Town of West Jefferson - Board of Alderman
Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.

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

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Assistant Town Manager Rebecca Eldreth, Fire Captain Lambert, and WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick.

Several other residents of the community also attended.

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor ProTem Shelton called to order the meeting of the Board of Alderman. Those in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance after the invocation was given.

Approval of the October 5, 2026 Agenda – Alderman Green made the request to add the consideration for an installation of a guardrail on High Drive. Alderman Absher made the motion to approve the agenda with the addition. Alderman Blanco seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Regular Session

Public Comments – Tony Goodman who serves as Alderman in the Town of Jefferson approached the board about his position against the reduction of US Highway 221 Business from a four lane to a three lane as part of the plan to add a multimodal path to connect the towns. West Jefferson Hotel owner Mark Beck came before the board in favor of his reappointment to the TDA board for an additional two year term. Mark shared noteworthy items of success to support his reappointment.

Approval of the August 3, 2026 Meeting Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Blanco made the motion to approve the minutes from the September 7, 2026 regular meeting. Alderman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Guardrail on High Drive – Alderman Green addressed the board concerning the need for a guardrail to be added to High Drive for safety reasons with the recent completion of the High Peaks Cabins. The section of guardrail was estimated at $9,000. Alderman Green made the motion to add a guardrail to High Drive. Alderman Absher seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of TDA Reappointment – West Jefferson Hotel owner Mark Beck has served on the TDA board for two years and is up for reappointment. Alderman Green and Alderman Absher both spoke in favor of Mark Beck and the positive impact the restoration of the hotel has on the town. Alderman Green made the motion to reappoint Mark Beck to the TDA followed by

a seconded from Alderman Absher. The motion did not pass with a vote of 2-3 with Alderman Blanco, Alderman Miller, and Mayor ProTem Selton against the motion. Alderman Blanco then made a motion to appoint Jennifer Guynn with Carolina Mountain Properties to the TDA with a second from Alderman Miller. The motion passed with a vote of 3-2 in favor of the appointment with Alderman Absher and Alderman Green opposed.

Consideration of Cemetery Plot Purchase – Lena Strope has requested to purchase a cemetery plot in the West Jefferson Cemetery for $800. Lena lived in town limits with her family as a child. Mayor ProTem Shelton made the motion to approve the plot purchase. Alderman Blanco seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Consideration of Resolution to Accept and Adopt the Capital Improvements Plan for AIA – Municipal Engineering has completed our Asset Inventory Assessment for both water and sewer. A resolution must be adopted to submit the grant invoices for reimbursement. Municipal Engineering will be at the November meeting to present the findings of the study. Alderman Miller made the motion to adopt the resolution. Mayor ProTem Shelton seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Tax Releases – With no discussion, Mayor ProTem Shelton made the motion to approve the tax releases as presented. Alderman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Police Report – absent

Water/Wastewater & Maintenance Report – WWTP Superintendent Brandon Patrick gave his report to the Board. Rain totals for the month were reported to be at 4.5 inches. Maintenance has repaired several large water leaks over the past month, with more leaks identified as others are being repaired. The filter plant averaged between 30,000 and 40,000 gallons per day. The board thanked Brandon for his report.

Fire Report – Fire Captain Lambert gave his report to the Board. A total of 74 calls were recorded for the month. The department is preparing for Halloween festivities while answering calls and completing other general maintenance. Alderman Green made the request that the department reduce the time spent in the side by side when traveling around town. The board thanked Captain Lambert for his report.

Maintenance Report – absent

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager gave his report to the board. Padco has completed the work on all water points and has moved to the repairs located beside Mike's Muffler. All that is left to repair are two culverts and a ditch. An additional $5.7 million has been released to help repair, renovate, or replace infrastructure that was damaged by Hurricane Helene. The detention pond at the park is complete while the underground detention system at the maintenance shop is almost complete. The stormwater project on Backstreet and Long Street

should begin in October. Taxes collected to date total 71% of the 2026 tax levy with 2025 at a 98.6% collection rate with only $21,000 outstanding. Sales tax increased by 3.3% over last July. Paddy Mountain trail had 675 visitors for the month. Blue Ridge Conservancy recently acquired 60 acres of forested land and transferred it to NC State Parks for inclusion in the Mount Jefferson State Natural Area. During the past two years, BRC has conserved 128 acres on Mount Jefferson, increasing the size of the State Natural Area to 1,270 acres. Town Manager Price provided the board with a printout of fire calls for the month as previously requested. Blue Ridge Energy made an announcement of a rate increase of 2-3% effective in November due to wholesale electricity costs. The Antique Fair was held last month with no issues, but crowds were thought to be down. Several water leaks have been repaired over the last few weeks due to the hot weather causing them to burst. Stomp and Brew will host an event for Shoes for Kids on October 11 from 5-7pm and have requested the use of two parking spaces in front of the Grape and Grain. An invitation to the Wilkes Community College Impact Symposium was given to the board. The park survey is now available to complete. Trick or Treat will be downtown on Saturday, October 31. Town Manager Price also shared an email from a building owner on Jefferson Avenue requesting a dumpster be relocated from the rear of the building to across the street at the Farmer Market. The board agreed not to relocate the dumpster. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Aldermen Comments – Alderman Green questioned where the proceeds from the Antique Fair are distributed. Alderman Blanco and Alderman Miller agreed they would like to know how the proceeds are handled. Town Manager Price will request a financial statement from the festival.

Closed Session – Alderman Absher made the motion to enter closed session per GS 143.318.11(a)(5). The motion was seconded by Alderman Miller.

Return to Regular Session – The Board returned to regular session.

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.

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Rusty Barr, Mayor Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk