



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 January 3, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

The Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen met in regular session on Monday, January 3, 2022, 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; Nathan Waldrup, Fire Chief; and Jon Clark, Police Chief

OTHERS PRESENT: Johnny Casey, News-Record Sentinel; Ryan Bell, Robin Lyles, and William Sewell.

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 that the agenda be approved as presented.** Alderman Larry Davis 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 December 6, 2021. There being no modifications to the minutes, **Alderman Stuart Jolley made a motion that the minutes for December 6, 2021, be approved as presented by management.** Alderman Nicholas Honeycutt seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the minutes were approved unanimously.

PRESENTATION – Mars Hill Fire Department Annual Report

Mayor Chandler then recognized Mars Hill Fire Chief Nathan Waldrup to present the annual report for the Mars Hill Fire Department. Chief Waldrup then reviewed the number and types of calls contained in the 2021 Activity Report (Attachment B). Chief Waldrup advised that the fire department received 1,239 calls for service in calendar year 2021. This is the most calls for any single prior year and is an increase of 202 service calls over calendar year 2020. Chief Waldrup noted that this is a 92% increase in calls from the rate 10 years ago, and a 26% increase from just five (5) years ago. The majority of calls are for medical assistance, with those totaling 697 in 2021. However, building fire, wildland fires, and other fire related calls are a significant portion of service

demands, in addition to search and rescue operations, traffic accidents, downed trees, fire alarm response, and a host of other service categories. Chief Waldrup also noted that he and the staff completed eight (8) fire prevention activities over the year reaching approximately 300 students/adults teaching fire safety. Alderman Zink asked about the number of false alarms and if there were problems with that issue at the university as in the past. Chief Waldrup advised that false alarms at the university due to mischief are not an issue. That issue drastically improved as a result of the monthly collaboration meetings between the town and university leadership and the university addressing those things through the student code of conduct.

Chief Waldrup advised the Board that the NC Department of Insurance (NC DOI) completed the required inspection of the Fire Department last fall. This was a very successful inspection which resulted in improved ratings for the department. The inside town limit rate remained at 5 and the rate 1,000 feet from a hydrant to 5-miles from the fire station improved from 6 to 5. The rate in the 5-mile to 6-mile beyond the fire station portion of the district was rated at 9 and beyond 6-miles was rated 10.

Chief Waldrup reported that of the paid staff, all have become certified in trench rescue due to a class that was held locally at the Smith Farm. They have also become fire instructor certified and fire officer certified. In terms of equipment, Chief Waldrup reported that the replacement vehicle for the deputy chief has been received and that vehicle has been outfitted and is on the road. This vehicle has already been very beneficial in a number of situations. Chief Waldrup also stated that the old standby generator at the main station has been and replaced with an upgraded natural gas generator. Further, he stated that plans are to add a permanent standby generator at the annex station by the end of the fiscal year, which will replace a portable generator.

Chief Waldrup thanked the Board for the opportunity to provide this report and for the excellent support the Board has provided to the Fire Department and asked if there were any questions. Alderman Jolley asked if the NC DOI inspection report identified particular areas to address in order to increase the rating score. Chief Waldrup advised the report and information from DOI only gives a total score and does not provide specific guidance on how to improve the rating score. He did advise, however, that he has contacted consultants who can provide direction on what may be done to improve scoring at the next inspection. Alderman Zink asked if the county was helpful with fire inspections of commercial properties in town. Chief Waldrup advised that has been difficult due to reorganization of some county departments, but Deputy Chief Bennie Gaddy recently obtained the provisional fire inspection certification and will sit for the state exam when it is next offered. This will give the department the ability to complete these fire inspections for commercial properties. The Mayor and Board members thanked Chief Waldrup for the good report and moreover for his and the fire department members service to the community.

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

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. Mr. Bennett provided the most recent numbers from the NCDHHS Dashboard for Madison County, reporting daily positivity rate of 11.3% for the past 14 days. This is a large increase from early December when the rate was 4.9%. The impact from the new omicron variant, together with the holiday gatherings, has been attributed to this latest spike with infections. By comparison, the statewide positivity rate for the same 14-day period stands at 27.4%. According to the latest data, Madison County has seen 159 new cases over the past 14 days. Mr. Bennett stated that there have been no serious issues to note due to COVID with Town operations.

Excavator for Public Works

Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the excavator currently in use by the public works department is nearing the end of its useful life as it is over 15 years old. This machine is used for all water and sewer line repair and replacements and other street and general construction earth moving needs. The machine has been very beneficial for operation but it is now time to begin the process to replace it. Mr. Bennett provided the Board with a preliminary proposal for a replacement excavator from a vendor approved by the NC State Government Contract and Purchasing which approaches \$70,000. There was general conversation by the Board regarding the need to proceed with the replacement process including obtaining additional vendor proposals. Mr. Bennett informed the Board that the information from this vendor is that once an order is placed, delivery will take approximately 90 days. Mr. Bennett advised the Board he will secure additional proposals and bring those to the February meeting for potential action.

REMINDER – February Regular Meeting at Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School

Mr. Bennett reminded the Board that the February 2022 regular meeting will be held at the Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School as discussed at the December meeting. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that he will ensure all appropriate public notifications are made regarding the meeting location. Mr. Bennett then advised the Board that the water system study is complete, and the consulting engineer is ready to make a presentation of the report to the Board. Mr. Bennett recommended meeting at Town Hall at 5:00 p.m. prior to the regular meeting in February to receive the report presentation in order to use the necessary technology resources at Town Hall, as well as accommodate the consultants' schedule. The consensus of the Board was in agreement to meet at 5:00 p.m. before the February meeting for this purpose.

General Update

Mr. Bennett advised the Board of a water line break Saturday, January 1st, on the Sprinkle Creek Road section of line that serves the I-26 Welcome Center. This pipe requires a contractor to repair due the unique pipe material. T&K Utilities is scheduled to complete the repair tomorrow, January 4th. Water department staff are monitoring the water storage tank at the Welcome Center and they report there has not been significant usage and there should be capacity to provide service for several days. Mr. Bennett will update the Board should there be any complication with the scheduled repair.

Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the surplus vehicles previously discussed have been advertised for sealed bid since mid-December. Bids for those vehicles will be accepted until and will be opened at 2:00 p.m. on January 6, 2022, in the Town Hall Conference Room. Mr. Bennett updated the Board on other items of interest to the Board.

Public Comment

Mayor Chandler then moved to public comment. Mayor Chandler recognized Mr. Robin Lyles to delivery comments to the Board. Mr. Lyles introduced himself to the Board and provided information concerning his lengthy career in law enforcement. Mr. Lyles stated he is originally from Gaston County, and currently lives just outside the Town on South Main Street. He advised he has worked at Asheville Police Department, Madison

County Sheriff's Department, and A-B Tech. He has specialized skills and is well-qualified for work in law enforcement. He stated he is easily accessible for any questions the Board may have.

There were no other public comments.

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

Mayor Chandler then advised that there was a matter before the Board required a closed session for personnel matters. **Alderman Zink made a motion to enter into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) for personnel matters.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.


Upon completing discussion of matters subject to the closed session, Mayor Chandler requested a motion to return the meeting to open session. **Alderman Jolley made a motion to end the close session and return the meeting to open session.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Chandler asked if there was a motion. **Alderman Jolley made a motion, that based on the recommendation of management, that Ms. Cora Gentry be approved for employment in the Police Department as a patrol officer subject to the trainee and probationary terms of the Town Personnel Policy.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.


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 14th day of February, 2022.


John L. Chandler, Mayor

ATTEST:


Nathan R. Bennett,
Town Manager





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AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING

Mars Hill Town Hall Conference Room

January 3, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order – *Mayor John L. Chandler*
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: December 6, 2021
4. **PRESENTATION** – Mars Hill Fire Department: Annual Report – Nathan Waldrup, Fire Chief
5. Old Business
6. New Business
7. Town Manager Report – Nathan Bennett, Town Manager
 - a. COVID-19 Response Update
 - b. Excavator for Public Works
 - c. REMINDER – February 2022 Regular Meeting at Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School
 - d. General Update
8. 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.]
9. Closed Session (*Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 – if needed*)
10. Adjourn

Mars Hill Town Hall

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Mars Hill, North Carolina 28754

Phone: (828) 689-2301 • Fax: (828) 689-3333

MHFD 2021 Activity Report

| Call Type | Number of Calls |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Building Fire | 17 |
| Trash Fire | 4 |
| Chimney Fire | 3 |
| Wildfire | 37 |
| Vehicle Fire | 10 |
| Explosion (no fire) | 1 |
| Medical | 697 |
| MVA w/o injuries | 72 |
| MVA with injuries | 29 |
| Land Search | 2 |
| Elevator Rescue | 2 |
| Hazardous Condition | 16 |
| Tree Down | 30 |
| Stranded motorist | 4 |
| Landing Zone | 2 |
| LPG/LNG leak | 2 |
| CO Detector | 2 |
| Service Call | 61 |
| Person in distress | 23 |
| Assist Invalid | 31 |
| Good Intent Dispatched and cancelled | 13 |
| No incident found | 70 |
| Authorized burning | 40 |
| Severe Weather | 15 |
| False Alarms | 3 |
| Total Calls | 1239 |
| Training Hours | 2653.5 |
| Fire Prevention activities | 8 |
| Fire Prevention Hours | 45 |
| Overlapping Incidents | 125 |