

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Special Meeting Minutes
September 4, 2018 | 6:00 p.m.

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, Town Attorney David Paletta, Police Chief Jeff Rose, 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. Mayor Baldwin led the group in a moment of silence. Those in attendance then stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the September 4, 2018 Agenda – Alderman Reeves stated he would like to remove the Discussion of Sign Regulations listed as item number seven on the agenda. Alderman Reeves also stated he would like to see the Board set a future date to hold a meeting to discuss the current sign regulations. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the agenda with the deletion. Alderman McMillan seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Public Hearing

Consideration of Text Amendment – Addition of Mini-warehouses to Section 508 Industrial District –

The Mayor stated the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed text amendment to Article V Section 508 Industrial District. The amendment would list mini-warehouses as a permitted use in the Industrial District. The Mayor opened public comment at 6:03pm. With no comments the Mayor closed public comment at 6:04pm.

Consideration of Text Amendment – Acceptance of Article XII Subdivision Revisions – The Mayor stated the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed text amendments to Article XII Subdivisions. The Mayor opened the public hearing for the amendment at 6:04 pm. Town Attorney David Paletta summarized the changes to Article XII to the Board. Mr. Paletta stated the amendments were to establish a public policy in favor of do no harm policy so new subdivisions would do no harm to adjacent property owners. The changes would make the policy easier to read and clarify the stormwater regulations. Attorney John Logston who represents the Highlander Company stated his opposition to the changes in Article XII including. Attorney Logston feels that the revisions would be a radical change in regulations and that the new regulations would freeze development in the Town. Attorney Logston also referred to Subsection B of Subsection 4 on page 26 that refers to a dated map that has been omitted. Jason Herman with the Thomas Herman Company expressed his opposition for the revisions to Article XII, as well. Mr. Herman feels the new regulations are too restrictive and will shut down development. With no further comment, the Mayor closed the public comment at 6:34pm.

Regular Session

Approval of August 6, 2018 Minutes – With no changes, Alderman McMillan made the motion to approve all minutes as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Text Amendments –Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adopt the revision to Article V Section 508 as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor. Alderman McMillan made the motion to table the adoption of the amendments to Article XII. Alderman Green seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Statements that Shows Consistency with the 2008 Land Use Plan – With no discussion, Alderman McMillan made the motion to approve the statement as read for Article V Section 508. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Presentation of ABC Report – Haskell McGuire presented his report for the 4th Fiscal Quarter 2017/2018 to the Board. Haskell highlighted several figures on the report including an increase of \$38,696 in sales from the same quarter of the previous year for a 9% increase. A check for \$16,250 has been delivered to the Town. Haskell provided an update on the store expansion that is now 99% complete and invited the Board to an open house after the project is complete. The ABC Annual Financial Audit was completed in July with no adverse findings. Haskell and Tony Lyall both attended the Annual NC ABC Board and General Managers Conference in August. The potential for privatization was one of the topics discussed at the conference. The Board thanked Haskell for his report.

Discussion of Library Parking Lot – Suzanne Moore came before the Board to discuss the proposed parking lot expansion and to invite the Board to the kickoff to the story walk in the in the West Jefferson Park. Suzanne provided an update for the parking lot expansion. The library asked the Ashe County Board of Commissioners for funding on the project since the Town of West Jefferson has given the library permission to use the land. The County Commissioners have agreed to share the financial responsibility by splitting the total bill in thirds between the Town of West Jefferson, the County, and the Library at \$21,535 each. Alderman Reeves suggested that the item be placed on the FY 2019-2020 budget. Alderman Green agreed with Alderman Reeves' suggestion to place the item on the budget. Alderman Reeves made the motion to add the Town's portion of the parking lot expansion in the FY 2019-2020 budget. Alderman McMillan seconded the motion with a vote of 4-1 with Alderman Green opposing.

Consideration of Planning Board Appointments – Mayor Baldwin stated that the terms for 2 ETJ members of the planning board have expired. James Ellis has agreed to serve another term if the Board agrees. However, Bradley McNeil has decided not to serve another term. Michael Vannoy has agreed to serve, if the Board agrees. Alderman Green made the motion to accept the nominations and send them to the County for final approval. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Tax Releases – Mayor Baldwin stated there are several routine tax releases. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the tax releases. Alderman Summey seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Police Report – Police Chief Jeff Rose gave the Police report for the month of August. There were 256 calls dispatched through the communications center: 20 auto collisions were investigated, 7 people were arrested on charges of larceny, assault, and drug related crimes. A total of 2 persons were arrested/charged for drug violations. The Board thanked the Chief for his report.

Water/Wastewater & Maintenance Report – WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick gave his report to the Board on the WWTP. The annual water inspection was completed in August with no issues to report. Both water filters are currently running. The electrical service for the wastewater plant belt press upgrade has been placed. There was a total of 7 inches of rain last month. The Board thanked Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave his report to the Board. A total of 81 one call tickets, 3 water leaks, and 1 sewer leak were reported for the month. Several customer leaks were reported. The department hauled 6 trips to the landfill after collecting all the discarded brush. A few flooding issues occurred Sunday night including the area beside Badger Funeral Home and on Long Street.

Continued Discussion of Subdivision Regulations – Brantley Price, Town Manager stated that the Town Attorney David Paletta would like to address the Board concerning the previous discussion about the

subdivision regulation revision. Attorney Paletta asked the Board to review page 26 of the revision addressing the concern for the missing date in subsection B under Storm Water Management Improvement Standards. Attorney Paletta stated the subsection with the missing date only applies to the redevelopment of an already developed site. Since there are no developments currently under consideration that fall under this category, the sentence could be removed allowing for other development to continue without further delay. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the subdivision regulations revisions as presented by Attorney Paletta. Alderman Summey seconded the motion with a vote of 3-2 with Alderman Green and Alderman Shoemaker opposing.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price gave his report to the Board. Brantley updated the Board on the USDA ARC project. The project has been released, and we can begin work on the project. Carolina Grading and Utilities, the contractors for the project, should start on the project in the upcoming weeks. The A and B sections of Highway 221 widening project are scheduled for completion by July 2021, the completion date for C section is unknown, and the D section date of completion has been updated to May of 2019. The right-of-way for section E is in progress with construction on the road beginning in 2019 with no completion date stated. A public meeting about the Highway 221 and Beaver Creek School Road will be held in Town Hall in October to show proposed solutions for the intersection. Taxes collected to date total \$876,522 which is 67% of the levy and in line with previous years collections. West Jefferson TDA's promotion with Pandora is currently running. We have partnered with the Ashe County Chamber so instead of a 3 week promotion, we will be participating in a 5 week promotion. The same promotion is scheduled again in the spring of 2019. Brantley informed the Board that he was approached by NC DOT about an opportunity to create a gateway for the Town at the Highway 221/163 intersection in section D of the Highway 221 widening project. The project would be designed and planned with aesthetic monies from NC DOT that amounts to 1.5% of the total budget. The Town must takeover maintenance and upkeep after the first year of service from NC DOT. The Board expressed their approval to move forward with the project. Brantley reported figures for tourism in 2017 including tourism spending was \$57.65 million with tax savings per household at \$501.46. Tourism has increased 31.4% over the last 7 years with an increase of 9% since 2016. The library has completed the story walk in the park and has invited the Town to the kickoff event. Mountain Outfitters is planning a sidewalk sale on October 6th. The Blue Ridge Brutal Relay race is scheduled for this weekend where a portion of the run is held in the West Jefferson area. Brantley gave an overview of his trip to Auburn University to discuss the Town's revitalization stating we are ahead of the game and everyone was impressed with transformation of the Town. Alderman Shoemaker initiated a conversation with Cullie Tarleton, our NC DOT Board member, and thanked Brantley for following up with Cullie to reroute asphalt trucks around Town while making deliveries. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Consideration of Statements that Shows Consistency with the 2008 Land Use Plan – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the statement as read for Article XII Subdivision revision. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Public Comment – Kitty Honeycutt, Executive Director of the Ashe County Chamber, spoke about all the beauty and accomplishments of the Town. She also addressed the need to signage to direct visitors in the area. Haskell McGuire and Kyle Hall updated the Board about on Blue Ridge Conservancy's efforts to acquire Paddy Mountain as the current owner has plans to auction the property in 3 pieces. The Conservancy would only be able to offer appraisal value for the property, so the Conservancy has asked for a local commitment from organizations that would support their purchase.

Aldermen Comments – Alderman McMillan expressed concern about the potential of runoff if the timber rights to the Paddy Mountain property were sold and the land was to be clear cut. Alderman Summey asked the appraisal value of the property. Alderman Shoemaker thanked Haskell McGuire and Kyle Hall for informing the Board about the Paddy Mountain Property.

Closed Session – The Mayor asked for a motion to enter closed session per G.S. 143.318.11(a)(6) to consult with the attorney about personnel. The Mayor stated they would return to open session before adjourning. Alderman Summey made the motion to go into closed session. The time was 8:04pm.

Adjournment – The Board returned to open session at 9:00 pm. With no further items to be discussed or voted on, 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