

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

Regular Meeting

May 25, 2021

THE WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN held a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room located at 9 South Main Street Waynesville, NC.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gary Caldwell called the meeting to order at 6:05 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
Eddie Ward, Town Clerk
Town Attorney William E Cannon, Jr.
Jeff Stines, Public Services Director
Autumn Lyvers, Finance Director

The following media representatives were present:

Becky Johnson, The Mountaineer
Chad Nesbitt, Skyline News

1. Welcome/Calendar/Announcements

Mayor Gary Caldwell welcomed everyone and referred the board to the calendar and mentioned the Rockin' Block Party at 7:00 pm on Saturday May 29, and the Oasis Shriners Spring Ceremonial Parade at 2:00 pm on Saturday June 5th. All Town offices will be closed on Monday May 31st for Memorial Day.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

Town Attorney William E Cannon, Jr. asked if anyone had public comments and opened the Public Comment period at 6:07 pm.

Erich Overhultz
26 Davis Lane
Waynesville, NC 28786

Mr. Overhultz talked about the upcoming Planning Board meeting and an item that is on the agenda. He encouraged the Board to think about the effect of low barrier shelters being allowed in residential areas would have on the citizens of Waynesville. He said the citizens of Waynesville did not ask for this proposed change and encouraged all citizens to take the time to study the Town's Land Use Plan, and become familiar with the zoning in each district, and what is allowed in those districts.

**Lisa Overhultz
26 Davis Lane
Waynesville, NC 28786**

Ms. Overhultz expressed her concerns about freedom of speech and being allowed to speak at Board meetings.

**Peggy Hannah
268 Hemlock Street
Waynesville, NC 28786**

Ms. Hannah spoke about people who are in jail and the charges against them. She asked the Board for an actual number of people who are homeless in Waynesville. She asked how could the Board state that there are more shelters needed for the homeless without knowing that number. She stated that the programs in place should be utilized rather than implementing more. She asked the Board to have a meeting with citizens and be open with them.

**Sherry Morgan
PO Box 1496
Waynesville, NC 28786**

Ms. Morgan voiced concerns about the Homelessness Task Force, and low barrier shelters. She said she felt that this process of rezoning for the low barrier shelters has not been thought out thoroughly and has come about too fast. Ms. Morgan said she had polled 150 residents in Waynesville, and not one person was in favor of the low barrier shelters. She asked to Board to carefully consider the consequences of allowing these shelters in residential areas.

**Joey Reece
108 Maple Street
Waynesville, NC 28786**

Mr. Reece addressed activities of the Homelessness Task Force and freedom of speech in Board meetings.

Attorney Cannon closed the Public Hearing at 6:25 pm.

C. CONSENT AGENDA: *All items below are routine by the Board of Aldermen and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a Board member so requests. In which event, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered with other items listed in the Regular Agenda.*

- i. Adoption of minutes of the May 11th, 2021 regular meeting
- ii. Approval of Special Event Permits – Sarge’s Dog Walk & First Methodist Vacation Bible School
- iii. Budget Amendment for purchase of Police vehicles

A motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Chuck Dickson, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

D. PRESENTATION

2. Helping Hands of Haywood presentation and Request for Allocation of ARP Funding
 - Korri McLaughlin, HHOH Board Member

Ms. McLaughlin gave a presentation to the Board asking for emergency hotel shelter funds from the Waynesville allocated American Rescue Plan funding. This funding is needed to temporarily house clients that are experiencing homeless, especially in the most complicated situations requiring a longer stay such as a disability or a serious medical condition.

Helping Hands is staffed by all volunteers and serve 40 – 50 Waynesville residents a month. Ms. McLaughlin gave statistics about the projected shelter nights for 2021 which is about 660 with a maximum of 780 ranging from \$46,200.00 to \$54,600 in actual costs. This could be individuals, couples, or families with children ranging from 1 up to 6 people in a private, non-communal room at the average price of \$70.00 per night. She asked that the Town allocate between \$25,000.00 and \$70,000.00 of the ARP funding to support Helping Hands of Haywood.

E. NEW BUSINESS

3. North Carolina Rural Water Association (NCRWA) Board of Directors
 - Jeff Stines, Director of Public Services

Jeff Stines, Public Services Director, told the Board that the North Carolina Rural Water Association Board of Directors has asked him to sit as a member. The NCRWA is a non-profit organization under the authority of the North Carolina Secretary of State and was organized to serve as the “voice of the Water and Wastewater industry. Mr. Stines said that the NCRWA offers numerous training opportunities for employees as well as several free services to assist municipalities in the industry.

A motion was made by Alderman Julia Freeman, seconded by Alderman John Feichter, to approve the support of Jeff Stines to sit on the Board of Directors for NCRWA. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Submission of 2021-22 Budget Proposal
 - Rob Hites, Town Manager

Town Manager Rob Hites presented the Board with the 2021-202 Budget Proposal. He said that this budget is one of the most unusual financial environments that budget teams statewide have encountered. For the Town of Waynesville, it was predicted that the local economy would tank. Instead, the Covid-19 pandemic created a boom in travel to the mountains and a surge in home renovation and new construction because of low interest rates.

Manager Hites said the Town has been holding off on equipment purchases for several years. This budget attempts to strike a balance between the need to replace outdated equipment with the need to keep the ad valorem tax as low as possible. The recommended tax rate for the upcoming fiscal year is .45¢ per \$100.00.

He gave a summary of the Budget including the impact of the American Recovery Plan, implementation of new pay plan, career track, and local government system. The proposal continues the use of the \$15.00 per vehicle fee paid when citizens renew their tags at DMV. This fee is roughly equal to one cent on the ad valorem tax rate. He talked about the Downtown Municipal Service District, personnel and insurance, rates, and fees, including a 10 % increase in sewer rates beginning in August billing period, and no other increase in the water or electric utilities. This increase is due to the costs incurred by the upcoming \$19,343,000 State Revolving Loan recently awarded to the Town. He said the total budget is \$35, 241,007.00.

Manager Hites asked the Board to set a date for the budget review workshop.

Autumn Lyvers, Finance Director, provided a power point to the Board and gave specifics in each category in the budget.

Assistant Town Manager Jesse Fowler thanked Ms. Lyvers for making the budget process so easy. He said that the Board typically appropriates one cent on the tax rate for Special Appropriations to non-profit organizations. This year there were 23 applicants for these appropriations. The amount requested this year is \$161,169.00, and the amount allocated is \$131,000.00. He explained the process of scoring for each applicant and asked the Board to decide how much they would like to appropriate and to which organization.

Alderman Chuck Dickson reminded the Board that the American Rescue Plan also allows grants to non-profits that have been negatively affected by Covid-19, and that would be a way to award money to non-profits.

A motion was made by Alderman Chuck Dickson, seconded by Alderman Jon Feichter, to set Thursday June 3, 2021 at 10:00 am for the budget workshop. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Alderman Jon Feichter, seconded by Alderman Julia Freeman, to call for a Public Hearing to be held on Tuesday June 8, 2021 at 6:00 pm or as closely thereafter as possible in the Town Hall Board Room located at 9 South Main Street for the proposed 2021-2022 Annual Budget. The motion carried unanimously.

F. COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF

Manager's Report

- Town Manager, Rob Hites

Call for Public Hearing

Manager Hites asked for the Board to call for a Public Hearing to be held on Tuesday June 8th, 2021 to discuss economic development incentives.

A motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Julia Freeman, to hold a public hearing on Tuesday, June 8th, 2021 beginning at 6:00 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible in the Town Hall Board Room located at 9 South Main Street, Waynesville to discuss economic development incentives.

Manager Hites told the Board that the concrete blocks are here for the wall to be built in Frog Level. Because of the weight of the blocks, only 6 can be delivered at one time. The consensus of the Board was for the blocks to be sprayed natural in color once they are in place.

Manager Hites said that effective June 4, 2021, Town Engineer Preston Gregg is resigning to start his own engineering business.

8. Town Attorney Report
- William Cannon, Town Attorney

Town Attorney Bill Cannon reported that the Hazel Street property sold for \$50,000.00.

Mr. Cannon referred the Board to the memo he had sent them concerning Public Comment period and said that he felt it was at the point where a Police Officer will need to be at the Board meetings. He also told the Board there could not be a variance in the Cemetery Ordinance.

G. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND BOARD

Alderman Jon Feichter asked if there was an update on the electric issue of high bills. Assistant Manager Fowler said electric bills would be audited by Withers-Ravenell to determine what happened. There have been some connectivity issues with servers to be able to work remotely and look at the data. As of May 26th, the process should be moving along.

H. CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Alderman Jon Feichter, seconded by Alderman Julia Freeman to enter Closed Session at 7:26 pm in Accordance with 143-318.11 (3) (4) to consult with the Town Attorney to preserve attorney/client privilege. The motion carried unanimously.

H. ADJOURN

With no further business, a motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Julia Freeman, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

Gary Caldwell, Mayor

Robert W. Hites, Town Manager

Eddie Ward, Town Clerk