



# 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 SPECIAL MEETING Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School 225 Mount Olive Drive, Mars Hill, NC February 13, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

The Town of Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen met in special session with the Friends of the Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School on Monday, February 13, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the historic Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School located at 225 Mount Olive Drive, Mars Hill, NC. The meeting was held in accordance with public notice given pursuant to N.C.G.S. 160A-71 and 143-318.12(b)(2). (Attachment A)

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor John Chandler; Aldermen Larry Davis, Nicholas Honeycutt, and Robert W. (Bob) Zink. Alderman Stuart Jolley was absent.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Nathan R. Bennett, Town Manager

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Faye Chandler, Dorothy Rapp, Ray Rapp, Willa Wyatt, and other members of the public.

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor John Chandler. Mayor Chandler welcomed those in attendance and expressed the Board's appreciation to the Friends of the Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School for the invitation to hold this meeting to hear an update from the Friends on their activities and initiatives.

#### **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 Bob Zink seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote on the motion by the Mayor, the agenda was approved unanimously. (Attachment B)

#### **PRESENTATION – Friends of the Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School**

Mayor Chandler then recognized Mr. Ray Rapp to provide a presentation of the activities and initiatives of the Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School (MHARS). Mr. Rapp thanked the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for their time and interested in meeting with the Friends at the school. Mr. Rapp also recognized Mrs. Willa Wyatt for her work and dedication to lead the effort raising approximately \$250,000 to save this historic structure and to rehabilitate it back into a center for the community from 2008 through 2022. Mr. Rapp then provided a brief history of the schools located in the Long Ridge community and how the original school on the site dates back to 1905. The existing school served as the African-American community from 1928 until integration in 1965. Mr. Rapp explained that Julius Rosenwald, a white Jewish American businessman was inspired by his friendship with

Booker T. Washington, an educator of the Tuskegee Institute, to establish Rosenwald Partnership Grants which funded over five thousand Black schools and ten thousand Black libraries across the Southeastern United States. These grants paid one-third of the costs of the proposed school while the county and the community would each pay one-third of the balance of the costs to construct the school to a standardized floor plan provided by Rosenwald. The MHARS was one of several school built in WNC but is now the only one still standing. The majority of these Rosenwald schools were built in North Carolina, some 811 total. The MHARS is the only known Rosenwald School in the South named for a former slave in Madison County, named Joseph Anderson.

The MHARS is recognized by the US Department of Interior on the National Registry of Historic Places. There is now a national effort to recognize the efforts of Julius Rosenwald. The National Park Service (NPS) has been ordered by Congress to study a number of proposals that could result in new national park sites or designation of new national heritage areas, national trails, or wild and scenic rivers. Mr. Rapp presented the current list and at number 10 on the list is a study to establish a designation to honor sites linked to Julius Rosenwald and the network of schools he created. This would establish a main park in Chicago, and have a number of affiliate school locations across the country. Mr. Rapp advised a couple of weeks ago, Phil Francis, former superintendent of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and now a NPS consultant, came to Mars Hill to evaluate and study the MHARS as a potential satellite site of the main Rosenwald. The photo used in the promotional material of the proposed national park and schools is the MHARS. Mr. Rapp states this process is just in the beginning of the study process, but should it come to fruition that status would have major implications for Mars Hill. Mr. Rapp stressed that if the “process was an extension ladder against a two-story building, we are on the first rung of the ladder.” Willa Wyatt stated that they are really excited about this process and what it could mean for the MHARS, Mars Hill, and Madison County. She further stated that there is a National Trust for Historic Preservation initiative that asking the states to locate all the Rosenwald school sites and in the promotional materials for that initiative, they utilize the photograph of the Mars Hill school. The initiative is entitled, “Tell the Rest of the Story.” Ms. Wyatt showed a video that was part of the history museum exhibit at Mars Hill University entitled Our Story, This Place,” that was done a few years ago in support of the rehabilitation fundraising efforts.

Mr. Rapp discussed the recent book entitled, *“The Historic Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School: Our Story, This Place, Notated History,”* published by the Friends of the Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School, providing a notated history of the school. Mr. Rapp presented a copy of the book to Mayor Chandler for the Town of Mars Hill, with the following inscription: *“The Friends of the Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School appreciate the support and encouragement given by the Town of Mars Hill to the preservation of this nationally recognized school.”* Mayor Chandler and board members thanked the Friends for the book and for the efforts made to save this historic treasure.

Mr. Rapp asked the Board as they looked forward to agenda planning next year, that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen would consider having their February meeting at the MHARS in recognition of Black History Month. He stated that meeting at the school would help the Friends call attention to the fact that they want this to be a community facility and is there to be used by the community. Mrs. Wyatt showed a second video that featured Sarah Hart sharing memories of her time as a student at MHARS. Mr. Rapp also advised there will be a documentary on Julius Rosenwald on PBS-UNCTV on February 23, 2023. He also invited the Board to an event at Mars Landing on March 25 from 1 to 4 featuring an exhibit and auction of artwork by the late Charity Ray to raise funds to be distributed to the Charity Ray Scholarship Fund at Mars Hill University and to the Mount Olive Baptist Church. At the conclusion of general conversation and announcements Mr. Rapp concluded the presentation.

Mayor Chandler thanked Mr. Rapp, Mrs. Wyatt, and the Friends for the presentation and information presented, noting how interesting and educational it was. Mayor Chandler again thanked them for the gift of the book and stated it will be prominently displayed at Town Hall.

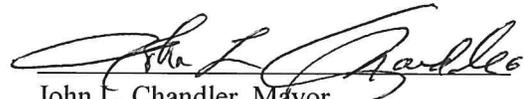
**Public Comment**

Mayor Chandler then moved to public comment. There were no public comments.

**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 Larry 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 \_\_\_\_\_ 13<sup>th</sup> day of \_\_\_\_\_ March \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

  
John L. Chandler, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Nathan R. Bennett,  
Town Manager





Notice of Special Meeting for Regular Meeting  
of the  
Town of Mars Hill  
Mayor and Board of Aldermen  
Scheduled for 13 February 2023

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Mars Hill Mayor and Board of Aldermen shall, pursuant to NC Gen. Stat. 160A-71 and NC Gen. Stat. 143-318.12(b)(2), hold a special meeting at the following designated place and time:

Date of Meeting: Monday, 13 February 2023

Time of Meeting: 5:30 p.m.

Place of Meeting: Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School  
225 Mount Olive Drive  
Mars Hill, North Carolina

Purpose of Meeting: The Mayor and Board of Aldermen will meet in collaboration with the Friends of the Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School to receive an update on the activities and initiatives related to the school and related purposes.

This the 8<sup>th</sup> day of February 2023.

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

Posted as required by NC Gen. Stat. 153A-40(b) and NC Gen. Stat. 143-318.12(b)(2) on this 8<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2023 at 12:00 o'clock p.m.

  
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Nathan R. Bennett, Town Manager

ATTACHMENT B



# Town of Mars Hill

MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN

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Nicholas A. Honeycutt  
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*Treasurer*  
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## AGENDA

### *SPECIAL MEETING*

*Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School*

*225 Mount Olive Drive, Mars Hill, NC*

*February 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.*

1. Call to Order – *Mayor John L. Chandler*
2. Approval of Agenda
3. **PRESENTATION** – Friends of the Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School
4. 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.]
5. Adjourn

**Mars Hill Town Hall**

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Mars Hill, North Carolina 28754

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