

**A Regular Meeting of the
VILLAGE COUNCIL OF SUGAR MOUNTAIN
MINUTES
Tuesday, January 20, 2026
4:00 P.M.**

1. **Call to Order of Regular Meeting** – Mayor Gunther Jochl called the Regular Meeting of Council to order at 4:00 p.m. with a quorum present as follows:

Council Members Present:

Mayor Gunther Jochl, Mayor Pro Tem Scott Brown, Council Member David Ammann, Council Member Dick Casey, and Council Member Wade Wittman.

Council Members Absent:

Village Hall Staff Present:

Attorney Stacy Eggers IV, Chief Casey Turbyfill, Public Works Director Bill Daniels, Village Manager Susan Phillips, and Village Clerk Tammy Floyd who recorded the official meeting.

Approximately six members of the public attended.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Chief Casey Turbyfill leads the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **Moment of Silence** – Mayor Gunther Jochl announces a moment of silence.
4. **Adoption of Regular Meeting Agenda** – Mayor Pro Tem Scott Brown moved to adopt the agenda with the addition of Banner Elk Fire Chief George Wright. Council Member Dick Casey seconded the motion. All were in favor and the **motion carried** four (4) votes to zero (0).

5. **Approval of Minutes**

- a. **December 16, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes**

- Council Member Dick Casey moved to approve the minutes as written. Council Member Wade Wittman seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the **motion carried** four (4) votes to zero (0).

6. **Old Business**

7. **New Business**

- a. **Consider Approval of Timber Ridge Rd. Repairs Project from Hurricane Helene Damages.**

- A bid sheet was provided to the council reporting the lowest bidder as Tri-County Paving for \$209,524.80.

- Mayor Pro Tem Scott Brown moved to accept the bid from Tri-County Paving. Council Member Wade Wittman seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the **motion carried** four (4) votes to zero (0).

- b. **Consider Adoption of FY 2025-26 Budget Amendment #2 to Appropriate Funds for the Ongoing Disaster Recovery Services Needed for Damages from Hurricane Helene.**

- Village Manager Susan Phillips reported these funds will be offset by FEMA. Council Member David Ammann made a motion to adopt the budget amendment. Mayor Pro Tem Scott Brown seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion carried four (4) votes to zero (0).

c. Consider Adopting the Toe River Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The Village Manager reported the plan is updated and considered for adoption every five years. Mayor Pro Tem Scott Brown moved to adopt the Plan with a second from Council Member Dick Casey. All were in favor and the **motion carried** four (4) votes to zero (0).

d. Consider Approval to Refund 2025 Tax Bill Overpayments.

A list of overpayments was provided to the Council. Council Member Wade Wittman motioned to approve the refunds with a second from Council Member David Ammann. All were in favor and the **motion carried** four (4) votes to zero (0).

e. Board President George Wright of the Banner Elk Vol. Fire Department.

Board President and Chaplin of the Banner Elk Vol. Fire Department presented information on the stipend program, number of calls per year, and annual goal to raise \$75,000 with the stipend program.

8. Departmental Reports

a. Village Manager's Report – Susan Phillips

The report includes an update on paving, repairs to Timber Ridge Road, Occupancy tax collection increase, FEMA expenditures and reimbursements.

b. Police Chief's Monthly Report – Chief Casey Turbyfill

The Chief reports the department is operating well. Managing traffic issues and daily calls for service with only one officer on duty during our busiest season remains a challenge. Melissa Keifer is being hired as a reserve officer and Madison Clark will be returning full-time. A monthly activity log was included for December 12, 2025 – January 15, 2026. Residence Checks: 390 Business Checks: 481 Patrol Miles: 4,767.

c. Public Works Director's Monthly Report – Bill Daniels

The report states the department has been very busy keeping up with the weather and it appears it will continue doing so for the week to come. The paving crew was able to return and get storm repair completed on Mossy Creek Lane, Slope View Road, Fox Run and the stretch of road between the Village Hall and the Avery County Convenience Center. Road cuts on Crestview Lane, Sugar Tree Lane, Forest Run and Dell Road will be repaired with the next warm up.

d. Monthly Permits Issuance Log – Tammy Floyd

Fence Permit: 1 Zoning Permit for New Home: 1 Zoning Permit for an addition: 1

e. Tax Collection Report

2025 Tax Collection Rate for January 16, 2026: 92.24%
2024 Tax Collection Rate: 99.77%

f. Finance Officer's Financial Report – Susan Phillips

Financial Reports provided through December 31, 2025.

9. Public Comments

Dedy Traver was thankful to George Wright for taking the time to come and get the word out on the stipend program.

10. Mayor/Council Comments

Mayor Pro Tem Gunther Jochl expressed great appreciation for staff and is blessed Sugar Mountain is home.

11. Closed Session for Personnel G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6)

At 4:24pm Council Member Dick Casey made a motion to enter closed session for personnel matters with a second from Council Member Wade Wittman. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously. The Council returned to open session with a motion from Mayor Pro Tem Scott Brown and a second from Council Member Wade Wittman. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously. Council Member Dick Casey made a motion to grant \$8,000 bonus and a 3% salary increase to village Manager Susan Phillips as a result to her annual review. Mayor Pro Tem Scott Brown seconded the motion. All were in favor and the **motion carried** four (4) votes to zero (0).

12. Adjournment

Council Member Dick Casey moved to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Wade Wittman seconded the motion. All were in favor and the **motion carried** four (4) votes to zero (0).

The meeting was adjourned at 4.31 p.m.

Gunther Jochl, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Tammy W. Floyd, Clerk

SEAL