

BANNER ELK TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
May 12, 2025
MINUTES

The Banner Elk Town Council met on Monday, May 12, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Council Members present: Mayor Brenda Lyerly, Mike Dunn, David Lecka, Robert Tufts, and Charles VonCanon.

Staff present: Town Manager Rick Owen, Chief Kevin Hodges, Public Services Director Justin Hodges, and Attorney Joey Petrack.

Call Meeting to Order

At 6:00 pm Mayor Lyerly called the regular Town Council meeting of May 12, 2025, to order.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Lyerly led those in attendance with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Council Member Charles VonCanon opened the meeting with prayer.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Council Member Dunn motioned to approve the April 14, 2025 minutes as written and Council Member Lecka seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Stated Agenda

Mayor Lyerly asked for a motion to approve or amend the stated agenda. Council Member Dunn motioned to approve the agenda as stated and was seconded by Council Member Lecka. The motion passed unanimously.

LiveWell Avery Presentation - Sarah Price

Sarah Price works with the Council of Governments. Avery County Government is introducing LiveWell Avery, a new initiative dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Avery County residents. LiveWell Avery connects residents with essential wellness resources, fosters collaboration between local organizations, and promotes a culture of togetherness and empowerment.

LiveWell Avery is for key public partners to bring awareness about what is already happening in the county with community health and create greater strength by bringing on more partners for this endeavor. It is the goal for this partnership to be inclusive. They desire to highlight what is being done and who is involved. She delivered an official invitation for the Town of Banner Elk, as one of the seven towns in the county, to become a partner in this project.

Examples of initiatives associated with LiveWell Avery include the Drug Council RoundTable, “Stronger Than The Storm YouTube video, a video on an app for the Sheriff’s department, and the recently unveiled “Purple Pantry” - a free library of health and wellness resources.

Newland and Elk Park have become partners with LiveWell Avery and the hope is that all towns will join in.

Proclamation Recognizing Bike Month and Ride of Silence - Ted Silver

Chairman of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee, Ted Silver, reported that as part of the League of American Bicyclists, he and 10 other North Carolinians traveled to Washington in March in order to lobby and advocate for active transportation. They met with 14 of the 16 national representatives and Ted was able to personally meet with Senator Tillis' staff as well as several NC Representatives. Also, as President of BikeWalk NC, he participated in a rally day in Raleigh in the beginning of May. More than 20 people from around the state walked into the halls of our Representatives to be heard.

He shared that May is National Bike month. He stated that he believes that the Town of Banner Elk is registered on the International Ride of Silence Organization. He read a proclamation recognizing May as National Bike month and Recognizing the Ride of Silence.

Council Member VonCanon made a motion recognizing the Proclamation on National Bike Month and the International Ride of Silence and was seconded by Council Member Dunn. The motion passed unanimously.

On Call Engineering Services

Manager Owen reported that of the two submissions for on-call services from qualified engineering firms, both of them were found to be suited for the particular work needed. Their work would be for all projects, including those required after Hurricane Helene. He asked the Council to consider entering into agreements with both firms since they will form different functions. McGill Associates of Asheville would be asked to focus on utility work and other areas of familiarity to them. Harven Engineering of Hickory would be working on road repair, including shoulders, bridges, and culverts.

Council Member Dunn made a motion to enter into agreements with the aforementioned firms and Council Member VonCanon seconded the motion. Council Member VonCanon stated that the included statement about the firms being available for on-call services is important. Council Member Lecka asked for affirmation that these firms would be acceptable with FEMA requirements. Council Member Dunn asked about the term of engagement and Manager Owen responded that it would be for three years with the possibility of making one year extensions. The motion passed unanimously.

Consider Tax Releases

Manager Owen highlighted the important information regarding the release of taxes as could be seen in the printouts. Council Member Lecka made a motion to release the tax releases as presented and Council Member VonCanon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Call for Public Hearing, 2025-2026 Budget

Council Member Dunn made a motion for a Public Hearing for the 2025-26 Budget and Council Member Tufts seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Consider Budget Amendments

Manager Owen explained the first amendment related to the Special Revenue Fund dating back to Covid. He traced the history of the fund and stated that this fund can now be closed out and the money moved to the General Fund. Council Member Tufts made a motion to accept this amendment and Council Member Dunn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

For a second amendment, Manager Owen reminded the Council about moving \$750,000 from the general fund to the site project and the goal would be to close out the project fund by the end of June.

Council Member VonCanon made the motion for this budget amendment and Council Member Lecka seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Storm Recovery Update

Manager Owen reported that the first reimbursement from FEMA for \$1,000,047 has been received. There is hope that the next allotment of money for \$200,000 will come in soon.

He reported that the two engineers will help get the bridges done for Silver Springs, Lecka Lane, Crooked Creek.

He stated that the Town has been working on disposing of the vegetative debris still in the Park. When the weather clears, the next phase of work will begin. He clarified that only sections of the park will be closed at a time throughout the process.

Manager's Update & Staff Reports

Manager Owen reported that tax, police, public services, ABC minutes reports were all on their desks when they came in.

He reminded Council that there will be a final budget meeting on June 5.

Manager Owen announced that the first Art On The Greene will take place Memorial Day weekend.

He asked Council Members to write letters to government officials in response to the Bills that could affect the Town's ability to enforce certain zoning functions. There is a move at the State level to limit local government controls.

Mayor Lyerly recognized Public Service Director Hodges and the work that his team has been doing.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjourn

With no further business, Council Member VonCanon motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Council Member Lecka. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting ended at 6:40.

Approved: _____
Mayor Brenda Lyerly

Attested: _____