

Minutes of Meeting
February 16, 2026
6:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Old Fort Board of Aldermen was held in the Board Room located in Town Hall on February 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

Governing Board Members present: Mayor Protem Iretha Hancock, Alderman James Grindstaff, Aldermen Wayne Stafford, Alderman Melvin Lytle and Alderman Erin Adams. Absent: Mayor Pam Snypes

Visitors: See attached sign in sheet

Meeting was opened by: Mayor Protem Iretha Hancock

Prayer: Opening prayer was led by Alderman Wayne Stafford

Pledge of Allegiance: Alderman James Grindstaff led the pledge of allegiance

Approve the Minutes:

Alderman Melvin Lytle made the motion to approve the prior month's minutes. The motion was seconded by Alderman James Grindstaff and approved 5 – 0 vote.

Public Comments:

Mason Black with the Old Fort Library updated on all that has been going on at the library in the past month. He gave out an event program calendar to anyone who was interested.

Carol Avery with Lowdermilk & Church gave an overview from the 2024-2025 audit for the Town. She handed out a sheet of the highlights from the audit and read it aloud. She told the Board that the Town's audit was in compliance and passed by the LGC. Alderman James Grindstaff made the motion to accept Lowdermilk & Church's audit contract for next year's audit. The motion was seconded by Alderman Iretha Hancock and approved 5 – 0 vote.

Jacob Stover, Pastor of the Redeeming Grace Holiness Tabernacle, came to ask the Board's permission to put up a sign (4X6) above the door to the building. His church rents a portion of the Rockett Building which belongs to the Town. Alderman Melvin Lytle made the motion to allow the sign to be put on the building. The motion was seconded by Alderman Wayne Stafford and approved 5 – 0 vote.

Cathy Moore gave an update on the 250 Committee and Waiting for the Train in McDowell (handout attached).

Bryant Lindsey, member of Overmountain Victory Trail came to inquire about the Town's plans for the Davidson Fort property which was gifted to the Town last year by former property owner, Gary Jones. Mayor Protem told Mr. Lindsey that the Town has made no plans until a structural engineer inspects the fort since it has not been inspected since Helene.

Board of Aldermen reports:

Alderman Erin Adams	-	None
Alderman James Grindstaff	-	None
Alderman Iretha Hancock	-	None
Alderman Melvin Lytle	-	None
Alderman Wayne Stafford	-	Thanked Renee' for a good job on the audit

Staff Reports:

Town Administrator – Renee' Taylor

Alderman James Grindstaff made the motion for Alderman Iretha Hancock remain as Mayor Protem. The motion was seconded by Alderman Melvin Lytle and approved 5 – 0 vote.

Alderman Erin Adams made the motion to appoint Alderman Melvin Lytle as Personnel Director. The motion was seconded by Alderman Wayne Stafford and approved 5 – 0 vote.

The Town has received one bid for the mowing of the Cemetery and the Trail Head. Alderman Lytle suggested that the Town wait another month to see if any other bids come in. Alderman Erin Adams is going to post on FB that the Town is accepting bids for the mowing.

Police Report:

None.

Public Works:

Mark White gave an update on Westerman.

120 Water and engineers are working on a grant to continue with verifying service lines to/from meters for a lead and copper survey. Alderman Erin Adams made the motion to adopt the attached Lead and Copper Resolution Service Replacement Projects. The motion was seconded by Alderman James Grindstaff and approved 5 – 0 vote.

Water Report : - Gail Turner

Gail gave out a handout for all water updates. (Attached)

Sewer Report:

None.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

Alderman James Grindstaff made the motion to adopt the Toe River Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2026) with McDowell County. The motion was seconded by Alderman Erin Adams and approved 5 – 0 vote.

The State Board of Elections made a recommendation to the McDowell County Board of Elections that the Town of Old Fort move the Municipal Elections to be held at the same time as the Primary Elections. This will be a cost savings of approximately \$13,000 every two years to the Town. The only cost the town would incur, if accepted, would be the cost of the voting ballots. This also means the elected officials terms now being served would extend one year. Alderman Melvin Lytle made the motion to change the Town's Municipal Elections to be held with the Primary Elections. The motion was seconded by Alderman Wayne Stafford and approved 5 – 0 vote.

Alderman Erin Adams made the motion to adopt the attached Line Worker Appreciation Day. The motion was seconded by Alderman Wayne Stafford and approved 5 – 0 vote.

Ann George spoke to the Board on implementing a Beautification Committee in Town. She is meeting with the Town of Black Mountain's committee on March 10th to get an idea what all is entailed with their committee. She is also going to reach out to Case Neal on the caring for the trees in the Town's Street Scape. Ann will meet back with the Town at the March 16th Board meeting.

Chick Fil A will be here this Friday, the 20th, and will set up at the Depot on Thursday evening. Their hours to serve lunch on Friday are from 11-2.

Alderman James Grindstaff made the motion to go into closed session as outlined by NCGS 143-318.11. The motion was seconded by Alderman Erin Adams and approved 5 – 0 vote.

Alderman Melvin Lytle made the motion to come out of closed session. The motion was seconded by Alderman Iretha Hancock and approved 5 – 0 vote.

At 7:06 p.m., Alderman Melvin Lytle made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Alderman Wayne Stafford and approved 5 – 0 vote.