

Walter M. Gardner, Jr.
Mayor

John Freeman
Administrator

TOWN OF WARRENTON
"Historically Great - Progressively Strong"
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August 9, 2010 Board of Commissioners Minutes

The August 9, 2010 meeting of the Town of Warrenton Board of Commissioners was held at the Warrenton Rural Fire Department.

Those present were:

Mayor Walter M. Gardner, Jr.	John Freeman, Town Administrator
Commissioner and Mayor Pro Tem Woody King	
Commissioner Jules Banzet	Public Works Director Bill Perkinson
Commissioner John Blalock	Police Chief John Younts
Commissioner Robert Davie	Jennifer Harris, Warren Record
Commissioner Mary Hunter	Town Attorney Mitch Styers
Commissioner Audrey Tippet	

Absent: Commissioner John Mooring

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. He then presented the proposed agenda for approval. Commissioner Banzet moved to approve the proposed agenda; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mayor Gardner then presented the minutes from the regular meeting of July 12, 2010 for approval. Commissioner Tippet moved that the minutes be approved; Commissioner Blalock seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Three members of the public signed up to address the Board.

1. Vonnete Robertson, owner of the Beauty Box at 105 North Main Street had signed up to address the Board on the subject of parking at the Public Hearing, but had been overlooked. Mayor Gardner asked for her comments now. The Board had recognized that Beauty shops provide services that cannot always be completed in 2 hours, and had authorized Chief Younts to develop a permit to be utilized in these situations. She said that she had not anticipated one problem which is that three days a week there is only one operator on duty at a time. State law says that an operator may not leave a customer alone when getting a permanent, and there are stiff fines and possible closure for violations. She said that although the permit is a nuisance, it is workable on Thursdays and Fridays. Commissioner Davie asked if she could suggest a solution, and she said that the problem was merchants parking on Main Street and that a solution would be to identify and ticket the merchants only. Commissioner Blalock pointed out that selective ticketing would not work and Ms. Robertson said she understood. Mayor Gardner suggested that she ask her customers to provide the license number that she could then keep on file. She answered it was difficult with mostly elderly customers, and it would help if she could just call the police department without leaving the shop.

2. Jacqueline Silver of 201 Village Drive Apt. #1 wondered why her utility bill had increased so much, saying her 7000 gallons cost \$170, up from \$119. Commissioner Blalock asked her about using that amount of water and she said her landlord had looked but found no leak. She said it was very hard for her to make ends meet on a fixed income.

3. Michelle Silver of 108 Warrenton Village Drive #101 said her bill was the same as her sister's (Jacqueline) and that she does not use \$106 of sewer and has been conserving as much as she can. In answer to Mayor Gardner's question she said she lived with her son and does not see how she uses so much water.

4. Arlene Hawkins of 209 Village Drive said her situation was the same, living alone with her son, and her bill has increased from \$109 to \$170. She does not understand how her bill is so high. She said she uses 7000 gallons. She asked why her bill would be higher than if she lived in town and Mayor Gardner said that rates are in fact higher for out-of-town customers. Commissioner Blalock explained that the water sewer system has to pay for itself and that it is old and expensive to maintain. He said that in the effort to keep rates low the Board had kept rates lower than they should have been and decided to restructure to cover actual costs. Commissioner Davie added that basic costs of running the system increase every year. He said that living alone he used 1000 gallons a month and wondered why she might be using that much more. She said she had even removed the outside hose connection in case someone was stealing water. Mayor Gardner suggested that the Town water department could check her history of usage to see if a leak might be indicated.

5. Joyce Freeman of 154 Ferguson Drive asked about the Town's water sewer service area. Mayor Gardner explained that the service district extends beyond Town limits and includes F&M Park. She asked if the county provided service and Commissioner Blalock explained that the county does not offer sewer service and that the Town maintains the sewer lines in her area. She asked if the Town provided service in her house but he said only to the cleanout at the edge of the road. In answer to her question about why her bill for the same amount of water used would increase so much Mr. Freeman explained that rates had been restructured to shift the burden from the lowest volume users to those who used more and to out-of-town customers. She expressed suspicion because the meter readings her bills were based on were always the same, though she went on to say it varied between 3000 and 4000 gallons. Bill Perkinson explained that one way to check for a leak was to be sure that all appliances and fixtures were turned off, then to look at the water meter to see if the sensitive red pointer indicated any water flow. Mr. Freeman said he would send her a copy of the revised rates.

Mayor Gardner thanked all for their comments, and in the absence of further public comment moved to Committee Reports.

Committee Reports

Finance and Administration

Commissioner Hunter began her report with a review of the six checks exceeding \$10,000 which she said appeared appropriate:

First Citizens Bank	\$25,313.09	Final payment 2 police cars and police equipment
First Citizens Bank	\$20,597.84	Payment police car and tractor
Warren county	\$16,801.85	Water purchase
Blackmon	\$23,219.20	Reimbursable grant expense
AECOM	\$15,000	Reimbursable grant expense
First Citizens	\$18,280.68	Payment 2 police cars

Mr. Freeman then presented the July Year-to-date report, cautioning that one month does not provide much basis for comparison but cash flow was down considerably because of a new loan payment for two police cars at \$18,280.68 and reimbursable Water Sewer grant payments of \$38,219.20. He noted that the payment of

\$25,313.09 was the final payment of a police department loan for 2 cars and equipment. He then noted that the Sales and Use Tax revenue for the month at \$12,667 was less than \$100 less than the previous year, and it has been predicted (and budgeted) to continue at or slightly above. He also presented an Ad Valorem tax worksheet that reflected commissioners request for details about delinquent taxes collected. Tax collection had increased from \$3477 to \$5158, but as indicated on the worksheet, this was all delinquent taxes as current tax year payments would not be reflected until the disbursement received in August.

Human Resources/Information Technology

Mr. Freeman said there was no report from Human Resources but in the area of Information Technology the web site had been set up with govoffice.com, and that he would be working on it in the next weeks. Commissioner Davie had been instrumental in registering the domain name and confirmed that it would be warrenton.nc.gov, and there was no charge. In answer to Commissioner Blalock's question Mr. Freeman said that information such as meeting schedules and minutes would be accessible on-line, and that the town email would be converted to this site.

Public Safety

Commissioner Blalock turned to Chief Younts for comment on the monthly activity report. In response to Commissioner King's question about parking tickets Younts said that the 76 reported included time limit violations in handicapped spaces, but the separate 5 handicapped violations were for use by non-authorized vehicles. He said 5 parking left side to curb tickets had been written in error and had been voided. Mr. Blalock asked about vacancies and Younts said that all positions were filled but two would not begin working for several months. One is former deputy John Dorman and the other a new recruit Shanterrica Lewis. Commissioner King asked about the dog (with the departure of his regular handler) and Younts said he had several options in mind but meantime the dog went to formal training at least one day a month and had frequent workouts.

Chief Younts then reported on National Night Out, held the previous Tuesday, August 3. He used a formula developed by the National Night Out program to calculate attendance, which testing during the previous two years had validated. By this measure 545 people attended, and he said it was considered a very successful event. Mayor Gardner then read a card from resident Barbara Conway thanking the department for sponsoring a free event of this type and for its service in general.

Commissioner Blalock reported that the Fire Department had been quiet but that the brush truck to be paid for by the grant reported at the previous meeting had been ordered. Mayor Gardner said that he was proud to announce that the department's new pumper had been chosen for display at the South Atlantic Fire Rescue expo in Raleigh this week.

The final agenda item in Public Safety was animal control and had been requested by Chief Younts as the result of continued frustration with animal control services provided by Warren County. A resolution had been passed at the May meeting requesting that these services be provided to the Town but the county Board of Commissioners had tabled the question at their next meeting because of questions about county enforcement authority in a municipality with its own ordinances. Mr. Freeman said he had discussed it with the Director of animal control at the time but had not pursued it since. The issue would be solved by the Town replacing its ordinance with that of the county ordinance, but without that only services mandated by state statute could be enforced. These include rabid and dangerous dogs but not picking up strays. Commissioner Blalock said the Town should conform to county rules as it does not have its own animal control and should look into what needs to be done to conform. Commissioner King suggested working with the county advisory board and Mr. Freeman recommended a review by Town Attorney Styers. Mayor Gardner said the something needed to be in place to assure that the Town receives the same level of service as the county, as Town residents pay the same taxes for that service.

Revitalization/Historical

Commissioner King reported that the Revitalization Committee would meet on August 11 to begin its planning for Harvest Market on October 23. Mr. Freeman presented a nomination by the Historic District Commission for one of the commission's two vacancies. Marsha West of 214 North Main Street has restored one historic house, is in the process of restoring another, and her frequent visits to historical sites is evidence of her interest in things historical. Commissioner Blalock moved for her confirmation; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Beautification/Facilities

Commissioner Tippett asked Mr. Freeman for a report on the Citizens Advisory Board. The first item was the request that a 1985 Chrysler (XWH-2108; plate expired 4/09) on College Street be declared a junk car and be tagged for removal. The photo was passed around and Commissioner Banzet moved that it be so designated. Commissioner Blalock seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

He then presented the draft of a "broken window ordinance" that had first been presented at the February Board of Commissioners meeting and tabled because of other issues such as budget work sessions. Mr. Styers recommended that such small ordinances be combined in a basic uniform minimum housing and building code. Commissioner Davie asked if there was anything similar in effect and the answer is no. Mr. Styers had drafted both a minimum housing (for residential) and building (for commercial) code a year or two ago. At the time it was considered too difficult to enforce because the Town lacked the personnel and too expensive because of the expected legal expenses. Commissioner King moved to adopt the ordinance but motion was allowed to die following some discussion about whether the draft ordinance from the CAB addressed the issues of falling glass. Mayor Gardner suggested that Mr. Styers circulate the drafts again after adapting and updating them to reflect current concerns. Following that discussion Commissioner Banzet asked about the coils of wire looping down from poles onto sidewalks. Commissioner Tippett said that they are Time Warner Cable lines not yet attached to new poles. Chief Younts said he had called and been told they would be taken care of, but nothing had happened to date. Mayor Gardner said he would call.

Commissioner Tippett complimented Town Public Works employees for doing an excellent job at keeping the Town looking good. She expressed regret that some citizens did not support their efforts, citing the amount of litter.

Public Works

Mr. Freeman announced that the first utility billing based on the newly adopted restructuring had been sent out and that there had been some reaction similar to that expressed during the Public Comment period. He said that more requests for sewer adjustments were to be expected (there were 8 on the agenda under New Business) and that a more formal process had been established, requiring the approval of either he or Public Works Director Perkinson.

Mr. Perkinson reported that the jetting/video inspection part of the Cleanwater Management Trust Fund grant had been completed and a report delivered. Repair priorities are divided with the first two being Urgent and Required representing fully a third of the system. Photographs clearly show dropped joints (pipe sections that do not line up), heavy root infiltration, hammer taps (connections made by crudely breaking a hole in the main line, sometimes "sealed" by a rag), broken pipes and slip joints that separate and leak. This report would provide the rationale for the grant approval resolution later in the agenda.

Mr. Perkinson said that the two new trucks, whose purchase was approved by the Board at its July meeting, had been ordered, but delivery would not be until November for the PW pick up work truck and December or January for the Street Department flat bed/leaf truck.

He also announced the first meeting of staff to discuss the WWTP contract renewal as the current contract expires in September. Mr. Freeman said this was intended to be a preliminary fact finding meeting for a process that would involve commissioners later on.

On another subject Mayor Gardner suggested that responsibility for the Peck Dam should be turned over to Warren County, now that it was county property. Mr. Freeman said Mr. Styers had recommended that to him and he would write to the county about it.

Mayor Gardner reported that Commissioner Davie had attended a week long program presented by the School of Government on Economic Development. Mr. Davie said that 80 attendees came from far and wide, and he had learned a great deal about what promotes economic development, including:

- Need to define what we are as a town
- Look at assets, identify what is important, and build those up
- Assess assets rather than needs
- Identify what makes Warrenton unique
- Establish an entrepreneurial environment
- The value of historic districts because of the unique tax credits available
- Building an angel investor network

Mayor Gardner expressed his appreciation to Mr. Davie for dedicating a week of his time to this program.

Zoning

There was no report.

Unfinished Business

Discussion of parking and parking enforcement provided the subject for Unfinished Business, beginning with a general discussion. Commissioner Hunter expressed her great concern the parking issue “had created a monster” and that it was a real problem and an embarrassment. Commissioner Blalock said that merchants he had spoken to were supportive and that he liked being able to find a parking space when going to lunch at one of the restaurants. About the problem on court days he said that the Town does not owe court personnel, attorneys or defendants a place to park on Wednesdays. Mr. Freeman said that he had visited most of the businesses and found that they supported enforcement. Mr. Blalock expressed his opinion that the purpose was to benefit merchants, and that it should be tweaked to accommodate real needs such as the beauty shops but not thrown out. Mayor Gardner suggested a plan that would offer some unlimited spaces a block apart on side streets: eliminate limited parking on East Franklin, indicate unlimited parking in the BB&T lot and on Church Street. Mr. Blalock recommended that all 10 minute spaces be changed to 15 minute for consistency. The following parking ordinance items were addressed:

1. Eliminate 2 hour parking on the south side of West Franklin Street between South Main and Front Streets and make that block No Parking. Commissioner Blalock so moved; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
2. Eliminate 2 hour parking on both sides of East Franklin Street between South Main and South Bragg Streets, converting the available spaces to unlimited parking. Commissioner King so moved; Commissioner Davie seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
3. Change the unlimited parking on East Market Street. These eight spaces will become, in order from South Main Street:
 - 1 handicapped (as it is now)
 - 3 time limited to 15 minutes
 - 3 unlimited
 - 1 time limited to 15 minutes

Commissioner Davie so moved; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed 5-1 with Commissioner Tippet voting nay.

4. Confirm the time limited parking on West Market as it is signed, all 2 hour including the handicapped spaces. Commissioner Blalock so moved; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

5. Extend 2 hour parking on South Main Street from where it currently ends at College Street to Cousin Lucy Lane, on both sides of the street. So moved by Commission Blalock; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed 4-2 with Commissioners Hunter and King voting nay.

6. Change College Street on the block between South Main and Front Streets, on the south side from unlimited parking to 2 hour parking. Commissioner King so moved; Commissioner Blalock seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

7. Change the parking enforcement period from 6:30am-6pm Monday through Saturday to 9:00am-5:00pm Monday through Friday, with public holidays excepted. This reflects current signage. Commissioner Blalock so moved; commissioner Davie seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Following action on the preceding ordinances Commissioner Hunter raised the issue of ticket fine amount as stated by several during the public Hearing. There had been discussion during the budget work sessions about making the various fines consistent at either \$30 (minor) or \$50 (major), with a \$20 penalty if not paid by the 11th day. Chief Younts said that he had just received a \$1200 order of new ticket books that would be possible but difficult to manually change. Commissioner Blalock said all the old tickets should be thrown out as it would be more acceptable to change the cost from \$30 to \$15 than the other way around. Commissioner Hunter said she thought the \$30 fine too high and Commissioners Davie and King agreed. During this discussion Commissioner King asked about the tickets written to the customers of Touched by an Angel; Chief Younts said that they had been advised of the necessity of a formal request to the Board and none had responded. Citing the appearance of Gwendolyn White before the Board during the Public Hearing, Commissioner Blalock moved that her ticket be voided and the fine refunded; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed unanimously. There followed discussion about the special request of Vonnete Robertson for a solution to issuing permits when alone in the shop; Chief Younts said he had the authority to work it would with her and would do so. Mr. Davie expressed the opinion that complicated requirements were overkill for these special parking permits. Chief Younts said his instructions are to enforce fairly and in his judgment this is the only way to do so. He said that the permits had only been used 8 times since July 23 when they were implemented. Mr. Davie said that one of the points made at the Economic Development conference was the importance of making it easy to do business in town, and this did not make it easy. Mr. King advised tweaking the permit rules to make it easier to use. Following that discussion Mrs. Hunter moved that the fine for violating the 2 hour parking limit be reduced from \$30 to \$15; Mr. Davie seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Freeman said that there was a budget issue as the enforcement position was supported by fines and an amendment might be necessary in the future.

A related item was moved from New Business as the request of Karlene Turrentine was discussed. Ms. Turrentine requested long term permits for herself and clients, and relief from several tickets she had received. The Board took no action, effectively denying her request.

New Business

Mr. Freeman presented the request for authorization to install a certifiable mag meter on the incoming sewer line that combines Norlina and Warren County sewer in order to confirm the percentage of sewer treatment cost paid by the Town. As it is, Warrenton pays for the difference between the total amount processed and that reported by Norlina and Warren County. This makes it difficult to separate the I&I of all three and the Town pays for all of it. There was considerable discussion, ending with Mr. Styers' recommendation that it be discussed with the

other partners before making the investment of \$35,000 to be sure that a change in formula would conform to the existing modified contract. He said particularly with the operating contract at its end there would be many important issues to discuss and reminded the Board of his caution of a year ago that this would be the biggest thing they would work on for a long time. Regarding the sewer meter request Mayor Gardner recommended waiting until the scheduled staff meeting had been held.

Mr. Freeman presented eight requests for sewer adjustment:

James E. West, Acct.# 4279, watering, 21k at \$12 for a total of \$252.00. Commissioner Blalock so moved; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Robert Burwell, #8014, watering, 18k at \$8 for a total of \$144.00. Commissioner Blalock so moved; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Lynette Choplin, #8271, outside water left on, 17k at \$8 for a total of \$136.00. Commissioner Blalock so moved; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Meade Shore, #7486, watering, 18k at \$8 for a total of \$144.00. Commissioner Blalock so moved; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed 5-1 with Commissioner Davie voting nay.

F.P.Whitley, #445, watering, 14k at \$8 for a total of \$112.00. Commissioner Blalock so moved; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed 5-1 with Commissioner Davie voting nay.

W.P.Raiford, #4188, watering, 16k at \$8 for a total of \$128.00. Commissioner Blalock so moved; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed 5-1 with Commissioner Davie voting nay.

Commissioner King then moved that the authority of the town administrator to approve sewer adjustments be raised from \$100 to \$200; Commissioner Blalock seconded the motion which passed 5-1 with Commissioner Davie voting nay.

Resolutions

Mr. Freeman presented a resolution in support of an application for a \$500,000 combination of grant and loan funding to address the highest priorities of sewer system repair. Commissioner Banzet moved that the resolution be adopted; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Gardner announced that reservations for the Kerr-Tar COG annual awards banquet were due, and that Board members should let Mr. Freeman know if they would like to attend. The Town pays the cost of the Board member's attendance, but spouses or guests are the responsibility of the Board member.

There being no further business Commissioner Blalock moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner King seconded the motion and Mayor Gardner declared the meeting adjourned at 10.10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Freeman
Town Administrator