

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2020 | 6:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Mayor Tom Hartman, Alderman Rusty Barr (absent), 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

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 May 4, 2020 Agenda – Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting held on April 21, 2020. Alderman Green seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of 2020 Walk for Life – Mayor Hartman stated Ashe Pregnancy Center would like to hold an event at the Backstreet Park and a walk around the park on September 26, 2020 from 9am to 12pm with estimated attendance of 200 guests. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the event as presented. Alderwoman Miller seconded with a unanimous vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of TDA Appointment – Mayor Hartman stated that Josh Williams has previously served on the TDA Board and is willing to serve another term if the Board so desires. With no further discussion, Alderman Green made the motion approve the appointment. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Discussion of lifting Restrictions Due to COVID-19:

Short-Term Rentals – The Mayor explained that the Town along with the Town of Lansing and the County added to the County's State of Emergency to prohibit short term rentals effective March 26th and remain in effect until May 8th. The suggestion was made to remain aligned with the Governor. With no discussion, Alderman Green made the to lift the restriction on short term rentals in line with the Governor. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 3-1 in favor with Alderman Reeves opposing.

When to Open Park Playgrounds and Tennis Courts – Following the discussion of short-term rentals the Board agreed to follow the guidelines in place of the Governor's Three Phase plans to open the park, playground, and tennis courts.

When to Open the Public Restrooms – After some discussion, the Board made the decision to open the public restrooms as soon as possible.

Consideration of Audit Contract FY 2019-20 – Mayor Hartman stated that Priscilla Norris has submitted her contract to compete the audit for fiscal year 2019-2020. Alderman Shoemaker made a motion to approve the contract. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Presentation and Discussion of Budget for FY 2020-21 – Town Manager Brantley Price presented the fiscal year 2020-2021 Budget to the Board.

General Fund Revenues

The major source of General Fund revenue is the property tax, accounting for approximately 64.4% of all revenues in the General Fund. The Property Tax rate will remain at 42 cents per \$100 of valuation, as was in FY 19-20. Of the 42 cents, 39 cents will go to General Fund and 3 cents to the Park.

Property Tax Revenue increased slightly due to the GE Expansion and Equipment additions (Collection rate budgeted at 95% due to COVID-19)

Local Option Sales Tax for FY 20-21 is projected to decrease approximately 15% over FY 19-20 due to COVID-19

Utility Franchise Tax projected to decrease 5% due to COVID-19

ARC Funds - \$22,200 – Wi-Fi Project (applied for but not approved)

Fund Balance - \$10,000

General Fund Expenditures

Group health insurance will decrease by 9% for FY 20-21, with employee coverage to remain the same, with the Town continuing to pay 100% of the employees' cost.

A 3% Cost of Living Adjustment for all employees.

Significant budget items in the General Fund worth noting include:

- \$4,000 – Pay Planning Board \$50/meeting
- \$20,000 – Attorney
- \$27,000 - Audit
- \$4,000 – Façade Grants
- \$3,000 – ALP – Ordinance update
- HCCOG
 - \$2,500 Pay Plan
 - \$2,500 Update 160D per state statute
 - \$15,000 – Update Comprehensive Land Plan
- \$44,400 Downtown Wi-Fi Project (if funded by ARC)
- \$16,700 – Wilkes Community College Building Fund Pledge
- \$125,000 – Final GE Incentive Payment
- \$30,000 – Engineering of sidewalks along N Jefferson Ave
- \$24,500 – Short Term Debt for purchase of land for new parking lot

- \$44,000 – Fire Department Contribution
- \$67,000 – Purchase of new police car with equipment
- \$7,500 – Viper Radio (1)
- \$8,000 – Police Department Improvements
- \$12,600 – Part time employee for streets (May-October)
- \$10,000 – Salt for roads during winter months
- \$6,000 – Replace rollup doors Maintenance
- \$8,500 – Downtown Flowers
- \$6,000 – Snow Blade
- \$35,000 – Shed for Maintenance
- \$100,000– Additional paving funds
- \$52,500 – Loan Payments Track Hoe, dump truck, street sweeper
- \$4,600 – Interest on loans

Park Revenues

Property Taxes compromise most of the Park Revenues, which is 3 cents of the 42 cents per \$100 in valuation.

\$41,500 - Fund Balance Appropriated

Park Expenditures

Significant budget items in the Park worth noting include:

- \$3000 - Tennis Court repair
- \$46,000 – Pave parking lot
- Paint Farmers Market - \$3,000
- Replace half Cemetery Fence with Trex fence - \$10,000

Powell Bill Revenues

Powell Bill revenues are disbursed by the State to the Town in two distributions, one in October and one in January of each year based on a formula based upon population and miles of Town-maintained roads. Revenues are budgeted slightly less than FY 19-20 actual.

Powell Bill Expenditures

We intend to prioritize our street resurfacing of Town streets in most need of resurfacing.

Fire Department Revenues

Increase Fire Tax from \$0.017/\$100 to \$0.03/\$100

Possible Grant for Equipment-\$30,000

Fire Department Expenditures

Significant budget items in the Fire Department worth noting include:

- \$60,000 – Equipment (gear/radios)
- \$12,500 – Paint inside Fire Station/Redo floors
- Increase Fire Call pay from \$5 per call to \$15 per call

Water and Sewer Fund Revenues

Revenues in Water/Sewer with a 5% decrease due to COVID-19

\$250,000 – Water Fund Balance

\$220,000 – Transfer from Water to Sewer

Water and Sewer Fund Expenditures

Significant budget items in the Water/Sewer worth noting include:

- \$28,000 – Parts Filter Plant
- \$30,000 – Water Tank Maintenance
- \$60,000 – Miscellaneous Water line/valve replacement
- \$60,000 – Upgrade SCADA for Wells
- \$220,000 – Transfer to Sewer from Water
- \$30,000 – Replacement pump Beaver Creek Pump Station
- \$15,000 – Landfill Fees - Polymer new dewatering system
- \$15,000 - Return pump replacement
- \$23,000 – Influent pump replacement/rebuild
- \$50,000 – Repair damaged sewer lines to remove I&I
- \$20,000 – Pump Station by-pass at Greenfield and Beaver Creek
- \$105,000 – Replace existing two aerators with floating units

Public Comments – An email from Raney Rogers was read allowed to the Board addressing concerns of the number of visitors and social distancing requirements in Town.

Aldermen Comments – The Alderman each thanked Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Attorney Jak Reeves, and staff for their hard work during the pandemic.

Adjournment – With nothing further, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Reeves with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk