

Walter M. Gardner, Jr.  
Mayor

Robert F. Davie  
Town Administrator

## TOWN OF WARRENTON

*"Historically Great - Progressively Strong"*

P. O. Box 281

Warrenton, NC 27589-0281

PHONE (252) 257-1122 FAX (252) 257-9219

---

### Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting November 11, 2013

Those attending were:

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

Goble Lane, Police Chief  
Robert Davie, Town Administrator  
Bill Perkinson, Public Works Director  
Jennifer Harris, Warren Record  
Bettie Davis, Finance Director

There were 8 citizens present.

#### Call to Order/Minutes/Agenda

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Those attending observed a moment of silence for veterans, former commissioner Herbert Mosley, and those affected by the typhoon in the Philippines. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The Proposed Agenda was presented for acceptance with additional items; 6D, Donation by Holt Family, 7D, Resolution for DOT Bi-Ped Grant, and 7E, Essentials of Local Government Class. A motion was made by Commissioner King to accept the revised agenda, and it was seconded by Commissioner Fleming. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### Public Comments

Mrs. Debbe Speer congratulated the newly elected commissioners and inquired about merchandise sales under temporary tents occurring on the corner lot at Franklin and S. Main Streets. Mrs. Speer asked if outside sales were permitted under current zoning regulations and proffered that a safety issue might be a way to disallow such outside merchandising. Mayor Gardner indicated that the issue would be looked into by the Town Administrator.

#### Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes of Board meeting September 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. A motion to accept Consent Agenda was made by Commissioner Banzet with second by Commissioner Fleming. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Finance and Administration**

Commissioner Hunter reported that the Finance Committee had met to consider retaining a new audit firm, at the request of the Town Administrator and based on information the Town Administrator received at the UNC School of Government. The Town is currently paying nearly \$19,000 for audit services and the proposed firm of Petway, Mills & Pearson has quoted \$7000 for a savings of nearly \$12,000 annually. A third bid was received at a significantly higher quote of \$29,000. The Town Administrator contacted other communities and received positive feedback for the firm of Petway, Mills & Pearson. Commissioner Hunter indicated that it is the recommendation of the Finance Committee to approve retention of this new firm. Commissioner Harding questioned the comments made by the Town of Black Creek. Mr. Davie explained how current town auditors have reduced on site time in recent years from two weeks to three or four days because of changes in technology. Mayor Gardner confirmed that the new auditor would be effective in the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year. Commissioner King asked if a three year commitment was required. Mr. Davie replied that pricing would be several hundred dollars higher each succeeding year. Commissioner Britt indicated that it was quite a savings. Commissioner Hunter motioned to approve the new auditors and Commissioner King seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Public Works**

Commissioner Harding reported that alternative areas of revenue have been identified to replace revenue lost from the Inactive Water Account fees. Mr. Davie outlined the three areas for potential savings: 1. renegotiating the water contract with the county to reduce the amount of water the Town is required to purchase, 2. utilizing a contingency line item for Water/Sewer, 3. utilizing a contingency line item for WWTP. Commissioner Mooring asked if the result would be a flat line for the contingency budget line items. Mr. Davie confirmed it would exhaust those line items. Commissioner Harding asked if any funds would be utilized from W/S or WWTP reserve accounts. Mr. Davie indicated that no reserve funds would be used. Mayor Gardner stated that these identified areas were just being recommended and that no budget amendment was being presented. Mayor Gardner also indicated that the Board must rescind the ordinance pertaining to collection of fees for inactive water accounts. Commissioner Mooring asked if Commissioner Harding had finished exploring all revenue alternatives. After affirming she had completed explorations, Commissioner Harding questioned why it was needed to rescind an ordinance. Commissioner Mooring and Mayor Gardner confirmed that the ordinance was passed by the BOC several years prior. Commissioner Britt motioned to amend the portion of the appropriate ordinance making reference to Inactive Water Account Fees. John Mooring seconded the motion. The motion passed with Commissioner King dissenting.

### **Public Safety**

Commissioner Banzet called on Chief Lane for several items. Chief Lane reported that automobile accidents were increasing especially in parking lots, particularly the L. R. West lot. Chief Lane also reminded individuals to lock their cars, homes and sheds during the holiday season. He also cautioned of credit card fraud.

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

Commissioner Fleming reported that all is well with Human Resources.

### **Revitalization/Historical**

Commissioner King read aloud a letter received by the Town Administrator from the NC Department of Commerce announcing that the Town had received an award for its Small Town Main Street efforts. Commissioner King stated that the STMS volunteers deserved a pat on the back for their contributions as well as Mr. Davie for preparing a wonderful application. Commissioner King indicated, along with the Mayor and Mr. Davie, that he would be attending the awards conference in New Bern in January.

Commissioner King outlined that revenues received by Revitalization exceeded projections, and that STMS had 67% of its current budget still unspent.

Commissioner King proposed a new appointment for the Historic District Commission. Joan Arbuthnot is recommended by the Jacob Holt Foundation to fill the unexpired term of Bill Miller, whose term will be effective until the end of 2015. Commissioner King motioned to approve the nomination. Commissioner Harding seconded. Commissioner Britt asked how the appointee was known. Commissioner King replied that she is the resident of the Tarwater house. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner King proposed appointments to the Revitalization Committee. Patricia Allen and Selena Mooring will serve for two-year terms through the end of 2015. Elyse Brown-Jordan and Tim Ennis will serve three-year terms through the end of 2016. Bob Shingler and Cheryl will be reappointed for three-year terms through the end of 2016. Commissioner Harding inquired about Patricia Allen. Mayor Gardner indicated she owns a building on S. Main with an upstairs apartment. Commissioner Mooring motioned to approve the appointments. Commissioner Banzet seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Beautification/Facilities**

Commissioner Britt indicated the difficulty of resolving the paving problem on S. Main Street. The meeting with Duke Energy had been postponed but was expected to be rescheduled this week. Commissioner Britt thanked the Shinglers for their Halloween decorations and Fright Night efforts. Commissioner Britt highlighted the discussion from the recent Streetscape Committee meeting. Types of plants, including crape myrtles and pistachio trees, and types of benches, trash receptacles and bicycle racks were discussed. Six-foot benches are strongly considered. Trees on the courthouse square are to be left intact. Dead and damaged trees up and down Main Street will be removed. The landscape architect, with assistance from Bill Perkinson's staff, will be handling the majority of work. Duke Energy has agreed to remove trees under the power lines along the proposed streetscape area at no cost to the town. Bill Perkinson's crew will remove the debris and set up safety cones as needed. Leftover grant funds could hopefully be used for replacing damaged banners. Further discussion of plantings continued. Commissioner King inquired about the start date of work. Mr. Davie indicated the landscape architect would provide a schedule shortly. Commissioner Elect, Tom Hardy, suggested letting the public know of the available wood.

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

Commissioner Mooring had no report. Commissioner Mooring asked for confirmation that upstairs residences were permitted within the C-1 district. Mayor Gardner replied in the affirmative.

### **Old Business**

Mr. Davie reported constant work on the old Town Hall roof. Mayor Gardner said work would realistically be completed by the end of December. Commissioner Mooring added that less than 10 percent of the roof-supporting boards had been replaced. Commissioner Hunter inquired about newspapers being delivered to old Town Hall and left in the elements. Chief Lane indicated that the newspaper delivers them for free. Commissioner King offered to pick them up on his way into work each day.

Mr. Davie highlighted the curb and gutter recommendation for Harris Street from engineering firm Municipal Engineering Services. Ten feet of curbing will be added to each end of Harris St. on the east side of the street to address erosion and water concerns. If leftover funds from the current sewer project are available they will be used upon completion of the sewer portion, otherwise funds from Powell Bill will be used in the fall of 2014.

Mayor Gardner indicated that no upset bids had been received regarding the Holt property. The Town had received an initial offer of \$45,000. Commissioner Mooring expressed intent to

separate out funds to be used for matching grant purposes. Mr. Davie shared that the original intent of the donors was to have funds match a parks grant. Commissioner Mooring motioned to accept the bid and place proceeds into a separate account for future aesthetic-related grants. A second by Commissioner Banzet was made. A discussion regarding contents of the property ensued and the Town Administrator was directed to contact the buyer and determine if the offer included personal property. Debbe Speer, a citizen, offered that the Packhouse had auctioned off contents from the same property earlier in the year. Commissioner Banzet asked for the language in the Town's advertisement of the property. Commissioner Harding read a copy of the ad aloud. Commissioner Mooring withdrew his prior motion and Commissioner Banzet motioned to accept the offer for the lot and house, excluding the personal property, pursuant to the advertised language of the public notice. Commissioner Mooring seconded and the Board approved the motion unanimously.

### **New Business**

A budget amendment was requested by Mr. Davie authorizing \$2418.51 from Powell Bill reserve funds to be transferred into the current budget for Powell Bill related expenditures. The planned streetscape improvements highlight areas of disrepair on N. Main Street that were previously not considered for repair in the current fiscal year. Budget line items to be amended include:

#### General Fund

##### Expense

37-900-361 Maintenance & Repair Sidewalk--Increase of \$2418.51

##### Revenue

37-321-412 Powell Bill—Increase of \$2418.51

##### Powell Bill Reserve

37-102-006 Savings Powell Bill – Decrease by \$2418.51

Commissioner Britt motioned to approve the budget amendment with a second by Commissioner King. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Fleming suggested an area along Ridgway Street be considered for future improvement, applying weed killer where needed.

Mr. Davie outlined a proposal for extending the town-funded Awning and Blade Sign grant to also include promotion of the town and town merchants on the internet, specifically through Google. The extension of the grant fund can be easily implemented. The town will contribute 25% of the cost of the development of the Google sites, as it already does for new awnings or blade signs. There will be a limit of 10 grants at \$75 each for a maximum potential outlay of \$750. There is currently \$1000 in the fund for FY 2013-2014. It was confirmed for commissioners that the grant applied to businesses within the historic district and was a one-time event in the current budget. Commissioner Fleming motioned to accept the proposed grant extension with Commissioner Hunter seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Davie outlined a proposed Warrenton Downtown Redevelopment Incentive Grant (WDRIG). The purpose of this incentive policy is to encourage the significant rehabilitation of older buildings within Warrenton's downtown commercial district. The additional objective of WDRIG is to provide property owners and individuals with an incentive for long-term investment while improving of the economic viability and appearance of Warrenton's Downtown District. Details of the proposal were discussed as was a five-year sunset clause. Commissioner Mooring motioned to accept the WDRIG with no sunset clause with Commissioner King seconding. Questions arose regarding frequency of property valuation by the County. Commissioner Fleming offered an amendment to the motion to include a five-year sunset clause beginning on this date of adoption. Commissioners Mooring and King accepted the amendment and a unanimous vote approved the motion.

Mr. Davie asked the Board to approve his solicitation of grant funds from the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The Application for Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Funds will include no match from the town and will establish a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle

plan for the town. This plan is a prerequisite for grant funds from NC DOT for sidewalks and bicycle paths. Commissioner Mooring motioned to approve application for the grant with seconding by Commissioner King. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mayor Gardner informed newly elected officials of the required course in Essentials of Municipal Government offered at the UNC School of Government. He asked commissioners to contact the Town Administrator and make arrangements.

**Announcements**

Commissioner King announced that the Prelude to Christmas will begin at 4:00 on December 14, and the Christmas parade will begin at 5:00 PM. Parking on Main Street will be prohibited after 3:00 PM on that day.

Mayor Gardner welcomed Tom Hardy to the Board of Commissioners and thanked Commissioner Banzet for his many years of gracious service. He encouraged Mr. Banzet to return to the December meeting for the swearing in of new commissioners.

Commissioner Banzet made his final motion, as a Commissioner, to adjourn, and it was seconded by all present. With no further business the meeting adjourned.