

TOWN OF WEAVERVILLE
Tree Board Meeting
Wednesday November 6, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Agenda

1. Call to Order Chairman Kantner
2. Adoption of Agenda Chairman Kantner
3. Approval of Minutes- September 4, 2024 Chairman Kantner
4. CODE Chapter 2, Art. IV, Div. 4. – Chart Priorities and Goals Clerk Mercer
As provided from members on September 4th
5. Helene Departmental Response and Action Plan as of 10/28/2024
6. Other Business- Board Member resignation
7. Adjournment

**Tree Board Meeting
Wednesday September 4, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Minutes**

**Town of Weaverville
State of North Carolina**

Wednesday, September 4, 2024

The Tree Board for the Town of Weaverville held a regular meeting on September 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, Town Hall, Weaverville, N.C.

Present: Chairman Russ Kantner, Vice Chair Peter Stanz, regular members Greg Sanfilippo, Jeff Colavecchia, Pauline Griffith and Inger Stallmann-Jorgensen and alternate member Gary Harmon.

Absent: excused Caroline Lord and Caleb Hudson

Staff: Tamara Mercer, Town Clerk and Dale Pennell, Public Works Director

1. Call to Order

Chairman Kantner called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

Chairman Kantner

*Without objection, Inger Stallmann-Jorgensen moved to approve the agenda.
Motion carried unanimously 6-0.*

2. Approval of Minutes- August 7, 2024

Without objection Chairman Kantner moved to approve the meeting minutes of August 7, 2024. Motion carried unanimously 6-0.

3. Public Works Tree Maintenance, Director Pennell presented his Public Works Department Report to the Tree Board.

Tree Board members' questions for Public Works Department:

1) Is there an arborist on Public Works staff?

Director Pennell stated that there are staff members with multiple years of experience in landscaping and related fields. One experienced landscape supervisor has 20-plus years of tenure with the Town of Weaverville. None are certified as an arborist, but staff works with consultants.

2) How does Public Works choose the species for tree planting?

The department selects trees from the town's recommended species list in Section 36-157 of the Town Code of Ordinances. The only exception is the planting of Japanese Maples for specific requests, such as the recent request as a memorial tree at the Community Center. The donor can request memorial benches at \$1,000 or trees for a fee of \$250.00.

3) Does Public Works have a tree preference?

The department mostly plants native trees that are mast-bearing for wildlife benefits, for example Dogwood, Oak and Holly trees. They choose trees that serve a dual purpose.

4) Is there a tree supplier for the Town?

Primarily local nurseries such as Reems Creek Valley Nursery (the Town receives a 20% discount) and Jesse Israel Nursery are suppliers. On occasion Hendersonville Site One provides bulk trees such as the 40 arborvitaes and hollies which were planted around the pickleball courts.

5) At intersection locations, what is the normal maintenance cycle?

The maintenance crews travel all over town as daily and weekly site checks. When an intersection has site line/site distance problems, they report the location in the system. Supervisors schedule street crew trimmers to trim the overgrown limbs. Likewise, the town responds to complaints from residents. Compliant driven reports are helpful to the

department. Some intersections need 'cutbacks yearly, others have 2-3 times a year maintenance schedule.

6) Does PW have new landscaping project plans?

No plans are budgeted at this time, and none suggested specifically to Public Works.

7) What is the budget for landscaping and tree planting?

The current budget for fiscal year 2024-25 Grounds Maintenance is \$474,511.00, which includes \$85,000 for a new overflow parking lot for Lake Louise situated near the Public Works Department on Quarry Road. A balance of \$389,511 is for full-time and part-time personnel, equipment, and vehicle maintenance, fuel, utilities, supplies, special events, etc. Any tree planting needed is budgeted from Supplies/Materials line item.

8) Can the Tree Board request that no asphalt be installed at the right-of-way along Alabama Avenue where there is currently gravel?

The Alabama Street paving project was completed August 26th for milling and concrete sealing operation, which included the rights-of-way. NCDOT roadway maintenance procedures and rights-of-way was reviewed by Director Pennell, he also explained the town's ditch and rights-of-way maintenance along roadways.

9) Does the town currently have a heritage tree program, or have they had one in the past? College Street tree plaque

Director Pennell confirmed the plaque at the Oak tree at the intersection of College Street and Church Street. There was a plaque on the Sycamore tree in the rock circle at Town Hall which was removed in March of 2024 due to the diseased tree being removed.

Additional statistics since 2017:

Community Center- over 300 plants planted on building and grounds, including annuals, perennials, Hawthorns, Hollies, Sugar Maples, Dogwoods, and service berries.

Town Hall- Rhododendrons, Hosta, Azaleas, Flox, and Japanese Maple.

Memorials- service berry in the Nature Park and Japanese Maple at the Community Cetner.

Fire Department- Japanese Maple, Maples, and landscaping

Public Works Department- Dogwoods and Crepe Myrtles

Outdoor Recreation Complex- Arborvitae (20), Holly (20), Pink Dogwoods

Arbor Day:

- 2018- Pink Dogwood in the Nature Park
- 2019- White Dogwood in the Nature Park
- 2020 Red Maple in the Nature Park in honor of past-Mayor Bett Stroud
- 2021 American Holly at Town Hall
- 2022 Pink Dogwood at Lake Louise
- 2023 Red Plum at Community Cetner in honor of past-Mayor Al Root
- 2024 White Oak at Town Hall rock circle in honor of past-Mayor Dottie Sherrill

Code of Ordinance, Chapter 2, Article IV, Division 4. Chart Priorities and Goals- Clerk Mercer

Ms. Mercer provided the board with Goal Chart and there was discussion, and the members polled for their highest priority inserted into the diagram action table.

4. CODE: Ch. 32 & Ch. 2 Sec. 2-176 Duties and Limitations
Review Mission, Priorities, Duties & Timing Discussion

Ms. Mercer reviewed the code for Chapter 32 vegetation and Chairman Kantner reviewed the Code for Chapter 2 Duties and Limitations. Discussion review by members yielded that 1) periodic review of regulations, 6) educational programs, 8) investigate available grants, and 9) a written plan for the care and preservation of trees were all on the high priority list.

There was the action plan chart reviewed as developed by a polling of each Tree Board member. The provided goals and priority chart to be presented to the Board at the next meeting. (October meeting was cancelled)

5. Art in Autumn September 20th

Interested members to attend the event consisting of Inger, Gary, Greg, and Pauline.

Mr. Harmon suggested the Board conduct further species list review and update the species list. There was discussion on native draught resistant plants, and that in the 1990's the Town had an Appearance Committee.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, and without objection Mr. Kantner adjourned the meeting at 7: 50 p.m.

Attest:

Tamara Mercer

**TOWN OF WEAVERVILLE
TREE BOARD AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: November 11, 2024
SUBJECT: Tree Board Goals and Priorities
PRESENTER: Clerk Mercer
ATTACHMENTS: Chart Goals and Priorities

DESCRIPTION/SUMMARY OF REQUEST: Tree Board Chairman has conducted a review of Chapter 2 Division 4, Sec. 2-176 Duties and Limitations. On September 4th, the Tree Board members conducted a review of the Code and provided their priority list for stated goals as follows.

Tree Board members to rate their goals and priorities. The chart diagram will prioritize the goals by the following action plan table: 1=high priority, addressed in 12 months; 2=medium priority, addressed in 24 months; 3=lower priority, addressed in 36 months and what is feasibly possible within the timeframe.

**CODE CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE IV, DIVISION 4. TREE BOARD
STATED GOALS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND PRIORITIES**

(1=high priority, addressed in 12 months; 2=medium priority, addressed in 24 months; 3=lower priority, addressed in 36 months; 0=proposed deletion)
Recommended –September 2024

	2024	2025	TB	Staff	STATED GOAL	NOTES	Staff	TB	TC
						RESPONSIBILITY			
1	1	1	1		To periodically review the regulations within the town’s code of ordinances related to trees and vegetation, including specifically Code Chapter 32, and make recommendations concerning revisions, additions, and/or repeal		✓	✓	✓
2	2	2	2		To study and make recommendations on land use regulations, such as a tree canopy or protection ordinances and other conservation minded regulation, with the goals of enhancing aesthetics, reducing urban heat islands, reducing stormwater run-off, providing wildlife habitats, lowering building energy costs, and increasing property values		✓	✓	
3	2	2	2		To seek advice, as needed, from qualified landscape architects, arborists, foresters, horticulturists, or other knowledgeable individuals		✓	✓	
4	3	3	3		To consult with certified residential and commercial arborists and foresters on an inventory of existing trees within town street rights-of-ways and on town-owned property with data collected on species, size, and general health of each tree	Anticipated FY2025-27	✓	✓	

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Recommended –September 2024

	2024	2025	TB	Staff	STATED GOAL	NOTES	Staff	TB	TC
5	3	3		3	To designate heritage trees, which are understood to be individual trees with unique value based on age, rarity, size, and/or aesthetic, botanical, ecological, or historical value, and are considered irreplaceable		✓	✓	✓
6	1	1	1	1	To organize educational programs and workshops, sponsor information booths, and develop/distribute informational materials on topics related to planting, maintenance, health, and protection of trees within the urban and community forests of Weaverville		✓	✓	✓
7	1	1	1	1	To foster communication among citizens of the town that would provide community education programs, and increased awareness of urban forestry, protection of trees, and to coordinate active measures to support tree health and growth within the town		✓	✓	✓
8	2	2	2		To investigate available grants, loans, or contributions from other governmental agencies, public or private corporations, or individuals, and to recommend the expenditures of any proceeds toward the accomplishment of the tree board's duties and responsibilities		✓	✓	
9	3	3	3		To study, investigate, counsel, develop and/or update periodically a written plan for the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal or disposition of trees and shrubs in parks, along streets and in other public areas		✓	✓	✓

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Recommended –September 2024

	2024	2025	TB	Staff	STATED GOAL	NOTES	Staff	TB	TC
					once a tree inventory has been completed. The plan is to be presented to the Town Council and its acceptance and approval constitutes the official comprehensive Town tree plan	Long-term goal which may take several years			
10	3	2	3	3	To approve voluntary planting plans on Town property or in Town street rights-of-way by private citizens or groups		✓		✓
11	1	1	1	1	To submit an annual report of its activities and recommendations to Town Council		✓	✓	
12	0		2		To perform any other related duties that Town Council may direct, either through ordinance or action		✓	✓	
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	COMPLETED
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**CODE CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE IV, DIVISION 4. TREE BOARD
STATED GOALS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND PRIORITIES**

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Recommended -September 2024

	9/20/2024				Tree Board with partnership Police Dept. disseminated Public Service					
					Announcements					
					at the event Art in Autumn for Leave the Leaves, Don't Tree Top, and Stormwater					
					Runoff education pamphlet information to the public					
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Tropical Storm Helene Update report to Council Oct 28th

Interim Town Manager Harris noted departments have identified several area needs and redundancies in our systems at all department levels to address in planning. A lot of tasks early on were accomplished by driving from dept to dept to ask questions and make plans as comms were down (phones, Internet, cell) and radio systems were overloaded. Our internet provider is ECR, with charter being our backup and both systems were down. Deputy Chief Michal Hunter had a portable starlink satellite system, that allowed us to get cell phone service (which was also the system we used to establish a link for payroll). We eventually started having request being filled by the Emergency operations Center and supplies flown in via helicopter

Over the initial weekend daily leadership team meetings started happening and updates from those were distributed by hand to the public and posted on town buildings

Town Staff (Finance)

Due to safety concerns the decision was made on Wednesday the 25th to close Town Hall for Thursday and Friday with the anticipated arrival of the storm system and precursor arriving on Wednesday evening

With no internet we started developing plans over the weekend on how to get in and process payroll. That was accomplished with a collaborative effort from members of finance, police and fire using a personal star link satellite system and coordinating with Epsilon to tie into the main system

Water Treatment Plant

The Ivy River gauge peaked at 28.36 ft at a flow of 15400 cfs or 115,192 gallons per second before it stopped working.

This time of year, the river typically runs about 2 ft and 30 cfs or 225 gallons per second.

Lost all power 6:30am.

Main line that feeds south of Reems Creek broke under Reems Creek about 9:30am.

Hamburg, Ridge, and Debose tanked drained completely. Almost 3 million gallons.

Raw water pump station got flooded up to the ceiling. All electrical and electronics were completely under approx. 10 feet of water

We requested 3 Generators and a Pump from Emergency Management via a radio request on Friday due to NO COMMUNICATIONS. Made contact with other Contractors who were able to bring in 2 generators, a pump motor, and temporary switch gear to be able to get the plant back to running again.

Public works Crews went to Charlotte to obtain equipment

The intake pit had 4-5- feet of sand and mud that had to be cleaned out. Approximately 20 people worked to get all of that cleaned out. That took approximately 16 hours. We also got a vacuum truck and crew to come in to assist us. Again, this was done when comms were down so it was going door to door in the community looking for someone to assist in this operation

All remote pumps and tank sites lost power. Everything had to be checked and operated by PW personnel until power and communications were restored.

fire Department swift water crews assisted with the removal of trees and a car from around intake.

Had to get SCADA system and Chlorine system modified to be able to run in manual.

Town of Mars Hills sent us about 300,000 gallons of water. Which was enough to keep some people in water.

The water treatment plant is running but there is still a lot of work to be done to get it back to where it needs to be.

All the Raw water intake switch gear, electrical, and electronics will have to be replaced, including the heat and lighting. The cost of this will probably be around \$100,000 +/-

Public Works

Here are some notes regarding the efforts by PW to address all the issues in the 4 weeks following Helene, in no particular order.

- We spent the 3 days (Monday 9/23, Tuesday 9/24, and Wednesday 9/25) before the hurricane in preparation for the event, based on increasingly dire forecasts. We cleaned drains and structures around town, including the forebay at Lake Louise, and prepared equipment for what was coming. We also had a 2" water line break on East Street following the Wednesday evening storm and flood, so a group of staff stayed until after midnight to make the repair. The Wednesday storm was the only time that the Lake Louise dam overtopped during the hurricane, and only by an inch or so that night.
- We also told the PW staff to come to work on Thursday 9/26 prepared to spend the night in anticipation of the hurricane extending over into the next day. All field staff stayed at the office on Thursday night and most of them stayed late on Friday 9/27 when the power failed, internet and cell service was interrupted, and we lost over 3 million gallons when the Reems Creek water line break was discovered. During Friday morning we ventured out around 10 am to begin damage assessments, however a crew was stranded along Long's Chapel Road and the Director and 2 Superintendents were blocked by falling trees at the Aiken Road and New Stock Road intersection. Both groups were rescued by a cell call that occurred just before cell/text service failed.
- Our overtime for the field staff during these 3 days (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday) was approximately 414 hours.
- Our crews work continuously from Saturday 9/28 through Sunday 10/13, clearing debris from roadways and monitoring our water system and overseeing the contractor who was working to repair the broken water line. We also helped with continuing work at the WTP to repair and clean the raw water wetwell (which flooded by 11' over flood stage), arranging to travel out of town to pick up generators and pumps for the WTP in Charlotte and Asheville, helping to coordinate electricians and plumbers, and manually monitoring tank levels as water began to return throughout the night.
- During this 2-week time period, the PW staff worked approximately 758 hours of overtime.

- We were proud that we helped to move the town from a drained water system, flooded raw water pump station, complete lack of power, no communication, no remote water system controls, and broken water line in Reems Creek on Friday 9/27 to having the entire water system functioning on Friday 10/11 and all of our customers having water.
- We also received our new knuckle boom truck on the first day of the hurricane on 9/26, and sent it out to begin debris collection on 10/2. We have designated an area on town property near the firing range and our leaf & chipping area as a town-only debris site, and began work to prepare the area for dumping of debris.
- As of Friday 10/25, we have collected and dumped approximately 3,570 CY of debris. We have made a first pass through town in the “downtown” area, generally bounded by the interstate on the west, the Fire Department on the north, North and South Main Street to the east, and Aiken Road to the south. We have instructed our FEMA debris contractor will divide their forces, sending half to the Stoneybrook/Highlander/Blueberry Hill area and the other half to the Reems Creek Golf Club and surrounding area. All debris collection will be done in at least 3 passes – an initial pass, a second pass to continue collection, then a third pass to finish the debris. Afterwards, our normal brush collection will take over as debris returns to pre-hurricane levels.

Police Department Update

*Officers supposed to report for duty could not make it to work. One had a **tree fall on his patrol vehicle, one was trapped behind an enormous mudslide, and others had to laboriously cut away trees to get off their property. For one supervisor at training out of town, the highways became impassable, and he resorted to sleeping in the patrol car during his multi-day attempt to make it back.**

*Officers arrived in any way they could make it to town and began using chainsaws to cut paths and clear routes for emergency traffic. They were not equipped with safety gear. Many got such severe cases of poison ivy/oak/sumac that they had to receive medical treatment.

*When phone service was restored, 287 messages were on the voicemail requesting welfare checks. Officers checked every request and went door to door in many neighborhoods to check on people.

*The department's Spanish-speaking officer spent two days visiting the surrounding Spanish-speaking communities to distribute water and other necessities. He and the group he traveled with were very patient in developing trust. More than four truckloads of items were handed out.

* Efforts were made to continuously staff the police department to assist with walk-ups. The exceptions were during overnight curfew restrictions when our limited night crew patrolled residential neighborhoods.

*The police department was tasked with guarding a distribution warehouse 24 hours a day for the first three weeks after the hurricane.

*PD leadership attended daily briefings with other Weaverville department heads. Over the first few days, they assisted with hand-writing and delivering the notifications to town council members.

*The PD utilized town volunteers to assist with senior welfare checks so that the seniors would receive advanced care efforts.

*The Community Resource Officer was part of the team that set up and ran the distribution site in the community center

*All available manpower (including mutual aid) as a request was put in through the Emergency Operations Center and Police Chief's Assoc for additional staffing to help backfill. Employees faced their own challenges at home with loss of life of family members and property but were here giving it their all.

Fire Department Update

During the storm period, Weaverville Fire Department responded to 232 alarms, not including additional actions such as clearing roadways, fielding public inquiries, refilling water storage units, and performing 340 welfare checks. Before Hurricane Helene struck, Weaverville had already been saturated by several inches of rain, leading to three separate water rescues on the night before the storm's arrival. In anticipation of the impact, the department proactively evacuated 12 personnel from flood-prone areas. **We had two near misses during the storm where trees nearly fell on our personnel while they were blocked on calls**

On the morning of the storm, call volume overwhelmed the department, and communication systems soon failed. Two personnel were unable to report for duty due to impassable roads: one due to a washed-out roadway and the other because of bridge failures and fallen trees. On-duty staff remained, but off-duty personnel couldn't be called back due to communication outages. During the storm's height, crews became trapped by multiple downed trees and power lines while attempting rescues. Eventually, all teams regrouped at the station, and leadership prioritized clearing Main St. to Reems Creek Rd. for flood assessment and emergency response access.

After ensuring local needs were met, Weaverville crews were dispatched to assist fire departments in eastern Buncombe County, including Garren Creek and Black Mountain. These teams conducted swift water rescues, extricated victims trapped in mudslides, and rescued homeowners who had been entrapped by waist-deep mud and flood debris inside their own home. Firefighters hand-dug these residents from the mud and debris where they had been trapped for over six hours, providing

immediate medical care and facilitating transporting them for injuries sustained. Other firefighters triaged walking wounded and assisted in evacuating all injured from the impacted area. Crews also recovered three mudslide victims before returning to Weaverville in the early morning.

In the days following, Weaverville's UAV teams supported rescue operations in Swannanoa, logging 294 flights, covering over 189 flown miles, and capturing nearly 5,800 photos in 46 hours of flight time. Attached to the Nebraska Task Force, these teams documented the event, while other personnel assisted Buncombe County's Task Force to aid neighboring communities. As operations transitioned to recovery, Weaverville Fire took on water supply duties, filling up to 50,000 gallons daily and distributing pallets of water to Weaverville community members still without water in the days following the storm.

The Community Center distribution.

Had approx. 40 volunteers working the site along with town staff

*659 cases of water were distributed at the Community Center, and more than that were donated to churches serving meals. The estimate is nearly 700 cases total.

*521 bags of food that served two people for two days. That totals 2,084 meals handed out.

*At least 31 welfare checks were generated and completed by volunteers who also delivered food.

*Bear Closet was donated 43 packages of diapers, 20 boxes of wipes, 32 boxes of formula, and 38 shopping bags full of supplies.

*The Community Center partnered with First Baptist Church to provide nearly 30 cases of water to accompany hot meals being made by World Kitchen.

*All remaining supplies were transferred to Grace Point Church on Friday for continued distribution.

The community center also became a flex workspace providing internet services

Lets talk Debris Removal for a minute, so I can put some of it in perspective of the amount

150,000 cubic yards = 4,050,000 cubic feet; if you piled the debris material to a height of 10 feet (height of a basketball goal) you would need 405,000 square feet to hold it all not including an area for burning or chipping and the haul roads for the trucks.

A football field is 360 feet long x 160 feet wide = 57,600 square feet; dividing 405,000 square feet by 57,600 square feet means you would need an area equivalent to **7 football fields.**

Our new grapple truck has a capacity of 24 cubic yards. Which fortunately arrived a few days before the storm did. I understand that SDR will be using similar trucks. Dividing 150,000 cubic yards by 24 CY per truck means they will need **approximately 6,260 truck loads to haul all the debris.**

To give perspective, from October 2 to October 25, our trucks have hauled 3,570 CY of debris to our town debris site behind PW.