

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

**John Freeman**  
Administrator

**TOWN OF WARRENTON**  
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**March 14, 2011 Board of Commissioners Minutes**

The March 14, 2011 meeting of the Town of Warrenton Board of Commissioners was held at Town Hall.

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

John Freeman, Town Administrator  
Town Attorney Mitch Styers  
Jennifer Harris, Warren Record  
Public Works Director Bill Perkinson

Absent: Commissioner Woody King

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. He then presented the proposed agenda for approval. Commissioner Blalock requested that a change be made to this and future agendas with the request that committee reports requiring the participation of support staff be moved to the beginning of that section so that staff would not need to stay beyond their participation. With that change Mr. Blalock moved to approve the agenda; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

There being no member of the public in attendance to make comments Mayor Gardner then presented the consent agenda that included:

- A. Minutes of Board meeting February 14, 2011
- B. Y-T-D Cash Flow Report
- C. Y-T-D Tax Revenue Report
- D. Y-T-D State Shared Revenue Report
- E. Checks in excess of \$10,000
- F. MacKenzie; Harris; WC Health Dept sewer adjustment requests
- G. Public Works Monthly Report
- H. WWTP Monthly Report
- I. Police Activity Report

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

## **Committee Reports**

### **Public Works**

Commissioner Davie turned to Director Bill Perkinson for his report on Public Works and the Treatment Plant. Mayor Gardner noted a number of pending repairs listed on the written report, to which Mr. Perkinson responded that all were planned but that weather, equipment availability and higher priority unexpected repairs had delayed their completion. Mayor Gardner asked about the status of major repairs to the WWTP administration building and lighting. Mr. Perkinson said that the assistance of the county had been requested regarding roof repair and replacement of windows as their maintenance department had accomplished a number of major renovation projects to county buildings. He said that he had assisted the county with a lighting assessment in conjunction with Progress Energy, and was also obtaining a quote from an electrical contractor. He said that scheduled work was also being paced with the comfort level of the partners when emergency repairs had to be undertaken immediately. Mr. Perkinson also reported that a water leak had caused the sinkhole in South Main Street and that it had been repaired today.

Mr. Davie reported there has been some progress in the downtown renovation project as Mr. Eddie Belk had submitted a plan for a restaurant conversion to a local business person. He suggested that the mayor send a letter on behalf of the Board to Mr. Belk assuring him of its support. Mayor Gardner said he had written once but would be glad to write again. Mr. Davie suggested that a reason for the follow up letter could be to communicate the Town's interest in utilizing tax credits for the renovation of Town Hall. Mr. Gardner said he would let Mr. Belk know that the Town is as interested as he is in the renovation of downtown. A question about the status of the reported new restaurant on North Main Street was raised, and Mr. Styers said that his understanding was that the owners were in the process of applying for a liquor license. Commissioner Blalock asked if anything had come before a Town committee and Mr. Freeman said the owner had called once about zoning. Commissioner Mooring said that the Historic District Commission was the only Town committee that would need to approve, and asked Chief Younts to call and check on the status of the liquor license application to see if his assistance could expedite the application.

### **Public Safety**

Commissioner Blalock asked Chief Younts for a report, and he in turn asked if there were questions stemming from the monthly activity report. There being none Mr. Blalock asked about staffing levels. Chief Younts said that the department is fully staffed though two reserves are sharing the schedule of one full time position. When asked about the parking enforcement position he said that he had hired two people, one of whom never answered his call to offer the job and the other of whom did not return for work the second day. He had scheduled interviews for the following week. Mr. Davie asked if there had been reductions in insurance since embarking on the process of accreditation. Chief Younts said that there would not be any until the process was completed, but he had been assured that there would be reductions when the policy was evaluated following accreditation. Commissioner Mooring asked if Board action was required to allow Younts to proceed with the accreditation process, but he said not until July when there would be budget implications.

Mr. Blalock said that February was a busy month for the fire department, with the Southern States building fire and 2000 acre wildfire in the county, perhaps the widest spread fire in county history. It had been ignited by sparks created by improper towing of a junk car.

### **Planning, Zoning and Annexation**

Commissioner Mooring reviewed the subject of the Public Hearing that had preceded the Board meeting, and based on it and the recommendation of the Planning/Zoning/Annexation Committee moved to remove churches and assembly halls from the Table of Permitted Uses in the C-1 Downtown Business District. Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion. Mayor Gardner asked if there was any discussion; there being none the Board voted unanimously to approve the change.

Commissioner Mooring then addressed the “broken window ordinance” proposed by the Citizens Advisory Board and recommended by the Planning/Zoning/Annexation Committee. He asked Town Attorney Styers for a status report and he advised that to be effective it would have to be treated as an aesthetic measure rather than one dealing with safety. If the latter it would need to apply to all buildings in Town and would be part of a minimum building standard with enforcement complications, while the Historic District Ordinance applies to appearance. Since the intended focus is to be the downtown business district that is included in the historic district in which window and door replacements are subject to the requirement of a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic District Commission Mr. Styres suggested that the broken window ordinance be added to that existing ordinance. Mayor Gardner suggested addressing the need for penalty fees in the Historic District Ordinance at the same time that broken windows be added. Mr. Mooring expressed concern that the goal of a simple, relatively easily enforced ordinance would be complicated by becoming part of a larger, complicated ordinance. He asked Mr. Styers for an estimate of how long it would take him to draft an ordinance and he was not sure, as he is currently having the entire Code of Ordinances revised and this one would take some time to research. At Mr. Mooring’s request he said he would attempt to have it ready by the time of the next Historic District Commission meeting on March 28. Mayor Gardner suggested that the Planning/Zoning/Annexation Committee meet with the Historic District Commission to discuss it together. There followed discussion about the question of application throughout the historic district which includes both residential and commercial properties, with Mayor Gardner suggesting that it simply state “commercial buildings in the historic district” and be prepared to defend it if necessary. Mr. Mooring noted one advantage of incorporating it into the HDC was its regular meeting schedule and dealing with similar issues, and asking Citizen Advisory Board to observe and report violations. It was agreed that a draft of the ordinance would need to be seen before proceeding with a public hearing or other action. Mr. Mooring said the committee would meet again to discuss it.

### **Beautification/Facilities**

Commissioner Tippet noted several items involving cleanup around Town.

- Mr. Freeman confirmed that four trees on Main Street were marked for removal, and that bids had been requested from tree removal firms.
- Commissioner Hunter noted that two previously reportedly dangerous trees on Hazelwood Street had been taken down.
- The front yard of the overgrown property at 311 Church Street had been cleared by the owner at the request of the Town.
- Leaf collection had ended for the season, and the leaf box removed from the new multipurpose truck.

Mr. Freeman reported that the Ridgeway Street sidewalk project was nearly finished and that he had met with Larissa Mills, of the county health department and coordinator of the Healthy Carolinians, to plan a dedication event. One suggestion is to make it part of the planned Health Fair on April 5. He will meet with the board of the Healthy Carolinians on Thursday to discuss it further.

### **Finance and Administration**

Referring to the year-to-date cash flow report included in the consent agenda Mr. Freeman said that it reflected the requested budget amendments to be presented under New Business. He said that while ad valorem tax revenues would likely reflect the county’s 1% shortfall, other sources of revenue had increased to offset it. He said that he and Chief Younts had discussed the police department budget and that the chief was confident of meeting the budget with the requested amendments. The Water Sewer Department cash flow had improved as planned.

Commissioner Davie asked about the status of the Town Hall feasibility report and Mr. Freeman said the architect was waiting for direction from him. He had been waiting for Board feedback and was concerned about some different ideas expressed by Mr. Belk after the project was underway. He said he would have the architect finish it and the cost details would be useful. Mr. Davie asked that the finished study be shared with Mr. Belk.

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

There being no reports Commissioner Mooring asked if the old Town website had been redirected to the new. Commissioner Davie said that the old one was the product of the Revitalization Committee and that he was waiting for its permission to have it redirected. He said that searches that found the old site would be redirected to the new, improving its find-ability. Mr. Blalock said that a Google search did not find the new site, indicating a problem with the search keys.

### **Revitalization/Historical**

Mr. Freeman reported that the Rural Center had awarded the Reuse and Renovation Grant for the 108-110 South Main Street project in the amount of \$56,000. It was hoped that this would allow the owners to begin renovation of this important building on courthouse square. He said that he had been told that the Town was scoring well on its application for a USDA grant for a revolving loan fund, but that decisions had not yet been made.

The most important items was a reminder that the second Town Café event was to be held the next night at the Armory. This is an important effort by the Warrenton Revitalization Committee to invite citizen participation in improvements in the downtown specifically and the Town in general.

### **Unfinished Business**

Mr. Freeman reported on the status of formalizing fire inspections in Town. The county had proposed an agreement that was just what had been requested to undertake all building and fire inspections, but that under review more detail was needed in the performance section. Mr. Styers had drafted a proposed revision that had been submitted to the county manager. An alternative solution would be to contract with an outside person to set up an inventory of buildings with a schedule of inspections, and to have a certified inspector perform the inspections with the financial support of fees. Mr. Freeman reported that he and Commissioner Davie had met with Ken Caudill of the Cary Fire Department who was going to make a proposal for setting up the inventory and schedule, and for implementation. He said his goal was to have a recommendation by the next Board meeting. Commissioner Mooring requested that emails involving fire inspections be copied to the Board.

### **New Business**

Mayor Gardner asked Mr. Freeman to introduce the requested budget amendments that had been included with the meeting preparation packets. He said that most were balancing entries of unanticipated revenue and expense, but that some adjustments were required by the award of the CRRP Police Officer grant that had been awarded after the beginning of the fiscal year. The grant pays for a base officer salary and benefits but not for anything above that or for uniforms or equipment. The amendment includes the expected reimbursement amount as revenue and all salary related expenses, uniforms and equipment as expenditures. In order to cover these unbudgeted costs the requested amendment transfers the budgeted general fund transfers in the Administration Department to the Police Department. Mr. Freeman noted that this was not reducing the general fund but reducing the amount anticipated to be added to it. He said that he does anticipate that there will be funds to add to the balance at the end of the year, though less than the previous year. Following his explanation Commissioner Blalock moved that the amendments be approved; Commissioner Tippett seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mayor Gardner then addressed the second item of New Business, setting dates for budget workshops. As Mr. Freeman had said that he would not have the proposed budget ready for presentation at the April meeting, Mayor Gardner asked commissioners to be prepared with their calendars to set dates then.

### **Resolutions**

There were no resolutions to present

## **Announcements**

Mayor Gardner reminded the Board that a Public Hearing had been set for 6:45pm on April 11, just before the next scheduled Board meeting, to receive comments on the proposed Water Shortage Response Plan that is mandated by the state. He said that in the past the Town, as a basic water customer of the Kerr Lake Water Authority and Warren County could just adopt their plans. Now, however, the Town was required to have its own plan to deal with its own customers. There was some discussion about the organization of the Kerr Lake Authority with Mayor Gardner assuring Commissioner Mooring that its activities are transparent, but that because the Town of Warrenton is not a direct customer, it is not a member of its advisory board.

There being no additional business, Mayor Gardner declared the meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Freeman  
Town Administrator