

**TOWN OF VALDESE  
TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2022, 6:00 P.M.**

The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Tuesday, November 1, 2022, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NW, Hickory, North Carolina. The following were present: Mayor Charles Watts, Mayor Pro Tem Frances Hildebran, Councilwoman Rexanna Lowman, Councilman Tim Skidmore, and Councilman Paul Mears. Also present were Town Manager Seth Eckard, Assistant Town Manager/CFO Bo Weichel, Town Clerk Jessica Lail, and WPCOG Executive Director Anthony W. Starr.

Absent: Ward 1 Vacant Seat

A quorum was present.

At 6:00 p.m., Council dinner.

At 6:30 p.m., Mayor Watts called the meeting to order. Mayor Watts shared that the Action Plan is used to establish the Town's priorities as it undertakes new initiatives or amends existing programs. The strategic plan identifies key initiatives with corresponding goals to direct the Town's actions to help achieve its mission. Mayor Watts suggested reviewing the Action Plan at every Council budget retreat.

Executive Director Anthony Starr welcomed Councilmembers and went over the agenda and ground rules for the session.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION** Town Manager Seth Eckard provided a brief five-year review presentation, identifying the Town's focus and accomplishments.

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?

- Water/Sewer upgrades - 4
- Housing growth - 4
- Upgrade/upkeep of our Town facilities - 3
- Attracting investment to Valdese - 2
- Building Lakeside Park without using taxpayer dollars - 1
- Increase in funding - 1

Council reviewed and made recommendations for revisions to the draft mission statement for the Town.

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

- Street paving - 5
- Incorrect information about the Town circulating in the community/how to deal with it - 4
- Recruitment/retention of qualified employees – 4
- Keeping downtown viable - 3
- Bringing more young people into the community - 3
- Businesses leaving the Town - 1
- Not enough industrial development - 1
- Next recession and the impacts on the Town - 1
- Unused capacity at facilities like Water Treatment Plant - 1
- Need to look at types of industry to attract - 1

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

- Rebrand community – logos/signage/entrance signs - 5
- Maintaining our CIP for Water/Wastewater to replace lines for clean water - 4
- Street paving - 4
- Complete Public Safety Building – 3
- Downtown investment (streetscape & beautification) - 2
- Tiger Gym refurbished - 1

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- Complete/assist housing developers - 1
- Attract/retain young citizens - 1
- Build community with citizens - 1
- Improve communication of positive information going on in Town - 1
- Wilderness Gateway Trail - 1
- Promote our good schools - 1

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

Members of the Council identified one takeaway from the Strategic Planning Session.

At 8:18 p.m., Councilwoman Lowman made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hildebran. The vote was unanimous.

The next regular Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 7, 2022.

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Town Clerk

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Mayor

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