Board members present: Mayor Pro Tem Otto

Commissioner Kitty Fouche

Commissioner Jane Alexander

Commissioner Tom Widmer

Commissioner Alice Lentz

Board members present via

Zoom: None

Board members absent: Mayor Tim Helms

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 Pro Tem Otto called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m., and led the group in the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence.

**Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Kitty Fouche moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Jane Alexander seconded and the motion carried 6/0.

**Mayor Pro Tem Communications**

Mayor Pro Tem Otto advised that Mayor Tim Helms is doing well after his recent surgery. The keys to the new Town Hall were given to the Mayor in the last week or so and we are scheduled to meet in the new building for the July Town Council meeting in some capacity. Mayor Pro Tem Otto extended a big thank you to the Mountain Retreat Association for letting us utilize the Walkup Building for all of the Commission and Committee Meetings. The Public Works Building is getting very close to completion as well. Greybeard Trail is slated to have the guardrails installed by the end of summer if not sooner. Mayor Pro Tem Otto stated that we find our nation and communities locked in fear, anger and pain due to justice issues and covid-19. We as Montreat need to speak words of healing and thanksgiving and pray for leaders to speak truth and wisdom. Mayor Pro Tem Otto encouraged Montreators to be bridge builders and not dividers.

**Meeting Minutes Adoption**

* March 12, 2020 Public Forum Minutes
* March 12, 2020 Town Council Minutes
* May 14, 2020 Town Council Minutes

**Town Administrator’s Communications**

Mr. Carmichael had no comments this evening.

**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.
* Sanitation – This report was given in written format.
* Streets – This report was given in written format.

**Public Comment**

Town Clerk Angie Murphy read the following emailed comments aloud for the Commission.

Mrs. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace stated that the questions and comments sent by members of the public to the Budget Public Hearing were not read until the very end of the meeting thus giving the Council no time to consider or respond the questions addressed. Mrs. Standaert stated that the resulting budget includes drastic cuts, reduced services and tax increases. Mrs. Standaert felt that the money spent on furnishings and landscaping for the new Town Hall could have covered the needed tax increase, maintained sanitation services, helped pay for Texas Road Bridge repairs and added to the Fund Balance.

Mrs. Martha Campbell of 149 Maryland Place commented on Montreat’s practice of Community Policing. Mrs. Campbell wrote Chief Arrant a separate email in which she asked for what the current Police Department requires and prohibits of officers. Mrs. Campbell also asked Chief Arrant if there is any consideration of reviewing any of the Town’s police policies especially in light of the current regional, state and national conversation about policing.

Mrs. Letta Jean Taylor of 386 Oklahoma Road appreciated the fact that employee’s salaries were not cut by 3% in the proposed budget. Mrs. Taylor also felt that the money spent for new furniture for the Town Hall could be put to better use in this tight budget year. She stated that what was spent on furniture could have eliminated the tax increase and paid employees appropriately. Mrs. Taylor also asked the Commission to consider renting out Upper Anderson Auditorium for future Town Council Meetings so the community can attend and practice appropriate social distancing.

Mrs. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace stated that daily from noon until 12:30 p.m. there will be a Stand for Justice at the Montreat Gate until July 4th. She stated that all are welcome to participate and social distancing and mask wearing will be observed.

**Old Business**

There was no old business to discuss.

**New Business**

1. FY 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance: Commissioner Alice Lentz moved to adopt the FY 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance. Commissioner Kitty Fouche seconded the motion. Commissioner Tom Widmer stated that the Commission delayed the relining of the culverts on Texas Road Extension pending an engineer’s recent review. Public Works Director Barry Creasman relayed to the Commission that he met with bridge inspectors earlier this week about the culverts. Mr. Creasman stated that the inspectors are willing to work with us to delay repairs until next year without any penalties. The Town is still waiting on the report to be emailed to Mr. Creasman. Commissioner Kitty Fouche stated that this budget was reviewed extensively by every member of the Commission. Commissioner Jane Alexander has been very impressed with the Community’s response to this year’s budget. She assured everyone that the Commission has listened and tried to make the budget fair across the board. Commission Alexander stated that Town Staff are the heart of what makes Montreat work. Commissioner Tom Widmer read a brief summary of an email response that he sent to a Montreat resident based on a lot of hard decisions that were recently made by the Board. Commissioner Fouche suggested that Commissioner Widmer send his response out in the weekly Montreat Minute because it was a good representation of what kind of planning went into this budget. Commissioner Alice Lentz thanked everyone that commented on the budget. The FY 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance was approved 5/0.
2. Discussion and possible action on a procedure to respond to citizen’s questions during Public Forum and Public Comment: Commissioner Widmer led the discussion of a need for a procedure to log, assign and respond to questions asked during the Public Forum and Public Comment period. A lot of times research is needed to answer questions effectively. Commissioner Alice Lentz expressed that she deeply misses the Public Forum that has been canceled due to Social Distancing and looks forward to the day when it can be reinstated. Commissioner Lentz does not want Town Staff to invest a lot of energy into a formal type of system. Council directed Mr. Carmichael to research a system and bring it back to the July Town Council meeting under Old Business.

**Commissioner Communications**

Commissioner Kitty Fouche and Commissioner Tom Widmer announced there will be a Town Hall Open House Tour on July 4th!! More information will follow so stay tuned to the Montreat Minute. Town Hall dedication plans are still on hold due to Covid-19 regulations.

Commissioner Alice Lentz stated that she hopes we can all feel and act for peace in these troubled times and pray for our community locally as well as globally.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Widmer moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lentz seconded and the motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

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Kent Otto, Mayor Pro Tem Angie Murphy, Town Clerk