

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 February 1, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

The Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen met in regular session on Monday, February 1, 2021 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 and Jamie Stokes, Town Attorney

Call to Order

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

Approval of the Agenda

Mayor Chandler 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 the agenda be approved as presented.** Alderman Nicholas Honeycutt seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the agenda was approved unanimously. (Attachment A)

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Chandler then asked the Board to review the minutes of the regular meeting held on January 4, 2021. Alderman Honeycutt noted a typographical correction to the name of a speaker in the public comment section. There being no other modifications to the minutes, **Alderman Stuart Jolley made a motion that the minutes for January 4, 2021 be approved as presented by management.** Alderman Larry Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the minutes were approved unanimously.

RESOLUTION – Black History Month

Mayor Chandler recognized Mr. Samuel Thomas, a senior at Mars Hill University (MHU), to present a resolution supporting February as Black History Month. Mr. Thomas read the resolution entitled “RESOLUTION – Recognition of Black History Month and Support for Racial Equality” for the record. The resolution was written and presented by members of the Bonner Scholars Program at MHU, with support and assistance of faculty members, as well as members of the Madison County Racial Justice

Coalition together with involvement from Town administration. Following the reading of the resolution, the Mayor recognized members of the audience to speak on the resolution. The first to speak was Mr. Jonathan McCoy, the director of the MHU Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Mr. McCoy offered comments in support of the resolution. He advised that the students worked hand in hand with the Town to draft this resolution making positive statements showing that the Town and university are bonded and committed to the hard work ahead. The next to speak was MHU student Amber Vernon. Ms. Vernon offered comments in support of the resolution. Ms. Vernon advised that the approval of this resolution will help all people to feel comfortable in their homes away from home. The next to speak was MHU student J.L. Fleming. Mr. Fleming offered comments in support of the resolution. He advised it was great to see the support of this resolution and while offering his personal experience it makes him feel safer and he thanked the Board for taking a stand to make Black and Brown people feel safer in this community.

Upon reviewing the resolution and completing discussion of the matter, Mayor Chandler called for a motion. **Alderman Jolley made a motion to approve the “RESOLUTION – RECOGNITION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND SUPPORT FOR RACIAL EQUALITY” as presented (Attachment B).** Alderman Honeycutt seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was approved unanimously. Alderman Honeycutt thanked the MHU students for their work on this resolution.

PRESENTATION – FY 2019-2020 Audit Report – Dorinda Bennett, Johnson Price Sprinkle, LLC

Mayor Chandler then recognized Ms. Dorinda Bennett with Johnson Price Sprinkle, LLC, the Town’s independent auditor, for a presentation of the results of the FY 2019-2020 Comprehensive Audit for the Town of Mars Hill. Ms. Bennett provided all Board members copies of the audit report documents entitled Financial Statements and the Communications from the Auditor. Ms. Bennett advised that the audit was completed on time and has been delivered and accepted by the North Carolina Local Government Commission as required. She advised that this is a “clean” audit opinion, and the Town is in an excellent financial position. Ms. Bennett reported that due to COVID-19, this was the first time that an audit had been completed by remote means. This placed a lot of additional work on Town staff to provide documents by email and Ms. Bennett advised that Town staff were very diligent and efficient to work with through this process. There were no disagreements with management during the auditing process. Ms. Bennett discussed the highlights of the audit report, including the financial statements. All audit documents are on file in the administrative office of Town Hall and are available for inspection by the public. Board members thanked Ms. Bennett for her report.

Town Manager Report – Nathan Bennett, Town Manager

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

COVID-19 Response

Mr. Bennett provided the Board an update on the continuing Town response to the coronavirus and COVID-19 situation. The Town continues to be under the state and locally designated state of emergency in response to COVID-19. He also advised all Town facilities are open and operating normally, except that Town Hall is closed to the public indefinitely to limit potential exposures.

Administrative staff are now back on regular schedule. Mr. Bennett advised he participated in the county COVID team meeting today and that it was reported the county positivity rate has improved greatly since the spike experienced from the holiday season. Also, the Madison County Health Department is continuing to administer the vaccine but have slowed due to the availability of the vaccine seen nationally but understand supply improving and additional vaccine is expected in the coming weeks. Officials at all levels of government and the healthcare community continue to advise to the community to wear face masks, wait six feet apart from others, and wash hands often with soap and water or sanitizer and to consider receiving the vaccine when it is made available.

Financial Report – 2nd Quarter

Mr. Bennett advised that the Financial Report for the recently completed 2nd Quarter of the fiscal year is included in Board packets. Mr. Bennett advised that General Fund revenues are at 78% collected, with 89% of budgeted ad valorem tax already received. Other major revenue sources are tracking at or above expectations for this point in the fiscal year. Mr. Bennett advised that General Fund expenditures are at 49% which is right on target for this point in the fiscal year. Most departments are tracking at expected budgeted levels with those that are slightly above 50% due to one-time payments made in the first half of the fiscal year. Water and Sewer Fund revenues are at 44%, slightly under expectations, due to continued depressed usage from the university due to COVID-19 impacts on the operation schedule. Expenditures are tracking within expectations at 56%. Management will monitor these items as the remainder of the year progresses and will look to control expenses to align with revenue projections. (Attachment C)

General Update

Mr. Bennett advised that the contractor resumed Carl Eller pump station work on January 19 as part of the wastewater system improvements project funded by the EDA and Golden Leaf grants. That work is expected to be completed in the next couple of weeks if weather will cooperate, allowing these grants to be closed. Mr. Bennett then updated the Board on the retirement of Chief of Police Michael Garrison. Chief Garrison retired from Town service effective yesterday, January 31, 2021. Mr. Bennett advised that he has received nearly 20 applications and is processing those applications for the next step in the process. He advised that interviews will be scheduled for next week with a couple of Board members to serve on the interview team. Mr. Bennett further advised that he appointed MHPD Captain Jon Clark today to serve as acting chief until the permanent replacement is named. Mr. Bennett provided general updates on other miscellaneous activities including the authorization received late last week to proceed with the process to replace the trash truck utilizing state grant funds.

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. There was no new business.

Public Comment

The Mayor then moved to public comment. There were no additional public comments.

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

Mr. Bennett advised that there was one issue to discuss in closed session. Mayor Chandler called for a motion. **Alderman Zink made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(3) to discuss a legal matter with the town attorney.** Alderman Jolley seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was approved unanimously.

Upon completion of discussion subject to the closed session, **Alderman Zink made a motion to return to open session.** Alderman Honeycutt seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was approved unanimously.

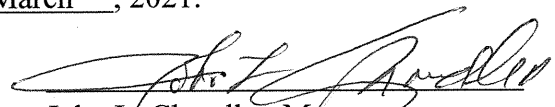
The Board then in open session discussed with Town Attorney Jamie Stokes the matter of a conditional purchase offer for a small section of the watershed property adjacent to the Wolf Laurel Ski Resort for the purpose of facilitating enhancement of an adjacent cellular tower site. Ms. Stokes advised that the process for the Board would be to authorize the process of the potential sale by publication in the newspaper of the \$10,000 offer for the Town property in Wolf Laurel for the statutory 10-day upset bid process. Mayor Chandler called for a motion subject to the process outlined by the Town Attorney. **Alderman Jolley made a motion to accept recommendation of counsel and management per the referenced parcel as stated.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was approved unanimously.

Alderman Zink then discussed compensation for acting police chief Jon Clark while he serves in this temporary status. Mr. Bennett advised that he had discussed a \$1.00 per hour increase with Mr. Clark and he was agreeable to the offer. Mr. Bennett requested the Board ratify the appointment made to acting chief and to authorize the \$1.00 per hour increase while he serves in this capacity. **Alderman Zink made a motion to ratify the appointment of Captain Jon Clark to the position of Acting Chief of Police and to increase his hourly compensation by \$1.00 per hour while serving in this interim capacity.** Alderman Honeycutt seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote 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 Davis 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 1st day of March , 2021.


John L. Chandler, Mayor

ATTEST:


Nathan R. Bennett,
Town Manager





Town of Mars Hill

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Mayor
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AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING

Mars Hill Town Hall Conference Room

February 1, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order – *Mayor John L. Chandler*
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: January 4, 2021
4. **RESOLUTION** – Black History Month
5. **PRESENTATION** – FY 2019-2020 Audit Report – Dorinda Bennett, Johnson Price Sprinkle, LLC
6. Town Manager Report – *Nathan Bennett, Town Manager*
 - a. COVID-19 Response Update
 - b. Financial Report – 2nd Quarter
 - c. General Update
7. Old Business
8. New Business
9. Public Comment
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



Town of Mars Hill

RESOLUTION

RECOGNITION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND SUPPORT FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

WHEREAS, the history of the Town of Mars Hill is inextricably linked with Mars Hill University; and

WHEREAS, the histories of both the Town and the University are incomplete without the telling of injustices – the occupation of a land once home to the Cherokee people; enslaved Africans, who built the first campus structure, together with that of Joe Anderson’s imprisonment as collateral for a college debt in the first days of Mars Hill University; and

WHEREAS, African Americans have been an essential part of the growth, development and ongoing operation of the University making tremendous contributions to the social and economic fabric of the community—some contributions known and some unknown; and

WHEREAS, African American students have enrolled in Mars Hill University since the 1960s, enhancing the academic, artistic, athletic, social, and religious aspects of campus and community life; and

WHEREAS, the tragedy of recent national events brings to the attention of the Town the challenges all communities face in recognizing the failures of the past and affirming the full inclusion, worth and dignity of all persons; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Mars Hill is committed to enhancing the quality of life for all residents and is committed to being an equal opportunity provider for all residing within its boundary.

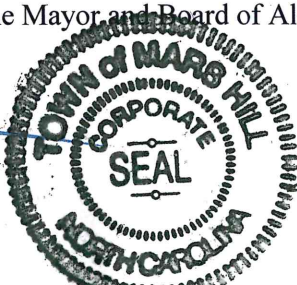
NOW, THEREFORE, by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for the Town of Mars Hill, North Carolina,
IT IS RESOLVED:

- Section 1.** The Town of Mars Hill affirms and values the presence and contribution of Black, Brown, and all races and ethnicities of the residents of the community and Mars Hill University.
- Section 2.** The Town of Mars Hill recognizes each February as Black History Month, and specifically pays tribute to February 2021 as Black History Month.
- Section 3.** The Town of Mars Hill supports all efforts to make the Mars Hill community a safe place for African Americans and promotes racial and ethnic equality throughout the community by:
 - (a.) Committing to having meaningful conversations about race;
 - (b.) Continuing to engage in training programs aimed at strengthening cultural, racial, and ethnic competency and awareness by the town;
 - (c.) Continuing to promote hiring policies and practices that give full consideration to racial and ethnic diversity and representation;
 - (d.) Continuing to voluntarily include race data in reporting traffic stops conducted by law enforcement.
- Section 4.** The Town of Mars Hill seeks to live by its stated commitment to *enhance the quality of life for all residents*—no exceptions.
- Section 5.** This Resolution shall be effective immediately.

ADOPTED this 1st day of February 2021, by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for the Town of Mars Hill.

ATTEST:


STUART L. JOLLEY, Clerk




JOHN L. CHANDLER, Mayor

ATTACHMENT C

Town of Mars Hill		
Mars Hill, North Carolina		
FINANCIAL STATEMENT		
31-Dec-20		
SECTION I: General & Powell Bill Funds	Budget	Actual
A. REVENUES ANTICIPATED		
Property Tax (Current Year/\$.47 per \$100)	\$ 593,659.00	\$ 531,285.00
Property Tax (Prior Years)	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 1,920.00
Payment in Lieu of Taxes	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 11,586.00
Tax Penalties and Interest	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 302.00
Ad Valorem Vehicle Tax	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 28,869.00
Municipal Parking Fee	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 8,479.00
Interest Earned/Investments	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 490.00
Rents and Concessions	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -
Utilities Revenue	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 375.00
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 13,484.00
Utilities Franchise Tax	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 62,606.00
Excise Tax - Beer & Wine	\$ 8,000.00	\$ -
Powell Bill Street Allocation	\$ 56,000.00	\$ 53,122.00
Local Option Sales Tax	\$ 425,000.00	\$ 317,435.00
State Gov. Grants - COVID Funds	\$ -	\$ 148,309.00
Court Costs, Fees, Etc.	\$ 100.00	\$ 40.00
Parking Violation Penalties	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 360.00
Zoning Permits	\$ 100.00	\$ 255.00
Inspection/Fire Codes Fee/Fines	\$ -	\$ 850.00
Street Department Revenue	\$ -	\$ 96.00
Police Department Revenue/Donation	\$ 100.00	\$ 414.00
Recreation Department Revenues	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,300.00
Fire Department Revenues	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 5,859.00
Fire Dept. Relief Funds	\$ 4,000.00	\$ -
Tax Refunds	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 16,796.00
Special Fire District Tax	\$ 575,000.00	\$ 362,557.00
Appropriated Fund Balance, General	\$ 35,000.00	\$ -
Appropriated Fund Balance, Powell Bill	\$ 90,000.00	\$ -
Other Fin. Sources/Uses-Transfer In	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL ANTICIPATED REVENUES	\$ 2,028,959.00	\$ 1,575,789.00
B. EXPENDITURES AUTHORIZED		
1. Governing Body	\$ 84,300.00	\$ 57,184.00
2. Administration	\$ 254,300.00	\$ 157,487.00
3. Elections	\$ -	\$ -
4. Tax Collections	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 581.00
5. Public Buildings	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 16,917.00
(Continued to Page 2)		

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6. Police Department		\$	476,569.00	\$	252,980.00
7. Fire Department		\$	532,131.00	\$	285,544.00
Fireman's Relief Fund		\$	-	\$	-
8. Street Department		\$	229,859.00	\$	109,388.00
9. Powell Bill Expenditures		\$	146,000.00	\$	4,312.00
10. Sanitation Department		\$	134,300.00	\$	70,176.00
11. Recreation Department		\$	69,000.00	\$	29,142.00
12. Library		\$	20,000.00	\$	14,566.00
13. Debt Service		\$	50,000.00	\$	-
14. Other Financial Sources/Uses Trans. Out		\$		\$	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES AUTHORIZED		\$	2,028,959.00	\$	998,277.00
SECTION II: Water & Sewer					
A. Revenues Anticipated					
Interest Earned/Investments		\$	6,000.00	\$	264.00
Interest Earned/Enterprise Fund		\$	6,000.00	\$	201.00
Miscellaneous		\$	4,000.00	\$	1,420.00
Water & Sewer Charges		\$	1,008,600.00	\$	460,698.00
Sewer Taps		\$	10,000.00	\$	11,000.00
Water Taps		\$	10,000.00	\$	17,000.00
Sale of Materials		\$	-	\$	-
Approp. Fund Balance/Water & Sewer		\$	25,000.00	\$	105,816.00
Approp. Fund Balance/Enterprise		\$	-	\$	-
Other Fin. Sources/Uses		\$	-	\$	-
TOTAL ANTICIPATED REVENUES		\$	1,069,600.00	\$	596,399.00
B. Expenditures Authorized					
Debt Service		\$	113,100.00	\$	27,558.00
Administration/Engineering/Billing		\$	228,500.00	\$	130,881.00
Operations		\$	728,000.00	\$	336,100.00
Downtown Water System Improvements		\$		\$	101,860.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES AUTHORIZED		\$	1,069,600.00	\$	596,399.00

SECTION III: WW Treatment Improvement Project**A. Revenues Anticipated**

Federal Government Grants/EDA	\$	390,120.00	\$	317,444.00
State Government Grants/Golden Leaf	\$	487,650.00	\$	438,885.00
Local Government Funds	\$	97,530.00	\$	-
Due to/From Other Funds (Enterprise Loan)	\$	-	\$	97,530.00
TOTAL REVENUES ANTICIPATED	\$	975,300.00	\$	853,859.00

B. Expenditures Authorized

Con. Serv./Mobilization	\$	19,500.00	\$	19,500.00
Sludge Pump Station	\$	162,900.00	\$	162,900.00
D.O. Control System/Blower	\$	132,500.00	\$	30,185.00
Concrete Tank Restoration	\$	145,000.00	\$	164,629.00
Exit 11/1000 LF Sewer Line	\$	95,000.00	\$	95,000.00
Exit 11/Sewer Line Pump Station	\$	151,000.00	\$	151,000.00
Exit 11/SPS Sewer Force Main	\$	42,800.00	\$	42,800.00
Contingency	\$	74,900.00	\$	-
Design & Permitting	\$	74,900.00	\$	74,900.00
Bidding/Award	\$	8,400.00	\$	8,400.00
Construction Administration	\$	37,400.00	\$	31,465.00
Grant Administration	\$	24,500.00	\$	24,500.00
Legal	\$	6,500.00	\$	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES AUTHORIZED	\$	975,300.00	\$	805,279.00

SECTION IV: Bailey Mountain Project**A. Revenues Anticipated**

Fed/Land & Water Conservation Fund	\$	250,000.00	\$	250,000.00
St./Clean Water Mgmt. Trust Fund	\$	352,326.00	\$	352,326.00
Local Funds	\$	106,074.00	\$	80,000.00
Enterprise Fund (Loan) Due/to From	\$	-	\$	-
TOTAL REVENUES ANTICIPATED	\$	708,400.00	\$	682,326.00

B. Expenditures Authorized

Capital Outlay/Land Purchase	\$	675,000.00	\$	675,000.00
Legal/Adm/Professional Costs	\$	33,400.00	\$	5,752.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES AUTHORIZED	\$	708,400.00	\$	680,752.00