Board members present: Mayor Tim Helms

Mayor Pro Tem Otto

Commissioner Kitty Fouche

Commissioner Jane Alexander

Commissioner Tom Widmer

Board members present via

Zoom: Commissioner Alice Lentz

Town staff present: Alex Carmichael, Town Administrator

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

David Arrant, Chief of Police

A few members of the public were present via Zoom. Mayor Helms called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and led the group in the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence.

**Agenda Approval**

Mayor Helms asked for an amendment to the agenda to add the approval of minutes from April 16th, the Consent Agenda, the Town Administrator’s Communications, the Mayor’s Communications, and Commissioner Communications. Commissioner Widmer suggested an edit to the April 16th minutes. Commissioner Fouche moved to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Alexander seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

**Mayor’s Communications**

Mayor Helms had no communications this evening.

**Meeting Minutes Adoption**

* April 16, 2020 Town Council Meeting Minutes

**Town Administrator’s Communications**

Mr. Carmichael advised Town Council that the Town Hall is continuing to move right along. The interior is nearing completion. The exterior is waiting on some materials that are scarce due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Town hopes to take ownership in June with a move in date of July 1st. The Public Works Building is also making great progress. The exterior building is complete and the interior is well under way. Mr. Carmichael advised that although the Town has not received reimbursement from the State of North Carolina for Tropical Storm Alberto repairs, the Commission will be taking action tonight to facilitate reimbursement.

**Administrative Reports**

* Administration – 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.
* Finance – This report was given in written format.
* Streets – This report was given in written format.

**Public Comment**

Mr. Spencer Henschen, age 6, of 215 North Carolina Terrace reported that there is a missing street sign at the corner of North Carolina Terrace and Virginia Road and hoped it will be replaced soon.

Mr. Ron Vinson of the Presbyterian Heritage Center announced that the PHC will re-open on May 23rd from 1:00- 4:00. This will be the only day that the PHC will be open in May. Mr. Vinson also provided a list of current exhibits for the Council.

**Old Business**

There was no old business to discuss.

**New Business**

1. Vote to allow virtual participation by Commission Members: Commissioner Fouche moved to allow virtual participation. Commissioner Widmer seconded and the motion carried 5/0.
2. Approval of Health, Dental and Vision Insurance: Mr. Carmichael stated that the medical insurance rates did not increase this year for the Town but there was a slight increase on the staff side for dental benefits. Mayor Pro Tem Otto moved to renew Health, Dental and Vision Insurance with the North Carolina League of Municipalities. Commissioner Jane Alexander seconded and the motion carried 5/0.
3. Budget Amendment #8: Mr. Carmichael stated that earlier this year two police officers resigned for other positions/careers. The Town of Montreat is obligated to pay out the comp and vacation time that these two officers had earned. The comp and vacation time was paid out of the police department budget and because of the payouts the budget is now over budget. This amendment of $2,700 will move money from the Governing Body Salary Contingency to the Police Department Salaries line item. Commissioner Tom Widmer moved to approve Budget Amendment #8 in the amount of $2,700 as presented. Commissioner Alice Lentz seconded and the motion carried 5/0.
4. Budget Amendment #9: Mr. Carmichael stated that the Town is moving forward with the sale of property on Florida Terrace/Arkansas Trail. The budget must remain balanced so we must account for the revenues and expenses. There was a budgeting mistake in the personnel line item spreadsheet of over $76,000. This budget amendment allocates money from the sale of the property to cover the budgeting mistake as well as allocates revenues into the sales tax revenue line item that is also projected to be short $24,500. The remaining amount will go into Professional Services to be put back in the General Fund. Commissioner Jane Alexander moved to approve Budget Amendment #9 in the amount of $109,442 as presented. Commissioner Alice Lentz seconded and the motion carried 5/0.
5. Call for Special Meeting for Presentation of Budget and Public Hearing: Mayor Pro Tem Otto moved to approve a Special Meeting for Presentation of Budget and Public Hearing on May 28th at 5:00 p.m. Commissioner Widmer seconded and the motion carried 5/0.
6. Resolution #20-05-001 to Authorize Town Administrator to Sign State Application Disaster Assistance Agreement: Commissioner Fouche moved to approve Resolution #20-05-001 Authorizing the Town Administrator to Sign State Application Disaster Assistance Agreement. Mayor Pro Tem Otto seconded and the motion carried 5/0.
7. Discussion of the Covid-19 Restrictions in Buncombe County: Commissioner Widmer remarked that Montreat is really unique given the activities that occur here as well as being home to the most vulnerable population affected by the coronavirus. Commissioner Widmer suggested that the Town should be looking at precautions as crowds increase for the summer. People coming to Montreat for the summer are likely not aware of Covid-19 regulations locally like quarantines, rentals and other situations. With the likelihood of MRA opening up in July and Montreat College in the fall the Council and the Town need to be talking together about how to keep the senior population safe. There was a lengthy discussion about increased communication to property owners as well as onsite communications. Several members of the Commission will get together with Mr. Carmichael to plan the best method to move forward with this initiative.

**Commissioner Communications**

Commissioner Lentz congratulated all who made possible the sale of the two lots on Florida Terrace. The most recent sale will close on the 19th of May. This sale will net the Town roughly $109,442. The sale of both lots will have netted the Town $226,390. Commissioner Lentz also advised everyone to visit [www.montreatlandcare.org](http://www.montreatlandcare.org) to see a new section entitled “Montreat Beautiful” which includes wildflower information, virtual tours and other valuable information to Landcare. The Flat Creak “Stream Team” will continue water sampling each week through September. A big thank you to community volunteers and MountainTrue for testing of waters in Flat Creek. Commissioner Lentz also mentioned the Firewise Zoom webinar that was presented by the NC Forest Service on May 6th which was organized by the Firewise Committee. The Town of Montreat’s application to be a Firewise Community is in process.

Commissioner Widmer shared the 2020 Census results thus far, with Buncombe County at a 54% self-response rate while Montreat is only 9.6%. Being counted is important for a myriad of reasons but one of the most important is the tax dollars flowing to Montreat based on population. Please make sure you make an effort to fill out your census either online or by the census package that was placed at your door recently.

**Closed Session**

Commissioner Widmer moved to enter into Closed Session in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(6) for discussion of a personnel matter. Mayor Pro Tem Otto seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

**Adjournment**

Upon returning to Open Session no business was transacted Commissioner Widmer moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lentz seconded and the motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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Kent Otto, Mayor Pro Tem Angie Murphy, Town Clerk