

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

Regular Meeting

March 23, 2021

THE WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN held a regular meeting on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom in the Municipal Building located at 16 South Main Street Waynesville, NC.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gary Caldwell called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm with the following members present:

- Mayor Gary Caldwell
- Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman
- Alderman Anthony Sutton
- Alderman Jon Feichter
- Alderman Chuck Dickson

The following staff members were present:

- Rob Hites, Town Manager
- Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager
- Town Attorney William E Cannon, Jr.
- Eddie Ward, Town Clerk
- Lt. Chris Chandler

The following media representatives were present:

- Becky Johnson, The Mountaineer

1. Welcome/Calendar/Announcements

Mayor Gary Caldwell welcomed everyone and reminded the board about the upcoming Good Friday Holiday on April 2nd, and the Gateway to the Smokies Half Marathon to benefit the Riley Howell Foundation Fund, which will be held on Saturday, April 3rd.

2. Adoption of Minutes

A motion was made by Alderman Julia Freeman, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton, to approve the minutes from the February 23, 2021 regular meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

<i>Mayor Gary Caldwell</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Chuck Dickson</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Anthony Sutton</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Alderman Jon Feichter</i>	<i>Aye</i>		

A motion was made by Alderman Jon Feichter, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton, to approve the minutes of the Board of Aldermen Special Meeting (Retreat) held on March 4, 2021 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

<i>Mayor Gary Caldwell</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Chuck Dickson</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Anthony Sutton</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Alderman Jon Feichter</i>	<i>Aye</i>		

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

3. Mayor Gary Caldwell asked Town Clerk Eddie Ward if there were any comments to be read into the minutes. Ms. Ward read a public comment from Ms. Peggy Hannah (included in these minutes).

C. PRESENTATION

4. Installation of restrooms at OK Park

- Phillip Gibbs
- Walter Bryson
- Bob Clark

Mr. Bob Clark stated that the newly developed OK Park is being used frequently for different events, but not having a restroom close causes some problems. They would like to see the Town build a restroom so that the park visitors would not have to walk to nearby homes to use the restroom. He stated that he has spoken with most of the community, and everyone believes that to get full benefits from the park, a restroom is needed. The group met with the Recreation Advisory Committee and received unanimous support for the request.

The park is very small, and they have had discussions with a neighboring landowner who might be interested in selling a piece of property adjacent to the park. He suggested to the Board that the community raise the money for that property, and then donate it to the Town for the restrooms.

Mr. Phillip Gibbs added that they did not want to create a health problem in the area by not having the restrooms. He wants to keep the park a clean and good place for the community to hold events. The community plans to use the park daily and this is something that is absolutely needed.

There is also a safety issue with the park currently being so close to the road now. Mr. Clark added that there had been discussion concerning closing Calvary Street so the land would be contiguous without a road in the middle to enhance parking. Closing Calvary Street would eliminate that issue.

Mayor Caldwell said he felt that it was a good idea, and asked Town Manager Rob Hites, Assistant Manager Jesse Fowler, and Fire Chief Joey Webb to research the project and present their findings to the Board in the upcoming Budget year.

5. TDA & 1% Zip Code Funding Mid-Year Report for 28785/86

- Lynn Collins, TDA Executive Director

Ms. Lynn Collins, TDA Executive Director, presented the TDA and 1% Zip Code Funding Mid-Year Report for 28785/28786. In the 3% Net Occupancy Report she pointed out that compared to budget the Occupancy Tax is 45% ahead, and 27% ahead compared to previous year. Ms. Collins said that in January of 2021 the Occupancy Tax was 113% above budget and 65% above compared to last year. She projected that the entire budget for the year will be collected in seven months, and she feels that the trend will continue. It took 32 years to reach one million dollars in collections, and two million in collections will be reached in 6 years.

The Town of Waynesville is doing quite well in the 1% Net Occupancy Tax which breaks everything down by zip code. Waynesville has already collected the budget for the year, and almost surpass the collection from last year. There will be money to carry over into the next budget year. Looking at the Occupancy Tax by Category shows a big increase in vacation rentals account for 73% of the occupancy for January. There was a slight increase in the hotel/motel category.

Ms. Collins reviewed the Co-op Marketing from the 1% Occupancy tax and said it had started slow, but as everything started opening the fourth quarter has been considerably higher with Waynesville contributing just

under \$100,000.00 for marketing. Most of that money will be spent for spring and summer advertising. She said most of the Towns have their own page on the TDA website, and Waynesville has been a very popular site to visit. After re-opening, the most inquiries were directed at hiking, and the TDA developed the NC Smokies Hiking Safety Tips. Another program that is extremely popular is the Mountain Heritage Trout Waters which includes several items including a three-day fishing license for \$8.00, tackle box and fishing pole. Ms. Collins said she would like to find a location in Waynesville to pick up and return the fishing gear.

Mayor Caldwell told Ms. Collins that he had heard many positive comments about the Wayfinding Signs. She gave credit to the committee consisting of managers from the Towns, in Haywood County for developing the signs.

D. PUBLIC HEARING

6. Public hearing to discuss Mountain Housing Opportunities request for a grant through the Town of Waynesville's affordable housing policy

- Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager

Attorney William Cannon opened the Public Hearing at 6:41 pm and asked if anyone wished to speak. No one answered.

Assistant Manager Fowler explained to the Board that at the January 12, 2021 meeting, they had approved a grant to Habitat for Humanity through the Town's Affordable Housing Policy in the amount of \$75,412. \$45,412 of this grant was to be paid to Habitat for Humanity through the General Fund Balance, and \$30,000 was to be paid through in-kind services. Habitat for Humanity had awarded a bid for services for infrastructure development prior to the Board's January 12 meeting. Therefore, rather than granting in-kind services in the amount of \$30,000, staff is requesting that Board approve a budget amendment of \$30,000 from the General Fund Balance to be granted to Habitat for Humanity to help offset their costs associated with water and sewer infrastructure development.

Mr. Warren Suggs of Civil Design Concepts thanked the Town Staff for all their efforts in making sure the Mountain Housing Opportunities project, known as Balsam Edge, located at 333 Howell Mill Road, has connectivity to water and sewer. He said that they had gone before the Planning Board last week and received a unanimous approval for the project. Mr. Suggs said that this would also be an advantage for any future customers along that section of Howell Mill Road.

Adeline Wolfe of Mountain Housing Opportunities thanked the Board for hearing this proposal and commented on how Waynesville has developed this incentive program for affordable housing. She said that a lot of the time these properties cannot absorb the costs and she is grateful to Waynesville for having this opportunity.

Alderman Feichter asked if the AMI that is being used to calculate the rent is for Haywood County or is it the AMI for the Town of Waynesville. Ms. Wolfe responded that it is based on all of Haywood County. Alderman Feichter asked if it was possible to use the AMI for Waynesville because it is lower than Haywood County. Ms. Wolfe said that the NCFHA (North Carolina Finance Housing Agency) dictates the AMI by the county. She explained that the goal is to have each bedroom type average out to not be above the 60 AMI range.

Alderman Chuck Dickson asked how it was decided which applicants are approved for residency. Ms. Wolfe explained that they had a Property Management Company that manages all the properties and oversees the

leases. The main requirement is that there are annual income limits that must be met to rent one of the apartments, and background checks will be administered.

Alderman Freeman and Alderman Sutton both agreed that this was a great honor for this project to be coming to Waynesville.

A motion was made by Alderman Jon Feichter, seconded by Alderman Chuck Dickson ,to award a Affordable Housing Grant to Mountain Housing Opportunities, Ordinance No.0-04-21 Amendment No. 11 and Ordinance No. 0-05-21 Amendment No. 12, to offset development fees and costs associated with the infrastructure development of their 333 Howell Mill Development. The motion carried unanimously.

<i>Mayor Gary Caldwell</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Chuck Dickson</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Anthony Sutton</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Alderman Jon Feichter</i>	<i>Aye</i>		

E. NEW BUSINESS

7. Budget Amendment for SRT Equipment
- Lt. Chris Chandler

Lt. Chandler stated that this request is to move money from object lines to an actual line item to purchase Special Response Team Entry Vests. This money will be moved from Watershed Law Enforcement Fund in the amount of \$4,860.00, Police Donations of \$2200.00, and SWAT Funds in the amount of \$8048.00 which is money that the policemen have raised by having hot dog and bar b que sales.

Five of these vests were purchased from the Materials and Supplies line item in the amount of \$13,000.00. By utilizing the requested Budget Amendment and pulling from other designated law enforcement funds, the Town will be able to purchase five additional vests which will properly equip the entire SRT with an in-date entry vest.

A motion was made by Alderman Julia Freeman, seconded by Alderman Chuck Dickson to approve Ordinance 0-03-21, Budget Amendment No 9 in the amount of \$12,000.00 for the purchase of SRT Vests. The motion carried unanimously.

<i>Mayor Gary Caldwell</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Chuck Dickson</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Anthony Sutton</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Alderman Jon Feichter</i>	<i>Aye</i>		

8. Special Event Application for the Drug Epidemic Awareness Walk (Walk Across America)
- Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager

Assistant Manager Fowler said that the Town had received a special event application for the Drug Epidemic Awareness Walk (Walk Across America). This event is organized by the Share Project and will be a short walk through downtown Main Street to raise awareness to the drug epidemic currently faced in America. This event was approved for 2020 but had to be postponed due to COVID-19. Staff has amended their original application and the event is now scheduled for May 16, 2021.

A motion was made by Alderman Jon Feichter, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton, to approve the special event: Drug Epidemic Awareness Walk (Walk Across America) scheduled for May 16, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.

<i>Mayor Gary Caldwell</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Chuck Dickson</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Anthony Sutton</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Alderman Jon Feichter</i>	<i>Aye</i>		

9. Budget amendment to fund Habitat for Humanity’s Affordable Housing Grant

- Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager

Assistant Town Manager Jesse Fowler explained that at the January 12, 2021 meeting, the Board of Aldermen approved a grant to Habitat for Humanity through the Town’s Affordable Housing Policy in the amount of \$75,412. He said that \$45,412 of this grant was to be paid to Habitat for Humanity through the General Fund Balance, and \$30,000 was to be paid through in-kind services. Habitat for Humanity had awarded a bid for services for infrastructure development prior to the Board’s January 12 meeting. Therefore, rather than granting in-kind services in the amount of \$30,000, Assistant Manager Fowler said staff is requesting that Board approve a budget amendment of \$30,000 from the General Fund Balance to be granted to Habitat for Humanity to help offset their costs associated with water and sewer infrastructure development.

A motion was made by Alderman Julia Freeman, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton, to approve Ordinance No. 0-06-21, Budget Amendment No. 10 for \$30,000 to offset the cost infrastructure development at Habitat for Humanity’s Sylvan Street development. The motion carried unanimously.

<i>Mayor Gary Caldwell</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Chuck Dickson</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Anthony Sutton</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Alderman Jon Feichter</i>	<i>Aye</i>		

10. Readdressing Board of Aldermen meetings via Zoom

- Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager

At the March 4, 2021 Board of Aldermen Retreat, the Board chose to extend the policy of hosting their regular scheduled meetings via zoom through the Month of March. Assistant Manager Fowler asked the Board if they wished to continue hosting the regular scheduled Board of Aldermen meetings via Zoom or to host them in person in the Town Board room located at 9 south Main Street.

A motion was made by Alderman Chuck Dickson, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton, to host regular scheduled Board of Aldermen Meetings in the Town Board room located at 9 South Main Street beginning with the April 13th meeting, and to remain in compliance with the Mask Mandate and Social Distancing orders from the Governor. The motion passed unanimously.

<i>Mayor Gary Caldwell</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Chuck Dickson</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Anthony Sutton</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Alderman Jon Feichter</i>	<i>Aye</i>		

11. Resolution Requesting NDOT to Pave Pigeon Street from Main Street to South Hill Street and Main Street from Legion Drive to Walnut Street

- Rob Hites, Town Manager

At the retreat in March, the Board asked Manager Rob Hites to draft a resolution requesting NCDOT to place Pigeon Street from Main Street to South Hill Street and Main Street from Legion Drive to Walnut Street back on the Transportation Improvement Program to be paved as soon as possible. He said that letters would be drafted and sent to local NCDOT representatives, NCDOT Chief Engineer for North Carolina, and state elected delegation. The letters will be followed up with phone calls to each person.

A motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Jon Feichter, to approve a resolution requesting NDOT to pave Pigeon Street from Main Street to South Hill Street and Main Street from Legion Drive to Walnut Street. The motion carried unanimously.

<i>Mayor Gary Caldwell</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Chuck Dickson</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman</i>	<i>Aye</i>	<i>Alderman Anthony Sutton</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Alderman Jon Feichter</i>	<i>Aye</i>		

F. COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF

12. Manager's Report

- Town Manager Rob Hites

Manager Hites had nothing to report.

13. Town Attorney Report

- Town Attorney William Cannon

Town Attorney William Cannon had nothing to report.

G. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND BOARD

Assistant Manager Fowler stated that he had received another Special Event Application, and gave details of the event. The event is the Smokies Black Bear Fest and is scheduled for Saturday June 19th and will be held from 10:00 am – 5:00 pm. Downtown Waynesville Association is sponsoring the event and will be following the Governor's guidelines. Assistant Manager Fowler said he is not asking for approval at this time, but the applicant needs to know if the event can be held so vendors can be notified. The consensus of the Board was that they were comfortable with the event being held on that date as far as the COVID mandate orders. Assistant Town Manager Fowler said that he would be bringing the information for approval to the next Board meeting.

Alderman Feichter stated that he had participated in a litter clean-up by the railroad tracks near Walmart. The Board saw before and after pictures of the area, and they agreed that it was impressive. He said that he would like to designate Saturday April 24, 2021 as "Waynesville Litter Pickup Day" and encourage the citizens of Waynesville to volunteer at least one hours of their time to preserve the Natural Beauty of the Town of Waynesville. Also, he said there was a litter pick up scheduled for March 24 at 5:00 pm beginning at the old Jim's Drive In. He encouraged everyone that could to participate and volunteer one hour of their time.

Mayor Caldwell asked Town Manager Hites to arrange for trash bags, and a garbage truck to be in place for the volunteers on clean-up day.

A motion was made by Alderman Jon Feichter, seconded by Alderman Julia Freeman, to adopt Resolution

R-03-21 Saturday April 24, 2021 as "Waynesville Litter Pickup Day". The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Chuck Dickson commented on the draft consent agenda that was in the packet. He said he would like to see it included in the agenda for the next meeting. Alderman Sutton said he felt that a consent agenda would save everyone time on items that can be approved all at one time.

Alderman Dickson asked if Manager Hites could arrange for the Bond Attorney, Bob Jessup with Sandford Holshouser, to speak to the Board at one of the April meetings. Manager Hites said he would arrange a meeting.

H. CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Chuck Dickson, to enter closed session at 7:27pm for hearing to discuss the purchase and improvement of property for the location of industry NC GS §158.7.1(b). The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Gary Caldwell	Aye	Alderman Chuck Dickson	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman	Aye	Alderman Anthony Sutton	Aye
Alderman Jon Feichter	Aye		

A motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Jon Feichter, to return to open session at 8:34 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Gary Caldwell	Aye	Alderman Chuck Dickson	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman	Aye	Alderman Anthony Sutton	Aye
Alderman Jon Feichter	Aye		

I. ADJOURN

With no further business, a motion was made by Alderman Julia Freeman, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton, to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 pm. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mayor Gary Caldwell	Aye	Alderman Chuck Dickson	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Julia Freeman	Aye	Alderman Anthony Sutton	Aye
Alderman Jon Feichter	Aye		

ATTEST:

Gary Caldwell, Mayor

Robert W. Hites, Town Manager

Eddie Ward, Town Clerk