

*****May 29, 2026*****

The Signal Mountain Town Council held a special called meeting to discuss the 2026/2027 Budget on Friday, May 29, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Those present were:

Mayor Elizabeth Baker
Vice Mayor Clay Crumbliss
Councilmember Andrew Gardner
Councilmember Charles Poss
Councilmember Miles Jorgensen

Also present were:

Town Manager Matthew Justice
Finance Director John Harr
See attached list for others present

Mayor Baker led the pledge of allegiance. A moment of silence was observed.

Roll Call

All Council members were present.

Citizens' Opportunity to Address Council

Mayor Baker asked if anyone present wished to address Council. There were no requests to address Council.

Budget Discussion

Mayor Baker stated that Council had a few remaining items to address before the proposed 2026/2027 Budget would be ready to move forward for consideration.

Library Fund

Council discussed that the Town's allocation to the Library would not be increased at this time and that any deficit would be reflected within the Library Fund and addressed further with the Library Board.

The Council reached consensus to leave the Library Fund as presented, with the understanding that the issue would be addressed with the Library Board within the first few months of the fiscal year.

Town Manager Compensation and Department Head Merit Increases

Council discussed the Town Manager's compensation for the upcoming fiscal year, including the proposed cost-of-living adjustment and merit increase.

The Council reached consensus to include a 3.5% merit increase for the Town Manager, in addition to the 3.8% cost-of-living adjustment the Council agreed to for Town employees.

The Council reached consensus to request that the Town Manager increase department head merit raises from 2% to 3%.

Althaus Park

Vice Mayor Crumbliss explained that the Town would need to spend \$500,000 on eligible improvements adjacent to and supporting the playground, such as sidewalks, bathrooms, accessibility improvements, and related park infrastructure, to receive a \$250,000 reimbursement from Hamilton County for the "Leaning into Communities" grant. He further explained that the playground itself is expected to be privately fundraised through Hope Included and that those private fundraising expenses are not eligible for reimbursement under the grant awarded to the Town.

The Council reached consensus to include a \$500,000 general fund expenditure in Parks and Recreation for Althaus Park, with the understanding that \$250,000 would be reimbursed through the Hamilton County grant.

Garbage Trucks

The issue was raised of the Town's garbage trucks and whether a capital investment may be needed through the vehicle replacement fund. Council discussed that additional information is needed before making a final decision.

The Council reached consensus to proceed with the proposed budget as presented and to address any garbage truck replacement or additional repair needs separately, if necessary, through a supplemental request or further Council discussion.

Budget Moving Forward

Mayor Baker asked whether Council had any further questions regarding the proposed budget. The Council reached consensus to place the 2026/2027 Budget on the agenda for a vote at the next regular meeting.

It was stated that the proposed budget does not include a tax increase.

Mayor Baker announced the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Town Council would be held Monday, June 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

With no further business, Vice Mayor Crumbliss made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Jorgensen seconded the motion. With all being in favor, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:35 p.m.

Elizabeth Baker, Mayor

Recorder