

**Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2023**

Board members present: Mayor Tim Helms
Commissioner Jane Alexander
Commissioner Kitty Fouche
Commissioner Tom Widmer

Board members absent: Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake

Town staff present: Savannah Parrish, Town Manager
Angie Murphy, Town Clerk
David Arrant, Chief of Police
Barry Creasman, Public Works Director
Rachel Eddings, Finance Officer

Approximately twelve 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 Tom Widmer moved to amend the agenda to add New Business Item H for nominations to fill a vacant alternate member Planning & Zoning Commission seat. Commissioner Jane Alexander seconded and the motion carried 3/0.

Mayor's Communications

Mayor Tim Helms announced that he did not have any official communications but remarked on what a beautiful fall day it had been in Montreat. Mayor Helms cautioned residents on how dry everything is in Town and mentioned the possibility of fire risks. Mayor Helms reminded residents to pay attention to Firewise recommendations and suggested keeping debris away from homes.

Meeting Minutes Adoption

- September 14th Public Forum Meeting Minutes
- September 14th Town Council Meeting Minutes

Town Manager's Communications

Town Manager Savannah Parrish reviewed the Consent Agenda but had no other communications.

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.
- Additional Planning & Zoning Information – This report was given in written format.

Commissioner Tom Widmer asked how the audit was coming along and if it would be ready to submit to the Local Government Commission by the end of October. Finance Officer Rachel Eddings advised that the auditors had been in Town Hall just that week doing their field work and everything looked good and on schedule for now.

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Old Business

There was no Old Business to discuss.

New Business

- A. **Nominations and Appointment of Town Commissioner:** Mayor Tim Helms reminded those in attendance that there was a vacant seat on the Commission since Kent Otto resigned in September. Mayor Helms asked if any Commissioner had any nominations. Commissioner Kitty Fouche moved to nominate Grant Dasher to fill the recently vacated Town Commissioner seat. Commissioner Fouche advised that Mr. Dasher resided on Virginia Road with his wife and three children. Commissioner Fouche stated that they had met with Grant and they were impressed by his interest and willingness to serve. Commissioner Jane Alexander seconded and the motion carried 3/0.
- B. **Oath of Office:** Mayor Tim Helms administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Grant Dasher. Commissioner Dasher took a moment to introduce himself to everyone. Commissioner Dasher, his wife and three children, moved to Asheville three years ago after he established a dental practice in Asheville. Commissioner Dasher feels that Montreat is a great place to live and raise a family and he is looking forward to serving the community of Montreat.

To view the swearing in of Commissioner Grant Dasher and to see the meeting in its entirety please visit the following zoom link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4Q2DVIyysk&t=2395s>

- C. Consideration of Personnel Policy Updates: Town Manager Savannah Parrish advised that she, with the help of Rachel Eddings, had been working on updating the personnel policy for the last few weeks. Ms. Parrish advised that the current policy had not been revised since 2013. The major changes include the Americans with Disabilities Act compliance language, Family Medical Leave Act language, revisions to the Conflicts of Interest section, additional language to the harassment and workplace violence sections, and expanded the substance abuse policy. Commissioner Tom Widmer felt that with the amount of time staff had spent updating the policy that the commission should spend time reviewing the changes before making any decisions. Commissioner Tom Widmer moved to table this discussion until the November meeting. Commissioner Kitty Fouché seconded and the motion carried 3/0.
- D. Consideration of Resolution #23-10-0001 Adopting Personnel Policy Updates: Mayor Tim Helms advised this was also tabled until the November meeting.
- E. Consideration of Proclamation #23-10-0001 Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Town Clerk Angie Murphy advised Council that Help Mate of Buncombe County had asked for every municipality in Buncombe County to adopt the proclamation in support of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Ms. Murphy read the proclamation aloud at the request of Commissioner Jane Alexander. Commissioner Jane Alexander moved to adopt Proclamation #23-10-0001. Commissioner Kitty Fouché seconded and the motion carried 3/0.
- F. Consideration of Resolution #23-10-0002 Disposal of Surplus Property: Town Clerk Angie Murphy advised Council that Town Staff had a number of items that they were interested in submitting to GovDeals, the online government auction website, to see if some money could be brought back to the Town. The items up for sale, if approved, are a Ford Escape police vehicle, a Vermeer Chipper, and miscellaneous electronic equipment. Ms. Murphy took a moment to explain the auction process to Commissioner Widmer. Commissioner Kitty Fouché moved to adopt Resolution #23-10-0002. Commissioner Tom Widmer seconded and the motion carried 3/0.
- G. Montreat Memorial Gardens: Zoning Administrator Kayla DiCristina advised Council that the Montreat Memorial Garden Committee was seeking approval from Council to upgrade and expand the existing path in the Montreat Memorial Garden to make the path handicap-accessible. Ms. DiCristina stated that the location of the proposed work is in the hatched green area to the right side of Assembly Drive. The project area crosses the 100-year floodplain, but is outside the floodway associated with Flat Creek. The existing path was proposed to be upgraded with new stone along its entire length. The new path will be three feet wide with stone and will proceed northward adjacent to Assembly Drive. Ms. DiCristina advised that as of right now a record of a maintenance agreement could not be located. The MRA handles maintenance currently but Ms. DiCristina recommends obtaining a written maintenance agreement to have on file as part of the approval process. Lynn Gilliland, representing the Montreat Memorial Garden Committee, described some of the proposed new features. Commissioner Jane Alexander moved to permit

with the condition of having a maintenance agreement drawn up with the Town of Montreat. Commissioner Kitty Fouche seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

- H. Nominations for Filling an Alternate Seat on the Planning & Zoning Commission: Commissioner Tom Widmer moved to nominate Daniel Hewitt to fill an open vacancy in an Alternate Seat on the Planning & Zoning Commission. Commissioner Kitty Fouche seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Commissioner Communications

Commissioner Jane Alexander stated that she could not think of a better way to use the Greenspace than for the MRA's Memorial Garden expansion and improvements.

Commissioner Tom Widmer reminded everyone of the Community State Legislative Update on Thursday, October 19th at 4:30 p.m. in Town Hall. Commissioner Widmer also announced that bear hunting season begins on Monday, October 16th and will continue on for about a month or so. It will then pick back up on December 11th through January 1st. Commissioner Widmer reminded everyone that the Town worked hard last year with the bear hunting club and he was happy to report there were no incidents. Commissioner Widmer advised everyone to be aware of their surroundings.

Mayor Tim Helms reminded everyone that the Made in Montreat Craft Show and Sale will be held on Saturday, October 14th from 9:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. in Moore Center.

Dates to Remember

- PZC Regular Scheduled Monthly Meeting, Thursday October 19th at 10:30 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options
- 2023 Community State Legislative Update, Thursday October 19th at 4:30 p.m. in Town Hall
- Tree Board, Tuesday October 24th at 9:30 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options
- Board of Adjustment Meeting, Thursday October 26th at 5:00 p.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options
- Landcare, Wednesday November 1st at 9:00 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom Options
- November Town Council Meeting, Thursday November 9th at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall with Zoom Options. Public Forum to begin at 6:30 p.m.

**Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2023**

- Open Space Conservation Committee Meeting, Tuesday November 14th at 3:30 p.m. in Town Hall
- Town Hall Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday, Thursday and Friday November 23rd and 24th
- Tree Board, Tuesday November 28th at 9:30 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom Options

Adjournment

Commissioner Jane Alexander moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Grant Dasher seconded and the motion carried 4/0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Tim Helms, Mayor

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk