

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

Governing Board Members present: Mayor Pam Snypes, Mayor Protem Iretha Hancock, Alderman James Grindstaff, Alderman Melvin Lytle and Alderman Erin Adams. Alderman Wayne Stafford came in at 6:27 p.m.

Visitors: See attached sign in sheet

Meeting was opened by: Mayor Pam Snypes

Prayer: Opening prayer was led by Alderman Iretha Hancock

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

Approve the Minutes:

Alderman James Grindstaff made the motion to approve the prior month's minutes. The motion was seconded by Alderman Iretha Hancock and approved 4 – 0 vote.

Public Comments:

Mason Black with the Old Fort Library updated on activities at the library. For the months of March & April, the Library is conducting a project on building bird houses for the elementary school aged children every 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday.

Robin Nicholson with Duke Energy, along with Tia Banks, are requesting the Town's permission for an easement on a strip of property on the Town's right of way behind McDonalds. There have been several power outages since Helene in this area, and Duke wants to add about 2-3 new poles and sturdy up existing poles and take the power to a 3-phase line. The Board was in agreement to table this matter until the April 20<sup>th</sup> board meeting so that the Town can look at the utility lines as well as the drainage system on this right of way before signing an easement.

Cathy Moore gave an update on the 250 Committee and Waiting for the Train in McDowell. She is having some 250 Celebration signs made up for each participant in the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade as our theme this year (see attachment).

Grant Baird addressed the Board and asked that the Town's current policy on leak adjustments be looked at and consider making change(s) to the policy. He had two water leaks at two different properties at his new apartment complex. He feels that an adjustment should be more off the water amount if the water doesn't actually go into the

sewer but actually leaks out into the ground. Mayor Snypes told Grant the Town would be working on the upcoming year's budget in the near future, and the Board would take a look at the current policy and decide if any changes need to be made to the policy.

Larry Hollifield with McDowell Transit introduced the new transportation available to citizens in Old Fort. This new service was made possible through grant funds from the NCDOT and approved by the McDowell County Board of Commissioners. The cost is \$5 for a round trip to/from Marion within an 8-mile radius (See attached).

Board of Aldermen reports:

Alderman Erin Adams	-	None
Alderman James Grindstaff	-	None
Alderman Iretha Hancock	-	None
Alderman Melvin Lytle	-	None
Alderman Wayne Stafford	-	None
Mayor Pam Snypes	-	None

Staff Reports:

Town Administrator – Renee' Taylor

Alderman Wayne Stafford made the motion to adopt the Resolution of Tentative Award for the Catawba Avenue Water System Improvements. The low bid was Huntley Construction Co. The motion was seconded by Alderman James Grindstaff and approved 5 – 0 vote.

The Town has received three (3) bids for the mitigation underneath the pedestrian foot bridges for the embankment stabilization.

Suttles Trucking and Grading, Inc.	\$69,960.00
HNH Construction Company	\$72,495.00
Bridge Brothers	\$100,000.00

Alderman Erin Adams made the motion to accept Suttles Trucking and Grading, Inc. The motion was seconded by Alderman Iretha Hancock and approved 5 – 0 vote.

Alderman Iretha Hancock made the motion to approve the budget amendments (attached). The motion was seconded by Alderman James Grindstaff and approved 5 – 0 vote.

The Town has received (5) bids for the mowing of the Town's cemetery and the Trailhead Park.

J&J Total Care	-	\$250/cut - Park
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		\$350/cut – Cemetery
JB's Lawncare	-	\$4,250/monthly for both
Ernie's Lawn Care	-	\$1400-\$1800/monthly-Park \$1,000/monthly-Cemetery
Elite Lawncare & Fence	-	\$700/biweekly – Cemetery \$\$400/10 days - Park
First Choice Lawncare	-	\$400/cut – Park \$550/cut – Cemetery

Alderman Melvin Lytle made the motion to accept Ernie's Lawncare bid. The motion was seconded by Alderman Wayne Stafford and approved 5 – 0 vote.

Alderman Melvin Lytle made the motion to adopt a Resolution In Support to Construct A Round About At The Intersection Of Catawba Avenue And Catawba River RD/I-40E Off Ramp In Old Fort. The motion was seconded by Alderman James Grindstaff and approved 5 – 0 vote.

Police Report:

Mayor Pam Snypes read the Police Report (attached) for the calls in the months of December, January and February.

Public Works:

Mark White informed everyone that the Westerman St. project is now complete. The local water supply is down to 19% water loss. Power bills and the cost of chemicals are down since the water leaks have been repaired.

Water Report : - Gail Turner

(See attachment)

Sewer Report:

None.

Old Business:

Ann George updated the board on her meeting with Black Mountain's beautification committee on March 10<sup>th</sup>. She says the committee for Old Fort will start out small and work their way up. As for now, plants will be planted at the entrance signs into Old Fort

and cleaning up around the depot. A few decorations for July 4<sup>th</sup> might be something the committee will do if possible.

New Business:

None.

Alderman Iretha Hancock made the motion to go into closed session as outlined by NCGS 143-318.11 (4). The motion was seconded by Alderman Erin Adams and approved 5 – 0 vote.

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

Alderman Melvin Lytle made the motion for Alderman Jamie Grindstaff to meet with an engineer with DOT about a possible easement for Crawford and Salisbury. The motion was seconded by Alderman Jamie Grindstaff and approved 5 – 0 vote.

At 7:50 p.m., Alderman Erin Adams made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Alderman Jamie Grindstaff and approved 5 – 0 vote.

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Mayor, Town of Old Fort

Attest:

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Renee 'Taylor, Town Administrator