

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2020 | 6:00 p.m.

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, Town Clerk Rebecca Eldreth, Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller, WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick, and Police Chief Brad Jordan

Several other residents of the community also attended.

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

Approval of the February 3, 2020 Agenda – Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Alderwoman Miller seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held on January 6, 2020. Alderman Barr seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Presentation by NCDOT on Proposed Changes to Jefferson Avenue – Rob Weisz with NCDOT presented the proposed change in markings to Jefferson Avenue to the Board. The proposed change in markings would take place during the scheduled resurfacing of Jefferson Avenue in Spring of 2020. The markings would be altered from the current four lane highway to a three lane highway with a biking and pedestrian lane on each side. Rob listed the benefits and disadvantages for the proposed project. Benefits listed included a three lane highway provides enough capacity for traffic volumes as daily traffic counts are between 10,000 and 13,000 cars, reduced speeds, reduced rear-ends and sideswipe crashes, easier to identify gaps when entering from side streets, safer access to existing and future development near US 221, provides a safe place for bikers and pedestrians, and could discourage through trucks as the benefits. Disadvantages were reduced speed for those wishing to drive faster and fewer gaps. The Board thanked Rob for his presentation.

Public Comment on NCDOT Project – Mayor Hartman opened the public comment to hear questions, comments, and concerns of those in attendance. Keith Woodie, Gwynita Steele, and Anita Yates spoke against the proposed changes. Susan Hall, Christina Borne, and Chris Borne spoke in favor of the changes. Mayor Hartman closed the public comment at 6:46pm.

Consideration of Resolution in Support of NCDOT Project to Change the Markings on Jefferson Ave. – After some discussion Alderman Reeves made the motion to table the decision to a later date. Alderman Green seconded the motion with a vote of 4-1 with Alderman Barr opposing.

Consideration of 2020 Christmas in July Festival Road Closure and Footprint – John Smyre spoke on behalf of the Christmas in July committee. The festival plans to use the same footprint as in previous years with the addition of reserving six parking spaces in front of the Ashe County Chamber and Visitor Center on Friday night only. One of the issues with the footprint has been the occurrence of Mountain

Outfitters sidewalk sale in the footprint of the festival, as they have in years past. Helemarie Reavis spoke on behalf of Mountain Outfitters. After some discussion Alderman Green made the motion to approve the footprint of the festival as presented that eliminates the space for Mountain Outfitters Sidewalk sale and the addition of the six parking spaces. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 2-3 with Alderman Barr, Alderman Shoemaker, and Alderwoman Miller opposing. The motion did not pass, and the sidewalk sale will continue. Kitty Honeycutt asked the Board to reconsider the addition of the six parking spaces in front of the Chamber. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the closure of the six parking spaces on Friday night. Alderwoman Miller seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of 2020 WJ Antique Fair Road Closure and Footprint – Keith Woodie presented the 2020 footprint to the Board with the possibility of eliminating the live stage for a DJ or jukebox. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the road closure and footprint as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Engineering Agreement Amendment #4 – Mayor Hartman explained that there are grant funds remaining from the USDA ARC water and sewer project. The funds can be used to add a booster pump to the new well site to increase the gallons per minute from approximately 65 gallons per minute to 95 gallons per minute. Alderman Green made the motion to approve the amendment. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Funds to Complete Wayfinding Project – Town Manager Brantley explained that the first phase of the wayfinding project is in place. The next phase would include the installation of the kiosks and parking signage in the amount of \$10,000. A total of \$5,000 remains in Town funds from the project, so an addition \$5,000 would be needed to complete the project by Spring. Alderman Barr made the motion to approve funds needed to complete the wayfinding project. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of TDA Appointment – Mayor Hartman stated that Andy Guion’s term on the Tourism Development Authority has expired. Andy is willing to serve another two-year term if the Board desires. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to reappoint Andy to another two year term. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Financial Update and Review Past Due Taxes – Town Manager Brantley Price gave an overview of the revenues and expenses for each account, and then gave a summary of past due taxes from prior years.

Budget Amendment #2 – Mayor Hartman stated the budget amendment is to purchase two natural gas furnaces to replace two older oil furnaces for the fire department. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the budget amendment. Alderman Barr seconded to the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Tax Releases – Mayor Hartman stated that the County sent a tax release for Paul Taylor Jr. for \$27.66 as the property is not in Town limits. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the tax release. Alderwoman Miller seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Police Report – Police Chief Bradley Jordan gave his report to the Board. A total of 293 calls were dispatched through the communications center: 14 auto collisions were investigated; 12 larcenies; 4 drug cases; 5 driving while impaired; 3 trespasses; 17 minor citations; 1 overdose; and 2 assault cases. The Board thanked the Chief for his report.

Water/Wastewater & Maintenance Report – WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick gave his report to the Board. Rain totals for the month were reported at 5.67 inches. A total of 120,000 gallons of sludge were ran through the belt press. The annual wastewater and land app reports for 2019 have been submitted and posted online for consumers. Both filters at the filter plant are in operation averaging between 90,000 and 100,000 gallons per day. The Board thanked Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – Eric Miller, Maintenance Supervisor gave his report to the board. Several water leaks were reported in the month of January with only three leaks on the Town’s side of the water system, four sewer line issues reported, three sewer taps were made, and one blocked manhole. The maintenance department repaired the pump on one well, added saddles for chlorine on another well, tested flow rates for the fire hydrants with Keith Buff’s assistance, chipped all brush, and made four trips to the landfill. The Board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager gave his report to the Board. Carolina Grading has been assisting the Town in eliminating old galvanized water lines and infiltration in the sewer lines and will continue to do so over the next six months. Taxes collected to date total 95.4% of the levy. The TDA along with the Chamber is currently running an ad in Our State magazine for the months of February, March, April, and May with an online article scheduled for April. Brantley reminded the Board of the upcoming Planning Board meeting on February 11th and Board of Adjustment meeting on February 12th. Brantley stated he will be attending the annual City and County Managers Conference. A Legislative luncheon will be held at the High Country Council of Governments at the end of February. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Aldermen Comments – Mayor Hartman congratulated Brantley Price for being named the Best Town Manager by the Ashe Post and Times. Each of the Alderman thanked those in attendance.

Public Comments – Mayor Hartman opened the meeting to public comment, but no comments were made.

Closed Session – The Mayor then asked for a motion to enter closed session per G.S. 143.318.11(a)(5) to establish the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating. Alderman Green made the motion.

Return to Regular Session – The Board returned from closed session at 8:20pm.

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

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk