

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2021 | 6:00 pm

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, Police Chief Brad Jordan, Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller, and WWTP ORC Brandon Patrick

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 November 1, 2021 Agenda – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Public Hearings

Consideration of Permanent Closure of a Proposed Road Between Hamilton Drive and Dyke Street – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing was to hear any comments on the proposed road closure between Hamilton Drive and Dyke Street. Mayor Hartman opened public comment at 6:01pm. With no comment, Mayor Hartman closed the public comment at 6:02pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderwoman Miller made the motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held on October 4, 2021. Alderman Barr seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of 2022 Stomp and Brew – Harry Galer came before the board to share the success of the 2021 Stomp and Brew Festival where funds raised total over \$25,000. Harry Galer along with Keith Blank presented Melody Rector and Martin Little a check in the amount of \$25,000 for the non-profit Shoes for Kids. Shoes for Kids provide shoes for over 2,000 children in the county with the help of these funds. Melody Rector thanked the board for allowing the event to be held in West Jefferson. In return the board thanked Melody and Martin for all they do for Shoes for Kids. Harry then asked the board for their consideration to hold the 2022 festival. The footprint of the festival will be the same as 2021 with the closure of East Main Street just below Third Avenue to the top of North Sixth Street, East First Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenue as well as the town's parking lot on Saturday, October 1, 2022, and the use of the town's parking lot on Friday, November 30, 2022 for the VIP Event. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the 2022 Stomp and Brew Festival date and footprint. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

ABC Report – Haskell McGuire presented his report to the Board for the fourth fiscal quarter. An increase of 12.84% in sales was reported from the same quarter in 2020. A check in the amount of \$45,000 has been delivered to the Town. Combs, Tennant & Carpenter conducted the annual financial audit for fiscal year 2020-2021 with no adverse findings. The store continues to operate on a reduced hourly schedule with no apparent loss to revenue and a reduction in payroll. The Board thanked Haskell for his report.

Consideration of Order to Permanently Close a Proposed Road – With no comment, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the permanent road closure. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Budget Amendment #2 – Mayor Hartman stated the budget amendment is for the first \$100,000 payment to assist in the purchase of the 154-acre tract by the Blue Ridge Conservancy. With nothing further, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the budget amendment. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief Appointment – Mayor Hartman explained that each year a fire chief and assistant fire chief must be appointed. Both Eric Miller and Jody Walters are willing to continue serve in their respective positions as fire chief and assistant fire chief. With nothing further, Alderman Green made the motion to reappoint Fire Chief Eric Miller and Assistant Fire Chief Jody Walters. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of ETJ Planning Board Reappointment – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the reappointment of Zeb Gambill to the ETJ Planning Board. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of SB300 Criminal Ordinance – Town Attorney Jak Reeves gave an overview of Senate Bill 300 to the board. This bill may require the town to adopt or amend ordinances with a criminal penalty. The board was in agreeance for Jak to review the affected ordinances and to review the revisions at the next meeting.

Police Report – Chief Jordan gave his report to the Board for the month of September. A total of 259 calls were dispatched through the communications center including 12 motor vehicle crashes, 12 larcenies, 11 drug cases, 2 DWI, 7 minor citations, 2 trespassing, and several other miscellaneous calls. The Board thanked Chief Jordan for his report.

Water and Wastewater Report – Wastewater Superintendent Brandon Patrick gave his report to the Board. A total of 8.66 inches of rain were recorded for the month of October. A sewer line at the end of North Church Avenue was discovered to collecting stormwater from the creek during rainstorms with the line being almost completely dry a day after the rain. A quote to line the interior of the sewer line has been received along with a quote to repair other lines. Decreased water levels were noticed midmonth because of a leaking backflow device causing a loss of 20,000 to 30,000 gallons per day from a local business. Since the finding the issue has been resolved. The filter plant was not operable in the month of October. The Board thanks Brandon for his report.

Town Maintenance Report – Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave his report to the Board. Monthly totals were reported of 87 locate tickets, 2 water leaks, and 1 sewer issue. A total of 619 feet of sewer lines have been laid on Midway Avenue. The basketball goals and lights have been installed in the park. The truck with the new bed has been picked up and stocked with tools. Eric then extended the invitation for the Board join the Fire Department for the annual dinner on Friday, November 13 at 6pm. With nothing further, the Board thanks Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager gave his report to the Board. A total of 21 active COVID cases have been reported bringing the total cases for the year to 3200 for the county with 53% of the population having been fully or partially vaccinated. The downtown wi-fi is averaging 80 clients per day with 100-150 users on the weekends. Section E of the Highway 221 widening project is 20% complete. The aesthetics project had an opening bid date of October 7th with no bids received from

SBE Certified firms. The project has been readvertised with opening bids on November 18th at 2:00pm. Taxes collected to date total 81% of our tax levy. The county will be completing a revaluation in 2023. The industrial park is scheduled for groundbreaking in the spring of 2022 as they are obtaining permits for water and sewer and will be receiving bids in November. Two employees in the maintenance department will be leaving for jobs at the town of Jefferson and Boone. Creative Placemaking is working on a final plan that includes a comprehensive housing strategy, developing a 3D printing bootcamp, and assisting with a funding strategy for Mount Jefferson Child Development Center. The annual Holiday parade will be held on November 20th and Hometown Christmas on Friday November 26th. Tourism spending is up 6% in Ashe County for 2020 when most counties were down. Brantley then congratulated Town Clerk Rebecca Eldreth for completing the clerk's certification course through the UNC School of Government. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments – Mayor Hartman opened the meeting to public comment. With no comments, the mayor moved to Alderman comments.

Aldermen Comments – Alderman Shoemaker thanked all those in attendance after stating how much he has enjoyed serving the Town of West Jefferson. Alderman Reeves followed with comments on how great the Town is and his hopes of serving another term. Alderman Barr expressed his support of the Town's role in preserving Paddy Mountain. Alderman Miller thanked Stomp and Brew for their donation to support Shoes for Kids. Alderman Green thanked Fire Chief Eric Miller for serving in the position and for all he does.

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

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk