

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 12, 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, Wastewater Superintendent Brandon Patrick, and Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller

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 July 12, 2021 Agenda – With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Public Hearings

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 19223 001 732 from Highway Commercial to Medium Density Residential – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed rezoning of the property located at 1003 South Jefferson Avenue. Mayor Hartman opened the public comment at 6:03pm. Property Owner Joe Blevins came before the Board to explain that even though the property is zoned Highway Commercial it has always been used as a residence. With no further comment, Mayor Hartman closed the public comment at 6:04pm.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 19223 001 969 from Conditional District to Medium Density Residential – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed rezoning of the property located between Hamilton Drive and Burkett Avenue. Mayor Hartman opened the public comment at 6:04pm. Property owner John Brown came before the Board to provide his plans for development of the property. With no further comments, Mayor Hartman closed the public comment at 6:06pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held on June 2, 2021. Alderman Barr seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of NC DOT Highway 221 Aesthetics Project – Jeff Lackey with NC DOT presented the Board with the Roadside Environmental Landscape Design and Aesthetics Project plan for the intersection of NC Highway 221 and 163. The project includes turf upgrades, canopy trees, and perennial plantings. The project is set to begin in Fall of 2021. After the initial plantings the NC DOT will provide maintenance with a replacement period of 18 months. With no further discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the Landscape Maintenance Agreement as presented. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of Permanent Road Closure of Unnamed Street off Hamilton Drive – John Brown came before the Board to ask for approval to move forward with plans to permanently close a proposed street

that divides two of his recently acquired properties. Portions of the proposed road adjoin two other properties, and they have given their consent to move forward with the road closure. The Board was in agreeance for John Brown to move forward with the documentation to close the road.

Consideration of Road Closure for Art on the Mountain – Rebecca Williams spoke on behalf of the Ashe County Arts Council about the Art on the Mountain Festival which will be held in September from the hours of 10:00am to 3:00pm. The Arts Council asked for Board permission to close a portion of School Avenue from the intersection of East Main Street and Sixth Avenue to the closest edge of the public parking lot where a food truck will be placed. Attendees of the event and others may use the parking lot the day of the event. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to close a portion of the street. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-1 with Alderman Green opposing.

Consideration of Parking Lot Closure for Stomp and Brew VIP Event – Harry Galer with Stomp and Brew Events requested to close the public parking lot across from the cheese plant for a VIP on Friday, October 1st. The event will be from 5pm-9pm with live music and a silent auction with proceeds going to Shoes for Kids. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the closure of the parking lot. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of Outdoor Dining and Parking – Mayor Hartman opened the floor to discuss the current outdoor dining arrangement and parking in downtown. Restaurant owner Tammy Rose expressed her opinion to the Board stating customers prefer to dine outside. Town Resident Shelly Elliott voiced her preference to walk to town and dine outside. After some discussion, Alderman Green made the motion to allow restaurants to utilize the parking spaces directly in front of their buildings for outdoor dining on Friday afternoons at 4:30pm until Monday morning at 2:00am. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Lease on Town Property – Restaurant owner Tammy Rose came before the Board to request the use of the parking spaces beside the building for outdoor dining. After some discussion, Alderman Green made the motion to not lease the spaces adjacent to the restaurant. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of Amendment to Title I General Provisions – Mayor Hartman opened a discussion of revising Section 10.99 of the town ordinance as the current ordinance is \$100 per incident. After some discussion this matter was tabled until a later time.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 19223 001 732 – With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the rezoning. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 19223 001 969 – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the rezoning. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Statements of Consistency with the West Jefferson Land Use Plan – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made a motion to approve the Statements of Consistency as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Order to Collect Taxes – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the order to collect taxes with Alderman Green seconding the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of Street Paving – Town Manager Brantley Price presented a list of the street that need to be resurfaced. Alderman Green made the motion to approve the paving of the streets as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Approval of ARP Funds and Appointment of Funds Manager – Mayor Hartman explained that the town will soon be receiving our American Rescue Plan Funds. The Board is required to approve the acceptance of these funds and appoint a fund manager to receive the funds. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the acceptance of the funds and to appoint Mayor Hartman as the manager of the funds. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor of the motion.

Consideration of Cemetery Plot Purchase – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the cemetery plot purchase for Brenda Fisher. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Planning Board Appointments – Mayor Hartman stated that John Reeves and Joan Watson’s terms on the planning board have expired. John is willing to serve another 3 year term. John is recommending the appointment of Beth Shelton to the other board opening. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the appointments of John Reeves and Beth Shelton. Alderman Green seconded the appointments with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Police Report – Chief Jordan gave his report to the Board for the month of June. A total of 338 calls were dispatched through the communications center including 10 motor vehicle crashes, 9 larcenies, 11 drug cases, 11 minor citations, 1 breaking and entering, and 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 3.79 inches of rain were recorded for the month of June with 100,000 gallons of sludge disposed of during the month. The land application inspection was completed which showed compliance for the program. The filter plant continued to produce 50,000 gallons per day last month. The Board thanks Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave his report to the Board. The maintenance department repaired 1 water leak, relocated 1 water line, made a recommendation to the location of sewer lines for the West Jefferson Hotel, and marked 26 locate calls. An update on the paving of Jefferson Avenue that is nearing completion was given with the crew will starting to replace the manholes and removing old pieces of asphalt that were left during the milling process. New benches and picnic tables have been installed in the park and an older bench and picnic table will be relocated. The fire department passed inspection with the hopes of lowering the FSRS rating. A request was made to open the gate of the cemetery road on the opposite end to allow traffic to enter and exit from that point. The Board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager gave his report to the Board. The COVID case count for the county is 2280 total cases which 6 are currently active and 4 being monitored. The new EV charger has been installed and is ready for use. The HCCOG is assisting with the storm water study. The plans for American Rescue Plan funds are to spend on water and sewer improvements. Taxes collected to date total 98.6% of the tax levy. Sales tax is up 15% over last year with the month of March up 51%. The online article for Our State magazine is up for viewers to enjoy and videos for Blue Ridge Heritage will be available soon. The Town is in the process of updating the land use plan which is required to be completed by July of 2022. The HC COG will the completing a parking study this week. The ABC Store has

completed their budget and estimate sales to increase 6.6%. The Appalachian Regional Commission along with new Federal Co-chair Gayle Manchin, individuals from the governor's office, the Department of Commerce, and Burr and Tillis representatives visited West Jefferson last week. Brantley then read a letter from the Farmers Market thanking the Town for the repairs to assist with water runoff and a letter of appreciation from Hobie Davis. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments – Mayor Hartman opened the meeting to public comment.

Aldermen Comments – Alderman Shoemaker thanked all those in attendance and those for the nice letters. Alderman Reeves echoed comments from Alderman Shoemaker. Mayor Hartman thanked those in attendance. Alderwoman Miller thanked the town staff for their hard work.

Closed Session – The Mayor then asked for a motion to enter closed session per G.S. 143.318.11(a)(3) to consult with the Town Attorney over Attorney-Client matters. Alderman Reeves made the motion to enter closed session followed by Alderman Green seconding the motion.

Return to Regular Session – The Board returned from closed session at 9:03pm. Upon returning the discussion of amending Title 1 General Provisions was brought back for discussion. Alderwoman Miller made the motion to increase the penalties assessed per violation by adding items (d) and (f) from the Town of Boone's ordinance. Before adjourning Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the pay schedule as presented by Mayor Hartman. Alderman Barr seconded with a vote of 4-1 to follow with Alderman Green opposing.

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

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk