

**Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Town Council Special Meeting
August 11, 2015
Walkup Building**

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

Town staff present: Ron Nalley, Town Administrator
Stefan Stackhouse, Finance Officer and Deputy Town Clerk
Steve Freeman, Public Works Director
Barry Creasman, Senior Water Operator

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and opened with prayer.

Agenda Approval

Commissioner Campbell moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Vinson seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

Sanitation Services Discussion

Mayor Letta Jean Taylor introduced the session by reviewing the history of sanitation services provided to the Town of Montreat. In July 2006, the Town began offering residential sanitation, recycling and yard waste collection services. Benefits of providing our own sanitation services included the following: a competitive cost structure; efficient and personal service delivery; increased service levels; Town owned capital investment; and smaller and safer vehicles for collection. Mayor Taylor reviewed the current service delivery method and discussed the amount of solid waste, recycling and yard waste collected since 2010. The Mayor also reviewed the temporary service change made at the compactor site by the Board of Commissioners in early June and the savings realized at the site since that time. She went on to state that the town experienced a problem with illegal dumping and unauthorized use at the site, which necessitated the changes implemented in June. Following a staff review of the sanitation program, it was determined that the present system is labor intensive, bags are handled twice, and the compactor site is being used as convenience center, even though it was not designed as such, and is not safe for use by the general public. Staff then developed four alternatives for consideration: 1) Montreat offers a higher level of service than most nearby municipalities – the Town could consider replacing the present equipment with a compactor truck and close the compactor site; 2) Continue as present, but permanently close compactor site to the public; 3) Eliminate curbside service except for fee-based back-door service, and go entirely to a fee-

**Montreat Board of Commissioners
Town Council Special Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2015**

based pay as you throw convenient center system; 4) No change from present, except for safety changes to the compactor site, with taxpayers continuing to subsidize non-taxpayer use. The Mayor went on to say that each option has advantages and disadvantages and that there are likely several variations or combinations of these alternatives. She also reminded everyone that the present sanitation truck must be replaced this fiscal year and that the service contract with Consolidated Waste Services for the compactors is ending. Mayor Taylor concluded by stating that the temporary service plan for the compactor site is having the desired effect in the reduction of solid waste, hauls and illegal dumping and unauthorized use. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the program, the challenges of operating the program and to receive feedback on what aspects of the program are most important to our residents and visitors. With additional public input and any additional research, the Board will be in position to make an informed decision on the potential changes to improve the overall sanitation program.

Mayor Taylor then introduced Mr. Sam Hobson who facilitated the remainder of the meeting. Those who attended the meeting were divided into groups of five to six people to discuss what they like about the current service; what they do not like about the current service; how Montreat's service and cost compare to the service at your permanent residence; the biggest challenge facing sanitation services; the appropriate level of service needed in Montreat; how much they are willing to pay for that level of service; and if they had to choose from the four alternatives, which would they prefer. After reconvening, each small group was asked to report back to the larger group.

Group One – Started with the premise that the community needs infrastructure services. The group listened respectfully to each other and of the four alternatives, leaned primarily towards alternative two. The group encouraged the Town, College and Conference Center to work together to creatively solve the problem. The group also encouraged the Town to consider standardized cans for automated truck pickup. In closing, the group expressed concern with alternative three but stated that Montreat residents need a site to throw trash, and acknowledged that illegal use by those outside the Gate was a problem.

Group Two – The group discussed several ideas and asked the Town to consider installing a key card type system and to update the compactor site. Most of those in the group wanted to retain the current system and preferred alternative four – to keep the service like it is and subsidize others use. There were mixed feelings about having a convenience center only because they liked having curbside collection, but they do not like the pay as you throw concept.

Group Three – The group felt that Montreat residents should have free access to the compactor site and that the Town should consider a key card type system at the site. The group mentioned that there is a credibility gap about the illegal dumping claims and the Town should install cameras to monitor the issue to determine how big a problem it really is. The group

**Montreat Board of Commissioners
Town Council Special Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2015**

preferred to have a place at the Gate, like a truck, so that the garbage could be tossed when people are leaving town. The group also noted the inefficiencies with the separate entities having different service providers and that the Town should explore cost saving options with the College and Conference Center.

Group Four – The group commended the Town’s sanitation staff and expressed their feelings that Montreat is a town for visitors, so the sanitation services should reflect that. The group felt that there is a need for curbside trash collection, however, people are opportunistic and will take advantage of whatever service is available. The group expressed interest in exploring the possibility of contracting out the service and wondered if this was a feasible idea. The group also expressed interest in revisiting consolidation sanitation service efforts with the College and Conference Center. Interest was expressed for a key card type system for residents. Alternative three was the least popular of the group and they also felt that it was not feasible for residents to use large carts with the Town’s topography and narrow streets. The group then expressed a concern that they felt forced to buy bear proof containers and that this solution to the bear problem impacted the Town’s ambiance.

Group Five – The group favored alternatives one or two. Alternative three was their least favorite. The group asked about the possibility of the Cottagers arranging a bulk purchase with discounted prices and the possibility of smaller, more attractive bear proof containers. The group expressed concern that the open compactor site problems will only get worse.

Following the group reports, Town Administrator Ron Nalley fielded several questions regarding Montreat’s current service and how that service might change depending on the alternative selected. It was noted by a resident that garbage is a national issue and one that is being currently discussed and dealt with all over the country. Mr. Nalley then asked that everyone take a few minutes to answer the brief survey provided at the beginning of the meeting.

Mayor Taylor thanked everyone for attending and for their input.

Adjournment

Commissioner Campbell moved to adjourn the Special Meeting. Commissioner Vinson seconded and the motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

Letta Jean Taylor, Mayor

Stefan Stackhouse, Deputy Town Clerk