

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 5, 2024 | 6:00 pm

Board Members Present: Mayor Tom Hartman, Alderman Rusty Barr, Alderman Calvin Green (absent), Alderman John Reeves, Alderwoman Shelton, and Alderman Stephen Shoemaker

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Attorney Jak Reeves, Assistant Town Manager Rebecca Eldreth, Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller, Wastewater Superintendent Brandon Patrick, and Police Chief Brad Jordan

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 July 1, 2024 Agenda – Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to add closed session per general statute 143.318.11(a)(6). Alderman Reeves seconded the motion. Mayor Hartman stated that he would like to go into close session but would like all ABC Board members present. Mayor Hartman then called for a vote on the motion made by Alderman Shoemaker. Alderman Barr and Alderwoman Shelton both were opposed. Mayor Hartman broke the tie by voting against the motion. Alderman Barr then made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Public Hearings

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 19223001968 and 19223001988 to Community Shopping

– Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed rezoning of the property located on Hice Avenue. The public hearing was open at 6:04pm. Randy Conn with Conncert Music spoke about how they would like to relocate their business which is currently on East Second Street. The plan is to place a 3500 square foot building for retail and lessons. With no further comment, Mayor Hartman closed the public hearing at 6:07pm.

Consideration of Text Amendment to Article V – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed text amendment to Article V. The public hearing was open at 6:07pm. Jennifer Byland with Jimmy and Jean’s spoke to the board on her plans to add billiards to her business stating the business has been open for one year and would like for the adults to have an activity while the kids are playing. With no further comment, Mayor Hartman closed the public hearing at 6:13pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Presentation of Kimley-Horn Sidewalk Feasibility Study – Alex McIntyre and John Moore from Kimley-Horn presented the final draft of the sidewalk feasibility study for the area to connect downtown to Beaver Creek School Road. Construction of the project is projected to be \$1.8 million with total cost at \$4.3 million.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcels 19223001968 and 19223001988 to Community Shopping

– With no discussion, Alderwoman Shelton made the motion to approve the rezoning of the property to Community Shopping. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Text Amendment to Article V – 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.

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

Consideration of 2025 Stomp and Brew Date – Harry Galer with Stomp and Brew approached the Board for approval on the 2025 date so that it can be shared with attendees of the 2024 event along with vendors. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the dates of September 12 and 13, 2025. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0.

Consideration of Revised Minutes from June 7, 2021 – The ABC commission has requested minutes from the meeting where the Board approved increasing the ABC Boards meeting stipend from \$150 to \$500. Manager Price has the notes that the Board approved the increase after returning from closed session at the June 2021 meeting. However, it was not included in the meeting minutes. With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the revision of the minutes. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0.

Consideration of Resolutions for Street Closures – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the resolutions for street closures for the Antique Fair and the Holiday Parade. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Lease with New River Brewing – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the lease as presented. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0.

Consideration of Lease with Third Day Market – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the lease as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0.

Consideration of Revised Offer and Acceptance Letter and Resolution for Greenfield Pump Station Project – With no discussion, Alderwoman Shelton made the motion to approve the offer and acceptance letter as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Revised Capital Budget Ordinance for State Budget Funds for Greenfield Pumpstation – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the capital budget ordinance as presented. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Awarding Greenfield Pumpstation Contract to Civil Designs Concepts – The town received two RFQs from engineers for the Greenfield Pumpstation project. The town

was originally planning on upgrading the pumpstation and upsizing the force main pipe, but due to the estimated cost of the project increasing CDC recommends only upgrading the pumpstation at this time. The upgrade will increase the capacity to meet the needs of the middle school and the town homes if the project were to happen. CDC is the firm working on middle school water and sewer extensions. Wastewater Superintendent Patrick and Town Manager Price both recommend CDC if the Board so desires. With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the CDC Contract. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Review Sidewalk Replacement and Street Paving – Town Manager Price provided quotes for the sidewalk replacement from Main Street to State Street starting in front of the West Jefferson Hotel and from below the Cheese Plant to School Avenue in front of Reeves Law and Regency Properties. In addition, the Board was presented with two options for paving that included Wilton Avenue, Graybeal Avenue, Burley Avenue, Spruce Street and either Short Street or East Fifth Avenue. Alderman Barr made the motion to replace the sidewalks in front of Reeves Law Firm and Regency Properties. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor. Next, Alderman Barr made the motion to pave option 2 that includes Wilton Avenue, Graybeal Avenue, Burley Avenue, Spruce Street and East Fifth Street. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Discussion of September Meeting Date – The board agreed to form a committee to meet on Monday September 9th.

Consideration of Planning Board Reappointment – The terms of four planning board members are set to expire including Chairman John Reeves, James Ellis, Zeb Gambill, and Michael Vannoy. Chairman Reeves does not wish to be appointed to another term. Alderman Barr made the motion to appoint Alderwoman Beth Shelton to the Planning Board to replace Alderman Reeves. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor. Alderman Barr then made the motion to approve the reappointment of James Ellis, Zeb Gambill, and Michael Vannoy. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Tax Release – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the tax releases as presented. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Police Report – Chief Jordan gave his report to the Board for the month. A total of 301 calls were dispatched through the communications center including 14 motor vehicle crashes, 5 larcenies, 4 drug cases, 29 minor citations, and other miscellaneous calls. The Board thanked Chief Jordan for his report.

Water & Wastewater Report – Wastewater Superintendent Brandon Patrick gave his report to the Board. Over nine inches of rain were reported for the month. One pump at the Beaver Creek Pump Station failed. The pump has been repaired and is back in service. The retention pumps at the Catawissa well and park well have been replaced. The filter plant produces 70,000 to 80,000 gallons a day. The Board thanked Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave his report to the Board. Monthly totals were reported with 38 locate tickets, 3 water leaks, and 2 sewer issues. The department has ten water taps to complete. The well pumps have been changed out. The flood

cleanup continues for the crew with work remaining on Highland Cove and Mike's Muffler. Eric invited the Board to the fire department picnic on the 24th. The board thanked Eric for his report

Town Managers Report – Town Manager Brantley Price gave his report to the Board. Brantley started his report with project updates. The lowest bid for the Golden Leaf Stormwater project came in at \$400,000 with only \$250,000 in funding the town is looking at how to reduce costs. Golden Leaf has approved a redesign to help lower the cost of the project and the engineer is reviewing. The town has received approval for \$742,000 for additional stormwater projects through the Division of Water Infrastructure that will include work at the First United Methodist Church, First Baptist Church, Library, and Wastewater Treatment Plant. Since two employees have left Rural Water, the town is working on changing engineers for the AIA water and sewer project. The Timber clearing is almost complete on Paddy Mountain and brush burning will be completed in a pit using a pit burner to minimize the smoke. An email was sent to NCDOT with complaint letters from New River Taproom and Mike's Muffler as NC DOT says that the new road only added 5% more water to the area. The business owners feel there should be no flooding issues due to no road construction. Taxes collected to date total 98.2% for 2023 that leaves \$27,000 past due. Tax bills for 2024 have been mailed with \$130,000 collected. Sales tax for the year is down 5% from the prior year. Bids for the renovation of the town hall are due August 16th. The employee picnic will be held August 23rd at 12pm. Our State magazine visited last week to collect ideas for a photo essay of West Jefferson focusing on the arts to be published next summer. Brantley informed the Board of a few bills that were budgeted in the previous year when the work was not complete until late July. A budget amendment will need to be made for these expenses. The annual Blue Ridge Relay will be Friday, September 6th. Brantley finished by reminding the Mayor and Rusty to complete their ethics course. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments – ABC Board Chairman approached the Board requesting an executive session to discuss ongoing issues at the ABC store as he felt the matters could not wait another month before being brought to the board. The Board agreed on a special meeting date of August 19th at 4pm. Bob Nash then spoke to the Board about the consideration to the Board to take over West Evergreen Street in his neighborhood.

Aldermen Comments – none

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.

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk