October 9th Town Council Meeting

Meeting minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Tim Helms called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Thursday, October 9, 2025. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by a moment of silence.

Agenda Adoption

> Motion to adopt the agenda as presented was made by Mayor Pro Tem Fouche, seconded by Commissioner Widmer. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor's Communications

Mayor Helms briefly mentioned that the leaves were starting to change and the weather was getting cooler, indicating that fall was approaching.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda included the meeting minutes from the September 11th Public Forum Meeting and the September 11th Town Council Meeting.

Town Manager's Communications

Town Manager Savannah Parrish provided an update on FEMA reimbursements. She reported that the town had received two reimbursement checks on Monday totaling $85,593.13, representing funds for repairs to Welch Field and the town's wells. She noted that significant progress had been made with FEMA over the past three weeks, and she anticipated that all projects would be out of the initial FEMA development stage by the next meeting.

Commissioner Widmer asked if this meant the projects would be obligated. Ms. Parrish explained that they would not yet be obligated but would move to the CRC (Consolidated Resource Center) stage where FEMA would conduct an in-depth study of all documents, expenses, photos, and site inspection reports to ensure everything aligned before moving to obligation.

Commissioner Alexander asked if the Texas Road bridge was still in the process, to which Ms. Parrish confirmed it was. She explained that pedestrian bridges, including the Arbor Lane Bridge and the Texas Road bridge, were part of their own project. These were among only three or four projects still left in the initial stage, and she expected they would move through to the CRC either the next day or Monday.

Commissioner Widmer asked for clarification about which stage the projects were moving out of. Ms. Parrish explained they were moving out of the initial project development stage, and this would include all remaining projects including the slides up on Gray Beard and all the paving work.

Administrative Reports

No discussion occurred on the administrative reports from administration, planning and zoning, public works and water, sanitation, streets, finance, September building permits, and police.

Commissioner Widmer inquired about the status of the audit. Town Manager Parrish responded that it was moving along but was more intense this year because of the bridge loans the town had received, requiring more documentation and questions. She noted that the Local Government Commission had extended the deadline to December 31st, and they were still on track to meet that deadline.

Public Comment

Elizabeth Hamilton (116 Maryland Place) reported as a member of the Tree Board that 15 hemlock trees on town property had been treated. Ashley Manson had arranged the treatment, and Ryan Franks from Appalachian Tree Care had donated his tree injection services. Arbor Jet had donated the chemicals, and Joe Standaert had helped with geolocating. The treated trees were marked with yellow dots, with one in the memorial garden area and others along Elizabeth's path.

Mrs. Hamilton also announced an upcoming Treasure Tree Walk on October 29th at 3:30 PM, co-sponsored by the Tree Board, the Presbyterian Heritage Center, and the MRA. Nancy Midgette and Jason Nanz would lead the walk, and a new version of the map with a QR code linking to a Google Map with more information would be available.

Letta Jean Taylor (386 Oklahoma Road) asked if a traffic study had been conducted before new stop signs were installed on Appalachian Way. She requested reconsideration of the stop sign at the corner of Appalachian and Oklahoma, noting that in winter or when leaves are wet, it's difficult to gain momentum to continue up Oklahoma Road after stopping.

Tanner Pickett (102 Walker Street, Black Mountain), representing the MRA, announced an event on October 18th where 10% of sales from the Huckleberry and the Montreat Store would benefit the Montreat Wilderness. A special edition Greybeard shirt would be available, and talks about the wilderness and its history would be given by Tanner Pickett, Jane Holt, and Perrin Wright starting at 1:30 PM.

Old Business

No old business was discussed.

New Business

Order of Collection

Town Manager Parrish explained that pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 105-373, the tax collector must provide the Board of Commissioners with an annual settlement of property tax collected in the previous year for approval. Additionally, according to the North Carolina General Statute 105-321, following approval of the tax collector's annual settlement, an order of collection must be adopted authorizing the collection of the current fiscal year property taxes.

> Motion to approve the Order of Collection was made by Commissioner Blake, seconded by Commissioner Alexander. The motion carried unanimously.

Appointment of Angie Murphy as Tax Collector

Town Manager Parrish explained that the Finance Director, Rachel Eddings, had previously been appointed as tax collector. However, through continuing education, Rachel learned that the finance director should not serve as tax collector, as these duties should be separated. While Buncombe County would continue handling the town's tax collection, the town is required to have an appointed tax collector.

> Motion to appoint Angie Murphy as Tax Collector was made by Commissioner Widmer, seconded by Commissioner Alexander. The motion carried unanimously.

Following the vote, Mayor Helms administered the oath of office to Angie Murphy.

Proclamation of Domestic Violence Prevention and Awareness Month

Mayor Helms read Proclamation #25-10-0001, declaring October 2025 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Montreat. The proclamation highlighted that domestic violence is a serious crime affecting millions of Americans annually regardless of background and urged residents to commit to stopping domestic violence by speaking out against it and learning about resources available to survivors and their families.

> Motion to approve Proclamation #25-10-0001 and declare October Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Montreat was made by Commissioner Fouche, seconded by Commissioner Alexander. The motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendment #3

Town Manager Parrish explained that Budget Amendment #3 would appropriate $65,471.62 from the third round of the state's disaster cash flow loan program into Fund 29, which is for Hurricane Helene recovery. These funds would help maintain cash flow for ongoing recovery work while waiting for more reimbursements.

> Motion to approve Budget Amendment #3 was made by Commissioner Fouche, seconded by Commissioner Widmer. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

No public comments were made during this second public comment period.

Commissioner Communications

No commissioners had communications to share.

Dates to Remember

Mayor Helms read the list of upcoming dates:

- Special Meeting – Board of Commissioners – Friday, October 10th, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options
- Tree Board - Tuesday, October 14th, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options
- Planning & Zoning Commission – Thursday, October 23rd, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options
- Board of Adjustment – Thursday, October 23rd, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options
- Bulk Pickup – Tuesday, October 28th, 2025, beginning at 8:00 a.m. at your curb
- Election Day – Tuesday, November 4th, 2025
- Landcare – Wednesday, November 5th, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options
- Veteran's Day – Town Offices Closed – Tuesday, November 11th, 2025
- November Town Council Meeting – Thursday, November 13th, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in Town Hall with Zoom options. Public Forum will begin at 5:30 p.m.
- Board of Adjustment – Thursday, November 20th, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. (if needed) in Town Hall with Zoom options
- Thanksgiving – Town Offices Closed – Thursday, November 27th, 2025

Closed Session

> Motion to enter into Closed Session in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(6) for discussion of personnel matters was made by Commissioner Widmer, seconded by Commissioner Alexander. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned to closed session.

The Board returned to open session at 7:07 p.m.

Commissioner Blake moved that the Board authorize the Manager to execute the conflict waiver, which was seconded by Commissioner Jane Alexander and passed unanimously.

The Mayor announced that the Board had expressed its belief that it was appropriate for the manager to receive a 4% raise effective retroactively to July 1, 2025. The commissioners all signaled agreement and approved the action by acclamation.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m. by motion and unanimous vote.

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Tim Helms, Mayor

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk