



# Town of Mars Hill

## MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN

John L. Chandler  
*Mayor*  
Nicholas A. Honeycutt  
*Vice-Mayor*  
Robert W. Zink  
*Treasurer*  
Stuart L. Jolley  
*Clerk*  
Larry H. Davis  
*Secretary*

### MINUTES REGULAR MEETING Mars Hill Town Hall – Conference Room December 4, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

The Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen met in regular session on Monday, December 4, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Mars Hill Town Hall.

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

**STAFF PRESENT:** Nathan R. Bennett, Town Manager; Jamie Stokes, Town Attorney; and Police Capt. Chad Wilson

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Ryan Bell, Terry Burnette, Robin Burnette, Sebastian Dunn, and Miryam Rojas

#### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor John Chandler. Mayor Chandler welcomed those in attendance.

#### Oath of Office Ceremony

Mayor Chandler stated that the certified results of the November 7, 2023, municipal general election have been received from the Madison County Board of Elections. He reported those elected to a four (4) year term as Alderman were Alderman-elect Larry Davis and Alderman-elect Stuart Jolley. Mayor Chandler then administered the oath of office to Alderman Davis and then to Alderman Jolley. Mayor Chandler congratulated each alderman and thanked them for their continued service to the Town. The oaths of office are attached to these minutes. (Attachment A)

#### Approval of the Agenda

Mayor Chandler then asked the Board to review the proposed agenda for approval. Upon review of the agenda, Mayor Chandler called for a motion. **Alderman Bob Zink made a motion that the agenda be approved as presented.** Alderman Stuart Jolley seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the agenda was approved unanimously. (Attachment B)

#### Approval of Minutes

Mayor Chandler then asked the Board to review the minutes of the regular meeting held on November 6, 2023. There being no modifications to the minutes, **Alderman Larry Davis made a motion that the minutes for November 6, 2023, be approved as presented by management.** Alderman Zink seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the minutes were approved unanimously.

#### Organizational Meeting

Mayor Chandler then moved to the organizational meeting of the Board as required by N.C. General Statutes to occur at the first regular meeting in December following the November general election held that year.

**Election of Board Officers – Vice-Mayor, Treasurer, Clerk, and Secretary**

Mayor Chandler then advised the Board must elect board members to serve in the board offices of Vice-Mayor, Treasurer, Clerk and Secretary. **Mayor Chandler made a motion to keep the current alignment of Board officers, those being Alderman Nicholas Honeycutt as Vice-Mayor, Alderman Bob Zink as Treasurer, Alderman Stuart Jolley as Clerk, and Alderman Larry Davis as Secretary.** Alderman Nicholas Honeycutt seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was approved unanimously.

**Old Business**

Mayor Chandler then moved to address old business. There was no old business.

**New Business**

Mayor Chandler then moved to address new business.

**Regular Meeting Modifications**

**January 2024 Regular Meeting** – Mayor Chandler advised the Board that the January 2024 regular meeting is scheduled for January 1, 2024, which is the New Years Day Holiday. Following brief discussion by the Board, Mayor Chandler called for a motion to reschedule that meeting. **Alderman Honeycutt made a motion to reschedule the January 2024 to MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was approved unanimously.

**February 2024 Regular Meeting** – Mayor Chandler reminded the Board that February regular meeting has been held at the Anderson Rosenwald School for the past few years at the request of the Friends of the Anderson Rosenwald School. Town Manager Nathan Bennett confirmed that the request was made several months ago to him by the Friends to do that again, but he had contacted them last week to confirm that was still their desire but has not heard back. The Board members indicated they were very willing to change the location of the February 2024 meeting to the Anderson Rosenwald School but would wait to formally make that decision until confirmation is received from the Friends. The item was tabled until the January 8, 2024, meeting by consensus of the Board.

**Town Manager Report – Nathan Bennett, Town Manager**

Mayor Chandler then recognized Mr. Bennett to provide the Town Manager Report.

**Christmas parade and related seasonal items**

Mr. Bennett reported to the Board that the town-sponsors Christmas Parade held on December 1, 2023, was an outstanding success. There were nearly 70 entries and an estimated 3,500 spectators. Mr. Bennett stated the parade required a full town organization effort, and that he was very proud of all the town employees for the hard work they invested in making this a successful event. Mayor Chandler and Alderman Honeycutt offered comments stating that the employees did a great job and were thankful for their efforts. Alderman Zink commented on the hard work done specifically by Garrett Fox, public works, for the artwork on the windows of the former department store building at 9 & 15 South Main. Mr. Bennett concurred and also mentioned additional public works employees Tommy Worley, Clint English, Craig Mace, Derral Jenkins, and Gordon Peek, for all of the lights and decorations to the South Main building, as well as all of the street lamps/poles around town.

Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the Town Christmas Luncheon will be Friday, December 22 at noon at Town Hall. He also reminded the Board of the dates observed by the Town for the holiday period, those being December 25, 26, and 27 for Christmas and December 31 for the New Year Holiday. These holidays will require a modification to the sanitation collection schedule, with collection on Wednesday, December 27, instead of

Monday, December 25, as well as Tuesday, January 2, instead of Monday, January 1, 2024. These modifications will be communicated to the community through town social media accounts and other methods.

#### **Police Chief Vacancy – Recruitment Update**

Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the Town has received approximately 56 applicants for the vacant police chief position which closed for applicants on Friday, December 1, 2023. He is in the process of reviewing those applications and will schedule interviews of selected candidates the week of December 11, 2023. The expectation is to complete the process and have the new chief in place by February 1, 2024.

#### **General Update**

Mr. Bennett advised the Board that last month authorization was granted to purchase a new brush truck for the Fire Department. Last week, Fire Chief Nathan Waldrup was able to order a brush truck meeting the preferred specifications for \$49,240, which was considerably less than the amount authorized. Mr. Bennett stated that Chief Waldrup proposes to equip the new truck with a new equipment bed and not transfer the old bed from the existing truck. Leaving the bed in place on the old truck will make it easier to resell.

Mr. Bennett advised the Board that he had completed the budget amendment process requesting the N.C. Department of Commerce to utilize the remaining \$198,382 in the Rural Transformation Grant received for the Main Street building for clearance and stabilization purposes. Mr. Bennett advised that Commerce has approved the budget amendment authorizing the town to utilize those remaining funds for those purposes. He will begin the process in January to secure a contractor to complete the scope of work.

Mr. Bennett advised the Board that he will be meeting December 7, 2023, with NCDOT regarding alternative solutions for the Bailey Street Bridge replacement. This meeting will include Frank Johnson, owner of the former Honeywell building on Hickory Drive, MHU leadership, and town and county government staff. Mr. Bennett stated he will provide the Board with an update on those alternatives at the next meeting.

Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the Code RED citizen notification system is active for registration. There are currently 70 people with registered accounts. He stated that efforts are ongoing to encourage participation in the free town service to provide timely emergency alerts and other pertinent information and announcements to our community.

Mr. Bennett updated the Board on other items of interest to the Board.

#### **Public Comment**

Mayor Chandler then moved to public comment. Mr. Ryan Bell was recognized by the Mayor. Mr. Bell congratulated the newly elected Board members. He then stated that he is the Parks and Recreation Committee chairman and that he has not held but one committee meeting this year. He states that Mr. Bennett has been very busy this year and that Mr. Bell was unsure of his authority to call meetings. He is excited about the improvement project about to begin at Smith Farm. He will work to keep the committee engaged in the coming year.

Mayor Chandler then recognized Robin Burnette who stated that the parade was wonderful and was even better than last year. She asked if the public could attend the meeting with NCDOT regarding the Bailey Street bridge. Mr. Bennett advised her that this was a staff-level meeting, but he would provide everyone with an update on discussions.

Mayor Chandler then recognized Miryam Rojas who represented the First Fridays group. She stated that the Christmas parade was wonderful. She stated that she and the First Fridays group would like to work together with the Town organizing the parade. She also stated that she thought the Town should consider holding the parade on Saturday evening instead of Friday. Having the parade on Friday conflicts with the regular First Fridays activities and if the event were on Saturday the merchants could benefit from having both events and offer a lot more opportunities.

There being no additional public comments, Mayor Chandler thanked everyone for their comments and closed the public comment period.

**Closed Session (Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11)**

Mayor Chandler advised the Board that there is a need for a closed session to discuss a personnel matter.

**Alderman Zink made a motion to enter closed session to discuss a personnel matter pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6).** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the motion was approved unanimously.

***CLOSED SESSION***

Upon completion of discussion of the personnel matter subject to the closed session, Mayor Chandler called for a motion to return to open session. **Alderman Zink made a motion that the Board end the closed session and return to open session.** Alderman Honeycutt seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the motion was approved unanimously.

**Open Session**


Upon return to open session, Mayor Chandler announced there were personnel actions necessary to address additional job duties and responsibilities for existing administrative staff following the death of Joanne Rice several months ago. **Mayor Chandler made a motion to authorize the promotion of Jessica Honeycutt to Finance Technician and provide a salary increase of \$6,000/per annum for additional job duties and responsibilities.** Alderman Honeycutt seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the motion was approved unanimously. **Mayor Chandler made a motion to authorize a salary increase of \$2,400/per annum for additional job duties and responsibilities for each Stephanie Payne, Office Manager/Tax Collector, and Shawna Fowler, Utility Billing Clerk.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the motion was approved unanimously.

**Adjourn**

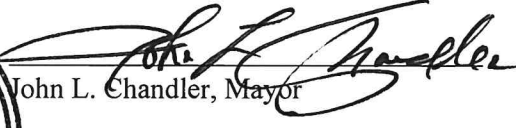
There being no further business before the Board, Mayor Chandler called for a motion to adjourn. **Alderman Zink made a motion to adjourn.** Alderman Jolley seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

Approved and authenticated this the 8<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2024.

ATTEST:

  
Nathan R. Bennett,  
Town Manager



  
John L. Chandler, Mayor



ATTACHMENT A

# TOWN OF MARS HILL

## *Oath of Office Ceremony*

*Mars Hill Town Hall  
Mars Hill, North Carolina  
December 4, 2023  
6:00 o'clock P.M.*



## WELCOME

John L. Chandler  
Mayor, Town of Mars Hill

## ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS

The Honorable John L. Chandler  
Mayor  
Town of Mars Hill

## OATH OF OFFICE TO BOARD OF ALDERMEN-ELECT

The Honorable Larry H. Davis

The Honorable Stuart L. Jolley

## CLOSING OF CEREMONY



# Town of Mars Hill

## OATH OF OFFICE

The Honorable

**LARRY H. DAVIS**

ALDERMAN

Town of Mars Hill

Mayor and Board of Aldermen

*North Carolina Constitution, Article VI, Sec. 7 Oath*

I, **LARRY H. DAVIS**, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and maintain the Constitution and laws of the United States, and the Constitution and laws of North Carolina not inconsistent therewith, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of my office as **ALDERMAN** for the Town of Mars Hill, so help me God.

*North Carolina General Statute 11-7 Oath*

I, **LARRY H. DAVIS**, do solemnly and sincerely swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States; that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of North Carolina, and to the constitutional powers and authorities which are or may be established for the government thereof; and that I will endeavor to support, maintain and defend the Constitution of said State, not inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States, to the best of my knowledge and ability; so help me God.

This the 4<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2023.

LARRY H. DAVIS

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
MADISON COUNTY



Oath of office administered this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2023.

THE HONORABLE JOHN L. CHANDLER,  
MAYOR, Town of Mars Hill



# Town of Mars Hill

## OATH OF OFFICE

The Honorable

**STUART L. JOLLEY**

**ALDERMAN**

**Town of Mars Hill**

**Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

*North Carolina Constitution, Article VI, Sec. 7 Oath*

I, **STUART L. JOLLEY**, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and maintain the Constitution and laws of the United States, and the Constitution and laws of North Carolina not inconsistent therewith, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of my office as **ALDERMAN** for the Town of Mars Hill, so help me God.

*North Carolina General Statute 11-7 Oath*

I, **STUART L. JOLLEY**, do solemnly and sincerely swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States; that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of North Carolina, and to the constitutional powers and authorities which are or may be established for the government thereof; and that I will endeavor to support, maintain and defend the Constitution of said State, not inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States, to the best of my knowledge and ability; so help me God.

This the 4<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2023.

  
STUART L. JOLLEY



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
MADISON COUNTY

Oath of office administered this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2023.

  
THE HONORABLE JOHN L. CHANDLER,  
MAYOR, Town of Mars Hill



ATTACHMENT B

# Town of Mars Hill

## MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN

John L. Chandler  
*Mayor*  
Nicholas A. Honeycutt  
*Vice-Mayor*  
Robert W. Zink  
*Treasurer*  
Stuart L. Jolley  
*Clerk*  
Larry H. Davis  
*Secretary*

### AGENDA

#### REGULAR MEETING

*Mars Hill Town Hall Conference Room*

*December 4, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.*

1. Call to Order – Mayor John L. Chandler
2. **Oath of Office Ceremony – Mayor Chandler**  
  

*Oath of Office Administration for  
Alderman-Elect Larry Davis and Alderman-Elect Stuart Jolley*
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes: November 6, 2023 Regular Meeting
5. Organizational Meeting
  - a. Election of Board Officers – Vice-Mayor, Treasurer, Clerk, and Secretary
  - b. Other Organizational Items
6. Old Business
7. New Business
  - a. Regular Meeting Modifications
    - i. January 2024 Regular Meeting (New Years Day Holiday)
    - ii. February 2024 Regular Meeting – Proposed Location Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School
8. Town Manager Report – Nathan Bennett, Town Manager
  - a. Christmas parade and related seasonal items
  - b. Police Chief Vacancy – Recruitment Update
  - c. General Update
9. Public Comment  

[Policy: Each speaker shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes. The public comment period is not intended to require the Board of Aldermen or staff to answer any impromptu questions. The Board will not take action on an item presented during the public comment period. The Board may refer inquiries made during the public comment period to the Town Manager to address as appropriate. If necessary, the item may be placed on the agenda of a future meeting.]
10. Closed Session (*Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 – if needed*)
11. Adjourn

### Mars Hill Town Hall

280 North Main Street • P.O. Box 368  
Mars Hill, North Carolina 28754  
Phone: (828) 689-2301 • Fax: (828) 689-3333