Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall

Board members present:	Mayor Tim Helms Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake Commissioner Kitty Fouche Commissioner Jane Alexander Commissioner Grant Dasher Commissioner Tom Widmer
Board members absent:	None
Town staff present:	Savannah Parrish, Town Manager Angie Murphy, Town Clerk Brandon Freeman, Town Attorney

Approximately nine 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 Adoption

Commissioner Kitty Fouche moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Jane Alexander seconded, and the motion carried 5/0.

Mayor's Communications

Mayor Tim Helms commented that it was always so nice to come through the gate into Montreat. Mayor Helms stated that we are blessed to be living in one of the best places in the world.

Meeting Minutes Adoption

- May 9th Public Forum Meeting Minutes
- May 9th Town Council Meeting Minutes
- May 10th Special Meeting Minutes Budget Workshop

Town Manager's Communications

Town Manager Savannah Parrish mentioned that the Town would like to thank the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina for providing the Pigeon River Grant in the amount of roughly $34,000 for Flat Creek Crossing. Ms. Parrish advised that members of Landcare have been

working hard pursuing grant opportunities to help fund the accessible trail project.

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.
- May Building Permits – This report was given in written format.

Public Comment

Dr. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace thanked Town Staff for their thoroughness in sending out certified letters to notify residents and neighbors of upcoming hearings of the Board of Adjustment.

Old Business

There was no old business at this time.

New Business

A. FY 24-25 Budget Public Hearing: Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake moved to open the Public Hearing. Commissioner Kitty Fouche seconded, and the motion carried 5/0.

Ms. Parrish took a moment to discuss a few highlights of the proposed FY 24-25 Budget. The General Fund budget totals $2,232,905 which is a +9.96% increase from the current year. The ad valorem tax rate in the proposed budget remains at 43 cents per $100 valuation. The FY 24-25 Budget does include a fund balance appropriation of $150,000, to complete the Texas Road Pedestrian Bridge Project. Highlights of the accomplished goals in the budget include:

- Allocated funding for the purchase of 75% of family health care costs
- Allocated funding for Convenience Center upgrades
- Allocated funding for the purchase of final replacement water meters
- 3% COLA increase for staff
- Up to 3% merit raise for staff dependent on performance reviews

Ms. Parrish advised that the Water Fund revenues total $423,744 with water access fees increasing from $14.55 to $15.55. The Water Fund will also reimburse the General Fund for shared expenses this year through indirect cost allocation of 5.25%.

Mayor Pro Tem Blake advised that the $150,000 Fund Balance appropriation next fiscal year is the $150,000 from this year that was set aside for the Texas Road Pedestrian Bridge Project and never spent.

Commissioner Fouche asked if the $15 a month sanitation charge could be reevaluated next year. Ms. Parrish said that it would be reevaluated to ascertain that it is doing what it needs to do, and it is still the right amount needed. Ms. Parrish advised that the Convenience Center upgrades total just over $21,000, the entirety of Drew Brown's salary in the sanitation department, and the entirety of the year's tipping fees will be covered by the revenue earned from the monthly sanitation charges.

Letta Jean Taylor of 376 Oklahoma Road thanked Ms. Parrish for all her hard work on the budget preparation. Mrs. Taylor commended the Public Works Department for their hard work and in saving the Town money by completing so many tasks in-house. Mrs. Taylor specifically mentioned the purchase of the paint striping machine and the work on Texas Road. Mrs. Taylor also thanked the Council for the staff compensation efforts in the proposed budget.

Dr. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace stated that she was not comfortable with the Town raising the money it needs by a fee. Dr. Standaert would rather see this increase in her taxes or implement cuts, so no increase is needed at all. Dr. Standaert also suggested to Council that they consider less expensive plans for the Texas Road Pedestrian Bridge.

Commissioner Jane Alexander moved to close the Public Hearing. Commissioner Tom Widmer seconded, and the motion carried 5/0.

B. <u>FY 24-25 Budget Adoption:</u> Ms. Parrish took a moment to thank Finance Officer Rachel Eddings for her hard work on the budget throughout the entire budget process.

Commissioner Tom Widmer moved to adopt the FY 24-25 Budget upon verification of several numbers that were discussed. Commissioner Kitty Fouche seconded the motion. Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake asked the Town's legal counsel if the budget could be adopted with stipulations. Town Attorney Brandon Freeman advised that Town Staff could make necessary adjustments to the budget after its adoption and present to Town Council for amendment when needed. Mayor Helms called for the vote. The motion failed 0/5. Commissioner Tom Widmer moved to adopt without revisions the FY 24-25 budget. Commissioner Kitty Fouche seconded, and the motion carried 5/0.

C. FY 24-25 Budget Ordinance: Ms. Parrish stated that by adopting the budget ordinance it would formally put the budget into place via ordinance. Commissioner Jane Alexander moved to approve the FY 24-25 Budget Ordinance. Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake seconded, and the motion carried 5/0.

D. Budget Amendment #1: Ms. Parrish advised this amendment would account for overages in the contract rental fees line item for dumpster service. Commissioner Kitty Fouce moved to approve Budget Amendment #1 to cover costs over budgeted amounts for FY23-24 for Sanitation Department (Contract Services – Dumpster Services). Commissioner Tom Widmer seconded, and the motion carried 5/0.

E. Loan Documents for Texas Road Pedestrian Bridge Project: Ms. Parrish stated that with the appropriation from Fund Balance the amount needed to be borrowed was now only $100,000. Ms. Parrish stated that the loan terms and amortization schedule in the agenda packet would need to be updated to reflect only $100,000 borrowed. The terms of the loan, however, will remain the same: 36 months and 6.18% interest. Commissioner Tom Widmer asked Ms. Parrish to request a lower interest rate since the amount borrowed will be lower. Ms. Parrish also advised that the Town would not enter into a contract with the bank for this loan until a final contract was in place with the engineers to do the actual work on the bridge project. Ms. Parrish stated this item was to let the bank know that the Town does intend to move forward with the loan. Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake moved to direct the Town Manager to negotiate a loan with First Bank in accordance with the Proposal for Credit Facility dated June 3, 2024, subject to Town Board of Commissioners approval of the final terms and documentation for the loan. Commissioner Grant Dasher seconded, and the motion carried 5/0.

Public Comment

Dr. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace stated that it appeared Montreat was generating a lot of trash. Dr. Standaert also stated that the community was generally environmentally sensitive so perhaps there needs to be some public education on the amount of trash generated and how to reduce personal sanitation waste.

Letta Jean Taylor of 376 Oklahoma Road congratulated Montreat for completing their financial audit on time. Mrs. Taylor also congratulated Finance Officer Rachel Eddings who recently was awarded a $25,000 scholarship to further her education. Mrs. Taylor suggested that the Council start thinking now about what they intend to put towards infrastructure next year.

Commissioner Communications

Mayor Pro Tem Mason Blake advised that the Council needs to look at the fee schedule especially with regards to development fees.

Town Manager Savannah Parrish reminded everyone that the July Town Council meeting will start at the new time of 6:00 p.m. The Public Forum will start at 5:30 p.m.

Commissioner Kitty Fouche again expressed her thoughts about the Montreat Steward signs and red bows scattered around town and again made a plea for them to be taken down.

Commissioner Tom Widmer requested that a bear proof trash can be placed near the picnic tables on Texas Road. Commissioner Widmer also asked for additional dog waste containers to be placed near Howerton Hall and Texas Road

Dates to Remember

- Tree Board, Tuesday June 25th at 9:30 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options
- Board of Adjustment, No June Regular Meeting
- Landcare, Wednesday July 3rd at 9:00 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom Options
- Town Hall Closed, Thursday July 4th in observance of the 4th of July Holiday
- Hillside Development Ordinance Subcommittee, July 11th at 9:00 a.m. in Town Hall
- Planning & Zoning Commission, Thursday July 18th at 10:30 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options
- Tree Board, Tuesday July 23rd at 9:30 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options

Adjournment

Commissioner Jane Alexander moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Kitty Fouche seconded, and the motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

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Tim Helms, Mayor Angie Murphy, Town Clerk