

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Special Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2022 | 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 Wastewater Superintendent 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 March 7, 2021 Agenda – Alderman Green made the motion to add a discussion concerning the alleyway behind Slice WJ followed by a second by Alderman Barr with a vote of 5-0 in favor. Alderman Barr made the motion to remove the consideration of revised demonstration permit from the agenda. Alderwoman Miller seconded the with a vote of 3-2 with Alderman Reeves and Alderman Green opposing the motion.

Public Hearings

Consideration of Text Amendment to Section 507.2 Special Uses in the Highway Commercial – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed text amendment to the Highway Commercial district. Town Clerk Rebecca Eldreth addressed the board stating the need to add the amendment to the Community Shopping district. With no further comment, Mayor Hartman closed the public comment at 6:04pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held on February 7, 2022. Alderman Reeves seconded with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Public Comment – Mayor Hartman moved the public comment to allow for comment before the regular agenda items were discussed. Democratic candidate for NC House District 93 Ben Massey introduced himself to the board. Business owner Ken Bumgardner expressed his concerns and spoke against the cruise ins that take place on every third Saturday from April to October.

Consideration of Alleyway Paving Behind Slice WJ – The owners of Slice WJ have requested to have the alleyway behind the building paved to comply with the health department regulations. Alderman Barr made the motion to pave the alleyway from Second Street to Main Street. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Outdoor Dining Regulations – Upon the request of the Board, Town Attorney Reeves developed Chapter 99 to address outdoor dining regulations. After reviewing, Alderman Barr made the motion to adopt the regulations as presented. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Ashe County Arts Council Lease – Executive Director Joni Ray came before the Board and asked to renew the existing five year lease after giving an update on the Arts Council. With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the five-year lease. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration Antique Fair Footprint – Keith Woodie made a request to close the road for the annual Antique Fair. The footprint would include Jefferson Avenue from East Second Street to Ashe Street keeping Main Street open for traffic. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the same footprint as last year. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Temporary Road Closure on West Ashe Street – A request has been made by local business owner Gary Brown to close West Ashe Street for a music event on April 9th. The event would include the album release party for Alex Key. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the road closure. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Miller with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Additional Playground Equipment – After the completion of the basketball court in the park, additional funds are available to purchase playground equipment. A piece of equipment has been selected that can be installed in three separate phases but would require additional funds to purchase phase one. After some discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the purchase of the new equipment. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of North Jefferson Avenue Sidewalk Project and Award Contract – A bid was received from Padco Excavating who will serve as contractor for Stuart’s Landscaping to replace the existing sidewalks on North Jefferson Ave as well as install new sidewalks from Fifth Street to Seventh Street. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the completion of the sidewalk project including the sidewalk installation from Fifth to Seventh Street and award the contract to Padco Excavating. Alderman Green seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Additional Funds for Fire Department Renovation – The fire department was budgeted funds for renovations on the old rescue squad portion of the building. After the installation of the new walls, paint, and floors, fire department members have requested to replace the ceiling tile and windows to complete the renovation. Alderman Green made the motion to approve the additional funds to complete the renovation. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Review of Sidewalk Sales – Town Manager Brantley Price gave the following dates for sidewalk sales in 2022. Mo’s Boots have requested June 17-18 and October 21-22 for their sidewalk sales. Mountain Outfitters have requested May 28, July 2, and September 3. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the dates requested. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Financial Review by Brantley Price – Town Manager Brantley Price gave an overview of the revenues and expenses for each account followed by a summary of past due taxes.

Consideration of Text Amendment – With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the text amendment as presented. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor as Alderman Barr left the meeting before the vote.

Consideration of Statements of Consistency – With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the statement of consistency as presented. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Discussion of Budget Meeting Date – The budget meeting date was set for Tuesday, March 22 at 5:30pm.

Police Report – Chief Jordan gave his report to the Board for the month of March. A total of 265 calls were dispatched through the communications center including 13 motor vehicle crashes, 7 larcenies, 14 drug cases, 21 minor citations, 2 DWI, 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 5.5 inches of rain were recorded for the month of February. All annual reports have been filed. The Consumer Confidence Report has been certified by the state and placed on the Town's website. Both filters have been running but have since been shut down due to an oil leak in the air compressor. The Board thanks Brandon for his report.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager gave his report to the Board. The COVID case count for the county is 6199 total cases with 53 cases reported in the past five days. A total of 57% of the population has either been fully or partially vaccinated. A purchase order has been issued to utilize ARPA funds to repair and line approximately 4000 feet of terracotta lines in the downtown area not to exceed \$200,000. A preconstruction conferences is to be set up for the 221-aesthetics project to discuss the timeline of the project. Taxes collected to date total 95% of the tax levy with past due letters scheduled to be mailed. Sales tax is up 20% for the month of November with a 16% increase year to date. The TDA's advertisement in the destinations section of Our State Magazine is scheduled to run from February to May in addition to the digital promotion with TriAd Media. The County has plans to start installation of the water and sewer lines for the new industrial park. Brantley then spoke about an opportunity to apply for a Regionalization Feasibility Grant to interconnect the Town of West Jefferson and Jefferson water systems. The board was in full support of the opportunity. The insurance company is still waiting on quotes from the water damage of the old Catawissa building. Brantley then recognized Eric Miller for his 30 years of service to the town, Heather Holdaway for 25 years of service, and Jody Walters for 24 years of service. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Aldermen Comments – The Board thanked everyone in attendance.

Adjournment – With nothing further, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Alderman Reeves with a vote of 4-0 in favor. The time was 7:50pm.

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk