

**Walter M. Gardner, Jr.**  
Mayor

**Robert F. Davie**  
Town Administrator

## **TOWN OF WARRENTON**

*"Historically Great - Progressively Strong"*

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### **Board of Commissioner's Regular Meeting August 12, 2013**

Those attending were:

Mayor Walter Gardner  
Commissioner Palmer "Woody" King  
Commissioner Mary Hunter  
Commissioner Kimberly Harding  
Commissioner George "Al" Fleming  
Commissioner John Mooring  
Commissioner Margaret Britt  
Commissioner Julius Banzet

Mitch Styers, Town Attorney  
Goble Lane, Police Chief  
Robert Davie, Town Administrator  
Bill Perkinson, Public Works Director  
Jennifer Harris, Warren Record  
Annette Silver, Minute Taker

There were 25 citizens present.

#### **Call to Order/Minutes/Agenda**

Mayor Pro-Tem King called meeting to order at 7:00PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. The Proposed Agenda was presented. Commissioner Mooring requested moving the Public Works Committee report to item 5a instead of 5b. Commissioner Harding requested the review of inactive water/sewer billing be removed from new business item and included under the Public Works Committee report. Town Administrator requested adding an item (G) to new business - taxi service. The Proposed Agenda was accepted with corrections by motion of Commissioner Hunter with second by Commissioner Fleming. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### **Public Comments**

Public Comments were heard from Al Fleming, Michael Layne, Ann Hawks, Travis Pulley, Rebecca Harris, Travis Ormsby, Debbe Speer, Robert Alston, W. E. Exum, Nick Bagshaw and Bill Miller. Commissioner Fleming spoke on the proposed water/sewer billing of vacant properties. He believes this to be an added tax to citizens who own rental property. He quoted Chief Justice Marshall in the case of Providence Bank vs. Billings (1656)... "The power to tax is the power to destroy." From his research he believes the inactive water/sewer billing is an uncollectable tax that will be outstanding on the account records. Michael Layne requested the Board support the Umbrella Marketing Project. If a community is not growing, it is dying. The revitalization that has been done in Warrenton needs to continue in order to thrive. Mrs. Ann Hawks stated she and her husband have lived in Warrenton for years owning several pieces of rental property and do not agree with the water/sewer billing of vacant properties at all. They, like Fleming, believe it is an unnecessary additional tax to customers. Travis Pulley, also, was opposed to the vacant property registry. If Warrenton is not managed properly, he believes in 15 years Warrenton will be a ghost town. He, also, voiced concerns of a leak on Brehon Street that his wife reported earlier this summer that has not been corrected and would like it reviewed. Mrs. Rebecca Harris, of CIBCO, was before Board to thank Mr. Davie and Mr. Perkinson for not getting the Town into legal difficulty with regard to insurance, recently, when they declined

assistance to the Town of Norlina before checking on the legal ramifications. Currently, there is not a mutual aid agreement in place for town or county assistance under emergency situations. (Mayor Gardner arrived). Travis Ormsby was before Board to voice his displeasure with the water-sewer proposal as well. Mrs. Debbe Speer spoke against the water/sewer billing project stating it was a punishment tax for owning rental property and attempting to improve the appearance of Warrenton. Mrs. Speer requested the Town look into the placement of no littering sign and additional trash receptacles on Main Street. Robert Alston wanted more information concerning the water/sewer billing and why some customers received letters and others did not. W. E. Exum wanted general information concerning the vacant property billing as well. Nick Bagshaw agreed with other speakers that the water/sewer billing would be detrimental to the Town in the long run. Bill Miller would like the Town to do something concerning the paving job done on South Main Street. Commissioner Mooring stated the Town has approached DOT on 4 separate occasions on the unprofessional job done. Former Commissioner Blalock has, also, contacted DOT to no avail concerning job appearance. Commissioner Britt has a scheduled meeting with DOT concerning issue.

### **Consent Agenda**

- A. Minutes of Board meeting July 8, 2013
- B. Year-to-Date Revenue and Expenditure Reports (Budget vs. Actual)
- C. Monthly Checks Report
- D. Public Works Monthly Report
- E. WWTP Monthly Report
- F. Police Activity Report

The Consent Agenda was presented with motion by Commissioner Mooring and second by Commissioner Banzet to approve. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Public Works**

Commissioner Harding was glad to know the Norlina problem had been resolved; however, without a mutual aid agreement in place, Warrenton could not assist Norlina in case of employee injury etc. Town Attorney Styers and Mr. Davie will propose an agreement with the Town of Norlina and Warren County that will eliminate future complications. Commissioner Hunter asked how soon would it be before agreement in place, it was anticipated by the next Board meeting. Commissioner Hunter inquired if insurance costs would increase. Per Rebecca Harris and Mr. Davie the answer is **NO**. The inactive water/sewer billing is still in Committee meetings. Commissioner Harding thanked the citizens present for their input expressed and all comments would be considered while the Committee is working on the basic service fee. Other towns are being referenced for collection processes and other pertinent information. At this time the Committee is not ready for a vote. Commissioner Harding reiterated all meetings are open to the public. Mayor stated all meetings are posted on Town Hall bulletin board, published in the Warren Record or citizens may receive e-mails by becoming members of the Sunshine List. Attorney Styers attempted to briefly explain that the water/sewer billing process began approximately 2 budget cycles ago. There are approximately 1200 water customers in the Town of Warrenton water district and of those 1000 pay monthly carrying the total water/sewer system maintenance burden, the other approximate 200 customers would fall into the inactive water/sewer billing registry. Commissioner Hunter suggested a public hearing for questions and answers for those concerned once committee has a recommendation.

#### **Finance and Administration**

Commissioner Hunter had no report other than what will be covered by Town Administrator.

#### **Public Safety**

Commissioner Banzet deferred to Police Chief Lane for information other than written report. Chief Lane presented a local governmental resolution for approval from the North Carolina

Governor's Highway Safety Program in the amount of \$7,000 for a light tower. The motion to accept and execute the resolution was made by Commissioner Banzet with second by Commissioner King. The vote was unanimously approved.

#### **Human Resources/Information Technology**

Commissioner Fleming had no immediate concerns; however, he asked if the new software system allowed meters to be read from the office. The answer is **NO**.

#### **Revitalization/Historical**

Commissioner King offered a reminder that the next Revitalization meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 20, 2013 at 6:00PM and invited all citizens present to join the committee. Harvest Market is scheduled for October 12, 2013, the 2nd Saturday in October. Mr. Davie has submitted some of the STMS projects for award consideration at the next annual STMS conference. No Historical report.

#### **Beautification/Facilities**

Commissioner Britt thanked the Public Works Director and his crew for work done in the downtown area. Mr. Davie will have more in his report.

#### **Planning/Zoning/Annexation**

Commissioner Mooring reported the "chicken" issue is still being reviewed with comparisons from other towns being reviewed for input.

#### **New Business**

The Town Administrator recommends the Board accept the 120 year roof replacement bid for Town Hall with Allen Bolton/Jimmy Harris/Century Slate for \$143,475.08, other bids received were over \$200,000. A motion was made by Commissioner Banzet with second by Commissioner Britt to accept the 120 year roof replacement bid for Town Hall with Allen Bolton/Jimmy Harris/Century Slate. The vote was unanimously approved to award contract and financing contingent upon LGC approval expected in September. All other grants are temporarily on hold. The Streetscape Advisory Committee will consist of Commissioner Britt(Chair), a member selected from Preservation Warrenton, Historic District Committee, Revitalization Committee and Tree Committee. A right-of-way encroachment agreement for the Streetscape project was presented between Town of Warrenton and DOT requesting permission to encroach on the right-of-way of the public road designated as Main Street (US 401) located between College and Church Streets in Warrenton with the construction and/or erection of trees, benches, bicycles racks and trash receptacles. A motion to accept this agreement was made by Commissioner King with second by Commissioner Banzet. The Capital Project Ordinance, Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation, was presented for approval. A motion was made by Commissioner Mooring with second by Commissioner King to accept Ordinance. The vote was unanimously approved. All Citizen Advisory Board requests presented to Town Administrator have been fixed and /or corrected by letters or assistance from Police Department. The Vacant Property Registry is moving forward slowly. The Umbrella Marketing Project was presented. This project falls under the STMS endeavors with advertising at Welcome Centers. The 3 towns Warrenton plans to link with include Halifax, Murfreesboro and Edenton. The cost to Warrenton would be approximately 1/4 of \$6500 (\$1625). A motion was made by Commissioner Mooring with a second by Commissioner Banzet to support Mr. Davie in this Town endeavor and it was unanimously approved. Lastly, Margaret Perry and Kenneth James (husband and wife) have applied for a taxicab license in the Town of Warrenton. The couple has done all the required paperwork. A motion was made by Commissioner Banzet with second by Commissioner Britt to approve the taxicab application. The motion was unanimously approved.

There were no announcements.

Commissioner Banzet made motion to adjourn with second by Commissioner Fleming, the motion was unanimously approved.