



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 March 2, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

The Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen met in regular session on Monday, March 2, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Mars Hill Town Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor John Chandler; Aldermen Larry Davis and Robert W. (Bob) Zink. Aldermen Nicholas Honeycutt and Stuart Jolley were absent due to employment obligations.

STAFF PRESENT: Nathan R. Bennett, Town Manager; Larry Leake, Town Attorney; and Chad Wilson, Police Chief

OTHERS PRESENT: Erica Copley (Swim Club Management Group), Connie Molland, and other members of the general public.

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 Larry Davis made a motion that the agenda be approved as presented.** Alderman Bob Zink seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the agenda was unanimously approved. (Attachment A)

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Chandler then asked the Board to review the minutes of the special meeting held on February 17, 2026, to conduct the regular business agenda for February that was cancelled due to inclement weather. There being no modifications to the minutes, **Alderman Zink made a motion that the minutes for February 17, 2026, be approved as presented by management.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the minutes were unanimously approved.

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.

Recreation Pool Operation Plan

Mayor Chandler recognized Town Manager Nathan Bennett to provide information regarding the plan for operation and management of the Town recreation pool for the upcoming summer pool swim season. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the Town traditionally recruits temporary employees to serve as lifeguards and pool management. He stated in recent years it has become extremely difficult to secure sufficient, reliable staff for pool operations. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that other models for operation have been considered, including contracting with a private company to manage all aspects of the pool operations. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that he has secured a proposal for consideration from Swim Club Management Group (SCMG) to manage the pool this summer. Mr. Bennett introduced Ms. Erica Copley, President of SCMG, who was present to provide more information on the proposal.

Mayor Chandler then recognized Ms. Erica Copley with Swim Club Management Group (SCMG) to provide a presentation concerning their proposal to operate the Mars Hill pool this summer. Ms. Copley introduced herself and the company, highlighting many years of experience. Ms. Copley provided a PowerPoint presentation describing the company's management experience with county and municipal governments in the region, including Buncombe County, City of Asheville, City of Brevard, as well as numerous private country clubs and homeowners' associations in the region. She advised the company covers a geographical area from Beech Mountain to Lake Toxaway. Ms. Copley described that SCMG provides pool owners with a turn-key solution to include maintenance, lifeguard management, repair, construction, and guest relations. Ms. Copley expressed that safety is at the heart of their business and safety always comes first. She stated that SCMG is an American Red Cross authorized provider and they have in-house lifeguard instructors and lifeguard instructor trainers certifying over 200 lifeguards each season. Ms. Copley stated that SCMG requires mandatory in-service staff training each month to maintain employment and they have a dedicated safety team that inspects pools and performs vigilance awareness testing throughout the season. Ms. Copley provided a thorough summary of SCMG approach to cleanliness and compliance at each facility to include the following: daily maintenance checks, standard operating chemicals are included in the contract, pre- and post- season operating procedures to include permitting requirements, commercial general liability insurance, and workers' compensation insurance. She stated that under the terms of the contract, SCMG handles daily gate admissions and concessions, scheduling pool parties, and season passes. The pool will be operated pursuant to the operations schedule and fee schedule established by the Town, with same hours and daily schedule as in past seasons. The pool will be staffed with one manager and three lifeguards from opening to closing each day. SCMG will retain daily gate admission, season pass, pool party and concession revenue as part of this proposal in addition to the fixed contract price. Mayor Chandler and Alderman Zink asked clarifying questions regarding the proposal.

Mayor Chandler recognized Mr. Bennett to discuss further and for a recommendation on how to proceed. Mr. Bennett advised the Board the presentation covered all areas of concern and that he has reviewed the draft agreement for SCMG services. Mr. Bennett stated he believes the proposal meets and exceeds the expectations for a contractual operation agreement and, upon further review and approval by the town attorney, Mr. Bennett stated he would recommend the Board accept the proposal and authorize staff to execute the agreement with Swim Club Management Group for this summer. Upon completion of discussion, Mayor Chandler called for a motion. **Alderman Zink made a motion to approve the proposal from Swim Club Management Group and authorize the town manager and town attorney to execute the required agreement with same for the 2026 pool season, as presented.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION – Asheville Regional Housing Consortium / Appointment of Representatives

Mayor Chandler recognized Mr. Bennett to provide information regarding the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium. Mr. Bennett stated he was contacted in February by James Shelton, City of Asheville Community Development Division Manager, who serves as staff to the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium. Mr. Bennett provided a summary of the purpose of the Consortium is to administer the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HOME Investment Partnership Program. Mr. Bennett reminded the Board of the Town’s previous long-time participation as a member of the Consortium. Mr. Bennett stated Mr. Shelton’s communication indicated that in a recent review of records by HUD it was discovered that due to administrative errors between the Consortium and HUD over the years, Mars Hill’s (and some other members) membership had never technically been made official. Mr. Bennett advised that it is confusing as the Town has been an active participant in the Consortium for many years, and the Town’s representative has been Ms. Karen Kiehna all of this time. It is inexplicable why the Consortium nor HUD has the membership documentation. In any case, Mr. Bennett advised that the Consortium has voted unanimously to invite Mars Hill to officially join the Consortium and has provided a resolution required to move forward with formally establishing membership. Mr. Bennett presented the draft resolution for Board consideration and provided a summary of the elements of same. Upon completion of discussion, Mayor Chandler called for a motion. **Alderman Zink made a motion to approve the “RESOLUTION – AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER OF THE TOWN OF MARS HILL TO ENTER INTO A JOINT COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH THE ASHEVILLE REGIONAL HOUSING CONSORTIUM,” as presented.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved. (Attachment B)

Mr. Bennett then advised the Board that to provide certain clarity regarding the Town’s representatives to the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium, he was asking the Board to consider making formal appointments thereto. Mr. Bennett recommended the Board appoint Ms. Karen Kiehna, who has been the town’s long-time representative to the Consortium. In addition, Mr. Bennett recommended the Board appoint an alternate in the event Ms. Kiehna cannot attend. Upon completion of discussion, **Mayor Chandler made a motion to appoint Karen Kiehna as the Town of Mars Hill primary representative and Town Manager Nathan Bennett as alternate representative to the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium, effective immediately and until further action by the Board.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.

Financial Report – FY 2026 – Mid-Year

Mayor Chandler then recognized Mr. Bennett to provide information concerning the FY 2026 mid-year Financial Report. Mr. Bennett presented the financial report and summarized the status of revenues and expenditures as of December 31, 2025, the midway point of the fiscal year. Mr. Bennett advised that in the general fund all revenue line items are trending in a positive direction with most either meeting or exceeding expectations. Mr. Bennett advised at this point in the fiscal year the collection of anticipated revenues would be 50%. The town has collected 77% of revenues. Mr. Bennett then reviewed the expenditures of all departments and noted that most departments are on target for expected expenditures. Mr. Bennett pointed out the departments that are more than the 50% target and explained that these departments had incurred unexpected expenses that were necessary or previously approved by action of the Board such as the purchase of the expansion trash truck in December. Mr. Bennett stated that the expenditures of the budget is at 59%, which is a reasonable expectation at this point in the fiscal year due to many expenditures for contracts and other one-time expenses that occur early in the fiscal year. Mr. Bennett advised the Board he has prepared a budget amendment to incorporate those expenditures into the budget to provide clarity for the remainder of the fiscal year. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the water and sewer fund is in excellent position with 62% of expected revenue already collected and expenses are at 41%. Upon completion of discussion, Mayor Chandler called for a motion. **Alderman Zink made a motion to**

approve the “FINANCIAL STATEMENT – December 31, 2025,” as presented. Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved. (Attachment C)

BUDGET AMENDMENT – FY 2026-02

Mayor Chandler then recognized Mr. Bennett to provide information concerning a budget amendment to the FY 2026 budget ordinance. Mr. Bennett presented Budget Ordinance Amendment FY 2026-02, to make certain modifications to the general fund budget allocations. Upon completion of discussion, Mayor Chandler called for a motion. **Alderman Davis made a motion to approve the “BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – FY 2026-02, ORDINANCE # 305,” as presented.** Alderman Zink seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved. (Attachment D)

Town Manager Report – Nathan Bennett, Town Manager

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

General Update

Mayor Chandler then recognized Mr. Bennett to provide the Town Manager Report. Mr. Bennett advised the Board bids are currently being received for the Calvin Edney Road/Exit 11 Water and Wastewater Extension Project. Bids will be opened on March 10, 2026, at the Town Hall Conference Room. Once bids are verified, a recommendation will be made to the Board for award of the construction contract.

Mr. Bennett advised the Board that he is working on the request for proposals to procure a contractor to provide residential yard waste collection. The town’s former contractor retired at the end of December after many years providing this service to the Town. Mr. Bennett advised he will provide an update on this process at the next meeting. Mr. Bennett then advised the Board that a tree fell on the pump station building located on Sprinkle Creek that provides service to the welcome center on I-26. The roof and exterior electrical service were severely damaged and had to be replaced but no damage was done to the interior of the building or any of the equipment located inside. Mr. Bennett stated that Mars Hill Hardware and their contractors worked quickly with town staff to make these repairs, eliminating any outage of service and securing the building.

Mr. Bennett provided the Board with a summary of other activities, ongoing projects, and items of interest to the Board. Mayor Chandler thanked Mr. Bennett for his report.

Public Comment

Mayor Chandler then moved to public comment. There was no public comment.


Closed Session (Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) & (4))

There was no closed session.


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 6th day of April, 2026.


John L. Chandler, Mayor

ATTEST:


Nathan R. Bennett,
Town Manager





ATTACHMENT A

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

March 2, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order – Mayor John L. Chandler
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: February 17, 2026 – Special/Regular Meeting
4. Old Business
5. New Business
 - a. Recreation Pool Operation Plan
 - b. **RESOLUTION** – Asheville Regional Housing Consortium
 - c. Financial Report – FY 2026 – Mid-Year
 - d. **BUDGET AMENDMENT** – FY 2026-02
6. Town Manager Report – Nathan Bennett, Town Manager
 - a. General Update
7. 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.]
8. Closed Session (*Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)*)
9. 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

ATTACHMENT B

RESOLUTION

AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER OF THE TOWN OF MARS HILL TO ENTER INTO A JOINT COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH THE ASHEVILLE REGIONAL HOUSING CONSORTIUM

WHEREAS, the Town of Mars Hill, North Carolina, has determined that the health and welfare of its jurisdiction may benefit from increasing the availability of decent, safe, and affordable housing; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Mars Hill has determined that providing decent, safe, and affordable housing will benefit work force productivity and area economic development; and

WHEREAS, a cooperative approach to providing housing in the Asheville Regional area will avoid duplication of effort and promote more effective delivery of housing services; and

WHEREAS, a consortium of local governments is entitled to receive funds from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that they would be unqualified to receive individually; and

WHEREAS, the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, as amended, makes provisions whereby units of general local government may enter into cooperation agreements and form Consortia to undertake or assist in undertaking affordable housing pursuant to the HOME Investment Partnerships Program; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Mars Hill, North Carolina desires to join the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium to undertake or assist in undertaking affordable housing under the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1990; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium have voted unanimously to invite Mars Hill to formally join the consortium; and

WHEREAS, Article 20 Chapter 160A of the North Carolina General Statutes authorizes units of local government to enter into contracts or agreements with each other in order to execute any undertaking.


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

- 1) The Town Manager of Mars Hill, Nathan R. Bennett, is hereby authorized to execute a Joint Cooperation Agreement with the other participating units of general local government in Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania and Madison Counties to join the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium.
- 2) The Town Manager is further authorized to sign all contracts, approved by the Town Attorney with other Governmental Agencies as may be required to carry out activities of the Cooperation Agreement.

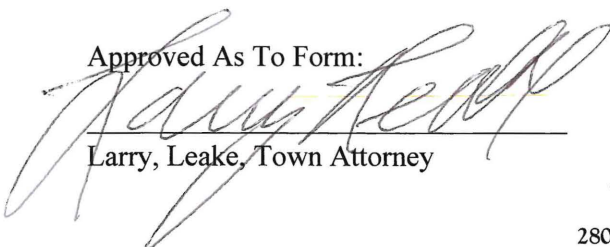
ADOPTED this 2nd day of March 2026, by the Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

Attest:


Stuart L. Jolley, Town Clerk


John L. Chandler, Mayor

Approved As To Form:


Larry, Leake, Town Attorney



Town of Mars Hill			
Mars Hill, North Carolina			
FINANCIAL STATEMENT			
31-Dec-25			
SECTION I: General & Powell Bill Funds		Budget	Actual
A. REVENUES ANTICIPATED			
Property Tax (Current Year/\$.47 per \$100)		\$ 950,250.00	\$ 798,684.94
Property Tax (Prior Years)		\$ 5,500.00	\$ 8,781.38
Payment in Lieu of Taxes		\$ 8,000.00	\$ 14,675.39
Tax Penalties and Interest		\$ 2,000.00	\$ 5,852.50
Ad Valorem Vehicle Tax		\$ 65,000.00	\$ 46,549.30
Municipal Parking Fee		\$ 6,000.00	\$ 10,338.00
Interest Earned/Investments		\$ 140,000.00	\$ 119,595.35
Rents and Concessions		\$ -	\$ -
Utilities Revenue		\$ 1,500.00	\$ 557.44
Miscellaneous Revenue		\$ 5,000.00	\$ 1,427.79
Utilities Franchise Tax		\$ 125,000.00	\$ 73,449.97
Excise Tax - Beer & Wine		\$ 8,000.00	\$ -
Powell Bill Street Allocation		\$ 70,000.00	\$ 79,296.54
Local Option Sales Tax		\$ 740,000.00	\$ 534,182.28
State Gov. Grants - COVID Funds		\$ -	\$ 50,000.00
Local Government Funds		\$ -	\$ 30,000.00
Court Costs, Fees, Etc.		\$ 100.00	\$ 121.50
Parking Violation Penalties		\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,265.00
Zoning Permits		\$ 500.00	\$ 400.00
Inspection/Fire Codes Fee/Fines		\$ -	\$ -
Street Department Revenue		\$ -	\$ -
Police Department Revenue/Donation		\$ 100.00	\$ 3,087.64
Recreation Department Revenues		\$ 25,000.00	\$ 16,676.26
Fire Department Revenues		\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,350.00
Fire Dept. Relief Funds		\$ -	\$ -
Tax Refunds		\$ 8,500.00	\$ 40,939.90
Special Fire District Tax		\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 720,294.02
Appropriated Fund Balance, General		\$ 130,000.00	\$ 82,000.00
Appropriated Fund Balance, Powell Bill		\$ 130,000.00	\$ -
Card Fee		\$ -	\$ 580.87
Other Fin. Sources/Uses-Transfer In		\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL ANTICIPATED REVENUES		\$ 3,425,450.00	\$ 2,640,106.07
B. EXPENDITURES AUTHORIZED			
1. Governing Body		\$ 128,500.00	\$ 104,317.34
2. Administration		\$ 325,100.00	\$ 185,947.43
3. Elections		\$ 10,000.00	\$ -
4. Tax Collections		\$ 5,800.00	\$ 2,745.04

5. Public Buildings		\$	50,500.00	\$	50,595.57
(Continued to Page 2)					
PAGE 2					
6. Police Department		\$	876,150.00	\$	381,548.85
7. Fire Department		\$	1,042,783.00	\$	585,212.65
8. Street Department		\$	416,687.00	\$	257,187.92
9. Powell Bill Expenditures		\$	200,000.00	\$	26,680.46
10. Sanitation Department		\$	237,130.00	\$	284,660.11
11. Recreation Department		\$	109,300.00	\$	97,975.78
12. Library		\$	23,500.00	\$	18,210.13
13. Debt Service		\$	-	\$	-
14. Other Financial Sources/Uses Trans. Out		\$	-	\$	30,000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES AUTHORIZED		\$	3,425,450.00	\$	2,025,081.28
SECTION II: Water & Sewer					
A. Revenues Anticipated					
Interest Earned/Investments		\$	40,000.00	\$	64,298.74
Interest Earned/Enterprise Fund		\$	20,000.00	\$	39,456.49
Miscellaneous		\$	10,000.00	\$	21,439.18
Local Government Funds		\$	-	\$	102,400.00
Water & Sewer Charges		\$	1,286,437.00	\$	626,602.57
Sewer Taps		\$	10,000.00	\$	9,000.00
Water Taps		\$	20,000.00	\$	14,000.00
Water Penalty		\$	-	\$	6,826.56
Sale of Materials		\$	-	\$	-
Approp. Fund Balance/Water & Sewer		\$	50,000.00	\$	-
Approp. Fund Balance/Enterprise		\$	-	\$	-
Card Fee		\$	-	\$	30.76
Other Fin. Sources/Uses		\$	-	\$	-
TOTAL ANTICIPATED REVENUES		\$	1,436,437.00	\$	884,054.30
B. Expenditures Authorized					
Debt Service		\$	113,100.00	\$	27,558.00
Administration/Engineering/Billing		\$	346,159.00	\$	174,215.01
Operations		\$	977,178.00	\$	384,100.48
TOTAL EXPENDITURES AUTHORIZED		\$	1,436,437.00	\$	585,873.49

TOWN OF MARS HILL


2025 – 2026 Fiscal Year

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT
FY 2026-02ORDINANCE #: 305


The purpose of this budget amendment is to update the FY 2025-26 **GENERAL FUND** budget as follows:

Budget Code	Description	Expenditures	Revenues
10-3680-0000	Special Fire District Tax	\$	\$ 187,737
10-3994-0000	Appropriated Fund Balance	\$	\$ 134,710
10-3491-0000	State Grants (NCOSFM Disaster Relief Grant)	\$	\$ 50,000
10-3493-0000	Local Government Funds (Rotary Grant 20K/ABA 10K – Restroom Proj.)	\$	\$ 30,000
10-5000-1500 Public Buildings	Maintenance – Buildings & Grounds (Town Hall water damage restoration, PD office safety improvements)	\$ 25,000	\$
10-5300-1500 Fire	Maintenance – Buildings & Grounds (Mini-split replacement)	\$ 3,500	\$
10-5300-1600	Maintenance – Equipment	\$ 5,000	\$
10-5300-3300	Supplies and Materials	\$ 5,000	\$
10-5300-3600	Protective Clothing	\$ 5,000	\$
10-5300-5300	Dues & Subscriptions	\$ 4,000	\$
10-5300-7400	Capital Outlay – Equipment (New Tahoe & Brush Truck upfit, UTV & upfit, rescue tools)	\$ 202,607	\$
10-5300-7800	Non-Capital Outlay/Equip	\$ 12,630	\$
10-5600-4500 Streets	Contracted Services	\$ 10,000	\$
10-5600-7400	Capital Outlay – Equipment	\$ 10,000	\$
10-5600-9500	Capital Outlay – Revitalization (New Mtn. View Parking Lot)	\$ 55,710.00	\$
10-5800-7400 Sanitation	Miscellaneous (Employee CDL Training X 2)	\$ 8,000	\$
10-6200-4500 Recreation	Contracted Services (Smith Farm Restroom/Shelters)	\$ 50,000	\$
10-6200-5700	Miscellaneous	\$ 1,000	\$
10-6300-1500 Library	Maintenance – Buildings & Grounds (additional cleaning services, other)	\$ 5,000	\$
	TOTAL ADDITIONAL EXPENSES AUTHORIZED	\$ 402,447	\$
	TOTAL ADDITIONAL REVENUES ANTICIPATED	\$	\$ 402,447

This budget amendment is hereby **ADOPTED** and incorporated into the FY 2025-26 Budget Ordinance by the Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen meeting in regular session on this the 2nd day of March, 2026.


John L. Chandler, Mayor

ATTEST:


Stuart L. Jolley, Clerk

