

Conciliatory Tones Mark Town-County Meeting

Written by Steve Frank

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What began as legal sparring between Watauga County Commissioners' and Boone Town Council's attorneys at the outset of their combined meeting Monday quickly turned into a collaborative effort by both elected bodies to resolve an issue that has been a point of contention between them for several months. An appointment made by the Commissioners to the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction Board had been overturned by the Town due to the appointee not meeting the criteria of living in the ETJ zone. The Town Council then took action taking the authority to make ETJ Board appointments away from the Commissioners and making it their responsibility. Following this action the Commissioners indicated they would consider taking legal action to overturn the Town's decision or consider changing the sales tax structure from per capita to ad valorem which would reduce the amount of revenues going to Boone and increase the amounts going to the other towns in Watauga County. It was at this point the two governing bodies felt they should meet together to discuss ways to resolve this leading to yesterday's meeting. After the initial statements by the attorneys Commissioner Deal followed by Commissioner Gable indicated they could, and should, resolve this in a cooperative manner. Following further discussion and clarifications of roles the governing bodies determined it was best to return to the original procedure for appointing representatives to the EFJ Board.