

"If we had inspected it, the odds are, this would not be—we would not be talking about this now." In the course of a trio of reporters asking Boone Planning Director Bill Bailey about the timeline for reopening the Boone Best Western Hotel, a new bombshell was dropped—that the swimming pool heating system blamed for three deaths at the East King Street hotel was not the system originally put in the building—and in fact, he said, it was not one that was there last year when Planning and Inspection certified the switchover from propane to natural gas, "It appears that's not the heater that we approved, so it's not permitted." And Bailey said they have no record of inspecting the new pool heater. Bailey said they are drafting a letter to the ownership of the hotel, "My understanding, it (the heater) won't meet the code for this building." Bailey also said that the type of heater they found after the third death at the hotel would have used an entirely different exhaust system, not the one the unit was tied into. On the issue of reopening the hotel, Bailey said this and a number of other issues had to be addressed, but he said that the timeline is really up to the hotel owners. 11-year old Jeffrey Williams was buried yesterday in Rock Hill. The boy died June 8th in room 225 at the Best Western, the same room where Daryl Jenkins and his wife, Shirley, 72, died April 16th. Law changes and lawsuits are being considered in the matter.