Board members present: Mayor Tim Helms

Mayor Pro Tem Kent Otto

Commissioner Kitty Fouche

Commissioner Alice Lentz

Commissioner Tom Widmer

Board members absent: Commissioner Bill Gilliland

Town staff present: Alex Carmichael, Town Administrator

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

Dave Arrant, Chief of Police

Kaila Gant, Patrol Officer

Jarod McIntosh, Senior Water Operator

Darlene Carrasquillo, Finance Officer

Adrienne Isenhower, Zoning Administrator

Approximately 23 members of the public were also present. Mayor Helms called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m., led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and held a moment of silence.

**Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Fouche moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Widmer seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

**Mayor’s Communications**

Mayor Helms thanked the Town Staff for all their hard work during the recent snowstorm.

**Consent Agenda Review**

The proposed Consent Agenda will include the following items:

* October 11, 2018, Regular Meeting Minutes
* October 29, 2018, Special Meeting Minutes
* November 8, 2018, Public Forum Meeting Minutes
* November 8, 2018, Regular Meeting Minutes
* Zoning Map Approval
* 2019 Board of Commissioners Meeting Calendar
* Resolution 18-12-002 Honoring Mike Morse read by Mayor Tim Helms

**Town Administrator’s Communications**

* Mr. Carmichael stated that in May 2018 when Tropical Storm Alberto came through Montreat there was a considerable amount of damage. The initial assessment was approximately $280,000 worth of damage but after further assessment that number rose to $800,000+. The State of North Carolina, Buncombe County and the Town of Montreat each declared a state of emergency which was later denied. The State of North Carolina appealed that decision by FEMA. FEMA has issued its final decision to not declare a state of emergency for that storm. Last week Mr. Carmichael made a quick trip down to Raleigh to speak with the NC Office of Emergency Management. The FEMA funds had they been available would have covered 75% of eligible costs. The State of NC Office of Emergency Management would have covered 25% of eligible costs. Without the FEMA fund the State of NC Office of Emergency Management will cover 70% of eligible costs. Another assessment is schedule for next Thursday. The Town of Montreat contracted with McGill to assess the damages, which is where the cost estimate of $804,000 originated from, and along with the documentation that was taken during the storm. All this information was provided and we are very optimistic about the full 70% being refunded to the Town. Mr. Carmichael also stated that a bid was put out for the repair of the Greybeard Wall as well as the Texas Road Bridge Design Project. We received no offers so we are going to reissue the bid to a broader audience.

**Administrative Reports**

Administration: Reports were in written form as requested by Council.

Planning and Zoning: Reports were in written form as requested by Council.

Police: Reports were in written form as requested by Council.

Public Works and Water: Reports were in written form as requested by Council.

Sanitation: Reports were in written form as requested by Council

Streets: Reports were in written form as requested by Council. Jarod McIntosh provided a brief update on the recent snowstorm. Two trucks ran during the night and three trucks ran during the day. 14 tons of sand and 1,500 pounds of ice melt were distributed on Montreat streets. Mr. McIntosh stated that each truck ran approximately 58-60 miles per shift and crews worked 12 hours shifts for 2 ½ days.

**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. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace stated that the item on the Agenda to change the election cycle from odd years to even years is a big decision to make for the Commission as well as the Community. Mrs. Standaert hoped Mr. Carmichael to share the pros and cons prior to taking the vote. Mrs. Standaert asked the Commission to share why they are voting for the change or against the change.

**Old Business**

A. Rules of Procedure Change: Public Comment Period: Mr. Carmichael stated there was a new memo included in the agenda packet which includes a red line version of what the new rules will look like. This change requires an affirmative vote of 2/3rds of the membership of the Commission which means 4 people must vote for the motion to pass. Commissioner Lentz move to approve amendments to Rules 6 and 7 of the Rules of Procedure as presented to allow discussion for any topic during Public Comment Period. Commissioner Widmer seconded the motion. Commissioner Lentz thanked Mr. Carmichael for his articulation in the new memorandum. Commissioner Lentz also stated that she appreciates the opportunity to listen to what the community has to say, she appreciates the conversations the Board has had revolving around this topic and she appreciates the Mayor’s ability to lead. Commissioner Fouche expressed her thanks to Mayor Helms for doing away with the 3 minute timer that was intimidating for some people. She also expressed her concern that once something is voted upon and someone wants to discuss it again it could be problematic. Commissioner Fouche stated that the two separate public comment periods are confusing even for her and she is open to giving the new way presented a try. Commissioner Widmer reiterated his position from last month. The Commission wants transparency and open communication and this transition makes sense of the character and values that are being strived for by the Board. Mayor Pro Tem Otto stated that last month he voted against this motion but he is open to giving it a try and he trusts the Mayor and neighbors to keep the meetings on task. The motion carried 4/0.

**New Business**

1. Swearing in of Officer Kaila B. Gant: Mayor Helms swore in Officer Kaila B. Gant as a Patrol Officer with the Town of Montreat Police Department. Officer Gant’s father and sister were on hand to witness and participate in the swearing in ceremony.
2. Appointment of Dan Dean to Planning and Zoning Commission: Commissioner Fouche moved to appoint Dan Dean to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a term of three years to expire on January 31, 2022. Commissioner Widmer seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

C. Appointment of Brad Hestir to Montreat Tree Board: Commissioner Widmer moved to appoint Brad Hestir to the Montreat Tree Board for a term of three years to expire on January 31, 2022. Commissioner Fouche seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

D. Appointment of Ann Vinson to Montreat Tree Board: Commissioner Lentz moved to appoint Ann Vinson to the Montreat Tree Board for a term of three years to expire on January 31, 2022. Mayor Pro Tem Otto seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

E. Appointment of Maggie Ray to Montreat Tree Board: Commissioner Fouche moved to appoint Maggie Ray to the Montreat Tree Board for a term of three years to expire on January 31, 2022. Commissioner Widmer seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

F. Re-Appointment of Matt Ashley to the Metropolitan Sewerage District Board: Mayor Pro Tem Otto moved to appoint Matt Ashley to the Metropolitan Sewerage District Board for a term of one year to expire on January 31, 2020. Commissioner Lentz seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

G. Zoning Ordinance Review: Mayor Pro Tem Otto moved to direct the Planning and Zoning Commission to review the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance through a multiple meeting process, beginning in January 2019 and to provide recommendations from their review to the Board of Commissioners at the August 2019 regular meeting. Commissioner Widmer seconded the motion and the motion carried 4/0.

H. Changes to Municipal Election Cycle: Commissioner Lentz moved to approve Resolution #18-12-001 Resolution of the Board of Commissioners in Support of Even Year Elections adding the red line version which will extend elections by one year. Mayor Pro Tem Otto seconded the motion. Mr. Carmichael pointed out there were two versions of the Resolution in this week’s packet. The second version is very specific about extending terms of office whereas the first resolution would leave it up to the General Assembly to decide. The practice of the General Assembly has been to elongate the terms to the next election cycle. This is what they did with the City of Asheville. Mr. Carmichael stated that the Town of Montreat will see cost savings with either odd or even election cycles. The higher cost saving of an undetermined amount will come from switching to even year election cycles. Commissioner Fouche does not see a compelling reason to be by ourselves in the odd year election cycles and stated that it is hard enough to get people out to the polls at uncontested elections. Commissioner Widmer stated that citizenry will have to be motivated to come out to vote. Commissioner Widmer feels that saving a couple of thousand dollars saved is good for the Town. Mayor Pro Tem Otto stated that the cost savings to the Community is really important to him. Commissioner Lentz has two different views. She feels that during this time of having an engaged citizenry that it is time to stand up and stick with odd year elections. Commissioner Lentz feels that she was elected to save money and she stands by that but she does not see the cost savings in either switching to even year elections or staying with odd year elections as being that impactful. She feels that the Town should stick to the odd year election cycle. The motion carried 3/1 with Commissioner Lentz voting against the motion.

I. Contract Approval: Real Property Sale: Commissioner Widmer moved to authorize the Mayor to enter into and execute Contract #18-12-0001 for the sale of Public Property being all of that 0.398 acre parcel shown as Tract 2 on the plat entitled “Survey for Town of Montreat” prepared by High Country Surveyors, Inc., and recorded in Plat Book 186 at Page 161 in the Buncombe County, North Carolina Public Registry. Being Lot 389 and a portion of Lot 388 as shown on the plat recorded in Plat Book 16 at Page 97 and being a portion of the property acquired by the Town of Montreat by deed recorded in Book 5159 at Page 190, Buncombe County Registry in the amount of $117,500.00. Commissioner Fouche seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

**Public Comments**

Mr. Tom Frist of 98 Frist Road thanked Mayor Pro Tem Otto for being willing to listen to people. Mr. Frist also assured Commissioner Fouche that the open public comment periods were not a threat to the smooth workings of the group.

**Commissioner Communications**

Commissioner Widmer encouraged everyone to read the packet for the January 2019 meeting and to join the Commission at the meeting. The preliminary design drawings will be included in this packet and a vote will be taken on the design as well as the costs of this project.

Commissioner Fouche advised that the drawings would be in the packet which will be distributed before the meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Otto feels that the upcoming Planning and Zoning Review will be healthy for the community and he is interested to see what feedback arises. He would also like the Stormwater Ordinance and Hillside Development Ordinance reviewed as well. Mayor Pro Tem Otto thanked the Public Work Crews for all their hard work. He commended the communication between the different departments. Mayor Pro Tem Otto stated that Montreat had some of the best plowed roads in the Valley on Sunday morning.

Commissioner Lentz seconded Mayor Pro Tem Otto’s comments regarding the hard work on the roads during the storm. Commissioner Lentz stated that Town Staff worked hard documenting everything from the very start of Hurricane Alberto. She also stated that it is so nice to see the community responding and participating. Commissioner Lentz advised that 81 people have filled out the online survey regarding the addressing issue.

**Upcoming Meeting Dates**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Christmas Holiday: Town Office Closed: | Monday, December 24, 2018 and Tuesday, December 25, 2018 |
| Sanitation Pickup: | Wednesday, December 26, 2018 |
| New Year’s Holiday: Town Offices Closed | Tuesday, January 1, 2019 |
| January Town Council Meeting: | Thursday, January 10, 2019  Walkup Building  Public Forum begins at 6:30 p.m. |
| Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday: Town Offices Closed: | Monday, January 21, 2019 |
| Sanitation Pickup: | Tuesday, January 22, 2019 |
| Tree Board: | Tuesday, January 22, 2019  9:30 a.m. Town Services Building |
|  |  |

**Adjournment**

There being no further business Mayor Pro Tem Otto moved to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Lentz seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| Tim Helms, Mayor |  | Angela Murphy, Town Clerk |