

**Town of Montreat  
Board of Commissioners  
Town Council Meeting  
December 8, 2016  
Walkup Building**

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Board members present: Mayor Pro Tem Kitty Fouche  
Commissioner Bill Gilliland  
Commissioner Kent Otto  
Commissioner Mary Standaert  
Commissioner Ann Vinson

Board members absent: Mayor Tim Helms

Town staff present: Al Richardson, Interim Town Administrator  
Steve Freeman, Public Works Director  
Angie Murphy, Town Clerk  
Barry Creasman, Senior Water Operator  
David Currie, Code Administrator/Building Inspector  
Stefan Stackhouse, Finance Officer & Deputy Town Clerk  
Jack Staggs, Police Chief  
David Arrant, Police Captain

Approximately 20 members of the public were also present. Mayor Pro Tem Fouche called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and held a moment of silence.

**Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Standaert felt that item #9 under Old Business should more adequately indicate that a Public Hearing was being tabled until further notice. Commissioner Standaert moved to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Gilliland seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

**Presentation to Council: Bounty and Soul**

Bounty & Soul is a grassroots, volunteer-run non-profit dedicated to creating a health and wellness movement in underserved communities in Buncombe County. Their fresh, free food markets are providing healthy food along with nutrition awareness and health and wellness resources for children, families, individuals, and seniors who may not have access to these resources. Bounty & Soul distributes over 6,000 lbs of healthy food to over 600 people every week. They also conduct weekly Health & Wellness Classes and cooking demonstrations. They offer their services at five markets throughout the week serving seniors in a low income senior living facility; a non-profit daycare center; residents living in the greater Black Mountain-Swannanoa Valley area at St. James Episcopal Church, the Flat Creek Community, and Swannanoa Community surrounding Creative Village Daycare. They are focused on improving the overall health and well-being of participants by providing health and wellness lessons, cooking demonstrations, recipes and additional resources at no cost. Bounty & Soul provides various programs to their participants engaging the

distribution of food, the growing of food, and the preparation of food. UGrow provides containers, seeds, soil, tools, plants, and expertise to provide families the resources they need to create their own gardens and grown their own food. The Backpack Program provides nutritious foods and Bounty & Soul resources to children in local schools. The Cookbook Project is a partnership with Buncombe County Early College which provides nutrition literacy and basic cooking skills to at risk youth. A Latino Outreach Program is uniquely designed and implemented based on needs gathered from within this community. Bounty & Soul utilizes over 120 active volunteers that play a vital role in their daily operations. Bounty & Soul believes that collaboration and relationships are vital to meet short-term and long-term goals.

### **Mayor's Communications**

There were no communications from the Mayor this evening.

### **Consent Agenda Review**

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

- November 3, 2016, Public Forum Minutes
- November 3, 2016, Town Council Agenda Meeting Minutes
- November 10, 2016, Town Council Minutes

### **Town Administrator's Communications**

- Interim Town Administrator Al Richardson stated there were two options in moving forward with the current Texas Road Bridge: remove the current bridge and install a pedestrian bridge or leave the current bridge and convert to a pedestrian bridge. Mr. Richardson has been in constant communication with Ray Lotfi to try to give the Board the accurate facts and figures to make an accurate decision. Mr. Richardson contacted Rick Tipton of the NCDOT Division 13 in Asheville to see if he had a recent bridge inspection on file but unfortunately he did not. Mr. Richardson sent KCI Engineering a letter of authorization to inspect and evaluate the Texas Road Bridge for \$4,000. KCI will be able to get to this inspection in January at the latest. Recent conversations with Mr. Lotfi indicate there is a possibility that the Town of Montreat may be able to get matching funds (80/20) to pay for the inspection. Mr. Richardson does have the necessary forms from Mr. John Williams with the NCDOT to close out the bridge project completely once the Town is at that point.

### **Administrative Reports**

Police: Chief Staggs introduced Master Patrol Officer David Arrant to those in attendance. Officer Arrant has been with the Montreat Police Department since 2005. He was promoted to the Officer I position in 2007, Officer II position in 2009, and in 2011 was promoted to the Master

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Patrol Officer Position. These promotions were a result of his hard work and dedication to Montreat Police Department as well as his completion of the required testing for advancement. Officer Arrant assumed responsibility for all Patrol scheduling in 2013 and has assisted the Chief with budget and CIP preparations. This year he became a Certified General Instructor for the State of North Carolina. This certification is most valuable to Montreat Police Department as it allows for Officer training to be completed in-house for the annual mandatory NC State requirements. Officer Arrant was then promoted and pinned by his father and witnessed by his mother to Captain of the Montreat Police Department. Chief Staggs reviewed and presented the November 2016 monthly departmental activity report. Chief Staggs advised that there were a lot more stationary and foot patrol hours due to the gas line crisis in late October/early November. Chief Staggs advised those in attendance of several fire incidents that occurred in Montreat over the month of November. Thankfully these incidents were isolated and were easily diffused. Special thanks were given to the Black Mountain Fire Department and the U.S. Forest Service for their hard work. Chief Staggs reminded everyone that Christmas was just around the corner and to call the Police Department if they notice any suspicious behaviors.

Public Works Director: Mr. Freeman advised that sanitation pickup will be on Tuesday, December 27<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> due to the Town Offices being closed on the normal pickup days for Christmas and New Year's Holidays. Public Work Crews have been cleaning leaves from culverts and road rights-of-way over the past month. There have been no water line breaks during the past month to report. Montreat is still in a drought situation even though we have received much needed rainfall. We are still down between 9 to 12 inches of rain for the year. Mr. Freeman suggested voluntary water conservation until this deficit is lowered.

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

- October 2016 Financial Summary Report;
- Final October 2016 Detailed Financial Statement;
- October 30, 2016 Cash and Investment Earnings Report.
- Preliminary November 2016 Detailed Financial Statements.

Building Inspector/Code Administrator: Mr. Currie presented and reviewed his November 2016 zoning and inspections activity report. Neither Planning or Zoning nor Board of Adjustments met during the month.

**Public Comments**

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

Mr. Bill Seaman of 425 Appalachian Way, stated that Tree City USA gives the Town of Montreat, at no cost, resources to promote Firewise Safety Procedures in the Town. We are one of 3,400 communities across the United States who have received this designation. "Tree City USA keeps

the tree in Montreat". Mr. Seaman also suggested that Bounty & Soul would be a great way to donate in lieu of Christmas gift giving.

Mr. Joe Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace, stated that he is on the Black Mountain-Swannanoa Endowment Fund which funds all the non-profits in Swannanoa Valley, including Bounty & Soul, and suggested giving to the Endowment Fund as an alternative to Christmas gifts. Mr. Standaert felt that the agenda has been very loosely followed this year with several violations of Rule 4 in the Rules & Procedures. Mr. Standaert does not understand why Planning & Zoning had to meet so hurriedly with regards to the Montreat College light pole banner request but then the Public Hearing just fell to the wayside.

Mr. Tom Frist of 98 Frist Road, inquired as to if we were still under an outside burn ban. Commissioner Vinson advised she would discuss during her Commissioner Communications.

#### **Old Business**

**Request from Montreat College for Approval to Install 30 Light Pole Banners on the Montreat College Campus: Public Hearing:**

#### **New Business**

- A. **Network Wiring Replacement & Improvement:** The Town's internal data network has been thrown together piecemeal over the past decade or more. It is difficult to maintain, and we continue to be subject to problems requiring repair. Our network security is also not as strong as it needs to be. We are past due for a complete replacement of the cabling and of our firewall. We have obtained recommendations from our tech support vendor, Electronic Office. While they can do some of the work, they also recommended that we engage Carolina Technologies to undertake the rewiring. The required work by Electronic Office will cost \$2,914, and the required work by Carolina Technologies will cost \$2,380.50, for a total of \$5,294.50. Commissioner Vinson moved to authorize Interim Town Administrator Al Richardson and Finance Officer Stefan Stackhouse to execute the procurement of network remediation and rewiring services from Electronic Office in the amount of \$2,914, and from Carolina Technologies in the amount of \$2,380.50. Commissioner Gilliland seconded and the motion passed 5/0.
  
- B. **Purchase Order Module for Computerized Accounting System:** Due to changes in state legal requirements, the Town will now need to considerably increase the number of purchase orders issued each year, from a couple dozen to potentially many hundreds. The Local Government Commission has decided to instruct municipalities and auditors to look for the pre-audit certification on almost every transaction. This can only be feasible with an automated solution that integrates with our existing computerized accounting system. Our existing vendor, Harris Local Government, offers a Purchase Order module as an addition to our existing suite of applications for

an initial investment of \$1,500, plus up to \$900 for implementation and training support. The ongoing annual maintenance and support cost will be \$330. Town Staff are requesting Board approval to proceed with the procurement of this Purchase Order module. Commissioner Standaert moved to authorize Interim Town Administrator Al Richardson and Finance Officer Stefan Stackhouse to execute the procurement of a Purchase Order module from Harris Local Government for the quoted price of \$1500 for the software license, plus up to \$900 in training and implementation support. Commissioner Vinson seconded and the motion passed 5/0.

- C. Budget Amendment #1: The purpose is to amend the Administration and Public Buildings budgets to cover expenditures for the switch from AT&T to Charter, the Root Cause Analysis performed by Electronic Office, replacement and improvement of the Town's network cable infrastructure, and for the procurement of a Purchase Order module. These expenditures are to be funded by a reallocation of budget from Public Buildings capital outlay. Mayor Pro Tem Fouche moved to amend the Administration and Public Buildings budgets to cover expenditures for the switch from AT&T to Charter, the Root Cause Analysis performed by Electronic Office, replacement and improvement of the Town's network cable infrastructure, and for the procurement of a Purchase Order module. Commissioner Otto seconded and the motion carried 5/0.
  
- D. Resolution #16-11-01 Commending Emergency Services Personnel for Suwannee Drive House Fire Response: Mayor Helms read Resolution #16-11-01 Commending Emergency Services Personnel for the Suwannee Drive House Fire Response. Commissioner Vinson moved to adopt Resolution #16-11-01. Commissioner Gilliland seconded and the motion carried 5/0.
  
- E. Resolution #16-11-02 Commending Emergency Services Personnel for East Ridge Trail Fire Response: Mayor Helms read Resolution #16-11-02 Commending Emergency Services Personnel for the East Ridge Trail Fire Response. Commissioner Vinson moved to adopt Resolution #16-11-02. Commissioner Gilliland seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

### **Public Comments-Other Topics**

Mayor Helms reiterated that the Public Comment period were for remarks pertaining to public business items not listed on the meeting agenda, including any reports or communications from other community entities.

Mrs. Martha Campbell of 149 Maryland Place, briefly talked about the Party Rock fire which is currently burning in the Lake Lure area. She asked everyone to keep former employee Ron Nalley in their thoughts as he managed the evacuations and emergency situations in his position as Town Manager of Lake Lure. Mrs. Campbell also acknowledged Public Works Director Steve Freeman, who is also Assistant Fire Chief in Bat Cave, who will be spending his time off from Montreat fighting the wildfires in Lake Lure and surrounding areas. Mrs. Campbell asked if the Town of Montreat will be eligible for municipal bridge monies in the future. Mayor Helms advised that the

Town would be eligible for Municipal Bridge Project monies for bridges other than the Texas Road Bridge.

### **Commissioner Communications**

Commissioner Standaert read a prepared statement in which she stated that there was a lack of openness and failure to provide all available information to the public with regards to the Bridge Meeting in Raleigh on October 4th which was attended by Mayor Tim Helms, Mayor Pro Tem Fouche, Commissioner Otto and Interim Town Administrator Al Richardson. This meeting was not mentioned at the October 6<sup>th</sup> Agenda Meeting nor was it added to the agenda for the October 13<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting. Additionally, Commissioner Otto made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Fouche, to not build a vehicular bridge, during the middle of this same October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting without having placed it on the table at the October 6<sup>th</sup> Agenda Meeting. Commissioner Standaert requested that this meeting be audio recorded and Mayor Helms reported that it was not recorded at the request of members from the Federal Highway Association. Commissioner Standaert contacted Frayda Bluestein of the School of Government who stated that Commissioner Standaert's request was legal and did not require the acquiescence of any, much less all, of the participants. Commissioner Standaert felt that with all the controversy surrounding the bridge a recording would have been helpful. Commissioner Standaert stated she would have opposed the "no-build" option if she had been at the October Town Council Meeting. She stated that Montreat has spent over \$100,000 to build a vehicular bridge over Flat Creek with nothing to show for it. Commissioner Standaert also stated that the Montreat/American taxpayer has spent an additional \$250,000 to build a vehicular bridge over Flat Creek, again, now gone forever, with nothing to show for it. At no point during the 6 years of council deliberations did she recall a single objection to a vehicular bridge over Flat Creek during public comment on the annual Montreat Budget or the Capital Improvement Plan. Commissioner Standaert felt that a "no-build" vote is a vote of no confidence in the Town of Montreat's Police Chief and Staff; shows a lack of support for the Montreat Conference Center and Montreat College and disregards the safety concerns of impacted citizens. Commissioner Standaert acknowledged that Veterans Day was the following day and encouraged everyone to participate in the many activities around the Swannanoa Valley.

Commissioner Vinson had some information on Firewise Landscaping and "Help! A Tree Has Fallen" which was compiled by the Montreat Tree Board. Commissioner Vinson thanked Public Works Director Steve Freeman for the work he will be doing in Lake Lure fighting fires.

Commissioner Otto had recently participated in the From Lookout Brewery to Lookout Mountain Race and he was amazed at how complimentary everyone was with the community of Montreat. He stated how nice it was during these heavy post election times to hear such positive comments about our community and the people within.

Mayor Pro Tem Fouche advised that the Town Hall Committee had met the previous evening and had a report ready to present to Council in December. She thanked everyone who served on the Committee.

**Upcoming Meeting Dates**

Mayor Pro Tem Fouche reviewed the following list of upcoming meeting dates and deadlines:

Town Services Office Closed: December 23 & December 26, 2016  
Christmas Holiday  
Sanitation resumes on December 27th

Montreat Tree Board: Will not be meeting in the month of December

Montreat Landcare: January 4, 2017, 9:00 a.m.  
Allen Building  
Swannanoa Room

January Town Council Agenda Meeting: January 5, 2017, 7:00 p.m.  
Walkup Building  
Public Forum begins at 6:30 p.m.

January Town Council Meeting: January 12, 2017, 7:00 p.m.  
Walkup Building

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mayor Pro Tem Fouche moved to adjourn the Town Council Meeting. Commissioner Standaert seconded and the motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

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Tim Helms, Mayor

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Angela Murphy, Town Clerk