

**Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting
September 24, 2009 – 4:00 p.m.
Kirk Allen Building**

The Montreat Board of Commissioners held a Special Meeting on September 24, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. in the Kirk Allen Building. Present among the Board were Mayor Letta Jean Taylor, Commissioner Ruth Currie, Commissioner Jack McCaskill and Commissioner O'Neil Tate. Mayor Pro Tem Eric Nichols and Commissioner Bill Hollins were absent. Town Administrator Ron Nalley, Public Works Director Charlie Caldwell, Assistant Public Works Director Steve Freeman, Town Clerk Misty R. Gedlinske and Chief of Police William B. McClintock represented Town staff. Approximately 25 members of the public were also present. Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order and gave the invocation.

Agenda Approval

Commissioner Currie moved to adopt the meeting agenda as presented. Commissioner McCaskill seconded and the motion carried 3/0.

Community Emergency Preparedness Education Presentation – Linda Thompson, RN

Montreat College Campus Nurse Linda Thompson said that health officials expected a very active flu season caused by both seasonal and H1N1 influenza outbreaks. She explained that H1N1 influenza differed from seasonal flu in that it contained both swine and avian flu genes in addition to human genes, and that it was more likely to cause respiratory distress in immune-compromised patients. She stated that H1N1 influenza was highly contagious and exhibited the most severe symptoms in patients 18 to 24 years of age or those with underlying health conditions. She described the typical duration and symptoms associated with the H1N1 flu virus and advised that proper rest and hydration during the first three days of symptoms had proven to shorten the duration and severity of the illness. Recommended flu preparation supplies include hand sanitizer, water or sports drinks such as Gatorade, tissues, a thermometer, Vitamin C tablets, acetaminophen and ibuprofen drugs such as Tylenol, Advil or Motrin, as well as contact information for local physicians, pharmacies and friends or family members willing to assist if illness does occur.

H1N1 flu vaccines are expected to be available beginning mid-October and will be administered by local physicians and the Buncombe County Health Department. Montreat College's Health Center will also administer vaccines to the public if adequate supplies are available. Pregnant women, those under two or over 65 years of age, or those with certain health conditions are especially encouraged to be vaccinated. The Centers of Disease Control has also recommended that seasonal flu vaccines be received at least seven to ten days prior to the H1N1 flu vaccine for maximum effectiveness. Frequent hand-washing, adequate sleep, proper cough and sneeze control and avoiding public contact while sick are encouraged to prevent the spread of this and other illnesses.

A member of the audience said her husband suffered from Guillian-Barré Syndrome and asked whether the H1N1 vaccine may dangerous for him to receive. Ms. Thompson recommended referring this question to her family's physician.

Suzanne McCaskill asked whether individuals with asthma were considered to be at a high risk of contracting the H1N1 virus. Ms. Thompson said that people with asthma or other respiratory conditions were encouraged to receive both the seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines and would be considered at a higher risk of possible complications from either type of influenza.

Jimmie Phipps said he was born before 1959 and had heard that he did not need to be vaccinated against the H1N1 virus. Ms. Thompson explained that people of this age group were thought to have some natural resistance to the virus but not enough to grant full immunity.

A member of the audience asked whether any medications were available to treat H1N1 influenza. Ms. Thompson stated that for high-risk patients, the use of anti-viral medications such as Tamiflu and Relenza has been proven to shorten the duration and severity of the illness if taken within 36 hours of the onset of symptoms.

John Hinkle asked about the effectiveness of wearing masks to control the spread of flu viruses. Ms. Thompson said that masks had been proven helpful in hospital settings where infection control protocols were very strict, but were not shown to be especially effective in other settings.

Martha Campbell asked whether a person who contracted the H1N1 virus was immune from repeat infection. Ms. Thompson said this was true, but also cautioned that it would be possible for former H1N1 flu patients to contract other strains of influenza.

**Community Emergency Preparedness Education Presentation –
Mack Salley, Buncombe County Emergency Services**

Mack Salley, Deputy Fire Marshal with Buncombe County Emergency Services said that one of the goals of his department's public education efforts was for residents to be able to survive disaster conditions for a minimum of 72 hours without assistance from emergency personnel. He explained that in times of severe weather or other significant emergencies, public infrastructure and emergency service facilities may be compromised or overwhelmed and may be delayed in their ability to respond to assistance calls. He also asked that 911 not be used to report electrical, telephone, cable or satellite service outages as these calls prevented dispatchers from focusing on true emergencies. Mr. Salley suggested obtaining several disaster preparation items, including non-perishable food items, flashlights with extra bulbs and batteries, a portable radio that would operate without electricity and a minimum of one gallon of clean drinking water per person per day. He also referred to several lists of other recommended disaster preparedness items and information sources from the American Red Cross and Buncombe County Emergency Services. He particularly noted a Special Needs Registry form that could be filled out and submitted for confidential use by emergency response personnel to make them aware of any special medical

needs or conditions when responding to a particular location and to help determine areas where special needs shelters may be needed.

Mr. Salley also mentioned two emergency training classes offered by Hearts With Hands that were available at no cost to the public. The first class, called “Preparedness is Paramount (PIP)” was a four-hour class designed to teach individual disaster preparedness so that residents could shelter in place at their homes for up to two weeks without assistance from emergency personnel. The second class, called “Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)” was a more comprehensive, twenty-four-hour course geared toward educating members of the community in basic first aid, firefighting and search and rescue skills so that they can act proactively until professional emergency personnel are able to arrive.

A member of the audience asked how long bottled water could be stored before it expired and needed to be replaced. Mr. Salley recommended referring to the expiration date on the purchased containers. He also suggested keeping several clean, empty one-gallon milk containers that could be filled with fresh tap water as needed.

Charlie Mitchell asked about recommended water purification methods. Mr. Salley said several good options were available at local camping supply stores.

A member of the audience asked whether the Town’s well system had an adequate supply of water in the event of an extended power outage. Mr. Caldwell replied that the Town had a three-to four-day supply of water stored at all times, which could be extended up to two weeks through mandatory conservation. He also said that Montreat’s water system was linked to the Town of Black Mountain and that a water exchange agreement was in place for emergency situations.

Glenn Bannerman asked about recommended alternative fuel sources. Mr. Salley said that propane or kerosene heaters were safer than some other options. He also stressed the importance of only using the type of fuels intended for the style of heat source being used, and warned that using outdoor barbeque grills indoors could lead to potentially fatal carbon monoxide exposure.

A member of the audience asked whether Lake Susan Dam would provide adequate flood control during heavy rains. Mayor Taylor said that the dam was in good condition and that flood gates were in place to control excess water from flash flooding.

Charlie Mitchell asked whether any institutional buildings in Montreat were equipped with auxiliary power sources. Mayor Taylor said that some residents had generators for their homes, but did not believe the College or Conference Center’s facilities were equipped with generators.

A member of the audience asked about the class format for the CERT training course. Mr. Salley said this class could be taught in either three 8-hour or four 6-hour sessions. Several members of the public expressed interest in both the PIP and CERT classes.

Mayor Taylor said medical history forms that could be stored in the home for use by emergency medical personnel were also available from the American Red Cross, and that pet emergency preparedness information was also available from the www.ready.gov website.

Public Comment

John Hinkle asked how the public would be notified on case of a fire and how often the Town's fire hydrants were tested. Mayor Taylor said the Town's fire hydrants were checked regularly and that plans were in place to ensure a quick response from fire department personnel and community volunteers.

A member of the audience asked about recent thefts from residences. Chief McClintock said that while residential burglaries had declined after the arrest of several individuals, thefts from automobiles were increasing. He encouraged the public to lock their homes and vehicles and to notify police immediately of any suspicious persons or activity.

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner McCaskill moved to adjourn the Special Meeting. Commissioner Currie seconded. The motion carried 3/0 and the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Letta Jean Taylor, Mayor

Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk