

**Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2021 | 6:00 p.m.**

Board Members Present: Mayor Tom Hartman, Alderman Rusty Barr, 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 of the March 1, 2021 Agenda – Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Alderwoman Miller seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Public Hearings

Consideration of Recommendation to Rezone Parcel ID 19223 001 740 from Medium Density Residential (R7) to Highway Commercial (HC) – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed rezoning of parcel ID 19223 001 740. Mayor Hartman opened the public hearing to allow comments at 6:00pm. Joe Coombs spoke against the rezoning. With no further comment, Mayor Hartman closed the public comment at 6:09pm

Consideration of Recommendation to Rezone Parcel ID 19227 099 and 19227 400 from Highway Commercial (HC) to Medium Density Residential (R7) – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed rezoning of parcel ID 19227 099 and 19227 400. Mayor Hartman opened the public hearing to allow comments at 6:09pm. With no comment, Mayor Hartman closed the public comment at 6:10pm

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation of Parcel ID 19227 531 – Greenfield Campground – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed annexation of the property located in Greenfield Campground. Mayor Hartman opened the public comment at 6:10pm and with no comments closed the public comment at 6:10pm.

Consideration of Text Amendment to Town's Zoning Ordinance – 160D Update – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed amendment to the Town's Zoning Ordinance to comply with the new 160D updates. Mayor Hartman opened the public comment at 6:11pm and with no comments closed the public comment at 6:13pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes February 1, 2021 Regular Meeting – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2021 Regular Meeting. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Discussion of Reducing the ETJ Footprint – Mayor Hartman discussed the possibility of reducing the boundaries of the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) as the Town does not feel it is necessary to control some of the outlying areas. Kelly Coffey then presented a set of maps for the Board to review as he discussed the process of reducing the ETJ. The Board was in consensus with moving forward with the reduction in the boundaries.

Consideration of 2021 Antique Fair Road Closures & Footprint – Keith Woodie came before the Board to ask permission for the street closure to hold the 2021 Antique Fair on September 17th and 18th, so he will be prepared to move forward with the event if COVID guidelines permit the activity. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the road closure and footprint for the 2021 Antique Fair. Alderwoman Miller seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of April's School of Dance Recital at Tennis Courts – April Barnes joined the meeting virtually to ask the Board permission to use the tennis courts in the park for the dance recital on Saturday, May 15th from 10:00am to 1:00pm. April stated a temporary floor would be placed on the courts to protect the court from any damage that may be caused by the dancers' shoes. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the use of the tennis courts for the dance recital. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Stomp and Brew – Harry Galer joined the meeting virtually to discuss the 2021 Stomp and Brew festival. Harry asked for the use of the Town parking lot that has been used in years prior for the date of Saturday, October 2nd. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the footprint for the 2021 Stomp and Brew festival. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Ashe Pregnancy Care Center Walk for Life – The Mayor stated Ashe Pregnancy Care Center would like to hold their annual walk for life event on Saturday, September 25th from 9:00am to 1:00pm starting at the Backstreet Park up Main Street to S Church Ave down Long Street then the Backstreet to return to the park. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the annual Walk for Life. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of 2021-2022 Farmers Market Lease – Farmer Market Manager Carol Griffith provided an update to the Board for the 2020 season stating there was an increase of 33% of customers to the market totaling 13,000 customers. She also informed that several vendors reported their highest sales this year. Board President Amanda Gentry asked to renew the lease for the upcoming season. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the lease for the 2021-2022 season. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration to Rezone Parcel ID 19223 001 740 – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the rezoning as recommended. The motion was seconded by Alderman Shoemaker with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration to Rezone Parcel ID 19227 099 and 19227 400 – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the rezoning as recommended. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Miller with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation for a Portion of Parcel ID 19227 531 – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the annexation. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Miller with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Text Amendment to the Town's Zoning Ordinance – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the text amendment as recommended. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Miller with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Statements that Shows Consistency with the 2008 Land Use Plan – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the statements of consistency as presented. The motion was seconded by Alderman Barr with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Budget Amendment #3 – Mayor Hartman stated that Budget Amendment #3 in the amount of \$54,300 for the fire department air packs that were discussed and approved at the last meeting. Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the budget amendment as presented. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Financial Update – Town Manager Brantley Price gave an overview of the revenues and expenses for each account, and then gave a summary of past due taxes from prior years

Discussion of Budget Workshop – Due to current COVID restrictions the budget workshop will be held in conjunction with the regular board meeting for April. The Board agreed to the recommendation.

Consideration for Tax Collector to Advertise Tax Liens per G.S. 105-369(a) – Mayor Hartman stated that the Finance Officer will need approval to advertise past due taxes. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the advertisement of past due taxes. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Tax Releases – Mayor Hartman stated a total of four releases have been sent from the County including: \$161.58 for property sold in 2017, \$2.76 for property not located within the Town limits, and \$48.15 for property of a business that is no longer in operation. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the tax releases as stated. Alderman Green seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager gave his report to the Board. The spring is running with one filter producing 50,000 gallons of water per day. Executive Order 195 loosened some COVID-19 restrictions and be reevaluated again on March 26th. Ashe County has reported a total of 2,029 cases with 22 currently active and 49 being monitored. Vaccination appointments will be open to essential workers starting on March 10th, which will include Town employees. The rebate for the additional EV charger has been approved in the amount of \$10,000 with total cost around \$19,000. The installation must be completed within 180 days. The downtown WiFi project has an estimated completion date of June 1st. The resurfacing of Jefferson Avenue is estimated to be in mid to late June. Taxes collected total 97.2% of the tax levy. Sales tax revenue continue to be strong at 14% for the month over last year and 12.6% year to date. West Jefferson was featured in the March addition of Our State magazine with a paid content article scheduled for June. Census counts should be complete by April 30th. The wastewater plant and wells were inspected by DENR on February 3rd revealing a few items that will need to be addressed. The inspector stated Wastewater Superintendent Brandon Patrick was very knowledgeable and helpful and that he should be commended for his efforts. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments – none

Aldermen Comments – The Board thanked those in attendance as well as Town staff for their efforts.

Adjournment – With nothing further, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Alderman Reeves with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk