

Town of Maggie Valley
Special Called Board of Aldermen Meeting
July 26, 2011
MINUTES

Members Present: Mayor Roger McElroy, Aldermen: Scott Pauley, Saralyn Price, and Phil Aldridge

Members Absent: Alderman Danya Vanhook

Staff Present: Manager Tim Barth, Public Works Director Mike Mehaffey, Planning Director Nathan Clark, Festival Director Audrey Hager, and Captain Jason Moody

Others Present: approximately 25 people

Meeting Called to Order

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

Proposed Wrestling Event at the Festival Grounds

Alderman Aldridge and Jim Higel, owner of Legends Sports Bar & Restaurant, met the owners of Tatanka Enterprises that would like to put on a wrestling event at the Maggie Valley Festival Grounds.

Director Hager met with Tatanka and provided a site tour of the grounds. The date of choice for the event was September 23 & 24. A conference call was held with Alderman Aldridge, Manager Barth, Director Hager, Danny Mitchell, Mandy Hartline, Chief Scott Sutton, and the town clerk. It was during the conference call that it was discovered that Tatanka Enterprises would need \$15,000 from Maggie Valley to put on the event.

A clerical error was made and it was discovered that the Mustang Club has the Festival Grounds rented on September 23 & 24. The Mustang Club expects 500 spectators and 100-plus Mustangs.

Upon finding the clerical error, Director Hager offered the remaining open dates to Tatanka Enterprises or suggested scheduling an event for next year. Tatanka Enterprises was not interested in any other dates or looking at next year. Director Hager talked with the Mustang Club representative and found that the Club would be agreeable to partner with the Tatanka Enterprises and share the grounds.

Director Hager contacted Covey Promotions, which was listed on the rental application from Tatanka Enterprises and was informed that September 23 & 24 is not an open date for him and that Tatanka Enterprises knew this.

Several motel owners say that they are already full September 23 & 24 with "Wings over the Smokies".

The two questions that must be answered are when will be the best time to schedule a wrestling event and where is the funding going to come from.

The Town can assist with soft cost such as rental fees, etc. but not with cash. The Town cannot be a funding partner for a for-profit promoter.

There were motel owners in the audience that stated they were full every weekend in October and have no rooms booked for the Mustang event.

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When questioned about getting a percentage of the gate or alcohol sales, Director Hager responded that none of those details had been discussed. Alderman Aldridge responded that the town would receive 10% of the gate, food would be split 60/40, and the town would get all of the alcohol sales.

Director Hager reminded Council that this is not a WWE match, although their marketing strategies guarantee 1,000 people. In-kind services provided by the town will be deducted from the requested \$15,000.

A gentleman spoke from the floor stating that it was a waste of time unless Maggie Valley begins to advertise on TV. "The 4th of July [event] did not fill the valley. That is how all the people feel."

Director Hager responded that the Town did advertise the 4th of July Celebration on TV. All media markets were used, newspapers, TV, radio, facebook, and flyers were handed out throughout the Haywood County school system. It was Director Hager's position that the town needs to focus on grassroot efforts and partner with hotel/motels throughout the valley.

The gentleman responded that if it does not bring people, it does not help Maggie Valley.

Alderman Price, who also works at Joey's Pancake House, stated that customers were excited about the Carnival. Jonathan Creek Inn and J Arthur's were also pleased with the turn out. There were businesses that profited from the 4th of July Celebration.

Director Hager concurred, adding that the carnival gave people something to do rather than leave the valley.

Philip Wight stated if the dates are available then give them the festival grounds. As for the fireworks, Mr. Wight felt they should be shot off on the 4th regardless of what day of the week it is.

Haywood County TDA Director Lynn Collins spoke from the floor explaining that Tatanka is Native American and he is interested in coming to this area due to the draw from Cherokee. Director Collins also stated the Maggie Valley has some 1% funding left.

Mayor McElroy will call a 1% subcommittee meeting to see how they feel about using 1% money.

Charles Meadows, owner of Sweet Briar Motel, stated that having the wrestling event come to Maggie Valley would be great, but he didn't believe 1% funding, nor the town's money should be used to bring them here. "The motorcycle rallies fill the valley and they don't receive town funding."

Director Hager added that she is unsure how Tatanka Enterprises will use the requested funding.

It appeared that the consensus was to wait until next year to bring the event to Maggie Valley during the slow part of the season.

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As earlier stated Alderman Aldridge and Mr. Higel are the driving force behind the wrestling event and have spoken with Tatanka much more than the town staff.

Alderman Aldridge questioned the audience; "When Ghost Town was in operation did the businesses just say we don't want any more people in Maggie Valley. There are plenty of accommodations for people. If this event is missed, it will be regretted. The Town put money into the 4th of July Celebration and in the brew fest; the town could invest a little money in this. It is foolish to pass this up."

Director Hager reminded Council that whatever is decided, we must be consistent. Again, Director Hager reiterated that Tatanka Enterprises would not accept any other date and would not consider next year.

Alderman Pauley felt that the Town could help with the soft cost, "but we must have more information before moving forward."

Alderman Price thought it would be wise for the Chamber, Hotel/Motel Association, and the Lodging Association to talk to their members to determine if sponsorship can be obtained.

Philip Wight thought the Town should make a counter-offer to Tatanka Enterprises.

Director Hager will send out an email to the three entities explaining what facts are known so that they can see how their membership responds.

Parham Park Grading Bid

The grading bids came in more costly than was anticipated. The lowest bid came from WNC Paving for \$98,017 and Clark & Leatherwood's bid was \$104,128.

Manager Barth, staff, WNC Paving, and Patrick Bradshaw, the engineer, worked to find ways of cutting the cost. It was determined that the pervious surface for the parking lot and walking trail was what drove the cost up. By eliminating part of the walking trail and using other pervious materials for the parking lot, the cost could be cut down to \$55,840. The Town would then pull those funds from the Fund Balance and move forward with the project.

Mayor McElroy informed Council that in the near-future the Town is going to be mandated to control storm water runoff. "This should be a demonstration project for the Town. The Pigeon River Fund contributed grant funding for the project for clean water purposes. The Lion's Club and the Civic Association have contributed funding for handicap accessibility."

When questioned about his thoughts, Director Clark agreed that the concept was to have Parham Park be a showcase. "It is the first public access to Jonathan Creek. The park is heavily used by people picnicking and enjoying the creek." Director Clark was an advocate of the gravel system, but with the Town's budget, the optional system would work and is still a pervious surface. "The walking trail will lead from the parking lot to the river deck."

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Brenda O'Keefe spoke from the floor stating that the Lion's Club has donated money and will continue to donate money to the project. The Maggie Valley Lion's Club is recognized as a civic organization and their desires are to have parks that have easy access for the blind and handicap. Ms. O'Keefe asked that Council make Parham Park a demonstration project. "Many people go to Parham Park to enjoy nature and Jonathan Creek with just two picnic tables and a trashcan."

Mayor McElroy added that there is a lot of upkeep to pea-gravel parking lots.

Alderman Aldridge agreed that the park was needed, but due to the economic times and the future of the Town's budget without Ghost Town paying taxes, "this is not the time to go all out on a park".

**ALDERMAN PRICE MADE A MOTION TO GO WITH THE ORIGINAL PLAN AND AWARD WNC PAVING THE BID FOR PARHAM PARK AT A COST OF \$98,017.
MOTION CARRIED.**

**ALDERMAN PRICE MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 6:57 P.M.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mayor Roger McElroy

Vickie Best, CMC, Town Clerk