

Walter M. Gardner, Jr.
Mayor

Jeffery W. Parrott
Administrator

TOWN OF WARRENTON

"Historically Great - Progressively Strong"

P. O. Box 281

Warrenton, NC 27589-0281

PHONE (252) 257-3315 FAX (252) 257-9219

The February 13, 2012 Minutes Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting

Those present were:

Mayor Walter Gardner, Jr.

Commissioner Woody King

Commissioner Mary Hunter

Commissioner Al Fleming

Commissioner Robert Davie

Jeffery Parrott, Town Administrator

Commissioner John Mooring

Goble Lane, Interim Police Chief

Commissioner Margaret Britt

Bill Perkinson, Public Works Director

Commissioner Julius Banzet

Bettie Davis

Annette Silver

There were 13 citizens in attendance.

Call to Order/Minutes/Agenda

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM. On a personal note he thanked everyone for the concern for his father who he said is not doing well. The proposed agenda was accepted no comment.

Public Comments

Public comments were heard by Anne Harris, and James C. Harris. Mrs. Harris spoke first, and she stated that she would like to understand the open meeting laws better. As a member of the Sunshine List she does receive information but wants more information. She wanted to know who collects the committee minutes. She also wants notification, agendas and minutes for all committee meetings. Mrs. Harris asked if there is a single custodian of all Town Board and committee meeting minutes. She wants to know where the committee minutes are kept, and if there is a fee for paper copies? Ms. Harris asked if information can be put on the website. Mayor Gardner stated that committee chairs are responsible for keeping meeting minutes. The Town Administrator receives a copy of committee minutes, which are kept at Town Hall for future reference. Mayor Gardner stated that notices of all meetings are sent to the local paper and posted at Town Hall. The Mayor announced that he thought the fee for paper copies was around \$0.25 per sheet.

James Harris spoke next. He said that he was present as a Town taxpayer and he had three areas to address: the Town Hall Renovation project, Main Street parking, and the Public Works department. Mr. Harris stated to his knowledge the Town Hall has had no

renovation work done since the 1980s, when he did contract work there. He recommended remodeling the building so that the Town employees would have a decent, safe and sanitary place to conduct business. He recommended that the Town purchase the building owned by Willoughby Harris at 222 S. Main Street (beside WRFD) and remodel it (with the Police Department and its needs in mind) as a temporary location for the Police Department and Town offices. Mr. Harris suggested that the Town hire retired local people to gut the Town Hall and take it down to the “bare bones,” so that those bidding on the renovation can see exactly what it is there that needs to be dealt with. He added that contractors will build in extra costs in their bids because of the “unknown.” Gutting the building prior to putting the project out for bid would eliminate these unknowns. He also suggested renovating only the first floor (but including an elevator shaft for when a second floor is needed) and putting a new roof on the building. After this is done he suggested that the administrative offices and museum move back into Town Hall and leave the Police Department at the S. Main Street location. Mr. Harris stated that the present tax base for the Town per R. E. Mitchum (County Tax Administrator) is \$64 million. Mr. Harris stated as residents become older the tax base will decrease more and more if annexation does not occur. Commissioner Davie asked if a contractor could get adequate renovation figures without gutting the building. Mr. Harris said he did not believe so. He agrees that with interest rates as low as they are, now is the time to borrow the money and do this project. Mr. Harris’s second concern is the problem of merchants parking on Main Street all day in front of their shops. He suggested a Town ordinance of No Parking by Business Owners to eliminate this problem. On a final note, Mr. Harris congratulated the Board of Commissioners for providing the necessary equipment and vehicles for the Public Works department to do work needed in town. He stated that some of the work locations are in hard-to-get-to places and in low-lying areas and that Public Works needs heavy duty 4WD vehicles to get to the jobs. The Mayor thanked Mr. Harris for his comments and concerns.

Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes of Board meetings December 12, 2011, & January 9, 2012
- B. Year-to-Date Revenues and Expenditures Reports (Budget vs. Actual)
- C. All January Checks
- D. Sewer Adjustment Requests – None
- E. Public Works Monthly Report
- F. WWTP Monthly Report
- G. Police Activity Report

The consent agenda was approved unanimously following a motion from Commissioner Banzet and a second by Commissioner King.

Committee Reports

Public Works

Commissioner Davie and Bill Perkinson reported the Water Committee met with a customer who had concerns and a follow-up meeting is to be scheduled. No other concerns are reported.

Public Safety

Commissioner Banzet and Interim Police Chief Lane reported nothing out of the ordinary except that accident reports are higher than the normal rate for this reporting period. Interim Police Chief Lane and Norlina Police Chief Barker have met to discuss and confirm a written mutual aid agreement so that the towns can give each other back-up when needed on police calls. Interim Chief Lane also reminded everyone of the Merchants Meeting scheduled for February 21, 2012, at the Fire Department. Ms. Britt suggested that downtown parking be addressed at the Merchants Meeting.

Finance and Administration

Commissioner Hunter stated that the Finance Committee met with Rebecca Harris from Citizen's Insurance and Bonding Company to clarify certain insurance questions. Commissioner Mooring questioned the Town Administrator on a check to Time Warner Cable. Bill Perkinson explained that it was a computer hook-up bill that was done some time ago before the present administrator. Commissioner Britt questioned checks to Patrick Electric and Mr. Perkinson explained they were for electric service at the wastewater plant and for work at the King Street Building. Commissioner Britt also questioned checks to Old Dominion Brush Company which were explained by Mr. Perkinson as bills for leaf vacuum repairs referred to in the monthly activity report for public works. Commissioner Britt thanked the Town staff for furnishing the Board with an itemized check listing. Commissioner Mooring questioned the Commission Accreditation check. Chief Lane explained that it was from a July bill left unpaid that carried over from last year. Mr. Parrott stated that if commissioners have questions concerning checks they are always welcome to call Town Hall and set up a time to meet with staff and get an answer.

Human Resources/Information Technology

Commissioner Fleming reported that he and Commissioner Banzet (Public Safety Chair) had talked but at present have not had a scheduled meeting for their joint committees. He had no report on Information Technology.

Revitalization/Historic

Commissioner King had nothing to report from the Historic District Commission. King reported that on Tuesday, February 14, there is a 4:00 meeting of the Revitalization Committee and a 6:00 Small Town Main Street Meeting. Commissioner Hunter stated that she was in Edenton recently and noted that its exemplary downtown revitalization is the result of its Small Town Main Street project. She went on to say that she hoped everyone fully understood the difference this program could make to Warrenton and urged everyone in the room and others to get involved in the Small Town Main Street effort. Commissioner King agreed and said that we as a board should work together to make this a success.

Beautification/Facilities

Commissioner Britt thanked Mr. Perkinson and his staff for repairs to the trash receptacles. She stated that she met individually with town merchants to voice her concerns of merchants using the trash receptacles on Main Street instead of their trash cans in the rear of the buildings. Ms. Britt stated that her visits to downtown merchants were received with mixed reviews; however, the merchants agreed that the streets are cleaner. Commissioner Hunter also noted that the dog walker dispensers for plastic bags need to be refilled. Commissioner King stated if bags are not at Town Hall he would attempt to get another donation.

Planning/Zoning/Annexation

Commissioner Mooring had no report. Commissioner Mooring asked the status of the water/sewer access fee project. Mr. Parrott stated that the project is approximately two-thirds complete and it is a time-consuming job. Mr. Perkinson explained that Citipak, a computer program that the Town uses, does not have a compatible program to do this task automatically; therefore, the work is being done manually. At present there are 140 vacant residences that have been identified in Town and in the surrounding area.

Unfinished Business

Commissioner Mooring stated that he has not met with any of the local funeral directors yet, because he has had too much going on and has not had time to do it. Commissioner Fleming reported that his committee has not met but he will have a report at the March meeting. Mayor Gardner reported that The Town Hall Renovation Survey Committee has not met but will have a report at the March meeting.

Mayor Gardner presented a slide show of the Town Hall Feasibility Study done by O'Brien & Gere, which identified both exterior and interior concerns. The exterior components that are failing are: cracks in the brick façade, missing mortar at the brick façade, rotted wood at the soffit, window trim deterioration, and breaches in the roof. Interior elements of concern include: environmental conditions (asbestos, black mold, and lead paint), poor electrical wiring and service, no handicap accessibility, poor building security, little or no insulation, single pane windows, window trim deterioration, poor condition of bathrooms, and extensive water damage. The purpose of the facility renovations will be to create a safe, secure, and effective work environment that will allow the Town employees to better serve the needs of Warrenton. The study process included five steps: creating an existing floor plan, interviewing the facility users, developing a renovation plan, conducting a structural survey and developing a cost estimate. There were 31 slides shown depicting the poor condition of Town Hall. O'Brien & Gere estimated that the construction cost will be \$1.2M for both a first and second floor renovation, and \$852,000 for a first floor only renovation.

Commissioner Davie reported that there have been some changes in the tax credit laws since the Town started the project. He has contacted the USDA office, State House Representative Butterfield, and Tara Shubert (a Group of Investors from Charlotte, NC)

for more information and details. Commissioner Fleming wanted to know what tax credits the town would get if the town does not pay taxes. Davie explained that the tax credit would go into an LLC for five years and then it would revert back to Town Hall. It was explained that the building would change ownership for a five-year period of time then be deeded back to the Town. The tax credit is approximately 40% of the cost of construction. It was suggested the Town contact the Tara Shubert Group of Investors for more information.

Commissioner Davie also stated that he received information from Richard Hunter referring to a Tobacco Trust Fund Grant offered by the State. This Grant is not a matching grant and there is not a cost to apply, only the time of the administrator in applying for and administrating the grant. The application is due in March. A motion was made by Commissioner Mooring, seconded by Commissioner King and passed unanimously, allowing the Town Administrator to pursue a Tobacco Trust Fund Grant.

New Business

The Town Administrator discussed a possible future Board of Commissioners Work Session/ Retreat. Commissioner Mooring asked if the date and/or the location had been finalized as he has to take a day off work in order to attend. At present, it is hoped to be a day meeting within the county to discuss upcoming budget needs. Commissioner Hunter will send emails out to each commissioner and try to coordinate a date that would work for everyone.

No Resolutions

No Announcements

No Closed Sessions

Meeting Adjourned

Mayor Gardner announced that if there was no other business he would entertain a motion to adjourn. That motion was made by Commissioner Banzet, seconded by King and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:15.