

**Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 5, 2018 | 6:00 p.m.**

Board Members Present: Mayor Dale Baldwin (absent), Alderman Calvin Green (absent), Alderman Jerry McMillan, Alderman John Reeves, Alderman Stephen Shoemaker, Mayor Pro Tem Brett Summey, Sr.

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Clerk Rebecca Eldreth, Police Chief Jeff Rose, Wastewater Superintendent Charles Call, and Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller.

Several other residents of the community also attended.

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Summey called to order the meeting of the Board of Aldermen. Alderman Shoemaker led the group in a moment of silence. Those in attendance then stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the February 5, 2018 Agenda – Alderman Reeves made the motion to move Item 9 – Consideration of Rezoning Parcel ID # 19223 001 579 to Item 2 on the Agenda. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Public Hearing

Consideration of Recommendation to Rezone Parcel 19223 001 579 from Residential-7 (R-7) to Industrial District (M-1) – Mayor Pro Tem Summey opened public comment at 6:00 pm to discuss rezoning of Parcel 19223 001 579 from R-7 to M-1 in order to allow the property owner to continue operations as a salvage yard. Mark Blevins, owner of Rainbow Recycling addressed the Board to discuss his future plans of the property if the rezoning of the parcel is approved by the Board. His plans included requesting a variance to the 15' setback and the installation of an 8' tall wooden fence with trees planted behind the fence in compliance with the existing ordinance. Mark then spoke about the services he provides at his location to Town and County residents. The Board thanked Mark for his comments. Alderman Reeves reminded Mr. Blevins the request for the variance would need to go back to the Planning Board for approval first. Mayor Pro Tem Summey voiced his approval for the rezoning stating he was in favor of the business but the site needs to be fenced. With no further comment, the Mayor Pro Tem closed public comment at 6:04 pm.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel ID 19223 001 579 – With no further discussion Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the rezoning of Parcel 19223 001 579 from Residential-7 (R-7) to Industrial District (M-1). Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – January 8, 2018 Regular Meeting – With no changes, Alderman McMillan made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Presentation of FY 2016-17 Town Audit – Priscilla Norris presented the Board with the audit findings for FY 2015-16. Some noteworthy items in Priscilla's report included \$1,891,068 in Fund Balance, \$1,060,633 as the unassigned portion with the remainder being restricted by statutes. Water and sewer revenues were up with some grants being included. Further, there was \$20,128 in uncollected tax monies, but 98.23% of the tax levy was collected as of June 30, 2017. Also, Priscilla stated the Petty

Cash and Change Fund Policy would help the internal controls. Overall, the Town was in a good financial state and no major issues were found. The Board thanked Priscilla for her report.

Consideration of 2018 Christmas in July Festival Road Closure and Footprint – John Smyre and Wesley Barker, Christmas in July Festival Board members, spoke to the Board requesting street closures for the 32nd annual Christmas in July Festival which will be held on Friday, July 6th and Saturday, July 7th. Wesley stated the festival footprint is the same as it has been in years past. The festival will feature live music, beginning at 3pm on Friday, July 6th. Food vendors, a Civil War reenactment, an opening ceremony, and more music from 5-10pm. The full festival will be held on Saturday, July 7th from 9am-7pm featuring over 100 arts and craft vendors, nonprofits, food vendors, live music, farmers market, tree growers' events, street performers, a community stage showcasing local talent, children's activities, and more. The proposed road closures are as follows:

Thursday, July 5th:

Midnight: Backstreet between Ashe Street and Main Street
Main Street between Jefferson Avenue and Backstreet

Friday, July 6th:

Midnight: Entire footprint of the festival is closed.

- Main Street from Jefferson Avenue to Church Street
- Backstreet from Ashe Street to Second Avenue
- State Street at Jefferson Avenue
- College Street from Main Street to First Avenue

Saturday, July 7th: All streets in the festival footprint remain closed to vehicle traffic except for controlled load in and load out and emergency vehicles.

Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the footprint and road closures for Christmas in July. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor. The Board thanked John, Wesley, and the festival committee for their continued work with the event each year.

Consideration of 2018 WJ Antiques Fair Road Closure and Footprint – Keith Woodie of the Antiques Fair spoke to the Board concerning the 2018 event. Keith said the fair will be held Friday, September 14th from 1-8pm and Saturday, September 15th from 8am-5pm in Downtown West Jefferson. Further, Keith stated the footprint of the fair would be the same as in the past which includes North and South Jefferson Avenue from Ashe Street to E. Second Street, with Main Street remaining open. The main stage would be relocated from the far end of Jefferson Avenue to the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Ashe Street to provide more space for the attendees. The footprint of the fair would be closed at 4:00 am on Friday, September 14th and remain closed until Saturday, September 15th until 7:00 pm. The fair will feature various vendors of antiques, collectibles, and primitives. There will also be a few food vendors and live music. With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the Antiques Fair road closures and footprint. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of the Public Library Parking Lot Expansion – Suzanne Moore, with the Public Library, continued the discussion of the parking lot expansion at the library. The Board expressed concerns about the safety of the wall that would be built around the expansion and the loss of space to the park by the existing ball field. The Board asked Suzanne to return to the March meeting with a drawing of the proposed plans

Consideration of the Public Library Story Walk in the Park – Peggy Bailey, the Service Librarian at the Public Library, spoke to the Board in regards to the opportunity of add a Story Walk to the park. A Story Walk is an innovative and delightful way for children to enjoy reading and the outdoors at the same time. The pages of a children’s book are laminated and attached to a special display post along the walking trail of the park. As the children stroll down the path they are directed to the next page of the story. The Library would be responsible for installation of the special display posts, as well as, updating and maintaining the story boards along the path. The Board requested for Eric Miller, maintenance director, to assist with the placement of the posts. With no further discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the addition of a Story Walk in the park. Alderman McMillan seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Discussion of the Ashe County Arts Center Bumpout Project – Ed Perzel and Traylor Renfro, Ashe County Arts Council Board members, spoke to the Board concerning the completion of the bumpout project by the 40th anniversary celebration in June. The project includes the relocation of a Skyline utility pole, the installation of 3 decorative stop signs, a decorative street lamp, and the bumpout extension with a piece of public art. The funding for the project will be derived from 4 different sources including Badger Funeral Home in the amount of \$767, Skyline in the amount of \$1500, The Arts Council in the amount of \$10,267, and the Town in the amount of \$20,591, for a total of \$33,125. With no further discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the project with a completion date before the anniversary celebration. Alderman McMillan seconded with a 4-0 vote in favor.

ABC Board Report – Haskell McGuire, ABC Board Chairman, gave a report to the Board on the 2nd Fiscal Quarter of the ABC Store for FY 2017-18. Haskell said the total sales for the quarter were \$538,101, a 4.46% increase from sales during this quarter last year. A check for \$16,250 was delivered to the Town for the 2nd Fiscal Quarter. Architectural designs are complete for the warehouse additions with details for bids to be released in February. The Board thanked Haskell for his report.

Consideration to Appoint TDA Chair – Brantley Price, Town Manager, spoke to the Board about appointing a new chair for the TDA. Don Baumeister, Sales Operations for the Holiday Inn Express, is the senior member of the Board and has agreed to serve as chair if the Board approves. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to appoint Don Baumeister the new chair of the TDA. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Text Amendments to Zoning Ordinances

Article V – General Rules, Section 502, Setbacks – Brantley Price, Town Manager, explained to the Board this amendment was within the General Rules. The General Rules does not have a reference as to where the setback should be measured. The Planning Board made the recommendation to the Board to amend the text to read *“setbacks shall be measured from the foundation of the structure.”* Alderman Reeves made the motion to amend the text of the General Rules within the Zoning Ordinance as recommended by the Planning Board. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Article XI – Sign Regulations, Section 1106, Attached Signs – Brantley Price, Town Manager, explained to the Board the current regulation allows for each building to have up to 3 signs per facing occupying 30% of the building each. The Planning Board recommended a text amendment to read *“the total area of all the signs shall not occupy more than 30% of the signable space on any building”* to the regulation in order to prevent businesses from covering the entire face of the building. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to amend the text of the Sign Regulations within the Zoning Ordinance as recommended by the Planning Board. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Article XI – Sign Regulations, 1106, Offsite Signs – Brantley Price, Town Manager, explained to the Board the current sign regulations do not allow a business located in the ETJ to have an offsite sign. The Planning Board recommended an amendment to the text to read *“ETJ – Properties located in the ETJ that do not have direct access to Highway 88, Highway 194, Highway 163, Highway 221, Buck Mountain Road, Beaver Creek School Road, or Mt Jefferson Road may have one (1) off site sign. Said sign shall comply with all relevant zoning regulations.”* The sign may be no larger than 40 square feet and the business owner must fill out a sign permit before erecting the sign. Alderman Reeves made the motion to amend the text of the Sign Regulations within the Zoning Ordinance as recommended by the Planning Board. Alderman McMillan seconded with a 4-0 vote in favor.

Consideration of Statements that Show Consistency with the 2008 Land Use Plan – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the statement that shows consistency with the Land Use Plan relating to the text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Road Closure Off Fairview Drive – With no discussion, Alderman McMillan made the motion to approve the road closure. Alderman Reeves seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Consideration of CDBG # 16-E-2905 Grant Project Ordinance – Brantley Price spoke to the Board in regards to the Community Development Block Grant – Downtown Redevelopment Funds Project in the building behind the current Mountain Outfitters’ building. The ordinance is required for grant funding. The owners of the property are moving forward with the project and expect to be opened by June 1st. With no further discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the ordinance. Alderman Reeves seconded, with a 4-0 vote in favor.

Consideration of Tax Releases- The Mayor Pro Tem stated the following tax bills are proposed to be released:

- a) Sterling Restaurants Inc. DBA McDonald’s - assessed an improper late fee - \$86.80
- b) Paul E Taylor Jr. - not in the WJ city limits - \$68.46

Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to release these two tax bills. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Police Report – Police Chief Jeff Rose gave the police report for January. There were 213 calls dispatched through the communications center, 10 auto collisions were investigated, 14 people were arrested with DWI, larceny, assault, and drug related crimes. A total of 6 persons were arrested/charged for drug violations. The Board thanked Chief for his report.

Water/Wastewater & Maintenance Report – WWTP Superintendent Charles Call gave an update on the WWTP. Charles stated the Reeves well pump went out but has been replaced. Carolina Technical Services completed their annual service and backed up data. The water level has been staying up despite a few leaks. The Board thanked Charles for his report.

Maintenance Report- Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave an update on the Maintenance Department. Eric said there were a total of 35 one call tickets for January, which is up slightly over last

month. There were a total of 9 water leaks that have been found and repaired. A total of 39 frozen water meter reported this month due to the cold weather. The town had one well froze but it has been thawed and replaced with proper insulation. There were several calls made by town residents to report frozen water, due to the weather. The maintenance department has been plowing snow and have received the final 2 loads of salt to complete the 100 ton contract. The Town has received 150 radio read water meters to be installed throughout the Town, 10 of which have been installed. The Board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report- Brantley Price gave his report to the Board. The Town is still waiting on a response from USDA to release the water and sewer project for bidding. The Docs on Main project is moving forward with the building reuse to start the Dr. Pepper museum with an ice cream and soda shop and hopes to be opened by May. Total taxes collected to date is 95% of our levy. Brantley gave the Board an update on delinquent taxes for prior years totaling \$96,208 which is down from prior years comparisons. The Town is working with the attorney to move forward with collection of the delinquent taxes. The Town will administering a survey to the taxpayers on how they would like to see their tax dollars spent. Brantley stated he had attended an annual conference for Town Managers and was amazed by the amount of people who have heard of or visited West Jefferson. One lady said that West Jefferson is an actual model small town for the state of North Carolina. Several other municipalities have visited our area to see what we have done with our Town and how we have completed the improvements. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments – Mayor Pro Tem Summey opened the meeting to public comment.

Rebecca Holman spoke to the Board about Ashe Rocks. Ashe Rocks would like to ask permission to use the wall on the side of Town Hall to place the painted rocks. By placing the rocks in the wall tourist and others interested would have easy access to the rocks. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the use of the wall by Ashe Rocks. Alderman Reeves seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Joey Igoffo, owner of the Nest and Birchwood Lofts, spoke to the Board about the possibility of adding wayfinding signs to the intersections of Downtown West Jefferson. The Board stated they would review the proposed signage but the design would need to go in front of the Planning Board before coming to the Board. Alderman Reeves spoke and said the desire of the Board would be to have something aesthetic and conducive to everything the Town has now. Joey also spoke about the probability leaving up the feather flag beside his business to attract attention. Alderman Reeves stated the flag would need to be removed per the sign regulation. Joey thanked Board for their time.

Andres Dominguez, owner of A's Café, spoke to the Board regarding the feather sign displayed outside his restaurant and the option of displaying the flag past the March 31st deadline for removal since he is a new business. Alderman Reeves stated the sign would need to come down before the time limit of the sign regulation. The Board welcomed Andres and Nidia to the Town. Andres thanked the Board.

Aldermen Comments – Alderman Shoemaker spoke about how wonderful it is to have new faces in the Town and to see the Town progressing. He also thanked the maintenance department and the rest of the Town's staff. Alderman Reeves spoke and welcomed everyone to the Town. Mayor Pro Tem Summey along with Alderman McMillan spoke and welcomed the new businesses to the Town.

Closed Session – The Mayor Pro Tem said the Board would be entering into closed session to discuss the acquisition of real property per G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5) and would return to open session before adjourning. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to go into closed session. The time was 7:43 pm.

Adjournment – The Board returned from closed session t 8:10pm. With no further items to be discussed or voted on, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Reeves. A vote of 4-0 in favor.

Dale Baldwin, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk