



# 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 May 4, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

The Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen met in regular session on Monday, May 4, 2026, 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; Larry Leake, Town Attorney; and Chad Wilson, Police Chief

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Johnny Casey, News-Record & Sentinel; Theresa Gang, Connie Molland, Devi Sharp, Hunter Sharp, 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 Nicholas Honeycutt 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 unanimously approved. (Attachment A)

#### Approval of Minutes

Mayor Chandler then asked the Board to review the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 6, 2026. There being no modifications to the minutes, **Alderman Jolley made a motion that the minutes for April 6, 2026, 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 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.

**AGREEMENT – FY 2025-26 Audit Contract for Service – Gould Killian CPA Group, P.A.**

Mayor Chandler recognized Town Manager Nathan Bennett to provide information regarding the proposed agreement for auditing services from Gould Killian CPA Group. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that Gould Killian CPA Group has submitted the proposed agreement to provide auditing services and the associated NC Local Government Commission contract to audit accounts for the Town of Mars Hill Fiscal Year 2025-2026 annual audit. Mr. Bennett explained that this will be the sixth year this firm has completed the audit and the proposed cost is not to exceed \$43,500. Those fees are based on 27,500 audit fee, \$4,500 major program fee (if required), and \$7,000 preparation of audit statements. These agreements are the same as prior years with no appreciable changes. Mr. Bennett recommended the Board approve these agreements. Upon completion of discussion of the matter, Mayor Chandler called for a motion. **Alderman Honeycutt made a motion to approve the “AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE SERVICES” and “CONTRACT TO AUDIT ACCOUNTS,” by and between Gould Killian CPA Group, P.A., and the Town of Mars Hill for the annual audit for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.** Alderman Bob Zink seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.

**RESOLUTION – LOCAL WATER SUPPLY PLAN**

Mayor Chandler then recognized Mr. Bennett to provide information concerning the 2025 Local Water Supply Plan for the Town of Mars Hill. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) requires the Town have a local water supply plan and that said plan is to be reviewed and updated every five years. This plan has been updated by Town staff and submitted to DEQ which has approved the plan on April 10, 2026. DEQ advised the next step in this process is that the plan must next be adopted by the Board by resolution. Mr. Bennett reviewed the draft resolution with the Board and recommended approval of same. Mayor Chandler asked the Board to review the proposed resolution. Upon completion of discussion, Mayor Chandler called for a motion. **Alderman Zink made a motion to approve the “RESOLUTION – Approving the Local Water Supply Plan for the Town of Mars Hill,” as presented.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved. (Attachment B)

**RESOLUTION – Buncombe Madison Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan**

Mayor Chandler then recognized Mr. Bennett to provide information concerning concerning the Buncombe Madison Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and N.C. Division of Emergency Management require every jurisdiction to have an adopted hazard mitigation plan in order to be eligible for federal flood insurance, disaster recovery funding, and other assistance from those agencies. Madison County and Buncombe County, together with each municipality within those counties, participate jointly in the development and implementation of a regional hazard mitigation plan to meet this requirement to identify and plan mitigation strategies for natural hazards. The proposed mitigation plan provides a comprehensive update to the previous plan created and adopted in 2021 by these jurisdictions. Upon completion of discussion of the subject plan, Mayor Chandler called for a motion. **Alderman Jolley made a motion to approve the “RESOLUTION – Adopting the Buncombe Madison Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.”** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was approved unanimously. (Attachment C)

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

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

## **General Update**

Mr. Bennett provided a general update on certain operational items. **FY 2027 Budget Preparation** – Mr. Bennett advised the Board that work on the FY 2027 budget is nearly complete. Mr. Bennett advised that he has met with department heads and has drafted a budget that will incorporate needed equipment and enhancements that will improve operations. He states the draft maintains the current tax rate at \$0.34 per \$100 of property valuation and a modest cost of living increase for employees. The final draft budget will be available for public inspection at Town Hall prior to the required budget hearing. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the budget hearing will be scheduled to occur as part of the June 1, 2026, regular meeting of the Board. Adoption of the budget can occur at that time or anytime thereafter, prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>, the statutory deadline. **WWTP Discharge** – Mr. Bennett provided the Board a report on the recent accidental discharge of approximately 77,000 gallons of untreated wastewater from the Town wastewater treatment plant into the Gabriels Creek during a 12-hour period from approximately 10:00 p.m. April 21, 2026, until 10:00 a.m. April 22, 2026. This discharge happened due to an error by the plant operator and was corrected immediately upon discovery. The Town immediately contacted and voluntarily reported this discharge to the NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and have followed all directives by that agency. The Town provided DEQ the required “5-day” report and provided notice to the general public on April 24 through a news release to the News-Record & Sentinel, and a notice to be published in that paper. The Madison County Health Department was contacted, and they advise there have been no reported water-borne illnesses reported and no deceased wildlife observed along the effected streams. DEQ continues to their investigation and at this time they have not directed any further actions to be taken by the Town. Mr. Bennett stated that DEQ has indicated that the Town will receive a notice of violation in the coming days and that the Town will take further action consistent with directives from DEQ. **Exit 11/Calvin Edney Road Water & Wastewater Extension Project** – Mr. Bennett advised the Board that a preconstruction conference was held for this project on April 13, 2026. The contract documents and project schedule were discussed, with the issuance of the notice to proceed. The construction begin date was set for May 26, 2026, and with a 90-day construction period, the completion date was set for August 24, 2026. Yard Waste Program – Mr. Bennett advised that Leapfrog Landscaping & Lawncare has been selected to manage the Town’s residential yard waste program. This is a very reputable local company and is fully insured. Leapfrog will manage the program under the same conditions as the prior company at a cost of \$105/hour, which is only a \$10 increase from the prior service provider that had been in place for many years. Leapfrog will begin service in the coming weeks. **MHU/Athletic Street Retaining Wall Damage** – Mr. Bennett advised the Board that MHU personnel contacted him last Friday stating the rock wall containing the fence along Athletic Street and the football stadium was apparently damaged during the Athletic Street resurfacing project. Mr. Bennett met with facilities director Tim Allen and assessed the matter. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that he did observe damage to the wall, and that he told Mr. Allen that while this was work done on the Town’s street, the work was done as part of the NC 213 waterline project and that the project and the contractor were under contract with Madison County and not the Town. Mr. Bennett explained to Mr. Allen he would provide photos and a summary of his observations to Madison County Manager Rod Honeycutt. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that he sent that information by email to the county manager this morning and provided copies to Mr. Allen, President Tony Floyd, and incoming president Tracy Parkinson. **Grant Applications** – Mr. Bennett advised the Board that he has submitted the Mars Hill/Marshall/Hot Springs partnership study grant to NCDEQ, as discussed last month. He also advised that last week he submitted the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant application for acquisition funding for the Bone Camp property as discussed. Mr. Bennett advised that he participated in a site visit with the NC Land and Water Fund (NCLWF) staff at the West Farm regarding the Town’s grant application for NCLWF assistance with funding to acquire the West Farm. The Town has applied for a grant of approximately \$770,000 for the West Farm project. The visit went very well and a funding decision is expected in early October. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant (state side funding) submitted last fall for \$500,000 in funding for acquisition of the Bone Camp property has been recommended for funding by NC Parks and has been forwarded to the US

Department of Interior – National Park Service for further review and potential award. Formal award notification must be made by last September 2026. Best College Town Designation – Mr. Bennett advised the Board that Mars Hill has been named one of “*America’s 11 Best College Towns with Mountain Views*” by *Islands*, a popular travel website. He stated that Mars Hill was one of only three town’s in the southeast United States, including Charlottesville, Virginia (home of the University of Virginia). Other town’s were in the Rocky Mountains, the Pacific Northwest, and Sierra Nevadas. Quoting from the article, Mr. Bennett stated, “And nestled in valley from North Carolina to California are beautiful towns that are home to great schools, where the atmosphere is often youthful, artsy, historic, and of course, wonderfully outdoorsy.” Mr. Bennett noted that the photo attributed to Mars Hill was the Town’s Smith Farm property and Bailey mountain Park and Preserve.

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 and hard work.

### **Public Comment**

Mayor Chandler then moved to public comment. Mayor Chandler recognized Connie Molland. Ms. Molland made brief remarks that she is here to learn about the issues Mars Hill is working on and how she might be of assistance if she is successful in her campaign for Madison County Commissioner. There were no other public comments.

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

Mayor Chandler advised the Board that there is a need for a closed session to consult with the Town Attorney on a legal matter. **Alderman Zink made a motion to enter closed session for the purpose of consultation with legal counsel pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3).** Alderman Jolley seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.

### ***CLOSED SESSION***

Upon completion of discussion of the 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 Jolley seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.


### **Open Session**


Upon returning to open session, Mayor Chandler announced there was no action subject to the 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 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 1<sup>st</sup> day of June, 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

May 4, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order – Mayor John L. Chandler
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: April 6, 2026 – Regular Meeting
4. Old Business
5. New Business
  - a. **AGREEMENT** - FY 2025-26 Audit Contract for Services – Gould Killian CPA Group, P.A.
  - b. **RESOLUTION** – Local Water Supply Plan
  - c. **RESOLUTION** – Buncombe Madison Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan
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

## RESOLUTION

### APPROVING THE LOCAL WATER SUPPLY PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF MARS HILL

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina General Statute 143-355(l) requires that each unit of local government that provides public water service or that plans to provide public water service and each large community water system shall, either individually or together with other units of local government and large community water systems, prepare and submit a Local Water Supply Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, as required by the statute and in the interests of sound local planning, a Local Water Supply Plan for Town of Mars Hill, has been developed and submitted to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for approval; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen finds that the Local Water Supply Plan is in accordance with the provisions of North Carolina General Statute 143-355(l) and that it will provide appropriate guidance for the future management of water supplies for the Town of Mars Hill, as well as useful information to the Department of Environmental Quality for the development of a state water supply plan as required by statute;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Mars Hill that the Local Water Supply Plan entitled, Local Water Supply Plan for the Town of Mars Hill dated May 4, 2026, is hereby approved and shall be submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Water Resources; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen intends that this plan shall be revised to reflect changes in relevant data and projections at least once every five years or as otherwise requested by the Department, in accordance with the statute and sound planning practice.

**ADOPTED** this the 4th day of May, 2026, by the Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

Attest:

  
Stuart L. Jolley, Town Clerk

  
John L. Chandler, Mayor





# Town of Mars Hill

## RESOLUTION

### ADOPTING THE BUNCOMBE MADISON REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

**WHEREAS**, the citizens and property within Town of Mars Hill are subject to the effects of natural hazards that pose threats to lives and cause damage to property, and with the knowledge and experience that certain areas of the county are particularly vulnerable to drought, extreme heat, hailstorm, hurricane and tropical storm, lightning, thunderstorm wind/high wind, tornado, winter storm and freeze, flood, hazardous material incident, and wildfire; and

**WHEREAS**, Town of Mars Hill desires to seek ways to mitigate the impact of identified hazard risks; and

**WHEREAS**, the Legislature of the State of North Carolina has in Article 5, Section 160D-501 of Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes, delegated to local governmental units the responsibility to adopt regulations designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of its citizenry; and

**WHEREAS**, the Legislature of the State of North Carolina has enacted General Statute Section 166A-19.41 (*State emergency assistance funds*) which provides that for a state of emergency declared pursuant to G.S. 166A-19.20(a) after the deadline established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the eligible entity shall have a hazard mitigation plan approved pursuant to the Stafford Act; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 322 of the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, as amended, states that local governments must develop an All-Hazards Mitigation Plan in order to be eligible to receive future Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Funds and other disaster-related assistance funding and that said Plan must be updated and adopted within a five year cycle; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Mars Hill has performed a comprehensive review and evaluation of each section of the previously approved Hazard Mitigation Plan and has updated the said plan as required under regulations and at 44 CFR Part 201 and according to guidance issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management, and that the plans have been updated in accordance with federal laws including the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended; the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as amended; the National Dam Safety Program Act, as amended; as required under regulations at 44 CFR Part 201, and according to guidance issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the intent of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for the Town of Mars Hill to fulfill this obligation in order that the Town of Mars Hill will be eligible for federal and state assistance in the event that a state of disaster is declared for a hazard event affecting the Town of Mars Hill.

#### Mars Hill Town Hall

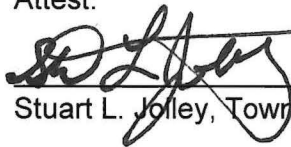
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Phone: (828) 689-2301 • Fax: (828) 689-3333  
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**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for the Town of Mars Hill hereby:

1. Adopts the Buncombe Madison Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.
2. Agrees to take such other official action as may be reasonably necessary to carry out the objectives of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**ADOPTED** this the 4th day of May, 2026, by the Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Stuart L. Jolley, Town Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John L. Chandler, Mayor

Certified by:  (SEAL)

Date: 5-4-2026

