

**Town of West Jefferson - Board of Alderman
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.**

Board Members Present: Mayor Rusty Barr, Alderman Phil Absher, Alderman Brian Blanco, Alderman Calvin Green, Alderman David Miller, and Alderwoman Beth Shelton.

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Attorney Jak Reeves, Assistant Town Manager Rebecca Eldreth, Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller, Fire Captain Lambert, and WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick.

Several other residents of the community also attended.

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Barr called to order the meeting of the Board of Alderman. After the Mayor offered an invocation, those in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the June 1, 2026 Agenda – With no changes, Alderman Miller made the motion to approve the agenda. Alderman Absher seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Public Hearing

Consideration of Resolution for Installment Financing Contracting Agreement – Mayor Barr stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed financing agreement to purchase the dwelling located at 400 Park Road that abuts the park and cemetery properties. The public hearing opened at 6:02pm. With no comment, Mayor Barr closed the public hearing at 6:03pm.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 192967628650 Beside 50 Short Street – Mayor Barr stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed rezoning of the parcel beside 50 Short Street. The public hearing opened at 6:03pm. With no comment, Mayor Barr closed the public hearing at 6:04pm.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 192967396178 and 192967398269 at 1267 NC Highway 194N – Mayor Barr stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed rezoning of two parcels located at 1267 NC Highway. The public hearing opened at 6:04pm. Neighbors to the property, Tom Hodges and Joanne Reid spoke about the state of the property. The property currently houses a single family dwelling for Danny Lewis Sr. and a used car parts business. The car parts business involves placing several junk cars on the property to be dismantled and later crushed for disposal. There are between 75-100 cars on the property at this time. Property owner, Danny Lewis Jr addressed the board about the state of the property. Danny and his father are in the process of reducing the number of cars on the property and would like to move forward with the rezoning to be able to place their manufactured homes on the property to be close to one another. Alderman Miller asked the board to hold the rezoning for a month to

allow the board time to inspect the property. Alderman Green was in favor of Alderman Miller's request. With nothing further, Mayor Barr closed the public hearing at 6:17pm.

Consideration of Text Amendment to Article V – Mayor Barr stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed text amendment to Article V to allow for a crematorium. The public hearing opened at 6:17pm. David Boone, owner of Boone Family Funeral Home spoke about the need for a crematorium with the number of cremations expected to increase over the next 5-7 years. Mr. Boone addressed the board's concerns about emissions and odors from the crematorium stating there would be none. With no further comment, Mayor Barr closed the public hearing at 6:21pm.

Consideration of Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Town Operating Budget – Mayor Barr stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed budget for fiscal year 2026-2027. The public hearing opened at 6:22pm. With no comment, Mayor Barr closed the public hearing at 6:23pm.

Consideration of Submission for Community Development Block Grant Disaster Relief – Mayor Barr stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on application for the CDBGDR funds for placing a sidewalk from E Buck Mountain Road to Beaver Creek School Road. The public hearing opened at 6:27pm. Judson Blevins with the High Country Council of Government gave an overview of the project. A second public hearing will be held at the July 7 meeting. Mayor Barr closed the public hearing at 6:29pm.

Regular Session

Public Comments – none

Approval of the Meeting Minutes – With no discussion, Alderwoman Shelton made the motion to approve the minutes from the April 6 regular meeting and the April 27 special meeting. Alderman Blanco seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of FY 2025-2026 Audit Contract – Priscilla Norris presented the contract for the 2025-2026 audit with a total cost of \$31,500 up from \$30,300 last year. Alderman Miller made the motion to approve the contract. Alderman Blanco seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Installment Financing Contracting Agreement – Mayor Barr shared the term of the loan of \$400,000 at 4.99% interest for 7 years. With no discussion, Alderman Blanco made the motion to approve the resolution. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Approval for FY 2026-2027 Budget Ordinance – Mayor Barr presented the changes for the final budget before the approval. Changes included an increase of tax revenue from GE that reduced the amount of fund balance to be appropriated. The employee health insurance plan was changed from a \$500 deductible plan to a \$2,000 deductible plan. Gas expenses for all departments have increased. Alderman Miller made the motion to approve the budget ordinance with the changes. Alderman Absher seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Approval for 2026-2027 Schedule of Fees – The schedule of fees was presented with an increase in fees to the request for a text amendment, rezoning, annexation, special use permit, variance, and administrative appeal. Alderman Green made the motion to approve the schedule of fees as presented. Alderman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 192967628650 Beside 50 Short Street – With no discussion, Alderwoman Shelton made the motion to approve the rezoning to highway commercial. Alderman Absher seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 192967396178 and 192967398269 at 1267 NC Highway 194N – Alderman Green urged the board to consider tabling the vote until a later date as discussed in the public hearing. Alderman Green made the motion to table the rezoning until the July meeting. Alderman Blanco seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor. The Lewis family expressed their discontentment for the decision to postpone the vote.

Consideration of Text Amendment to Article V – With no discussion, Alderman Blanco made the motion to approve the text amendment. Alderman Absher seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Statement of Consistency – Alderman Green made the motion to approve the statements of consistency for the rezoning of the parcel beside 50 Short Street and the text amendment as presented. Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Resolution for SmBIZ Infrastructure Grant Program – Mayor Barr explained that there are still funds available through the NC Department of Commerce SmBIZ grant. The funds could be utilized to complete the stormwater project for the Golden Leaf project on Long Street and Backstreet. The cost to complete the section would be \$265,740 with 100% covered by the grant. Alderwoman Shelton made the motion to approve the SmBIZ application. Alderman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Year End Budget Amendment – Alderman Green made the motion to approve the year end budget amendment to ensure no funds are overspent. Alderman Absher seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of TDA Appointment – Josh Williams term limits have expired on the TDA board, so a new member will need to be appointed. Kelly Vannoy has expressed interest in the appointment. Alderman Green made the motion to appoint Kelly Vannoy to her first two year term on the TDA board. Alderman Blanco seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of Absher House Contents – The daughter of Tommy Absher has requested to gain access to the property at 400 Park Road before the demolition to retrieve items of sentimental value. The board was not in favor of giving permission to enter the dwelling in its current state. Alderman Blanco agreed to salvage some items from the house if possible before demolition.

Discussion of July Board Meeting – The board agreed to meet Tuesday, July 7 at 6pm.

Police Report – absent

Water/Wastewater & Maintenance Report – WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick gave his report to the Board. Rain totals for the month were reported at 5 inches. An old meter that was leaking on the spring line was replaced as well as a pilot valve on the pressure reducing valve going to the plant. The current pilot valve will dump water at 254 psi while the old was dumping at 60psi which allows water to be stored all the way to the spring before it is dumped to the creek. After the repair the filter plant is pumping between 90,000 and 100,000 gallons compared to 60,000 before the repair. The board thanked Brandon for his report.

Fire Report – Fire Captain Matt Lambert gave his report to the Board. A total of 65 calls were recorded for the month. The 9S inspection is scheduled for August with preinspection completed. Permits to restore the water point should be acquired soon. The board thanked Captain Lambert for his report.

Maintenance Report – Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave his report to the Board. Monthly totals were reported with several locate tickets, 2 water leak, 2 sewer issues and 9 water taps. Eric thanked the police and Brandon for their assistance in identifying the individuals who damaged the park. The department has been completing general maintenance and picking up brush. The Board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager gave his report to the board. Padco is scheduled to start work on the water points after approval is given from DEQ. Work has begun on the stormwater detention pond at the park with the underground detention system at the maintenance shop to be placed next. Taxes collected to date total 97% of the levy. Sales tax decreased 2% over last march with year to date up 2.5% over prior year. Paddy Mountain trail had 380 visitors for the month. Capital credits from Blue Ridge Energy in the amount of \$12,000 was received. The library will hold its annual foam party on June 25 at 1pm. Ebenezer Children's Home will hold their share a thon on June 12. Derek Goddard with BREC will present the park transformation project at the September meeting. The employee picnic will be Friday, June 12.

Fireworks will be on the hill between town and Walmart at 9:30pm on the 4th. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Aldermen Comments – The Alderman thanked those in attendance. Alderman Blanco and Alderman Absher commended the actions of Officer Graybeal during a high speed chase.

Closed Session – Alderman Absher made the motion to enter into closed session. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Shelton.

Return to Regular Session – The Board returned to regular session. Upon return from closed session Alderman Blanco made the motion to amend the ABC ordinance on term limits. Board members may serve up to three consecutive three year terms. The amendment is to clarify that the board members first term is set to begin at the first appointment after the date of adoption for the ordinance of November 4, 2024. Alderman Green requested to recuse himself from the vote. Alderman Miller seconded the motion of 4-0 in favor. Alderman Miller made the motion to appoint Derek Green to the ABC board. Alderman Blanco seconded the motion. Alderman Green again recused himself from the vote. The motion was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Adjournment – With nothing further, Alderman Miller made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Alderman Absher. A vote of 5-0 in favor.

Rusty Barr, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk