

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN**  
**Special Meeting – Winter Board Retreat**  
**March 4, 2021**

**THE WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN** held its Winter Board Retreat on Thursday March 4, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. in the Training Room of Public Services, 129 Legion Drive, Waynesville, NC.

**A. CALL TO ORDER SPECIAL MEETING**

Mayor Gary Caldwell called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with the following members present:

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

The following staff members were present:

Rob Hites, Town Manager  
Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager  
Eddie Ward, Town Clerk  
Autumn Lyvers, Finance Director  
Dean Trader, Assistant Finance Director  
Joey Webb, Fire Chief  
Chris Mehaffey, Assistant Fire Chief  
Jeff Stines, Public Services Director  
Rhett Langston, Parks and Recreation Director  
Preston Gregg, Town Engineer  
Elizabeth Teague, Development Services Director  
David Adams, Police Chief -arrived 12:00 pm

The following media representatives were present:

Becky Johnson, The Mountaineer  
Cory Valliancort, Smoky Mountain News - via Zoom

**1. Call to Order**

**Mayor Caldwell**

- a. Introductory Comments

Mayor Gary Caldwell called the meeting to order at 8:30 am and welcomed everyone. He said the word for the day is communicate because each person has ideas for the future of the Town, and with the pandemic, we have not gotten to communicate with each other in a while. He hopes that since we are together in person today that we be able to have good conversations and communicate for the betterment of the Town.

**2. Additions or Corrections to the Agenda**

**Mayor and Board**

Mayor Caldwell asked if anyone had any additions or corrections to the agenda. There were none.

### **3. Town Meeting Procedures & AV Improvements**

**Alderman Sutton**

#### **a. Consent Agenda**

- Manager Rob Hites

Town Manager Rob Hites explained to the Board how a consent agenda works and read the NC General Statute 160A-75 pertaining to a Consent Agenda. He said this is a “reading system”, and Waynesville has a modified reading system. Routine items are placed on the consent agenda such as one-year leases, special events, minutes, contracts, call for a Public Hearing and other housekeeping items. This will free up time in the Board meetings for discussion of other items and is almost universal in other cities and towns. Four out of five Board members need to vote in the affirmative to place an item to be on the Consent Agenda. Manager Hites told the Board that any item can be pulled from the Consent Agenda and be placed on the regular agenda.

Alderman Anthony Sutton said he liked the idea because it streamlines the agenda and allows the public more time for discussion of other matters.

The consensus of the Board was to develop a Consent Agenda for the March 23, 2021 meeting to let everyone see how it will work.

#### **b. Audio System Replacement and Video Capabilities**

- Asst. Manager Jesse Fowler

Assistant Town Manager Jesse Fowler told the Board that the audio/visual equipment in the Town’s Board room is obsolete and requires replacement. He has been researching new AV capabilities that would allow for Board meetings to be broadcast to televisions in the mezzanine as well as the downstairs lobby. This would allow the Board of Aldermen to better accommodate large crowds that must overflow outside of the Board room.

These new capabilities would require the installation of 4 cameras, 2 large screen televisions, and 2 audio input/output devices. Assistant Manager Fowler recommends purchasing a new television for the Board room to improve presentation capabilities and a new computer to operate this new suite of audio and visual equipment. He also recommends that this new computer be outfitted with the capability to capture and edit audio and video content.

Estimates for these installments will cost between \$25,000 and \$30,000. However, he said we are still in the process of researching the best, and most affordable options and will report back to the Board with more accurate numbers.

Assistant Manager Fowler indicated that staff is seeking the Board’s input whether the Town should include budgetary funds in this year’s budget for these audio and visual upgrades in the Board room.

Alderman Jon Feichter asked that if down the road the Town decided to broadcast the meetings, could that feature be added. Assistant Manager Fowler stated that the meeting could be live streamed on YouTube. Alderman Feichter also asked if the existing microphones and monitors could be used. Assistant Manager Fowler said that the microphones could be used if they work with the new equipment, but the monitors would be replaced, possibly with touch screen capabilities.

Alderman Chuck Dickson asked about the maintenance on the new equipment. Assistant Manager Fowler said that he could perform basic maintenance, and Electronic Office will be involved with any technical issues.

***A motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Jon Feichter to include budgetary funds in this year's budget for these audio and visual upgrades in the Town Hall Board Room. The motion carried unanimously.***

- c. **Board of Aldermen Meeting Time**
  - Asst. Manager Jesse Fowler

In December 2020, the Board of Aldermen voted to change their regular meeting time from 6:30 pm to 6:00 pm. This action was set to last until March 14, 2021 when day light savings time is set to begin. Assistant Manager Fowler stated that staff is requesting clarification from the Board concerning whether they would like to keep the 6:00 pm meeting time, or if the Board would like to revert to a 6:30 pm meeting time again.

***A motion was made by Alderman Chuck Dickson, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton, to set the time for regular Board of Aldermen meetings to 6:00 pm on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. The motion carried unanimously.***

#### **4. Commercial District Improvements**

**Mayor Caldwell**

Mayor Caldwell stated that he felt that Main Street needed some improvements. He said he would like to see a Gazebo added to the "Old Time Music Men" art piece on Main Street. He said he felt that adding a gazebo would be another attraction on Main Street and could possibly be used as a place for families to rest and maybe have bands play there occasionally.

- a. **Gazebo Adjacent to "Old Time Music" on Miller Street**
  - Asst. Manager Jesse Fowler

Assistant Manager Fowler stated that per the Mayor's request, staff developed preliminary designs to upfit a portion of Miller Street adjacent to the "Old Time Music Park" to accommodate a Gazebo for public use. This Gazebo would be used to allow the public refuge from the weather while they enjoy their time exploring Downtown Main Street and would provide a band stand for music groups to perform throughout the year.

This project would require the Town to build out an area of Miller Street adjacent to the "Old Time Music Park" approximately 25' down the street at a 26" fall. The dimensions of this build out are approximately 26' 11" in width, 25' 6" in length, and 26" in height. This would require the area to be filled with approximately 744 cubic feet of fill. The end of the build out would require a retaining wall approximately 3' 7" height with 18" inches of the wall being below grade. There would be a concrete path leading to the entrance of the gazebo. The Town would be able to match the landscaping of the "Old Time Music Park", but staff would recommend a concrete path to the gazebo due to the inability to match the stone work, as well as the flexibility of concrete to provide a winding path.

Assistant Manager Fowler stated that two handicapped parking spaces would have to be removed to place the Gazebo in that area. He said those two spaces were not ADA compliant.

This proposed project is in the South Main Street fire district and staff will have to determine how the building code within fire districts will affect construction. Manager Hites explained that the Gazebo would have to be constructed of flame-retardant material, and it might take up to three months to get that material and suggested that this item be placed in next year's budget.

The estimated cost of this project would be approximately \$3,550 for the site work and \$10,000 for the gazebo itself, totaling \$13,550. Assistant Manager Fowler suggested applying for the Medford Grant to subsidize some of the cost of the construction of the Gazebo and landscaping on Miller Street.

Mayor Caldwell made another suggestion for the placement of a water feature in the park near the Historic Courthouse. Assistant Manager Fowler referred to the Board packet which contains the Central Business District Concepts as a long-term street scaping plan designed by Mr. Thomas Woltz . One of Mr. Woltz's concepts was to have the water feature and to develop this park as a place where guests and citizens could take an outdoor picnic area. Restaurants would be able to use the park for catering events. Another concept is to possibly build a kiddie park using natural materials.

Development Services Director Elizabeth Teague offered a suggestion to flip the elements of the park by placing the gazebo in the park opposite the courthouse. She said she felt the Miller street area did not give a lot of visibility, and if the gazebo is placed across from the Courthouse, people would be able to sit on the Courthouse lawn and hear if a musician is playing in the gazebo. She said the kiddie park would be great at the "Old Time Music Men" because children are automatically drawn to them.

- b. Frog Level Lighting: Commerce, Depot, and Dellwood
  - Manager Rob Hites

Manager Hites explained to the Board that Mr. Jim Pierce, owner of Panacea, has been awarded a grant to replace the five streetlights on Commerce Street. Although Mr. Pierce likes the lighting design that the Town chose for the parking lot, staff has a problem using the parking lot fixtures because the sidewalk is too narrow to place the post so that the fixture cannot be hit by delivery trucks. He said that if we use them, we will have to take out five parking spaces to build "bulb-outs" to accommodate the lights.

After conferring with Alderman Feichter, a solution to the dilemma was to purchase a double headed fixture and the lights will lay parallel with Commerce Street. The double headed fixtures are about \$2,000 more expensive than the single heads but will not require removal of parking places or a saw cut in the parking space to rewire the circuit. The additional cost of the fixtures plus installation would cost the Town approximately \$15,000.

Manager Hites said the experience in Hazelwood has been that the other owners/tenants will request the light fixtures along Depot and Dellwood Street be replaced as well. Without help from a grant each fixture will cost approximately \$5500 or \$66,000 for twelve fixtures. In house labor would amount to \$1,000.00 per fixture or \$12,000.

The recommendation of the staff is that the Town aide in the purchase of the Commerce Street lights and install them in this budget year (2020-21), and budget for the purchase and installation of the Depot and Dellwood Street lights in the upcoming budget (\$78,000).

***A motion was made by Alderman Sutton, seconded by Alderman Julia Freeman, to include \$15,000.00 in the current year budget to install lights on Commerce Street. The motion carried unanimously.***

- c. Frog Level Parking Lot Wall and Fence
  - Manager Rob Hites

Alderman Feichter has been working with the staff for over a year on an acceptable design for a fence/wall to replace the damaged black metal fence the Town originally installed in the Frog Level parking lot. The staff originally suggested a wall made of horizontal rails that would not be damaged by the vehicles. Owners and tenants in Frog Level did not like the look, so the challenge was to find a fence/wall that could withstand the constant abuse by folks and be decorative. Town Engineer Preston Gregg suggested that the Town purchase a three-foot wall made of preformed native stone capped by a two-foot black metal vertical rail fence similar in design to the fence that was torn out. The fence would be capable of withstanding abuse, high enough to discourage people climbing over it, and decorative. Alderman Feichter and the staff have shown the concept to some of the tenants/owners and they approved the design. We estimate the cost of the wall/fence to be approximately \$32,000. The fence/wall will be funded through the General Fund.

***A motion was made by Alderman Jon Feichter, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton to fund this project from the General Fund Balance in the current budget year. The motion passed unanimously.***

Mayor Caldwell called for a fifteen-minute break at 9:45 am.  
The meeting resumed at 10:00 am.

## 5. Rollout Recycling and Garbage Containers

Alderman Dickson

- a. Recycling Containers and Pickup
  - Manager Rob Hites

Alderman Chuck Dickson said that he felt that the Town was entering into a phase of prosperity and the Town needed to do everything they could for the benefit of the Town. He said that 25%, or 2,500 people in Waynesville were below the poverty line. He asked the Board to keep that in mind in the decisions that they were making, and he wanted it to be the best decisions for everyone involved. He added that he is in favor of the upgrade of the recycling and garbage containers to be in line with the other Towns in Haywood County.

Manager Hites stated that the Board had approved a grant request to purchase 4,000 65-gallon rollout recycling cans during their February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 meeting. Should the Town be awarded the grant, Haywood County will purchase the cans on the Town's behalf. The budget for the purchase minus the grant is \$141,370. Adding \$20,000.00 to assemble the cans will bring the total outlay to \$161,370. The County will bid the cans and the Town will reimburse the County. Included in the grant, the Town has asked that the Town Seal be imbedded into the sides of the cans, along with an individual tracking number. Manager Hites said the Town will have to work with the vendor in deciding how to disperse the cans.

If the County is successful in receiving the grant in the spring the Town will use General Fund Balance to cover the cost. If the award and purchase will take place in the new year the staff will include it in the budget and an appropriation from the General Fund Balance will cover the cost of the program.

- b. Garbage Containers and Pickup
  - Manager Rob Hites

The Town will retrofit its two new packers with hydraulic lifts to handle the recycling and garbage cans for about \$10,000.00. The lifts will streamline our operation and drastically lower the chance for injuries from dumping heavily loaded cans. Once we have the recycling cans in place it makes sense that the Town would go ahead and purchase green 65-gallon rollout garbage cans. Purchasing and having the cans assembled will cost approximately \$211,370. Staff's recommendation is that the garbage cans be budgeted in 2021-22 and delivered approximately one year after the recycling cans.

In cases where a resident cannot roll out the cans to be emptied, their names would be added to a list so that Town employees know in advance that the person needs help. It will be on the honor system and hopefully abided by.

The long-range plan includes having these cans to small businesses and residents first, and when the Town needs to purchase another hauler, getting out of the garbage business altogether. Now the Town is competing with the private sector's prices for collecting garbage, and it is much lower than the Town's. Alderman Feichter asked about the time frame for possibly discontinuing garbage collection in the Town. Public Services Director Jeff Stines said that he would be getting the costs together and would be presenting information at the March 23, 2021 Board meeting.

Manager Hites told the Board that there is an educational package that is attached to every can that is rolled out, and information on the Town's website as well.

Alderman Feichter asked how purchasing both recycling and garbage cans now would affect the budget. Manager Hites said the money would have to come from the General Fund, and that is why he feels like there should be a lag in purchasing both now.

With the introduction of rollout service, the Town will need to amend its garbage ordinance to match the new service.

***A motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Jon Feichter to include \$161,370.00 for recycling cans in this year's budget. The motion carried unanimously.***

**6. Streets**

**Mayor Caldwell**

**a. Street Condition Report**

**Alderman Dickson**

- Town Engineer Preston Gregg

Preston Gregg, Town Engineer said that Haywood County had approximately 15 – 20 roads on a list to be repaved. Main Street and Pigeon Street were included on this list and was to be paved sometime between now and next spring by NCDOT. Mr. Gregg said he had received information that both streets had been deleted from the list. There has been a lot of turnover in the NCDOT's departments and he encouraged the Board to be in contact with the new key people at NCDOT to at least get those two streets back on the list to be paved.

Manager Hites suggested compiling a Resolution and letter to be sent to NCDOT stating the impact this has on the Town and asking to be placed back on the paving list. He said he would have a Resolution by the March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 meeting.

**b. Additional Money for Street Repair**

**Alderman Dickson**

- Manager Rob Hites

Manager Hites said a lot of research has been done to try to split out the Powell Bill money from the annual cost of street repairs, and the question was asked about 3 years ago about additional funding for street repair. At that time, he said the Town was spending over a penny on the tax rate in General Fund money in addition to Powell Bill money. Manager Hites said he was comfortable in saying that was the current situation as well. He explained that Powell Bill money is used for street maintenance, which includes sidewalks, storm sewers, leaf removal, and snow removal. He said that the Town could not use Powell Bill money on state roads unless an agreement was signed with the state.

Alderman Feichter asked about the Pavement Condition Survey that was due to be done in July 2020. Mr. Gregg explained how the Pavement Condition Survey works. He said that every street in Town is evaluated and scored. From that list the Town will prioritize roads and will be possibly in line with the Survey. The scores range from 80-90, which is good, 70 is fair, and 50-60 is poor condition. Mr. Gregg said the rating for Waynesville 82.7 overall with the state average being 80. He referred the Board to the Survey in the agenda packet, and the ratings that have been given to streets in Waynesville and explained how the streets are rated.

There was much discussion about Brown Avenue not qualifying for the speed study. Manager Hites explained that four of the five streets that that have requested the study have met the criteria. J. M. Teague is currently putting together a list of the property owners and those who will be affected by the study, and petitions will be sent out. At that point the Town will need 65% of property owners signatures and then it will come before the Board to decide how to proceed.

## **7. Way Finding: Phase 2**

**Alderman Feichter**

- Manager Rob Hites

Manager Hites reported that the TDA has completed Phase I of the County/Towns Wayfinding program. The initial phase was completely funded by the TDA and involved the initial design of a County wide wayfinding system that contains a custom feature for each Town. Waynesville's custom feature is the "Plott Hound". NCDOT has whittled down the list of locations considerably. In the late fall they gave the TDA permission to install the signs that were permitted.

Phase II takes the Wayfinding signs into the central business areas of the Towns. In Waynesville's case that involves the Downtown, Frog Level and Hazelwood. Waynesville would use the same template as you will see as the sign on Russ Avenue in front of Publics, and reduce the size of the sign when the speed limit on streets drops from 35 to 20 mph. Mr. Buzz Bizzell is the president and creative director of Bizzell Design, Inc, a multi-disciplinary design firm in the Charlotte, NC area. They focus on Wayfinding signage, murals, and civic branding. He will meet with Town stakeholders, and this meeting can be held remotely if desired, to determine the information that is included on the signs and the locations. Both Mr. Bizzell and the Town staff will work with DOT on sign placement along state roads. Manager Hites said there is a lot more freedom with sign location on Town Streets.

Alderman Feichter asked about the number of signs that have been placed in Waynesville and could there be money included in the budget to cover more signs at entry ways into Waynesville. Manager Hites said that originally there were signs planned for exit 100 and exit 98. The NCDOT engineer cut a third of the signs out because he felt there was no need and that existing signs sufficed. The state has regulations that state that signs cannot be placed in or near their right of ways, but the Town can place the signs on their own streets.

One of the signs that DWA and the Town has been hoping to have funded is "Public Parking" signs directing folks to the County/Town's parking deck.

In speaking with Lynn Collins, Manager Hites suggested that the Town submit a grant for a 50/50 partnership on the cost of Phase II up to a certain amount. The Town would handle the work with Mr. Bizzell and work with stakeholders to design the signs. The final plans would be brought before the Town Board for final approval. The signs should cost about \$3,200 per sign.

If 20 signs and four parking lot signs are installed the total cost will be approximately \$76,800 which would be split 50/50 with the TDA. The total Town appropriation would be \$38,400.00.

The information on the signs must be general in nature. Specific business names may not be used. The State will permit governmental and some non-profit locations to appear on Wayfinding Signs.

The consensus of the Board was to include the cost of Phase II in the next budget.

**8. Call for Public Hearing: Affordable Housing Policy, MHO Development**

- Assistant Manager Jesse Fowler

Assistant Manager Fowler Mountain Housing Opportunities (MHO) is a private, Non-profit community development corporation that has been developing affordable housing in Western North Carolina for 32 years. MHO is applying for the Town's Affordable Housing Policy in the amount of \$167,153.60 in order to have access to incentive grants from the Town in order to finance their gap in sewer and water line extension from Abel Lane to the proposed development site located at 333 Howell Mill Road.

***A motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Chuck Dickson to hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 beginning at 6:00 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible in order to review Mountain Housing Opportunity's application to receive incentives for the Town's Affordable Housing Policy. The motion carried unanimously.***

**9. Cancellation of the March 9, 2021 Board of Aldermen meeting**

- Assistant Manager Jesse Fowler

Assistant Manager Fowler told the Board that because of the items being taken care of in today's meeting, there will no items to be discuss in the March 9, 2020 regular meeting, asked if they wished to cancel that meeting.

***A motion was made by Alderman Jon Feichter, seconded by Alderman Julia Freeman to cancel the March 9, 2021 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.***

Mayor Caldwell called for a lunch break at 12:00 pm for thirty minutes.  
The meeting resumed at 12:30 pm.

**10. Affordable Housing**

a. Land for Affordable Housing

- Manager Rob Hites

**Alderman Dickson**

**Alderman Feichter**



Alderman Feichter presented a power point to the Board consisting of statistics that help illustrate the scope of the affordable housing problem, a snapshot of where the housing market is today, and the five steps we can discuss taking to help.

He explained that the poverty rate in Waynesville is higher at 18% than the rate of the County or the State. The median Waynesville resident brings home 21% less money per year than their Haywood County neighbors and 28% less than other North Carolinians. This most prevalent industries for employment in Waynesville is Accommodations/Food Services/Entertainment, Education/Healthcare/Social Assistance, and Retail. He said that typically these are the lowest paying jobs.

Alderman Feichter said that cost burdened families are people who pay 30% of their adjusted gross income for housing, and severely cost burdened are those who pay 50 % of their adjusted gross income for housing. There has been a significant rise in the sale price of homes with the average sale price of a home in Haywood County being \$305,259.00, and monthly house payment of \$1,572.00. The affordable home price at Waynesville's AMI of \$42,796.00 the monthly payment would be about half.

Housing Trust Funds are a flexible way for municipalities to address the affordable housing crisis because there are fewer restrictions and can be tailored to specific community needs. Alderman Feichter also suggested affordable and workforce housing friendly LRU's, and developing a Workforce Housing Advisory Board are some ways to help with the housing crisis in Waynesville. Working to establish and extend partnerships include Habitat for Humanity, Mountain Projects, and Smoky Mountain Housing Partnership and others can be incorporated into the plan. He said marketing and outreach by creating a micro site within the Town's website is an important factor to identify and contact developers, so they know these resources are available.

Alderman Dickson spoke to setting up an affordable /Workforce Housing Trust Funds Board. He reiterated setting up a Housing Board that would be similar in nature to the Planning Board. They would advise the Board on affordable/workforce housing issues and evaluate and make recommendations on application for AHFT loans. He discussed how to identify land acquisition for Affordable Housing and asked if possibly realtors needed to be involved. Another option was the Town to designate a section to be redeveloped and a developer can buy a section of run-down homes and redevelop the area.

Alderman Sutton told everyone that the Waynesville Task Force on Homelessness is also working on an affordable housing plan, and they are recommendations from Habitat for Humanity, Mountain Projects, and Smoky Mountain Housing Partnership as well.

Manager Hites praised the Board for incentives toward affordable housing totaling approximately \$500,000.00 in effort to attract affordable housing in 24 months. He said the current Affordable Housing Policy is meant to refund the General Fund with either property taxes or utility payments over time, so it is an investment.

## **11. Law Enforcement**

**Alderman Sutton**

### **a. Less Than Lethal Force**

- Police Chief David Adams

Police Chief David Adams stated he appreciated the Town's support since his employment one year ago. During the past year the Police Department has retrofitted old shot guns so they will fire pellets and guns are marked with orange to specify that they are non-lethal. The Use of Force Policy has been updated to

state no choke holds, and officers have been trained in de-escalation techniques. Body cameras were operational as of December 15, 2020 for the officers.

Chief Adams said he has been in conversations with Alderman Sutton concerning Taser Electronic Impulse Devices and Bola Wraps. He stated that every agency had Tasers, but none of the other agencies had the Bola Wrap. A Bola Wrap is a hand-held device that fires a kevlar cord that wraps around a person's arms or legs from 10 to 25 feet away. The lasso-type tool is designed to detain a person from a distance, giving officers an alternative to guns or Tasers. The Bola Wraps are much cheaper than Tasers. Chief Adams said that if there were a combination of both Tasers and Bola Wraps, it would be beneficial to both the officers and citizens. The Board asked if a demonstration can be set up for the to see how it works.

**b. Police Vehicles**

- Police Chief David Adams

Except for replacing one Dodge Charger that was a total loss due to a motor vehicle accident with a deer, it has been three budget cycles since the Police Department has had the opportunity to follow the recommended vehicle replacement schedule. With this delay, several of our vehicles have had to undergo numerous repairs to keep them in operation. Chief Adams said that in discussions with the Town's Chief Mechanic we have identified the top ten vehicles that need to be replaced. His professional opinion determined that we could not rely on high mileage alone as the primary assessment tool in making the decision about which vehicles should be replaced. A careful review of maintenance records coupled with mileage was decided to be the most efficient way to determine the order of vehicle replacements. With these findings in mind, this list was prepared as the recommended vehicles to be purchased as replacements for those vehicles which met the criteria.

Chief Adams stated that that there were approximately 30 police vehicles in the fleet, and there are some spare vehicles that can be sold to recoup some of the money. Equipment such as lights and sirens can be transferred to new cars.

There was discussion concerning the loan for the new cars concerning payments and interest. Finance Director Autumn Lyvers will be checking into what will be the best financing for the cars.

**c. Body Camera Policy**

- Police Chief David Adams

Alderman Sutton asked Chief Adams about the Body Camera Policy and the fact the Policy sets a standard operating procedure for each officer, and the officers can be held accountable if they deviate from that policy. Anytime an officer interacts with a citizen the camera must be on and follows the State and Federal guidelines for body cameras. Chief Adams said the exception to the rule would be if immediate action is needed, the officer might forget to turn the camera on.

**d. Additional Security and Weapons Checks at Board Meetings**

- Police Chief David Adams

Alderman Sutton stated concerns that at least two Board meetings last year with certain groups, there were people in attendance with weapons. He said it is a safety concern for people who wish to speak and for Board members and employees.

Chief Adams said the he is looking at bigger signs to be posted stating no weapons allowed. No weapons are allowed in any government building. He suggested looking into metal detectors in the future for concealed weapons. Also, there is an officer at every Board meeting.

## **12. New Fire Station and Apparatus Update**

**Alderman Sutton**

➤ Fire Chief Joey Webb

Fire Chief Joey Webb said the discussion today is not new projects, but a continuation of things that the Town has been addressing. He said that due to financial restraints, things have been pushed back, so now it is time to discuss staffing, apparatus, and facilities.

Chief Webb explained that the Fire Departments followed the National Fire Protection Association 1720 standard for the Organization and Development for Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public for Volunteer and career firemen. For the population density for Waynesville is per 1160 people per square mile, the Fire Department is required to have 15 personnel on scene in 9 minutes, at least 90% of the time on residential fires. He said that across the country, the number of volunteer fire fighters is dimensioning. Assistant Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey said that at no time in 2020 did the Fire Department have 15 people on a fire, including 4 mutual aide departments. Chief Webb stated that even though eight additional firefighters were added in 2015, another eight are needed to be complying.

Fire station 1 is thirteen years old now, and with the current staffing there are only two bedrooms. If personnel are expanded, there would be a need for an additional bedroom. Fire Station 2 is the busiest station for Waynesville because there are more calls that are run out of that station, and with the projects that are in the pipeline now, the calls will only increase. The building was built in 1979 as a volunteer station. Chief Webb said that with only one bedroom and during the past year during COVID, one person has had to sleep on the couch. Newer trucks will not fit into the bay, and the bathroom needs to be totally upgraded. If there is a female firefighter, there is no accommodations for her.

The average age of the firefighting apparatus is 18.6 years, which includes engines, tankers, and ladders. He said the ladder truck is worn out because it is old, and the Town is putting lives on the line with a vehicle that is close to thirty years old. The tanker is 29 years old. Because of its age the NFPA suggests that the Fire Department not respond in that truck.

Chief Webb stated that he hoped that all three areas could be addressed in this budget.

There was much discussion concerning finding land for a new station. Manager Hites added that hopefully land can be acquired for a new Fire Station and then some of these other things can be looked at.

## **13. Department Capital Requests**

➤ Manager Rob Hites

Manager Hites provided the Board with a list of the 2021 Capital Improvement Requests. He said that with the new County Evaluation, new value will be added to the Town's tax roll. He said the staff has been waiting since 2007 to do some of the work that is needed in Town. He wanted the Board to look at the revenue neutral and the new tax rate and keep in mind the pressure from the requests that have been discussed today, as well as the capital needs. He said that the Town had retained bond counsel, Bob Jessup with Sandford Holshouser, when we thought we were going to do an ASDA Loan. Mr. Jessup has

offered to meet with the Board and make recommendations for a traditional Go Bond (General Obligation Bond) that requires a vote, or other alternatives that do not require a vote. He said that borrowing three to four million dollars and spreading it over twenty to thirty years would solve the immediate problems. He added that if the Board is not willing to raise the tax rate above the current rate with the new evaluation, the Town would not be able to pay cash for all of this.

Manager Hites told the Board that possibly by the March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting he could have the pay plan. He said Haywood County was completing their pay study, and that would put pressure on Waynesville to keep up with the market change. It will have an impact on the General Fund over the next 2 years.

**14. Closing Comments**

**Mayor and Board**

Mayor Caldwell thanked the Staff and Board for everything they do for the Town. He said he felt blessed to have great people doing their jobs and making a great team.

**15. Adjourn**

***With no further business, a motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Chuck Dickson, to adjourn the meeting at 2:31 pm. The motion carried unanimously.***

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Caldwell, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert W. Hites, Jr. Town Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Eddie Ward, Town Clerk