

**Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Town Council Meeting
February 2, 2017
Walkup Building**

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

Board members absent: Commissioner Bill Gilliland

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

Approximately 30 members of the public were also present. Mayor Helms called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m., led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and held a moment of silence.

Agenda Approval

Commissioner Standaert felt that this meeting should be addressed as an agenda meeting. Mayor Helms stated that it had been advertised as a regular meeting and that is how the Council would proceed. Mayor Helms further stated that in March the Board will go back to having 2 meetings as the Rules & Procedures state. Interim Administrator Al Richardson stated that the vote of last month to do away with the agenda meeting was in direct violation of Rule #32 under Rules & Procedures. Mr. Richardson consulted with the Town Attorney who confirmed that in order to change the meeting schedule a vote of 2/3 (66%) of all actual membership is required. Mr. Richardson stated that holding the regular meeting this evening would be perfectly acceptable. Commissioner Otto spoke to the School of Government about this issue and they said to proceed as scheduled and then correct the meeting schedule going forward. Mayor Pro Tem Fouche moved to accept the agenda as presented. Commissioner Standaert seconded the motion. Commissioner Otto suggested removing item B, Vision Insurance, from New Business. Commissioner Otto stated that in light of the fact that Council had changed insurance twice that perhaps it would be best to package this whole conversation for the Board Retreat. Mr. Richardson advised that there was a limited coverage vision policy with Blue Cross Blue Shield and when Council switched to United Healthcare there was a savings that allowed for a Vision Coverage Plan to be added. Upon switching back to Blue Cross Blue Shield, due to the prescription drug benefits, vision coverage was omitted. Mr. Richardson has been in contact with

the League of Municipalities for a quote for health insurance for the upcoming year. Commissioner Standaert suggested that this item be left on the agenda and perhaps table it for another time. The motion to approve the agenda as presented carried 4/0.

Mayor's Communications

Mayor Helms had no communications this evening.

Consent Agenda Review

The proposed Consent Agenda will include the following items:

- January 5, 2016, Town Council Agenda Meeting Minutes
- January 5, 2016, Public Forum Meeting Minutes
- January 12, 2016, Town Council Meeting Minutes

Town Administrator's Communications

- Interim Town Administrator Richardson announced that the Town of Montreat property reappraisal values are out and have been received.

Administrative Reports

Police Chief: Chief Staggs reviewed and presented the January 2016 monthly departmental activity report. Chief Staggs thanked Public Work Crews for their hard work with snow removal and stated that there were no accidents or stranded motorist calls during this time. Montreat Police Department made approximately 27 extra spot checks of residences around Town. These checks are separate than residents requesting house checks. Commissioner Standaert asked if the lack of evidence storage room impacted any of the situations that occurred this month with firearms and drugs. Chief Staggs stated the impact was minimal mainly because any of the evidence from incidents that occurred at Montreat College would be stored at Black Mountain Police Department. Chief Staggs announced that the Montreat Police Department was reinstating a promotion program to officers. This program will allow for advancement with the completion of years served and NC Justice Academy courses and applicable testing completed.

Public Works Director: Public Works Director Steve Freeman announced that crews have started their annual fire hydrant inspection and flushing systems. They have completed about 1/3 of the hydrants which equates to about 30 out of 97 hydrants in Town. Mr. Freeman advised that residents may see some mild discoloration in their water and if this happens they need to call the Town Services Office. This flushing process will also help iron buildup problems. Crews have replaced the roofing on Well B on Texas Road. The second snow event earlier this week did not allow enough precipitation for plowing, as at least an inch is needed, but crews did use their new ice melt spreader to distribute 6 tons of sand and 150 pounds of ice melt.

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

- December 2016 Financial Summary Report;
- Final December 2016 Detailed Financial Statement;
- December 31, 2016 Cash and Investment Earnings Report;
- Preliminary January 2016 Detailed Financial Statements

Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer: Mr. Currie presented and reviewed his January 2016 zoning and inspections activity report. Mr. Currie did 29 fire inspections and 10 fire re-inspections during the month. There was a Board of Adjustments variance hearing on January 26th and due to the creativity of a neighbor the variance was withdrawn. There was no Planning and Zoning meeting held during the month.

Public Comments

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

Mrs. Martha Campbell of 149 Maryland Place, looked up the definition of inclusive and found that it means “treating all groups or all members of a group equally and without exception” and she supports adding this phrase to the Town of Montreat’s mission statement.

Old Business

There is no Old Business to discuss.

New Business

- A. Montreat as an inclusive community: Commissioner Standaert moved to change the Board of Commissioners Mission Statement to include the phrase “to be an inclusive community”. Commissioner Vinson seconded the motion. Commissioner Standaert stated that this was not meant to be a political statement but that it was meant to be simply what it says that Montreat is an inclusive community and we treat people equally. Mayor Pro Tem Fouche does not feel it is necessary to add words to the Mission Statement she thinks it is necessary to live out what we believe on a daily basis. Commissioner Vinson stated that we do need to strive to be an inclusive community and be reminded of it every day. Commissioner Otto felt that actions speak louder than words. Commissioner Otto spends a lot of time volunteering at Montreat College and sees that there is a diverse population of students and he has seen multiple families in Town take students in for meals and laundry, pay for books, send care packages and the list goes on. Commissioner Otto felt we should continue to show inclusiveness through actions rather than changing the mission statement or adding signs. Commissioner Standaert felt that we if we are an inclusive community what would be wrong with adding it to the Mission Statement since we are already fulfilling the Mission of the Board of Commissioners.

The motion was tied 2/2 with Commissioner Otto and Mayor Pro Tem Fouche voting against the motion. Mayor Helms voted to break the tie and the motion failed 2/3. Mayor Helms suggested that a workshop or the Annual Board Retreat would be more appropriate to address an item such as this.

- B. Employee Benefit Health Insurance – Vision: Commissioner Vinson moved to authorize the Town Administrator and Finance Officer to contract with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Carolina, effective as soon as possible, to add the Blue 20/20 Exam Plus vision benefit to our health insurance package at a cost of \$8.80 per employee per month. Motion died for lack of a second.

- C. Regular Board Meeting of January 12th, 2017: Mayor Helms announced that in March the Council will go back to having two meetings a month. The first Thursday will be the Agenda Meeting preceded by the Public Forum at 6:30 p.m. and the second Thursday will be the regular Town Council Meeting. The motion at the last meeting failed because we needed an affirmative vote equal or greater than two-thirds of all the actual membership of the Board, excluding any vacant seats and not including the Mayor. Commissioner Vinson suggested adding this item to the Annual Board Retreat to brainstorm other ways to set the agenda.

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.

Mr. Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road, stated that he would like to see an aisle incorporated in the room setup for ease of movement for speakers.

Mr. Richard DuBose of 160 Woodland Road, representing Mountain Retreat Association, presented a check of just under \$9,000.00 in community fees to Mayor Helms.

Mrs. Annie Carlson of Montreat College, announced that the College recently opened an exercise science lab which is a new major of study at Montreat College. Mrs. Carlson also advised Council that the Black Mountain Campus of Montreat College had recently put in stands, a press box and lights at Pulliam Stadium. This funding came from the Buncombe County Tourism Grant. Also a new online Cyber-Security degree was established in January for non-traditional students. Early projections for enrollment look good for the upcoming school year.

Commissioner Communications

Commissioner Vinson had the fliers, established by the Montreat Tree Board, for what to do if a tree falls and firewise available if anyone would like a copy. Commissioner Vinson also reminded everyone in attendance that the Native Plant Sale is scheduled for April 29th.

Commissioner Otto encouraged everyone to step into the Montreat College sports program. These are great opportunities to get out with neighbors and cheer on Montreat at the new sports facility.

Commissioner Standaert mentioned that the living wage ordinance was passed at no cost to the Town and everyone on the Board was well aware that employees made more than the living wage. Commissioner Standaert advised those in attendance that the Board met with regards to the Florida Terrace Property recently and several ideas were tossed about one of which was to sell the property and another was the possibility of low income housing. Commissioner Standaert would like to hear some input from the community about these ideas. Commissioner Standaert stated that several people had expressed difficulties getting in touch with Representative Patrick McHenry. When you enter the portal you enter the zip code plus your post office box number and then type your message. In order to send the message you enter your post office box under street name and your message will be accepted.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

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

<u>Montreat Tree Board:</u>	February 28, 2017, 9:30 a.m. Town Services Building
<u>Montreat Landcare:</u>	March 1, 2017, 9:00 a.m. Allen Building Swannanoa Room
<u>March Town Council Agenda Meeting:</u>	March 2, 2017, 7:00 p.m. Walkup Building Public Forum starts at 6:30 p.m.
<u>March Town Council Meeting:</u>	March 9, 2017, 7:00 p.m. Walkup Building

Closed Session

Commissioner Vinson moved to enter into Closed Session in accordance with North Carolina General Statute §143-318.11(6) for discussion of a personnel matter. Commissioner Otto seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Vinson and a second by Mayor Pro Tem Fouche with the motion carrying 4/0, the Board returned to Open Session. Commissioner Vinson moved to hire Mr. Alex Carmichael as the Town of Montreat's new Town Administrator with an annual salary of \$70,000 beginning February 20, 2017. Mayor Pro Tem Fouche seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Vinson moved to adjourn the Town Council Meeting. Commissioner Kent seconded and the motion carried 4/0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Tim Helms, Mayor

Angela Murphy, Town Clerk