

Town of Mars Hill
MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
Monthly Meeting

January 3, 2011
7:00 p.m.

Town Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor John Chandler; Aldermen Nicholas (Nick) Honeycutt, Stuart Jolley, Robert W. (Bob) Zink

OTHERS PRESENT: Anna Freeman, The News Record and Sentinel; Karen Kiehna, Land of Sky Regional Council; Katie Mason; Robb Pierce; Steven SuBera; Rick Morgan; Larry Leake, Town Attorney; Darhyl Boone, Town Manager; Joanne Rice

Mayor Chandler called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the first item of business the approval of the December, 2010, Minutes. A motion was made by Stuart Jolley, second from Nick Honeycutt, to approve the Minutes as written. The motion received unanimous approval.

Under Agenda Modification/Acceptance, Darhyl Boone requested following Karen Kiehna's presentation, an item be added regarding a change in funding of the current water project. Also, Rick Morgan had requested of Darhyl the opportunity to update the Board on the Western Carolina University project which will be added under Old Business. A motion was made by Nick Honeycutt to accept the Agenda with the two requested changes. The motion received a second from Stuart Jolley and was unanimously approved.

Karen Kiehna with Land of Sky Regional Council has been asked to make a presentation to the Board on National Register of Historic Places for the down town district. Ms. Kiehna gave a verbal presentation detailing the things that the National Register would do and, also, the things it would not do eliminating many myths with regards to this distinction. The National Register would not restrict or dictate to the individual property owners what can be done with their property, renovations, sale, etc. The only restriction would come if the property owner took advantage of federal tax credits offered, and then they would have to comply with National Historic guidelines.

Ms. Kiehna provided a written presentation for the Board with additional copies for the public containing detailed information with regards to this designation. She further recommended that, if the Town wishes to pursue this plan, a consultant be retained to complete the process. There is sometimes grant funding available to offset the consultant fees.

After some questions and discussion, the Board expressed appreciation to Ms. Kiehna for the work she had put into this presentation.

Ms Kiehna then presented to the Board the change in the funding on the Transmission Line Replacement Project that is underway. She explained that while the total project cost has not changed and the source of funds remains the same, the change is being made by USDA. The Town has been approved for a \$200,000 loan for Phase I and a \$200,000 loan for Phase III. The change would be that these two Phases would be combined and the loan would reflect a \$400,000 total. The benefit of this change will be that there will be no interruption in moving from one Phase of funding to the other, but

will be continuous. It will become one clean project package with a smooth transition from Phase I to Phase III. As part of the approval process, the Board will need to authorize the Mayor to execute all documents for the project funds. With no questions, a motion was made by Nick Honeycutt to approve the changes as recommended and authorize Mayor Chandler to execute project documents. A second was made by Stuart Jolley and the motion received unanimous approval.

A list of Fire Department officers for 2011 as recommended by the Department was presented to the Board. The list was reviewed and a motion was made by Bob Zink to accept the recommended list of officers as presented. The motion received a second from Nick Honeycutt and was unanimously accepted.

The term of office for Grady Worley, Fireman's Relief Fund Board member, has expired. This is a two year term with terms of members staggered. The Fire Department has recommended that Mr. Worley be re-appointed to this Board. A motion was made by John Chandler, second by Stuart Jolley, for the re-appointment of Grady Worley to the Fireman's Relief Fund Board. A second was received from Stuart Jolley and the motion was unanimously approved.

Under Old Business, Joanne Rice explained to the Board the process of collection of delinquent taxes through the North Carolina Debt Set-off Program. It was requested that the Board appoint Darhyl Boone as Hearing Officer for this process. A motion was made by Stuart Jolley, second from Bob Zink, to appoint Darhyl Boone to this position. The motion received unanimous acceptance.

Rick Morgan gave the Board an update on the Western Carolina University Program. Initially, WCU was asked to look at the recommendation from the charette for a down town arts district. This project was completed by two professors and two seniors. In May, 2010, a presentation and report was given at Western Carolina completing Phase I which was issues related to buildings along with renovations necessary. In August, they were requested to proceed with Phase II--possible benefits and income generated, but WCU was unable to proceed for lack of personnel. In December, the Economic Development Committee was contacted and informed that WCU could now proceed with Phase II. This information is to let the Board know that WCU is now in a position to work with us and to provide some valuable information with regards to the economics of an arts district. Mr. Morgan concluded that this information would be forthcoming and that an evening session would be scheduled so that the Board could attend.

With no New Business, Katie Mason asked, under Public Comment, if the Town had not discussed the National Historic designation last year. The Board responded that this is the first information the Board has received on this process.

Rick Morgan expressed appreciation to the Town for the snow and ice removal and the collection of garbage during the previous snow events. He complimented Town employees for the work done even on holidays. He further stated that he had received a number of compliments on the Christmas lighting in the down town. Mr. Morgan also complimented Attorney Larry Leake on the Ethics Standards written for the Board and feels they are far above those he has read for other communities.

With no further public input, a motion was made by Bob Zink, second by Stuart Jolley, to adjourn. Motion received unanimous acceptance.
