BLACK MOUNTAIN TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

May 15, 2025 | Special Called Meeting: FY26 Budget Presentation + Golf Course Discussion | Time: 8:30 A.M.

Black Mountain Town Hall | 160 Midland Ave., Black Mountain, NC 28711

The Black Mountain Town Council held a special called meeting on Thursday, May 15, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. at Black Mountain Town Hall, 160 Midland Ave., Black Mountain, NC 28711. The purpose of this special meeting was for the FY26 Town Recommended Budget Presentation by the Town Manager and a Golf Course Discussion.

Mayor C. Michael Sobol called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. with the following members in attendance: Mayor C. Michael Sobol, Vice Mayor Archie Pertiller, Council Member Alice Berry, Council Member Doug Hay, Council Member Pam King, Council Member Ryan Stone.

The following staff members were present: Josh Harrold, Town Manager; Jessica Trotman, Assistant Town Manager; Tammy Heide, Finance Director; John Coffey, Fire Chief; Steve Parker, Police Chief; Jamey Matthews, Public Works Director; Josh Henderson, Recreation & Parks Director; Shannon Hensley, Human Resources Specialist.

****

FY26 Town Recommended Budget Presentation

Town Manager Josh Harrold presented his recommended Town Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26 to the Town Council. Noteworthy items from his budget presentation included the following:

- $19,569,250 for all Town operations, capital improvements and debt service.
- Budget represents a 11.2% decrease from the FY24-25 adopted budget, attributed to impacts of Hurricane Helene.
- Town tax rate will remain at .3210 cents per $100 of valuation. No proposed increase.
- Increased to water rates (approximately 15%) for in-town and out-of-town customers beginning July 1, 2025, due to an increase of 33% in wholesale rates from the City of Asheville.
- No increase in stormwater fees from the current year.
- Waste reduction fee will be $8 per month per customer beginning July 1, 2025, a $3 increase.
- Cost-of-living increase of 3% for permanent employees.
- 4 new full-time positions and 1 new part-time position.

A copy of the recommended budget will be available for public inspection at Town Hall beginning today, until the public hearing is held on the recommended budget. The recommended budget will also be posted to the Town's website for review. ***Copies of the budget documents are attached as Appendix A at the end of these minutes.***

Vice Mayor Archie Pertiller made a motion to call for a public hearing on the FY26 recommended budget for Monday, June 9th, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. for anyone wishing to speak on the budget. A vote of 5-0 in favor.

****

Golf Course Discussion

Town Manager Josh Harrold, accompanied by Golf Course Operations Manager Brent Miller, and Golf Course Superintendent Jerry Brigman, gave a presentation on the Black Mountain Golf Course and the process to get the course re-opened following Hurricane Helene. The presentation included the following topics; review of property and equipment damages, summary of the repairs made to date, explaining the remaining needs of the course, and review of financial and regulatory conditions, including insurance. It was noted that a closure of the golf course had never been discussed or considered. Further, the course and its operations suffered $2 million in damages from Helene. Also, the Town Manager stated more funding has been spent to maintain the golf course and prioritize its reopening than any other recovery effort other than critical infrastructure. A review of the proposal presented by Mayor Sobol was then discussed, as well as financial and regulatory constraints. Information was shared from the UNC School of Government stating that while using Water Fund Balance to support projects unrelated to utility service, which is allowed but carries consequences, this type of use would disqualify the town from receiving future state water or sewer grants or loans.

The reopening strategy of the golf course was then discussed. Golf Course staff have previously presented an operational strategy to reopen the golf course based on the existing financial constraints. The strategy working to open the back 9 holes by the beginning of June 2025, and working to install a driving range on the front 9 holes to bring in more revenue this budget year.

Town Manager Josh Harrold stated the town had just received information from Beard Equipment Co. about leasing John Deere mowers in order to operate and maintain the course. The lease would provide the Town with four new mowers. The cost of the lease is approximately $7,400 per month, totaling $88,800 annually. It was also stated that the previous equipment lease will be paid off by the Town's insurance company under the inland marine policy.

After some additional discussion, Council Member Doug Hay made a motion to move forward with the lease agreement with Beard Equipment Co. as presented. A vote of 5-0 in favor.

****Copies of the golf course presentation slides and new lease agreement with Beard Equipment Co. are attached as Appendix B and C at the end of these minutes.***

There being no further business, Mayor C. Michael Sobol adjourned the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

_____
C. Michael Sobol, Mayor

Attest:

_____
Wesley M. Barker, Town Clerk