MINUTES – BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 9, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

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

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A brief moment of silence was observed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor George announced the following board vacancies:

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
Three alternate positions

CULTURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD
One student position

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
One regular position

PLANNING COMMISSION

One regular position

REQUESTED APPEARANCES

Lane Moody – Downtown Development Director

Ms. Moody provided a brief update regarding the Downtown Boone Development Authority's recent annual meeting, including information on upcoming events and the ongoing Howard Street project. Council Member Roseman asked whether the mural planned for Ice House Alley would pay homage to the alley's history, as she recalled it being discussed previously. Mayor George recalled the discussion differently, stating that Ice House Alley had been noted, but he did not recall discussing incorporating its history into the mural. Council Member Roseman also expressed concerns with certain components of the Howard Street project and noted that none of the current Council members had voted to approve the plans as they are currently being implemented. Mayor Pro-Tem Carter agreed with Mayor George's recollection regarding Ice House Alley, and stated that Dana Folk Way would be moving forward in the alleyway. He also thanked staff for their efforts to address graffiti in the area. Mayor George stated that he would be meeting with the Tourism Development Authority regarding potential funding for marketing efforts at the project's completion.

TENTATIVE AGENDA ADOPTION

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Amy Forrester of Boone read a statement regarding challenges associated with the Howard Street project and the negative impacts the project has had on her business. Ms. Forrester shared data reflecting a 28% negative impact from the traffic flow change beginning on August 5, as well as guest feedback on parking, traffic patterns, and visibility. She expressed concern about the lack of public input before the project began, offered several potential mitigation measures, and requested more communication from staff.

Council Member Tait suggested adding the matter to the next work session agenda for further discussion, specifically including the possibility of adding a left-turn signal onto Appalachian Street to address issues with the current traffic signal cycle. Ms. Meade noted that she had seen temporary signage directing motorists to commercial establishments during other construction projects and suggested a similar approach. Mayor George suggested that the DBDA move forward

with a signage initiative, engage the Tourism Development Authority and Boone Area Chamber of Commerce to conduct a marketing push. He also suggested authorizing Town Manager Perkins to speak with NCDOT regarding options to expedite improvements to traffic flow onto Appalachian Street and Howard Street. In response to discussion regarding responsibility for the temporary signage, Ms. Moody stated that she would work with the affected business owners. Council Member Tait asked whether the DBDA had a marketing plan for the area once the project was completed. Mayor George and Ms. Meade added that the proposed social district would play a role in those efforts and expressed optimism regarding the project moving forward.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

Upon a motion by Council Member Pruitt, seconded by Council Member Ball, Council unanimously approved the following items on the Consent Agenda:

1. Hellbender Mural Expansion

PLANNING MATTERS

Discussion of Renew NC Workforce Housing for Ownership Program

Ms. Shook presented information regarding approximately $1.4 billion in funding available through the North Carolina Department of Commerce to support recovery efforts following Hurricane Helene. She noted that the Town may be interested in the Multifamily Construction and Repair Program and the Workforce Housing Program. Council Member Pruitt noted the short application timeline and asked whether the Town could partner with other public or private entities to pursue the funding. Ms. Shook confirmed that joint applications are permitted and stated that she expected this to be a one-time funding opportunity.

Mayor Pro-Tem Carter asked whether the funding could provide an opportunity to revisit plans for the Junaluska community to encourage homeownership. Council Member Ball agreed it would be a good opportunity and believed the community would welcome it. Ms. Shook noted that similar efforts had previously been planned through the Affordable Housing Trust. Council Member Ball said she had worked with Lynne Coulthard, who contacted her about potential projects in the community and said she intended to pursue grant funding for those efforts through the Housing Trust.

Ms. Meade expressed hesitation about committing significant Town resources given the short timeframe. Council member Tait suggested that partnering with Watauga County or the Affordable Housing Trust on projects already being planned may be a more feasible approach. Ms. Shook stated that she would consult with the Town Attorney, research eligibility and partnership opportunities, and meet with Ms. Wise and representatives from the High Country Council of

Governments to further research the funding opportunities to bring an update back to Council later in the month.

COUNCIL MATTERS

Appointment to Historic Preservation Commission

Council Member Roseman nominated Pierce Hall to a full term on the Historic Preservation Commission. Hearing no further nominations, Mayor George called for a vote.

VOTE: Aye: All
Nay: None

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor George noted ongoing coordination with the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Development Authority regarding messaging related to the Howard Street project. He also noted that the dedication of the Rufus Edmisten Bridge on the Greenway would take place Friday.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Perkins updated Council on the following topics: Regarding the Police Department, he reported that Watauga County Communications had removed components from the facility and expected to clear out the remaining equipment within the coming weeks. Fitness equipment had arrived and was expected to be operational by October. The Department also reported that a second co-responder was expected to be in the field by early October, which would expand program coverage to seven days per week.

Grants staff reported that grant applications had been submitted for fire equipment for Station Four and for the Police Department. Mr. Perkins also noted an NCDOT pedestrian safety funding opportunity for improvements at Burrell Street and Rivers Street.

Mr. Perkins indicated that Human Resources staff reported that the Town had received the Family Forward certification and was working with the North Carolina League of Municipalities to offer a defensive driving class for employees who drive as part of their job duties.

On behalf of Public Works, Mr. Perkins reported that the Town's annual Litter Sweep and cleanup day would be held September 19. Recently completed projects included repairs to the Hunting Hills slope failure and the CDBG Deck Hill Water Tank Replacement project. Projects currently underway included the Winkler Creek dredging project and Fairway Drive improvements, including

installation of a new water line. He also reported that the Town had engaged professionals to conduct a water loss audit to identify and address unaccounted-for water loss within the system.

BOARD LIAISON UPDATES

Council Member Roseman reported that the Historic Preservation Commission was working on a panel for Clawson-Burnley Park. She also reported that the Daniel Boone Native Gardens' Fairy Day was successful and announced an upcoming plant swap.

Council Member Tait reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission was working through scheduling for several sports teams and noted the appointment of a new director.

Ms. Ball reported that the Human Relations Commission held a Buy Boone Lunch on September 2 with a good turnout. Mayor Pro-Tem Carter noted that the next event, "How Local Government Works," would be held September 20.

CLOSED SESSION

Upon a motion Council Member Pruitt, seconded Council Member Ball, Council voted unanimously to enter into closed session at 10:21 a.m. pursuant to the following:

1. N.C. Gen. Stat.§ 143-318.11(a)(1), to review, approve, and seal closed session minutes from Council's prior closed session(s).
2. N.C. Gen. Stat.§ 143-318.11(a)(3), to consult with the Town Attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the Town Council, and obtain legal advice, consider, and/or give instructions to the attorney concerning one or more potential legal claims.
3. N.C. Gen. Stat.§ 143-318.11(a)(6), to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee.

Without further discussion, Mayor George adjourned closed session and the regular meeting at 11:48 a.m.

_____ _____

Nicole Harmon, Town Clerk Dalton George, Mayor