

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2019 | 6:00 pm

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 Rebecca Eldreth, Interim Police Chief Bradley Jordan, Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller, and WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick.

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 Shoemaker gave the invocation. Those in attendance then stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the January 7, 2019 Agenda – With no changes, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the agenda. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor. Alderman Summey arrived after the vote.

Public Hearing

Consideration of Text Amendments – The Mayor stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the on the proposed text amendments to Article XI and XII. Mayor Baldwin opened the hearing at 6:02pm. Tammy Wilson owner Taste of Chicago voiced her concerns of visibility with her business being located on Third Avenue to the Board. Tammy felt it would beneficial for her business to display portable signs to attract customers and to draw attention toward her business. Tammy then asked the Board to allow small business to promote themselves with additional signage. Debra Patterson with Meadowsweet Gardens Inn addressed the Board with her concerns with the lack of signage on the side and backstreet. Debra stated it is difficult to direct guests of the Inn to the side and backstreet areas of Town without the additional signage. Alderman Reeves informed those in attendance that the Town is in the process of considering wayfinding signage. Alderman Shoemaker agreed that signage is a problem, and the Town is moving forward to implement new signage to keep the Town moving forward without looking congested. Ken Jones with Meadowsweet Gardens Inn asked the Board to consider neat well-made signs as the Town is a destination, and he is proud of being from West Jefferson. With nothing further, the Mayor closed public comment at 6:16pm.

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation of Ashe County Rescue Squad – The Mayor stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed annexation of 300 Mount Jefferson Road. Mayor Baldwin opened the hearing at 6:16pm. Bob Nichols spoke on behalf of the Ashe County Rescue Squad. Bob stated there is a need for water service at the Rescue Squad, and has interest in a sewer connection, as well. Bob then thanked the Town staff for their assistance with the completion of the required paperwork. With nothing further, the Mayor closed public comment at 6:19pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no changes, Alderman Summey made the motion to approve the minutes from the December 3, December 13, and December 27 Meetings as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Presentation of FY 2017-18 Town Audit – Priscilla Norris presented the Board with the audit findings for FY 2017-18. Some noteworthy items in Priscilla's report included an increase in Fund Balance of \$197,198 as of June 30, 2018 with a balance of over \$2,000,000 with \$1,200,000 as the unassigned portion with the remainder being restricted by statutes. Further, 98.03% of the tax levy was collected as of June 30, 2018.

Overall, the Town was in a good financial state with no account overbudget, and no major issues were found. The Board thanked Priscilla for her report.

Presentation of Stormwater Mapping – Jessica Wellborn, GIS Planner with the High Country Council of Government presented the Stormwater Mapping project to the Board. The project was funded by a Water Quality Mapping Grant. Data was collected from April – December 2018 including 707 inlets, 163 outlets, 5 retention basins and about 13 miles of culverts. The mapping will help the town address any infrastructure problems, identify opportunities to improve water quality, plan maintenance, and use for reference during development. The Board thanked Jessica for her report.

Discussion of Stomp and Brew 2019 – Rebecca Lane with Stomp and Brew came before the Board to discuss the potential of increasing the size of the footprint event to include East 1st Street from 4th Avenue to 5th Avenue. With the addition of the space the event would now offer craft and food vendors and a car show to attendees of all ages. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the additional space and the addition of a car show. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion. With a vote of 5-0 in favor the motion was carried.

Consideration of Text Amendments – Mayor Baldwin stated the Board could approve the amendments to Article XI and Article XII in two separate votes if they so choose. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the proposed text amendments to Article XI. Alderman Summey seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor. Next, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the proposed amendments to Article XII. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Statements that Show Consistency with the 2008 Land Use Plan – With no discussion Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the Statements that Show Consistency with the 2008 Land Use Plan. Alderman McMillan seconded the motion with a unanimous vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation – Ashe County Rescue Squad – Mayor Baldwin explained that the Ashe County Rescue Squad has requested an annexation into the Town to receive Town utility service. The property is contiguous with Town limits and they have completed all necessary paperwork. With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the annexation. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Budget Amendment #2 – Mayor Baldwin stated the budget amendment was for the purchase of a brush truck for the fire department, and that the purchase of the truck was approved at a Special meeting held the previous month. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the budget amendment as presented. Alderman Green seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of Aerator at WWTP – Town Manager Brantley Price stated that \$100,000 was placed in the budget to replace the outer aerators in the oxidation ditch with a new floating system. The new process has been approved by the state, and the Town is ready to move forward with the replacement. However, the total cost of replacement totaled \$115,000, so to complete the project, the additional amount of \$15,000 needs to be approved. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the additional amount. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of Upgrade/Retrofit Water Plant – Town Manager Brantley Price stated that the Town would need to consider replacing the existing high-pressure system with a low-pressure system. Replacement parts for the high-pressure system are becoming scarce and costly to change. The low-pressure system would require less maintenance and use less electricity. The Town will need to work with Mike Acquesta to obtain state approval for the replacement.

Consideration of the 2019 Holiday Schedule – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the schedule as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of Board of Adjustment Meeting – Town Manager Brantley Price informed the Board that Wilkes Community College has submitted a variance request that would need to be reviewed. The Board agreed to meet on Monday, January 21, 2019 at 5:30.

Police Report – Interim Police Chief Bradley Jordan gave the Police report for the month of December. A total of 253 calls were dispatched through the communications center: 19 auto collisions were investigated; 10 larcenies; 1 breaking and entering; 1 drunk and disruptive; and 4 minor traffic stops. The Board thanked the Chief for his report.

Water/Wastewater Report – WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick gave a report to the Board. A total of 72" of rain and 27.5" of snow were reported for the month. Due to the amount of rain a belt press needs to be rented as the Town's belt press is not scheduled for completion until May 2019. Also, the Westwood tank has been cleaned and inspected. Brandon then thanked the Board for their approval on replacing the aerator and retrofitting the water plant. The Board thanked Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave his report to the Board. There was a total of 29 one call tickets, 3 water leaks, one water tap, and no sewer problems reported. The snow has been removed from the street. The department has started to remove the Christmas lights, chipping brush from the fallen limbs from the ice and snow, and made 6 trips to the landfill. The Board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price gave his report to the Board starting with an update on USDA ARC project for the new well site, belt press, and sewer lines. The water and sewer extension are almost complete except for the taps for the last 3 houses and the water tap for the old O'Reily's building. Both pads have been poured for the well house and the belt press, and the belt press is ready for delivery. But, due to the federal government shutdown, the projects are getting ready to come to a complete stop, because the Town is unable to have the pay applications approved to pay the contractor. Taxes collected to date totals \$1,280,854 which is 90% of the levy. Brantley then provided past due amounts starting from 2008. Blue Ridge Energies provided an update that the charging station in Town has been used a total of 74 times in 2018. Phillip Absher called to thank the Town for paving Midway and commended the maintenance department on the snow removal during the big storm. We received an invoice from NCDOT for the 2nd Street and Jefferson Avenue project that was completed 2 years ago that include charges for engineer costs. Brantley then read a thank you note from the Lions Club for the Town's support for the Holiday parade. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comment – None

Aldermen Comments – Alderman Shoemaker welcomed the members of the community in attendance and welcomed Alderman Summey back. Alderman Reeves along with Alderman Green extended the greeting and thanked the Town staff.

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

Dale Baldwin, Mayor

Rebecca L. Eldreth, Town Clerk