BLACK MOUNTAIN TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

May 28, 2026 | Budget Work Session | Time: 8:30 AM

Town Hall Council Chambers | 160 Midland Avenue, Black Mountain, NC 28711

Black Mountain Town Council held their budget work session on Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 8:30 AM in the Council Chambers of Town Hall, 160 Midland Avenue, Black Mountain, NC 28711.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor C. Michael Sobol called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with the following Council members in attendance: Vice Mayor Archie Pertiller, Town Council Member Alice Berry, Town Council Member Larry Haris, Council Member Doug Hay, Council Member Ryan Stone.

The following staff members were present: Richard Hicks, Interim Town Manager; Scott Buffkin, Interim Assistant Town Manager; Wesley Barker, Town Clerk; Steve Parker, Police Chief; John Coffey, Fire Chief; Jamey Matthews, Public Works Director; Jacob Guiot, Recreation & Parks Director; Jennifer Tipton, Senior Admin Planning Department; Matt Begley, Budget Analyst; Chad Goins, Interim Project Manager; Laurel Mabery, Accountant; Greta Gibson, Revenue & Customer Service Supervisor; Brent Miller, Golf Course Manager.

2. FY26-27 BUDGET WORK SESSION

The first item was for the Council to set a date for the budget public hearing. This public hearing date was set for Monday, June 15, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall.

Interim Town Manager Richard Hicks and Golf Course Manager Brent Miller reviewed the proposed FY2026-27 Golf Course budget. Expenditures with the golf course are up over $200,000. This proposed budget is based on a full year of operations for 18 holes. Council and staff discussed proposed fee increases to generate additional revenue, as well as personnel, contract services, equipment, and maintenance costs. Facility needs were also reviewed, including flooring repairs at the Green Tee Grill, the golf course maintenance building project with $1 million currently available and a $1.5 million Buncombe TDA grant application pending, and bridge repairs expected to begin and be completed by July once engineered plans are finalized to allow the full course to reopen.

Fire Chief John Coffey reviewed Fire Department budget items with Council and read a statement regarding staffing, compensation, vacancies, delayed response times, and potential impacts to citizens and businesses if multiple vacancies occur within the department. The Fire Department budget is funded by a 59% Town contribution and 41% Buncombe County contribution. Under the proposed FY2026-27 budget, the Town contribution would be $2,008,285, compared to $1,438,650 for FY2025-26. The Town budgeted $361,400 from Fund Balance; however, the FY2025-26 audit shows Fund Balance at $120,896, which may require an additional General Fund appropriation before June 30, 2026 to balance the budget.

Chief Coffey requested $2,471,000 in capital funding, including approximately $2,000,000 for an aerial fire apparatus and $471,000 for a mini pumper expected for delivery in August or September. The recommended budget includes $0 for the capital request but budgets a principal payment of $83,982 and interest payment of $26,216, with the expectation of a $475,000, 59-month loan in FY2026-27 to cover the mini pumper cost.

Additional Buncombe County funds may be available through proposed appropriations; however, the Town would need to provide the required match of $0.69 for every $0.41 from the County, which may be difficult under the proposed budget. The current draft does not include firefighter salary increases pending Council direction. Council and staff also discussed turnout gear replacement costs, equipment, technology, training and certification needs, and fire truck repair/replacement funding.

Upcoming budget meetings were then discussed. The following additional meetings were set for further budget discussions to be held in the Council Chamber at Town Hall:

- May 28, 2026 at 8:30 a.m. (already scheduled)
- June 1, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.
- June 4, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. (along with agenda review)
- June 11, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.
- June 15, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. (FY26-27 budget public hearing)
- June 30, 2026 at 8:30 a.m. was set for an additional budget meeting and for the adoption of the FY26-27 budget.

Following this, permit fees were discussed by Mr. Hicks, who stated these fees should generate about $425,000, which would cover the cost of the two full-time inspectors. Planning Department staff salaries were reviewed, along with the GovWell-permitting software used by the department for inspections and permits.

Additional IT-related expenses were discussed within the technology fund, and how the costs of technology licenses could be lowered and/or what is paid out of this fund and for what purposes.

3. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to be discussed, Mayor C. Michael Sobol adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

C. Michael Sobol, Mayor

Attest:
Wesley M. Barker, Town Clerk