

**Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
May 7, 2018 | 6:00 p.m.**

**Board Members Present:** Mayor Dale Baldwin, Alderman Calvin Green, Alderman Jerry McMillan, Alderman John Reeves, Alderman Stephen Shoemaker, and Alderman Brett Summey, Sr. (absent)

**Town Staff Present:** Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Clerk Rebecca Eldreth, Police Chief Jeff Rose, and Wastewater Superintendent Charles Call, Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator

Several others also attended.

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

**Approval of the May 7, 2018 Agenda** – Mayor Baldwin stated the need for an additional item on the agenda for the repair of public sidewalk. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the agenda as presented with the addition. Alderman McMillan seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

**Regular Session**

**Approval of Minutes – March 20, 2018 Special Budget Meeting** – With no changes, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

**Approval of Minutes – April 2, 2018 Regular Meeting** – With no changes, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

**Approval of Minutes – April 6, 2018 Special Meeting** – With no changes, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

**Discussion of Fire Substation for the Stonebridge Community** – Dave Eastburn spoke on behalf of the Stonebridge Community to voice the concerns of the residents of the subdivision. The subdivision is divided between the West Jefferson and Fleetwood Fire Departments with the only entrance to the subdivision located in the Fleetwood Fire District. Mr. Eastburn asked the Board to consider building a fire substation in the West Jefferson Fire District to decrease response times and a lower insurance premiums for the residents of the subdivision. The Mayor stated the addition of a substation would be cost prohibited. Mr. Eastburn then asked the Board to consider rezoning the 180 homes located in the West Jefferson Fire District within the subdivision to the Fleetwood Fire Department. Alderman Green stated the redistricting of the homes in the subdivision would need to be approved by both fire departments. The Mayor agreed with Alderman Green's comments and encouraged the subdivision to set up a time for both departments to meet and discuss. Mr. Eastburn thanked the Board for its time.

**Consideration of Audit Contract for FY 2018-2019** – Mayor Baldwin stated Priscilla Norris, CPA has submitted her contract for the FY 2018-2019. The contract price has increased by \$1,000 from the

previous year, but the Town is pleased with the services provided by Priscilla as she is good to help and give advice during the year. With no further discussion, Alderman Green made the motion to approve the contract. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

**Proclamation and Invitation to Forty Fest** – Jane Lonon with the Ashe County Arts Council updated the Board with the events of Forty Fest and extended an Invitation to the Mayor and the Board. Ed Perzel, the President of the Ashe County Arts Council Board of Directors, read the Proclamation to the Board. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the Proclamation as read. Alderman McMillan seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

**Discussion of Sign Regulations** – Alderman Reeves, Chairman of the Planning Board, stated that several persons in attendance wanted to discuss the current sign regulations. The current regulation states that certain signs must come into compliance by July 1, 2018 or be removed. Matthew Minton spoke on behalf of Lowes. He asked the Board to take into consideration the size of the building and the scale of the sign if they were to comply with the sign ordinance. Mr. Minton also discussed the strategic placement of the detached sign for visibility. Amanda Mann with Troutman Sanders spoke on behalf of Walmart echoing the concerns with visibility and appearance, if the sign were to be adjusted to conform to current sign regulations. Ms. Mann also stated that Walmart would have to create a new sign as there are no signs in production that would meet the Town's specifications. Preston Kendall, representing Ingles, addressed his concerns to the Board. Mr. Kendall discussed the issues with visibility and appearance. He also stated that the signs were purposefully placed on the outside of the building to direct shoppers and give them quick access to the items needed inside the store. Mr. Kendall also stated that Ingles could provide several different options for services inside the store, but these options would not be made available to the Town of West Jefferson if they are not allowed to display signage. Alderman Reeves stated that he would make a recommendation to the Planning Board to amend the current zoning ordinance by removing Section 1114 (c)(2) – *All other signs not conforming to the provisions of this Article as of July 1, 2013 shall be removed, changed, or altered to conform to this Article within 5 years from July 1, 2013.* Alderman Reeves invited the representatives in attendance to the next Planning Board meeting on Thursday, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Discussion of Acquiring Additional USDA Funds for Water/Sewer Project** – Mike Acquesta updated the Board on the new well site, belt press, and water/sewer extensions. Mr. Acquesta stated that the original bid opening was postponed from March 22nd, to April 4th due to the lack of bidders. Carolina Grading and Utilities was the lowest bidder on all 3 projects. The 3 projects had a total budget of \$657,500. However, the sum of the bids for all 3 projects came in over budget by approximately \$525,000. Mike stated a few changes to the plan, higher labor, and material costs could explain the increase in the bids price. USDA has additional funds to loan the Town the additional funds to complete the project. Mike asked the Board to consider allowing the Town to apply for the additional funds through USDA. With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion. Alderman McMillan seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

**Presentation of ABC Report** – Haskell McGuire present ABC Report for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fiscal Quarter 2017-2018. Haskell stated third quarter sales totaled \$399,433 which is a 9.8% increase from the previous year. A check for the amount of \$16,250 has been delivered to the Town for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Haskell then updated the Board on the current warehouse expansion project giving the completion date of June 22, 2018. The Board thanked Haskell for his report.

**Discussion of Library Parking Lot Expansion** – Suzanne Moore along with John Maddox presented the Board with an artist drawn rendering of the project that would give the Library an additional 14 parking spaces along the bank. The project would consist of the excavation of 18’ along the bank alongside the entryway of the library, the placement of a 90” retaining block wall, and the installation of a new fence along the top of new wall for added safety. The addition of steps will be added for easy access to and from the park. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion for the library to move forward with the project in order to secure funding from the County with the contingency that the library return before the Board with an engineered plan for final approval of the project. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 3-1, with Alderman Green opposing.

**Consideration of Resolution to Allow the Sale of Personal Property** – Mayor Baldwin stated it was necessary for the Board to approve the resolution to allow the sale of personal property on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the resolution. Alderman Reeves seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

**Consideration of Public Sidewalk Repair** – The Mayor stated the sidewalk was in need of repair located beside the Arts Council. Brantley explained that there had been some drainage issues in that location when Skyline was working to remove the blinking light at the intersection. Carolina Grading and Utilities has agreed to repair the sidewalk for \$30,500. With no further discussion, Alderman McMillan made the motion to approve the repair. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

**Police Report** – Police Chief Jeff Rose gave the police report for March. There were 210 calls dispatched through the communications center, 10 auto collisions were investigated, 9 people were arrested with DWI, larceny, assault, and drug related crimes. A total of 4 persons were arrested/charged for drug violations. The Board thanked Chief for his report.

**Water/Wastewater & Maintenance Report** – WWTP Superintendent Charles Call gave an update on the WWTP. Charles stated there has been one water leak identified on Long Street, and water distribution is back up. One filter at the filter plant was down, but it is back up now and running 68,000 to 70,000 gallons. Total of 65 gallons of sludge have been hauled to the fields. Charles then introduced Brandon Patrick to the Board as Brandon will be replacing Charles in July. The Board thanked Charles for his report.

**Maintenance Report** – absent

**Town Managers Report** – Brantley Price, Town Manager, updated the Board on several ongoing projects in the Town. Doc’s on Main is moving forward with the hopes of opening in May. The grand opening for Mountain Outfitter’s annex is scheduled for June 16, which will be a great addition to West Jefferson. Taxes collected to date total \$1,244,183 which is 97.6% of the levy. The Pandora promotion for the TDA will start at the end of May and run through the end of June, so the Town is hoping for another successful summer season. Brantley updated the Board about required ethics webinar for the elected officials that must be completed by the first of November. The Shriners will be holding their roadblock on May 11<sup>th</sup> with Ebenezer’s roadblock the following week. The Town Attorney is currently updating the Town’s subdivision ordinances to make them easier to understand. The Caboose dedication is scheduled for May 26<sup>th</sup>. Brantley then told the Aldermen about a compliment he receive from a lady about the way Officer Josh Hodges handled a call. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

**Public Comments** – Mark Wyatt, resident of Stonebridge, came before the Board to encourage them to consider the requests of a West Jefferson Fire Department Substation or the rezoning of the homes in

the West Jefferson Fire District to the Fleetwood District that were addressed at the beginning of the meeting. The Mayor reiterated that the decision to redistrict the homes would be left up to the two fire departments.

**Aldermen Comments** – none

**Closed Session per G.S. 143.318.11(a) (6) to Discuss Personnel** – The Mayor stated the Board would be entering into closed session per G.S. 143.318.11(a) (6). The Board would return to open session following closed session, and any items in need of a vote would be addressed. Alderman McMillan made the motion to enter into closed session, seconded by Alderman Reeves. The vote of 4-0 in favor. The time was 7:43 pm.

**Adjournment** – The Board returned to open session at 8:10 pm. With no further items to be discussed, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Reeves. A unanimous vote in favor.

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Dale Baldwin, Mayor

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Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk