BLACK MOUNTAIN TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

May 21, 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.

2. FY26-27 BUDGET WORK SESSION

Interim Town Manager Richard Hicks asked Police Chief Steve Parker to review the FY2026-27 Police Department budget. Chief Parker reviewed the need for several replacement police vehicles, related equipment outfitting, and establishing a regular replacement cycle of at least one vehicle per year.

A police vehicle loan of $260,000 was discussed for FY2026-27, with the first payment not due until FY2027-28. Council also discussed vehicle loans and payment schedules. Chief Parker noted increases in state-controlled LEO retirement fees and insurance costs.

No additional Police Department personnel were requested; however, Chief Parker reported several vacancies due to retirements and resignations since the first of the year, with minimal applications being received. The department has 28 employees when fully staffed.

Technology and software systems, including RMS CAD (Record Management Systems / Computer-Aided Dispatch), were reviewed, and Chief Parker stated he was working to reduce those fees for the department. Council also discussed PSIP (Public Safety Interoperability Partnership) costs with the County and briefly discussed the shooting range repair needs.

Mr. Hicks and Public Works Director Jamey Matthews reviewed the Public Works-related budgets. Items discussed included salaries and benefits, temporary office trailer costs, contracted mowing of Town properties, Veterans Park restroom facilities, tree trimming around the Community Garden and Veterans Park, and statuses of department vehicles and replacement needs.

Council briefly discussed public bus transportation fees paid to the City of Asheville and payments for Black Mountain Trail Blazer Mountain Mobility Services. Other Public Works items included Powell Bill funds, street maintenance needs and costs, disposal fees for sanitation, recycling, junk, and bulk items, and the addition of one sanitation employee not included in the current FY budget, resulting in 9 sanitation employees instead of 8. Two sanitation equipment loans remain active, with payments of approximately $95,000 and $38,000, ending in FY2027-28. Mr. Hicks also reviewed the current $8 household sanitation fee and noted Council should consider an increase.

The Recreation & Parks budget was reviewed. The proposed budget included an assistant garden manager request of $17,982, which was covered by a donation for the next Fiscal Year. Camp and program expenses were reviewed with no new proposals added. Council's recently approved pool staff pay rate increases were included, and pool operating costs were discussed. Council also discussed the possibility of charging for tennis court use, particularly for organized groups. Lakeview Senior Center staffing was reviewed, including the full-time manager, meal site manager, drivers, and fitness instructors. Council briefly discussed improvements to the downstairs area of Lakeview for use as an office by the full-time Senior Center Manager.

Council requested that Mr. Hicks provide the proposed FY2026-27 tax rates from other municipalities in the County.

3. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to be discussed, Mayor C. Michael Sobol adjourned the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

_____
C. Michael Sobol, Mayor

_____
Wesley M. Barker, Town Clerk