

**TOWN OF VALDESE
TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2018, 6:00 P.M.**

The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Monday, January 8, 2018, at 6:00 p.m., to participate in a goal setting and strategic planning session. Members of Council met at the Western Piedmont Council of Governments facility, 1880 2nd Avenue NW, Hickory, North Carolina. The following were present: Mayor John F. "Chip" Black, Jr., Councilman Keith Ogle, Councilwoman Frances Hildebran, Councilwoman Susan Stevenson, Councilman Gary L. Delp, and Councilman Roy F. Sweezy. Also present were Town Manager Seth Eckard, Deputy Town Clerk Courtney Kennedy, and WPCOG Executive Director Anthony W. Starr.

Absent: None.

A quorum was present.

At 6:00 p.m., Mayor Black called the meeting to order. He said this was a special called Council meeting for the purpose of goal setting and strategic planning for the town and there would be no action taken or public comment accepted.

STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION Town Manager Seth Eckard provided a brief two year review presentation, identifying the town's focus and accomplishments. Council reviewed and made recommendations for revisions to the draft mission statement for the town.

Executive Director Anthony Starr guided Council through an activity to identify and vote on various areas relevant to the town of Valdese. The following answers received the highest number of votes for each category:

What do you believe are the town's top accomplishments in last 2-3 years?

- Capital Improvements Plan - 3
- Retaining Meridian's operations in Valdese - 3
- Successfully obtaining grants for the water and wastewater facilities - 3
- Improvements in parks and recreation - 2
- Voting for a tax increase - 2
- Success of Main Street Program - 2
- Hiring a good town manager - 1
- Downtown streetscape improvements - 1
- Issues with The Settings ending – 1

What challenges, obstacles, and concerns do you have for the town?

- Century-old infrastructure replacements needed - 5
- Lack of affordable housing - 4
- Out-migration of youth - 4
- Availability of resources for senior care needs (housing, transportation, etc) – 4
- Need for business and economic development – 4
- Employee turnover in finance department – 2
- Lack of quality jobs in Valdese that offer a good pay rate – 2
- Need for a palatable code enforcement system – 2
- Lack of leadership in a department - 1

What opportunities, projects, and priorities can you identify for the town?

- Start on new park – 4
- Emphasize Valdese as an art mecca – 4
- Improvements to Main Street streetscape – 4
- Finish park and recreation projects in older parks – 3
- Street lights on Main Street – 3
- Improve amphitheater and outdoor drama – 3
- Transition to new staff in key positions – 3
- Establish a bed and breakfast or other overnight accommodations – 2
- Identify properties for construction with willing developers and banks – 1
- Host art in the park events four times a year – 1
- Establish commercial rail service in town – 1

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This information will be used to create an action plan for the town.

At 8:34 p.m., Councilwoman Hildebran made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilwoman Stevenson. The vote was unanimous.

The next meeting is a special called Council meeting on Tuesday, January 23, 2018, 1:00 p.m., at Alray Tire to discuss the Whisnant Street Relocation Project.

Town Clerk
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Mayor