

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2020 | 6:00 pm

Board Members Present: Mayor Tom Hartman, Alderman Rusty Barr, Alderman Calvin Green, Alderwoman Crystal Miller, Alderman John Reeves, and Alderman Stephen Shoemaker

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Attorney Jak Reeves, and Town Clerk Rebecca Eldreth

Mayor Hartman called the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Alderman to order at 6pm. After the invocation was given, Alderman Reeves led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the October 5, 2020 Agenda – Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Alderman Barr seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Public Hearings

Submission of an application for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Infrastructure funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act in the amount of \$1,152,000 to repair and/or replace approximately 3,955 linear feet of the Town’s sewer collection system and rehabilitation of 23 manholes located in the downtown area – The Board of Aldermen for the Town of

West Jefferson held a public hearing on October 5, 2020 for providing explanation and description of the 2020 North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Community Development Block – Infrastructure Grant (CDBG-I). Members present were Mayor Tom Hartman, Alderman Rusty Barr, Alderman Calvin Green, Alderwoman Crystal Miller, Alderman John Reeves, and Alderman Stephen Shoemaker. Mayor Hartman opened the public hearing at 6:01pm.

Michelle Ball, Regional Planner with High Country Council of Governments was present to discuss the purpose of the public hearing for the Town of West Jefferson’s CDBG-I funding application. Ms. Ball stated that the purpose of the public hearing was to obtain citizen’s views and to respond to funding proposals and answer any questions posed by citizens. Ms. Ball also stated that the public hearing must cover the Town’s community development needs, development of the proposed activities, and a review of program compliance before the submission of the Town’s CDBG-I funding application to the state of the North Carolina.

The Town of West Jefferson proposes requesting funding from NCDEQ’S CDBG-I program for **The West Jefferson Sewer Collection System Project**. The proposed project will meet the following community and housing needs of West Jefferson by replacing approximately 2,165 lf and repairing, with cured-in-place pipe, approximately 1,790 lf gravity sewer line and rehabilitation of 23 manholes located in the downtown West Jefferson area.

The purpose of the CDBG-I grant program is to improve the quality of life for low to moderate income people by providing a safe, clean environment and clean drinking water through water and sewer infrastructure improvements and extensions of service.

- To benefit a residential area where at least 51% of the beneficiaries are low to moderate income as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- To perform eligible activities.
- To minimize displacement, and
- Provide displacement assistance as necessary.

For the fiscal year of 2020 the CDBG-I funding available is expected to be \$25.2 Million and each the maximum available grant \$2.0 million over a 3-year period. Applications for funding are received November 23, 2020.

The CDBG program is able to fund a wide variety of community development activities. The State of North Carolina has chosen to fund several activities: water and sewer infrastructure, neighborhood revitalization, COVID-19 related projects, and economic development projects that lead to job creation or retention. The infrastructure program, or CDBG-I program can fund a range of water and sewer infrastructure and economic development activities, including, but not limited to the, following:

Water:

- Projects that resolve water loss in distribution systems.
- Projects that extend public water to areas with contaminated wells.
- Projects that extend water lines to areas with dry wells.
- Projects that assist with low water pressure in public water systems.
- Projects that regionalize two or more water systems.
- Project that rehabilitate or replace a water treatment plant.

Wastewater:

- Projects that resolve inflow and infiltration to collection systems and surcharges from pumps stations and manholes.
- Projects that extent public sewer to areas with failed septic tanks.
- Projects that rehabilitate a wastewater treatment plant to allow for greater efficiency/compliance with regulations.

The Town of West Jefferson is seeking an amount in CDBG-I funds not to exceed \$1,152,000 for The West Jefferson Sewer Collection system Project. The purpose of the Town's request is to replace approximately 714 lf of 8", 1,091 lf of 10", and 360 lf of 12" sewer lines; repair, using cured-in-place pipe (CIPP), of 1,250 lf of 8" and 540 lf of 10" sewer lines; and the rehabilitation of 23 manholes all located in the downtown area of West Jefferson. The lines to be replaced are the main section of the Town's sewer collection system that carries the majority of the Town's wastewater to the WWTP.

A total of 100% of the CDBG- I funding will be used to benefit Low to Moderate Income (LMI) people. The project area in the Town of West Jefferson has been determined to have an area-wide LMI of 58.92%. The project area includes the entire town.

The range of activities covered by the CDBG-I funds for the **West Jefferson Sewer Collection System Project** includes:

- Construction.
- Environmental Review
- Engineering Design
- Construction Administration and observation.
- Legal activities.
- Surveying.
- Grant Administration.

If the Town of West Jefferson is awarded a CDBG-I grant, the town is required to adhere to federal procurement requirements and other federal regulations which include:

- American with Disabilities Act/Section 504 Survey
- Davis-Bacon & Related Labor Acts
- Adoption/Submittal of a Citizen's Participation Plan
- Adoption/Submittal of an Equal Opportunity Plan
- Adoption/Submittal of a Fair Housing Plan
- Adoption/Submittal of a Language Access Plan
- Adoption/Submittal of a Relocation Assistance Plan
- Adoption/Submittal of a Section 3 Plan
- Excess Force Provision

The State of North Carolina requires that the if the Town of West Jefferson receives CDBG grant funding that the town will certify that they will comply with the requirements of the general displacement and relocation policy for CDBG grant funding. This policy assists low to moderate income people with costs associated with relocation or displacement, should such relocation become necessary due to the project activities. CDBG funds can be used for those costs, if necessary. If no displacement and relocation will occur as a result of the proposed CDBG grant activity, then the Town of West Jefferson confirms that during this public hearing.

In the past, the Town has applied for and received for the following completed CDBG project:

- 1999 CDBG-ED – Lowes Foods Water & Sewer Extension - \$398,000 – 40 new jobs
- 2000 CDBG-ED – Wal-Mart Water & Sewer Extension - \$496,000 – 309 new jobs
- 2016 CDBG-Downtown Redevelopment – Mountain Outfitters Building Rehabilitation - \$349,410 – 7 new jobs
- 2014 CDBG-Infrastructure – Burkett St. Water & Sewer & Graybeal St. Water - \$661,478 – Improved water for 11 households and sewer for 5 households

The Town of West Jefferson will submit its CDBG-I application for the West Jefferson Wastewater Interceptor Project on November 23, 2020. The CDBG-I application will be available for review during

normal business hours at The West Jefferson Town Hall, 1 South Jefferson Ave, West Jefferson, NC. Additional information is available from Town Clerk, Rebecca Eldreth. Should you have any complaints or grievances regarding the subject public hearing, they should be addressed to the addressee mentioned above within 10 business days or by October 19, 2020 and a written response to the written complaints and/or grievances will be sent by the Town within 10 business days, where practicable. With no additional comments Mayor Hartman closed the public hearing at 6:13 pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on September 14, 2020. Alderman Barr seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Resolution to apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Infrastructure Funds Under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act in the Amount of \$1,152,000 –

Mayor Hartman stated a resolution of support would need to be adopted in order to apply for the CDBG-I funds. After some discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adopt the resolution as presented. Alderman Barr seconded, with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Presentation of NC DOT Highway 221 Aesthetics Project – Mayor Hartman informed the Board the NC DOT has completed a preliminary plan of the aesthetic project at the intersection of US Highway 221 and US Highway 163. Jeff Lakey with NC DOT presented the proposed plan to the Board to receive input on the \$260,000 project. Mr. Lakey will submit a preliminary drawing to the Board for final approval of the design concept. After final approval is given the Board will adopt a resolution of support which will take place at a future meeting.

Consideration of Landscaping and Fencing Requirements for 203 East First Street – Kevin Nichols presented to the Board on behalf of The Phoenix Group. Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the 7-foot fence and evergreen hedge as presented. Alderwoman Miller seconded with a unanimous vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Closing Town Parking Lot for Cruise Ins – Mayor Hartman explained the car club has asked permission to close the parking lot off state street for the Cruise In on Saturday, October 24. Alderman Reeves spoke in favor for the closure. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made a motion to approve the closing of the parking lot. Alderwoman Miller seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager gave his report to the Board. Rain totals for the month are 8.6 inches making the year to date total 69.3 inches. Parts have been ordered to repair the spring. The state of North Carolina is currently in Phase 3 under the Governor's Executive Order 169 with 327 reported COVID-19 cases in which 53 of those cases are currently active. The latest outbreak was reported at Forest Ridge Assisted Living Facility. The sewer line behind Ashe County Cheese has been repaired so that no water should enter the sewer pipe. Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator in Charge Brandon Patrick along with Rural Water completed a survey for treated water at the sewer plant versus water consumed to identify any inflow and infiltration issues. The booster pump is scheduled for install however the pump is no longer operating properly and in need of repair to connect the booster pump. The booster pump will complete the ARC project. All paving projects have been completed including the park parking lot and Church Ave. The Town is slated to receive \$41,186 in Powell Bill funds from the

state which is \$1800 less than budgeted. The West Jefferson sign on US Highway 221 Business will be relocated to the end of Blevins Express Road as Joe Blevins has given the Town permission to place the sign on his property. Taxes collected to date equals 68.7% of the levy. An increase of 15% in sales tax for the month of July has been reported in comparison to the same month in 2019. The deadline for the 2020 Census has been extended to October 31st with completion rates for North Carolina at 63%, Ashe County at 51.2% and West Jefferson 52.6%. Mo's Boots has planned a sidewalk sale on October 16th and 17th. Ashe Services for the Aging will hold their annual fuel assistance drive on October 9th. The West Jefferson Business Association will host an alternative to Downtown Trick or Treat by handing out treat bags at the Farmers Market. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments – Mayor Hartman opened the meeting to public comment. With no comments the Mayor closed public comment.

Aldermen Comments – Alderman Shoemaker made note of the improvements to the lot on Long Street. Alderwoman Miller pointed out how good Town looks with the addition of the scarecrows and pumpkins as well as the addition of hand sanitizer stations.

Adjournment – With nothing further, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Alderman Barr with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

These minutes were unanimously approved by the West Jefferson Board of Alderman Regular monthly meeting held on November 2, 2020.

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk