

Walter M. Gardner, Jr.
Mayor

John Freeman
Administrator

TOWN OF WARRENTON
"Historically Great - Progressively Strong"
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June 13, 2011 Board of Commissioners Minutes

The June 13, 2011 meeting of the Town of Warrenton Board of Commissioners was held at Vance Granville Community College, Building 4 Seminar Room.

Those present were:

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

John Freeman, Town Administrator
Robbie May (for Town Attorney Styers)
Jennifer Harris, Warren Record
Public Works Director Bill Perkinson
Chief John Younts, Police Department

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. He then presented the proposed agenda for approval with the addition to "Unfinished Business" of a letter from the USDA regarding the Town application for a grant to establish a revolving loan fund. This discussion could lead to the consideration of a resolution. Commissioner Mooring moved to approve the proposed agenda with that addition; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

One member of the public signed up to address the Board under "Public Comments." Bernadette Johnson told the Board that she felt there was a lack of communication between the Town and county Boards. She said that she wished more citizens would come to the Board meetings because many have concerns but do not understand the reasons some decisions are made. She said she better understands utility rates after listening to the discussion during the preceding public hearing on the proposed budget but she also understands Mr. Green's comments about the difference between in-town and out-of-town rates and the need for programs to help those in financial difficulty. Mayor Gardner thanked her for her comments.

Mayor Gardner then presented the consent agenda that included:

- A. Minutes of Board meeting May 9, 2011
- B. Minutes of Public Hearing May 9, 2011
- C. Y-T-D 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--None
- H. Public Works Monthly Report
- I. WWTP Monthly Report

J. Police Activity Report

Commissioner Blalock moved that the consent agenda be approved; Commissioner Tippet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Public Safety

Commissioner Blalock turned to Chief Younts for the monthly report. There being no questions about the monthly activity report Mayor Gardner reported that the Fire Department had received a \$26,000 matching funds grant from the state insurance department for communications equipment.

Public Works

Commissioner Davie asked Director Bill Perkinson for a report. Mr. Perkinson reported that progress had been made on the sewer rehab project as all sections had been surveyed. This makes it possible to determine how far the funds will go and how many sections can be replaced. He said the cargo trailer had been delivered and should be fitted out and ready for use in a few weeks. He reported success in putting the fire hydrant at the corner of Bragg and Macon back in service as it was discovered that the valve had been paved over some years ago while shut off. Excavating the asphalt made it possible to uncover the valve and make the hydrant usable. Mr. Davie asked if there were a sewer line under the Dameron Building at the corner of Franklin and South Main, and Mr. Perkinson said if there were it was only a service line that was not a Town responsibility. Mr. Blalock asked about the status of the Peck Dam to which Mr. Freeman reported correspondence with Warren County manager Linda Worth who had met with the county Public Works Director Macon Robertson and would report to us their recommendations.

Finance and Administration

Mr. Freeman reviewed the reports included in the consent agenda, saying that it did appear that budget targets would be met, though it would be close and would require the adjustments that auditors make in the annual audit. He reported that Sales Tax revenue continues to run about 1.5% more than the previous year and that greater than budgeted Franchise Tax revenue will offset the small decline in ad valorem tax revenue.

Human Resources/Information Technology

There was nothing to report relating to human resources. Mr. Davie confirmed that the Town web site was now linked to the older revitalization web site so that it is easier to find with search engines.

Revitalization/Historical

Commissioner King asked Mr. Freeman for a report on the two agenda items. The first concerned benches for the downtown district which had been discussed at previous meetings. Now, however, the Revitalization Committee had requested permission from the Board to research types of benches and make a recommendation as well as to develop a program by which the benches could be "sold" to businesses and residents. Commissioner Mooring so moved; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The second item was a new initiative of one of the Thriving Downtown subcommittee of the Revitalization Committee called First Friday. Mr. Freeman asked Rose Shingler for a report as she is the Revitalization Committee representative on the Thriving Downtown subcommittee. She said the subcommittee had demonstrated great energy at its last meeting and the desire to do something quickly. The First Friday is an effort to have businesses open from 5:00-7:00pm on the first Friday of each month; this ties in with the Jacob Holt House Foundation which has begun to hold an open house at the same time. Ms. Shingler envisions having entertainment on courthouse square and businesses offering special incentives to encourage people to stay downtown and make

this a communal as well as economic event. She said the program looked promising. Mayor Gardner thanked her and her committee for all of their volunteer hours, which Mr. King seconded.

Beautification/Facilities

Commissioner Tippett asked Mr. Freeman about the status of the Town Hall renovation study and he asked Commissioner Davie for a report on his contact with historical architect Eddie Belk. He said that Mr. Belk would develop cost estimates for renovating the building with and without tax credits, and would have to revise the existing plans to qualify for those tax credits.

Mrs. Tippett observed that the downtown area looks very nice, and that the new Mad Hatters store had landscaped the adjoining vacant lot into an attractive feature. She also noted that the trash problem seemed somewhat improved.

Commissioner Blalock said the staff was making a great effort to clean gutters and edge sidewalks, and noted the use of the street sweeper. Mr. Freeman said that the use of a steel brush as suggested by Town employee Jerry Pettus was effective in scraping up the grass and dirt which could then be dumped in the waiting flatbed truck. Mr. Davie said he had seen them working and it looked great. There was some discussion about whether the steel brush would damage the brick sidewalks but Mayor Gardner said it was a side brush that could be raised.

Mayor Gardner asked about the paint markings of potholes and Mr. Freeman said they had been marked and cataloged, and it was his intention to call for informal bids from several contractors.

Planning, Zoning and Annexation

Commissioner Mooring presented two items. The first was the “Broken Window Ordinance” that had been revised based on a number of meetings and discussions at Board meetings. The last revision that had been included in the Board meeting preparation materials reflected the recommendations of the Town Attorney Styers. Mr. Styers also recommended removing potentially conflicting references to window repair in the Vacant Property Registry. Mr. Freeman added three changes that had been recommended by a Board member and one spelling correction. Mr. Mooring moved that the ordinance be approved with the changes reported by Freeman and recommended by Styers; Commissioner Davie seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The second item presented by Mr. Mooring involved annexation. Mr. Freeman said that Town Attorney Styers had confirmed that it was a relatively straightforward process for the Town to voluntarily annex Town-owned property currently outside the Town limits. There was some discussion about which properties this would involve, including the Town cemetery, King Street maintenance complex, lots on Warren Street and land adjacent to the WWTP. Mr. Mooring moved that the annexation process be begun for all Town owned property currently outside the city limits; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Mayor Gardner introduced the added agenda item as the receipt this day of a volume of assurances and commitments required in support of the Town’s application for a USDA grant to establish a revolving loan fund. Mr. Freeman explained that the application had been moved from the “pre-application” stage and was now in the full application stage. What was required was authorization for Mayor Gardner to sign all of the required documents. Commissioner Davie moved that Mayor Gardner be so authorized; Commissioner Mooring seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

New Business

Mayor Gardner summarized the process of the proposed budget with the work sessions and public comment received. He said that the time had come to make a decision about the proposed 2011-2012 budget. Commissioner Hunter thanked Mr. Freeman, Chief Younts and Director Perkinson for their hard work on the budget.

Commissioner Blalock moved that the last draft of the proposed 2011-2012 budget and rates as distributed to Board members the previous week be approved; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed by a vote of 5-2 with Commissioners Davie and Mooring voting against.

The next item of New Business was the proposal to move the regular meetings of the Board from Town Hall to the Fire Department. Mr. Freeman explained that the Town Hall conference room was cramped with just the Board and does not comfortably accommodate public attendance. He also said that the IT equipment being purchased and consolidated would best be put on a rack in the conference room, but that could only be done if Board meetings were moved. Commissioner Mooring asked about the cost which Commissioner Blalock said was \$50 for cleaning to outside organizations but that the Town had not been charged. He would have to confirm but felt that it could be enough to have Town employees set up and knock down tables and chairs. Mayor Gardner suggested asking the Fire Department Board if they would approve and that it met on the first Thursday of the month. Commissioner King moved that the Town request the use of the room from the Fire Department Board, and to Vance Granville Community College secondarily if the Fire Department could not be used; Commissioner Mooring seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The third item of New Business as presented by Mayor Gardner is a new ordinance requiring that all buildings with fire suppression and/or fire alarm systems install master key lock boxes generally referred to as Knoxboxes. He said the purpose is to allow fire and emergency personnel to enter these buildings quickly without having to destroy doors and windows (the cost of one door would exceed that of the Knoxbox). He said this is a common requirement in other areas and a number of buildings in Warrenton have installed the boxes voluntarily. In answer to Commissioner Mooring's question about key security Mr. Blalock said they are almost impossible to break into and access is restricted, coded and recorded. Mr. Mooring also expressed concern about potential liability but Mayor Gardner said the only Town involvement is to require it as the property owners would pay the cost of \$210 or more depending on the installation. Commissioner Davie moved to adopt the proposed ordinance; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

There being no further New Business Commissioner King moved that the Board go into closed session to discuss a legal matter; Commissioner Mooring seconded the motion which passed unanimously and the Board went into closed session at 7:57pm. The Board returned to open session at 8:30 and the meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Freeman
Town Administrator