Board members present: Mayor Tim Helms

Mayor Pro Tem Kent Otto

Commissioner Jane Alexander

Commissioner Kitty Fouche

Commissioner Alice Lentz

Commissioner Tom Widmer

Board members absent: None

Town staff present: Alex Carmichael, Town Administrator

Adrienne Isenhower, Zoning Administrator

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

Kaila Gant, Patrol Officer

Darlene Carrasquillo, Finance Officer

Barry Creasman, Public Works Director

Twenty eight members of the public were present. Mayor Helms called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m., and led the group in the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence.

**Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Tom Widmer moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Kitty Fouche seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

**Presentations & Reports: Matt Braswell, Martin Starnes & Associates**

Matt Braswell of Martin Starnes & Associates thanked the Board for the opportunity to review the 2019 Audited Financial Statements. Mr. Braswell stated this presentation was a snapshot in time of June 30, 2019. The financial statements were issued as a clean and unmodified opinion which means the financial statements were materially correct. The staff was very cooperative and responsive and easy to work with which allowed the auditors to get the audit to the Local Government Commission in time. The Fund Balance is the assets minus the liabilities and it is the tool in which the Local Government Commission uses to compare Montreat to other units. It is also how the auditors calculate the fund balance percentage. The total Fund Balance in 2019 was 1,752,315 compared to 1,656,576 in 2018. There is a slight decrease in total fund balance, around $10,000, over the past three years due to funding capital projects and special revenue funds. Revenues increased due to the sale of the Florida Terrace property and expenditures increased due to capital outlay and streets and legal services increased in the Administrative Department. The top three revenues are ad valorem taxes, other taxes and licenses and sales and services. The top three expenditures are transportation, general government and public safety. The Water Fund Balance is very comparable to 2018. The Operating Expenditures are very comparable to 2018 as well. The presentation concluded with a brief question and answer period with the Council.

**Mayor’s Communications**

Mr. Carmichael stated that a lot of questions had been asked about the Town Hall Capital Projects Fund. The item in the Finance Report tonight is the entire Capital Projects Fund. It includes the construction contract, change orders, interior design fees, owner’s representative fees and more. The Capital Projects Fund was over budgeted for incidentals like change orders. The Capital Projects Fund was budgeted at just under $2 million dollars. It is not the construction contract. It was the initial idea that if we had money left over in the Capital Projects Fund after the completion of the Town Hall Project that the leftover funds would be utilized for debt servicing. The construction of the Town Hall is $1,641,000 that includes roughly $84,000 of privately raises funds. At this moment in time we are on schedule and under budget. We have paid 6 pay apps so far for roughly 50% of the total cost. Landscaping costs were budgeted in the $1,641,000. The original budget of $1.9 million has not changed since the beginning of the project.

**Meeting Minutes Adoption**

* December 12, 2019, Public Forum Minutes
* December 12, 2019, Town Council Minutes

**Town Administrator’s Communications**

Mr. Carmichael stated that since Tropical Storm Alberto came through Town Greybeard Trail has been compromised and it is a significant public safety issue. The detour has been a work in progress. The timed light control system did not work due to the topography in Montreat but the engineer worked on two separate lights working on their own timers. The upper light on Nesbitt lasts about 4 minutes and the one on the lower end lasts about 6 minutes. The contractor is working on it daily to ensure the safety of all people who travel Greybeard Trail. Mr. Carmichael strongly suggested not running the lights to ensure safety of all Montreat residents and visitors. The project has slowed down due to weather concerns as well as other factors such as the size of boulders they are pulling out of the stream. It looks like it will remain closed for the full 90 days of the project and then the road will be reopened with gravel only until the road is paved again in April. There are two types of reflectors that will be installed: flashing lights to alert people at night and reflectors alongside the steeper hills and sharper curves.

**Administrative Reports**

* Administration – This report was given in written format.
* Finance- This report was given in written format.
* Planning & Zoning – This report was given in written format.
* Police – This report was given in written format.
* Public Works and Water – This report was given in written format.
* Sanitation – This report was given in written format.
* Streets – This report was given in written format.

Commissioner Widmer questioned why on the General fund and Water fund are showing 54% short on collected amounts for General Fund and 25% short on collected amounts for Water Fund. Ms. Carrasquillo stated that it was primarily the ad valorem taxes that are paid largely in September and then another large influx towards the end of January that is affecting the general fund. Mr. Carmichael will get back to the Commission about the difference in the Water Fund. Commissioner Lentz asked for an update on Suwannee Road and Mr. Carmichael briefly reviewed the problem and advised that the affected area encompasses three properties and title searches have been difficult. The title search has been completed by the Town Attorney and we are working on the next step of an easement. Commissioner Widmer asked for an update on the Public Works Building. Mr. Creasman stated that grading will begin on January 10th with footers to follow next week.

**Public Comment**

Mrs. Clare Frist of 98 Frist Road stated that a house on North Carolina Terrace near Convocation Hall looked to be recently burned. Mr. Wade Burns stated that a tree fell on the back of the house and the Flowers family recently purchased the house and are going to remodel it soon.

**Old Business**

There was no old business to discuss.

**New Business**

1. Nominations and Debate for Membership to Board of Adjustment: Mayor Helms advised that Margaret Waterstradt wanted to move from a regular member position to an alternate position. Commissioner Alexander moved to approve Margaret Waterstradt’s request to move from a regular member position to an alternate position. Commissioner Fouche seconded and the motion carried 5/0. Commissioner Widmer moved to appoint Bill Solomon to the Board of Adjustment as a regular member for three years to expire on January 2, 2023. Mayor Pro Tem Otto seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

**Public Comment**

No Public Comment at this time.

**Commissioner Communications**

No Commissioner Communications at this time.

**Meeting Dates**

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| --- | --- |
| Montreat Planning & Zoning Commission: | Thursday, January 16, 2019  Walkup Building  10:30 a.m. |
| Town Office Closed: | Monday, January 20, 2020  Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday |
| Sanitation Services Resume: | Tuesday, January 21, 20 |
| Montreat Tree Board: | Tuesday, January 28, 2020  Town Services Building  9:30 a.m. |
| Montreat Landcare: | Wednesday, February 5, 2020  Allen Building  Swannanoa Room  9:00 a.m. |
| February Town Council Meeting: | Thursday, February 13, 2020  Walkup Building  7:00 p.m.  Public Forum 6:30 p.m. |
| Save the Date! | Saturday, April 25, 2020  Moore Center Field  Native Plant Sale & Arbor Day Celebration |

**Closed Session**

Commissioner Lentz moved to enter into Closed Session to approve/deny and seal/unseal Closed Session Minutes in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(3) for a personnel matter, NCGS 143-318.11(6) for discussion of the proposed acquisition of real property and NCGS 143-318.11(5) for attorney-client privilege.

**Adjournment**

After returning to Open Session there was no further business.

Commissioner Lentz moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner alexander seconded and the motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

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Tim Helms, Mayor Angie Murphy, Town Clerk