

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

**John Freeman**  
Administrator

**TOWN OF WARRENTON**  
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**August 8, 2011 Board of Commissioners Minutes**

The August 8, 2011 meeting of the Town of Warrenton Board of Commissioners was held at the Fire Station on South Main Street.

Those present were:

Mayor Walter M. Gardner, Jr.  
Commissioner John Mooring  
Commissioner Jules Banzet  
Commissioner John Blalock  
Commissioner Mary Hunter  
Commissioner Robert Davie  
Commissioner Woody King  
Commissioner Audrey Tippett

John Freeman, Town Administrator  
Town Attorney Mitch Styers  
Jennifer Harris, Warren Record  
Public Works Director Bill Perkinson

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:02pm. He then presented the proposed agenda. Commissioner Davie asked that discussion about the USDA Revolving Loan Fund be moved from the committee report on Revitalization/Historical to Public Works and Mayor Gardner added an announcement about the Kerr-Tar COG. Commissioner Banzet moved that the agenda be approved with those changes; Commissioner Tippett seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

There being no members of the public who desired to address the Board Mayor Gardner presented the consent agenda for consideration.

- A. Minutes of Board meeting July 11, 2011
- B. Minutes of Public Hearing July 11, 2011
- C. Year-to-Date cash flow report
- D. Y-T-D Tax Revenue Report
- E. Y-T-D State Shared Revenue Report
- F. Checks in excess of \$10,000
- G. Sewer adjustment request—Emmanuel Episcopal Church
- H. Public Works Monthly Report
- I. WWTP Monthly Report
- J. Police Activity Report

Commissioner Mooring moved that the consent agenda be approved; Commissioner Hunter seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Public Works**

Commissioner Davie turned to Director Bill Perkinson who asked if there were any questions about the monthly reports distributed with the meeting materials. Commissioner Mooring asked about the work he had observed at the water tower on North Main Street, and Mr. Perkinson said that the pump station was undergoing repairs. The original pump had failed and was being replaced as it is obsolete and parts are no longer available. Although the new pump requires some re-piping it is a direct replacement. Mr. Mooring asked if it would increase the pressure in the area and Mr. Perkinson said the new pump would not increase the pressure but would stabilize it and allow the pressure to be maintained. Mr. Davie asked if this repair was budgeted as a separate line item and Mr. Perkinson said it was included in the Maintenance and Repair category which was intended for this type of repair that is not large enough for its own project budget.

Mr. Davie asked for a report on the repair of potholes and Mr. Perkinson reported that the project was expected to begin this week. He said the plan was to divide the town into areas and to proceed section by section. The first step would be to cut each repair, which would be followed by removing cut areas and doing the repairs. Mr. Freeman described the bid requirement which specifies that the pavement be cut to 4", the rubble removed, a tack coat applied and asphalt laid and tamped at 2" levels.

Mr. Davie expressed concern about Town employees working in the above average heat this summer and Mr. Perkinson said that employees were cautioned at department meetings about the importance of pacing themselves, drinking water and observing their fellow employees. The trucks all have ice water and the cautious approach has been working.

Mr. Davie then discussed the USDA Revolving Loan Fund and next steps. Mr. Freeman said that a committee or board would need to be selected and the criteria developed for applications. Mayor Gardner asked that Mr. Davie set up a committee meeting that he, Mayor Gardner, would be glad to attend. He also suggested involving Rick Seekins of the Kerr-Tar COG because of his experience with similar programs. Mr. Davie agreed and said he had spoken with Mr. Seekins about it the previous week.

The final item on this committee report was the presentation of the newly completed Water Sewer Department Cargo Trailer at which point the commissioners went outside to inspect the trailer. The purpose of this trailer is to allow the department to complete most repairs on-site without having to travel back and forth to the shop. It is outfitted as a mobile shop with tools and equipment and replaces the 1997 van that had been donated to the Town by the phone company after it had served its useful life (it has been declared surplus by the Board and will be sold by sealed bid with a reserve of \$2000). The cost of the trailer is approximately half that of a new van and has comparable savings of insurance and maintenance while serving much more capably.

### **Finance and Administration**

Mr. Freeman said that comparisons are not very meaningful after only one month of the fiscal year because single events make significant differences. As an example he pointed out that the Police Department expenditures had dropped some \$24,000 because the final payment for two cars and equipment had been made the previous year. He also referred to the list of checks in excess of \$10,000 that includes \$35,460 for Workers Comp insurance. In the past the payments had been made quarterly with a 4% premium. Because the amount had increased 28% this year the 4% represented a larger amount and the decision was made to pay the premium as a lump sum. Last year the July payment was 25% of a much lower amount. Even with the effect of that decision on July figures the cash flow is comparable. He also noted that the Sales and Use Tax revenue increased over the previous year. Ad valorem tax collection was lower but he said it was not useful to compare this early in the collection cycle.

### **Public Safety**

There being no questions about the monthly activity report Mayor Gardner noted that two officers had attending training in Salemburg the previous week. Chief Younts said that they had received training as evidence techs and would have primary responsibility for evidence and the evidence locker with him as backup. He reported that Officer McPherson had been out on extended leave for a knee injury (not suffered while on duty) and that it would be another 5-6 weeks before it would be determined if surgery would be necessary. If so he would be out for 6-9 months. Commissioners Tippet and Mooring expressed concern about his financial situation and Chief Younts said the Town's Short Term Disability insurance was helping for the first six months, at which point the Long Term Disability policy might come into play. Mrs. Tippet asked if administrative work was available and Chief Younts said he had worked several days in the office but there was limited opportunity for that. In the meantime he was managing coverage with reserves, and there was no budgetary problem as McPherson was being paid through insurance.

Commissioner Blalock noted that no parking tickets were written in July and asked about progress with filling the parking enforcement position. Chief Younts said that the position was being advertised continuously on the Employment Commission website but that no qualified candidates had applied and that a number of applicants had not passed background checks. Mr. Davie asked about utilizing student interns and Younts said the problem was that they were available for only parts of days and were not particularly reliable. Mayor Gardner also noted that they would need to be 18. Commissioner Mooring expressed his opinion that the part time position be eliminated and that officers do the parking enforcement. He said he understood that they would be called away and not always available to do the 2 hour follow up required for full enforcement but did not see that it was so important that some of the schedule be missed. Mr. Blalock said occasional enforcement would help control the merchants who tended to park all day. Mayor Gardner asked the Board if the parking enforcement position should be advertised and filled, and Mr. Davie said he thought that it should, saying that if the law was on the books it should be consistently enforced or taken off the books. After some discussion Mayor Gardner expressed the consensus of the Board that Chief Younts should not fill the position and should have officers attempt to assume parking enforcement in a more consistent way.

Relating to the Fire Department Mayor Gardner said that several pieces of \$20,000 grant funded equipment had been received. The Department of Insurance had funded the purchase of hydraulic equipment. He was also proud that the department had been asked to display its new brush truck at the upcoming conference of fire chiefs in Raleigh. Mr. King asked about the status of the code enforcement officer and Mayor Gardner said that the position had been advertised and that he hoped to interview candidates during the week of August 22.

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

There was no Human Resources report but Mr. Freeman said that the new server was being installed at Town Hall this week. Mr. Davie said he had found that the Town website included tracking software and provided a good deal of information. Mr. Blalock asked that the website indicate the new location of the Board of Commissioner meetings and Mr. Freeman said he would take care of it.

#### **Revitalization/Historical**

Commissioner King reported that the kickoff event for the Small Town Main Street program was being planned for late September. The STMS staff plans a day long schedule of interviews with town and community representatives, a tour, and finally an open Town meeting in the early evening. Mr. Freeman said he hoped to have the date confirmed by the end of the week.

#### **Beautification/Facilities**

Returning to street repairs Commissioner Tippet asked if all of the pot holes would be repaired. Mr. Freeman said the bid cost was by square foot of repairs to tenths of a foot, it being difficult to determine just how large each repair would be until it was excavated, but that the low bid price of \$5.95 per square foot would probably allow it. He said that the annual Powell distribution in October would be about \$25,000 and he recommended that most of that be used, as there is approximately \$40,000 currently in the account.

Mrs. Tippet asked if the Citizens Advisory Board was meeting, and Mr. Freeman said it was very regular, the cancellation of its last meeting the only one he remembered. She noted that there were many junk vehicles around and Mr. Freeman said the CAB had been involved in the Broken Window Ordinance recently passed by the Board of Commissioners. He would suggest they return to look at the vehicle problem.

Mrs. Tippet then asked about the status of the Town Hall feasibility study and application for a grant or loan to begin renovation. Mayor Gardner said that he was waiting for the new Town Administrator to participate and asked Mr. Davie if he would contact architect Eddie Belk about attending a workshop sometime in the next 60 days.

### **Planning, Zoning and Annexation**

Commissioner Mooring did not have a report but Commissioner Davie opened a discussion about the possibility of expanding the historic district to include the Peck Manufacturing plant which is just out of town and could qualify for historic tax credits. At least some of the property appears on the Sanborn insurance map of 1912 and the plant provided electrical power to the Town early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Town Attorney Styers said that it might look like special treatment to annex this one parcel and add it to the historic district and Mr. Davie said he had consulted with Richard Hunter, chairman of the Historic District Commission, about other areas. Mr. Styers summarized the process for adding buildings to the historic district and there followed some discussion about property owners input.

### **Unfinished Business**

There was no Unfinished Business.

### **New Business**

Mayor Gardner introduced the first item of New Business, that of presenting the name of the new Town Administrator for approval. He reviewed the process which included consideration of 24 applications received by the Human Resources committee that selected four for interviews by the full Board on August 2. The Board had asked him to negotiate with its preferred choice and Mayor Gardner said he was glad to report that Mr. Jeffrey Parrott had agreed to serve for \$50,000. Commissioner Mooring asked about this being above the \$38,000-44,000 advertised and Mayor Gardner explained that Mr. Parrott is a federal retiree with a great deal of experience and paid health insurance. The agreed upon pay represents the top of the advertised range plus the value of the health insurance he would not require. Commissioner King moved that Mr. Parrott be approved as Town Manager at the terms negotiated by Mayor Gardner; Commissioner Davie seconded the motion which passed with 6 votes in favor and Mr. Mooring opposed. Mr. Mooring made clear that he approved of the selection of Mr. Parrott but did not think it necessary to offer more than the advertised top of range \$44,000. Mayor Gardner said that Mr. Parrott would start on August 22 and work with Mr. Freeman through the end of the month.

Mayor Gardner then thanked Mr. Freeman for his service as Town Administrator and said he hoped to have a farewell reception before his final day.

Mr. Freeman introduced the next item of New Business which was a proposed amendment to the 2011-2012 budget. The explanation is appended to the end of these minutes. Commissioner Mooring moved that the amendment be approved as described and as written; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mooring then introduced the third item of New Business relating to the Town cemetery. He expressed concern about local funeral homes utilizing the cemetery without obtaining permits or permission, resulting in lost revenue and control. He recommended implementation of a rule that any digging be done by the Town or contractors hired by the Town, and that funeral homes be charged a fee. He also recommended

assigning a Town employee to inspect the cemetery once a week to observe any unapproved burials. Mayor Gardner said there had once been a cemetery committee but it had disappeared some years ago. Commissioner Tippett asked if there was a map but Mr. Freeman said he only had a list and that there does not appear to be a map of who is buried or of available plots. Mr. Styers suggested that it be mapped out and that plots could be sold or licensed, and that income go into a trust fund. Mr. Freeman said the cemetery could also be closed to any future burials. Mr. Blalock suggested a chain across the entrance as there is room to turnaround by the road. There was discussion about the historical nature of the cemetery. Mr. Banzet said that one of the reasons for the Town's recent annexation of the cemetery (and other parcels) was to allow Town police to patrol, and that the police could now patrol the cemetery. Mr. King suggested approaching the funeral homes and asking if they have maps and how they determine where to bury people. Mayor Gardner said that their cooperation could be encouraged if they knew that without it the cemetery could be closed. Mr. Mooring asked that the item be on the next meeting agenda.

### **Resolutions**

The requested resolution was to confirm participation in the Small Town Main Street Program for which the Town had recently been selected. Mr. King said he was not clear on the point that the Town would pay for a market study, having no specific information on the cost, but Mr. Styers suggested adopting the motion with the limitation of budget line items. Mr. King moved that the resolution be adopted with the provision that it did not exceed the line item budget; Mr. Mooring seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **Announcements**

Mayor Gardner reminded the Board of the Kerr-Tar COG annual banquet to be held at the Armory on September 22. He is to be installed as COG president at this meeting, and other annual awards are to be presented. Although hosted by the Vance County chapter, there was no suitable location there so the Armory was selected. The Town pays for commissioner's tickets, but not for spouses. He also noted that the November meeting was scheduled for the Fire Department.

There being no further business Commissioner Blalock moved that the meeting be adjourned and Mayor Gardner declared it adjourned at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted,

John Freeman  
Town Administrator

### **APPENDED TO MINUTES: BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUEST, AUGUST 8, 2011**

Although it is early in the new budget year several budget amendments are recommended in order to address unanticipated opportunities and needs. The Water Sewer, Sanitation and Streets Departments have been undergoing a reorganization during the past several years with the goal of being more productive through cross training, organization and scheduling of employees. Bill Perkinson as director of public works has been able to produce more with less and has proposed a plan that furthers the ongoing reorganization even with less. This is based on a re-evaluation following the departure of long term employee Jerry Pettus who was the lead maintenance worker and primary garbage truck driver, and redistributes the funds budgeted for his position.

Several positions are budgeted between departments and the proposed amendment readjusts a number of these. One fulltime position is currently split between Water Sewer (working the customer service window) and administration (accounts payable and payroll). With the arrival of a new Town Administrator with much to absorb, and in anticipation of the retirement of finance senior clerk Bettie Davis within two years, I recommend that the clerical position be moved 100% to Administration. This would allow her to be fully trained and prepared to take

over the department when Davis retires and allow her to pursue a number of long postponed projects with the CitiPak management software. At the same time I recommend that be made Administration Office Supervisor and a part time employee hired to work at the Water Sewer Department customer service window. This is included in the proposed amendment.

The proposed amendment also addresses an oversight in the General Fund budget that does not adequately account for the local match of \$6500 required for the USDA Revolving Loan Fund grant that was awarded last week. The proposed amendment includes this funding as well as an additional \$3904 to build the fund balance. This is possible because the combined requested personnel transfers reduce the overall personnel budget by \$3011 while the revenue is increase by \$7393 because of the increased administration personnel budget and support from W/S and WWTP.

The proposed amendment does not change the Water Sewer Department Fund 38 total revenue or expense. Personnel is reduced by \$13846 with that amount shifted to other line items. Support for the WWTP would be reduced by \$4413 because the WWTP budget would be reduced. The transfer of a half a position to Administration increases W/S support by \$3704. The remainder of the savings of \$14555 is transferred to the Contingency line to maintain flexibility should there be need for part time personnel if the staff reduction is too severe.

The proposed amendment reduces the personnel budget of the WWTP Fund 39 by \$13238. This makes the Director and Backup ORC available to Fund 37 and Fund 38 activities on a 50% basis (now 50 and 25%), and is only possible because of the high level of certification and availability when needed by the WWTP. Several other minor changes are made to represent the time spent by two other employees. As with Fund 38 this reduction is partially offset by the additional support caused by the transfer of half a position to Administration.

The goal of these amendments is to represent new organizational changes accurately in the budget and to free certain personnel from the restrictions of being assigned to specific fund budgets. It also addresses the need to fund the Revolving Fund Grant and to build the fund balance. This should also be considered available to the new Town Administrator for obtaining office equipment, professional organization memberships and conferences and support for new programs he deems important.

Submitted by John Freeman, Town Administrator