

**TOWN OF VALDESE
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 6, 2023**

The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Monday, November 6, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall, 102 Massel Avenue SW, Valdese, North Carolina. The following were present: Mayor Charles Watts, Mayor Pro Tem Frances Hildebran, Councilwoman Rexanna Lowman, Councilman Tim Skidmore, Councilman Tim Barus, and Councilman Paul Mears. Also present were: Town Attorney Tim Swanson, Town Manager Seth Eckard, Assistant Town Manager/CFO Bo Weichel, Town Clerk Jessica Lail, and various Department Heads.

Absent: None

A quorum was present.

Mayor Watts called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He offered the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENT: Mayor Pro Tem Frances Hildebran read the Rules & Procedures for Public Comment: Rule 5. Public Comment - Any individual or group who wishes to address the council shall inform the town clerk, Jessica Lail, any time prior to the start of the meeting, and provide their name, address and subject matter about which they wish to speak. Persons must be present if they wish to address the Council. Comments should be limited to five minutes per speaker. If the speaker's comments need to be addressed, upon the direction of the Council, someone from the management team will be in touch with you later. Please silence your cell phones.

Mayor Watts read Open Forum Guidelines: 1. Open Forum is not intended to require the Council or Staff to answer any impromptu questions. Speakers will address all comments to the entire Council as a whole and not one individual member. Discussions between speakers and members of the audience will not be permitted. 2. Speakers will maintain decorum at all times. Speakers are expected to be courteous and respectful at all times, regardless of who occupies Council chairs. These guidelines will help to ensure that a safe and productive meeting is held and that all those wishing to address Council will be afforded the opportunity.

LIFE IN VALDESE – JEANINE BARUS, 111 & 113 BARUS AVE., VALDESE: Ms. Barus shared that she is a second-generation Waldensian and has lived in this location her entire life. Ms. Barus shared stories of her father and uncle digging a waterline and installing a pipe when their well went dry one summer. Ms. Barus said that at that time, they were annexed into the town limits to tap into the main waterline and began paying for water. Ms. Barus shared all the services they started receiving over time that they had to pay for. Ms. Barus remembers her family cleaning the road after Hurricane Hugo and scraping the streets during snowstorms. Ms. Barus said that she lived for 52 years on a gravel street until she and her mother asked the Town to pave their road. They still had to pay for a third of the cost. Ms. Barus said that the property owners had to pay for all additional services during a time of revenue-neutral property tax in Valdese and stated that revenue-neutral will bring us back to the old ways. Ms. Barus feels that this election has pitted family against family, divided friends and neighbors, high school classmates, and even tried to divide the two sides of Town. Ms. Barus stated that the current Council is being blamed for the decisions made by the previous Council members. Ms. Barus feels that the Public Safety Building is a big project and does not agree with the placement and feels the Council should look at that again. Ms. Barus said it wasn't fair for those currently seated to be blamed for the past hold-up of the economy and COVID and feels strategic planning has taken place. Ms. Barus stated that one group wants more control of this project, for our Town to be run by a small group of consultants instead of elected officials, and for us to vote with the ringleader. Ms. Barus believes in a democratic process and that we can survive again.

ART EXHIBIT – ROSE MUELLER, 610 DIXIE AVE. NW, VALDESE: Ms. Mueller shared that she lives in the West part of the Town and wants the people who think that part of the Town is not beautiful to look around. Ms. Mueller shared that she is an artist inspired by what she sees in the Town. Ms. Mueller invited everyone to stop and see her artwork displayed in the Play It Again Records window at 150 West Main Street. Ms. Mueller asked that everyone take the time to look at the sunrises and sunsets in this beautiful Town and hoped that people would find inspiration.

WATER PIPES – JEAN MARIE COLE, 705 BERTIS ST., VALDESE: Ms. Cole has been reading the newspaper about the old lead pipes in many places in the country. Ms. Cole is curious if we are repaving streets, will we replace waterlines. Ms. Cole lives in the old part of the Town and wants to know if the Town has lead pipes and if there is a plan to replace them. Ms. Cole understands that she has to replace the line from her house to the meter, but what about the line in the street. Ms. Cole is concerned about her great-grandchildren living in her home. Ms. Cole would like to know what the plan is.

VALDESE – LINDA CABOT, 822 GARDIOL AVE., VALDESE: Ms. Cabot thanked the current Council and the past Council for their selfless service in providing all the amenities we enjoy by living in Valdese. Ms. Cabot feels that we think that all small towns are similar, and they are not. Ms. Cabot said that we have an exceptional small Town. We have superior employees, and our Officials are here for only one reason: to make our Town better. Ms. Cabot shared that she was taken care of with excellence whenever she had a request. Ms. Cabot said we have always been the beneficiaries of excellence, which shows. Ms. Cabot thanked our dedicated staff and elected Officials.

CONSENT AGENDA: (enacted by one motion)

APPROVED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 9, 2023

Councilman Barus made a motion to approve the aforementioned item on the Consent Agenda, seconded by Councilman Mears. The vote was unanimous.

End Consent Agenda

ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA: None

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES: Public Works Director Allen Hudson introduced new Utility Field Technicians Dustin Hyler and Austin Sigmon.

RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR KAREN CLARK-CARUSO: Mayor Watts presented the following Resolution of Appreciation for retiring ABC Store Manager Karen Clark-Carusio:

WHEREAS, Karen Clark-Carusio for the past 13 years has served the Town of Valdese with distinction as a committed and dedicated General Manager with the Valdese ABC Board; and

WHEREAS, Karen's 13 years of service have been marked by exemplary dedication, integrity, and professionalism to serve the best interests of the community, our citizens, and the Valdese ABC Board; and

WHEREAS, Karen has earned the admiration and high regard of those with whom she has worked with and the members of the public with whom she has served these past 13 years; and

WHEREAS, Karen has served the Valdese ABC Board as General Manager; being appointed at the inception of the Board and serving in that capacity for the entirety of her tenure, establishing herself as a proven leader; and

WHEREAS, Karen has been instrumental as an advocate for the Town of Valdese in the adoption of a referendum allowing for the opening of a retail spiritous liquor establishment within town limits; and

WHEREAS, Karen has been instrumental as an advocate for the Town of Valdese in the adoption of a referendum allowing for "liquor by the drink" permittees to sell spiritous liquor in the Town of Valdese; and

WHEREAS, Karen has served as a true ambassador for North Carolina's alcohol control system, acting as a catalyst for the dissemination of information related to the benefits to our community and the public that it serves; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Valdese as we take this occasion to express honor, respect, and admiration to **Karen Clark-Carusio** for her outstanding contributions to the Valdese ABC Board and the Town of Valdese.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council of the Town of Valdese, North Carolina, hereby expresses its sincere appreciation and gratitude to Karen Clark-Carusio for her service and leadership to

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the Valdese ABC Board and the Town of Valdese during the past 13 years and extends congratulations and best wishes upon her retirement.

Adopted this the 6th day of November, 2023.

PROCLAMATION FOR NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK: Mayor Watts presented the following Proclamation for National Apprenticeship Week:

**Valdese Town Council
Burke County, North Carolina**

WHEREAS, apprenticeships have been a cornerstone of skill development and workforce enrichment, contributing significantly to the growth and prosperity of our nation, state, and community; and

WHEREAS, the spirit of innovation and dedication exhibited by apprentices enhances the economic competitiveness of our town and state by fostering excellence and promoting continuous learning; and

WHEREAS, the collaboration between businesses, trade organizations, and educational partners highlights the power of partnerships in advancing workforce development; and

WHEREAS, apprenticeships are a strategy to ensure that opportunities are accessible to individuals from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, Western Piedmont Community College's PACE program, in collaboration with numerous Burke County employers, has afforded our citizens opportunities to develop skills that lead to high wage jobs; and

WHEREAS, National Apprenticeship Week provides an opportunity to recognize apprentices, employers, colleges, and partners for contributing to a skilled workforce; and

WHEREAS, the celebrations during this week not only honor the achievements of apprentices but also inspire new generations to pursue vocational education and apprenticeship opportunities, bolstering our nation's workforce for the future; and

WHEREAS, the commitment to apprenticeship aligns with the Town of Valdese's mission of enhancing economic growth;

THEREFORE, we, the Valdese Town Council, do hereby proclaim November 13-19, 2023, as

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

in the Town of Valdese, we encourage all citizens, businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations to join in celebrating apprenticeship programs and their positive impact on our town.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hand and caused the seal of the Town of Valdese to be affixed this 6th day of November in the year 2023.

/s/ Charles Watts, Mayor

The President of Western Piedmont Community College, Dr. Joel Welch, and representatives from Meridian and Valdese Weavers, which participate in the program, were at the meeting to accept the Proclamation.

Mayor Watts thanked Dr. Welch for providing this program and feels it will be a wonderful asset to our community.

PROCLAMATION FOR BURKE COUNTY, NC NONPROFIT DAY (AKA 1BURKEGIVES): Katherine Christie, director of sales and marketing for Burke County Tourism Development and member of the 1BurkeGives planning team, shared that BC United Way hosts 1BurkeGives. Ms. Christie said that last year, 39 non-profits participated and raised \$100,000 in one day. She encouraged everyone to follow BC United Way on Facebook and contact BC United Way with questions.

Mayor Watts presented the following Proclamation:

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Proclamation
Burke County, NC Nonprofit Day
(aka 1BurkeGives)**

Whereas, charitable nonprofit organizations throughout Burke County save taxpayers thousands of dollars through their services and contribute significantly to the high quality of life for all citizens; and

Whereas, these organizations are committed to serving the educational, cultural, civic, health, religious, human and animal services, recreational, philanthropic, environmental, and other diverse needs of Burke County; and

Whereas, the staff and volunteers of all Burke County nonprofit organizations are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of community service, donating their time and effort to making a difference in the lives of others; and

Whereas, Tuesday, November 28, 2023 observance of "Burke County, NC Nonprofit Day" (aka 1BurkeGives) provides a unique opportunity for the citizens of Burke County to join together in appreciation and support of the many contributions made by nonprofit organizations to our continued wellbeing while boosting awareness for continued growth.

Now, therefore, I, Charles Watts, Mayor of The Town of Valdese, do hereby proclaim Tuesday, November 28, 2023, as Burke County, NC Nonprofit Day (aka 1BurkeGives) and encourage all citizens to recognize the positive impact nonprofit organizations have on the quality of life of the citizens of Burke County.

/s/ Charles Watts, Mayor

APPROVED RESOLUTION AWARDING TOWN-ISSUED SERVICE SIDE ARM AND BADGE FOR

RETIRING POLICE CHIEF: Mayor Watts asked the Council if they had any questions on this item and noted that we would recognize retiring Police Chief Jack Moss at the Council meeting on December 4, 2023, closer to his retirement.

**Town of Valdese
North Carolina**

Resolution Awarding City-Issued Service Side Arm and Badge Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 20-187.2 A

WHEREAS, Chief Jack W. Moss will retire from the Valdese Police Department on Dec 31st, 2023; and

WHEREAS, Chief Jack W. Moss was a dedicated law enforcement officer to the citizens of North Carolina and Town of Valdese since Aug 10th 1994; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute 20-187.2 (a), permits The Town of Valdese to donate the badge worn at no cost, and to the sell service-issued side arm to retiring law enforcement officers, at a price determined by the Town Council Members; and

THEREFORE, THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF VALDESE RESOLVES THAT:

1. Chief Jack W. Moss service weapon and badge be declared surplus property; and 2. The Mayor of Valdese, Charles Watts, is authorized to present Chief Jack W. Moss his Town of Valdese Police Department issued badge at no cost, upon his retirement; and 3. The Mayor of Valdese Charles Watts, is also authorized to sell a Glock, Model 21 Gen 4, Serial Number AHBL-235 pistol at a set price of \$1.00 to Chief Jack W. Moss upon his retirement.

Adopted this 6th day of November 2023.

/s/ Charles Watts, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Town Clerk

Councilman Barus made a motion to accept the Resolution Awarding Town-Issued Service Side Arm and Badge for the Police Chief upon his Retirement, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman. The vote was unanimous.

APPROVED BUDGET AMENDMENT: Public Works Director Allen Hudson shared that we had some issues with the storm drain on Micol Ave., requiring a budget amendment. Councilman Mears asked if we were on target with the paving project, and Mr. Hudson said we were finished. Councilwoman Hildebran asked if this was our only overage, and Mr. Hudson said yes.

Valdese Town Council Meeting

Monday, November 6, 2023

Budget Amendment #

2-10

Subject:

2023 Street Paving change order

Description:

Changes for work not included in contract scope:
 Driveway add and credit on Skie Circle: \$(3,718.53)
 Mill/patching on Columbo St: \$5,975.00
 Waterline relocation for proper storm drainage on Micol Ave: \$10,971.75
 POWELL BILL FUND BALANCE WILL BE USED

Proposed Action:

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the Town of Valdese that, pursuant to Section 15 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following amendment is made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024:

Section I:

The following revenues available to the Town will be increased:

Account	Description	Decrease/ Debit	Increase/ Credit
10.3991.000	Powell Bill Fund Balance		2,554
	Total	\$0	\$2,554

Amounts appropriated for expenditure are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
10.5700.154	Drainage and Storm Sewer	2,554	
	Total	\$2,554	\$0

Section II:

Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board, to the Budget Officer and the Finance Officer for their direction.

Councilwoman Hildebran made a motion to approve the Budget Amendment in the amount of \$2,554 for the Micol Street paving project, seconded by Councilman Barus. The vote was unanimous.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Town Manager Seth Eckard asked Fire Chief Truman Walton to talk about the recent burn ban. Chief Walton shared that yesterday at 5 pm, we went under two separate burn bans. Chief Walton shared that one is from the NC Forest Service covering any burning outside 100 feet from any resident. The second is from the BC Fire Marshal's office, covering anything within 100 feet of an occupied dwelling. Chief Walton said we would be under a burn ban until we get considerable rain. Chief Walton said the only outdoor legal burning would be inside an enclosed BBQ grill.

Town Manger Seth Eckard asked Water Resources Director Greg Padgett to talk about the drought status. Mr. Padgett shared the following information: The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) announced yesterday, Nov. 1, that warm and dry weather conditions have placed the Catawba-Wateree River Basin in Stage 1 of the group's Low Inflow Protocol (LIP). Stage 1 is a drought stage that requires the first phase of operational adjustments at Duke Energy's hydroelectric facilities. Voluntary water conservation by all water users is strongly encouraged including Valdese.

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Due to warm temperatures and below average rainfall since earlier this year, water storage in the 11 reservoirs in the Catawba-Wateree River Basin has decreased and stream flows that feed the reservoirs are well below normal.

The LIP is the drought management protocol major users of the water from the Catawba- Wateree River Basin use to share responsibility and set priorities to conserve the limited water supply during drought conditions. Stage 1 is the second of five drought stages outlined in the protocol and it requests voluntary water conservation by water users across the basin. Residents using water from a Duke Energy lake for landscape irrigation are asked to limit watering to Tuesdays and Saturdays.

During drought conditions, Duke Energy's hydroelectric plants continue to operate but at reduced levels to progressively decrease downstream flows and preserve water storage in the lakes.

At Stage 1, Duke Energy will increase surveillance of its public boating access areas along the lakes. To ensure the safety of boaters and protect property, some boat ramps will close temporarily due to declining lake levels. Any closures will be listed on the Duke Energy Lakeview app and Duke-Energy.com/Lakes.

CW-DMAG was established in 2006 to monitor drought status and to recommend coordinated actions for CW-DMAG members. CW-DMAG members include the area's public water suppliers and several large industrial users withdrawing water from the river and lake system, North Carolina and South Carolina resource agencies, other federal agencies and Duke Energy.

CW-DMAG and the LIP resulted from Duke Energy's relicensing process for the Catawba- Wateree Hydroelectric Project. The LIP is part of Duke Energy's federal operating license issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). CW-DMAG meets at least monthly when conditions reach Stage 0 or greater of the LIP. For more information about CW-DMAG and the LIP, visit duke-energy.com/community/lakes/drought-management-advisory/catawba-wateree-dmag.

Mr. Padgett said that hopefully everyone has received a Code Red alert today from the Town about the current drought situation. Mr. Padgett encouraged citizens to sign up for Code Red and look at the information that is on our Town's website. Mr. Padgett shared what it means for us to be in Stage 1. In Stage 1, Voluntary Reductions, all water users will be asked to reduce their normal water use by 5%. Customer education and outreach programs will encourage water conservation and efficiency measures including: irrigating landscapes at a maximum of two days per week, a maximum of one inch per week; preventing water waste, runoff and watering impervious surfaces; reduction of residential vehicle washing; washing only full loads in clothes and dishwashers; using spring-loaded nozzles on garden hoses; and identifying and repairing all water leaks. Mr. Padgett feels that we will be entering into Stage 2 in a few months and said there are five stages. Mr. Padgett read this was the first time in 17 years that skipped Stage 0 and went straight to Stage 1.

Town Manager Seth Eckard shared:

Christmas in November Craft & Gift Show at the Old Rock School is scheduled Friday, November 10, 2023, 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm & Saturday, November 11, 2023, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Annual Town Council/Valdese Merchants Association Dinner, Tuesday, November 14, 2023, 6:30 pm at the Old Rock School, Waldensian Room

Town Offices Closed on November 10 in Observance of Veterans Day & November 23 & 24, 2023 in Observance of Thanksgiving

Valdese Christmas Parade, Saturday, December 2, 2023, 10:00 a.m., Honoring Grand Marshal Bruce Hawkins

Bluegrass at the Rock: Appalachian Road Show, December 2, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. Visit www.townofvaldese.com for ticket information.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS: Councilwoman Hildebran complimented Karen Caruso on her management of the Valdese ABC Store. She said she has been involved with it throughout her term on the council, and Ms. Caruso has presented before the Council with professionalism, expertise, and grace. She thanked her.

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Councilwoman Hildebran has had several people tell her that there is a lot of speeding on Lake Rhodhiss Drive going to Lakeside Park. She wants to bring this to Police Chief Jack Moss's attention.

Councilman Barus shared that he had gone to the Pine Crossing Apartments for a walk-through and that it looked beautiful. Town Manager Seth Eckard said they are expected to have their first resident in January 2024. Councilman Barus also shared that we got confirmation that Tron Place was a go. Mr. Eckard shared that grading should happen in the next six months.

Mayor Watts shared that this year's Treat in the Streets attracted the biggest crowd and thanked the Town employees and businesses for their work and resources. He stated that Valdese is such a success because we all work together, which is what it takes.

Mayor Watts personally thanked each Veteran who is here tonight and all the Veterans who live in Town.

ADJOURNMENT: At 6:47 p.m., there being no further business to come before Council, Councilwoman Hildebran made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman. The vote was unanimous.

The next regular Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 4, 2023.

Town Clerk

Mayor

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