

**Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Town Council Meeting
November 13, 2014
Walkup Building**

Board members present: Mayor Letta Jean Taylor
Mayor Pro Tem Mary Standaert
Commissioner Martha Campbell
Commissioner Jack McCaskill
Commissioner Ann Vinson

Board members absent: Commissioner Tim Helms

Town staff present: Ron Nalley, Town Administrator
Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk
Jack Staggs, Chief of Police
David Arrant, Master Police Officer
Stefan Stackhouse, Finance Officer
David Currie, Building Inspector/Code Administrator

Approximately 60 members of the public were also present. Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and gave the invocation.

Agenda Approval

Mayor Taylor briefly summarized Mr. Tom Frist's request for an item of business to be placed on this meeting's agenda, which he made during a Public Comment period at last week's Agenda Meeting. She then explained the procedures and monthly submittal deadline for agenda item requests from the public, as set forth in the Board's adopted Rules of Procedure. She asked Mr. Frist to submit a written request in accordance with those guidelines in order to be considered for inclusion in the packet materials for the Board's December 11 Town Council Meeting.

Commissioner Vinson moved to adopt the proposed meeting agenda as presented. Commissioner McCaskill seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

Presentation to Council

2013-2014 Fiscal Year Audit Report Presentation: Mr. Matt Braswell of Martin, Starnes & Associates presented and reviewed the 2013-2014 Fiscal Year Audit Report. The Report reflected an unqualified opinion, meaning that the Town's financial statements were fairly presented in all material respects. He summarized the procedures and stages of review performed at each phase of the audit process. He explained the definition and purpose of the Town's Fund Balance, and provided information on how this amount is calculated. Mr. Braswell then gave comparison data indicating Fund Balance levels over the past three fiscal years. He reviewed significant revenue sources and expenditures for the General and Water Funds, comparing each figure to the balances

reported at the end of the prior fiscal year. He also thanked the Audit Committee and Town staff for their participation and cooperation in this year's audit. The Local Government Commission has approved both the Town's Audit Report and Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The Town's CAFR earned a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association, and Mr. Stackhouse has been recognized with an Award of Financial Reporting Achievement for his contributions toward preparing the CAFR document.

Brief discussion was heard concerning the Town's Fund Balance amount compared with the Local Government Commission's recommended minimum Fund Balance level. Mr. Braswell stated that municipalities are generally required to maintain a minimum Fund Balance level of 8% of their total annual Budget amount, which represents a figure equivalent to one month's expenditures. Montreat's Fund Balance for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 is 73%, which is equivalent to approximately nine months' expenditures. The Board also recognized and thanked the Audit Committee members and Mr. Stackhouse for their efforts.

Mayor's Communications

Mayor Taylor thanked Public Works Department staff for their recent leaf collection efforts.

Consent Agenda Review

With the adoption of the Consent Agenda, the Board approved the following items:

- September 11, 2014 Town Council Meeting Adoption;
- September 18, 2014 Special Meeting Minutes Adoption;
- September 29, 2014 Special Meeting Minutes Adoption;
- October 2, 2014 Agenda Meeting Minutes Adoption;
- Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget Amendment #2 Adoption.

Town Administrator's Communications

- Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget Amendment #2 is needed to account for indirect cost allocations from the Water Fund to the General Fund. These funds are already budgeted, and all proposed amendments net to zero within each fund.
- KCI Associates continues to work on a written agreement with the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office that will allow the new Texas Road bridge structure to be similar in appearance to other bridges in Montreat. Staff expects this agreement to be ready for Board approval at the January Town Council Meeting.

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- Architectural Design Studios staff is working on draft Town Hall design plans and construction drawings for initial presentation at the December Town Council Meeting. Formal approval of the final plans is expected in January, to be followed by construction bid packet preparation.
- Initial grading and site preparation for the Upper Kentucky Road Paving and Utility Assessment projects has been done. Water and sewer line placement for the Phase 1 Residential Utility Extensions is scheduled for completion within the next 30 to 60 days, followed by final gravel roadway grading. The paving assessments projects in this area will take place next spring.
- Heavy rains earlier in the month caused a small slope failure from a private residential lot onto Texas Road Spur roadway. Public Works Department crews removed the soil and other debris from the pavement, and closed the road to pedestrian and vehicle traffic until further notice in the interest of public safety. Residents on Texas Road Spur may still access their homes, as no driveways will be blocked due to the road closure. The property owners are working with geotechnical engineers and other professionals on plans to ensure that the slope is stabilized. A nearby slope that was damaged during Hurricanes Frances and Ivan in 2004 and repaired using gabion baskets was unaffected by this storm.
- The stormwater retention feature at the intersection of Virginia Road and Mississippi Road is nearly complete. Natural stonework was installed near the drain area to improve sediment filtration and to hold the drain in place more effectively. A smaller, but similar, feature will also be installed on Community Center Circle. The work was completed by Public Works Department staff over a two-week period and funded by reimbursement grant proceeds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the North Carolina Department of Emergency Management.
- No water has been found after drilling to a depth of 800 feet for the Well A02 replacement project on Greybeard Trail. Town staff will contact FEMA representatives to discuss whether to attempt drilling in a new location or to re-drill the existing Well A02, and will continue to update the Board on the status of this project.

Mr. Nalley also addressed comments heard recently from the public that Board members had requested police escorts to their vehicles after meetings. He explained that in response to certain actions, correspondence, and statements made during and after meetings held in June and July, he and Chief Staggs decided to increase the Police Department's presence at Board meetings and to escort the Commissioners and Town staff members to their vehicles afterward. He stated that this decision was made by Town staff in the interest of maintaining public safety and was not done in response to a request by any member of the Board.

Administrative Reports

Police Chief: Chief Staggs presented and reviewed his October 2014 monthly departmental activity report. He reminded the public to immediately report any suspicious persons or activity, and acknowledged letters of appreciation the Department received from the Montreat Morning

School and a local parent. He also spoke briefly about the Department's participation in recent funeral services for Mr. Thomas Morris, who served as a Montreat Police Officer from the Town's incorporation in 1967 until 1986.

Public Works Director: Mr. Freeman was absent and had no report at this time.

Finance Officer: Mr. Stackhouse presented and reviewed the following financial reports:

- September 2014 Financial Summary Report;
- Final September 2014 Financial Statement;
- Preliminary October 2014 Financial Statement;
- October 31, 2014 Cash and Investment Earnings Report.

Building Inspector/Code Administrator: Mr. Currie presented and reviewed his October 2014 zoning and inspections activity report. He reported that he is working with Montreat College and Montreat Conference Center staff members on further revisions to proposed pole-mounted banner regulations, and expects to have an updated draft ready for presentation to the Board in January or February. Neither the Board of Adjustment nor the Planning and Zoning Commission met during the past month.

Commissioner Reports

Mayor Pro Tem Standaert reported that Montreat Cottagers Association Co-President Kent Smith was developing a reference almanac of community information and answers to frequently asked questions about Montreat's facilities, events and Town services. Mr. Smith plans to publish an electronic version of the completed document by the end of the calendar year. Mayor Pro Tem Standaert also said she had again contacted the North Carolina State Board of Elections and Congressman Patrick McHenry's local office concerning the continued address inaccuracies in Montreat's voter registration database.

Commissioner Campbell reported on the following topics:

- The Montreat Landcare Committee is working on several updates to its website, www.montreatlandcare.org, and also continues to support two Montreat College graduate students who are seeking to complete Landcare-related projects as part of their Master's degree programs.
- Next year's Native Plant Show and Sale will be held on May 2, 2015 in the Moore Center Meeting Room and on Moore Center Field. This event will also include National Arbor Day activities.

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- Presbyterian Church (USA) Moderator Dr. Heath Rada and his wife, Peggy, visited a number of Middle Eastern countries during late September and early October. Dr. and Mrs. Rada gave a presentation on their travels following the Presbyterian Heritage Center's Board meeting on November 10. The Heritage Center will hold its Annual Christmas High Tea on the afternoon of December 10, and will be open to the public during the winter months by appointment only.

Commissioner Campbell also said that property owners on Texas Road Extension have asked the Town to relocate a nearby 20 MPH speed limit sign closer to the Montreat Gate so that northbound vehicles on Assembly Drive are travelling slower before reaching this intersection. Police and Public Works Department staff will perform a traffic evaluation in this area and report their findings to the Board for further consideration.

Commissioner McCaskill reported on his attendance at the last month's Western North Carolina Stormwater Summit sponsored by the Land-of-Sky Regional Council, and his plans to attend next week's French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting.

Commissioner Vinson encouraged anyone with questions about the Open Space Conservation Program, or who may be interested in placing their lots into permanent conservation to contact her or other Open Space Conservation Committee members.

Public Comment

Mr. Tom Frist of 98 Frist Road thanked Mayor Taylor and Mr. Nalley for their explanation of why his proposals were not included in tonight's meeting agenda, as well as the reasons for the increased police presence at recent Board meetings. He asked that his proposals concerning the Town Hall project be considered at the December Town Council Meeting. He addressed what he felt may be some of the potential objections to his ideas by stating that renovating leased facilities or building new structures on leased property was a common occurrence. He also suggested that it may be possible for the Town to purchase the current Town Services Office location from the Mountain Retreat Association. He believed that if the Town Hall was built at Pratt Park, any impact on dedicated greenspace would serve the same public benefit as the walking path, columbarium and utility easements in this area. He also suggested that community volunteers could continue performing welcome center duties during the summer months to avoid the need to hire an additional full-time staff member for this purpose.

Ms. Robyn Josephs of 538 Peace Lane expressed her continued concerns about muddy and unsafe roadway conditions on Peace Lane and Upper Kentucky Road, and requested additional gravel to repair potholes and address erosion control issues in this area.

Mr. Bob Cunningham of 162 Virginia Road noted the continued public opposition to the Florida Terrace Town Hall site, and felt that Mr. Frist's alternative proposals were sincere efforts to find an

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acceptable compromise on this issue. Mr. Cunningham believed that the Board members had an obligation to build community consensus before taking final action on contentious matters, rather than acting upon their personal opinions or consciences. He asked the Board to consider the effect that moving forward with the Florida Terrace site would have on community relationships, and whether any harm would be caused by delaying construction of the new facility until a consensus decision can be reached.

Mr. Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road thanked Town staff for the stormwater retention feature at the intersection of Virginia Road and Mississippi Road. He also asked the Board to consider videotaping all of their meetings and posting the footage on the Town's website.

Mr. Rusty Frank supported the display of public artwork in the interior lobby spaces and outdoor patio area of the new Town Hall facility, and suggested that up to 1.5% of the total project cost be allocated for this purpose. He also encouraged the Board to collaborate with Montreat College, Montreat Conference Center and any possible sources of private financial donations to support the Town of Black Mountain's sidewalk project along Montreat Road.

Mrs. Mary Jo Clark of 407 West Virginia Terrace said that those opposed to the Florida Terrace Town Hall site loved Montreat and were deeply concerned about relationships with other community members. She hoped that the Board would seriously consider Mr. Frist's proposals concerning the Town Hall project, as well as allowing open public dialogue about this issue during future Board meetings.

Mr. Gordon Neville of 226 Alabama Terrace thanked the Board members for their service. He requested reconsideration of his previous proposal to construct the new Town Hall facility on the Town-owned hillside lot just inside the Montreat Gate. He felt that this site warranted further independent evaluation by an outside party, and suggested that the proceeds from re-selling the Florida Terrace site could be used toward the construction costs of a new building in a different location.

Mr. Bill Straughan of 122 Eastminster Terrace described the public controversy surrounding the Town Hall issue was a serious matter that could cause permanent damage to relationships between community members, and felt that every available option should be examined to help find consensus on this issue.

Mr. Don Reid expressed his full support for Mr. Frist's proposals regarding the Town Hall project, along with his belief that the Florida Terrace location was the worst of the four potential Town Hall sites. He felt that the facility's proposed square footage was unnecessarily large for a town of Montreat's population and size, and that significant cost savings could be achieved by selecting an alternative building location. He was also critical of the citizen comment cards distributed to gather public input on the four proposed Town Hall sites, stating that the Board's disregard of the

reported results had damaged the public's trust and wasted taxpayers' monies. He felt that negative characterizations of those opposed to the Florida Terrace site were inappropriate, and that concerns about Board members' physical safety were unfounded. Mr. Reid asked Mayor Taylor to share her personal position on the Town Hall project, and felt that if the Board did not intend to sincerely consider compromise proposals for the Town Hall's design and location, this position should be revealed at tonight's meeting. He encouraged the Board to approve a temporary moratorium on this issue to review all possible alternatives to the current plans and prevent further divisiveness among community members.

Old Business

There were no items of Old Business to discuss at this time.

New Business

- A. Resolution Honoring Rev. Albert G. "Pete" Peery, Jr.: Commissioner Campbell moved to adopt Resolution #14-11-0001 Honoring Rev. Albert G. "Pete" Peery, Jr. on the Occasion of His Retirement. Commissioner Vinson seconded and the motion carried 4/0. Mayor Taylor read the Resolution text aloud and presented an executed document to Rev. Peery. A copy of this Resolution is attached to these minutes and incorporated herein by reference.

- B. Planning and Zoning Membership Appointment: Mayor Pro Tem Standaert moved to appoint Lucile Jackson as a regular member of the Planning and Zoning Commission for a three-year term to expire on January 31, 2017. Commissioner Vinson seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

- C. Proposal for Engineering Services - Greybeard Trail Water Storage Tank: The Town's current Capital Improvement Plan and Annual Budget call for the construction of a new water storage tank on Greybeard Trail. In August 2014, McGill Associates presented the results of a hydraulic analysis of the Montreat Water System, which updated the Town's existing computerized hydraulic model and recommended the construction of a second, 100,000 gallon ground-level storage tank at the end of Greybeard Trail at approximately the same elevation as the existing tank on Appalachian Way. The new tank will work in conjunction with the existing tank to improve system pressures, increase the water system's overall storage capacity, allow for routine tank maintenance without creating significant operational difficulties, and facilitate continued water system operation during extended power outages through the use of gravity flow.

Commissioner Campbell then moved to approve a proposal for engineering services from McGill Associates for the Greybeard Trail Water Storage Tank in the amount of \$63,500 and to authorize the Mayor and Town Administrator to execute the necessary contract documents. Commissioner Vinson seconded. Discussion was heard concerning the time frame for

construction of the new tank, as well as the ability to provide adequate household usage and fire protection water pressures to higher elevation areas. Mr. Nalley said that design and engineering for the new tank would be done over the coming winter months, with construction to begin next summer. He also explained that owners of certain undeveloped lots above 3,100 feet in elevation, including portions of Greybeard Trail, Appalachian Way, Lookout Road, and Upper Kentucky Road, would need to install small, individual booster pumps to ensure consistent household water pressure if they chose to build homes on their properties. The motion then carried 4/0.

- D. Proposed Revisions to Montreat General Ordinance, Chapter I – Disorderly Conduct and Public Nuisances, Article II “Noise Control”: During a recent review of this Ordinance section, staff determined that the amplified sound limits and the permitting requirements for indoor and outdoor events may need clarification for greater ease and consistency of enforcement. While not required for General Ordinance amendments, the Board has sometimes asked the Planning and Zoning Commission to review certain matters and provide recommended revision language. This option lengthens the time period for a revised ordinance draft to be presented to the Board for consideration, but also provides greater opportunity for public input as any changes are developed. After brief discussion, the Board agreed by consensus to refer Montreat General Ordinance, Chapter I – Disorderly Conduct and Public Nuisances, Article II “Noise Control” to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review during their January 2015 regular meeting. Staff will work with the Commission to ensure that any amendment language is presented to the Board for adoption prior to the start of 2015 summer conference season.

Public Comment

Mr. Erskine Clarke of 558 Providence Terrace felt that open two-way dialogue and debate between the Board and members of the public was critical to resolving the controversy surrounding the Town Hall project. He also called for greater transparency, referring to recent conversations with private individuals concerning the construction of a new Town Hall facility for Kiawah Island, SC that was to be located outside of the town’s incorporated limits. He said that these individuals, who were residents of Seabrook Island, SC, also believed that Seabrook Island’s Town Hall was located outside that town’s municipal limits. Mr. Clarke felt that having this information available would have had a significant impact on previous discussions concerning the proposed location of Montreat’s Town Hall.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Mayor Taylor reviewed the following list of upcoming meeting dates and deadlines:

Agenda Items Due:

Wednesday, November 26, 2014, 5:00 p.m.
Town Services Office

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Town Services Office Closed:

November 27-28, 2014
Thanksgiving Holidays

Agenda Packets Available:

December 2, 2014
[http://www.townofmontreat.org/
TownGovernment.php](http://www.townofmontreat.org/TownGovernment.php)
or Town Services Office

December Montreat Landcare Committee Meeting:

December 3, 2014, 9:00 a.m.
Location TBA

December Agenda Meeting

December 4, 2014, 7:00 p.m.
Walkup Building

December Town Council Meeting:

December 11, 2014, 7:00 p.m.
Walkup Building

Town Services Office Closed:

December 24-25, 2014
Christmas Holidays

Adjournment

There being no further items of business to discuss, Commissioner Campbell moved to adjourn the Agenda Meeting. Commissioner McCaskill seconded. The motion carried 4/0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Letta Jean Taylor, Mayor

Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk