

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

**John Freeman**  
Administrator

**TOWN OF WARRENTON**  
*"Historically Great - Progressively Strong"*  
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**May 10, 2010 Board of Commissioners Minutes**

The May 10, 2010 meeting of the Town of Warrenton Board of Commissioners was held at the Warrenton Town Hall.

Those present were:

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

Absent:

Commissioner John Mooring  
Jennifer Harris, Warren Record

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

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

**Public Comments**

Fred Poppa, appointed in January as Warren County Director of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) offered his assistance to the Town in its revitalization efforts. He reviewed his background which started with a degree in urban planning and includes considerable experience with grant work, writing historic district and zoning ordinances, planning documents and related work. He hopes to work with Warren County Planning Director Ken Krulik on a future regional land use development plan for the ETJ and surrounding area. He concluded by asking that the Board feel free to call on him. Mayor Gardner thanked Mr. Poppa for coming and was glad of the opportunity to officially welcome. Based on a conversation with County Commissioner Ernie Fleming, Commissioner Davie asked if Mr. Poppa needed an official resolution or request to provide assistance to the Town. Poppa responded that Warrenton is in the county and he represents the entire county, but at Mayor Gardner's suggestion he would find out if such a resolution was necessary. Poppa said a letter to his EDC Board could be useful and Town Attorney Mitch Styers suggested the letter invite Poppa to attend Warrenton Revitalization Committee and Historic District Commission meetings and include a contact list.

Mayor Gardner thanked Mr. Poppa for his comments and offer of help. He then read a note from Elaine Coleman of Preservation Warrenton complimenting Town staff for its hard work preparing the Town for SpringFest and the Preservation Warrenton bi-annual home tour, and for hanging the “May is Preservation Month” banner on courthouse square.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Finance and Administration**

Commissioner Hunter began her report with a review of the four checks which she said appeared appropriate:

MIT	\$11416.90	Monthly health insurance
BB&T	\$12834.61	Annual payment of Battle Avenue sewer/paving project
Warren County	\$18339.20	Monthly water purchase
Citizens Insur.	\$18796.40	Quarterly liability and property insurance payment

Mrs. Hunter then said that although the proposed budget was not on the agenda she said she had found the narrative very informative. She then asked Mr. Freeman for his report. He began by reviewing the year-to-date cash flow budget, saying that budget targets were being met, though explanations for several lines would be useful:

- The General Fund Powell Bill expenditure of \$6761 represented \$900 for sidewalk repairs and the balance for a share of the annual payment to BB&T for the Battle Avenue paving project.
- Grant payments and reimbursements affected the Water Sewer Department; being unpredictable these had not been budgeted and would require an end of year amendment. When factored in, revenue and expenses were on target and cash flow, while comparatively less, was a positive \$12,193 (compared with \$18,637). He also pointed out that contributions to the cash reserve were shown as expenditures, and that \$37,242 had been set aside year-to-date.

He reported that Sales and Use Tax revenue continued to be down 10.5% compared with the previous April. Citing a NCLM report he said this reflected the continued difficulties in the construction industry. General retail sales were down only 4% but construction and related home furnishing sales were down 22%. With receipts of \$14,526 in April, ad valorem tax revenue had reached \$441,158 which exceeded the \$415,790 budgeted.

There being no further questions Mayor Gardner reminded the Board of the budget work sessions scheduled on May 17, 24 and June 7. There was general consensus that the first session should deal with the complicated subject of rate restructuring as that could require ongoing discussion.

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

There was no report.

### **Public Safety**

Commissioner Blalock turned to Chief Younts for comment on the monthly activity report. Commissioner Banzet asked about the reported vandalism as that was unusual. Younts said it was a domestic situation between a couple and not general vandalism. He said a group of kids had been arrested for injury to property, which would be handled by the court system. Mr. Blalock asked about department vacancies and Younts answered that he was currently vetting several candidates for the one vacancy, and that he hoped to fill the position in two weeks.

Commissioner Davie asked about the 2 hour parking limit enforcement that had been directed by the Board at the April meeting. Chief Younts reported that enforcement had begun on Monday, May 3, and that 16-20 violations had been written. One driver had reacted negatively, resulting in his arrest, but the greatest problem was the time

to do it. The single officer on duty is often called away which can disrupt the cycle of marking and checking parked cars. Mr. Freeman said that in response to Board concern about notification letters had been mailed to residents, a notice had been put in the newspaper and letters had been sent by the Police Department to all the businesses. Chief Younts said that one business owner had requested a reserved space because of physical problems (knees) that made it difficult for her to access her office from the parking lot in the rear because of stairs. Mr. Blalock expressed concern that an exception now could make enforcement more difficult, and Mayor Gardner said he had told her the same thing. Mr. Blalock said a handicapped space would not help because, as Chief Younts confirmed, there would still be a 2 hour limit. Mr. Freeman said there was access without stairs between the rear parking lot and front of building by walking between buildings, and there was a general consensus that an exception should not be granted. Having been told of a petition to end enforcement, Mr. Blalock asked if one had been received. Chief Younts said that it had not yet and Mr. Styers said it was at the cash register at the Southern City Steak and Seafood Restaurant.

Chief Younts went on the report that several officers had successfully completed radar and intox training, and were attending other classes. He also reported completing his Associates Degree in Criminal Justice Technology and plans to pursue his bachelors at Western Carolina via internet. He has been attending the two week New Chief's Executive Development Course at NC Justice Academy and has been accepted to the Law Enforcement Executive program sponsored by the UNC School of Government. He has also applied to the UNC School of Government for the Municipal and County Administration Course later in May. Mr. Blalock offered his congratulations on completing his degree.

Commissioner Blalock reported that the fire department had been fairly quiet although an old warehouse on Depot Street had burned down. Mr. Freeman said there had been no additional fire inspections and Mayor Gardner noted that the county had frozen the new position of Assistant Fire Marshall which would hinder a broader inspection schedule.

### **Revitalization/Historical**

Commissioner King reported that SpringFest, although not as big as last year, was generally considered a success. The weather had cooperated with the rain holding off until the end of the day, but that a rain plan would be discussed next year. Most vendors seemed pleased and there had been steady traffic with SpringFest and the biannual Preservation Warrenton Homes Tour complimenting each other. He also said that artist Dianne Rodwell had generously created an image of the Jacob Holt House that was printed on t-shirts, some announcing SpringFest and some without. Rodwell expressed interest in creating an image of another Warrenton landmark next year.

Mayor Gardner noted that the county block party event on the previous Friday night was also well attended, making it a busy weekend for Warrenton. Mr. King said the Revitalization Committee would be meeting on Wednesday to review the event.

Mr. Freeman then reported the recommendation from Chairman Richard Hunter of the Historic District Commission that two positions be declared vacant. Those individuals had not attended meetings or responded to letters to contradict their apparent lack of interest. He reported that the commission had three residents to nominate for these two positions, both of which are at-large with a term ending in 2012. They are Marsha West of 213 North Main Street, Ronald Shearin of 107 Marshall Street and Ken Speer of 120 Battle Street. There being some question about communication from the nominees Mayor Gardner recommended that the decision be tabled which would also give the public additional opportunity for nominations. Commissioner Blalock so moved; Commissioner Tippettt seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **Beautification/Facilities**

Commissioner Tippettt echoed the previous comments about preparations for the big SpringFest weekend. She commended the Public Works leadership and staff for their hard work. In the matter of appearance there

followed discussion about the former Super 10 building the weeds around which Town staff had trimmed for a second time. Commissioner Banzet announced that the building had gone into foreclosure which Mr. Styers said was good because the bank that now owned it could be sent a bill and would likely be more than willing to pay it.

Commissioner Tippett said the historic banners were an attractive downtown feature and asked if there were funds to purchase more. Mr. Freeman said the banners and brackets had been inventoried, cleaned and consolidated in the downtown section. Chief Younts said there were several banners on hand but Mr. Freeman said new brackets were \$100 a set and had not been ordered. Commissioner Banzet reported that with trees leaved out dead branches on dogwoods among others were apparent, and Mayor Gardner said several were completely dead. Mr. Perkinson said that Public Works would continue their pruning from last fall and address these problems. Mrs. Tippett also pointed out that another bollard set in concrete to protect the sidewalk next to Oakley Hall Antiques had been knocked down. Mr. Freeman said the last quote for replacement was \$800 each bollard, and in answer to her question about the possibility of reimbursement Mr. Styers said it would be possible if a license plate was recorded, but that most trucks just kept going.

Mr. Freeman then reported on the proposal from engineering firm AECOM for an architectural/engineering study of Town Hall as the prerequisite for applying for grants and or loans. He reported that a second proposal was expected but that the one from AECOM was helpful for laying out the goals and process. Mayor Gardner suggested waiting for the second proposal but said that in his opinion Town Hall renovation was as important as anything the Board had to deal with. Mr. Styers suggested that members of the Historic District Commission be asked about any contacts or recommendations for others to do this study, as well as addressing the need to Rep. Wray and Sen. Berger. Mayor Gardner asked Mr. Poppa for input and he suggested approaching the Rural Center. Mr. Freeman said one problem is that most grants are tied job creation, and the most likely source of funding would be the USDA. Mayor Gardner said that students from NC State had been instrumental in Warren County's Armory renovation project and that he would ask County Manager Linda Worth about it. He also said he would want to be added to the list of those to be consulted as stated in the AECOM proposal.

### **Public Works**

Commissioner Davie asked Mr. Freeman about a reported problem with the contract with American Tower Corporation approved at the last Board meeting. Mr. Freeman said that Mr. Styers had made the recommended changes in the contract, a signed copy of which had been sent to American Tower which had rejected one of the changes. Mr. Davie said the company has been very proactive and gotten to work right away. Although they had not returned the contract with revisions acceptable to them, their representative had visited the site and all of the detailed information had been sent. Mr. Poppa said that he had been heavily involved in communications towers in the past and was trying to improve the service in Warren County by bringing new operators. He offered to review the contract if that would be helpful.

Mr. Perkinson then reported that there had been good cooperation from residents regarding the Leaf and Debris Collection policy, and that staff had been freer to tackle seasonal work. He reported that the grant funded sewer video inspection project was expected to be completed in 2-3 weeks. Relating to the Waste Water Treatment Plant, several repairs were being completed, but there were no pending big repairs. He also reported that the new permit had been received, with a term of five years. Commissioner Blalock noted that 16.5 million gallons had been processed compared with a normal dry volume of 13.5 million. Mr. Perkinson said that the volume would likely decline to normal with the dry season, and during wet months could exceed 20 million gallons.

Noting that the Peck Dam condition is regularly reported with the note that erosion issues remain, Commissioner Blalock asked what would be required to address the problem. Mr. Perkinson said that the spillway had been lowered and widened which had lowered the pond volume 2-3 feet and that seemed to have reduced the pressure considerably. This raised the question of ownership and Mr. Styers said his understanding was that the property was to be auctioned off, in which case the new owner would be responsible and that he should send a claim to the

new owners. Mr. Poppa said it was scheduled for tax sale in the near future; Mr. Styers had not yet received a notice but would investigate and send a claim for cost of items and work performed during the past three years.

### **Zoning**

Mr. Freeman had no report.

### **Unfinished Business**

Mr. Freeman presented a list of vehicles and equipment with the recommendation that they be declared surplus. There followed discussion about the advisability of setting reserves on none or the more valuable, the value of the equipment being in running condition and documentation of major repairs, and about the relative value of specific pieces of equipment. After this discussion Commissioner Blalock moved that all on this list be declared surplus to be sold at absolute public auction, whereas and as is, on May 15 at the annual "cow pasture" auction conducted by E.B.Harris in Inez. Mr. Davie seconded the motion which passed with one negative vote cast by Commissioner Tippett (with reservations about selling some without reserve). The following was so designated:

1994 Ford F-350 (VIN 1FTJX35G6RKB95823)  
1996 Ford F-150 (1FTEF15YOTLB46412)  
1997 Ford Ranger (1FTCR10A6VTA69167)  
1994 Ford F-150 (1FTEF15Y5RNB18568)  
Bandit Chipper Model No. 90 XP, Wisconsin 4 cylinder gas engine, 1065 hours  
John Deere L130 48 inch cut Riding Mower  
1997 Ford Crown Victoria (2FALP71W2VX102760)  
1998 Ford Crown Victoria (2FAFP71W5WX155595)  
2000 Ford Crown Victoria (2FAFP71W5YX197087)

### **New Business**

There was no new business.

### **Resolutions**

Chief Younts said that the Town often had need of Animal Control services but that the Warren County Director of Animal Control required a formal request from the Town to provide those services. Mr. Gardner read a proposed resolution that stated Town support of the Warren County Animal Control policies and procedures, and its request that those services be provided within the Town of Warrenton. Commissioner Blalock so moved; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **Announcements**

There being no announcements or further business Commissioner Banzet moved to adjourn and Mayor Gardner declared the meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Freeman  
Town Administrator