Wi-Fi for the downtown area that they are looking at right now in this situation.

Pangea Management and Staff Executive Director Ron Walters spoke about Pangea's roll in the Lake Lure area. About how they built out the fiber to provide Wi-Fi through other companies. He

also mentioned that they have a new company interested called Open Broadband, and that they would work with Open Broadband who said that they can provide a better service. He also talked about Pangea's focus and Pangea's service which is given to the town for free, and about the RFP and how they have been doing the first three things already, and if they need to do better to let them know.

Mr. Baldwin again reiterated that the focus is to help the tourist that come to our area. Specifically the Beach, Morse Park and Arcade area. Mr. Walters said that Open Broadband would be the best company to a short term solution for our area. Mr. Baldwin told him that Open Broadband could send in an RFP themselves or partner with them, that it is not closed to only those few that it was sent to. He said to let the current RFP run its course and then release another one after if we need to.

b. Low Pressure Sewer System Update – The 3rd ER has been sent to the state which is currently being reviewed by them. We did get something from the State saying that they did not have any more comments or concerns about the ER, but he feels that will we be getting something more official from them soon. But, he said, it cannot be designated as a complete ER until financing is in place, and can't get the financing until we have solid numbers. He said that this is where we are now. We have selected a geo-tech company to see what we are facing to get those numbers more accurate. Trying to get to the point that the ER is finished and move forward from there.

Curt said that he wanted to give a full disclosure. He went out with David Arrowood and Jesse, who works with BLE, to take a look at the map. His disclosure is that he has worked with them in the past but that he has nothing financial to do with them and that the Town can work with BLE or someone else if they would like to. That the BLE contract is between the Town and BLE.

Mr. Baldwin said David Arrowood was on the lake with a contractor who said that it would take about \$25,000 to hook up each home, which is way over the \$7,500 predicted by Brown. Richard Glassen said that he would like more specifics on what Brown Engineering's Firm numbers include. For instance this particular \$7,500. He would like more definition of scope of work for line items. Shannon said that once BLE comes back with the rock work he would like to have Brown add that into their design. They would then insert the billing to see where that is at. He said that we would like to get the ER finished first. But can then ask Brown to provide us with more information on what the numbers include.

Richard Glassen said that we need to come up with the type of pump. This will help narrow down the costs. He also said that we don't want to get multiple pumps, different styles, different vendors, etc. John Chapman said that the faster we can narrow down the provider, the faster they can help us with their expertise. Curt said there are a couple of options. When going to design phase and bidding, we will have to name three vendors to comply with state statutes. He said there is a lot of red tape to deal with when using state monies.

Mr. Diorio said that he feels like this board has done enough research on the type of pump and pump stations to make an educated choice on them, but what we don't know is how that fits into the bigger design. He feels like we need to wait until we get into that phase to give feedback.

New Business

a. *Report on Geotechnical Firm Choice* – Richard Glassen reported that the Town Manager would like to sign the purchase order for the Geotechnical Firm with the Utility Advisory Board's approval. He has asked the David Diorio gave a synopsis of the meeting with BLE and said that they use ground penetrating radar system. Mr. Diorio said that they will be going under the road and not cutting at the side of the road because of the water line. That they will not have to check the places that Stepp Construction already knows where rock is located. The machine they use is 36" wide, the radar goes straight down about 3 ½ feet, and measures the change in density. They then probe to validate the findings of this machine. The proposal is to start with the highways and the main 6" branch of the system and then as money allows start going down the other public roads where the system will run.

Richard Glassen said that he would like to see the final report have a total rock quantity, include Stepp's estimates and the BLE findings of the other area in their final report. Said that it could be separated, but include both in report.

The board then had a short discussion about the costs of re-asphalting the road and the difficulty of doing that with traffic. The cost of traffic control and other costs associated with it.

The board then discussed the need to get some reputable companies to give costs for this work. This will show how accurate the numbers that Brown has provided for this work are and determine where this project will need to go.

David Diorio made a motion to approve the BLE contract with the small change of adding that their numbers include Stepp's rock information on the final report. John Chapman seconded the motion, which carried 4 – 0.

David made a motion to adjourn at 3:35 and John Chapman seconded the motion. Motion carried 4 – 0.

b. *Info from Meeting with Steppe Construction* – This item discussed above.

Open Comments/ Discussion – none

Public Comments – none

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

ATTEST

Richard Glassen, Co-Chairman

Linda Ward, Clerk