

**Town of Montreat  
Board of Commissioners  
Town Council Meeting  
March 12, 2015  
Walkup Building**

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

Board members absent: Mayor Letta Jean Taylor

Town staff present: Ron Nalley, Town Administrator  
Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk  
Steve Freeman, Public Works Director  
Barry Creasman, Senior Water Operator  
Stefan Stackhouse, Finance Officer  
David Currie/Building Inspector/Code Administrator  
Justyn Whitson, Police Officer  
Susan Taylor Rash, Town Attorney (arrived at 7:24 p.m.)

Approximately 35 members of the public were also present. Mayor Pro Tem Standaert called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and observed a moment of silence.

**Agenda Approval**

Mayor Pro Tem Standaert welcomed everyone and again explained that the first Public Comment period would be devoted to comments related to items appearing on the meeting agenda, including staff reports and communications, while the second Public Comment period would be a time for comments regarding public business items not listed on the agenda or for communications from other community entities.

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

**Public Hearing: Proposed 2015-2020 Capital Improvements Plan**

Mr. Nalley presented the proposed 2015-2020 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), a flexible financial planning tool used to forecast the Town's equipment, building and infrastructure needs over the next five years. Items included in the CIP have a life expectancy of greater than one year and a value of greater than \$5,000. He explained the staff-recommended numerical and alphabetical priority codes used to organize each project scheduled throughout the Plan's five-year scope on both the departmental and organizational levels. Each project, as well as its corresponding priority

code, is subject to revision or deletion at the Board’s discretion. Once the final CIP is adopted, the numerical priority codes for the projects included in the first year of the Plan will be used to help determine funding allocations in the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year Budget.

In order of priority, the proposed projects and expenditures for the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year are as follows:

**Proposed General Fund Projects and Expenditures**

1)	Local Street Paving (Texas Road)	\$194,000
2)	Texas Road Bridge Replacement Project	\$818,000
3)	Town Hall Replacement	\$97,600
4)	Street Department Truck Replacement (1996 Ford F250)	\$45,000
5)	Stormwater Utility Study	\$35,000
6)	Wayfinding Signage Plan	\$20,000
7)	Compactor Area Paving	\$25,000
8)	Sanitation Truck Replacement	\$75,000
9)	Native Plant Garden	\$10,000
10)	New Road Paving (Texas Road Spur)	\$37,000

<b>General Fund Total for Fiscal Year 2015-2016:</b>	<b>\$1,356,650</b>
<b>Total for 2015-2020 and Future Years:</b>	<b>\$6,756,700</b>

**Proposed Water Fund Projects and Expenditures**

1)	Water Line Replacement (Texas Road Spur)	\$55,000
2)	Greybeard Trail Water Storage Facility	\$87,100
3)	Portable Generators	\$5,000

<b>Water Fund Total for Fiscal Year 2015-2016:</b>	<b>\$ 147,100</b>
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<b>Total for 2015-2020 and Future Years:</b>	<b>\$1,364,600</b>
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The draft CIP is available in print at the Town Services Office or electronically on the Town’s website. The public is encouraged to review the Plan and provide their input. The final Plan will be scheduled for adoption at the April 10 Town Council Meeting.

Brief discussion was heard concerning how revenues and expenditures for the Texas Road bridge replacement project are depicted in the draft CIP document for the previous, current and future fiscal years.

Mayor Pro Tem Standaert opened the public hearing on this matter at 7:14 p.m. Hearing no comments from the public, she then declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:15 p.m.

**Certificate of Recognition: 2015 Mount Mitchell Challenge/Marathon**

Commissioner Campbell explained that Certificates of Recognition had been prepared for Montreat residents Chip Craig and Robert Barker for their achievements during the 2015 Mount Mitchell Challenge/Marathon. Mr. Craig finished 41<sup>st</sup> in the Challenge event, while Mr. Barker finished 81<sup>st</sup> in the Marathon event. Commissioner Campbell noted that Mr. Barker had participated in either the Challenge or Marathon events every year they had been held, completing each one nine times. These Certificates will be mailed to Mr. Craig and Mr. Barker, who were both unable to attend this meeting.

**Presentation to Council: Montreat Landcare Program**

Mr. Nalley noted that prior to the Montreat Landcare Committee's founding in 2008, organizations in Montreat had a long and successful history of working together on local environmental community efforts. These projects have included the Town's certification through the National Wildlife Federation as the first Community Wildlife Habitat in North Carolina, the Montreat Conference Center's dedication of 2,500 acres of land into a conservation easement, reintroduction of native brook trout above Greybeard Falls, greenway and trail development, and the establishment of Town's Open Space Conservation Program. With assistance from Land-of-Sky Regional Council, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was established in 2008 to form an umbrella group of representatives from the Town, Montreat College, Montreat Conference Center, Cottager's Wilderness and Open Space Program, Mountain Retreat Association Wilderness Committee, Montreat Trail Club, and Montreat Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program. The Montreat Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) Earth Ministry Team was added as a represented party in 2012 through an amendment to the MOU. These entities operate together under the terms of the MOU to coordinate, promote, and serve various Landcare teams, projects, and events in Montreat. The Town of Montreat acts as the Committee's fiscal agent and provides administrative staffing support.

Mr. Nalley then listed a number of projects undertaken by the Montreat Landcare Committee since its inception, including the purchase of an electric vehicle, construction of the Montreat Native Plant Garden, discovery and study of the seepage salamander, and hemlock wooly adelgid treatment for 168 trees along Assembly Drive and the Flat Creek corridor. Several of these projects have been funded in whole or in part by grant proceeds from the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Division of Air Quality, Land-of-Sky Regional Council, the North Carolina Rural Center, and other agencies. Other ongoing efforts include the annual Native Plant Show and Sale, Earth Day programs, stream cleanups, and invasive plant eradication efforts. Anyone interested in supporting Landcare in Montreat is encouraged to volunteer, suggest a project, or start their own Landcare project or team.

**Mayor's Communications**

Mayor Taylor was absent and had no report at this time.

**Consent Agenda Review**

The proposed Consent Agenda included the following items:

- February 5, 2015 Agenda Meeting Minutes Adoption;
- February 12, 2015 Town Council Meeting Minutes Adoption;
- February 19, 2015 Special Meeting Minutes Adoption;
- Adoption of Resolution #15-03-01 Designating May 2, 2015 as Arbor Day in the Town of Montreat.

Resolution #15-03-01 coordinates Montreat's Arbor Day celebrations with the 2015 Native Plant Show and Sale events, and will also accompany the Montreat Landcare Committee's application for official Tree City USA designation for Montreat through the Arbor Day Foundation.

**Town Administrator's Communications**

- Engineering and design work for the Texas Road bridge replacement project continues, and preliminary plans at 75% completion are expected soon. Recent hydrology studies of the area have indicated a need to raise the new bridge structure an additional foot to avoid construction within the floodway and surrounding non-encroachment areas. The completed 75% plans will include this revised structure height, and will be available for inspection in the Town Services Office once they are received.
- Camera inspection for the Well A02 replacement project has been rescheduled for Monday, March 16 due to recent inclement weather delays.
- There is no new information to report on the Town's continued efforts to correct township name and ZIP code inaccuracies in Montreat's voter registration database.
- The 2015 Annual Board Retreat will be held on April 22 beginning at 9:00 a.m. This meeting is open to the public, and its location will be announced once final arrangements are made.
- The Town of Montreat has been selected to compete in the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) 2015 Hometown Showdown, a March Madness-style photo competition on the NCLM's Facebook page. This annual event is an opportunity for friendly competition and a show of hometown pride for each competing municipality. Votes are tabulated for each

voting round based on the number of Facebook “likes” each photo receives. All interested social media users are encouraged to participate.

### **Administrative Reports**

**Police Chief:** Chief Staggs was absent due to a family emergency. Officer Whitson presented and reviewed the February 2015 monthly departmental activity report. He noted that the department assisted the Black Mountain Fire Department in providing support for the 2015 Mount Mitchell Challenge and Marathon events. During the recent winter storms, officers performed additional house checks, located three fallen trees, and reported numerous residential water leaks to Public Works Department staff. Officer Lee Blevins is recuperating at home and expects to return to active duty in May. Chief Staggs and the Town’s auxiliary officers will perform patrol duties while Officer Blevins is on medical leave. Officer Whitson also reported that retired Black Mountain Police Department Sgt. Johnny Raines had passed away on March 1.

Brief discussion was heard concerning the Department’s response to certain drug-related incidents included in the monthly report. Commissioners Helms and Campbell praised the Department for its patrol efforts to locate and address these and other urgent issues.

**Public Works Director:** Mr. Freeman explained the snow removal procedures used during inclement weather events, emphasizing the importance of establishing and maintaining 24-hour emergency vehicle access to all Town streets. Snow plowing begins once 1” of snow or ice has accumulated, and continues in 12-hour shifts around the clock until the storm has passed. All public streets are plowed, although different methods are used depending on whether or not the roadway is paved. If a fire or ambulance call is received from a street that has not yet been plowed, Police and Public Works Department personnel coordinate to provide an escort and ensure access to that location. Approximately 32 tons of sand was also applied to roadways and intersections during the February 17 and February 24 winter storms.

A total of 18 residential water pipes burst during recent severe cold weather, as well as three water meters and one air valve. Water Department staff used the Town’s automated water meter reading system to help detect areas of unusual usage in vacant homes, turned off the water service to prevent any further damage, and notified the affected property owners. The AMR system can also be used to determine both the severity of a particular water leak and the date and time in which it occurred. Montreat acquired the AMR system through grant funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

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

- January 2015 Financial Summary Report;
- Final January 2015 Financial Statement;

- Preliminary February 2015 Financial Statement;
- February 28, 2015 Cash and Investment Earnings Report.

Mr. Stackhouse also noted that, to date, the Town had incurred legal fees in the amount \$15,780 in defense of the civil action, Crowder, et al., v. the Town of Montreat. During discussion, the Board also requested a water loss report with comparison data from other local municipalities to be presented at next month's Town Council Meeting.

Building Inspector/Code Administrator: Mr. Currie presented and reviewed his monthly zoning and inspections activity report. He noted the approval of a co-location permit for AT&T to install a 4G data service array on the South Carolina Terrace cell tower, as well as an administrative agreement for a rock wall replacement in the right-of-way on Texas Road. He also explained the scope and permitting requirements for the renovations currently underway in Upper Anderson Auditorium. The Planning and Zoning Commission will meet on April 16 to consider possible revisions to Montreat General Ordinance Chapter I, Article II "Noise Control." The Board of Adjustment did not meet during the past month and had no hearings pending at this time.

### **Public Comment – Agenda Items**

Mayor Pro Tem Standaert reiterated that this Public Comment period was intended for remarks pertaining to items listed on the meeting agenda, including staff reports and communications.

Mr. Wade Burns of 232 North Carolina Terrace praised the Town's automated meter reading and SCADA monitoring systems for their ability to quickly detect water leaks or abnormal usage amounts. He stated that these features recently helped prevent one of his neighbors from incurring significant property damage from a burst residential water pipe.

Montreat Conference Center Vice President for Development Lynn Gilliland thanked the Public Works Department for their assistance during the recent winter storms.

### **Old Business**

- A. Proposed 2015-2020 Capital Improvements Plan: The proposed 2015-2020 Capital Improvements Plan is scheduled for formal adoption during the April Town Council Meeting. The Board may choose to hold additional Special Meetings over the next month for further discussion and possible amendment of the draft CIP document. The public may view the draft CIP on the Town's website or obtain printed copies from the Town Services Office. Anyone with questions or suggested amendments to the CIP is encouraged to contact Mr. Nalley.

**New Business**

- A. **Comprehensive Plan Update**: The Town of Montreat's Comprehensive Plan serves as a strategic policy guide for future development, infrastructure and service decisions over a 15 to 20 year period. The Plan was originally adopted in April 2008, and recommends 97 long-and short-term goals and strategies for addressing a number of key community desires and issues identified during the course of its development. Mr. Nalley presented an updated summary of the completion status of those goals, which indicated that 72% had been fully accomplished, achieved significant progress, or were currently underway. More than half of the remaining goals have been come under consideration by the Board, but have not moved forward due to unfavorable legislative changes, lack of public support, and other similar reasons.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be reviewed and updated every five years, and Mayor Taylor has suggested that the Board begin this process this coming spring to maximize opportunities for participation and input from seasonal residents. Initial cost estimates from LandDesign, the professional consulting firm that assisted with the development of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan total approximately \$67,000 and are subject to further amendments and reductions. The current fiscal year budget can be amended to allocate funds for the Plan update if the Board so desires. During discussion, the Board recognized former Commissioner Eric Nichols and former Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee member Don Reid for their efforts in developing the 2008 Plan. The Board agreed by consensus to discuss this matter further during their April 22 Annual Retreat.

- B. **Town of Montreat Technology Use Policy**: Adopting and implementing a comprehensive Technology Use Policy will formalize a number of best practices and security measures already in general use to ensure the appropriate and responsible access, maintenance and use of all of the Town's various hardware, software, electronic networks, systems, and devices. The draft Policy has been reviewed by the Town Attorney and the Town's third-party software and technology services vendors and, once adopted, will serve as a reference guide to all current system users and technology support vendors, and will become part of the orientation materials provided to all future new employees and elected or appointed officials. Implementing a comprehensive Technology Use Policy also satisfies an adopted Administration Department goal for the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year as set forth during the 2014 Annual Board Retreat. After brief discussion, Commissioner Helms moved to adopt the Town of Montreat Technology Use Policy as presented. Commissioner Campbell seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

**Public Comment – Other Topics**

Mayor Pro Tem Standaert reiterated that this Public Comment period was intended for remarks pertaining to public business items not listed on the meeting agenda, including any reports or communications from other community entities.

Montreat College Executive Director of Marketing and Communications Annie Carlson reported that a new Vice President of Enrollment and new Vice President of Advancement would begin serving at the College within the next two weeks. She mentioned several "Meet Montreat" recruitment events that occurring in the homes of various alumni and Board of Trustee members. She also said that President Maurer had recently returned from a trip with Board of Trustee member Will Graham and a team from the Billy Graham Evangelical Association. Those interested in joining the College's e-mail public information group are encouraged to contact Ms. Carlson at [acarlson@montreat.edu](mailto:acarlson@montreat.edu). Montreat College is also competing in Blue Ridge Magazine's 2015 Top Adventure College tournament, and is currently matched with Warren Wilson College in the Round 2 bracket. Those interested can vote once per day online at <http://www.blueridgeoutdoors.com/best-outdoor-school/>.

Mr. Peter Boggs of 338 Chapman Road expressed his disappointment that the two public agenda item requests submitted by Mr. Frist and Mr. Neville had not been included for consideration during this month's Town Council Meeting. He said he understood that the Town's legal counsel had advised the Board not to discuss matters related to the current litigation, but did not feel that this advice should prevent members of the public from being able to speak about these issues.

Mr. Bob Cunningham of 162 Virginia Road hoped the Board would carefully consider the feelings of what he described as a great percentage of those who live in or love Montreat, whose views on the Town Hall issue differ from those of the Board. He asked the Board to keep in mind the best interests of the entire community as it moves forward on this matter.

### **Commissioner Communications**

Commissioner Campbell reported on the following items:

- The Montreat Landcare Committee continues its preparations for the May 2, 2015 Native Plant Sale and Arbor Day Celebration. Two Montreat College students are also working with the Committee on Landcare-related projects as part of their Master's degree programs. Beginning next week, other Montreat College students will also help distribute posters and rack cards to promote the Plant Sale and Arbor Day Celebration, and will provide on-site volunteer assistance on the date of the events. Other interested community volunteers are encouraged to contact Commissioner Campbell.
- The Presbyterian Heritage Center Board will meet on March 15 and 16.
- Rev. Billy Graham will be recognized on May 29-30 in a conference event entitled "Great Awakenings: Evangelists and their Impact on American Cultures." Speakers at this event will include Duke Divinity School Professor of Christian History Dr. Grant Wacker, Montreat resident Rev. Dr. John Akers, who served as Dr. Graham's personal assistant, and Dr. Edith Blumhofer, Professor of History at Wheaton College.

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- Anyone with suggestions for future opportunities to recognize the accomplishments of Montreat citizens is encouraged to contact Town staff or Board members.

Commissioner Vinson stated that the Board had asked the Town Attorney how best to address the public agenda item requests submitted at last week's meeting, and had been advised not to place these items for Board consideration until after the current litigation against the Town is resolved.

**Upcoming Meeting Dates**

Mayor Pro Tem Standaert reviewed the following list of upcoming meeting dates and deadlines. She noted there would be no Agenda Meeting in April due to Maundy Thursday observances.

Agenda Items Due: March 27, 2015, 5:00 p.m.  
Town Services Office

Agenda Packets Available: March 31, 2015  
[http://www.townofmontreat.org/  
TownGovernment.php](http://www.townofmontreat.org/TownGovernment.php)  
or Town Services Office

April Montreat Landcare Committee Meeting: April 1, 2015, 9:00 a.m.  
Moore Center Meeting Room

Town Services Office Closed: April 3, 2015  
Good Friday Holiday

April Town Council Meeting: April 9, 2015, 7:00 p.m.  
Walkup Building

April Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting: April 16, 2015, 7:00 p.m.,  
Walkup Building

2015 Annual Board Retreat: April 22, 2015, 9:00 a.m.  
Location TBA

**Closed Session**

Commissioner McCaskill moved to enter into Closed Session in accordance with North Carolina General Statute §143-318.11(3) for attorney consultation regarding the Civil Action: Carolyn Zoe Crowder, John L. Currie, Nancy B. Thomas, Henry W. Darden, Jr., and wife, Carolyn V. Darden, Plaintiffs, versus the Town of Montreat, Defendant. Commissioner Vinson seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

No action was taken during the Closed Session.

**Adjournment**

Upon returning to open session at 9:25 p.m., Commissioner Helms moved to adjourn the Agenda Meeting. Commissioner Campbell seconded. The motion carried 5/0 and the meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

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Mary Standaert, Mayor Pro Tem

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Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk