



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 November 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

The Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen met in regular session on Monday, November 3, 2025, 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; Kaitland Finkle, Regional Planner – Land of Sky Regional Council

OTHERS PRESENT: Johnny Casey, Madison News-Record & Sentinel; Danielle Plimpton, Samuel Evans, Sydney Grace Evans, Allyson Kirkman, Bill Sewell, Frank Johnson, James Heinl, Srea Bloch, 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 Bob Zink made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.** Alderman Nicholas Honeycutt 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 asked the Board to review the minutes of the regular meeting held on October 6, 2025. There being no modifications to the minutes, **Alderman Larry Davis made a motion that the minutes for the October 6, 2025, regular meeting 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 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.

Bailey Mountain International Folk Festival

Mayor Chandler then recognized Danielle Plimpton with the Bailey Mountain Cloggers to present information regarding the proposed Bailey Mountain International Folk Festival. Ms. Plimpton thanked the Board for the opportunity to present information on this exciting event and to request the Town to consider a sponsorship opportunity. Ms. Plimpton stated that the Bailey Mountain International Folk Festival is a celebration of global dance and music from diverse cultures to share their traditions, creativity, and passion. Through performances, workshops and collaborative experiences, participants and the local community will develop an appreciation of the world's rich artistic heritage. BMH has experienced these cultural exchanges for over thirty years and wants to bring these experiences to Mars Hill. The event is organized and produced by the MHU Bailey Mountain Cloggers (BMC) and is scheduled for July 1 – 5, 2026. Ms. Plimpton discussed the various organizational aspects of the event and how it will drive certain economic development and tourism business to the Town. She stated BMC has received support from the Madison County Tourism Development Authority, Madison County Visitor Center, and Madison County Chamber of Commerce. There was conversation between the Mayor and Board members regarding the specific needs of the event and how the Town can support this initiative. The Board expressed support for the event and thanked Ms. Plimpton and BMC. Upon completion of discussion by the Board, Mayor Chandler asked for a motion. **Alderman Stuart Jolley made a motion to allocate \$5,000 in Town funds for operations and other needs as a “Legacy Sponsor” of the Bailey Mountain International Folk Festival.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.

North Main Street Small Area Plan

Mayor Chandler then recognized Kaitland Finkle, Regional Planner with Land of Sky Regional Council. Ms. Finkle provided the Board with a progress update on the North Main Street Small Area Plan project. Ms. Finkle reminded the Board that this planning effort is fully funded by a grant from the N.C. Department of Commerce Rural Economic Development Division. Ms. Finkle advised that the proposed plans are a vision for future potential development activity for this subject area bound by Mountain View Road, Anderson Street, and Ivey Street, as well as Short Street. The Plan outlines strategies to guide future development in the short and long term. These proposed plans involve both public and private investment ideas for this area. The Plan envisions a mix of public improvements including street and sidewalk improvements, public parking, green space to include a greenway and park, and infrastructure to support potential private investments such as mixed-use structures for residential and business use. The Plan serves as a conceptual vision for the future and is advisory in nature with no mandate or requirement for private participation or other government action. Ms. Finkle stated that interviews have been completed with the property owners in the plan area, residents, business owners, library, fire department, and other private and public entities in the subject planning area. The plans have also been reviewed and modified through several meetings with the Town Planning and Zoning Board, and their recommendations have been included in these draft documents. The Planning Board voted to endorse these proposed plans at their last meeting on October 28, 2025. The next step will be for the Board of Aldermen to hold a public hearing after giving public notice and then consider taking action for approval after that hearing. Board consensus was for Ms. Finkle to proceed with this planning process and place the notice for the public hearing on the proposed plan at the Board's next regular meeting on December 1, 2025. Mayor Chandler and Board members thanked Ms. Finkle for her work on this project.

N.C. Department of Environmental Quality – Asset Inventory and Assessment Grants

Mayor Chandler then recognized Town Manager Nathan Bennett to provide information regarding the Asset Inventory and Assessment grants received from the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Mr. Bennett reminded the Board that the Town was notified in March that DEQ awarded two Asset Inventory and Assessment grants, one for the water system and one for the wastewater system. Each grant award is \$150,000

requiring a 20% match from the town and a 1.5% administrative fee charged by the Department. These grants will provide funding to facilitate the Town's ability to develop an Asset Management Plan (AMP) which will help create a systematic process for assessing, repairing, and replacing critical assets for the Town's water and sewer utility. The project will include a full asset inventory and assessment of the condition of the Town's water and sewer systems, update system maps on GIS, a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), an Operation and Maintenance Plan, and a financial model to schedule annual expenditures required to fund proposed capital improvements, including a rate study to reflect the potential for necessary changes to the Town's rates or rate structure to fund projects identified in the CIP. The Town and DEQ have completed the scope of work drafting process and the DEQ has approved the Town proposal and now provides the grant agreements for the Town to approve before work on the project can begin. The performance period is one (1) year from that point with an expected draft product deliverable by end of calendar year 2026. Upon completion of discussion by the Board, Mayor Chandler asked for a motion. **Alderman Jolley made a motion to approve the resolutions entitled "RESOLUTION BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN FOR THE TOWN OF MARS HILL WATER SYSTEM ASSET INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT (AIA) PROJECT – PROJECT NUMBER AIA-D-0315 (Attachment B)," and "RESOLUTION BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN FOR THE TOWN OF MARS HILL WASTEWATER SYSTEM ASSET INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT (AIA) PROJECT – PROJECT NUMBER AIA-W-0316 (Attachment C)," as presented.** Alderman Zink seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.

AIA Grant – Engineering Services Agreement

Mr. Bennett then presented information regarding the proposed engineering services agreement between the Town of Mars Hill and McGill Associates. Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the proposed engineering services agreement secures the services of McGill to provide the professional engineering services required to complete the components of the previously discussed NC DEQ Asset Inventory and Assessment grants for the Town water and wastewater systems. Mr. Bennett advised that these services are paid through the grant funds and the required local match. Mr. Bennett recommended approval of the engineering agreements as proposed. Upon completion of discussion by the Board, Mayor Chandler asked for a motion. **Alderman Honeycutt made a motion to approve the proposed McGill Associates Engineering Services Agreements for the Town of Mars Hill water and wastewater AIA projects, as presented.** Alderman Davis seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.

Board Appointments

Mayor Chandler then moved to address appointments to certain ancillary boards. Mayor Chandler advised the Board that Mr. Grady Worley was a member of the Mars Hill Firefighters Relief Fund Board and the Mars Hill Housing authority. Mr. Worley recently passed away, and Mayor Chandler recognized and expressed thanks for Mr. Worley's service to the Town on these Boards. Mayor Chandler advised the Board that Fire Chief Nathan Waldrop has recommended Mr. Billy Roberts be appointed to the remainder of Mr. Worley's unexpired term on the Firefighters Relief Fund. Upon completion of discussion by the Board, Mayor Chandler asked for a motion. **Alderman Jolley made a motion to appoint Mr. Billy Roberts to the Mars Hill Firefighters Relief Fund Board.** Alderman Honeycutt seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved. Mayor Chandler then stated the recommendation of Ms. Sandra Smith to the Mars Hill Housing Authority to the position previously held by Mr. Worley. **Mayor Chandler made a motion to appoint Ms. Sandra "Sandy" Smith to the Mars Hill Housing Authority Board of Directors.** Alderman Zink seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote by the Mayor, the motion was unanimously approved.

Town Manager Report – Nathan Bennett, Town Manager

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

Christmas Parade

Mr. Bennett advised the Board that the town-sponsored Christmas Parade will be held Saturday, December 6, 2025, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Parade participants will begin lineup at 3:00 p.m. at the usual location from prior years – Mars Hill Elementary for vehicles and floats, Town Hall for walking groups. Mr. Bennett stated that there is no fee to participate but an application is required and those must be submitted to Town Hall administration no later than close of business on Monday, December 1, 2025. The Board has previously approved the required ordinance for temporary street closures per NCDOT requirements. Mr. Bennett advised that there will be a craft vendor village and several food trucks located on College Street. Mr. Bennett stated that the parade is an extremely popular event and everyone is looking forward to another great year.

General Update

Mayor Chandler then recognized Mr. Bennett to provide the Town Manager Report. Mr. Bennett provided an update on the NC 213 water project. He stated that most of the Mars Hill portion of the project is complete with the installation of the water line and construction of the water storage tank. He states the remaining items on the Mars Hill side include the construction of the water pump station near Petersburg that is necessary should emergency water be needed from the Town of Marshall, and the resurfacing of Athletic Street.

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

Public Comment

Mayor Chandler then moved to public comment. Mayor Chandler recognized Mr. Frank Johnson. Mr. Johnson states he is the new owner of the property formerly home to Zink Outdoor Equipment at 180 Carl Eller Road. Mr. Johnson states he has renovated the property and there are new businesses located in that facility – Meadowsweet Creamery and Rutherford & Pug, and another restaurant under construction. Mr. Johnson advised that his tenants are concerned with perceived safety of NC 213 due to speed of vehicles and noise and asked if the Town can request NCDOT to perform a safety assessment of the area. By consensus, the Board asked the Town Manager to write a letter to NCDOT requesting they evaluate this area for potential safety improvements.

There being no other speakers for public comment, Mayor Chandler then moved to the next agenda item.

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

There was no closed session.

Adjourn

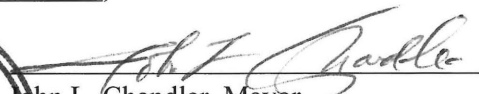
There being no further business before the Board, Mayor Chandler called for a motion to adjourn. **Alderman Zink made a motion to adjourn.** Alderman Jolley seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

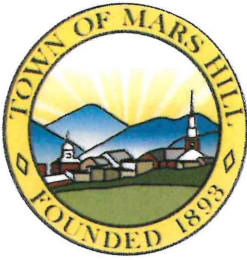
Approved and authenticated this the 1st day of December, 2025.

ATTEST:


Nathan R. Bennett, Town Manager




John L. Chandler, Mayor



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

November 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order – Mayor John L. Chandler
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: October 6, 2025 – Regular Meeting
4. Old Business
5. New Business
 - a. Bailey Mountain International Folk Festival – Danielle Plimpton
 - b. North Main Street Small Area Plan – Update – Kaitland Finkle, Regional Planner, Land of Sky RC
 - c. NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) – Asset Inventory and Assessment Grant (AIA)
 - i. **RESOLUTION** – NCDEQ AIA Grant Acceptance – Water and Wastewater Projects
 - ii. **AGREEMENT** – Engineering Services for AIA Projects – McGill Associates
 - d. Board Appointments – Firefighters Relief Fund
6. Town Manager Report – Nathan Bennett, Town Manager
 - a. Christmas Parade
 - b. 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

RESOLUTION BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN FOR THE TOWN OF MARS HILL WATER SYSTEM ASSET INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT (AIA) PROJECT

PROJECT: Mars Hill Water System AIA
PROJECT NUMBER: AIA-D-0315

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 159G has created Asset Inventory and Assessment (AIA) grants to assist eligible units of government with meeting their water infrastructure needs, and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality has offered a State Reserve Grant in the amount of \$150,000.00 to perform an Asset Inventory and Assessment study detailed in the submitted application, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Mars Hill intends to perform said project in accordance with the agreed scope of work,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF MARS HILL:

That Town of Mars Hill does hereby accept the State Reserve Grant offer of \$150,000.00.

That the Town of Mars Hill does hereby give assurance to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality that any Conditions or Assurances contained in the Award Offer will be adhered to.

That John L. Chandler, Mayor and Nathan R. Bennett, Town Manager, and successors so titled, are hereby authorized and directed to furnish such information as the appropriate State agency may request in connection with this project; to make the assurances as contained above; and to execute such other documents as may be required by the Division of Water Infrastructure.

Adopted this the 3rd day of November 2025, by the Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen at Mars Hill, North Carolina.

ATTEST:


STUART L. JOLLEY, Clerk




JOHN L. CHANDLER, Mayor



Town of Mars Hill

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN FOR THE TOWN OF MARS HILL WASTEWATER SYSTEM ASSET INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT (AIA) PROJECT

PROJECT: Mars Hill Wastewater System AIA
PROJECT NUMBER: AIA-W-0316

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 159G has created Asset Inventory and Assessment (AIA) grants to assist eligible units of government with meeting their water infrastructure needs, and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality has offered a State Reserve Grant in the amount of \$150,000.00 to perform an Asset Inventory and Assessment study detailed in the submitted application, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Mars Hill intends to perform said project in accordance with the agreed scope of work,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF MARS HILL:

That Town of Mars Hill does hereby accept the State Reserve Grant offer of \$150,000.00.

That the Town of Mars Hill does hereby give assurance to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality that any Conditions or Assurances contained in the Award Offer will be adhered to.

That John L. Chandler, Mayor and Nathan R. Bennett, Town Manager, and successors so titled, are hereby authorized and directed to furnish such information as the appropriate State agency may request in connection with this project; to make the assurances as contained above; and to execute such other documents as may be required by the Division of Water Infrastructure.

Adopted this the 3rd day of November 2025, by the Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen at Mars Hill, North Carolina.

ATTEST:


STUART L. JOLLEY, Clerk




JOHN L. CHANDLER, Mayor