

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 7, 2021 | 6:00 pm

Board Members Present: Mayor Tom Hartman, Alderman Rusty Barr, Alderman Calvin Green (absent), 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 June 7, 2021 Agenda – Mayor Hartman informed the Board that Mark Watson would not be able to attend the meeting tonight and requested to remove that agenda item from the agenda. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the agenda with the exclusion of item mentioned. Alderwoman Miller seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Public Hearings

Fiscal Year FY 2021-22 Town Operating Budget – Mayor Hartman stated the public hearing is to hear any comments on the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Town Operating Budget. The Mayor opened the public hearing at 6:01 pm. With no comment, the Mayor closed the public hearing at 6:03 pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held on May 3, 2021. Alderman Shoemaker seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Museum of Ashe County History Invitation – Gary Poe came before the Board to extend the invitation to the unveiling of the latest exhibit “Real Americans: Native Americans in Ashe County” on Friday, June 11, 2021 to the Board.

Discussion of Parking – Danna Little expressed her concerns to the Board about the lack of parking in the Town and questioned to why the restaurants were extended the courtesy of using the parking spaces directly in front of their business seven days a week now that pandemic restrictions have been lifted. A discussion was had as to whether the restaurant should be allowed to continue operating the outdoor seating given the restrictions on indoor restaurant capacity had been relaxed. Following the discussion Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to retrieve the parking spaces used for outdoor dining Monday through Saturday during regular business hours and to allow the restaurants to use the spaces after 5pm on Friday and Saturday and all day on Sunday. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion. A vote of 2-2 followed with Alderman Reeves and Alderman Barr voting against the motion. Mayor Hartman broke the tie with a vote in favor of the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 3-2.

Consideration of Cemetery Plot Purchase – The Mayor stated that town resident Kathy Church Sheets would like to purchase a plot in the town’s cemetery. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the purchase of the cemetery plot. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Budget Amendment # 4 FY 2020-21 Year End – Mayor Hartman presented the final budget amendment of the year for review by the Board. The amendment is to ensure each fund is not overspent at year end. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the budget amendment as presented. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Approval for FY 2021-22 Budget Ordinance – Town Manager Brantley Price stated that the budget ordinance for fiscal year 2021-22 has been revised as recommended at the previous meeting along with the addition of an increased ABC general distribution, reduction in the cost to sidewalks on North Jefferson Avenue as to only replace the existing sidewalk, and the reduction of fund balance to balance the budget. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the budget ordinance as presented. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 to follow.

Consideration of Approval – FY 2021-22 Schedule of Fees – The schedule of fees was presented to the board for review. With no changes, Alderman Shoemaker made a motion to approve the schedule of fees as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Discussion of July Board Meeting – Mayor Hartman stated the July regular meeting is scheduled on the July 4th holiday. The board agreed to reschedule the meeting for the following Monday, July 12th at 6pm.

Police Report – Chief Jordan gave his report to the Board for the month of June. A total of 325 calls were dispatched through the communications center including 11 motor vehicle crashes, 4 larcenies, 9 drug cases, 2 DWIs, 7 minor citations, 5 trespasses, 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 2.68 inches of rain were recorded for the month of May with 144,000 gallons of sludge disposed of during the month. Brandon stated with the hauling and press running through the winter, the plant is in the best shape it has been in years. He then added that one filter is running about 50,000 gallons per day. The Board thanks Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave his report to the Board. The maintenance department repaired 2 water and 3 sewer leaks, made 1 water tap and 5 sewer taps, relocated water lines, marked 31 locate calls, assisted with the drain repair at the Farmer Market, installed road signs, and repaired the ditch on 7th Street. Eric reminded the Board about the milling and resurfacing of Jefferson Avenue during the month of June. The annual fire inspection has been completed. 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 2257 total cases which 2 are currently active and 12 being monitored. The latest Executive Order has relaxed the restrictions and increased capacity for indoor and outdoor gatherings and eliminated the mask requirement outdoors. The EV charger has been installed and is available to use. The High Country Council of Governments is assisting with the revision of the storm water ordinance. Downtown Wi-Fi is live outdoors in the Town Hall and Farmers Market area. The remainder of the project should be complete by the end of the week. Taxes collected to date total 98.3% of the tax levy. The paid content article with Our State magazine will be published next month. Mo's Boots has a sidewalk sale scheduled June 18-19th and the employee picnic will be held on Friday, June 18th in the park. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments – Mayor Hartman opened the meeting to public comment. Several members of the community spoke including Tamar Hendrix, owner of Burgers Y'all requested to keep parking space available for outdoor dining. Andy Guion, owner of The Tavern approached the Board asking for consideration with approval from the funeral home to continue the live music outdoors on the weekend.

Aldermen Comments – Alderman Shoemaker thanked all those in attendance along with the Town staff. Alderman Reeves stated that the Board would work to resolve the issues within the Town as the Board wants to see the Town grow.

Closed Session – The Mayor then asked for a motion to enter closed session per G.S. 143.318.11(a)(6) to consult with the Town Board concerning personnel. Alderman Bar made the motion to enter closed session.

Return to Regular Session – The Board returned from closed session at 8:35 p.m.

Adjournment – With nothing further, Alderman Barr made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Alderman Shoemaker with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk