

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 6, 2022 | 6:00 pm

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

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Attorney Jak Reeves, Police Chief Brad Jordan, and Wastewater Superintendent Brandon Patrick

At 6:00 pm Mayor Hartman called to order the meeting of the Board of Aldermen. After the invocation was given, those in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the June 6, 2022 Agenda – Mayor Hartman made the request for closed session to be removed from the agenda. Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the agenda with the deletion of closed session. Alderwoman Miller seconded the with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Town Operating Budget – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed operating budget for fiscal year 2022-2023. The Mayor opened the public hearing at 6:02pm. Town Manager Brantley Price made a few comments including that the tax rate will remain the same as previous years, \$125,000 was moved from the general fund to balance the budget, included in the general fund is \$100,000 incentive payment for GE, the final \$100,000 payment for Paddy Mountain, and \$240,000 for a service truck for the fire department. The second round of ARPA funds is due in the next couple of months, and water and sewer rates are slated to increase by 3%. With no further comment, Mayor Hartman closed the public hearing at 6:05pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held on May 1, 2022. Alderman Barr seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Public Comment – Shawn Leeper came before the board to express his concerns for the future plans of Jefferson Station including a rooftop bar. The condo owner's concerns are for the noise and the potential of others accessing the condo area. The condo owners would like the opportunity to discuss the development in the future as the project progresses. The board thanked Shawn for his comments.

Discussion of GE Refund – Ashe County Tax Collector Chris Lambert and representatives from GE came before the board to explain the double listing on GE's business personal property. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the refund with Alderman Reeves seconding the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Land Use Plan Update – Kelly Coffey with the High Country Council of Governments reviewed the Land Use Plan update with the board. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the Land Use Plan as presented. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of FY 2021-2022 Audit Contract – Priscilla Norris, CPA presented the FY 2021-22 audit contract with the board. With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the audit contract as presented. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Downtown Bike Tours – Catherine Massey came before the Board with all requested information for final approval. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the downtown shuttles. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Budget Amendment #3 – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the budget amendment as presented. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Approval for FY 2022-23 Budget Ordinance – With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the budget ordinance as presented. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Approval for FY 2022-23 Schedule of Fees – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the schedule of fees as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Revised ARPA Grant Ordinance – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the revised grant ordinance as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Policies – To meet the guidelines for the ARP funds received by the town the Eligible Use Policy, Non-Discrimination policy and Record Retention Policy must be adopted. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the policies as presented. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Memorandum of Understanding – Town Attorney Jak Reeves explained the reason for the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of West Jefferson and the Town of Jefferson. The memorandum states that the Miller Store in Smethport meets the requirements of satellite annexation, and that Jefferson is not interested in annexing the property even though they are closer in proximity. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the memorandum as presented. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of TDA Appointment – Josh Williams term with the TDA expires this month, but he is willing to serve another term. With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the reappointment of TDA board member Josh Williams. Alderwoman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Ashe Pregnancy Care Center Walk for Life – Ashe Pregnancy Care Center is requesting to walk downtown of September 24th as they have done for several years prior. The walk will begin and end at the Backstreet Park. With no further discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the walk. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Cemetery Plot Purchase – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the purchase of the cemetery plots for Judith Graham and Marlyn Hartzog. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Tax Release – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the tax release for Pinnacle Propane Express. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Discussion of July Board Meeting Date – Mayor Hartman explained that the next Alderman meeting falls on the July 4th holiday so an alternate date will need to be set. The Board agreed to meet Monday, July 11, 2022 at 6:00pm.

Police Report – Chief Jordan gave his report to the Board for the month. A total of 294 calls were dispatched through the communications center including 7 motor vehicle crashes, 6 larcenies, 25 drug cases, 29 minor citations, and other miscellaneous calls. The Board thanked Chief Jordan for his report.

Water and Wastewater Report – Wastewater Superintendent Brandon Patrick gave his report to the Board. A total of 7.5 inches of rain were recorded for the month of May with the heaviest rain of 3 inches in one day. The flow was noticeably lower at the plant compared to similar rain events due mainly to the sewer rehab that was completed earlier this year. The bearings have been replaced on 2 of the aerators. These bearings lasted almost 3 years compared to 6 months with the old aerators. Both filters are running and are averaging about 80,000 gallons a day. The Board thanked Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – absent

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager gave his report to the Board. The town wifi is averaging 264 clients per day. The original ARPA funds have been utilized for sewer rehab which has reduced some of the water into the system. Sidewalks on North Jefferson Avenue are scheduled to be completed this week. Taxes collected to date total 97.8% of the levy. Sales tax for the month of February are up 25% with a year to date increase of 14%. Our State magazine will be filming video footage this week around town for a promotional video. The fireworks display will be held on July 4th at around 9:30pm. The Town will be receiving additional funds from the ABC board in the amount of \$20,000. Capital credits received from Blue Ridge Energy total \$10,900 which will be credited to each account. The water damage claim on Buck Mountain at the old Catawissa plants has not been settled. Mo's Boots will be holding a sidewalk sale on June 16th-17th. The employee picnic will be June 17th at the park. A congratulations was given to Town Clerk Rebecca Eldreth for her designation as NC Certified Municipal Clerk.

Aldermen Comments – The Board thanked everyone in attendance.

Adjournment – With nothing further, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Alderman Reeves with a vote of 4-0 in favor. The time was 7:13pm.

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk