

**Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting
November 3, 2014
6:00 P.M.
Minutes**

Present: Mayor Dale Baldwin, Alderman Calvin Green, Alderman Tom Hartman, Alderman John Reeves, *Alderman Stephen Shoemaker (absent)*, Alderman Brett Summey. Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Clerk Wesley Barker, Town Finance Officer Heather Holdaway and Town Planner Matthew Levi were also present. Several other Town employees, business owners and residents of the community also attended.

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Baldwin called to order the meeting of the Board of Aldermen. Alderman Hartman then said the invocation. All in attendance stood and said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of November 3, 2014 Agenda- The Mayor said that Perry's Gold Mine would like the Board's permission to use the Town Seal on a coin they are going to produce for the West Jefferson Centennial with the Centennial logo on the other side of the coin. He would like to place this item on the agenda following the Centennial Update. Alderman Hartman then made a motion to approve the agenda with the proposed addition. Alderman Green seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Public Hearing

Proposed Text Amendment to the Permitted Uses of the Community Shopping (C-S) Zoning District

The Mayor said this public hearing was to hear comment on the proposal to include billiard rooms under the permitted uses of the Community Shopping Zoning district as it is currently not permitted. The Mayor said there was a proposed billiard/game room at 114 N. Jefferson Ave. The public hearing was opened at 6:04 p.m. for comment. Jerry Woodie spoke to the board and said he would like to put in a billiard/game room in the basement of this building. He said when he moved back here he seen there wasn't a game room in Town for young people to go to that is in a safe environment. Jerry states this business would be a safe and well monitored area, alcohol free and there would be no trouble. Jerry said he had gave the Planning Board an update on the proposed business and says he just wants a chance to see how it goes, perhaps on a trial basis. If the business is not satisfactory, Jerry says it can be shut down. The business would be open at night at 6pm and would not cause any parking issues in downtown and he would always be on site when the business is open. Talara Parish spoke next to the Board stating she is all for new business in Town. Talara asks the Board to be aware of residents in apartments above the buildings in downtown as she feels the noise level would be a nuisance from this game room, especially since the back entrance would be in the alleyway. She says the sound carries in the alleyway and anyone in the apartments can hear everything. She also spoke on the potential of outside loitering by teenagers at this facility. With no further comments, the public hearing was closed at 6:12 p.m.

Proposed Map Amendment to the Town's Zoning Map (Voluntary Annexation of Highland Community Church)

The Mayor said this public hearing was to hear comment on the voluntary annexation of Highland Community Church who wishes to be annexed into the Town to receive water service. The public hearing was opened at 6:12 p.m. With no comment, the public hearing was closed at 6:13 p.m.

Proposed Text Amendment to the Signs of the Neighborhood Service (NS) Zoning District

This public hearing is to hear comment on the proposed text amendment to add the Town's sign ordinance regulations to the Neighborhood Service Zoning District as they are currently not included

within this district and it will regulate signage in this district as it does the other zoning districts. The public hearing was opened at 6:13 p.m. With no comment, the public hearing was closed at 6:14 p.m.

Regular Session began at 6:14 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes- October 6, 2014 Regular Meeting

With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Alderman Summey seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

GE Expansion Update

Tim Tucker, West Jefferson GE Plant Leader, showed a short video to the Board and those in attendance on GE Aviation's plants in the United States as well as the products made at each. Tim then gave an update to the Board on the expansion of the West Jefferson plant and the job search that will soon be launched. Tim said the West Jefferson plant would be hiring 105 hourly employees and 21 salary employees as a result of the expansion project. The expansion would house a rotating parts value stream, new to the West Jefferson plant. Tim said after the expansion was completed, 34 processes would occur in the West Jefferson plant. Applications would begin being accepted online for the new positions on December 1st, 2014 and 15 applicants would be selected each quarter to be trained until the 105 employees were reached. Tim spoke on the hiring process which included an online evaluation, preliminary training at the Ashe County Job Development building, interviews, teamwork evaluations and on-the-job training. Tim said the scope of the new hires would be to find youth from the county and surrounding areas, preferably 24 years of age and younger, with a mix of veterans. GE would be working with community colleges and local high schools in the area in an attempt to attract a young workforce. 10,000 people would ultimately like to be "touched" with this project that includes education of the project and recruitment of employees. Tim spoke on the maturity of the West Jefferson plant workforce and states they take their jobs seriously and productivity is high. The Board thanked Tim for his report.

ABC Board Report & Audit Review- Haskell McGuire

ABC Board Chairman Haskell McGuire spoke to the Board and gave an update on the ABC Board. Haskell said for the first fiscal quarter 2014-15 total sales were \$395,282, a 1.6% increase over this quarter last year. A check was delivered to the Town for \$11,000 for the first quarter, an increase from \$10,500 last fiscal year. Haskell then spoke on the annual ABC audit for Fiscal Year 2013-14. Haskell said the audit found no negative findings. Further, assets exceeded liabilities by \$609,292 (an increase of 13.2% compared to 2013), debt was down 19.97% from June 30, 2013, total assets were \$882,247, total liabilities were \$272,955 with a net position of \$609,292. Total sales for the Fiscal Year were \$1,480,696, an increase of \$75,528, or 5.3%. Haskell then spoke on the requirements of the ABC Commission, (which included quarterly reports to the Aldermen, ABC Officer, required trainings, completion of an annual audit, percentages due to local law enforcement and Town, and alcohol education). Haskell introduced Mary Howell, retired educator, who had been leading alcohol abuse education courses and will be teaching these classes statewide. The Board thanked Haskell for his report.

West Jefferson Centennial Commission Update- Lynn Rees-Jones

Lynn Rees-Jones gave an update to the Board on the West Jefferson Centennial Commission. Lynn said the Centennial website had been launched, a Facebook page was active, 2015 events were planned and the Commission would have an entry in the upcoming Holiday parade on November 15th. Lynn said Centennial banners would be printed and placed on every other light pole in Downtown beginning in early 2015. Further, a West Jefferson birthday celebration event was planned for February 2015, editorials with Our State Magazine were in the works and a 30 minute history of West Jefferson video would be produced. Lynn said one goal is to get the word out to locals about the Centennial celebration. The Board thanked Lynn for her report.

Consideration to Use Town Seal for Centennial Coin

Gene Hafer spoke on this proposal on behalf of Perry's Gold Mine. Gene said Perry's Gold Mine would like to produce a coin to commemorate West Jefferson's Centennial with the Centennial logo on one side of the coin and the Town seal on the other. Gene said Perry's Gold Mine would just need permission by the Board for Perry's to use the Town seal on this coin. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the use of the Town seal on the Centennial coin by Perry's Gold Mine. Alderman Summey seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of 1-Mile Centennial Race

Ken Syvenski spoke to the Board on a potential 1-mile race in conjunction with the West Jefferson Centennial celebration. Ken said he is seeking permission from the Aldermen to approve a 1-mile race that would be from the Cabin Store on Jefferson Avenue and from Long Street to Main Street. Ken requests that part of the 4 lane be closed off during this race, which would ultimately make that section of Jefferson Avenue a 2 lane. Ken said cones would be placed along the routes to make this a 2 way traffic flow during the time of the race which would last between 45 to 90 minutes. This race would be held in June 2015 during the late evening hours. The setup time before the race would be at least an hour in order to block the road off with cones. Alderman Green suggested not blocking off the road in the middle of the day or for half a day period and felt the late evening time was best. Ken said he would like to have an estimated 500 runners attend the race. With no further discussion, Alderman Hartman made the motion to approve the 1-mile race as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor. Alderman Green asked that Ken report back to the Board in the spring to give an update on the race.

Appointment of W.J. Fire Department Chief & Assistant Chief

The Mayor said Donnie Miller and Eric Miller are willing to accept the Chief and Assistant Chief for another year, respectively. With no discussion Alderman Green made the motion to appoint Donnie Miller as Fire Chief for another year, seconded by Alderman Reeves. The vote of 4-0 in favor.

Alderman Summey then made the motion to appoint Eric Miller as Assistant Fire Chief for another year, seconded by Alderman Green. The vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Thank you Letters to County of Ashe, Board of Education, Badgers Funeral Home and Christmas in July for Parking Lot Partnership

Brantley said the parking lot has been completed at the old tennis courts at the former West Jefferson School and 48 spaces have been created. Brantley has written thank you letters to each partner in this project and is seeking Board approval for these. With no discussion, the Board was in consensus to send the thank you letters to each partner.

Consideration of Proposed Text Amendment to the Permitted Uses of the Community Shopping (C-S) Zoning District

The Mayor said the Board would now decide whether or not to allow a billiard/pool hall as a permitted use within the Community Shopping (C-S) zoning district. The Mayor said the Planning Board voted unanimously to not recommend approval of this amendment for permitted use in this district. Discussion took place on allowing this business on a trial period basis and to shut it down if complaints arose. However, it was stated that a trial period was not materialized when the vote was called for by the Planning Board. Brantley read an email from Town Attorney David Paletta which stated a trial period for a business was not allowed within permitted uses, that a conditional use permit would have to be granted. Further, it was stated that if the Board allowed this permitted use within this district, anybody could open up a billiard hall that was located in the district. After more discussion by the Board, Alderman Green made the motion to not approve the text amendment to add billiard halls to the

permitted uses of the C-S zoning district. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor to not approve this amendment.

Consideration of Proposed Map Amendment to the Town's Zoning Map (Voluntary Annexation of Highland Community Church)

Highland Community Church is seeking annexation into the Town as they need Town water due to a failing well. Brantley said Eric and himself had reviewed and seen no issues with putting water to the church. The Town will have to bore underneath Ray Taylor Rd. for the water hookup. The tap fee and capital reserve fee should cover the costs to install the line and meter. The Planning Board voted to recommend the voluntary annexation of the church. With no discussion, Alderman Hartman made the motion to approve the voluntary annexation of Highland Community Church into the Town of West Jefferson. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Proposed Text Amendment to the Signs of the Neighborhood Service (NS) Zoning District

Brantley explained to the Board that currently the Town sign standards are not covered in the NS District which means that anyone currently in this district could have any sign displayed, even if it was not allowed under the sign ordinance. However, nobody is currently in violation of the Town sign standards. This text amendment would formally include the sign ordinances in this district and the Planning Board voted to recommend adding the sign standards to the NS District. With no discussion, Alderman Summey made the motion to approve the proposed text amendment to the NS District to add the Town sign standards. Alderman Hartman seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Statements that are/are not Consistent with the Town's 2008 Land Use Plan

With no discussion, Alderman Hartman made the motion to approve the statements that are consistent with the Town's 2008 Land Use Plan (Voluntary Annexation of Highland Community Church & Text Amendment of Signs in the N-S District) as well as approve the statement that is not consistent with the Town's 2008 Land Use Plan for the text amendment for permitted uses within the C-S District. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Police Report

Chief Rose gave a report on the Police Department. Chief said during the month of October, 225 calls were dispatched through the communications center, 21 auto collisions were investigated, 9 people were arrested including charges of DWI, larceny, assault and drug related crimes. Further, the Chief said 7 persons were arrested for drug violations. The Board thanked the Chief for his report.

Water/Wastewater Report

Charles Call gave a report on the status of the WWTP. Charles said the recent inspections went well with no major issues. Charles said all is going well at this time at the plant. Also, rotary press demonstrations would be taking place at the plant this week. The Board thanked Charles for his report.

Maintenance Report

Eric said for the month of October, 24 one calls had been completed. 2 water leaks and 3 sewer line issues has been found and repaired. Further, the department had been chipping brush, winterizing the park, finishing up paving and would be putting up Christmas lights next week. Eric also spoke on the upcoming state inspections on the sewer lines/pump stations. The Board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Manager's Report

Items in Brantley's report included the holiday parade and light up the Town on Saturday, November 15th, streetscape project update, GE expansion and storm water grant partnership with Sparta which

would assist in drainage and create a rain garden at the Arts Center. Further, Brantley said taxes collected to date were \$697,000 or 67.7% of the levy. Brantley said West Jefferson is 1 of 6 towns in the running for the Virginia Tech Design Grant which would help with potential Backstreet street enhancements. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments

Public comment was opened at 8:00 p.m. Jeff Caudill, Town resident, spoke on a golf cart/4 wheeler ordinance. He stated the Town of Banner Elk has an ordinance on golf cart usage on the roads that allow anyone over the age of 21 years of age to use these if obeying traffic laws. Jeff spoke again on neighbors helping neighbors and requests permission to use his 4 wheeler in neighborhoods to help those in need such as hauling wood or scraping driveways in the winter. After some discussion, Alderman Green said if you are helping out a neighbor he doesn't have a problem with using a 4 wheeler to assist. Alderman Reeves agreed with Alderman Green as long as he isn't joy riding. Jeff assured the Board that he does not joy ride and only uses his 4 wheeler for work purposes. With nothing further, public comment was closed at 8:07 p.m.

Adjournment

With no other items to be discussed, Alderman Hartman made the motion to adjourn the Board of Aldermen meeting, seconded by Alderman Summey. The vote of 4-0 in favor. The time was 8:08 p.m.

Dale Baldwin, Mayor

Wesley M. Barker, Town Clerk