

**Town of Montreat  
Board of Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
October 8, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.  
Town Hall/Zoom Meeting**

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Board members present: Mayor Tim Helms  
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: None

Town staff present: Alex Carmichael, Town Administrator  
Angie Murphy, Town Clerk  
David Arrant, Chief of Police  
Darlene Carrasquillo, Finance Officer  
Barry Creasman, Public Works Director

Three members of the public were present at Town Hall with several others watching via Zoom. Mayor Helms called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m., and led the group in the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence. Mayor Helms asked for prayers for the families of Gordon Neville and Harry Phillips, who both recently passed away, as well as Bill Hollins, a former Commissioner, who is currently in the ICU.

**Agenda Approval**

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

**Presentation & Reports: Body Worn Cameras-David Arrant**

Police Chief David Arrant advised Council that the Black Mountain Police Department has offered to issue the Montreat Police Department a body-worn camera free of charge. Chief Arrant thinks this will be a great trial run to see if body-worn cameras are something Montreat wants to pursue. These cameras must be utilized with all public interaction in Montreat as well as Black Mountain.

**Mayor's Communications**

Mayor Helms stated that Commissioner Otto, Commissioner Widmer, Town Administrator Alex

Carmichael, Faculty and Staff of Montreat College and the Mayor himself has worked on the noise issue on Woodland Road. Mayor Helms wanted everyone to know that it is a problem that is being worked on by numerous individuals.

### **Meeting Minutes Adoption**

- September 10<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting Minutes

### **Town Administrator's Communications**

Mr. Carmichael advised Council that Town Staff has received two responses on a RFQ (Request for Qualifications) for repair of the Texas Road Wall Project. Mr. Carmichael also reported that Montreat has received a municipal bridge report outlining some areas along Texas Road Bridge, Texas Road Extension Bridge and Shenandoah Bridge that need some work. None of these bridges require immediate action; they do, however, require future planning. The Town of Montreat also received a second payment from Tropical Storm Alberto projects bringing the total received to \$242,000. Commissioner Fouche asked Mr. Carmichael about the Suwannee Road mudslide repair project. Mr. Carmichael stated that he would be preparing a RFQ for that work within the next month.

### **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.

Mayor Pro Tem Otto asked Finance Officer Darlene Carrasquillo about tax revenues from the State. Ms. Carrasquillo stated that June tax revenues were up over 15% from the previous month, which was down 12%-14% from the prior month.

Commissioner Fouche appreciated the police report showing annual comparisons and expressed her interest in seeing other departments moving forward with the same kind of comparisons.

Commissioner Widmer thanked Staff for the communications report that was included in the meeting packet. He suggested that an item not be shown as completed until it is completely resolved.

### **Public Comment**

Mrs. Clare Frist of 98 Frist Road thanked Town Staff and the Town Council for their work and dedication. She questioned whether it had been stressful due to COVID-19. Mayor Helms advised that the biggest impact has been financial. Mayor Helms also stated that there are no capital projects this year except for Tropical Storm Alberto repairs which are reimbursed by the state.

Commissioner Fouche asked Public Works Director Barry Creasman about the new Public Works Building. Mr. Creasman stated that it was great! He advised that recent donations from Montreators enabled them to receive a new stove and refrigerator which they are putting to good use. Mr. Creasman stated that everyone in Public Works is very thankful and blessed to have the new building.

Town Clerk Angie Murphy read a comment from Ms. Mary Nell Todd of 143 Eastminster Terrace. Ms. Todd is very concerned about the removal of the tree canopy due to residential construction projects. She suggested that the Town adopt a plan to preserve the remaining canopy in the Town.

Town Clerk Angie Murphy read a comment from Mrs. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace. Mrs. Standaert offered some important information about voting in the upcoming election. This included absentee ballots, early voting, voting locations and more.

### **Old Business**

There was no old business to discuss.

### **New Business**

- A. **CARES Act Funding:** Mr. Carmichael stated that the Town had received \$9,697.06 in CARES Act Funding from the State to cover expense incurred by COVID-19 and the pandemic. The funding covers expenses such as PPE, Zoom services and extra cleanings of the Montreat Town Hall. Commissioner Tom Widmer moved to approve Budget Amendment #2 in the amount of \$9,697.06 for the formation of the Special Revenue Fund for reimbursement of expenses pertaining to COVID-19. Mayor Pro Tem Otto seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Tom Frist of 98 Frist Road expressed his thoughts on the Texas Road Bridge. He reminded Council that a year or so ago he suggested adding some potted flowers along the walkway of the Bridge and was told that was not an option. Mr. Carmichael explained some of the constraints that the Town is under with regards to the Bridge repairs. Town Council directed Mr. Carmichael to address this issue in the spring. Mr. Frist also asked about the possibility of renting the Town Hall

and what protocol had been established. Mayor Helms stated that in time they would probably rent out the facility but with COVID-19 it just is not feasible at this time.

### **Commissioner Communications**

Commissioner Alice Lentz stated that starting next week there will be tree trimming and tree removal in Montreat due to the threat to power lines. There are roughly five trees on Town property that will be affected. The remainder of the trees are on Montreat College Campus and Mountain Retreat Association properties. The tree trimming and removal will take place along Assembly Drive and Lookout Road. Any trees identified on private property will not be trimmed or removed without written consent of the home-owner. Asplundh (tree care company) and ECI (a sub-contractor of Duke Energy) will remove all debris that is chip-able with their equipment. Town of Montreat Staff will remove all remaining large logs that are not chip-able. The Town's certified arborists, Barry Creasman and Daniel Wiggs, will monitor the tree trimming/tree removal on Town property. Commissioner Lentz also noted that the trees identified by Asplundh and ECI align closely with the Town of Montreat's Tree Board 2019 inventory of at-risk and dead trees.

Mayor Pro Tem Otto appreciated Mr. Roberts and Ms. Stansill coming forward at tonight's meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Otto stated that the college has been very responsive to the needs of the Town and are doing all that they are able to do.

Commissioner Kitty Fouche suggested Council members take turns sitting at the Gate to observe the traffic, noise and speed issues that Sally Stansill mentioned earlier.

Commissioner Tom Widmer thanked Public Works Director Barry Creasman and the Public Works Crew for all their work on the Greybeard guardrail. Commissioner Widmer also mentioned there was a new sign in the rain garden as of yesterday explaining how the rain garden works. There are also informational brochures. A group of men and women have joined together to do some volunteer gardening at Town Hall. They have called themselves the "Gardeners of Weed-in".

Mayor Helms commended the entire Council on all their hard work throughout the weeks in addition to their other jobs and responsibilities.

### **Adjournment**

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

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Tim Helms, Mayor

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Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

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