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Thursday, December 15, 1977, Vol. 24, No. 9



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Town manager fired

by Dan Ward

After two hours of discussion in a closed session, the newly-installed Black Mountain Town Board fired Town Manager Jon Creighton, apparently for not going out in his association with townspeople. I really don't know why I fired," Creighton said after the 3 to 2 decision, in which Ald. Ruth Brandon and A. Tyson strongly defended Creighton's performance as manager and town clerk. Creighton said that all the town members said that he had done a good job administratively, but that new board members Michael Begley, Jim Norton and John Klutz said that he had a personality clash with some members.

Mayor Tom Sobol said that he would not discuss what happened in closed session, which lasted two hours, or comment on specific complaints about Creighton's performance because it could give Creighton's chances of getting another job. He affirmed Creighton's statement that the board found complaints with his administrative performance.

Sobol did say that he had received about 100 calls from persons asking that Creighton be replaced with "a local person." Sobol said that he has no doubts that there are local persons capable of leading the town manager's office.

"I don't think there was one (major) reason for firing Creighton—I think it was generally a number of smaller things," Sobol said. Sobol said that the board did not have to give a reason for dismissing the town manager, because "the town manager serves at the pleasure of the board."

Tyson, after noting that Creighton was unanimously given a merit raise six months ago by the board, said that placing a trained professional manager with a new management "hurts the taxpayers."

Tyson pointed out that the previous Town Board set up prerequisites for a town manager two years ago when former Town Manager Charlie Lindsey resigned. He said they were that the manager had training in municipal management, that he have experience in municipal management, and that he have no political ties and that he maintain good

personal habits (remain aloof from personality cliques). Tyson said that Creighton has lived up to those qualifications and that no local person could fill them.

"I've been on the board 14 years, and this is the saddest night I've had on the board of Black Mountain," Tyson said after the decision.

Brandon, who also would not comment on events in the closed session, said she could not understand why Creighton

should be fired. "Sure, I've heard complaints," Brandon said. "I've heard he (Creighton) is not outgoing—he's not a backslapping, favor-doing good Joe. He treats everyone equally—and that upsets some!"

Brandon noted that the town has invested \$1052.62 in educating Creighton, who holds bachelor's and master's degrees in town management. Creighton said that the board did not offer him a chance to resign, but did offer

to write a letter of recommendation for other job prospects. Creighton also said that he was not consulted on a motion by Brandon that the press, including a television cameraman, be allowed to observe discussion during the executive session. He would not say how the voting went on that motion, although it apparently failed.

Mayor Sobol called a special meeting after the voting to discuss possible replacements for Creighton. The public

meeting will be held December 15 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall. Sobol and Brandon said that no individuals were mentioned as possible replacements at the closed meeting.

Creighton will be given 90 days severance pay from the date his duties end.

Approximately 70 persons, some offering catcalls as pro and con Creighton aldermen spoke, attended the meeting, which was held in the Black Mountain Library.



Mayor Tom Sobol announces that Jon Creighton will be fired as town manager. (Dan Ward)

New board sworn in

by Dan Ward

Prior to an executive session in which it was decided to fire Town Manager Jon Creighton, an appeal for cooperation and forgetting the past was the keynote of the first regular meeting of the new Black Mountain Town Board December 12.

After swearing in aldermen Jim Norton, John Klutz and Michael Begley and incumbents Ruth Brandon and A.F. Tyson, Mayor Tom Sobol asked that the new board start out on a new foot.

"Effective from now, the past is behind us," Sobol said. "It's all over and gone—the mistakes have been made."

The board split on its first action. Klutz, Begley and Norton voted in favor of electing Begley vice-mayor over Tyson.

The board voted unanimously in favor of a motion by Klutz to adopt Robert's Rules of Order for all Town Board meetings. Under Robert's Rules, a member of the audience will only be allowed to speak if he is recognized by the mayor, and must ask for recognition by raising his hand. All unscheduled business, under the rules, must be saved for the end of the meeting. Mayor Sobol asked that all persons who wish to address the board make an effort to contact the town manager before the meeting to be listed on the agenda.

The board also approved a third application for a Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development grant of up to \$300,000. One of the prerequisites for obtaining the grant is that a series of community input hearings be held to determine town needs.

A citizens' participation committee, who will organize the hearings, was nominated. Jean Standley and Bill Hickey accepted nominations. Margaret Slagle, Don Hoefling and Jack Milby declined. More persons are needed to serve on the committee, Sobol said.

The board voted to license insulation contractors, as recommended by state legislation. In order to be

authorized to put in insulation, a contractor must apply for a privilege license with the town and affirm that he has never been involved in fraud. Either the town or county building inspector will issue the licenses. The board passed two of the three needed readings.

Sobol also noted that contrary to action taken last month, Valley Realty, of which he is co-manager, will

pay not half but the entire amount of a disputed bill with the town for installation of water pipe at Sky High Reservoir.

Sobol also said that a meeting will be held the week of December 19 to determine which town service each alderman will represent.

While in closed meeting, the board decided to give \$100 Christmas bonuses to town employees.

Montreat board installed, mayor chosen

by Elizabeth Maxwell



Outgoing members of the Montreat Board of Commissioners (back row) Larry Wilson, Elizabeth Maxwell and Ed Crisp got together with new board members Andy Andrews, John Abernethy and Ivan Stafford at the last town board meeting, where the changeover was made.

At the regular December meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Montreat, the newly-elected commissioners—John N. Abernethy, E.A. Andrews Jr., and Ivan E. Stafford—were sworn in by Mayor Elizabeth Maxwell, and the retiring board officially withdrew. The new board then elected John Abernethy mayor and E.A. Andrews mayor pro-tem.

The new mayor announced that Andrews will have general oversight of streets, town workmen, and licensing and that Dr. Stafford will be the finance officer.

Resolutions of appreciation to the retiring commissioners were read, and plaques were presented to Elizabeth Maxwell, Larry Wilson, and Ed Crisp.

Board confirmed the continued appointment of town employees—attorney: Philip Carson; municipal accountant and tax collector: Susan Neville; police officers: Chief Pete Post, Captain Robbie Yates, Thomas Morris, Ron Halford, and Mike Burnette; street maintenance: Joe Quinn; contractor for solid waste removal: John Hamilton.

Also named were the following appointees: town clerk: Helen Miles; Assistant town clerk: Pat Daniel; assistant to finance officer: Ed Crisp; building inspector: Bob Marshall; assistant building inspector: Ed Berg; and auxiliary police: Virginia Post, Pete Robinson, Wayne Dickens, and Edwin Neville.

Dr. Stafford requested Crisp to present the financial report for the month of November. The board amended the budget, increasing both revenues and expenditures by \$1200, and accepted the report. The board voted to give Christmas hams or turkeys to the employees.

Mayor Abernethy named the following as members of the Planning and Zoning Commission: Elizabeth Maxwell, Frances Foreman, Charles Hardie, Steve Aceto, and Ed Teters - and as members of the Board of Adjustment: Larry Wilson, Marilyn Munson, Chris Bauer, Dan Marshall, and Nancy Talmage, with Helen Miles as an alternate.

The board moved to take steps toward increasing the

number of commissioners and changing the term of office, and referred the matter to the Planning Commission for study and recommendation. The Planning Commission was also asked to look into the possibility of acquiring the Gate House as town headquarters.

After a statement concerning the plans for placing a Channel 13 solar-powered relay station on Rainbow Mountain, the board agreed to lend the town's backhoe and the services of Joe Quinn for as much as two days to aid in opening up Rainbow Ridge

Road so that equipment may reach the construction site. After welcoming Denny Martin, associate director of Land-of-Sky Regional Council, and passing a motion to continue Montreat's membership in that organization, the board moved to adjourn until January 12.

Most of the visitors present remained for an organizational meeting of the League of Voters, deciding on purposes of the league and electing as co-chairmen Dr. Harry Bryan and Bob Marshall.

FDAA officials today approved a reimbursement of \$15,298 in disaster public assistance funds to help the Black Mountain Board of Aldermen defray the costs of

restoring public property damaged by flood November 4-6, according to Federal Coordinating Officer Joe D. Winkle.

The major portion of the reimbursement, \$12,420, earmarked to offset the costs of extensive repairs to the damaged public utilities system; \$2,878 is allocated to repair washed-out shoulders along town streets in the wake of the flood.

The request for federal assistance by the board of aldermen cites unbudgeted need caused by flood emergency as a reason for the request. FDAA approval triggers federal funds reimbursing town of Black Mountain funds used in the flood recovery effort.

The grant of \$15,298 to the town is made under provisions of Public Law 286, 93rd U.S. Congress, the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, according to FDAA sources.

February." The airman, who is also working on a degree in criminal justice, recently received a "below the zone", or early promotion - an honor enjoyed by only 14 of 500 competing airmen in Montana this spring.

Home for soft sell

by Dan Ward

A Valley serviceman came home a couple weeks ago not on leave, but to work.

Airman Charles Robinson, a 1972 Owen graduate who grew up in the Presbyterian Home for Children, spent 15 days "telling it like it is" to potential recruits from the Valley in the Air Force's Hastywrap Program before returning to Malstrom AFB in Montana last week.

"The idea is just to let the young people know what is going on. Are the recruiters telling lies? I have no quotas to fill, so I tell it like it is," he said.

"It gives people the new image of the Air Force—not the old 'I gotcha' thing." Robinson's love for the Air Force is obvious. He is president of the Enlisted Airman Council at Malstrom. In addition, he is now in competition for the Outstanding Airman of the 15th Air Force. He and three others are representing three air force bases, all Strategic Air Command (SAC) bases from Montana. The honor is based on job knowledge, efficiency, job evaluation, military bearing and an interview by superiors.

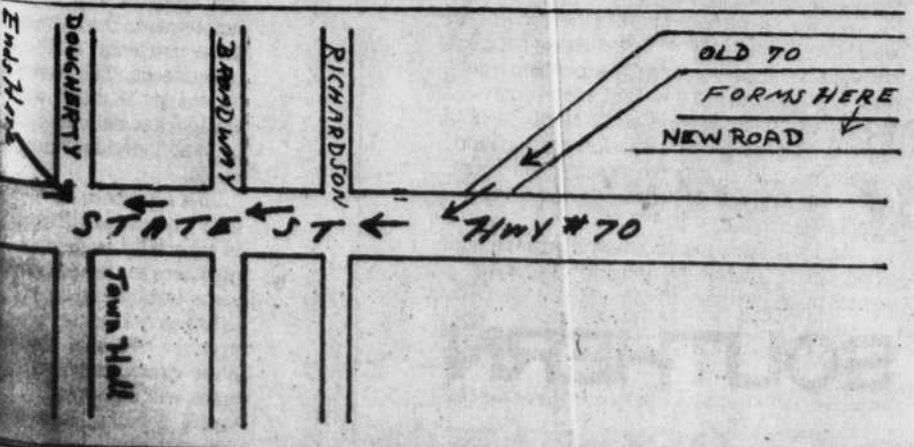
Robinson's job is an important one. As a security specialist, he is one of a number of military police responsible for guarding nuclear missile sites along the Canadian border - particularly against terrorists. Although his wife, the



Parade route set

by Ed Weber

The Black Mountain-Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce will put on its annual Christmas parade at 3:30 p.m., Friday, December 16, in Black Mountain. The parade will begin on the east side of the town on I-40 - 70 east



Route of the Swannanoa Valley Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade through Black Mountain December 16, beginning at 3:30 p.m.

Greenwood to run for re-election

Rep. Gordon Greenwood of Black Mountain has announced that he will seek a seventh term as state representative.

Greenwood, a Democrat, is assistant to the president of Montreat-Anderson College and former publisher of the Black Mountain News.

Greenwood, who represents Buncombe and Transylvania Counties, serves as chairman of the Local Government II Committee, vice chairman of the Ap-

propriations Committee of Education, vice chairman of the Employment Security committee and is on the State Personnel and Aging Committees.

He is the fourth to announce for one of the four seats open from the 43rd District, following Marie Colton, and Reps. Claude DeBruhl and James Clarke.

A former Black Mountain alderman, he resides in Black Mountain with his wife, Grarnet. They have two sons, Ricky and Buddy.

Special meeting set

A special meeting will be held at Town Hall, State Street, Black Mountain, on December 15 at 6 p.m. The purpose of this open meeting is to discuss the filling of the vacancy of position of Town Clerk and such added duties as the Town Board may assign.