

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 6, 2016 | 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Dale Baldwin, Alderman Calvin Green, Alderman Jerry McMillan, Alderman John Reeves, Alderman Stephen Shoemaker, Alderman Brett Summey, Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Clerk Wesley Barker, Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller, Police Chief Jeff Rose. Several other residents of the community also attended.

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Baldwin called to order the meeting of the Board of Aldermen. Alderman Shoemaker gave the invocation and those in attendance then stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearing

Proposed Town Budget- Fiscal Year 2016-17- The Mayor opened public comment at 6:03 pm for anyone wishing to speak on the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2016-17. Alderman Reeves stated there would be no tax increases this year. With no public comment, the Mayor closed the public hearing at 6:05 pm.

Regular Session

Approval of the June 6, 2016 Agenda- Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Alderman McMillan seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Approval of Minutes- May 2, 2016 Regular Meeting- With no comments, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Approval of Minutes- May 10, 2016 Special Meeting- Budget- With no comments, Alderman Green made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Approval of Minutes- May 17, 2016 Special Meeting- Budget- With no comments, Alderman Summey made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of Ashe Dash 5K Race- Stephanie Bunch, of the Appalachian District Health Department, spoke to the Board on the upcoming Ashe Dash 5K Race which is a fundraiser for Ashe County Middle School's School Based Health Center. Stephanie said 100% of the proceeds from this race would go toward the Center. The 5K race is currently scheduled for Saturday, September 10th beginning at 8am. Stephanie stated when this race was held in West Jefferson several years ago, a portion of W. Main Street at the Old Depot was closed as the start/finish area for the race for a short amount of time. The route of the 5K would begin at the Old Depot and would follow the Backstreet to Second St down along Business 221 to the bowling alley and would then loop around following the same route back to downtown, proceeding up Second St to Church Ave and back down Main St ending at the Depot. Stephanie requests the same area of W. Main Street by the Old Depot be closed for this year's race from 7am-11am. The Board had concerns of parking and blocking off the street due to the Farmers Market. Alderman Summey encouraged runners to park in the new public parking areas. Alderman Green suggested to move the start/finish line to one of the new parking areas or to another location in order to not block off the street. After further discussion, Alderman Summey made the motion to approve the proposed event and the date of September 10th but to work on the location and the route and come back to the next meeting to discuss. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Town Audit Contract for FY 2015-16- The Mayor said Priscilla Norris' office has conducted the Town's audit for several years and would like to once again conduct the audit. The Mayor said the audit cost has increased \$1,500 to \$22,000 due to the LGC making the audit more difficult with additional calculations. The Mayor said the Board could then proceed to contract with Priscilla for another year if they wished. Alderman Green made the motion to approve Priscilla Norris to conduct the Town audit for FY 2015-16. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of USDA Letter of Conditions- Debbie Sexton from USDA spoke to the Board on the letter of conditions/commitment for the well, dewatering and water/sewer line extension projects. Debbie proceeded to highlight aspects of the project stating the interest rate would be 1.75%, the ARC Grant would be in the amount of \$300,000 and the Town contribution of \$171,000. With a total project cost of \$851,000. Other items Debbie discussed included the project budget, repayment, schedule, security requirements, payments, financing, disbursement of funds, audits and loan closing information. Debbie said the annual payment would be \$13,293 and \$111 monthly reserve payments. Debbie also stated the Board would need to adopt a resolution for the USDA loan for these projects in the amount of \$380,000 for the water and sewer services. Alderman Shoemaker then made the motion to approve the loan resolution for the USDA project. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Town Attorney David Paletta stated he had no questions for Debbie and the USDA project as Debbie's presentation were standard procedures from USDA. It was stated that payments will be budgeted and come out of the checking account, not fund balance.

The Board was then presented with a Resolution which accepts the conditions set forth in a Letter of Conditions dated June 6, 2016 including mitigation measures as identified by the environmental assessment. The resolution also authorizes the Mayor and Clerk to execute all forms necessary to obtain a loan from Rural Development. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the resolution accepting the letter of conditions abovementioned and to approve the Mayor and Clerk to sign all paperwork necessary for the loan. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

The Mayor then stated there would be a 10 minute recess in order for the Clerk and himself to sign paperwork for the USDA/Rural Development loan. The time was 6:36 pm.

The Mayor resumed regular session at 6:50 pm.

Consideration of Road Closure for Perry Evans Home Grand Opening Event- The Mayor introduced Jesse Evans, owner of Perry Evans Home to speak. Jesse stated he is the owner of a new business located on N. Third Ave. at the former Ashe Sharing Center. Jesse said he would like to have a special grand opening event on Sunday, June 26th from 1-5 pm. Jesse stated he would like to close a portion of N. Third Ave. for this event. Jesse said no businesses would be affected by this road closure as the Honey Hole is the only business across from him and are closed on Sunday. He said he had spoken to the Honey Hole and encouraged them to be open during the event if they wished. Jesse said he had been in Ashe County for 8 years and previously lived in Greensboro working in residential/commercial design. Jesse said he wanted to be in a downtown area with less travel. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the street closure at the time and date presented and to close the road a little earlier if needed. Alderman Summey seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Budget Amendment #4 FY 2015-16 (Year-End)- The Mayor stated this budget amendment was year-end which would move monies and balance the budget and keep accounts from being overspent. Town Manager Brantley Price stated this amendment includes the new public parking lot (\$91,000) and shows moving monies (\$41,500) to General Fund Capital Project for the streetscape

project. No additional funds were required from Fund Balance for the streetscape project. Also, \$20,000 was moved from water and sewer to cover some repair items. With no discussion, Alderman Green made the motion to approve the budget amendment. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Fiscal Year 2016-17 Budget Ordinance- The Mayor said this is the formal approval of the Town budget for the next fiscal year and it must be adopted by July 1st of each year. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the Town Budget and Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2016-17 as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Fiscal Year 2016-17- Schedule of Fees- The Mayor said there had been no changes to the schedule of fees. With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the Schedule of Fees for Fiscal Year 2016-17. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Amendment to West Jefferson Code of Ordinances- Chapter 72: Traffic Schedule- The Mayor stated this amendment would be to update the Traffic Schedule in the Code of Ordinances to add the all way stop signs at Jefferson Avenue and Second Street. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the amendment, seconded by Alderman Summey. The vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Thank You Letter to County of Ashe- The Mayor asked the Board about sending a thank you letter to each County Commissioner who supported and approved \$60,000 towards the new public parking lot. The Board was in consensus to send this thank you letter.

Discussion of July Board Meeting Time Change- The Mayor said the next Aldermen meeting would fall on Monday, July 4th and asked the Board if they would like to reschedule the meeting for Monday, July 11th or to postpone the meeting until August 1st. A consensus among the Board was to cancel the July Board meeting and meet again on Monday, August 1st. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to cancel July's meeting, seconded by Alderman Green. The vote of 5-0 in favor.

Police Report- Chief Rose gave a report on the Police Department. Chief said during the month of May, 219 calls were dispatched through the communications center, 20 auto collisions were investigated, 9 people were arrested including charges of DWI, larceny, assault and drug related crimes. Further, the Chief said 2 persons was arrested for drug violations. The Board thanked the Chief for his report.

Water/Wastewater Report- absent.

Maintenance Report- Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave a report on the maintenance department. Eric said the department had found several water and sewer issues on the Town's side and have since repaired. Also, Eric said the sewer line had been installed to the Longs who lived on Barnett Street. Eric said the department had been doing general maintenance and cleanup from the recent rainstorms. Eric also said the public restrooms are now open. The Board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report- Brantley Price gave his report to the Board. Brantley gave an update on the USDA loan project and stated the Town can finally start the projects with design and move forward with construction to begin in spring 2017. The streetscape project at Jefferson Ave. and Second St. is nearing completion with landscaping and installation of the large streetlights as well as cleanup and adding power to the bumpouts. Brantley said the Federal Highway Commission would be auditing the project this week. Brantley said the Town had received monies from the GE expansion project and must get a letter confirming job creations from the expansion before any monies are released. The sidewalk

replacement projects down by Miller's Insurance would be moved to August. Further, Brantley reported that Pocahontas would be picked up and discussion/quotes on the base are still taking place. The TDA is working with Raycom Media to produce high quality videos of West Jefferson for promotions on thesouthernweekend.com, as well as ads on Pandora and WBTV. Brantley said he would be meeting with representatives from the Lion's Club to replace the water fountain at the WJ Park. Brantley spoke on the Ashe Vision meetings being held throughout the county stated these meetings are to show where Ashe is headed in the future and are informational public meetings. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comment- The Mayor opened public comment at 7:30 p.m. Ann Rose, of Rose Mountain Butcher Shoppe and the West Jefferson Business Association, spoke to the Board on downtown mail delivery stating businesses have issues receiving their mail as it is sometimes sent to their physical address which is then returned by the Post Office. Ann mentioned adding cluster boxes to areas in downtown which the USPS would deliver to per the Postmaster. Ann stated this is possible revenue for the Town as there would be a maintenance fee recovered for the boxes. Ann said she would work on a cost analysis and design and report back to the Board. Ann said the Town would purchase the cluster boxes originally, but the Town would get their money back within 2 years by a maintenance fee charged to box renters, just as the USPS does for PO Boxes. The cluster box location would be back behind buildings, on the side streets, not on Jefferson Avenue or Main Street. The Mayor said this could be placed back on the agenda at a later date to be discussed.

Pam Neaves, of Pam's Unique Boutique, spoke to the Board on the pedestrian crossing in front of her store stating it is dangerous as people have been hit and almost hit due to cars not stopping for pedestrians. Pam asked if flashing lights could be placed above the pedestrian signs to warn drivers, or something be placed in the bumpouts to slow traffic down. It was stated that according to DOT, the crosswalk was properly marked with required signage. The Board suggested to have more police enforcement in these areas with people not yielding for pedestrians at these crosswalks. Pam also spoke on the number of cigarette butts in the bumpouts and around the sitting area in front of her store. She suggested the Town get another cigarette disposal container to be placed in the sitting area.

Mike Sawyer, Town resident, spoke to the Board stating the crosswalks shouldn't be at the intersections especially with no proper lighting and with drivers already looking at other drivers to proceed through the intersection in addition to pedestrians trying to cross the street. Mike suggests moving the crosswalks back away from the intersections.

With no other comment, public comment was closed at 7:47 p.m.

With nothing further, Alderman Green made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Shoemaker. The vote of 5-0 in favor.

Dale Baldwin, Mayor

Wesley M. Barker, Town Clerk