

# Sky Valley considers pulling tourism authority support

By Tommy Culkin

Staff Writer

SKY VALLEY — The City of Sky Valley contributes hotel-motel tax funds to the Tourism Development Authority. However, the Sky Valley City Council is considering pulling its hotel-motel support from the TDA.

Sky Valley levies a 5 percent hotel-motel tax, keeping 3 percent and sending the other 2 percent to the TDA. At the council's monthly meeting, Councilman Chip Durpo proposed keeping all the hotel-motel taxes.

The additional funds could be used to fund the city's ongoing sewer feasibility study, Durpo

said. City Attorney Doug Kidd asked Durpo if he wanted the funds to go to a not-yet-created authority promoting solely Sky Valley, and Durpo said that would be another option worth exploring.

"I'm not proposing we don't work with (the TDA); I'm proposing we keep that money in house and I think using our own money... we need to work on our issues here and I'd rather



DURPO



EARNHARDT

see our money be spent right here," Durpo said. "That doesn't mean we won't work with them in the future as well."

After the meeting, TDA Executive Director Teka Earnhardt told *The Clayton Tribune* that Sky Valley is the only city that contributes hotel-motel funds to the authority. Dillard has contributed hotel-motel funds in years past, but Dillard doesn't have a regular payment

agreement and hasn't contributed money in two years, Earnhardt said.

City Clerk Ella Fast said the 2 percent given to the TDA last year amounted to approximately \$6,600.

Kidd said he wasn't sure if the change could be made this year, or if the city would have to go through the state legislature, which he said would likely delay the amendment to next year.

The matter was tabled to allow for further research.

In other business, Kidd told the council he drafted up a change to the town's charter, which would remove the mayor from the legislative body, which would take away

the position's ability to vote. It also change what constitutes a quorum.

By removing the mayor, a quorum would be limited to three council members, but the mayor would not be counted towards a quorum, meaning three council members and the mayor could still meet, Kidd said.

Kidd told the council the proposed changes to the town's charter need to be run in the county's legal organ, in this case *The Clayton Tribune*, followed by two draft readings.

Also on the agenda:  
● The council unanimously approved an ethics ordinance that pro-

vides council oversight.

● The council unanimously voted to officially appoint Mike Commons to the Rabun County Water and Sewer Authority.

● City Manager Linda Lapeyrouse informed the council the city had received a Firewise Grant worth \$3,000 for mitigation and reduction of fire fuels.

How this story was discovered: Attended the meeting

Who our sources were: Councilman Chip Durpo, City Clerk Ella Fast, City Manager Linda Lapeyrouse, City Attorney Doug Kidd, TDA Executive Director Teka Earnhardt