

**Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2017 | 6:00 p.m.**

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

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Clerk Wesley Barker, Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller, WWTP Superintendent Charles Call.

Several other residents of the community also attended.

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

Approval of the March 6, 2017 Agenda- With no changes, Alderman Summey made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Approval of Minutes- February 6, 2017 Regular Meeting- With no comments, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Farmer's Market Lease 2017-18- Brian Chatham, President of the Farmer's Market, spoke to the Board and gave them an update of the market from 2016 and plans for 2017. Brian stated the 2016 market had approximately 65 vendors with 61.5% of these vendors being growers/producers, 30.36% being arts and crafts vendors and 7.6% being value added vendors. Further, the 2016 fall festival at the market held in October was the single most successful fundraiser in the market's history, raising \$1,600 for the market in a single day. Brian said the market's plans for 2017 included working and building partnerships with local agencies and school groups, an antique farm equipment day, Earth Day celebration and working with the Christmas in July Festival. Brian said the Farmer's Market appreciated the Town for their continued support over the years and would like to formally request the Town renew its lease with the market for another year in the amount of \$1. This lease would be from April 1, 2017 until March 31, 2018. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the Farmer's Market lease for one year as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Presentation of FY 2015-16 Town Audit- Priscilla Norris, CPA- Priscilla Norris presented the Board with the audit findings for FY 2015-16. Some noteworthy items in Priscilla's report included \$2,140,369 in Fund Balance, \$906,138 as the unassigned portion with the remainder being restricted by statutes. Also, Priscilla said the Fund Balance was budgeted to use \$375,000, but only used \$95,000. Water and sewer revenues were up with some grants being included in this. Further, there was \$51,765 in uncollected tax monies, but 98.59% of the tax levy was collected as of June 30, 2016. Priscilla said the Town had 36% in unrestricted Fund Balance, which was good as the minimum required was 8%. Overall, the Town was in a good financial state and no major issues were found. The Board thanked Priscilla for her report.

ABC Board Report- Haskell McGuire, ABC Board Chairman, gave a report to the Board on the 2nd Fiscal Quarter of the ABC Store for FY 2017-18. Haskell said the total sales for the quarter was \$513,010, a 9.77% increase from sales during this quarter last year. A check for \$12,000 was delivered to the Town for the 2nd Fiscal Quarter with an additional Town distribution of \$4,800. Bids are currently being taken for maintenance and repair jobs on the ABC building and property. The Board thanked Haskell for his report.

Consideration of Blue Ridge Energies to Construct Electric Vehicle Charging Stations- Brantley Price explained to the Board this request from Blue Ridge Energies to construct an electric vehicle charging station in West Jefferson. Blue Ridge Energy has been awarded funding from Duke Energy to construct these electric vehicle (EV) charging stations for downtown Blowing Rock and West Jefferson to be installed by December 31, 2017. The grant will pay for the charging station, installation plus first year on-site parts, labor and station management and 1 year of network services. The Town would be responsible to run power to the charging unit and pour the concrete base at an estimated cost of \$1,000. Also, the Town would be responsible for power used to charge the vehicle but will have the option to charge each user through the network services agreement after a trial period. The best proposed location at this time would be the gravel lot behind the Backstreet Park stage as the Town already has a meter and the installation will be simpler. It would take approximately 3-4 hours to completely charge a vehicle so individuals will more than likely eat and shop downtown while charging the vehicle. This would require 3 parking spaces to be used for this station. Alderman Green felt like the Town should give up 3 parking spaces for this as parking is already limited in town. Alderman Shoemaker feels this station should be somewhere in town, just not at the Backstreet Park area. Alderman Summey suggested to use other parking spaces at the other public lots such as at the parking lot by Badger's. Alderman Reeves stated this is a coming thing for the future and would be beneficial. After some discussion, Alderman Green made the motion to use the parking lot by Badger's as the location of the charging station and explore the options for placing this station there and access to power. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Resolutions Opposing Proposed Senate Bill 94 & House Bill 64- The Mayor explained these resolutions were opposing the proposed Senate and House bills which would change municipal elections to even number years instead of odd number years and would change municipal elections to partisan from non-partisan elections. Alderman Summey made the motion to approve the resolution to oppose Senate Bill 94, seconded by Alderman McMillan. The vote of 5-0 in favor. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the resolution which opposed House Bill 64. Alderman Green seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Text Amendment to Zoning Ordinance- Article V- The Mayor asked Alderman Reeves to explain this item as he is the Planning Board Chairman. Alderman Reeves said the Planning Board met to discuss adding "landscaping and horticultural supplies & equipment, sales & service" to the Zoning Ordinance as a permitted use within the Highway Commercial District (section 507.101), M-1 Industrial District (section 508.1), and as a conditional use within the Residential Agriculture (R-A) district (section 503.2). Mountain Advantage, LLC has purchased the former Chevrolet dealership in Town and this definition would fit the criteria of their business and comply with the Zoning Ordinance. Alderman Reeves said the Planning Board recommended these amendments to the Aldermen for approval. This use would require fencing around any business that abuts a residential district in compliance with Section 1001 and 1004.4, Screening & Buffering, of the Zoning Ordinance. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for Section 507.101, 508.1 and 503.2 as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Amendment to Zoning Ordinance Article XI- Sign Regulation- Section 1105- The Mayor said, per the Board's request, the Planning Board met to discuss adding the following statement back to the Sign Regulations, Section 1105- Prohibited Signs: "banners, flags, streamers, spinners, placards and pennants are prohibited. Flags of the United States, North Carolina, Ashe County and the Town of West Jefferson are permitted." The Planning Board reviewed and recommended the Aldermen

to reinstate this statement within prohibited signs, with the deadline to comply being December 31st, 2017. The Board of Aldermen can now decide to approve the recommendation or change as they see fit. After some discussion, the Board felt a 12 month grace period to have businesses comply with this would be better. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the amendment to the Sign Regulations, Section 1105 to add the abovementioned statement and for the deadline to comply be March 6, 2018. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Statements that are Consistent/Not Consistent with the 2008 Land Use Plan- With no discussion, Alderman Summey made the motion to approve the statements which state the Zoning Text Amendments approved are consistent with the 2008 Land Use Plan. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Street Policy Amendment for Mt. Jefferson Child Development Center- Brantley Price said he and Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller met with Surveyor Jason Herman to review the street for the proposed Mt. Jefferson Child Development Center (MJCDC) to be located behind Boone Family Funeral Home. The proposed street uses the entrance to Boone Family then continues straight behind the funeral home. Jason Herman pointed out two issues that would only allow the street to be paved 18' wide instead of 25' as the current Town policy states. These issues were NCDENR has declared the stream beside Boone Family Funeral Home as a trout stream, so the street cannot extend any closer to the creek bank. Also, Boone Family's building and the current street and stream will not allow for more than 18' of pavement. After consulting with the Town Attorney, he stated the Town has the authority to modify our policy for taking over a street for certain special circumstances and leave the policy as is. The Board can now discuss if they would like to make this exception. This drive could still end up being a private drive or a Town street, as it is still undecided by MJCDC. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to allow an amendment of 18' of pavement for MJCDC for this one time instance. Alderman Green seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration for Tax Collector to Advertise Tax Liens per G.S. 105-369(a) - The Mayor said each year the tax collector is required to inform you of delinquent property taxes and ask to list these in the local paper. The Town plans to publish these in the paper in April. At this time, the Town has the following Past Due Taxes: 2016- \$44,309, 2015- \$10,298, 2014- \$3,542, 2013- \$2,874, 2012- \$1,160, 2011- \$953, 2010- \$1,040, 2009- \$1,619, 2008- \$3,937, 2007- \$1,045. With no discussion, Alderman McMillan made the motion to post the delinquent taxes as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Appointment of WJ Fire Department Fireman's Relief Fund Board Members- The Fireman's Relief Fund requires the Board of Aldermen to appoint two representatives to the Firefighters Relief Board, with one member serving a one year term and one serving a two year term. Eric Miller and Mayor Baldwin have been the representatives, and they are willing to be reappoint if the Board desires. Alderman Summey made the motion to appoint Eric Miller to a two year term for the Fireman's Relief Fund Board and Dale Baldwin to a one year term. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of FY 2017-18 Budget Workshop- The Board discussed and scheduled the first budget meeting workshop for Tuesday, March 21st at 5:30 pm at Town Hall. There will also be a Public Hearing at this meeting for the CDBG application for the Mountain Outfitters project.

Police Report- Police Chief Jeff Rose gave the Police report for the month of February. There were 214 calls dispatched through the communications center, 10 auto collisions were investigated, 15 people

were arrested on charges of larceny, assault and drug related crimes. 12 persons were arrested/charged for drug violations. The Board thanked the Chief for his report.

Water/Wastewater & Maintenance Report- WWTP Superintendent Charles Call reported to the Board on the status of the Water & Wastewater plants. Charles said there had been some work on the wells and filter plant services. 160,000 gallons of sludge had been hauled off from the WWTP. Charles said there had been no major issues. The Board thanked Charles for his report.

Maintenance Report- Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave an update on the Maintenance Department. Eric said there were a total of 39 one calls for February. A sewer line and culvert repair had been made at Glenn Drive. The Ray well lines had been worked on and check valves installed. The water and sewer hookups and fire hydrants had been made for the new Dollar Tree. A sinkhole had been found at Basic Finance on E. Second St. and the Town worked with DOT to determine several culverts were in need of replacement. The Board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report- Brantley Price gave his report to the Board. Brantley said paving on Burkett Ave. should be this month to finish up the CDBG project of the water & sewer line replacement. Taxes collected to date are \$1,095,246, or 96.2% of the levy. The West Jefferson TDA plans to advertise for the spring and summer with Pandora radio and Raycom Media once again. This proved to be a successful effort last year. Brantley spoke on the well located at the High School that has been offline for nearly 2 years due to excessive iron in the water, which would have cost the Town a lot of money to filter. There has been no issues with the Town's water supply since this well was taken offline. The High School is interested in using this well to water the ball fields. The Board had no objection on assigning this well property to the County, once the Town received clearance from the State on the well disconnect from the Town's system. The Board would like the Town to send a survey to the Town residents on use of tax monies. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comment- opened at 7:21 pm. Christopher Born, Town resident and member of the West Jefferson Business Association Board of Directors, spoke to the Aldermen on issues with businesses not receiving their mail and having checks and packages returned because the Post Office will not deliver to their physical address. Mr. Born said this is a real problem to businesses as currently they can only have a PO Box at the Post Office in order to receive mail through the USPS. Mr. Born also said the businesses generate sales tax and property tax which is what keeps WJ thriving. He feels the businesses deserve a chance to be heard and requests the Board allow the Business Association to make a formal presentation to the Board at the next meeting and requests to be on the agenda. The board thanked Christopher for his comments. With no other public comment, the Mayor closed public comment at 7:26 pm.

Aldermen Comments- none.

Adjournment- With no further items to be discussed, Alderman Green made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Reeves. A vote of 5-0 in favor.

Dale Baldwin, Mayor

Wesley M. Barker, Town Clerk