

Town of Mars Hill
MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
Monthly Meeting

February 7, 2011
7:00 p.m.

Town Hall

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Larry Smith; Katie Mason; Jon & Dianne VanHoff; Larry Leake, Town Attorney; Darhyl Boone, Town Manager; Joanne Rice

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Chandler at 7:00 p.m. with the first item of business being approval of the January 3 and January 24, 2011, Minutes. A motion was made by Nick Honeycutt to approve the Minutes for both dates as written. The motion received a second from Stuart Jolley and was unanimously approved.

Under Agenda Modification/Acceptance, Darhyl Boone requested a short closed session following Public Comment for discussion of a personnel matter as well as a legal issue. A motion was made by Stuart Jolley, second from Larry Davis, to approve the Agenda with the one change. The motion was unanimously accepted.

The next item of business was a Water Supply Plan Resolution. Darhyl explained that since the Town is now classed with a Tier I Drought Condition by the State, the Water Supply Plan must be updated annually as opposed to every five years prior to that classification. This Plan details all facets of the water and sewer systems such as type of pipe used, amount of wastewater treated, etc. The Town has completed the updates through 2010; however, the State is behind and has recently approved our 2007 update. The Water Supply Plan Resolution for acceptance of this update must be approved only after approval from the State is received. A motion was made by Stuart Jolley to approve the Resolution as presented. A second was received from Nick Honeycutt and was unanimously approved. Signatures were affixed to the document.

Next discussion was on a proposed amendment to the Water & Sewer Service Policy. Darhyl explained that the water department is experiencing problems with some rental property. We are on a bi-monthly billing and, sometimes, the two month water and sewer charges exceed the amount of the deposit that is currently \$100.00; therefore, if they move and do not pay the additional amount over the deposit, the Town loses that revenue. The amendment would set a water deposit amount for rental property at \$200.00. Discussion followed as to options for ensuring that water accounts on rental property are settled. A motion was made by Bob Zink to amend the Water & Sewer Service Policy to set the deposit on rental property at \$200.00 and to state that any rental property on which a delinquent amount remains owed, water service will not be granted to that residence for future tenants. The water service would be granted to the property owner only. A second was received from Stuart Jolley and the motion received unanimous approval.

The Fire Department Activities Report for 2010 was presented to the Board. Eddie Fox, Fire Chief, had planned to attend and verbally present this report but was required to be in training during the meeting. The Board reviewed the report and commented on the excellent job done by this department.

An Amendment to the 2010 – 2011 Budget was presented by Darhyl Boone. The Amendment is in the General Fund and is for Fire Department equipment. Additional turn-out gear along with replacement of hose and ladders that would not pass inspection was an additional expense that had not been anticipated. The \$30,000.00 amendment will cover this additional cost. A motion was made by Stuart Jolley, second from Larry Davis, to approve this Amendment to the 2010-2011 Budget. The motion received unanimous approval.

The next item on the Agenda was the Financial Statement for December 31, 2010. Darhyl explained that, financially, we are holding fairly well as evidenced by these mid-year figures. He explained that the Interconnection Project is progressing with the loop of line to Crossroads Ventures on Interstate 26 nearly ready to be charged. Another change order will be requested for an 8" line from the State Maintenance Shed along Roy Edwards Lane to Highway 213 that will loop this area in. If USDA approval, which has been requested, is granted there will be enough funds to complete these two loops. These two sections are a large part of Phase II as detailed in the Capital Improvements Plan and would actually be accomplished in Phase I and Phase III. In response to questions, he explained that the connection with Weaverville will probably be the last thing to be completed in the project. It has been delayed and extensions have been received due to the change orders; however, the Town wants to expend all the grant/loan funds and not have to send any back. With no further discussion, a motion was made by Nick Honeycutt, second from Bob Zink, to approve the Financial Statement as presented. The motion was unanimously accepted.

Under Old Business, Darhyl stated that if the Mayor and Board wished to pursue the National Register for Historic Place for the down-town district, he would like to request that Karen Kiehna with Land of Sky Regional Council assist with finding funding and a consultant to proceed with this project. It was the general consensus of the Board that Darhyl proceed and ask for assistance from Ms. Kiehna.

Being no New Business, the floor was opened for Public Comment. Dr. Larry Smith questioned the landscaping at the Family Dollar store on Carl Eller Road. Darhyl assure Dr. Smith that they would meet the requirements of the Landscape Ordinance and that the Planning & Zoning Board is currently working on a design plan for new businesses that would require more timely adherence to the landscaping portion of any project. He also questioned why the hardware does not have a green space and was informed that the hardware being an existing building when the landscape plan was adopted was grandfathered. Darhyl further explained that the new design plan would likely state that a certificate of occupancy could not be issued until the business completes all requirements which will eliminate businesses taking too long to complete landscaping, etc. Dr. Smith stated that, in his opinion, appearance standards should be set high.

Dr. Smith questioned if water and sewer would be extended along Highway 213 toward Marshall. Bob Zink responded that this has been explored along with annexation of this area. Annexation is not feasible due to the lack of revenue that would be generated. The 1.5 million, plus, cost of extending water and sewer to this area is also not feasible. Grant funding we have received recently has been because Mars Hill has a Tier I Drought Classification and funds must be expended to develop additional water source in the event of severe drought. Grant funds that would be applicable to develop water and sewer along Highway 213 would be based on the creation of numbers of permanent jobs. There has

not been enough interest in commercial development along 213 to make this an approved project for grant funding.

With no further Public Comment, Bob Zink made a motion with a second from Larry Davis to go into a Closed Session for discussion of a personnel matter and a legal issue. Motion received unanimous acceptance.

A motion was made by Bob Zink, second from Nick Honeycutt, and unanimously approved to return to Open Session.

Mayor Chandler made a motion to approve a \$1,200.00 per year salary increase for Shawna Mace. Shawna has completed a year's employment with the Town and has learned the operations of the water and sewer billing. Her office and public skills are an asset to the Town. Motion received a second from Stuart Jolley and was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Bob Zink, second from Larry Davis, to adjourn. Motion was unanimously approved.
