

**Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2023 | 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, and Wastewater Superintendent Brandon Patrick

At 6:00 pm Mayor Hartman called to order the meeting of the Board of Alderman. After the invocation was given, those in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of November 6, 2023 Agenda – Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the agenda with no additions. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Public Hearings

Consideration of Permanently Closing Alleyway Off Fourth Street – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed closure of the alleyway located off Fourth Street. The public hearing was open at 6:01pm. With no comment Mayor Hartman closed the public hearing at 6:01pm.

Consideration of Permanently Closing Alleyway Off College Avenue – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed closure of the alleyway located off College Avenue. The public hearing was open at 6:01pm. Real Estate Agent Judson Blevins spoke on behalf of the homeowners at 403 College Avenue where the alleyway is located. Mayor Hartman closed the public hearing at 6:03pm.

Consideration of Text Amendment to Article XI – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed text amendment to Article XI. The public hearing was open at 6:04pm. Alderman Barr along with Alderman Reeves gave a quick explanation of the recommendations from the planning board on the text amendments. Mayor Hartman closed the public hearing at 6:07pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the minutes for the October 2nd Regular Meeting. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Review of Kimley-Horn Sidewalk Feasibility Study – Alex McIntyre with Kimley-Horn joined the meeting via Zoom to review the sidewalk concept from Buck Mountain Road to Beaver Creek School Road.

Discussion of Short-Term Rentals – Certified Housing Inspector Trey Young reviewed the home inspection process to be used by short term rental owners with the Board. The inspection process will check items such as the 911 address posted on the exterior of the house, ensure adequate off-street parking is available, inspect fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and carbon monoxide detectors. An inspection performed by a certified housing inspector would be at the cost of the owner of the property and would be required to be completed within 90 days of the issue date of the town permit. Alderman Green made the motion to require the certified housing inspection in addition to the completion of inspection by the fire department. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Update on Northern Peaks Trail and Paddy Mountain – Jordan Sellars provided an overview of the Northern Peaks Trail and the progress of Paddy Mountain Park.

Consideration of Approval of PARTF Grant with Mayor and Town Manager as Signers – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve Mayor Hartman and Town Manager Price as signers on the PARTF Grant paperwork. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Approval for the Mayor and Town Manager to Sign Golden Leaf Application – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve Mayor Hartman and Town Manager Price as signers on Golden Leaf paperwork. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Resolution and Contract for Interconnect Feasibility Study by McGill Engineering – NCDENR has prepared the contract for the water interconnect study with the Town of Jefferson. Approval of the resolution and contract are needed to move forward with the project. Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the resolution and contract. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Resolution for NCLM ARP Technical Services Program – The North Carolina League of Municipalities has received additional ARP funds that assist towns with engineering services and a free cyber security overview of the IT system. In order for the town to be eligible for the funds a resolution and memorandum of agreement must be approved. With no discussion, Alderman Green made the motion to approve the resolution and memorandum as presented. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Order to Permanently Closing Alleyway Off Fourth Street – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to permanently close the alleyway as requested. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-1 in favor with Alderman Green opposing.

Consideration of Order to Permanently Closing Alleyway Off College Avenue – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to permanently close the alleyway as requested. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-1 in favor with Alderman Green opposing.

Consideration of Text Amendment to Article XI – Randy Marion Ford has requested text amendments to the zoning ordinance to allow for more signage at both West Jefferson locations.

The first amendment requested was to add banners outside of a 15-foot setback was not recommended by the planning board. Alderman Green made the motion to approve the amendment to allow banners to be displayed behind the 15-foot setback from the road. With motion went no further as there was no second for the item. The next amendment would allow an addition sign on a corner lot that is adjacent to a public road and a private road as long as it does not abut a residential district. Alderman Green made the motion to approve the amendment as presented. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 4-1 in favor with Alderman Reeves opposing.

Consideration of Statements of Consistency – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the statements as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Lion’s Club American Flag Disposal Box – The Lion’s Club asked to place an American flag disposal box outside the public restroom area. The Board was not interested in the addition at this time.

Discussion of Cemetery Plots – Johnny Brown and wife inherited 2 cemetery plots that they will not be using. The Board agreed to offer the Browns \$250 per plot.

Police Report – Chief Jordan gave his report to the Board for the month. A total of 262 calls were dispatched through the communications center including 19 motor vehicle crashes, 18 larcenies, 4 drug cases, 2 minor citation, 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 0.75 inches of rain were recorded for the month. The siding for the building at the wastewater plant has been finished and should be insulated today. No issues have been noticed with the wells due to the dry conditions. The Board thanked Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – absent

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager, gave his report to the Board beginning with project updates. The Lead Service Line scope of work is due December 1st. The timeline for the Golden Leaf Stormwater project has been established with engineering and design due January 1st, bidding and procurement due March 15th, construction set to begin May 1st, and a completion date of April 30 of 2025. DEQ has approved the scope of work for the AIA water and sewer project. The contract for the Interconnect Grant has been approved. Taxes collected to date total 71.9% of the tax levy. Sales tax for June was up 5% over the prior year with year-to-date sales tax up 12%. A thank you was given to the Sexton Family for decorating the town with pumpkins. The holiday parade will be held on November 18 at 2pm. Town Hall will be closed on Friday, November 10th for Veterans Day. An invitation was extended to the Board on behalf of Ashe County High School to the Veterans Day assembly. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments – Town resident Kyle Hall thanked Town Manager Brantley Price, Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller, and WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick for their assistance locating a water leak.

Aldermen Comments – Alderwoman Miller extended a thank you to the Board and town staff and good luck to the candidates in the election the next day. Alderman Barr and Alderman Reeves reminded those in attendance to go out and vote.

Closed Session – Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to enter closed session. Alderman Green seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0. The time was 7:34pm.

Return to Regular Session – Alderman Green discussed with the board promoting Rebecca Eldreth to Assistant Town Manager for succession planning. The board discussed and all agreed with this change. She will keep all job duties as currently tasked – Clerk, HR and zoning and will be required to complete the Municipal Administration course through the SOG. Alderman Green made the motion and Alderman Barr made the second with a 5-0 vote.

Adjournment – Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Alderman Barr with a vote of 5-0 in favor. The time was 8:12pm.

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk