

**TOWN OF VALDESE  
ANNUAL COUNCIL/DEPARTMENT HEAD BUDGET RETREAT  
MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2018**

The Valdese Town Council met on Monday, March 19, 2018, 1:00 p.m., for the Annual Budget Retreat, Old Rock School, Waldensian Room, 400 Main Street West, Valdese, North Carolina. The following members were present: Mayor John F. (Chip) Black, Jr., Councilman Keith Ogle, Councilwoman Frances Hildebran, Councilwoman Susan Stevenson, Councilman Gary Delp, and Councilman Roy Sweezy. Also present: Town Manager Seth Eckard, Deputy Town Clerk Courtney Kennedy, and all Department Heads.

Absent: None

A quorum was present.

**CALL TO ORDER** At 1:00 p.m., Mayor Black opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Mr. Black shared that he had been on the Council for many years and recently realized that his only regret was that sometimes items were approved in a nature that was short-sighted and encouraged Council and staff to plan for the future of the town.

**OPENING COMMENTS – TOWN MANAGER SETH ECKARD** Mr. Eckard welcomed everyone and said staff was looking for feedback from members of Council. Mr. Eckard shared that this year, a new program, Emerge Valdese, is being implemented in lieu of a citizens academy. Emerge Valdese will be a group of young professionals, meeting to discuss what is happening in the town and how to better engage the community.

**HUMAN RESOURCES** David Hill of HR Essentials Consulting provided an overview of a pay study and classification process. The Town of Valdese has not conducted a pay study and classification since 2007. Mr. Hill will facilitate this process during FY2018-2019. Town Manager Seth Eckard informed Council that the study will be conducted during the upcoming fiscal year with implementation scheduled for FY2019-2020.

**FINANCE DIRECTOR** Finance Director Jerry LaMaster discussed major revenue sources for FY2017-2018, informing Council that revenues were coming in as predicted and that department heads were staying within budget. Mr. LaMaster informed Council that sales tax will come in above budget again this year. Mr. LaMaster does not expect any increases in revenues in FY2018-2019.

**VEDIC** Executive Director Kerri Poteat and Community Affairs Director Morrissa Angi presented the proposed Valdese Building Reuse Loan Program. The vision is to make this a VEDIC program, with Town oversight. The final Valdese Building Reuse Loan Program will be presented at the April 23, 2018 Council meeting.

**UTILITY DEPARTMENTS** Water Resources Director Greg Padgett provided a presentation on recent accomplishments at the wastewater and water treatment plants, identifying various projects that have been completed. R.J. Mozeley of McGill Associates provided updates on current projects and presented the Water Resources Capital Improvement Plan. Vice President Andy Lovingood provided an overview of the Water and Sewer Utility Fund Summary Financial Analysis and Funding Awards Summary.

**PUBLIC WORKS** Public Works Director Bryan Duckworth informed Council that his department had successfully made multiple water line replacements, various equipment purchases, and completed street improvements throughout the town. Mr. Duckworth identified priority items for FY 2018-2019 such as the purchase of a bucket truck. Mr. Duckworth also discussed the Utility System Performance Report.

**COMMUNITY AFFAIRS** Community Affairs Director Morrissa Angi summarized major events that were held in FY 2017-2018, the recreation of a mailed newsletter, implementation and growth of the town's social media presence, and new events such as the April Craft Market and Movies at the Rock. Ms. Angi and Council discussed the Valdese Farmers Market. Ms. Angi recommended relocating the Valdese Farmers Market in front of Old Rock School due to the high volume of cars in the public parking lot across from Old Town Hall and also recommended holding the market on Fridays only. Council was in favor of this change. Ms. Angi and Council discussed goals and ideas for a Main Street program, wishing to create a fun factor in downtown. Ms. Angi finished her presentation by identifying FY2017-2018 accomplishments, requests for FY 2018-2019, and current the current fee schedule and lease rates at Old Rock School.

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Councilwoman Hildebran asked if it would be possible to install speakers on Main Street so visitors could listen to music in various locations. Staff will explore this possibility.

**ADMINISTRATION & PLANNING DEPARTMENTS** Planning Director Larry Johnson provided an overview of permitting, enforcement, and housing developments for FY 2017-2018. Mr. Johnson also informed Council of the planning board agenda for 2018, which includes Central Business District expansion and tiny homes. Mr. Johnson requested \$20,000 for town hall maintenance and repairs.

Town Manager Seth Eckard informed Council that he is seeking a 2% COLA, iPad upgrades for Council, and funding for the Valdese Building Reuse Program for FY 2018-2019.

**DINNER** At 5:30 p.m., Mayor Black invited everyone to enjoy dinner catered by Myra's Catering. At 6:00 p.m., Mayor Black called the meeting back to order.

**PARKS & RECREATION** Parks and Recreation Director Doug Knight discussed various improvements within his department. Mr. Knight also presented a proposed fee schedule, as requested by Council earlier this year. This fee schedule will be discussed at the May 7, 2018 Council meeting.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT** Fire Chief Charlie Watts shared departmental accomplishments, information on the acquisition of the new ladder truck, information about the Junior Firefighter Program, and the Mingle with Kris Kringle event. Chief Watts informed Council that he is requesting funding to purchase a rescue utv. Chief Watts informed Council that he received a report from an engineer today about possible structural issues at the fire and police complex. Staff will meet with the engineer to discuss the findings.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT** Police Chief Jack Moss shared accomplishments his department had in FY 2017-2018 and identified objectives for FY 2018-2019. Chief Moss is seeking funding to purchase two new vehicles for his department. Town Manager Seth Eckard informed Council that the vehicle that was purchased for town hall will be given to police; therefore, Chief Moss will only need to purchase one vehicle. Chief Moss expressed concern over officer salaries and the need for new tasers.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION** Council expressed their gratitude to staff, remarking that this is one of the best management teams the town has had.

Town Manager Seth Eckard informed Council of upcoming meetings on: April 3, April 23, and May 1, 2018.

**ADJOURNMENT** – Mayor Black thanked the Department Heads for a tremendous job. He adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

The next meeting is a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, April 2, 2018, 6:00 p.m., Valdese Town Hall.

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Town Clerk

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Mayor

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