

Susan S. Phillips  
Village Manager

Stacy C. Eggers IV  
Village Attorney

(828) 898-9292  
www.seesugar.com



Gunther Jochl  
Mayor

Scott J. Brown  
Mayor Pro Tem

**Council Members**  
David Ammann  
Wade Wittman  
Dick Casey

**THE VILLAGE OF SUGAR MOUNTAIN**  
251 Dick Trundy Lane  
Sugar Mountain, NC 28604

## **Manager's Monthly Report** **January 21, 2025**

**Hurricane Helene:** Work continues, as it will for some time, throughout the Village on assessing damage from Hurricane Helene. The process of the debris removal and repairs to our infrastructure has begun as previously reported, with a considerable slow down with the holidays and the inclement weather. The contractors for debris removal have been in the Village since the holiday break, with a concentration of debris removal on Tynecastle Highway near Grouse Moor Drive entrance. A report from Avery County showed there have been 10,292.4 cubic yards or 335 loads removed from Sugar Mountain as of January 12, 2025. There have been 174,778.5 cubic yards or 5,012 loads removed as of this date in Avery County.

We continue to meet with FEMA representatives and Insight Consulting and have identified four projects that are nearing completion and will be submitting the costs of these projects for reimbursement from FEMA and the State.

**Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Board Meeting:** The TDA Board met on Wednesday, January 8, 2025. The Board approved the FY 2025 audit contract with Misty Watson in the amount of \$3,250. The Board received a recap of 2024 SugarFest weekend from Kim Jochl. The Board recommended to the Council the appointment of Erin Chu, Sugar Mountain Resort, as a member of the TDA Board following the resignation of Neill Cooper. The Board approved funding to the Resort in the amount of \$5,250 for January advertisement in Our State magazine. They also approved the purchasing of additional snowflake lights, garland, and wreaths for our decorative light poles in the amount of \$21,962. FY 2024-25 Budget Amendment #2 was adopted for the purchase of six decorative lights in the Resort parking area and the holiday decorations. The Board discussed needed improvements to the walkway and stairs from the Resort parking areas to the Resort. Options discussed were installation of a crosswalk and a permanent walkway along Sugar Mountain Drive. Chief Turbyfill has spoken of safety issues as people cross the road in this area. This will be discussed with the Resort before proceeding with any improvements. Dalton Kirby of Bramble Marketing submitted the attached December 2024 marketing update.

The November 2024 collections of the occupancy tax showed a decrease of 25% in comparison to November 2023. The occupancy tax collections for the period December 2023 through

November 2024 (\$742,097) have shown a \$121,736 or 14.09% decrease in comparison to the same period of 2023 (\$863,833).

**Courtyard Marriott at the Grandfather Center:** Following setbacks in construction in the past year, not only from acquiring permits, but also from damage caused by Helene, work has resumed on the construction of the Courtyard Marriott beside Lowe's Foods and has been progressing at a fast pace since mid-November. With an anticipated January 2026 opening, this will be a positive amenity for our guests and a nice addition to our tax base, both property and occupancy tax, with little or no increase in our costs of Village services.

**Property Tax Collections:** Of the \$1,435,840 total 2024 levy, \$1,330,467 or 92.66% has been collected with a balance of \$105,372 uncollected through January 16, 2025. A balance of \$3,694 is still uncollected for the 2015-2023 tax years. Taxes were due by Monday, January 6, 2025 and now any unpaid taxes begin to accrue interest and penalties.

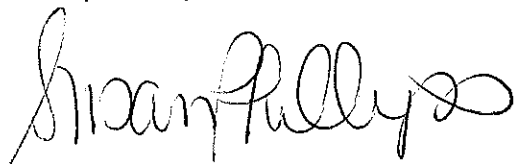
**Administrative Matters:** Advertisements for the Police Officer position vacancy, following the sudden resignation of Kyle Osborne, continue to run in the local newspapers as well as with the NC League of Municipalities job postings publication. To date, the Village has received no applications for the position. Chief Turbyfill continues to work the scheduled shifts of Osborne as well as being in the Village on the weekends for additional coverage with the busy ski season.

The Village office will be closed Monday, January 20th for the Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday. Residential household trash pick-up scheduled for Monday, January 20th will be picked-up on Tuesday, January 21st. All Avery County convenience centers and landfills will be closed on Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>.

The Police Department will be on a regular schedule throughout the holiday weekend. Reserve officers will be staffed to provide additional coverage.

The Public Works staff will also be scheduled as needed in the case of inclement weather.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Phillips", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Susan Phillips  
Village Manager