

**Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2018 | 6:00 p.m.**

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

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Clerk Rebecca Eldreth, Police Chief Jeff Rose, and 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. Mayor Baldwin asked for a moment of silence. Those in attendance then stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the January 8, 2018 Agenda – Mayor Baldwin added a Resolution to procure funding through USDA Rural Water Development and the Appalachian Regional Commission for Water and Sewer Improvements. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the addition to the agenda. Alderman McMillan seconded with a 4-0 vote in favor.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – December 4, 2017 Regular Meeting - With no changes, Alderman McMillan made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Alderman Summey seconded with a 4-0 vote in favor.

Consideration of Resolution to Procure Funding through USDA Rural Development and ARC – Mike Acquesta with USDA addressed the Board to provide an update on the Town's water and sewer improvements and waste water treatment plant improvements that are funded by a grant through USDA and ARC. Mike presented a Resolution to the Board that states the plans and specifications have been completed and reviewed by the Board. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the resolution. Alderman McMillan seconded the motion with a 4-0 vote in favor.

Discussion of the 40th Anniversary of the Ashe County Arts Council – Jane Lonon, Executive Director of the Ashe County Arts Council, thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Arts Council. Jane shared that the Arts Council has been in operation 40 years this year and how over the years the Arts Council has shown slow, steady, sustained growth as a nonprofit organization that believes in education, being accessible, and using the arts as a vehicle for change. The Arts Council has been a strong presence in downtown West Jefferson since 1993 when they renovated the old rock building and turned it into the Ashe Arts Center. The Arts Council is looking at several key events during 2018 in celebration of their history. Jane stated the Arts Council has several requests to present to the Board. First being a new logo that has been created for their 40th year with hopes to make the new logo into banners and have them installed on Jefferson Avenue, Main Street, and 2nd Avenue alternating with the existing maroon Historic West Jefferson banners. The Arts Council has requested permission to purchase 27 banners to be in place from April to August. Secondly, the Arts Council is planning a big celebration for June 2nd in front of the Arts Council to showcase the Arts in Ashe County and the many

things in which the Arts Council is involved. Jane requested that the Town permit the Arts Council to block off part of the street from the corner of Main Street and School Avenue down to the creek which is the area directly in front of the Arts Center. The next request made by Jane is the removal of the blinking light at the intersection of Main Street, School Avenue, and 6th Street to be replaced with a three way stop signs similar to the existing intersections in town. The Arts Council and Badger Funeral Home have agreed to each purchase one of the stop signs in favor of the project. Jane asked the Town purchase the third stop sign and to be responsible for the installation of all 3 signs. Lastly, Jane asked the Town to create a bumpout at the corner in front of the Arts Center. Jane feels the creation of the bumpout would be an attraction to invite visitors to continue their journey towards the Arts Center and add to the cohesiveness of Town with the other bumpout areas. In addition to the construction of the bumpout, the Arts Council would like to create a 12' art palette sculpture out of steel to be displayed on the bumpout creating another photo opportunity and focal point in the Town. John Maddox joined Jane to describe the schematics of the proposed bumpout along with a drawing of the area. Mayor Baldwin suggested allowing Brantley Price, Town Manager, time to research all the steps necessary to complete the project before the Board gives their approval. Alderman Reeves stated the Town would have to set a timeline in conjunction with the contractors to complete the project. Alderman Summey stated the building of the bumpout in front of the Arts Center would be a final step in bumpout project, and that he would like to see it done. Jane made the suggestion to continue the discussion at the next meeting to allow more time for information to be gathered. Alderman Green stated he felt that everyone was for the project, but that the project might need to be added to the budget for the next fiscal year to secure funding. Alderman Reeves voiced his approval of the project but also expressed his concerns in rushing the completion of the project. Jane then asked the Board to continue the discussion until next meeting to allow time to collect more information on the project including estimates for cost and time. Jane continued with her proposal and asked the Board for approval for the purchasing of the banners and the closure of the street for the June 2nd celebration. Alderman McMillan made the motion to approve the closure of the street and the purchase of the banners. Alderman Green seconded the motion with a unanimous vote in favor. Additionally, Jane requested permission to move forward with the removal of the blinking stop light to be replaced with a 3 way stop sign. The Board discussed the option of the removal, but decided it was best to postpone the removal of the traffic signal until more research can be conducted. Jane thanked the Board for their time and consideration.

Discussion of Parking at the Public Library – Mayor Baldwin asked to table this discussion until a later date.

Discussion of the High Country Regional Mitigation Plan Update – Patty Gambill came before the Board asking for approval of the High Country Regional Mitigation Plan that updates the current plan which was approved 5 years ago. The plan is required by the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 in order to be eligible for disaster relief funds if a disaster were to occur in the area. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the plan. Alderman Summey seconded the motion with a unanimous vote in favor.

Consideration of the Petty Cash and Change Fund Policy – Brantley Price, Town Manager, updated the Aldermen on the purpose of the Petty Cash and Change Fund Policy that was recommended by Priscilla Norris, CPA, and the importance to have the policy in writing. With no discussion Alderman McMillan made the motion to approve the policy. Alderman Green seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Resolution for National Parks Bill – Brantley Price address the Board to explain the proposed bill. The bill supports the upkeep of the National Parks like the Blue Ridge Parkway. The bill urges Congress to create a reliable, predictable stream of resources to address deferred maintenance needs in America’s Park System, and to ensure that federal infrastructure initiatives include provisions to address park maintenance. With no discussion Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the bill. Alderman McMillan seconded the motion with a 4-0 vote in favor.

Consideration to Appoint a New Member of the TDA – Mayor Baldwin stated Andy Guion with Hotel Tavern has agreed to fill the empty spot upon the Board’s approval. With no discussion Alderman Green made the motion to appoint Andy Guion to the TDA Board. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a unanimous vote in favor.

Police Report – Police Chief Jeff Rose gave the police report for the month of December. A total of 200 calls were dispatched through the communications center, 12 auto collisions were investigated, 5 people were arrested with DWI, larceny, assault and drug related crimes. There were 2 persons arrested/charged for drug violations. The Board thanked the Chief for his report.

Water/Wastewater & Maintenance Report – WWTP Superintendent Charles Call gave an update on the WWTP. There was a total of 54.76 inches of rain and 12 inches of snow for the year of 2017. The department hauled approximately 112,000 gallons of sludge to the fields in December. Water levels have stayed constant at 27’ despite the increase of leaks this month. The Board thanked Charles for his report.

Maintenance Report – absent

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager, gave his report to the Board. Brantley stated Eric Miller and his crew have been staying on top of all the water leaks. Rural Water was able to identify a few leaks, and those leaks have been repaired. Taxes collected to date \$1,194,364 which is 93.7% of the levy. The new playground equipment at the park has been installed with the mulch around it, and it has been used a few times. Brantley then stated he would be attending the County and Municipal Seminar in Winston Salem on January 31st through February 2nd. Brantley mentioned to the Board that the Town might need to look into purchasing some new Christmas lights like the ones that were added last year while the lights are on sale. Brantley then asked the Board to spend \$3,000 to \$4,000 on upgrading the lights. The new lights worked well and did not trip the breakers like the other lights causing less problems. Alderman Summey voiced his approval for the purchase of additional lights. Alderman Reeves expressed his approval stating how many compliments he received on how nice the light looked. Brantley stated he would watch for a sale to make the purchase and keep the Board updated. Alderman Green then spoke and expressed his thoughts on how nice the park looked. He then stated that the addition of a few benches by the new playground equipment would be nice for the parents and grandparents to sit while the children were playing. Brantley stated the new benches should be included in the new budget. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comment – None

Aldermen Comments – Alderman Reeves spoke and expressed his appreciation for Joy Campbell, who was in attendance of the meeting, and her participation on the Planning Board. Alderman Summey stated he also appreciated the Planning Board. He also thanked the staff and the maintenance department working on the water lines.

Closed Session – The Mayor Pro Tem stated the Board would be entering into closed session per G.S. 143.318.11(a)(6).

Adjournment- Alderman Summey made the motion to enter into the closed session.

Brett Summey, Mayor Pro Tem

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk