

**Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall**

Board members present: Mayor Tim Helms
Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake
Commissioner Kitty Fouche
Commissioner Jane Alexander
Commissioner Tom Widmer
Commissioner Kent Otto

Board members absent: None

Town staff present: Ben Blackburn, Interim Town Manager
Angie Murphy, Town Clerk
David Arrant, Chief of Police
Barry Creasman, Public Works Director
Jarod McIntosh, Senior Water Operator

Several members of the public were present at Town Hall and several more were watching via Zoom. Mayor Tim 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

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

Mayor's Communications

Mayor Tim Helms thanked Margaret Bauer, Robin Melvin, Nickie Otto, Lynn Gilliland and Lolly Hightower for adding seasonal decorations around Lake Susan. Mayor Helms also thanked Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake for coordinating meetings between the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners and Montreat Town Council to discuss funding issues.

Meeting Minutes Adoption

- December 8th Town Council Public Forum Meeting Minutes
- December 8th Town Council Meeting Minutes

Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake requested the word “carried” to be changed to the word “defeated” in the December 8th Town Council Meeting Minutes under Item H. Mayor Pro

Tem Mason Blake moved to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Kitty Fouche seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

Interim Town Manager's Communications

Interim Town Manager Ben Blackburn had no communication this evening.

Administrative Reports

- Administration – This report was given in written format.
- Finance – Reports were handed out to the Commissioners at the beginning of the meeting.
- 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.

Public Comment

Dr. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace referred to her earlier comments about the removal of chestnut pews from Graham Chapel and advised that during the break she learned that the pews had already been removed and are being sold.

Old Business

There was no Old Business to discuss.

New Business

- A. Presentation of Wellhead Protection Certificate of Achievement: Ms. Jordan Jackson of NC Rural Water Association was on hand to present Senior Water Operator Jarod McIntosh, on behalf of the Town, an Award of Achievement. Montreat Water Department voluntarily prepared a Wellhead Protection Plan which was submitted and accepted by NC Rural Water Association.

- B. Consideration of Designation of Voting Delegate for 2023-2024 North Carolina League of Municipalities: Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake moved to appoint Mayor Tim Helms as Voting Delegate for 2023-2024 North Carolina League of Municipalities. Commissioner Tom Widmer seconded and the motion carried 5/0.
- C. Consideration of Updating Signature Authority on Town of Montreat's Bank Accounts at Truist Bank: Commissioner Jane Alexander moved to appoint Town Clerk Angie Murphy, Interim Town Manager Ben Blackburn, Police Chief David Arrant, Mayor Tim Helms and Commissioner Kitty Fouche to have Signature Authority on Town of Montreat's Bank Accounts at Truist Bank. Commissioner Tom Widmer seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

Public Comment

There was no Public Comment at this time.

Commissioner Communications

Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake informed the Commission that the BearWise Committee, underneath the umbrella of Montreat Landcare, has been very busy working to get Montreat qualified as a BearWise community. Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake also mentioned his intent to attend the North Carolina League of Municipalities Town & State Dinner on February 22nd in Raleigh. Mr. Blake feels that it would be a great opportunity for the Commission to visit with the state legislation delegation. Mayor Pro Tem Blake also thanked Public Works Director Barry Creasman and his team for installing signage and arranging boulders along Appalachian Way to curtail parking issues with Montreat College students

Commissioner Tom Widmer made everyone aware that that the Land of Sky Metropolitan Planning Organization, who are responsible for transportation efforts in our area, are seeking input on the 2023-2033 transportation plan. The survey link will be provided in the next Montreat Minute. Commissioner Widmer also thanked Barry Creasman and his team for the installation of new "Children at Play" signage on Texas Road Spur and Texas Road Extension.

Dates to Remember

- Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting, Friday January 13th at 10:00 a.m. in Town Hall
- Town Offices Closed Monday January 16th in observance of MLK Day. Sanitation services will resume on Tuesday, January 17th
- Planning & Zoning Commission, Thursday January 19th at 10:30 a.m. in Town Hall
- Tree Board, Tuesday January 24th at 9:30 a.m. in Town Hall

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- Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting, Wednesday January 25th at 10:30 a.m.
- Board of Adjustment, Thursday January 26th at 5:00 p.m.
- Landcare, Wednesday February 1st at 9:00 a.m.
- Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting, Tuesday February 7th at 12:00 p.m. in Town Hall
- Bridge Aesthetics Committee Meeting, Thursday February 9th at 2:00 p.m.
- February Town Council Meeting, Thursday February 9th at 7:00 p.m. Public Forum begins at 6:20 p.m.

Interim Town Administrator Ben Blackburn introduced Rachel Eddings as the Finance Officer. Mr. Blackburn also thanked the Public Works Department for the recent installation of dog waste stations with accompanying signage.

Closed Session

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

Upon returning to Open Session Mayor Tim Helms announced that the Montreat Board of Commissioners extended an offer of employment to Jonathan Blanton of Ranlo, NC for the position of Town Manager. Pending his acceptance of the position by noon on January 13, 2023, Mr. Blanton will work a 30 day notice and agree to a salary of \$100,000.

Adjournment

Commissioner Jane Alexander moved to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake seconded and the motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Tim Helms , Mayor

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

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