

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN
SPECIAL MEETING - RETREAT
April 6, 2022

THE WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN held its winter retreat on Wednesday April 6, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. at Public Services Training Room located at 129 Legion Drive, Waynesville, NC.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gary Caldwell called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. with the following members present:

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

The following staff members were present:

- Town Manager Rob Hites
- Assistant Town Manager Jesse Fowler
- Town Clerk Eddie Ward
- Fire Chief Joey Webb
- Police Chief David Adams
- Assistant Police Chief Brandon Gilmore
- Parks and Recreation Director Rhett Langston
- Development Services Director Elizabeth Teague
- Public Services Director Jeff Stines
- Assistant Public Services Director Ricky Foster
- Assistant Finance Director Dean Trader

The following media representatives were present:

- Becky Johnson – The Mountaineer – arrived at 8:58 am
- Cory Vaillancort – Smoky Mountain News

2. Discussion of ground rules for retreat

Town Manager Rob Hites told everyone that in this meeting the Aldermen have formatted their goals for the future of the Town. They will describe the goals they have, set up action items, and discuss with staff. Mayor Gary Caldwell, Alderwoman Julia Freeman, and Alderman Anthony Sutton had the goal of construction of a new fire station.

Manager Hites asked Mayor Gary Caldwell to begin with his goals as follows:

MAYOR GARY CALDWELL GOALS

GOAL: CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW FIRE STATION

ACTION ITEMS:

- Draft RFP to solicit architectural qualifications.
- Review RFPs and select an architectural firm.
- Determine a project budget for the project.
- Architect will solicit input from fire department and Board of Aldermen through “conceptual design” process.
- Prepare RFP for borrowing the funds to pay for the project.
- Architect will draft building elevations, floor plans and materials list for Board Approval.
- Once approved the Architect will draft construction drawings and submit the project for bid
- Board will choose low bid and Town will issue “authorization to construct.
- Include RFQ funding in within the 2022/2023 budget.

Mayor Caldwell suggested using the Fire Station in Statesville, NC as a model and using their architectural drawings. Fire Chief Joey Webb stated he and Assistant Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey had visited this Fire Station, and talked to the Firefighters there on duty, and got ideas about changes that could be made. Mayor Caldwell stated he would like to see the first phases of the project started in early 2023.

Chief Webb added that he would like to see the extension that was originally planned for Station 1, but then dropped because of expense, added for an additional sleeping area.

GOAL: CONSTRUCT A “MAIN STREET PAVILION” AT THE INTERSECTION OF MILLER STREET AND MAIN STREET

ACTION ITEMS:

- Work with the Downtown Waynesville Advisory Committee to review the current design drawings and receive recommendations the Committee might offer.
- Review the current bids and determine a strategy of moving either moving forward with the current bid, reposting the bid while trying to increase the number of bidders, or waiting a year for the current construction market to change.
- Postpone project while watching construction material prices with the possibility of rebidding the project.

Mayor Caldwell said this project had been put out for bids, and the only bid was for \$152,000.00. He asked for the bids to be sent out again.

Assistant Town Manager Jesse Fowler stated that at the last Board of Aldermen meeting staff was instructed to turn this item over to the Downtown Waynesville Advisory Committee as their project. This committee has not held a regular meeting since being formed, but they will be involved with the plans and construction.

GOAL: CONSTRUCT A PAVILION ADJCENT TO THE VANCE STREET SKATE PARK

ACTION ITEMS:

- Review the current bids and determine a strategy of moving either moving forward with the current bid, reposting the bid while trying to increase the number of bidders, or waiting a year for the current construction market to change.
- Postpone project while watching construction material prices with the possibility of rebidding the project.

This item was identical to the Main Street Pavilion Project – with only one bid at a price of \$102,000.00. Mayor Caldwell suggested that because of the price, and only one bidder, this item be sent out for bids

again. This project will also be turned over to the DWAC.

GOAL: OK PARK RESTROOMS

ACTION ITEMS:

- Continue with the current phase of the project. Upon completion, develop an RFP to bid gather bids for the construction of the restrooms.

Bids for this project have not been sent out, but the site is being prepared for the project. The clearing and grading will be done in-house. Once the site is ready, the design will be created, and bids sent out.

Mayor Caldwell said he felt this is the most important project because of the development in the area, and the restrooms are needed in the park.

GOAL: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT BUMP-OUTS ALONG MAINSTREET FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTDOOR DINING

ACTION ITEMS:

- Work with the Downtown Advisory Committee to determine locations for possible bump-outs and ensure cohesiveness with our current Downtown Central Business District Streetscape plan.
- Develop an RFQ to hire an architectural/engineering firm to design bump-outs in accordance with the themes found in our Downtown Central Business District Streetscape Plan.

Mayor Caldwell mentioned the need for a bump-out at the Truist Bank on Main Street. He expressed his concerns about citizens crossing and not being seen by traffic. Manager Hites suggested this item be placed on the April 26th agenda for discussion.

Mayor Caldwell said that outdoor dining is a big thing in other cities. He would like to work with the DWAC to be able to have bump-outs with tables for the restaurants on Main Street. Alderman Anthony Sutton told everyone this could be tied to the Social Districts and make it easier for alcohol to be served on the street.

ALDERWOMAN JULIA FREEMAN GOALS

GOAL: CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW FIRE STATION

ACTION ITEMS:

- Draft RFP to solicit architectural qualifications.
- Review RFPs and select an architectural firm.
- Determine a project budget for the project.
- Architect will solicit input from fire department and Board of Aldermen through “conceptual design” process.
- Prepare RFP for borrowing the funds to pay for the project.
- Architect will draft building elevations, floor plans and materials list for Board Approval.
- Once approved the Architect will draft construction drawings and submit the project for bid
- Board will choose low bid and Town will issue “authorization to construct

Previously discussed.

GOAL: PURCHASE OF SRT AND RESCUE VEHICLE FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

ACTION ITEMS:

- Determine specifications for an SRT and rescue vehicle for the Police Department and develop a formal bid for the purchase.
- Explore and determine funding sources either through grants or General Fund Balance appropriations.
- Used is approximately \$179K vs a new being approximately \$300K
- Public communication to educate about the wide variety of uses from police operations to EMS, fire, and public service

Alderman Julia Freeman stated that this item was of particular interest to her because during the protests in Buncombe County, the Waynesville Police Department was brought in because of their experience and certifications. She said that we need to make sure that our law enforcement has the resources they need.

GOAL: DETERMINE THE LONG-TERM GOALS OF THE DOWNTOWN WAYNESVILLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEMS:

- Continue the current process of Committee Member training, asset mappings, and SWOT analysis.
- Hold a community forum in conjunction with the North Carolina Main Street and Rural Planning Center to develop community goals.
- Using the DWACs asset mapping, SWOT analysis, and community goals, develop a new mission statement for the DWAC and a long-term vision.
- Use the new DWAC mission and vision to work with the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center to develop a long-term plan.

This is such a new component to the Town of Waynesville; Alderman Freeman would like to see where we are going to be in the next 15 – 18 months. She wants to make sure that the DWAC regains any accreditations that has been lost because of inactivity and past inaccuracies. Meeting state standards is a top priority for the DWAC.

GOAL: WORK TOWARDS UPDATING THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE ROAD SYSTEM

ACTION ITEMS:

- Continue using the Pavement Condition Survey which was conducted in 2020
- Develop a pavement and sidewalk CIP which is prioritized by referencing the Pavement and Condition Survey.
- Analyze cost of bringing all the Town of Waynesville Road surfaces up to a “C” rating or better.
- We will work with DOT to develop strategies to repair and maintain those roads within our system that they are not currently slated to develop or on the STIP
- Public Services will present the Board with their current priority list of town owned streets and build out that list by referring to the 2020 Pavement Condition Survey

Alderman Freeman said that the number one complaint she receives is concerning the condition of the roads and potholes. The community wants to know why the roads aren’t being paved and repaired. She would like the Public Services to give the Aldermen a new talking point, or timeline of what needs to be done so she can relay it to the citizens.

Public Services Director Jeff Stines discussed the Pavement Condition Survey and explained that on the high priority streets the sidewalks will be done the year before and resurfacing the streets the following year.

As far as the Pigeon Street project, the construction company is waiting on materials. Estimation of delivery of the materials is the end of May, and 60 days to complete the job, then the paving will begin. NCDOT will hold off on paving Main Street until Pigeon Street is done.

GOAL: CONTINUE WORKING TOWARDS THE COMPLETION OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN ACTION ITEMS:

- Determine which elements of the current master plan have already been completed.
- Prioritize the elements of the current Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Site-Specific Plan.
- Determine funding sources through General Fund appropriations and grant opportunities such as PARTF applications.
- Hold a work session with the Board of Alderman and members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to better determine a strategy for addressing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Alderman Freeman stated that with the exit of the Parks and Recreation Director, she would like to know how the Town will move forward in this area.

Manager Hites said that to have the entire Master Plan carried out, he suggested adding the multi-million-dollar tab to the Fire Station and borrow for more than one item.

ALDERMAN JON FEICHTER GOALS

GOAL: CONVERT MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS TO SOLAR GENERATED HEAT AND HOT WATER.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Select Consultant/Engineer to design and bid installation of Solar systems in Recreation Center, New Fire Station #2, Town Hall, etc.
- Conversion will save the Town money in the long run and mitigate the harmful effects of Climate Change.

Alderman Jon Feichter said he would like to see the Town take a leadership role in the community to help spur development of solar power. Rhino Renewables has generated a case study that would implement solar panels for electric service on the roof of the Recreation Center. This would supply about 28% of the electrical usage for that facility. The cost for this project would be about \$250,000.00.

GOAL: TRANSITION TO SMART ELECTRIC METERING

ACTION ITEMS:

- Request Proposals from “Smart Electric Meter” providers , evaluate them with the help of a metering consultant.
- Determine the cost of conversion to “Smart Meters”.
- Refrain from installing additional radio read meters
- Install only “smart meters” on new developments
- Determine the funding opportunities for Town wide conversion

- Serious issues with fluctuating billing cycles and frequent turnover in staff require that the Town turn to fully electronic electric meter reading.
- Bring report to the Board of Alderman about the requirements for implementing a “Smart Metering” system.

Alderman Feichter said that the Meter Reading seems to be an ongoing challenge. By implementing Smart Meters, the meters could be read from the office and eliminate the fluctuating days between reads. He would like for the Town to start now with the electric meters.

GOAL: PROVIDE OPTION FOR “BUDGET BILLING”.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Develop a “Budget Billing” program ASAP where the Town determines a monthly average bill for customers. The problems with meter reading and billing in the recent past have created unnecessary hardship for some of our customers, particularly those on fixed incomes.
- Contact MUNIS and other Electricities to determine the best way to set up such a program.
- Develop a “budget billing policy” for the Board’s adoption and purchase the necessary software to carry out the program.

Alderman Feichter explained that the customer’s bills would be averaged for a year and divided into monthly equal payments so the amount would be the same for that year. He emphasized this would be very beneficial to customers on a fixed income.

GOAL: PERMIT CUSTOMERS TO RECEIVE THEIR UTILITY BILLS VIA EMAIL

ACTION ITEMS:

- Work with Finance staff to determine the best approach to billing, i.e., Mail or Email, Mail and Email.
- Develop method to permit customers to notify the staff as to which method they should choose. i.e., An Application on the Town’s website, a phone number printed on the bill”, a check off box and place to add email address on bill.
- Explore the capabilities of the MUNIS billing system to integrate with automated or manually generated email billing lists.

Other utilities offer this feature to their clients, and Alderman Feichter would like to see the Town do this as well. He said that for customers that do not have access to the internet, the option of receiving paper bills would still be offered.

GOAL: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING STATION IN THE TOWN

ACTION ITEMS:

- Conduct research on the most efficient and cost-effective charging station technology
- Determine the cost of the station and installation.
- Apply for grant assistance available from the Dept. of Transportation to aide in paying for the stations.
- Stations should be “Quick Charge” which requires the same power as a home dryer.
- Potential locations are as follows:
 - Miller Street Public Parking Lot
 - Hazelwood Parking Lot

- Frog Level Public Parking Lot
- Downtown off-street parking location.
- Explore the possibility of integrating charging stations into the proposed Main Street Bump outs

Alderman Feichter stated he had spoken with a company called Charge Point and with that company the only thing the Town must do is get the electricity to the site. They will install, monitor, and maintain the stations. The estimated cost of each station is about \$2500.00 per station for five years. He said electric vehicles are the cars of the future. He said he wanted the Town to be a leader in clean energy.

ALDERMAN CHUCK DICKSON GOALS

GOAL: BUILD OUT STRATEGIC GREENWAY SEGMENTS

ACTION ITEMS:

- (N-S) Lake Junaluska Connector to Hazelwood to Hyatt Creek Road.
- Hire an attorney and/or conservation organization to assist with land and easement acquisition.

Alderman Chuck Dickson spoke to the Board about the greenway connector between Lake Junaluska, Hazelwood and Hyatt Creek, and said this will be the pride of Waynesville. This project could save energy also because people could use it for cycling and walking.

GOAL: BE PRO-ACTIVE IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES

ACTION ITEMS:

- Support the Housing Authority Strategic Plan.
- Initiate a rehab and weatherization program for local homeowners.
- Host a “housing summit” of local organizations, developers, and nonprofits to foster communications and cooperation, and support the pursuit of federal and state funding opportunities (SMHP, Region A).
- Continue the Housing Incentive Grant Program.

GOAL: MAXIMIZE GRANTS TO SUPPORT ABOVE AND OTHER NEEDS

ACTION ITEMS:

- Hire a consultant to assist with grant applications and administration.
- Develop a Consolidated list of major capital needs to evaluate Town investment, loan repayment, and match liability over the next 5 years, and evaluate financial strategies and options (Bond initiative? Other?).
- While searching for consultants to assist in grant writing, work to develop a team of subject matter experts that we can refer to for specialized funding opportunities through different enterprise funds.

Alderman Chuck Dickson told the Board that he feels the Town needs to hire a consultant that can find and apply for grant opportunities for the Town. He mentioned the American Rescue Plan, which includes water infrastructure, stream bank restoration, and the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act. The IJA is a once in a lifetime opportunity for grants. This includes transportation, water, climate, and environment over the next 5 years. There are also partnership grants available with Haywood County. He said we need to be ready, to know what grants are available, and to apply for these grants – especially for smaller

communities.

GOAL: DEVELOP/UPDATE TOWN WATER AND SEWER POLICY

ACTION ITEMS:

- Revisit criteria for when and how Town extends utilities (Urban Service Boundary, ETJ, and beyond the ETJ)

Alderman Dickson said he wasn't sure that the Town has a water and sewer policy for utilities extending to the ETJ, beyond the ETJ, and the Urban Service Boundary. He asked how big we want the Town of Waynesville to be? The way to control growth is through water and sewer. Alderman Anthony Sutton added that while the Future Land Use Plan was being discussed, the consultants suggested that the service district is not extended beyond a certain point.

Elizabeth Teague, Development Services Director spoke on the Urban Services Boundary and said that it was pulled back in certain areas in the case of steep slopes where the Town could not reasonably service that area. During that process, decisions were made concerning where the lines are already in place. She said that in the case of septic failure, there is an environmental need to allow areas to connect to the sewer system.

Manager Hites explained the process of allowing someone to connect to sewer if the system is condemned by the Health Department, and within one hundred feet of city sewer, the city may honor the Health Department's request and connect without annexation.

GOAL: REVISIT STAGGERED ELECTION TERMS

ACTION ITEMS:

- Research other municipalities and SOG recommendations.

Due to the possibility of having a completely new Board, Alderman Dickson said staggered terms should be considered. All the other towns in Haywood County have staggered terms, and it would be beneficial to Waynesville. He explained the process that would need to be taken for the Town to begin staggered term.

Mayor Caldwell said that changing to staggered terms would be an expense to the Town every two years.

GOAL: ADDRESS STORM WATER AND INFLOW AND INFILTRATION IN THE DOWNTOWN AND FROG LEVEL DISTRICTS

ACTION ITEMS:

- Determine the primary sources of inflow and infiltration through continued mapping of our stormwater and sanitary sewer systems.
- Secure funding through by leveraging state grant opportunities or through General Fund appropriations.

The Town needs to address the stormwater issues in the Downtown and Frog Level areas. Alderman Dickson told everyone that this would save the Town a lot of money.

ANTHONY SUTTON GOALS

GOAL: IMPLEMENT THE APP FOR PUBLIC STATISTICS ON POLICE RECORDS

ACTION ITEMS:

- Conduct research into the types of information that is reported on the app
- Determine the cost of maintaining the app
- Determine the method of transferring the information to the app.
- Report findings to the board for appropriation and authorization.

Alderman Anthony Sutton said that implementing an app for public statistic on Police Records would be transparent, and the public could view them almost immediately.

GOAL: INITIATE PROCESS TO CONSTRUCT FIRE STATION #2 IN HAZELWOOD

ACTION ITEMS:

Draft RFP to solicit architectural qualifications.

- Review RFPs and select an architectural firm.
- Determine a project budget for the project.
- Architect will solicit input from fire department and Board of Aldermen through “conceptual design” process.
- Prepare RFP for borrowing the funds to pay for the project.
- Architect will draft building elevations, floor plans and materials list for Board Approval.
- Once approved the Architect will draft construction drawings and submit the project for bid
- Board will choose low bid and Town will issue “authorization to construct.

Previously discussed

GOAL: DRAFT AND IMPLEMENT A HIRING DIVERSITY PROGRAM. PUBLICIZE THE DIVERSITY THAT CURRENTLY EXISTS IN THE TOWN.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Develop a program for attracting diversity in the town’s workforce and among appointed boards and commissions.
- Present proposed plan to Town Board for comment and adoption
- Implement program through targeted recruiting, advertising, promotion
- Review program twelve months after initiation.

Alderman Sutton told everyone that we are a diverse workplace, and that needs to be publicized. It is becoming harder and harder to hire people, and the ones that can be hired aren’t diverse. It is easier to hire people is they feel welcome.

Town Attorney Martha Bradley stated that there are companies that specifically look for locations based on local attitudes toward diverse work forces. Having a public policy could help with economic development.

Chief Adams indicated that the Police Department has recently developed an “Officer of the Month” program, and the officer’s picture will be placed on Facebook, and that is one way to show diversity.

GOAL: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY WATCH PROGRAMS

ACTION ITEMS:

- Develop a community watch plan and organization that fits our Police Department's resources.
- Solicit interest from different communities.
- Conduct meetings to inform and train volunteers
- Develop a Community Watch Budget to draw funds for program

Alderman Sutton would like to see a Community Watch Program for the Town. Police Chief Adams is working with one group, and it would be nice to develop that town wide. He commended the Police Department for reporting statistics for crime in Waynesville. By being completely transparent, the public will know what is going on.

Break 10:15 pm – 10:34 pm

Recap of each Goal

Manager Hites explained the beginning of the process for the construction of the Fire Station including costs, financing, combining projects for financing, architect, and architectural plans.

Mayor Caldwell asked if there could be police stationed in the new building. Manager Hites said there was a police station built into the plan that Fire Chief Webb has. In addition, the space that the Fire Department currently occupies in the Finance building can be used by the Police Department.

The consensus of the Board was to proceed with the process of construction of the new Fire Station.

About the Main Street and Skate Park Pavilion, Manager Hites stated that the choices are to send the projects out for bids again or wait to see if construction costs lower in the future. He suggested that the projects be budgeted in the next year. Alderman Dickson added that these projects and the bump out proposals be forwarded to the DWAC for their input.

The consensus of the Board is to budget the OK Park bathrooms in the next year's budget.

Assistant Police Chief Brandon Gilmore gave a presentation on an armored vehicle for the Police Department. The main purpose of this vehicle is the safety of policemen when they travel together to a scene. He said that because currently they must travel in different vehicles, and with today's technology, citizens can hear their radio traffic and know where they are going in dangerous situations. The vehicle can also be used in rescues, fire situations and in situations where gas needs to be used, as a ballistic shield. He described the different attachments that are available for the vehicle.

Assistant Chief Gilmore said that brand new the vehicle is around \$300,000.00. The Lenco Bear Cat Company has purchased several used vehicles from the Department of Energy, and they have been refurbished. The cost of the refurbished vehicles is around \$179,000.00.

Assistant Manager Fowler gave an update on the DWAC and the progress they are making. There have been several zoom trainings that have been held. He stated that they would be reporting at a Board meeting in the future.

Manager Hites told the Board he had an up-to-date pavement condition survey, and the Town has a grade "C", which is not bad for a municipality. Most of the complaints received concerning the roads apply to state roads. The state allows a city to fund repairs using their specifications, along with a Memorandum of Understanding, but you cannot use Powell Bill monies to make any repairs to a state road. For the city streets, a significant portion of the Powell Bill money is used, and a portion of the General Fund money is used.

Elizabeth Teague, Development Services Director, reported on timelines for projects set for the Town. The South Main project is indefinitely delayed, Russ Avenue is slated for 2024, and the bridge replacement project on 19-23 near Lake Junaluska is 2024. The North Main project is projected to start in July of this year and the contract is for one year.

There was much discussion about repairing sidewalks on Allens Creek and different areas of Waynesville. Manager Hites said Powell Bill money can be used for sidewalks that are already in place.

Concerning the solar power, the consensus was to place the panels on the new Fire Station. Manager Hites asked about the municipal buildings and asked if the Board would like a proposal for the solar on those buildings. Alderman Feichter stated he would like to see them on the Recreation Facility because of the high-power usage in that building. He reiterated that by having solar power would save the Town a lot of money, and there are grants available for that purpose.

Manager Hites discussed transitioning to smart meters and said the meters would be the cheapest part. The transmission system that will transfer the data to the Finance Department will be the more difficult part. He said he would need to research on what is on the market now to transmit the smart meter to the computer, and how the Munis system could handle it. He said this could be a multi-year project.

The budget billing process is commonly used, and for people who live paycheck to paycheck it is a good thing.

For the electronic billing, we will need to make sure the legislature doesn't require a paper bill. Manager Hites said this would be a great thing to utilize.

The charging stations on Miller Street are failing, and these stations will have to be replaced. Ms. Teague told the Board that the new charging stations are sleek, have higher speed, and don't take up as much room as the older ones. Alderman Dickson asked if incentives could be offered to encourage placing the stations at different places in the Town. Manager Hites said that incentives could certainly be offered to commercial developers once the price of chargers is determined.

Ms. Teague discussed the two phases of the greenway feasibility studies, and the bridge at the Recreation Park should be installed in the summer. She and Alderman Dickson discussed the different segments of the studies to see what grants might be available, right of way acquisition needs, and how to move forward. She said it would be helpful to have someone who could put the projects together and look strategically at the funding sources.

Manager Hites said that the Town is about halfway through replacement of 2200 feet sewer line replacement in the County Club area and estimates that 929,000 gallons of in flow during a storm event and 40,000 on any give day. That is about 23% of inflow and infiltration, and hopefully the Town can move towards 45 to 50%.

For the employees, Manager Hites told the Board that the Town is having a hard time recruiting specialists, in particular, police officers. It is being discussed to adopt the balance of the market plan for regular employees, plus adding a cost of living in the amount of \$475,000.00 in all funds. It is very competitive in recruiting, and Manager Hites suggested that to bring in new officers, that a conditional offer be made to pay them as recruits to go to Basic Law Enforcement Training. They would then contract with the Town, and if they did not finish BLET, the cost would be repaid.

Chief Adams explained that the Police Department is looking to recruit experienced Police Officers with 10 – 12 years' experience and offer them up to a \$2,500 sign on bonus. This is not just for police, but for town-wide employees. For Department heads moving expenses up to \$3,000.00 would be provided. In the future, this will give the Town the ability to negotiate.

A motion was made by Alderman Jon Feichter, seconded by Alderwoman Julia Freeman, to permit, on a case-by-case basis, the hiring of recruit Police Officers under contract, to pay for Basic Law Enforcement Training. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Julia Freeman, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton, to allow staff the ability to offer signing bonuses or moving expenses on a case-by-case basis under contract, for experienced employees in positions that have remained vacant for extended periods of time. The motion passed unanimously.

Lunch – 12:26pm – 1:16pm

Assistant Finance Director Dean Trader gave a financial update for the Town including a review of Fiscal Year 2020-2021. He said that FY 21 added \$627,029.81 to the General Fund Balance. Added to the Available Fund Balance is \$8,495,577.00. At the close of the year the Available Fund Balance was 9,361,494.00. In cities of the same size, the average of the group is 42.65 %, and the Town of Waynesville is at 66.72%. He said the Town is very stable financially.

Mr. Trader referred the Board to the FY 2021-2022 General Fund Revenues and said that some areas such as Taxes-Ad Valorem current Year, Taxes-Ad Valorem prior years, Building Permits and Planning Fees, Sales and Services – Fire Protection and Miscellaneous Revenues are above budget. Connect and Late Payment Fees are only at 17% of what has been budgeted because there have not been any disconnect fees, and that is an area of concern. Other concerns are Garbage Fees, Recreation & parks, and other Sales and Services. Mr. Trader told everyone these figures are as of February 28, 2022.

For the Sales Tax Revenue \$3,651,380.00 was budgeted. Through December \$2,074,242.00 has been collected which is an increase over the prior year. He said that if the trend continues with the Sales Tax Revenue, he predicts that there will be a 13% increase over the prior year. Property Tax Collections are at \$6,186,061.00, and 98% collection rate is expected.

In General Fund Expenditures the Town is at 58.51% of budget as of February 28, 2022. The Enterprise Funds (water, sewer, and electric) are self-sustaining funds. Mr. Trader said the Enterprise Funds are doing well considering that the Town does not have expenditures more than revenue coming in. The Pandemic has created loss in the areas of utilities because of not having disconnections.

Mr. Trader explained the process of utility billing and the days involved with each bill. The Non-current due is \$1,433,572.00 which has grown since June 2019. This amount is more collectable than the over

120 days bills. Those bills have grown substantially since June 2019 due to the policies of the Town and the orders of the Governor. He stated that some of the uncollectable monies have been written off as bad debt. Some of the uncollected in the amount of \$734,947.00 over 120 days could be collected when the utility turn offs are continued, and customers will have to address the fact that they owe the Town. In the next few months, the Finance Department will begin the process of turning off utilities.

Manager Hites said that there is a \$475,000.00 budget set aside for salaries, and 60% of that is to bring the employees up to the 100% market level and provide a cost-of-living increase. He said that with all the projects that have been brought up, he and Finance Director Misty Hagood will return to the Board with the totals and fine tune it.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Alderwoman Julia Freeman, seconded by Alderman Dickson to adjourn the meeting at 1:28 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Gary Caldwell, Mayor

Rob Hites, Town Manager

ATTEST

Eddie Ward, Town Clerk