

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

Regular Meeting

January 10, 2023

THE WAYNESVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN held a regular meeting on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 6:00 pm. 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
Alderwoman Julia Freeman
Alderman Jon Feichter
Alderman Chuck Dickson
Alderman Anthony Sutton

The following staff members were present:

Rob Hites, Town Manager
Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager
Elizabeth Teague, Planning Director
Luke Kinsland, Recreation Director
Chief David Adams
Candace Poolton, Town Clerk

Members of the media:

Becky Johnson, The Mountaineer
Corey Vaillancourt, Smoky Mountain News

Others present:

Sam Cullen, Assistant Town Planner for Maggie Valley

1. Welcome/Calendar/Announcements

Mayor Gary Caldwell wished everyone a Happy New Year. Mayor Caldwell reminded everyone that Town Offices will be closed on Monday, January 16th for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and the next Board of Aldermen meeting is January the 24th.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

The floor was opened for public comments and there were none.

C. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Mayor Caldwell stated with no additions or deletions to the agenda, he asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

D. 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.

2. Adoption of minutes of the December 13th, 2022 Regular meeting

A motion was made by Alderwoman Julia Freeman, seconded by Alderman Chuck Dickson, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

E. PUBLIC HEARING

3. Maggie Valley Annexation Renewal

- Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager

A motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Chuck Dickson, to open the Public Hearing at 6:07 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Assistant Town Manager, Jesse Fowler, reported that in April 2007, the Town of Waynesville and Maggie Valley entered into an annexation boundary agreement which prohibits each town from annexing past that boundary. Mr. Fowler said the agreement is due to expire in five years, and because Maggie Valley is updating their comprehensive land use plan, they would like to renew the agreement now. Mr. Fowler stated that once both the Maggie Valley and Town of Waynesville Board of Aldermen vote in favor of renewing this annexation boundary agreement, there will need to be a Public Hearing with Haywood County because part of this agreement lies outside of the three-mile boundary, as required by statute. Sam Cullen, Assistant Town Planner with Maggie Valley was also present. Planner Cullen had nothing to add.

The floor was opened for public comments and there were none.

A motion was made by Alderman Chuck Dickson, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton, to close the Public Hearing at 6:11 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Alderman Chuck Dickson, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton, to approve Ordinance NO. 0-02-23, an ordinance Approving Annexation Agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Alderman Chuck Dickson, seconded by Alderman Anthony Sutton, to approve Contract NO. C-01-23, Town of Waynesville & Town of Maggie Valley boundary Annexation Agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

F. NEW BUSINESS

4. NCDOT request to eliminate connection between Lea Plant Road and South Main Street

- Elizabeth Teague, Planning Director

Planning Director Elizabeth Teague reported that the NCDOT is finalizing designs and right of way acquisition for South Main Street. The NCDOT requested feedback from the Board of Aldermen about design. Ms. Teague reported that the NCDOT would like to eliminate the intersection where Lea Plant Road and Hemlock Street connect to South Main. The NCDOT proposed instead to eliminate the intersection by creating a curved, seamless connection of Lea Plant Road with Hemlock Street and that property would then become a DOT right of way. Ms. Teague said the NCDOT's idea behind the project is to make Main Street safer and eliminate intersections in favor of roundabouts or signalized intersections. The project isn't scheduled to start until 2029. Ms. Teague said the construction is most likely not going to move up because cost of construction is too high.

Alderman Anthony Sutton added that when this project was taken off the project list, it was not done by the MPO Board, it was done by the State of North Carolina without the consent of the MPO Board. Mayor Gary Caldwell stated that the wait time on starting the project is affecting property owners because they can't develop or sell their property, so they're just paying taxes for unusable property. Alderman Chuck Dickson added that the business owners that the right of way would affect may have objections to this project. Ms. Teague offered to have her staff get the business owners' input because the NCDOT does not need an answer right away. She added that she already spoke with the Fire Chief and Public Services, and they don't see any issues with closing the intersection.

The motion to grant the NCDOT request to disconnect Lea Plant Road from US23/South Main Street was tabled until Development Staff can get the property owners' opinion about the NCDOT project, at request of the Board.

5. Town of Waynesville Recreation Endowment Grant

- Luke Kinsland, Recreation Director

Recreation Director Luke Kinsland reported that the Town of Waynesville Recreation Endowment Fund managed by the NC Community Foundation was setup 25 years ago and has accrued \$43,000. The recreation department has received over \$21,000 over the years. This year, the Town submitted a grant request and received \$2,150. Mr. Kinsland made a request that the money be used to help pay for a fraction of the dog water stations for the newly renovated Waynesville dog park.

There was much discussion about the ongoing construction of the dog park, including the drainage issues. Mr. Kinsland said he is working with Public Works to solve the drainage problem. He emphasized that the goal is to do the project correctly the first time, so they are taking their time and doing things right. The freezing and rainy weather has been impeding the project. Alderman Chuck Dickson suggested moving the dog park if the drainage issues cannot be resolved. Town Manager Rob Hites said that this is the only accessible location and it has the best drainage out of any other potential site. Mr. Kinsland added that the proximity to restrooms is also important, which the current site offers. Mr. Kinsland said they are working with Haywood Waterways to potentially add a rain garden to help catch run off from the dog park.

A motion was made by Alderman Chuck Dickson, seconded by Alderwoman Julia Freeman, to approve the grant amount \$2,150 to help pay for dog water stations at the Waynesville Dog Park. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Entertain a bid of \$31,700 for a .8317-acre tract located on Oakdale Drive
- Rob Hites, Town Manager

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that Mr. Chris Amsler submitted a bid of \$31,700 for a .8317-acre tract of land (Pin #8615-33-9978) located on Oakdale Road owned by the Town. Mr. Hites said that Mr. Amsler has no plans for the land, he would like to keep it a vacant lot. Mr. Hites asked department heads if they foresaw any need for the land. Development Services said that the land could be used for up to four houses to be used as affordable housing. Mr. Hites also stated that the property contains water, waste, and power along its frontage with Oakdale. Mr. Hites explained the bid process to the Board.

Alderman Chuck Dickson said we have a tremendous need for workforce housing and would prefer that we not sell the parcel. He recommended that we could donate it to a non-profit such as Mountain Housing Projects or Habitat for Humanity to build houses on the land. He added that the housing would be tax generating.

Alderwoman Julia Freeman agreed with Alderman Dickson about the need for affordable housing, but she suggested that the conversation needs to be had with the housing non-profits to see if they would even want to use the land. Alderwoman Freeman did not think the land should be donated and said the Town should accept Mr. Amsler's bid.

Alderman Jon Feichter agreed with Alderman Dickson and Alderwoman Freeman about approaching the housing non-profits first. Town Manager Hites said the Board could table the item until after they speak to non-profits. Mr. Hites also reminded the Board that this is an upset bid process, so that means that a developer could potentially move in. Alderman Anthony Sutton thought the property wouldn't support housing because of how narrow it is, and he thought the Town should sell. Mayor Gary Caldwell agreed that the Town should accept the bid. Alderwoman Freeman added that the non-profits could bid on the property as well.

Mayor Gary Caldwell made a motion, and Alderman Anthony Sutton seconded, to accept Mr. Amsler's bid and to instruct the Clerk to advertise the bids for an "upset bid". Mayor Gary Caldwell, Alderman Anthony Sutton, and Alderwoman Julia Freeman vote in favor of the motion. Alderman Chuck Dickson and Alderman Jon Feichter vote against the motion.

G. COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

7. Manager's Report
- Town Manager, Rob Hites

Town Manager Rob Hites said that it is time for the Board to schedule their annual Board Retreat. The Board decided by consensus that they will hold their Retreat on Friday, February 24th.

Mr. Hites reported that the Sewage Treatment Plant project is going well. The road that allows construction equipment to get to the plant will be paved almost two months ahead of schedule.

8. Town Attorney Report
 - Town Attorney, Martha Bradley

Town Attorney Martha Bradley was absent but passed along nothing to report.

H. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND BOARD

Alderman Chuck Dickson reported that he will be facilitating a meeting between Katherine Allen, a Social Work Professor at Western Carolina University, and Chief Adams. The meeting will be about potentially having social work interns assist the Police Department.

Alderwoman Julia Freeman reported that she had an opportunity to speak with Representative Mark Pless and he mentioned there will be money available for the Town Fire Department. Alderwoman Freeman asked for the Town staff to work with Chief Webb to find out what the needs are for the Fire Department. She also said that Rep. Pless mentioned that there will be more money coming to Haywood County that could help pay for things like the Sewage Treatment Plant.

Alderman Jon Feichter would like to recommend Courtney Tetrault, owner of Axe and Awl Leatherworks, to serve on the Haywood County TDA 1% Subcommittee.

Alderman Jon Feichter made a motion, Alderwoman Julia Freeman seconded, to recommend Courtney Tetrault, owner of Axe and Awl Leatherworks, to be appointed to serve on the Haywood County TDA 1% Subcommittee. The motion passed unanimously.

Alderman Anthony Sutton reported the North Carolina League of Municipalities annual dinner will be February 22nd. He asked if another Board Member would attend since they will be seated with Rep. Mark Pless. Alderwoman Julia Freeman agreed to attend with Alderman Sutton. Alderman Sutton said that he has been attending the Duke University Leadership Programs once a month.

Mayor Gary Caldwell reported that local businesses have been asking about getting green garbage bins. Town Manager Rob Hites asked if the Mayor could forward any requests to him. Assistant Town Manager Jesse Fowler added that Public Services ran out of stock, so they are waiting on the supplier to get more.

Alderman Chuck Dickson asked what estimated date of completion will be on the “Bi-Lo” apartments being built on Russ Avenue. Town Manager Rob Hites estimated it will take eight more months.

I. CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Alderman Anthony Sutton, seconded by Alderman Chuck Dickson, to enter a Closed Session at 6:59 pm for the purpose of discussion of Personnel-Manager-under North Carolina General Statute §143.318.11(a)(6). The motion passed unanimously.

J. Closed Session

A motion was made by, Alderman Sutton, seconded by Alderman Dickson to enter into closed session at 6:59 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Alderman Dickson, seconded by Alderman Sutton to reenter open session at 7:35 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Freeman, seconded by Alderman Dickson to increase the Town Manager's salary to \$152,000. The motion carried unanimously.

K. Adjourn

A motion was made by Alderman Dickson, seconded by Alderman Sutton to adjourn at 7:37pm. The motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

Gary Caldwell, Mayor

Robert W. Hites, Jr. Town Manager

Candace Poolton, Town Clerk