

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2025 | 6:00 pm

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

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Attorney Jak Reeves, Assistant Town Manager Rebecca Eldreth, 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 September 9, 2024 Agenda – Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the minutes as presented for both meetings. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of 2025 Christmas in July Layout – Christmas in July Festival Chairman Dorothy Ingram presented the 2025 festival layout to the board highlighting a change to move the stage to the opposite end of Main Street in front of Badger Funeral Home. The proposed reason for the change would be to address safety concerns from the rear of the stage closest to Backstreet. Alderman Reeves and Alderman Shoemaker expressed their desire to keep the stage in the current location. Alderman Green suggested leaving the stage where it is and provide a police officer for added safety to the rear of the stage. Alderman Barr pointed out that moving the stage would move the crowd farther away from the vendors, downtown shops and farmers market. Carrie Vargas spoke on behalf of the Farmers Market stating their concerns for the move of the stage and how it would negatively affect the market. Mark Beck, owner of the West Jefferson Hotel also conveyed his opinion on the placement of the stage. Alderman Green made the motion to approve the footprint of the 2025 festival with the stage remaining on the west end of Main Street and adding a police officer to the intersection to assist with traffic control. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of Outdoor Dining Revision – The outdoor dining ordinance allows restaurant establishments to offer outdoor seating starting at 4:00pm on Friday afternoons. The late start time causes an issue as patrons are already parked in the spaces needed. Town Manager Price proposed a revision to allow the outdoor seating to start earlier on Friday to avoid the issue of having to move cars. Alderman Reeves made the motion to allow outdoor dining to start at 8:00pm on Thursday until 9:00pm on Sunday. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Rescue Squad MOU – Ashe County Rescue Squad had their attorney review the MOU that was approved in July and are requesting some changes. Town Attorney Reeves has reviewed the revisions and does not see any issues. With no discussion, Alderman

Shoemaker made the motion to approve the MOU as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Presentation of AARP Age Friendly Certification – AARP Associate State Director Rebecca Chaplin along with AARP volunteer Alan Briggs presented the Town of West Jefferson with the Age Friendly Certification.

Consideration of Burley Avenue Parking – Chris Phipps would like to make the section of the Burley Avenue in front of the old tobacco market a one way street, as the layout of his parking lot makes Burley Avenue the exit. If Burley Avenue becomes a one-way street there will be room to add five to seven parallel parking spaces. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the street to become a one-way street and to add the parallel parking spaces. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0.

Discussion of Town Hall Renovation – Bids for the Town Hall exterior renovations were received from Phipps Construction and Vannoy Construction with Phipps being the lowest bidder. However, there was only \$100,000 budgeted for the project. The completion of the work by Phipps Construction would cost an additional \$62,000. Alderman Shoemaker requested that the honeycombs on the front of the building be removed during the renovation. Alderman Green made the motion to approve the additional funds for the project and the removal of the honeycombs. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0.

Budget Amendment #1 – The budget amendment is for additional funds for Paddy Mountain, bucket truck repair, and street maintenance from the May flooding event. With no discussion, Alderman Green made the motion to approve the budget amendment. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Private Sale by Negotiation – The fire department has received the new equipment truck, and they would like to sell the old truck to make room for the new truck. There is a buyer for the truck. With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the lease as presented. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0.

Consideration of Contract Cancellation with Rural Water for AIA Project – A contract was executed between the Town and NC Rural Water for the AIA grant. Unfortunately, the employees that were familiar with the water system are no longer employed with Rural Water, and Wastewater Superintendent Patrick and Town Manager Price do not feel like the current staff will provide the same quality of work that is expected. Rural Water has agreed to terminate the contract if the board would like to do so. With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to terminate the contract with Rural Water. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0.

Consideration to Award Municipal Engineering Contract for AIA Project – Wastewater Superintendent Patrick and Town Manager Price would like to award the AIA contract to Municipal Engineering. With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the contract as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of ABC Board Member Replacement – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to defer the matter until the October meeting. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 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 5-0 in favor.

Police Report – Chief Jordan gave his report to the Board for the month. A total of 255 calls were dispatched through the communications center including 11 motor vehicle crashes, 8 larcenies, 1 DWI, 7 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. Almost four inches of rain were reported for the month. The engineer has started work on the Greenfield Pumpstation. The filter plant is producing about 50,000 gallons per day. The Board thanked Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – none

Town Managers Report – Town Manager Brantley Price gave his report to the Board. Brantley started his report with project updates. Bid opening for the WWTP and sewer line extensions with only one bidder the bid was not able to be open. Rebid will be held on September 26. All flood damage expenses have been submitted to date. The total amount of damage was increased to \$130,000 with the Town set to receive 75% reimbursement of everything except payroll. Taxes collected to date total 70% of the levy which is about \$60,000 more than this time last year. The bank caught a fraudulent check and stopped payment on the check before it cleared. Finance Officer Holdaway will now be checking the accounts daily for checks clearing to make sure they are legitimate. All the paving is complete apart from Wilton Avenue. The maintenance department has been replacing service lines to each home on Wilton Avenue before repaving. Blue Ridge Energy notified the town of a required rate adjustment will be 0.1% with the average rate increase of 1.5% effective October. Assistant Town Manager Eldreth was accepted into the municipal and county administrative course through UNC School of Government beginning in October and ending in May. She was able to obtain a \$1,000 scholarship to reduce the cost of the program. Generations Ashe fuel assistance roadblock will be October 11 with a rain date of October 18. Ashe Pregnancy Center Walk for Life will be held September 28. Brantley finished by reminding the Mayor and Rusty to complete their ethics course. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments – Bob Nash who lives on West Evergreen Street came before the Board to again request that the Town take over the street as the street is private.

Aldermen Comments – Alderman Green, Alderman Barr, and Alderwoman Shelton all agreed that the meeting was productive. Alderman Reeves thanked Jak for the letter about the replacement of the sidewalk in front of his building. Alderman Shoemaker thanked everyone in attendance.

Closed Session – Alderman Barr made the motion to enter closed session. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0. The time was 7:10pm.

Return to Regular Session – The Board returned to regular session at 7:51pm

Adjournment – With nothing further, Alderman Barr made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Alderman Reeves with a vote of 4-0 in favor as Alderman Shoemaker did not attend closed session.

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk