MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
OCTOBER 22, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at the Jones House Community and Cultural Center located at 604 W. King Street in Boone. Mayor Tim Futrelle presided. Council members present included Mayor Pro-Tem Dalton George, Virginia Roseman, Todd Carter, and Eric Plaag (remote). Town staff present included Town Manager Amy Davis, Interim Town Manager/Human Resources Director Dale Presnell, Town Clerk Nicole Harmon-Church, Grants Coordinator/Communications Laney Wise, Finance Director Guy Miller (remote), Planning Director Jane Shook, Commercial Zoning Administrator Amy Snider (remote), Deputy Planning Director Brandon Wise, Cultural Resources Director Mark Freed, Fire Marshal Amy Flieg, Public Works Director Todd Moody, Police Chief Daniel Duckworth, Major Jon Houck, Major Shane Robbins, and Town Attorney Allison Meade.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A brief moment of silence was observed.

TENTATIVE AGENDA ADOPTION

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro-Tem George, seconded by Councilmember Carter, Council voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF PROCLAMATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Futrelle read the following proclamation into the record:

Town of Boone Proclamation in Honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month

WHEREAS, breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in America, with hundreds of thousands of new diagnoses each year, representing 15.5% of all new cancer diagnoses;

WHEREAS, breast cancer leads to approximately 42,000 deaths each year and is the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths in America, as well as the second leading cause of cancer death among women;

WHEREAS, due to widespread testing, the survival rate for breast cancer is 91.7% and there are over four million breast cancer survivors currently living in America;

WHEREAS, the survival rate is much lower for Black women, with a 73.5% survival rate, and for those not diagnosed until the cancer has already spread to multiple parts of the body, with a dismal 32.9% survival rate;

WHEREAS, research shows the vast majority of Americans are aware of breast cancer and testing is widely trusted and used to catch many cases early on, meaning the focus should be on funding research rather than awareness;

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need for research into metastatic breast cancer, as it is currently the deadliest form of this cancer, yet receives very little funding compared to the money spent on awareness;

WHEREAS, October is internationally recognized as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and has contributed significantly to increased awareness, early detection rates, and funding for research;

WHEREAS, the Town of Boone is undoubtedly home to many women who have or will experience breast cancer;

WHEREAS, it takes a community to support individuals and families during cancer treatments and during recovery, as negative health impacts are common;

WHEREAS, recognizing October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month in the Town of Boone will foster continued efforts towards curing this disease with more research, as well as supporting survivors and their families;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Boone Mayor and Council do hereby proclaim October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month and encourage all residents to join in activities that will increase support for research into curing breast cancer, provide support for survivors and their families, and pay tribute to those who have lost their lives to this disease.

This is the 22nd day of October, 2025.

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Councilmember Carter read the following proclamation into the record:

Town of Boone Hate Crimes Prevention Proclamation

WHEREAS, The Town of Boone, North Carolina, stands with communities across the United States to proclaim all community members deserve equal protections from Hate and Hate Crimes; and

WHEREAS; The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, signed into law by President Barack Obama on October 28. 2009, expanded federal law to include

hate crimes motivated by a victim's perceived or actual gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, in addition to race, color, religion, and national origin; and

WHEREAS, this landmark act allows federal prosecution for violent hate crimes and provides federal assistance to states for investigating and prosecuting them.

WHEREAS, the Boone Town Council finds that prejudice and the practice of discrimination against any individual or group based on actual or perceived age, mental or physical disability, sex, religion, creed, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial or marital status, economic status, veteran status or national origin, may menace the peace and public welfare; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina has seen an increase in legislation and action maliciously targeting individuals of the LGBTQ+ community; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina has seen an increase in Hate Crimes against persons because of their race, gender identity, and sexuality; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Boone has committed to creating an environment in which LGBTQ+ and BIPOC members of the community are safe and celebrated for their contributions to the community; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Boone reaffirms its commitment to support law enforcement, community agencies, and individuals in protecting members of the LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities from Hate Crimes per the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009.

Now therefore, I, Tim Futrelle Mayor of Boone North Carolina, declare October 28th. 2025 **Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Day** and encourage all to recommit ourselves to a shared future of a healthy, peaceful, safe, and sustainable community for all.

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Upon a motion by Councilmember Roseman, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem George, Council approved both proclamations as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Attorney Meade announced that, due to a recent surgery, she may have to leave early due to discomfort. Councilmember Roseman briefly outlined the public comment process for those who signed up to speak. Councilmember Plaag asked that Council consider moving Ms. Meadows' presentation before Public Comment, since many speakers may want to respond to it. Upon a motion by Mayor Pro-Tem George, seconded by Councilmember Carter, Council voted unanimously to amend the agenda to move Requested Appearance Number One – Rachel Meadows prior to Public Comment.

REQUESTED APPEARANCES

Rachel Meadows – Request for Discussion Regarding Sexual Assault Cases

Ms. Meadows began by requesting that Council members hold an ongoing, public discussion regarding transparency, accountability, and the treatment of victims within the justice system.

She shared brief details of her own sexual assault, noting that she had been in shock following the incident but continued to carry on with her normal life as a wife and mother of three. She stated that she followed all instructions typically given to victims: she underwent a rape kit examination, reported the assault to law enforcement, and cooperated fully with the investigation. She explained, however, that she had limited memory of the incident.

According to her statement, errors in her medical records were later used against her during discussions with the District Attorney's Office. Initially, she felt that the assigned detective was committed to pursuing justice on her behalf, then explained how, in her view, that changed. During a subsequent three-hour meeting, the detective and other officers reviewed photos and text messages and informed her that they needed to perform a data extraction ("dump") of her phone. She said that the process did not feel victim-centered and that she felt violated by the request. She agreed to provide her phone, but it was later returned without being processed because the technical officer had left for the day.

Ms. Meadows stated that the officers photographed her text messages, but those messages were not referenced again for several weeks. During this time, she sought and was granted a Domestic Violence Protective Order against the alleged perpetrator. She was informed that the individual would be served by the end of the day, but later learned from the Watauga County Sheriff's Office that deputies had gone home for the evening and that she would need to follow up the next day. She described receiving conflicting information from the Sheriff's Office regarding service of the order.

Over the next two months, she said she provided extensive evidence to law enforcement because she wanted to ensure the community's safety. To her knowledge, the suspect was only interviewed once. She expressed concern about a lack of transparency and stated that her full cooperation was ultimately used against her by the District Attorney's Office. She added that law enforcement again brought up the idea of dumping her phone, while failing to do the same with the suspect's phone, despite his criminal record.

Following this, she said she was informed that the District Attorney had declined to prosecute the case. She wrote to the Assistant District Attorneys requesting an explanation. The response she received indicated that witness statements had been

altered, contextual details had been omitted, that there was no documented physical evidence in the medical report, and no “rape cry” had been heard.

She later discovered that a neighbor had heard her cries during the assault but did not disclose this information out of respect for the ongoing investigation. Ms. Meadows said the detective described her as “argumentative,” and she believed that characterization negatively influenced the District Attorney’s decision not to prosecute. She noted that the District Attorney’s Office did not possess the phone data extraction and that her rape kit remained untested in the state laboratory.

After the case was closed, she took it upon herself to locate and speak with several of the perpetrator’s previous victims, discovering a clear pattern of behavior. She stated that she had to plead with the District Attorney to review these additional victims’ accounts, and that the review was undertaken only reluctantly. She also reported that she still had not received full access to her police department file and continued to live in a constant state of fear.

She expressed deep disappointment that no public alert had been issued on social media regarding the suspect, despite the potential risk to others. She emphasized that her experience reflected a “nationally broken system,” in which accountability becomes a moving target when officials fail to fulfill their roles effectively.

Ms. Meadows requested that Boone Police Department statistics be made publicly available, asserting that a pattern existed in which arrests were made only when the District Attorney indicated a willingness to prosecute. She stated that victims should not have to present a “perfect case” in order to be believed and called for greater transparency, progress, and accountability in handling sexual assault cases.

In closing, she urged Town leaders and the Boone Police Department to engage in open, ongoing discussions about law enforcement’s role within the broader system of justice and victim advocacy.

Following public comment, Mayor Futrelle thanked Ms. Meadows for sharing her story and expressed his appreciation for her courage in coming forward. He offered a sincere apology for her circumstances and the experiences she described.

Mayor Futrelle then asked Town Attorney Allison Meade to provide clarification and guidance regarding the Town Council’s role in such matters. Attorney Meade explained that, under North Carolina law, active law enforcement investigations are confidential. She stated that this confidentiality presents challenges, as neither the Police Department nor Town officials are permitted to publicly discuss the details of an ongoing or closed criminal investigation. From the Town Council’s perspective, she emphasized that there would be no discussion of the particulars of this case unless and until a court order were to authorize such disclosure.

Attorney Meade further advised that, if Council wished to review broader procedural issues or systemic matters in the future, she would be happy to facilitate that discussion. She clarified that the Town Council and the Boone Police Department do not have authority over decisions made by the District Attorney's Office. The District Attorney and Assistant District Attorneys are independent legal officials who operate as a separate branch of government. Similarly, the service of court orders, such as Domestic Violence Protective Orders, falls under the jurisdiction of the Watauga County Sheriff's Office.

While noting that she was not a criminal attorney, Attorney Meade also explained that Boone Police officers make arrests at their own discretion only when a crime occurs in their direct presence, for example, in cases such as driving under the influence or a residential break-in. She believed that in all other cases, when an offense is reported after the fact, the District Attorney must authorize charges before an arrest can be made. She believed that felony cases required a grand jury indictment before prosecution could proceed.

Ms. Meadows inquired about the role of probable cause in these determinations. Attorney Meade reiterated that if officers do not personally witness the alleged offense, they cannot make an immediate arrest without prior authorization from the District Attorney's Office.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Futrelle noted that the Town's public comment policy limits speakers to three minutes or less in order to ensure that all individuals wishing to address the Council have an opportunity to do so.

Speakers who followed generally expressed their support for Ms. Meadows and called for transparency and meaningful action on the part of the Town of Boone.

- Hannah Adcok shared her own experience as a survivor of sexual assault and expressed frustration with what she perceived as a lack of accountability within the justice system. She stated that when she reported her assault to the Police Department, the interviewing officer turned off his body camera during the conversation. She later said she was publicly identified and subsequently arrested for cyberstalking. Hannah emphasized that the community must move beyond simply offering assistance to victims and instead provide meaningful, sustained support that promotes justice and accountability.
- Mary Vasgaard shared her story in an effort to raise awareness about sexual assault and institutional accountability. She stated that she had been raped by a professor while attending college at AppState. After reporting the incident, she was directed to the university's Office of Student Conduct rather than to law enforcement. She said her mental health declined significantly following the assault and her decision to withdraw from school.

- Later that same year, she learned that at least two other students had also reported being sexually assaulted by the same professor, who was subsequently transferred to another institution rather than disciplined. She added that she had been told at the time that because she did not “cry out,” the incident was considered consensual. Ms. Vasgaard expressed solidarity with all survivors in the community and stated that her experience reflected a broader, systemic failure that must be addressed through greater accountability and cultural change.
- Rebecca Canu, A longtime Boone resident who identified herself as a neighbor of Council Member Roseman, stated that she had lived in Boone for twenty years and had always believed the community was a safe place where authorities would protect residents. She said that over the past two months, she had come to believe that this was not the case. She questioned why so few reported rapes in Boone result in arrests, noting that the rate appeared to be significantly lower than in other areas. She asked what message this disparity sends to survivors and the broader community, emphasizing that such a low rate both denies justice to victims and fails to protect others from potential harm. The speaker asked what obstacles prevent arrests when probable cause exists, whether they stem from influence by the District Attorney’s Office, procedural issues, or other systemic barriers. She urged that the safety of Boone’s residents remain the Town’s highest priority.
- Denise Lovin stated that she wanted to make it clear that many members of the community were angry and deeply concerned. She said that a significant number of people in Boone were worried, hurt, and felt broken by a system that, in her view, was not working for women. She emphasized that many survivors lack the strength or support to stand up and speak publicly about their experiences. She called for accountability at every level, stating that meaningful change was necessary to restore trust and ensure that victims receive justice and protection.
- Veronica Toub, a neighbor of Ms. Meadows, expressed admiration for the bravery shown by the survivors who spoke. She said she was shocked to learn that the rape kit in Ms. Meadows' case had not yet been processed and that the alleged perpetrator had not been arrested. She also voiced concern that the community had not been warned by police about a potential threat, stating that residents have a right to be informed when public safety may be at risk.
- Tonya Coffey voiced strong support for Ms. Meadows and stated that she was furious about the circumstances described. She urged the Town Council to look closely into how the case was handled, calling the situation a travesty and emphasizing the need for accountability and systemic reform.
- Melissa Pollard shared that she was also a survivor of sexual assault and reflected on how, at the time, she had not advocated for herself. She stated that experiences like hers have lasting impacts on women’s lives, often for decades. She emphasized that it is not only the trauma of the assault itself that causes harm, but also the absence of justice and accountability that follows. She expressed hope for a broader cultural shift in society, one in which survivors are believed, supported, and treated with dignity throughout the justice process.

- Jill Nicklaw expressed deep disappointment in what she described as the Police Department's failure to prosecute sexual assault cases effectively. She stated that Boone's record in this regard appeared significantly worse than in other areas and called the situation unacceptable and disheartening.
- Natasha Fuller shared that her mother had been murdered in Asheville and that she had participated in a restorative justice process as part of that case. She stated that the District Attorney in Buncombe County had been outstanding by listening to victims, standing up for their rights, and ensuring that their voices were heard. She contrasted that experience with her concerns about the current situation in Boone and noted that District Attorney Banks would be up for reelection next year. She concluded that the community deserves far better than it is currently receiving in terms of justice and victim advocacy.
- Kendall McDevitt stated that she was outraged and heartbroken by what she had heard, echoing the sentiments expressed by previous speakers. She shared that she had grown up with a father who was an attorney and later became president of the bar association, giving her a deep understanding of the legal system and its complexities. She said that many in the legal community were already aware of this situation and that she would continue to share the story to raise awareness and demand change. She emphasized that accountability was essential and vowed not to let the matter drop, stating that she intended to use her professional connections and influence to help ensure justice and reform.
- Joan Lacefield expressed strong support for the victims who had shared their stories and urged the Town Council to apply all possible pressure on both the Police Department and the District Attorney's Office to bring about meaningful change. Joan stated that the current record, one arrest out of forty-two reported sexual assaults, was unacceptable and called for immediate action to address what she described as a systemic failure in the community's response to such crimes.
- Sarah Cooper neighbor of Ms. Meadows, expressed strong support for the survivors and stated that she had personally witnessed the visible harm and distress suffered by Ms. Meadows the day after the reported assault. She asserted that she believed there was sufficient evidence to justify an arrest and urged Town officials to determine why it did not occur. She emphasized that a two percent arrest rate for reported sexual assaults should not be acceptable under any circumstances and called on the Town to take decisive action to address the issue.
- Kerry Gersonde, a neighbor of Ms. Meadows, voiced support for all those who had shared their experiences. She stated that she looked forward to being part of the solution and working alongside others in the community to promote justice, accountability, and positive change.

- Councilmember Virginia Roseman, a neighbor of Ms. Meadows, stated that the recent events had deeply affected the sense of safety in the community. She shared that neighborhood children no longer played in the street as they once did, and that her grandchildren had begun visiting less frequently out of concern. She said that the situation had changed the way residents live and interact, emphasizing that fear and mistrust now linger where there had once been comfort and connection. She then shared her own story of sexual assault.
- Austin Hill urged Town officials and community members alike to reflect on their personal responsibility in creating a safer environment for the town. They challenged everyone present to ask themselves what they were actively doing to make Boone a safer place for all residents, emphasizing that meaningful change requires collective accountability and action.
- Maggie Heide was signed up to speak but was not in attendance when called.
- Lumini Merced stated that the inaction by law enforcement in addressing sexual assault cases was unacceptable and called for immediate steps to move from discussion to concrete action to protect residents. She said she had always believed Boone to be a safe community, but that learning about the circumstances surrounding these cases had shaken that belief. She emphasized that the lack of arrests in reported sexual assault cases was indefensible and that decisive action was necessary to restore public trust and ensure safety for all.
- Brooke Kornagay expressed support for the victims who had shared their experiences and thanked the Town Council for taking the time to listen, investigate, and do what it could within its authority to address the concerns raised. Ms. Kornegay emphasized the importance of continued attention and commitment to ensuring accountability and safety within the community.
- Megan Long expressed her support for Ms. Meadows and stated that she appreciated anything the Town Council could do to address the issue, noting that the problem extended beyond Boone and reflected challenges seen throughout the state and across the country.
- Susan Eby, who said she had moved to the Cherry Brook neighborhood five years ago, expressed her shock and fear upon learning of the recent events. She shared her hope that all victims would be believed and protected and that reported cases would be thoroughly investigated and fully prosecuted.
- Hillary Pransch identified herself as both a victim of sexual assault and a neighbor of Ms. Meadows, shared that the recent events had been deeply painful to experience. She stated that she had not come forward about her own assault when she was younger because she did not know what to do at the time. She expressed that she no longer feels safe walking in her neighborhood and that she continues to carry feelings of shame related to her experience. She concluded by expressing hope that the community could come together to create change, restore safety, and ensure that future victims feel supported and empowered to speak out.

- Laura Fonseca, a neighbor of Ms. Meadows, expressed both disgust and surprise at how sexual assault cases have been handled in the community. She said she hoped Town Council members would use their influence with the Police Department and other agencies to encourage a change in attitude toward the investigation and prosecution of such cases in the Boone area.
- Allison Rollins stated that she had worked with Ms. Meadows and shared that she had personally witnessed the impact of the situation on both children and the wider community. She said she was stunned that no meaningful action had been taken in response to Ms. Meadows' assault and emphasized that changes must occur to make Boone a safer community for everyone. She urged Town leaders to recognize the urgent need for reform and to actively push for those changes. She added that there are many other victims who have not yet come forward and that their silence should not be mistaken for the absence of harm.
- Vanessa VanValin stated that she was outraged that the alleged perpetrator remained free and expressed fear for the safety of the community. She said she wanted to see justice served and called for clear direction from Town leaders on the actions that could be taken to ensure accountability and prevent further harm.
- Rachel Swadley, identifying herself as a survivor of sexual assault, requested that meaningful changes be made to ensure Boone becomes a safer place for all families. She emphasized the need for stronger protections, greater accountability, and a community-wide commitment to preventing future harm.
- Mary Wood stated that she was astounded, ashamed, appalled, and angry upon hearing the accounts shared during the meeting.
- Samantha Wright acknowledged that sexual assault is a complex and widespread problem that extends far beyond the local community. She urged Town leaders to use their influence, authority, and expertise to help address the issue at the local level, stating that while the problem is global, meaningful change must begin within Boone. She encouraged the Council to lead with compassion, determination, and a commitment to lasting solutions.
- Ginger Powell shared that she did not personally know Ms. Meadows but was deeply affected by hearing her story, particularly as a parent raising children in Boone. She said the situation had made her more cautious and aware of safety concerns at all hours of the day. She expressed that communication from authorities had been limited, leaving many residents uncertain and uneasy. Ms. Powell added that her own experiences with the Boone Police Department had been positive, but felt that the case described revealed gaps that warranted review. She encouraged Town officials to revisit the matter to ensure transparency, consistency, and community trust moving forward.
- Karen Brown was signed up to speak, but was not in attendance when called.

- Susan Trew, a neighbor of Ms. Meadows, expressed strong support for her and stated that the community hears and believes her. She urged the Town of Boone to do the same, calling on Town officials to acknowledge the victims' experiences and to take meaningful steps toward justice and accountability.
- Lynda Gioia-Flynt expressed support for Ms. Meadows and the other victims who had come forward. She said she was horrified both by the stories shared and by the statistics regarding sexual assault in the Boone community. She urged the Town and its partners to do better at addressing and prosecuting such cases, questioning why Boone's outcomes appeared so poor compared to other areas. Ms. Gioia-Flynt, who identified herself as a healthcare provider in the area, stated that she could not honestly tell her patients that they have a fair chance at justice under the current system. She called for systemic improvements to ensure that survivors are treated with dignity and that perpetrators are held accountable.
- Jon Councill expressed support for Ms. Meadows and the other victims who had shared their experiences. He reminded the Town Council that, as elected officials, they are responsible for advocating on behalf of their constituents and using their positions to effect positive change. He stated that the Council now faced a choice, either to lead boldly on this issue or to defer responsibility to others, and expressed hope that they would choose to lead and make the right decision for the community.
- Trinity Jaynes declared that she supported Ms. Meadows and the survivors who did not receive justice. She encouraged Council members to review the story of "Kim Mackelroy" and to use it as part of their decision-making on how to proceed.
- Maria Carcatera was signed up to speak, but was not in attendance when called.
- Quint David, a neighbor of Ms. Meadows, expressed a desire for the community to come together to find solutions to the issues raised. He reminded Town officials that they had campaigned on protecting Boone's neighborhoods and stated that this moment represented an opportunity to fulfill that commitment through meaningful action.
- Scott Williford commented on the statistics regarding sexual assault in Boone, describing them as shameful.
- Sabrina Jones was signed up to speak but was not in attendance when called.
- Natalie Page was signed up to speak but was not in attendance when called.
- Carolyn Clark, identifying herself as both a survivor of sexual assault and a neighbor of Ms. Meadows, shared that she had witnessed Ms. Meadows' determination and strength throughout her ongoing fight for justice. She stated that while she did not fully understand the Town Council's specific role and responsibilities in such matters, the data and statistics presented were difficult to ignore. She emphasized that the information spoke for itself and called for meaningful consideration and action from Town leadership.

- Alan Rasmussen expressed support for the survivors who shared their stories and reassured Town leaders that they were not alone in addressing the issue. He emphasized that the community stands ready to work together to find solutions and create a safer, more accountable environment for everyone.
- Alicia Greene expressed her support for Ms. Meadows and the other survivors, who shared that her children were friends with Ms. Meadows' children and that the situation had deeply affected their families. She stated that there was clear evidence that something was wrong and that there was room for meaningful change. She urged Town leaders not to remain silent supporters of hopeful change but to take visible, active steps toward progress. She emphasized the importance of men speaking up in support of victims and said it was not acceptable for women to have to re-experience their trauma by retelling their stories in order to be heard.
- Lauren Faircloth was signed up to speak but was not in attendance when called.
- Maddie North was signed up to speak but was not in attendance when called.
- Kelly Boone was signed up to speak but was not in attendance when called.
- Lindsay Cero was signed up to speak but was not in attendance when called.
- Meredith Casper thanked everyone who had come forward to share their stories and perspectives. She stated that survivors often relive their trauma in the pursuit of justice and accountability and emphasized that they would continue to fight until meaningful change is achieved.
- Peggy Benton expressed support for Ms. Meadows and said she hoped Town officials truly heard the voices and outrage expressed by those in attendance regarding the injustice described. She urged the Council to find a solution and emphasized that they had a genuine opportunity to make a difference in the community by taking meaningful action.
- Gary Moss, a neighbor of Ms. Meadows, stated that his twenty-year-old daughter and a friend were home alone a few nights after the incident. He said they obtained mace and that he paced the house out of concern for safety. Mr. Moss noted that the person in question had been previously charged in Mecklenburg County for assault on a female. He asked the Council to consider what they would do to protect a loved one if they were the next victim.
- Andy Hill stated that the information shared during the meeting had been shocking but also served as a powerful call to action for everyone to protect the most vulnerable members of the community. He described the current situation as one that could no longer remain without action. Mr. Hill said he had seen the Town Council take bold steps on other complex issues in the past and expressed confidence that they would approach this matter with the same thoughtfulness, courage, and commitment to doing what is right.
- Ellen Burnette expressed support for Ms. Meadows and the other survivors, stating that every resident has the right to live in a safe community. She urged Town leaders

to take meaningful steps to ensure that Boone remains a place where all individuals feel protected and supported.

- Becky Hoover was signed up to speak but was not in attendance when called.
- Joanna Gober was signed up to speak but was not in attendance when called.
- Jamie Goodman, a longtime Boone resident, stated that she lived in the affected neighborhood and had circulated information among her neighbors while feeling fearful for her safety. She said she had contacted the Boone Police Department seeking information, but was told that details could not be shared because the case was active. She asked to be notified of updates, but no one ever called her back. She referenced earlier local cases, including those of Jenni Gray and Leigh Cooper, and expressed disbelief that the community was still struggling to address the same concerns about women's safety. She recalled instances in which women were not believed or were persuaded to drop charges and said such patterns demonstrated a systemic failure. Ms. Goodman demanded answers, asking why a man's claim that an assault was consensual was often given more weight than physical evidence such as bruises, why the District Attorney's Office continued to refuse to prosecute rape cases, and why rape kits remained untested. She urged Town leaders to use their influence to demand accountability and emphasized the need for better training and oversight within the justice system.
- Suzanna Brewer made a plea for meaningful change to make Boone a safer community for all residents. She stated that the issue had deeply affected public trust and that she would consider the Town's response to this matter when casting her vote in future elections.
- Susan Lappan, a mother of three who stated she had not met Ms. Meadows personally, said that the patterns described throughout the evening should be alarming to everyone. She urged the Town Council not to look away from what had been shared and to take all possible actions within their power to make Boone a safer and more accountable community.
- Lance Schoychid was signed up to speak but was not in attendance when called.
- Nicole Schoychid thanked everyone who had spoken and emphasized that accountability often feels like a moving target. She expressed concern that the District Attorney's Office was declining to prosecute cases and asked what the community was doing to protect victims in the meantime. She said she had contacted the Police Department to share her concerns after learning that the alleged perpetrator had five pages of prior charges. She described the responding officer as frustrated and stated that she was asked whether the victim had told her to call, suggesting that her outreach was hindering the investigation. She said this response was troubling, especially after hearing from the Town Attorney that officers must personally witness a crime to make an arrest, which she found concerning and indicative of a broader misunderstanding or lack of urgency.

- Ms. Schoychid referenced organizations such as OASIS and said she believed the community could do better in supporting victims of sexual assault. She recommended forming or strengthening Sexual Assault Response Teams to improve coordination and victim care. Mayor Futrelle responded that such a team already exists within the community.
- Alicia Davidson shared that she could relate to the survivors' experiences, explaining that she was a victim of child sexual assault. She said it was horrifying to hear that such incidents continued to occur and would likely keep happening as long as there was no justice or accountability. She expressed that she no longer felt safe in her own community. She stated that victims should not have to prove their own cases or take on the responsibilities of law enforcement to be believed. She said it felt as though, no matter what the victims did, nothing changed. Ms. Davidson described the issue as both a gender and minority problem that required greater attention and awareness, emphasizing that it must stop and that the community has a collective responsibility to confront it.
- Maddie Gorniak was signed up to speak but was not in attendance when called.
- Annie Wright, an attorney who lives and practices in Boone, thanked the victims who had spoken for their bravery in coming forward. She acknowledged that the Town Council's opportunities to intervene in active criminal matters are limited, but emphasized that there are still other avenues for meaningful action. She stated that to claim there are none would represent a failure of creativity and leadership. Ms. Wright expressed hope that the Town could explore ways to leverage and coordinate its existing legal, social, and community-based resources to make Boone a safer and more supportive place to live for everyone.
- Will Canu, a neighbor of Ms. Meadows, stated that the incident had changed the quality of life in their community, bringing with it deep fear and sorrow. He described the hollowness she felt upon learning that no action had been taken in the case. Identifying himself as a psychologist, he asked about the local statistics on sexual assault and said the lack of accountability has far-reaching psychological and social impacts, particularly on women who will experience or fear such violence in the future. He observed that many women, consciously or not, perform a "cost-benefit analysis" before reporting an assault, questioning whether it is worth coming forward when there is only a two percent chance of being taken seriously. He said the community must do better and asked whether there were any consequences for District Attorneys who fail to fulfill their duties. He concluded by stating that while he did not know the answer to that question, he did know that Ms. Meadows had done everything expected of a victim and still received neither justice nor fair representation within the system.
- Sam, a student at AppState, was moved by the stories told and called for change.

Councilmember Plaag made a motion to reopen Requested Appearances. Mayor Futrelle then closed Public Comment at 8:25 p.m., and Mayor Pro-Tem George seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Town Manager Davis shared that she had personally experienced trauma and understood well the emotion of fear. She explained that she had researched relevant statistics and confirmed similar data on the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) website. Manager Davis stated that Boone Police Department data undergoes validation with the SBI. Of the 41 cases reflected in the report, 13 involved victims who declined to pursue charges, and 8 cases were declined for prosecution by the District Attorney's Office. Two cases remained active, and one case was inactive but awaiting further action. The remaining 17 cases involved offenders who were deceased, incarcerated, or juveniles.

Manager Davis noted that she had worked for the Town of Boone for 26 years and emphasized that the Department's police officers were good people with a strong moral compass. She stated that as a mother and grandmother, she would trust any of these officers with her children's or grandchildren's safety. She expressed that supporting victims did not have to come at the expense of not supporting law enforcement, encouraging attendees to rally behind both victims and officers.

Ms. Meadows followed by noting that there were many minute issues that contributed to the broader problem. After speaking with victims, Ms. Meadows shared that some felt discouraged from pursuing justice because of the scrutiny they received from the Police Department. She cautioned that the number of victims who declined to pursue charges should not be interpreted as those who decided they were not assaulted; rather, many decided they could no longer endure the process.

Town Manager Davis left the meeting at 8:32 p.m. due to a prior engagement.

Mayor Pro-Tem George thanked everyone who spoke and acknowledged that the issue was complex and deeply important. He requested that Town staff provide a copy of the meeting recording to the Appalachian State University Police Department (ASUPD), the Watauga County Sheriff's Office (WCSO), and the District Attorney's Office for their awareness and review.

In response to a previous comment, Mayor Pro-Tem George noted that the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) policy had been included in the meeting agenda packet and encouraged everyone to review it in detail. He further discussed the existing delays in the processing of rape kits at both the Attorney General's Office and the State's Office, explaining that these delays hindered the pursuit of timely justice for victims.

Mayor Pro-Tem George suggested that the Council consider adopting a resolution urging the State to allocate additional resources to those offices to ensure that cases are

processed promptly. He stated that such an action would be a positive step forward in supporting victims and strengthening the justice process.

Councilmember Plaag expressed support for Mayor Pro-Tem George's suggestion to continue the dialogue and to share the meeting recording with other entities. He thanked all who had spoken and addressed the discussion surrounding rape kit processing.

He then stated that while delays in rape kit processing are often attributed to a backlog in Raleigh, that explanation may not always apply. He noted that, in some cases, decisions regarding whether or not to process a rape kit could be made at the local level. Councilmember Plaag emphasized that if such decisions were being made within the Boone Police Department, it would represent a serious mistake. Councilmember Plaag stated that there is inherent value in processing every rape kit, regardless of the eventual outcome of the investigation. He asserted that the Town's policy should clearly require that, in every case reported to the Boone Police Department, a rape kit be completed and submitted for testing without exception.

Councilmember Carter thanked all individuals who spoke and expressed appreciation for their courage in sharing personal experiences. He validated the fear and emotion expressed by speakers and acknowledged the importance of community in addressing such difficult issues.

Councilmember Carter emphasized that, within the Town Council's scope of authority, members were committed to ensuring that every possible action was taken to support victims and strengthen local response systems. He noted that Mayor Pro-Tem George had presented several actionable ideas that the Council could pursue and expressed a desire to continue the discussion in future meetings. Councilmember Carter concluded by assuring those present that their voices had been heard and that this conversation marked the beginning of the Town's efforts to seek meaningful solutions.

Councilmember Roseman stated that while she understood the significant responsibilities carried by law enforcement officers, she was concerned that there might have been an instance in which a victim was not treated with the tenderness and compassion they deserved. She emphasized that this was an issue that warranted further review and that, if additional training for officers was necessary, it should be considered a crucial priority.

Councilmember Roseman noted the limited number of officers currently serving in the Boone Police Department, often only three or four per shift, and recognized the challenges this presented. However, she stressed that every individual who comes forward should be treated with respect and should never feel like an inconvenience. Councilmember Roseman requested that available footage related to the case be reviewed.

Councilmember Roseman also expressed concern about a possible disconnect between the Boone Police Department and the District Attorney's Office, questioning whether the

issue stemmed from how cases were being presented locally or from prosecutorial decisions at the DA level. She inquired whether there might be an opportunity and a need to reopen the case in question.

Mayor Pro-Tem George made a motion, which was seconded by Councilmember Roseman, to direct staff to send the October 22, 2025, meeting recording to the ASUPD, Watauga County Sheriff's Office, and the Watauga County District Attorney's Office, and to direct staff to republish the meeting packet to include the supplemental attachments sent by Ms. Meadows and Manager Davis. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Futrelle thanked those who spoke for their strength and courage in sharing their experiences. He stated that the Town Council would do everything within its power to ensure that such incidents do not occur again and, when they do, that justice is served.

Wright Tilley – Boone Tourism Development Authority

Attorney Meade reported that she had reviewed the board's bylaws and provided a revised resolution reflecting the proposed updates for Council's consideration.

In regards to the proposed changes, Mayor Pro-Tem George stated that six consecutive years of service was sufficient for board membership, other members agreed.

Councilmember Carter made a motion that the Chair and Vice-Chair positions be appointed by the Town Council. Councilmember Plaag seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem George then made a motion to establish a six-year maximum consecutive term limit for board members. Councilmember Roseman seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Councilmember Roseman suggested that Council representatives serving on the board should rotate periodically and that the six-year limit should also apply to Council Members in those roles.

Tourism Development Authority Director Wright Tilley presented the proposed bylaws for review. Councilmember Roseman and Mayor Pro-Tem George expressed support and moved to approve the bylaws, subject to the discussed changes. Mr. Tilley additionally recommended aligning board terms with the fiscal year and extending terms set to expire in the near future to conclude on June 30.

Councilmember Plaag asked how long the current members had served. Mr. Tilley responded that two members were completing their second terms and two were at the end of their first. As a result, two members would serve a total of six years and six months,

while the remaining members would remain eligible for a second term under the new six-year limit.

Councilmember Roseman made a motion to extend the four board seats expiring this year to June 30, 2026, with the understanding that those members would roll off the board at that time. Mayor Pro-Tem George seconded the motion. The motion carried.

VOTE:	Aye:	Roseman, George, Carter
	Nay:	Plaag

Occupancy Tax Collections Report

Next, Mr. Tilley presented the year-end occupancy tax collections report for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, providing Council with an overview of revenues and trends in local lodging tax receipts. He reported that year-end occupancy tax collections were up more than 11 percent, attributing the increase primarily to the presence of storm-related volunteers and recovery workers following Hurricane Helene. Mr. Tilley noted that collections on the county side had decreased, which appeared to correlate with a decline in short-term rental income. He stated that September figures would be available soon and that Boone's upward trend continued, showing an overall increase of 13.9 percent.

Attorney Meade left the meeting at 9:03 p.m. Mayor Futrelle declared a break at 9:04 p.m. Council reconvened at 9:11 p.m.

WORK SESSION

Mayor Pro-Tem George stated that he and other members had received numerous emails from residents concerning the golf course property and noted that much of the circulating information was inaccurate. He suggested it might be helpful for staff to prepare and share a clear public statement confirming that no formal development plans had been submitted for the site. He further requested that staff include detailed information from the Planning and Inspections Department outlining current zoning regulations, allowable uses, and the procedural steps that would be required should an application be filed in the future. Mayor Pro-Tem George suggested that Communications Manager Laney Wise issue a coordinated press release, in consultation with Planning staff, to clarify the facts and ensure accurate public communication. Other members were in agreement, and it was the consensus of Council to direct staff to move forward with the issuance of a press release on the next business day.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon a motion by Councilmember Roseman, seconded by Councilmember Carter, Council voted unanimously to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

1. Donation of Surplus Property

2. CDBG-I Deck Hill Water Replacement – Recommendation of Award
3. Budget for HRC Event – "How Local Government Works"
4. Donation of Personal Property to Watauga County Heritage Museum
5. Cancellation of Second November Council Meeting & Second December Council Meeting

PLANNING MATTERS

Cases A25-0446/A25-0684 Lindsay & Andrew Hannon – Joint Annexation & General Use Zoning Map Amendment

Deputy Director Wise presented the above case and noted that the Planning Commission recommended approval.

Councilmember Roseman made a motion that the proposed amendment to the Town's zoning map is consistent with the Town's comprehensive plan and any other adopted plans of the Town that are applicable because of the following from Boone Next:

> **Goal 1.5 Intentional Grown Management**
> **Policy 1.5.1 Manage Growth to Balance Protection of Community Character and Natural Areas while Directing Desired Growth to Identified Centers**
> **Policy 1.5.2 Guide Utility Service Extensions and Annexations Using the Service and Annexation Criteria**
> **Policy 1.5.3 Guide Growth Using the Growth Management Tiers Map**
> **Policy 1.6.5 Preserve the Town's existing affordable homes**

Councilmember Carter seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Councilmember Roseman made a second motion to approve Ordinance A25-0684, and that approval is reasonable and in the public interest because it will preserve housing stock within other communities around the R1 district. Mayor Pro-Tem George seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Roseman, seconded by Councilmember Carter, Council voted unanimously to approve the annexation Ordinance #A25-0684 as presented.

Cases A25-0500 &A25-0685 Seldomridge – Annexation & General Use Zoning Map Amendment

Deputy Director Wise presented the above case and noted that the Planning Commission recommended approval with an R3 zoning designation.

Mayor Pro-Tem George asked whether any neighbors had reached out regarding the proposal. Deputy Director Wise stated that none had. Councilmember Roseman expressed concern that the R-3 zoning may be too dense for the area. Councilmember

Plaag inquired about the nearby stream. Deputy Director Wise explained that the project must comply with ordinance restrictions requiring a 25-foot buffer and that construction plans show no work between the road and the creek, noting that most development would occur to the rear of the property. He added that the project remains a by-right use under R-3 zoning, though if the applicants wished to proceed differently, they would likely need to pursue a Conditional District (CD) zoning.

Councilmember Carter made a motion that the proposed amendment to the Town's zoning map is consistent with the Town's comprehensive plan and any other adopted plans of the Town that are applicable because of the following from Boone Next:

Planning Principle 7
Planning Principle 10

Mayor Pro-Tem George seconded the motion, and the votes were cast as follows:

VOTE: Aye: Carter, George, Plaag
Nay: Roseman

Councilmember Carter made a second motion to approve Ordinance Z25-0685, and that approval is reasonable and in the public interest because it encourages development, housing, and proximity to the Town, as well as the overall housing stock; it supports the Boone Next plan, and it makes use of existing infrastructure and services provided by the Town. Mayor Pro-Tem George seconded the motion and stated that his support for the project stemmed from his confidence in the Town's ordinances and regulations, noting that the Conditional District process provides a strong framework for managing development. He added that he appreciated the Town's opportunity to be "in the driver's seat" regarding future growth. The votes were cast as follows:

VOTE: Aye: Carter, George, Plaag
Nay: Roseman

Upon a motion by Councilmember Carter, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem George, Council voted unanimously to approve the annexation Ordinance #A25-0685 as presented.

Cases A25-0501 & A25-0686 Rogers – Annexation & General Use Zoning Map Amendment

Deputy Director Wise updated Council regarding the property's split zoning. It was noted that the owner has a survey prepared to recombine the parcels, which are currently zoned B-3 and R-3. Staff explained that restrictions cannot be applied to the property under a general use zoning designation.

Applicant Rogers explained that he had previously attempted to separate the parcel before applying for annexation. When he informed the surveyor that he needed only a half-acre lot, the survey was laid out accordingly; however, the surveyor failed to account for the right-of-way, which reduced the lot size below the county's required half-acre minimum. Mr. Rogers stated that, after consulting with Planning staff, it was determined that the current request would be the best path forward, and he intends to file for the separation of property following approval.

Councilmember Plaag stated that while he does not generally support approving items based solely on verbal assurances, he recognized that the applicant's situation presents unique circumstances that would make the standard process unnecessarily burdensome.

Councilmember Carter made a motion that the proposed amendment to the Town's zoning map is consistent with the Town's comprehensive plan and any other adopted plans of the Town that are applicable because of the following from Boone Next:

Planning Principle 1
Planning Principle 10
Policy 1.5.2 Guide Utility Service Extensions & Annexations Using the Utility Service & Annexation Criteria
Policy 1.6.3 Diversity Boone's Housing Options

Mayor Pro-Tem George seconded the motion. The votes were cast as follows:

VOTE: Aye: Carter, George, Plaag
Nay: Roseman

Councilmember Carter made a second motion to approve Ordinance A25-0686, and that approval is reasonable and in the public interest because the request falls into the secondary growth area and its land uses are consistent with the Town's goals and policies. Mayor Pro-Tem George seconded the motion. The votes were cast as follows:

VOTE: Aye: Carter, George, Plaag
Nay: Roseman

Upon a motion by Councilmember Carter, seconded by Councilmember Plaag, Council voted unanimously to approve the annexation Ordinance #Z25-0686 as presented.

Cases A25-0581 & Z25-0687 – Suni & Daniel Kerr

Deputy Director Wise presented the above case and indicated that the Planning Commission had recommended approval with an R-1 Corridor District zoning designation.

Mayor Pro-Tem George made a motion that the proposed amendment to the Town's zoning map is consistent with the Town's comprehensive plan and any other adopted plans of the Town that are applicable because of:

Planning Principle 5
Policy 1.5.2 Guide Utility Service Extensions & Annexations Using the Utility Service and Annexation Criteria
Policy 1.6.5 Preserve the Town's Existing Affordable Homes
Policy 4.4.1 Promote Use of Existing Resources
Policy 5.2.2 Manage Growth on Boone's Edges

Councilmember Carter seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem George made a second motion to approve Ordinance #A25-0687, and that approval is reasonable and in the public interest because the applicant needs access to water to live there. Councilmember Carter seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro-Tem George, seconded by Councilmember Roseman, Council voted unanimously to approve the annexation Ordinance #A25-0581 & A25-0687 as presented.

Case A25-0606 Outdoor Dining – UDO Text Amendment

Planning Director Shook presented the above case and noted that the Planning Commission recommended approval.

Mayor Pro-Tem George stated that he believed this change would give the dining community tools to make good use of their space. He then made a motion that the proposed amendment to the Town's UDO is consistent with the Town's comprehensive plan and any other adopted plans of the Town that are applicable, because of the following from Boone Next:

Planning Principle 2
Planning Principle 3
Chapter 1
Goal 1.2

Councilmember Carter seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem George made a second motion to approve Ordinance A25-0606, and that approval is reasonable and in the public interest because it continues to give businesses in town additional tools and flexibility to provide outdoor dining and to allow for more economic success and opportunity. Councilmember Carter seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Consideration of Planning Commission Chair and Vice-Chair

Upon a motion by Councilmember Plaag, seconded by Councilmember Carter, Council voted unanimously to approve the Planning Commission Chair and Vice Chair appointments as presented.

Consideration of Scheduling Special Town Council Meeting

It was the consensus of Council to schedule a Special Town Council meeting on December 8, 2025, at 6 p.m. at Council Chambers.

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro-Tem George, seconded by Councilmember Carter, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 p.m.

_____ _____

Nicole Harmon-Church, Town Clerk Tim Futurell, Mayor