

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

Board Members Present: Mayor Dale Baldwin, Alderman Rusty Barr (absent), 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 October 7, 2019 Agenda – With no changes, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the agenda. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 3-0 in favor.

Public Hearing

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation of Parcel ID 19227 280 – The Mayor stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed annexation. Mayor Baldwin opened the hearing at 6:02pm. With no comments, the Mayor closed public comment at 6:03pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no changes, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the minutes from the September 9, 2019 meeting as presented. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 3-0 in favor.

Consideration of Voluntary Annexation – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the annexation. Alderman Green seconded with a vote of 3-0 in favor.

Update on WJ Business Association – Crystal Miller came before the Board about the Business Association. Crystal stated that several of the merchants have expressed the need for further streetscaping on E. Second Street and along Third Avenue in addition to a crosswalk to assist pedestrians in crossing from Third Avenue. Merchants have also expressed the desire to leave up the white lights on the light poles throughout Town during the winter months. The Board thanked Crystal for her update.

Discussion of Stomp and Brew – Harry Galer came before the Board to propose a new layout for the 2020 festival to accommodate the increasing number of attendees and to expand the family friendly attractions like the car show and food trucks. Mr. Galer proposed closing Main Street starting at Ashe County Cheese and extending right above the intersection of Main Street, Sixth Avenue, and School Avenue. The new footprint would also close E. First Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenue. The Board saw an issue with closing Main Street below the intersection as cars could turn down the street and no way in which to turn around. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the request for the new footprint closing E. Main Street and E. First Street from Third Avenue to Fifth Avenue. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 2-1 with Alderman Green opposing.

Discussion of Arts Council Heat Pump Replacement – Jeff Fissel, Ashe County Arts Council Executive Director, presented two quotes to the Board for the replacement of the heat pump at the Arts Council.

The Arts Council currently leases the building from the Town and would like the Board to fund the replacement. The Board requested additional quotes for the replacements. Jeff agreed to return next month with additional quotes.

Tax Releases – Mayor Baldwin stated that there is one tax release for consideration as the property is no longer in Town limits. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the releases as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 3-0 in favor.

Police Report – Police Chief Bradley Jordan gave the Police report for the month of September. A total of 245 calls were dispatched through the communications center: 16 auto collisions were investigated; 7 larcenies; 5 drug cases; 2 driving while impaired; 7 minor traffic stops; 3 trespassing; and 1 vandalism. Chief Jordan informed the Board that the department met testing requirements set by the SBI Uniform Crime Reporting Unit. Detective Dillard received his Police Law Institute certificate, and Officer Bledsoe received his General Certification Certificate. The Board thanked the Chief for his report.

Water/Wastewater Report – WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick gave a report to the Board. A total of 182,000 gallons of sludge was hauled to the fields and 116,000 gallons of sludge through the beltpress over the past month. The filter plant has been inoperable most of the month due to the dry condition as the Town only receiving a half inch of rain for the month of September. The new well has pumped over 1.5 million gallons this month. A well sounder was placed on the new well for a week to determine the water levels, and the water level did not fluctuate more than one foot while the well was pumping 18 hours a day. The Board thanked Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave his report to the Board. There was a total of 36 one call tickets, 2 water leaks, 3 water taps, and 2 sewer taps. The sewer extensions on Wade Vannoy Road are almost complete. The water line has been moved to accommodate the building site of Wilkes Community College with plans to move the line between the buildings. Cleanup after the Antique Festival went well with little to no issues. Eric informed the Board that the natural gas company is in Town installing new lines which increased the amount of one call tickets. Eric then gave an update on the Fire Department. He is working towards switching the Fire Department to natural gas. Jody and Nick Walters will be picking up truck 4 in Charlotte after repairs are complete. The Board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price gave his report to the Board. A sewer inspection is scheduled for Wade Vannoy Road in November, which will bring the USDA/ACR project to a close. Taxes collected to date total \$1,101,344 which is 65.5% of the levy. The TDA fall ad campaign with Facebook and Pandora ended in September. Targeted areas include Charlotte, Atlanta, and Raleigh with analytics showing that several people who were served an ad visited the area during the campaign flight. Locations for the wayfinding signs have been marked, and the Town will move forward installing the poles. A representative with the 2020 Census will present at the November meeting. Mo's Boots has a sidewalk sale scheduled for Friday, October 11 and Saturday, October 12. Brantley then thanked Greg and Robin Sexton with Ashe County Corn Maze and Pumpkin Festival for their generous donation of pumpkins to decorate the Town for fall. ARC produced a 2-minute video on the Town's water and sewer project. As a reminder Brantley mentioned that identification would be needed to vote during the 2020 election. The Mayor, Alderman Shoemaker, and Brantley all attended Blue Ridge Energy's Community Leaders Committee that focus on small towns. Downtown Trick or Treat will be held on Thursday, October 31. The library will be holding an event on Saturday, November 2 in the park. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comment – None

Aldermen Comments – Alderman Green thanked the merchants for their participation in the scarecrow displays throughout the Town. Alderman Shoemaker thanked all of those in attendance. Alderman Reeves echoed the comments of both Alderman Green and Alderman Shoemaker and stated that he is proud of West Jefferson.

Closed Session – The Mayor asked for a motion to enter closed session per G.S. 143.318.11(a)(5) to establish the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to go into closed session. The time was 6:55pm.

Return to Regular Session – The Board returned from closed session at 7:32 pm.

Adjournment – With nothing further, Alderman Reeves made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Shoemaker. A vote of 3-0 in favor.

Dale Baldwin, Mayor

Rebecca L. Eldreth, Town Clerk