MINUTES – TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 12, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, in the Boone Town Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road in Boone. Mayor Dalton George presided. Council members present included Mayor Pro-Tem Todd Carter (remote), Virginia Roseman, Adrian Tait, Anne Pruitt, and Anitra Ball. Staff present included Interim Town Manager/Human Resources Director Dale Presnell, Town Clerk Nicole Harmon, Planning Director Jane Shook, Deputy Planning Director Brandon Wise, Grants Coordinator/Communications Laney Wise, Public Works Director Todd Moody, Police Chief Daniel Duckworth, Advanced Planning Specialist Jessica Mitchell (remote), Sustainability and Special Projects Manager George Santucci, and Cultural Resources Director Mark Freed.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A brief moment of silence was observed.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BOARD VACANCIES

Mayor George announced the following board vacancies:

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
Three alternate positions

CULTURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD
One student position

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Two regular positions

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
One position

PLANNING COMMISSION
One regular position

APPROVAL AND PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTION

Resolution Dedicating the Bridge at Lower Hardin Creek to be Named the "Rufus Edmisten Bridge"

Mayor George gave a brief history of the impact Mr. Edmisten has had on the community and noted that a bridge dedication ceremony would be held in the future.

Upon a motion by Council Member Roseman, seconded by Council Member Ball, Council voted unanimously to approve the resolution as presented.

RESOLUTION DEDICATING THE BRIDGE AT LOWER HARDIN CREEK TO BE NAMED THE "RUFUS EDMISTEN BRIDGE"

Whereas, Rufus Edmisten is a native of Boone and Watauga County, whose family land is now host to the portion of the Greenway that this bridge and the Lower Hardin Creek are located; and

Whereas, Rufus has served his State and Country in many ways, working alongside Senator Sam Ervin, serving as North Carolina's 46th Attorney General, 21st Secretary of State, Democratic Nominee for Governor, and a multitude of other civic and non-profit roles and capacities; and

Whereas, Rufus has been instrumental in the advocacy, crafting, and adoption of policies that have benefitted our Nation, on issues spanning civil rights, environmental causes, the support of North Carolina businesses, education, and much more; and

Whereas, this bridge rests over a tributary of the New River, a river in which, as Attorney General, Rufus fought doggedly to ensure its protection and designation as a Wild and Scenic River, securing its health and protection for future generations; and

Whereas, many Boone residents know well Rufus Edmisten and his many accomplishments representing Boone and the Edmisten family; and

Whereas, as a sign of appreciation for his work, the generosity of his family, and their connection to the land, it is only fitting to honor him through the dedication of this beloved portion of our Town's Greenway;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Mayor of Boone officially declares this bridge, the "Rufus Edmisten Bridge," and directs staff to work to prepare for its official dedication, including Rufus and other organizations.

REQUESTED APPEARANCES

David Graham – High Country Council of Governments

Mr. Graham provided a presentation regarding the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) currently being developed by the High Country Council of Governments.

Council Member Tait noted that the Town's 2013 transportation plan is now outdated and asked how the CTP process accounts for an existing plan that is no longer current. Mr. Graham explained that the development of the new plan will focus on analyzing current data when making recommendations. He noted that completed projects, as well as projects requiring additional analysis, will be considered in greater depth as part of the process.

Council Member Tait asked where the project currently stood within the anticipated 12- to 18-month timeline. Reuben Crummy with the NCDOT Transportation Planning Division stated that the transportation model work began in March and that the project remained on schedule, with completion anticipated within the 18-month timeframe.

Council Member Roseman discussed the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and referenced the Daniel Boone Parkway project, noting that she had opposed the project initially because of concerns about committing only to the Boone portion without adequately considering land acquisition and impacts on County residents. She emphasized the importance of considering residents throughout Watauga County who may be affected by transportation projects. Council Member Roseman also noted that pedestrian bridges could serve as a crucial lifeline for the community, particularly because the Town does not control many of its major roadways, and stressed the importance of providing safe ways for pedestrians to cross those roads.

Mayor George asked what public engagement would look like throughout the CTP process. Mr. Graham stated that staff was in the beginning stages of developing a public survey anticipated to be released in September. The survey would be promoted through a press release, online links and QR codes, outreach to the student community, flyers, and community events throughout the County. Paper copies would also be available, and the survey would be offered in both English and Spanish. Once recommendations were developed, the public would have another opportunity to provide feedback. Mr. Graham encouraged everyone to participate in the survey and noted that the Town of Boone, along with other municipalities throughout Watauga County, would be asked to assist in sharing and promoting it. Mayor George noted that many of the Town's major roads are not owned by the Town and requested an overview of roadway ownership and maintenance responsibilities. Mr. Graham explained that North Carolina and U.S. routes are maintained by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). He indicated that although the Town does not own its primary thoroughfares, it can provide input and

influence how those roadways are modified. Mayor George encouraged residents to contact members of the North Carolina General Assembly to advocate for additional funding for NCDOT.

Mark Freed – Boonerang Report

Mr. Freed provided an update on the fifth year of the Boonerang Music and Arts Festival, including festival highlights and financial information. Council members expressed their appreciation to Town staff and volunteers for their hard work and contributions to the festival's success. Council Member Pruitt stated that she would return at the next work session with ideas for formally recognizing festival volunteers.

George Santucci – Community Climate Action Plan Update

Mr. Santucci gave the five-year update on the Community Climate Action Plan, including plans for a new page on the Town of Boone website.

Mayor George declared a break at 10:01 a.m. Council reconvened at 10:13 a.m.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

1. Resolution & Contract – NCGHSP Town of Boone's Award for the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program

   Motion to Approve: Roseman
   Second: Ball
   All in Favor

2. Budget Amendments:

   a. **Police Department:**

To: Miscellaneous Supplies	010-407-000-519900	$15,000.00
From: Contributions/Donations	010-000-000-482200	($15,000.00)

   Explanation: Check donation from Mark Ricks for the Police Department's new fitness equipment room.

   b. **Sustainability:**

To: Sustainability Projects	010-401-000-549114	$25,000.00
From:Appropriated Fund Balance	010-000-000-499900	($25,000.00)

   Explanation: NC Land and Water Fund grant reimbursement.

c. Public Works Department:

To: Rivers House	010-411-000-549145	$75,000
From: Appropriated Fund Balance	010-000-000-499900	($75,000)

Explanation: To cover remaining grant match for restrooms and project expenses.

Motion to Approve: Roseman
Second: Tait
All in Favor

3. Minutes:

   a. July 9, 2026, Regular Town Council Meeting
   b. August 3, 2026, Special Town Council Meeting

   Motion to Approve: Pruitt
   Second: Tait
   All in Favor

4. Ordinance (Boone BOO!)

   Motion to Approve: Roseman
   Second: Ball
   All in Favor

PLANNING MATTERS

Walk Audit Update

Ms. Shook requested a date for the walk audit and gave a brief overview of the process, noting that staff will be working with the AARP on this year's event. It was the consensus of Council to hold the event on September 16th, with staff agreeing to send more details at a later date.

COUNCIL MATTERS

Update Regarding New Interim Town Manager

Mayor George announced that effective today, Hank Perkins will start on Monday, August 17th, as interim Town Manager. Upon a motion by Council Member Roseman, seconded by Council Member Tait, Council voted unanimously to approve Mr. Perkins' employment contract as presented.

Approval of Agreement – North Carolina Department of Transportation

Mr. Moody discussed approximately one mile of proposed multi-use path located primarily outside the Town limits and stated that he had spoken with the County Manager regarding the possibility of the County maintaining the portion within its jurisdiction, but was advised that the County was unable to provide maintenance. NCDOT indicated that the project would be removed from the plan if the Town did not agree to maintain the path. He stated that maintenance responsibilities would include mowing, snow removal, and trash collection, resulting in approximately two additional miles of maintenance for Town staff.

Council Member Tait asked whether the section along Bamboo Road would be widened, noting that the existing area was narrow. Mr. Moody confirmed that the path would be widened along the entire route. In response to a question regarding estimated maintenance costs, he stated that costs would primarily consist of staff time, fuel, mowing, snow removal, and other routine maintenance. Council Member Tait expressed support for having the path and accepting the associated maintenance responsibilities. Council Member Roseman expressed support for taking the necessary steps to provide the path for the betterment of the community. Mayor George asked whether the Town could partner with community organizations for mowing and trash collection to reduce the burden on Public Works staff. Council Member Pruitt expressed disappointment that the County was unwilling to assist with maintenance. Mayor Pro-Tem Carter expressed a desire for greater clarity regarding the final design, noting that he had seen different concepts for the project. He indicated support for exploring alternative maintenance arrangements once the final design and maintenance needs were better understood.

Upon a motion by Council Member Tait, seconded by Council Member Pruitt, Council voted unanimously to approve the agreement as presented.

Appointment to Sustainability Committee

Council Member Roseman nominated P. Herbert to a regular seat and W. Copeck and A. Fagiolo to student seats. Mayor George indicated that a Watauga High School student named Chase had applied for a student seat, but had missed the deadline. Council Member Pruitt suggested that Chase be appointed as a high school volunteer. Council Member Roseman accepted this as part of her nominations. Hearing no further nominations, Mayor George called for a vote.

VOTE: Aye: All
Nay: None

Appointment to Downtown Boone Development Association

Council Member Tait nominated J. Moretz for reappointment to the Downtown Boone Development Association. Hearing no further nominations, Mayor George called for a vote.

VOTE: Aye: All
Nay: None

Appointment to Historic Preservation Commission

Council Member Roseman stated that she was impressed with Phoebe's application. Mayor George expressed concerns regarding the application and questioned whether she might be better suited for the Planning Commission, noting that he did not want to place her in a position where she might not be successful. After brief discussion, Council Member Roseman nominated Phoebe for appointment, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a three-member commission so that the commission could still hold Quasi-Judicial meetings. Council Member Tait noted that Phoebe had specifically applied to serve on the board and therefore had some understanding of its role. He stated that all applicants may have opinions that are not necessarily applicable to the work of a particular board and expressed support for the appointment. Hearing no further nominations, Mayor George called for a vote.

VOTE: Aye: All
Nay: None

Mayor's Report

Mayor George reported that the Downtown Boone Development Association had hired its part-time staff member and that he attended the first Community Partners meeting at the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce. He also attended a regional mayors' meeting in Seven Devils, where he heard similar concerns and challenges expressed by mayors from communities throughout the High Country.

Town Manager's Report

Interim Town Manager/Human Resources Director Dale Presnell gave a report on the following topics:

- Grants Coordinator/Communications Laney Wise recently passed an Advanced Public Information Officer course.
- Watauga County Communications is in the process of moving their equipment out of the Police Department and into their new office. This move will make room for a new workout facility, for which the department recently secured a donation to completely outfit.
- Thanks to the support of Council, the Human Resources Department implemented a 3% COLA at the beginning of the new fiscal year.
- The Human Resources Department is continuing its work on the Family Forward certification, with a survey sent out recently and ongoing policy reviews.
- The Town of Boone currently has five open positions.
- The Street Department, along with our paving contractor, completed approximately 1275 linear feet of milling and resurfacing on State Farm Road, from VFW Drive to Sunnyside Drive.
- Hunting Hills Slope Failure - Repairs are 95% complete on the Hunting Hills slope failure. Repairs include new curb and gutter, guardrail, fence, water and sewer lines, new base, and new asphalt on the travel lanes.
- The Request for Proposals for the audio/visual upgrades at Council Chambers is currently being reviewed by the Town Attorney, with hopes that it will be published in the next couple of weeks.

- Staff has successfully implemented the new CivicClerk meeting management system.

Mr. Presnell thanked Council, staff, and the community for their kindness and support during his time serving as Interim Town Manager. Council members expressed their appreciation to Mr. Presnell for his service and thanked him for his time and dedication while serving in the interim role.

Mr. Moody reported that recent rainfall had improved the Town's water supply conditions and recommended transitioning from Stage 2 to Stage 1 water conservation measures effective today. Mayor George noted that the Town remains under Stage 1 conservation measures at all times as part of its conservative approach to water management. It was the consensus of Council to return to Stage 1 water conservation measures effective immediately.

Board Liaison Reports

Council Member Pruitt referenced the Sustainability presentation provided earlier in the meeting and Mayor George's report regarding the Downtown Boone Development Association.

Council Member Roseman referenced Mr. Freed's earlier presentation regarding Boonerang and reported that student music lessons were available at the Jones House. She applauded the implementation of the new volunteer app used during Boonerang, and noted that the Jones House had recently received a new roof. She reported that the Historic Preservation Commission was currently unable to establish a quorum until three seats were filled, but continued to move forward with the Kraut Creek and Clawson-Burnley Park interpretive panel projects. She also announced the upcoming Fairy Day event at the Daniel Boone Native Gardens.

Council Member Tait reported that an upcoming Regional Transportation Advisory Committee meeting was scheduled and expressed enthusiasm about participating. He also noted that a Parks and Recreation meeting would be held that evening. Council Member Tait reported that the recent Economic Development Commission meeting included discussion of Rootsy Sweet Potato Milk, which was in the final stages of product development and had received a significant grant from the North Carolina Economic Development Commission. He noted that the company would be based in Watauga County.

Council Member Ball provided an update from the July Human Relations Commission meeting, including upcoming activities in recognition of Overdose Awareness Month and a Buy Boone lunch event at F.A.R.M. Café.

Mayor Pro-Tem Carter reported that AppalCART had begun a new route to the Farmers' Market and encouraged the public to utilize the service during its one-year test phase. He noted that electric bus options continued to be explored due to delays and that two double-decker buses were expected in the near future. He also reported that the Human Relations Commission held a successful Disability Pride event, noting that Boone was one of the few municipalities in Western North Carolina to host such an event. He announced that the upcoming Buy Boone lunch would be held on the 2nd at F.A.R.M. Café.

Mayor George reported that he had been invited to speak at NYC Climate Week, which he described as the largest climate event of its kind in the world. He clarified that he would not formally represent the Town of Boone but would speak about local sustainability efforts. Council Member Pruitt asked whether the Town's Sustainability Manager could also attend. Mayor George stated that he would discuss the possibility with Mr. Santucci.

Council Member Roseman reported that the Cultural Resources Advisory Board would recognize Doc Watson Day on Friday. She also noted that the Farmers' Market was in the running for a national America's Favorite Farmers Market award and encouraged the community to vote.

With no further business, Mayor George adjourned the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

_____ _____

Nicole Harmon, Clerk Dalton George, Mayor