

**TOWN OF MAGGIE VALLEY  
SPECIAL CALLED BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING  
MAY 14, 2009  
MINUTES**

Members Present: Mayor Roger McElroy, Aldermen: Colin Edwards, Saralyn Price, Mark DeMeola, and Phil Aldridge  
Staff Present: Manager Tim Barth, Attorney Chuck Dickson, Planning Director Nathan Clark, Captain Jason Moody, Detective Archie Shuler, Administrative Assistant Karen Batick, and Town Clerk Vickie Best  
Others Present: Seventy-six people

**Meeting Called to Order**

Mayor McElroy called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. in the Town Hall Boardroom.

Mayor McElroy announced that this public hearing has been called to receive public comment regarding the Town of Maggie Valley lending Ghost Town Theme Park \$200,000.

Mayor McElroy opened the floor for comment.

Hugh Allison: Mr. Allison owns property that boarder Ghost Town. “The Town should not loan Ghost Town the money. The Town will not be repaid.”

Phyllis McClure: Ms. McClure a residential taxpayer that has been the Town Clerk of the Town of Waynesville for 25-years felt that this was not a good use for public funds. The EDC and TDA have both turned Ghost Town down for additional funding. The business owners can form an alliance and lend the money. Ms. McClure felt the business is too dated to become a success in this day and time. Ms. McClure was opposed to lending Ghost Town the money, because there is no benefit to the residents of Maggie Valley. Ms. McClure stated that she had faith in the Town’s leaders.

Ron DeSimone: Mr. DeSimone lives at 127 Ladderback Ridge in Brannon Forest Subdivision. Mr. DeSimone was against the Town lending Ghost Town money. He felt that it was a poor use of taxpayer’s money. The Town should not be in the banking business and does not have the resources to investigate Ghost Town’s business plan. A decision to lend the money would not be in the best interest of the residents of Maggie Valley.

Michael Howard: Mr. Howard is the maintenance manager for Ghost Town. Mr. Howard was in favor of the Town lending the money. Mr. Howard stated that his and 250 more people’s livelihoods depend on Ghost Town. “Ghost Town has gone through some highs and lows. Management is on the right path now. There is not a harder working team of people than the employees at Ghost Town. People in Maggie Valley and Haywood

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County benefit from what the employees do. Give Ghost Town a fair chance. Lend them the money.”

Verlin Edwards: Mr. Edwards is not a resident, but the Edwards family has lived in the Maggie Valley community for over 200 years. Mr. Edwards also did engineering work for Ghost Town for which he has not been fully compensated. “The Town is not in the banking business. The investors should come through with the needed funds. If Maggie Valley gives them the money it will not be a loan, it will be a gift.”

Torry Pinter Jr.: Mr. Pinter lives at 36 Penny Lane and owns a business in Maggie Valley. Mr. Pinter asked that the two entities work together to find a solution where both sides gain something. “Is TDA funding available? Can an additional 1 cent occupancy tax be added for that purpose?”

Jim Casey: Mr. Casey, a full-time resident in the Crockett Meadows Subdivision opposed the Town lending money. “A municipality is not a bank. The article in the Smoky Mountain News was a great article. Ghost Town owes BB& T Banking 9-million dollars. It is a risky proposition.”

Teri French: Ms. French has worked at Ghost Town of two-years. “Ghost Town is a major attraction. People come all the way from the west coast to visit Ghost Town.” Ms. French asked that the board make the right decision and lend Ghost Town the money.

Steve Shiver: Mr. Shiver, CEO of Ghost Town and one of the original investors in 2006 addressed Council stating that the tourist industry has changed over the last several years, but that he felt confident that Council would do the right thing. He too, has sit in the same position, as a council member of a large city, and then later, as a county manager. Mr. Shiver stated that he knew the task of making difficult decisions, being in the pubic eye, and getting those late night calls from disgruntled citizens.

Mr. Shiver informed Council that economic development is provided for in the Town of Maggie Valley’s charter. Maggie Valley’s economic engine is tourism. Second homes and vacations sales are currently driving Maggie Valley’s economy.

Mr. Shiver commended Council on taking the steps to purchase the festival grounds in an effort to bring tourist to town during the years that Ghost Town was closed. There are many venues to bring tourist to Town; Ghost Town is one of the largest attractions.

Haywood County made a \$500,000 grant to Blue Ridge Paper Plant in Canton. Spending public funds for economic development is already in place. “Ghost Town is here and is going to stay. The investors are committed. A five-year capital plan is in place.”

Due to an error in advertising the public hearing, Mr. Shiver stated that he would do his presentation on May 18.

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Roger Ferguson: Mr. Ferguson, a taxpayer and lifelong resident, opposed “throwing good money after bad”. Mr. Ferguson felt that if the town has \$200,000 to “throw away” it should be put in a trust fund, to give the young people in Maggie Valley, that are deserving, a chance to go to college.

Randy Brian: Mr. Brian, the safety director for Ghost Town, addressed Council stating that he loves Maggie Valley, but without Ghost Town, people will be out of work. “If Ghost Town does not open, then how can anyone get paid back?” Mr. Brian stated that he had put \$250,000 of his own money into Ghost Town, because of his love for Maggie Valley. Mr. Brian was in favor of the Town lending Ghost Town the money.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR, THE  
MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:05 P.M. BY MOTION OF ALDERMAN  
EDWARDS, WITH ALL IN FAVOR.**

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Mayor Roger McElroy

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Vickie Best, CMC, Town Clerk