

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 5, 2018 | 6:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Mayor Dale Baldwin, Alderman Calvin Green, Alderman Jerry McMillan, Alderman John Reeves, Alderman Stephen Shoemaker, and Alderman Brett Summey, Sr.

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Clerk Rebecca Eldreth, Police Chief Jeff Rose, Wastewater Superintendent Charles Call, and Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller.

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

Approval of the March 5, 2018 Agenda – Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to remove Item 3 – Discussion of Public Library Parking Lot Expansion from the Agenda. Alderman Reeves seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – February 5, 2018 Regular Meeting – With no changes, Alderman McMillan made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Farmers Market Lease 2018-2019 – Brian Chatham, Farmers Market President, presented to the Board the Market highlights for the 2017 season and asked for a renewal of the lease for the upcoming year. The Market has continued to grow and on a regular weekend the Market can see up to 250 visitors and up to 1,000 visitors on big event weekends. The season ended with 62 vendors which was comprised of a mix of 61% growers or producers of farm products, 30% arts and craft vendors, and the remainder were vendors with value added goods such as baked goods. The Market manager, Lori Goodman, implemented several new events to attract new business to the Market including a Father's Day event displaying antique farm equipment, and an Earth Day Celebration. The main event for the Market is the Fall Harvest Festival that bring in close to 800 attendees. The Market has received numerous compliments throughout the year about the variety and selections it has to offer. Brian stated the Farmers Market is operating on its own and Lori Goodman will return for her third year as the Market manager. Stephen Shoemaker made the motion to approve the lease. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor. The Board thanked Brian for his update.

Consideration of Driveway Entrance to 305 Wilton Avenue – Cristina Henson, property owner, addressed the Board to seek permission to add a driveway to her newly purchased property in addition to a garage for off street parking. Cristina provided a drawing of the proposed renovation to the Board. The contractor for the project stated they would cut the sidewalk to place the proposed driveway and replace the sidewalk similar to existing entrances on Wilton Avenue. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the project. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor. The Board welcomed Cristina to the neighborhood, and Cristina thanked the Board for their consideration.

Consideration of Revised Cemetery policy – Mayor Baldwin introduced the revision to the Board which would allow two urns to be placed in one cemetery plot. The consideration for the amendment is due

to the amount of requests and the limited amount of space in the cemetery. Alderman Summey agreed with the amendment but felt that it should not be limited to two urns. The Board agreed to amend the policy to state “the ashes of more than one persons”. With no further discussion, Alderman Summey made the motion to approve the amendment. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Budget Amendment # 2 – Brantley Price, Town Manager, stated the need for budget amendment is to recognize the revenue and expense for the construction of the bumpout, add stop signage, and remove light pole at the Ashe County Arts Center in the amount of \$21,500. The Town has received 2017 tax revenue in excess of budgeted, so the 2017 tax revenue can be moved to pay for the cost of the project. Alderman Green made the motion to approve Budget Amendment #2. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Consideration of the ABC Appointment – Mayor Baldwin notified the Board that ABC Board member, Jak Reeves’ term is expired and recommended to the Board that Jak be reappointed. With no further discussion, Alderman Green made the motion to approve the reappointment. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Consideration of Resolution to File an Application with the Local Government Commission – Mayor Baldwin introduced the Resolution to the Board stating that the Town of West Jefferson has determined to make certain improvements to the water and sewer system of the Town, consisting of (1) a sludge dewatering facility at the West Jefferson Wastewater Treatment Plant, (2) a water supply well and water lines and (3) the Mount Jefferson Road/Wade Vannoy Drive water and sewer lines (collectively, the “Project”). The Town is considering issuing revenue bonds to finance, together with other available funds, the cost of acquiring, constructing, and equipping the Project. The Project is necessary to secure adequate and reliable sewer service and to promote the present and the future welfare of residents of the Town and it’s environ. In order to start the process to secure funding through USDA the Board will need to adopt the Resolution to file the application with the Local Government Commission (LGC), as with the project we will borrowing \$380,000 from USDA for forty years at a rate of 1.75%, which will increase our annual debt for water sewer by \$13,300. With no further discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the Resolutions. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a 5-0 vote in favor.

Financial Update – Brantley Price, Town Manager, discussed with the Board the financial standing of the Town with budget to actual comparisons 7 months or 58% into the fiscal year. Brantley pointed out some select items. Utilities are running over budget due to Blue Ridge Energies eliminating the wholesale power cost adjustment in May of 2017 which was not taken into consideration when making the budget. Maintenance repair for water has been extremely high for the year due to having to replace 3-4 pumps, wells, pipes going into the wells, and issues at the water plant. In the general fund the property tax revenue received for 2017 exceeded the budget by \$63,000. Our sales and use tax is up 4.3% over last year so local sales are increasing. Brantley then gave a summary of funds for each account to show all the accounts are around 58% expensed. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Consideration for Tax Collector to Advertise Tax Liens per G.S. 105-369 (a) – The Mayor stated the need for the Board’s approval to advertise 2017 tax liens. The public notice of delinquent taxes is a routine procedure for the Town. With no discussion Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the advertisement. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Appointment of WJ Fire Dept. Fireman's Relief Fund Board Member – The Mayor stated he was appointed last year to a one year term on the Fireman's Relief Fund Board and his term has expired. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to appoint the Mayor for another one year term. Alderman Reeves seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Consideration of Property Tax release: – The Mayor stated the following tax bill was proposed to be released: H & M Holdings of Ashe County – Valuation adjustment per Chris Lambert. Alderman Reeves made the motion to release the tax bills. Alderman Summey seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of FY 2018-2019 Budget Workshop – Brantley Price, Town Manager, discussed with the Board a potential date for FY 2018-2019 Budget Workshop. Brantley stated the week of the 19th would be ideal. Alderman Green suggested Tuesday, March 20th. The Board agreed on this date at 5:30pm.

Police Report – Police Chief Jeff Rose gave the police report for February. There were 185 calls dispatched through the communications center, 16 auto collisions were investigated, 12 people were arrested with DWI, larceny, assault, and drug related crimes. A total of 4 persons were arrested/charged for drug violations. The Board thanked Chief for his report.

Water/Wastewater & Maintenance Report – WWTP Superintendent Charles Call gave an update on the WWTP. The state inspection on the plant and collection system went well. The crew replaced a few bearings on the oxidation ditch and couple of valves at the filter plant. The filter plant is running about 80,000 gallons a day and water levels are stable. The Board thanked Charles for his report.

Maintenance Report – Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave an update on the Maintenance Department. The number of one call tickets is up from last month for a total of 61 calls. There has been a total of 3 water leaks this month. One water leak was caused by the installation of a guardrail on top of an 8" water line. Eric has spoken with the construction company about installing the guardrail farther back from the roadway so the rail will not be on top of the water line to avoid future issues. A total of 140 new radio read water meters have been installed and has reduced the amount of time taken to read meters. The addition of 3 taps have been added to off Oakwood Road for new homes and 3 of the 5 taps have been completed for the building under renovation on East 2nd Street. The crew has hauled 3 trips to the landfill. Eric then stated he hopes to pick up some of the brush from the storms after the taps have been completed. The Board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report – The Town is moving forward with the new well site, belt press, and sewer extension. The bid opening will be March 22nd and as long as there are 3 bidders construction should start mid-May. Brandon Vannoy is moving forward with the renovations including the porch of the Mountain Outfitter's Annex building and will be cleaning out the inside soon. This project is part of the Downtown Redevelopment Fund and hopes to be opened by June. Sections C and D of the Highway 221 widening project should be opened this year which would make Highway 221 a 4 lane highway from the intersection of Highway 221 and 163 to the dumpster facility on Highway 221. Sections A and B have the completion date of July 2021 and Section E will start construction in 2019. Taxes collected for the year total \$1,231,695 which is 96.6% of our levy. Brantley then updated the Board on the development in the Forest Ridge Community. They have complete two houses and have started construction on a third house. They will also be submitting plans for a new subdivision that will add several lots for houses in the Forest Ridge area. The TDA has launched the new Visit West Jefferson website with new pictures, videos, and expanded business directory. The charging station has been used 37 times since June with the cost of approximately \$300 to the Town. Governor Roy Cooper announced that GE Aviation

Asheville and West Jefferson facilities are part of the company's aviation supply chain and the company will be adding 146 jobs to North Carolina, 15 of which will be in West Jefferson. Brantley stated he would be attending the Main Street Conference in Clayton, NC on March 13th and 14th. Brantley then spoke to the Board about a need for the maintenance department. A lift was installed in the maintenance building but the lift did not include jacks. The jacks are necessary in order to raise the vehicles to perform routine maintenance tasks. The purchase was going to be added to the budget for next year but extra funds are available from the collection of taxes. Brantley asked the Board for their approval to purchase the \$6800 jacks for the maintenance department. With no further discussion Alderman Summey made the motion to purchase the jacks. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a unanimous vote in favor. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments – None

Aldermen Comments – Alderman Shoemaker welcomed Cristina Henson to the Town. He also thanked the Town's staff and providing detailed reports and keeping the Board informed. Alderman Summey thanked the employees and welcomed Cristina to the Town. Alderman Summey acknowledged former Board member Tom Hartman who was in attendance at the meeting. Alderman Reeves then thanked the Town employees and recognized one of the merchants in the Town. The Mayor reminded the Board that the Caboose dedication ceremony has the proposed date of Saturday, May 26th, on Memorial Day weekend.

Adjournment – With nothing further, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Alderman Summey seconded with a unanimous vote in favor.

Dale Baldwin, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk