

**TOWN OF NEWLAND**  
**10/01/2024**  
**EMERGENCY MEETING**



**ATTENDING:**

**MAYOR:** Derek Roberts

**ALDERMAN:** Kenan Foxx, James Johnson, Gail Haller, Christie Hughes, Dave Calvert

**GUEST:** Theresa Foxx, Maria Roberts, Nathan Gittner, Vanessa Angrisani, Susan Rash, Vicki Caraway, Kenny Caraway, Keith Hoilman, Larry Hoyle, Beverly Hoyle

**STAFF:** Interim Town Manager/Finance Officer Sandy Lewis, Police Chief Michael Fields, Police Captain Chris Clark, Public Works Director Gary Lewis

Mayor Roberts called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. He said this meeting would be focused on discussing Hurricane Helene. Mayor Roberts asked Sandy if she would like to tell them about some things she has been doing during all of this. Sandy stated that the Town had declared an emergency once the storm had happened. We also received emails from the public water supply at the state level saying to use this verbiage to issue a system advisory notice. Once they activated the EOC, we became under them. Therefore, whatever we did in Newland then had to go through the EOC because if you do not go through them, you will not receive any FEMA funding back. Alderman Calvert asked if what we did was incorrect by going ahead and fixing the water before going through the EOC. He said the citizens were probably very grateful they could have water back instead of waiting for a contract to be approved. Gary Lewis said they weren't waiting on a contract and Alderman Calvert said if that happened to be the case. Sandy said once she received the email from Asheville, they also said they needed an update on our water system. They called back the next day, and we had to explain that our pumping station was not working and that we needed to turn it on. He touched base with his counterpart on the wastewater side and then gave us permission to turn on the pumping station. After that, Michael and Keith approached EOC and said the same thing. Sandy said she understood we needed water; however, we also had to follow protocols established by the State, so it all happened simultaneously. Gary stated that the biggest problem was somebody else trying to run the Town, and nobody went through Sandy. Nobody asked or included him, and everyone did whatever they wanted. He said Michael and Keith were running the show and did not include him or Sandy, the Town Manager. Alderman Calvert said let's learn from this situation and not do it again. Keith Hoilman said Chief Fields came to him and asked if he could help, and he was more than happy to help since he had some knowledge about our water/wastewater system. Keith said Chief had people coming to him from Mountain Electric and the jail stating they had employees who would leave because they didn't have any water. Sandy said she had a page worth of stuff written up because EOC told her that if we needed anything, to let them know and that they would get that resource out to you. She started with the pump station,

and they told her today that a state engineer would be here to assess the whole thing. She turned in five additional things today needed for the pumping station; however, EOC told her they could not move forward until the state engineer completed the assessment. She turned in the Kabota windshield replacement because it was broken while moving trees. Portable lights for areas without power and several of the streets that were damaged. Some streets may look fine, but what happens in five years after that street was sitting underwater. She also asked for temporary help with Public Works. The County told her today they will have a debris cleanup contract, and Newland will be included, so we will not have to ask for that. Mayor Roberts asked if this included all the debris that citizens were putting out by the side of the road. Sandy said she wasn't sure and that she would have to ask. Gary said he wanted to reiterate he appreciated everything Keith had done and that he had taught him a lot today. His problem was how the situation was handled, and he wanted to make clear he had nothing against Michael or Keith. Alderman Calvert said we made a mistake; let's learn from it and not repeat it. Mayor Roberts said the mistake was a communication breakdown, and he didn't think anyone tried to do anything spiteful. Alderman Hughes said she was good with Keith and happy to see him. She said there is a lot to be done, and many people are in desperate need. Not just here in Newland, but lower Avery is really bad. Alderman Haller reiterated what Alderman Hughes said, stating she can't describe what people have been through and that everybody should try to work together. Alderman Calvert said Dudley Greene has been going up and down the mountain to get people here. FEMA has people going door to door doing inspections, several insurance companies were hit pretty hard, and it will take a while for some things to be done. The only thing we can possibly do is show empathy for folks and help out the best we can. He stated he couldn't believe what he had seen from the community as far as jumping together and doing things for the County. Vicki Caraway stated that several organizations have come together, and resources are available. She was at Feeding Avery Families, and they asked if you know someone in the community who does not have food or access to come and get it, to please come and get it and take it to those in need. First Baptist Church, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Jonas Ridge, and Spear also have resources. Alderman Hughes also added the Green Valley Fire Department and Frank Fire Department. Sandy stated that the County has a Facebook page listing all the resources and places where people can take shelter. Alderman Johnson said he wanted to thank all the employees. Sandy, Gary, and Chief have been here every day. He thanked the police department and Keith for everything they had done. He thanked everyone for being there and glad they were all safe. The Police Department sent the board a list of businesses that were open so they could share it with the citizens in case they needed anything. The list includes Shady Lawn Motel, Exxon, Dollar General, Puerto Nuevo (take out only), Linville River Electric, Carolina Water Service, Quick Shop, O'Reilys, SECU, Wells Fargo, First Citizens, Three Nails Hardware, Avery Tire, Premier Pharmacy, NAPA, and CVS is open from 12-5. Alderman Johnson said it was time to unite and put personal differences aside. He said they had spoken with Sandy earlier today, and hopefully, they can open Town Hall tomorrow. Possibly offer the board room and/or Mayor's office to folks without service who need to file their FEMA paperwork. He asked Chief if they were taking any donations. Chief said not necessarily since so many other places were taking donations and trying to keep them all in one place as much as possible. Alderman Johnson said Emmanuel Baptist had a tractor-trailer full of supplies delivered from the coast, and if anyone knows individuals in need, please send them there. Alderman Haller said they would try to open the Health Department backup tomorrow from 10-3. They do not have phone service but can do strep tests, prescribe antibiotics, give tetanus shots, etc. Vanessa Angrisani added that Cannon Memorial was setting up a triage tent outside so you can see a nurse practitioner if you need medications prescribed. Samaritan's Purse is also set up to provide oxygen tank refills and breathing treatments. Vicki Caraway stated people outside of the County are asking if there is a need for insulin and are willing to bring it. Alderman Haller asked if she could let EMS or those at EOC know because there are people at the rock gym who are running low on their medication. She also said

some pharmacies pitch in and give insulin to those in need if they are out or running low. Sandy said if anyone asks where they can go to help or bring items, direct them to the EOC because they are making them fill out paperwork for reimbursement. Gary said this is also a safety measure to ensure nobody goes missing while helping the community. MPT Foxx stated he was at the EOC yesterday, and they asked him to go around to different centers to hand out food and water. The biggest thing he saw from all that was the sense of community and how everybody was so willing to help and care for each other. He spoke with his grandmother, who said if we ask for any relief, it must be done on a state level. The second point was not to spread rumors; we need exact information on supplies, roads, etc. Mayor Roberts said he has been dealing with many calls concerning fuel tanks in people's backyards and the creek. He spoke with the County today; they do not have any resources to pick these up and leave them where they are. Eventually, they will have someone available to pick up the propane, diesel, and kerosene tanks. He asked everyone to be aware of all the wires that are down and to please stay away from them. He discussed with the game wardens that wildlife is disheveled and anxious, so they will not act like they normally do. Sandy said the yellow jackets are horrible right now as well. Vicki Caraway stated that EMS had a supply of Benadryl and Epi-pens. Mayor Roberts stated there are a lot of homes that are not properly ventilated, and if it is wet, mold will grow. Everyone needs to alternate between opening windows and running dehumidifiers and fans. Make sure you do not take small children with compromised lungs into these houses until you are sure it is safe. Phillip Barrier said the only dump sites open now are Linville and Three Lane. Vanessa Angrisani asked if the EOC or FEMA would provide certain designated areas for people to dump during this time. Mayor Roberts said he was trying to find out that information and working with Appalachian Waste on possibly having a few dumpsters dropped somewhere. For that reason, Alderman Calvert said Carolina BBQ got a new dumpster placed out back. Nathan Gittner said their dumpster is full, but anyone is welcome to put anything in it once it is emptied. Sandy said you cannot put metal or wood in the dumpsters; they must be household items. Mayor Roberts said the Newland Fire Department received a large shipment of water today. The Baptist Church and Feeding Avery Families has anything and everything imaginable. He thanked the board and everyone for coming to the meeting and asked everyone to be neighborly. He has received several phone calls regarding people on properties they shouldn't be on. Chief said he had all his officers working right now for that reason. Susan Rash asked if they wanted to help and where do they need to go. Sandy said to go to the EOC, and they will put you to work. Alderman Calvert asked if the road was open to Tennessee, and Chief said yes. They are stopping people to try and keep the bigger trucks from coming through because roads are not in the best shape right now. According to the governor's report this morning, Alderman Johnson said that I-40 was open through NC. MPT Foxx said he had spoken with the County, and the open main roads were 105, 181, and 19E. Larry Hoyle stated that 221 was open to getting into Blowing Rock. Vicki Caraway said nobody has anywhere to shower and questioned about portable showers. Nathan Gittner said if anyone needed a shower, they were welcome to use the ones at the motel. Sandy said she had three things to ask FEMA about: portable showers, laundry facilities, and porta johns. They said these things were coming; however, now the Town has water, and we haven't heard any updates. Alderman Johnson made a motion to adjourn. All agreed by a show of hands and stating aye.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.

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**Town Clerk, Jessica Buchanan**

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**Mayor, Derek Roberts**