

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 4, 2019 | 6:00 pm

Board Members Present: Mayor Dale Baldwin, Alderman Rusty Barr, Alderman Calvin Green, Alderman Jerry McMillan (absent), Alderman John Reeves, Alderman Stephen Shoemaker

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Clerk Rebecca Eldreth, 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. After the Mayor offered a moment of silence, those in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance which was led by Alderman Reeves.

Approval of the November 4, 2019 Agenda – Alderman Reeves asked to add closed session to the agenda. Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the agenda. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Public Hearing

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation of Parcel ID 13231 075 – The Mayor stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed annexation. Mayor Baldwin opened the hearing at 6:04pm. Laura Jones, owner of Windy Ridge Properties, LLC, presented to the Board an overview of Saloon Studios and the services they offer. Sherman Lyle also spoke in favor of the annexation. Following the comments, the Mayor closed public comment at 6:10pm.

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation of Parcel IDs 19223 192 007, 19223 173, 19223 627, and 19223 658 – The Mayor stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed annexation. Mayor Baldwin opened the hearing at 6:11pm. Alderman Green verified with Town Manager Brantley Price that sewer services have been connected to the properties. With no further comments, Mayor Baldwin closed public comment at 6:13pm

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation of Parcel ID 1923 234 – The Mayor stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed annexation. Mayor Baldwin opened the hearing at 6:14pm. Jeanie Fox came before the Board and stated the annexation would allow the property to be connected to Town services. With no further comments, Mayor Baldwin closed public comment at 6:17pm

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no changes, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes from the October 7, 2019 meeting as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Discussion of 2020 Census – Rick Farmer, Partnership Specialist with the U.S. Census Bureau presented to the Board and discussed the importance of the 2020 census count.

Discussion of Heat Pump Replacement at the Arts Council – John Smyre came before the Board to discuss options for replacing the heat pump at the Ashe County Arts Council. After some discussion Aldermen Green suggested to replace the air conditioner unit only at the cost of \$5110 to be divided between the Town and the Arts Council. Alderman Barr made the motion of dividing the cost of the air conditioner replacement. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Discussion of Crosswalk between Third Avenue and East Second Street – Business located on East Second Street have shown interest in adding a crosswalk from Third Avenue to East Second Street. NC DOT requires there be no parking within twenty feet of either side of a crosswalk. The addition of the crosswalk would cause the street to lose a total of three parking spaces. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to table the discussion. Alderman Green seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation of Windy Ridge Properties, LLC – After some discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the annexation. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation of Reed Real Estate Holding, LLC – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the annexation. Alderman Barr seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation of Fox Property – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the annexation. Alderman Green seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief Appointments – Mayor Baldwin stated that it is required each year to appoint a Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief of the West Jefferson Volunteer Fire Department. Currently Eric Miller is Chief, and Jody Walters is assistant Fire Chief both are willing to be reappointed. With no further discussion, Alderman Green made the motion to appoint Eric Miller as the Fire Chief. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor. Alderman Reeves made the motion to appoint Jody Walters as Assistant Fire Chief. Alderman Green seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Discussion of Board of Adjustment Meeting Date – Mayor Baldwin stated that a date for the Board of Adjustment meeting needed to be decided. Alderman Green recommend Monday, November 25th which the Board agreed.

Tax Releases – Mayor Baldwin stated that there are several tax releases for consideration as the properties are no longer in Town limits. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the releases as presented. Alderman Barr seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Police Report – Police Chief Bradley Jordan gave the Police report for the month of October. A total of 300 calls were dispatched through the communications center: 15 auto collisions were investigated; 11 larcenies; 8 drug cases; 2 driving while impaired; 10 minor traffic stops; 1 trespassing; 2 breaking and entering case; 1 overdose; and 1 drunk and disruptive. The Board thanked the Chief for his report.

Water/Wastewater Report – WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick gave a report to the Board. There was a total of 8.3 inches of rain. A total of 80,000 gallons of sludge was hauled to the fields and 140,000 gallons of sludge was processed by the beltpress over the past month. Jody and Nick replaced a bearing on one of the aerators. The state reviewed the lead and copper sampling results for the water system, and determined all requirements were met. The first samples on the new well have all passed with mostly below detection limits on all parameters. The Board thanked Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave his report to the Board. There was a total of 39 one call tickets, 1 water leaks, and 1 sewer call. The sewer extensions on Wade Vannoy Road are complete and all 4 wells will be metered. The relocation of the water line on the building site of Wilkes Community College is complete. The gas line extension to the sewer plant on US Business 221 has been completed. The maintenance department will begin installing Christmas lights and are currently installing wayfinding signage. Eric then gave an update on the Fire Department and invited the Board to the Annual Volunteer Fire Department dinner. The Board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price gave his report to the Board. Final inspection has been scheduled for the USDA ARC water and sewer projects. Section E of the US Highway 221 widen project is scheduled to go out for bid in March of 2020. A total of 66.5% of the tax levy has been collected. Brantley attended the managers meeting hosted by the High Country Council of Governments where he received the NC League of Municipalities update stating the state budget has still not passed instead a series of mini budgets have been passed to keep the state operating. Also, the state is reviewing enforcement the collection of online sales tax. The historic tax credit program received an extension for another 2-3 years. State grants for several municipalities are on hold which includes \$11,000 of funding for the Town's wayfinding signage. Brantley recommended that the Board consider using Town funds to complete the wayfinding project and removing the concrete blocks that line the sidewalks. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comment – None

Aldermen Comments – Mayor Baldwin read a thank you letter from the Ashe County Board of Commissioners for allowing the Board to meet in Town Hall followed by a note for the Ashe County Council on Aging for allowing them to hold their annual fuel assistance roadblock.

Closed Session – The Mayor asked for a motion to enter closed session per G.S. 143.318.11(a)(6) to discuss personnel. Alderman Barr made the motion to go into closed session seconded by Alderman Shoemaker. The time was 7:15pm.

Return to Regular Session – The Board returned from closed session at 7:45pm.

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

Dale Baldwin, Mayor

Rebecca L. Eldreth, Town Clerk