

Walter M. Gardner, Jr.
Mayor

John Freeman
Administrator

TOWN OF WARRENTON
"Historically Great - Progressively Strong"
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November 8, 2010 Board of Commissioners Minutes

The November 8, 2010 meeting of the Town of Warrenton Board of Commissioners was held at Town Hall.

Those present were:

Mayor Walter M. Gardner, Jr.	John Freeman, Town Administrator
Commissioner Jules Banzet	Town Attorney Mitch Styers
Commissioner John Mooring	Police Chief John Younts
Commissioner Robert Davie	Jennifer Harris, Warren Record
Commissioner Mary Hunter	
Commissioner Audrey Tippet	
Commissioner John Blalock	

Absent: Commissioner and Mayor Pro Tem Woody King

Also: Julie Reid, Community Development Administrator for the Kerr Tar COG
Jim Winston, Town auditor
Carleen Norwood and Gabe Cumming

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 Blalock seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mayor Gardner then presented the consent agenda that included:

- Minutes of the Board meeting October 11, 2010
- Minutes of Public Hearing October 11, 2010
- Y-T-D Cash Flow report
- Y-T-D Tax revenue report
- Y-T-D state shared revenue report

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

Public Comments

There were no members of the general public in attendance.

Resolutions

Mayor Gardner reviewed the proposed resolution requested by the Kerr Tar COG in support of the application for CDBG-R funding for the decaying and undersized Franklin Street sewer line between Hayley Street and Earleen

Lane. Commissioner Mooring moved that the resolution be adopted; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

New Business

Auditor Jim Winston reported on the 2009-2010 annual audit for the year ending June 30, 2010. He said the Town had a good year, had made nice improvements and was heading in the right direction. He said the audit had received an unqualified opinion and that everything was in order. He said the general fund balance in particular had improved, but that the Town should work toward 50% of a year’s expenditures. Among the highlights he pointed out:

- Total assets had increased \$113,483 compared with an increase of \$14,562 the previous year
- Unreserved fund balance had increased \$69,397 to \$137,179, which equals 14.65% of expenditures compared with 7.9% last year
- Fund balance of governmental funds increased \$84,245
- Fund balance of proprietary funds increased from a negative \$37,056 to a positive \$39,440, a positive swing of \$76,496
- Cash balances improved \$137,050 to \$478,838
- Tax collection had improved from 95.55% to 96.85%, “a great number”

Mayor Gardner read from Sharon Edmundson of the LGC in her comment letter to the Board that “we commend the Town’s management, staff and citizens for that improvement.” Commissioner Blalock expressed appreciation on behalf of the Board to Mr. Freeman, Finance Clerk Bettie Davis, Mr. Perkinson and Chief Younts for their efforts to improve the Town’s financial position.

In other New Business Mr. Freeman reviewed the project being proposed for Town sponsorship through a Rural Center Grant. Carla Norwood and Gabe Cumming, who own 108-110 South Main Street, requested that the Town sponsor an application to the NC Rural Center for a grant for \$60,000 to be part of the funding for their planned renovation of this building on courthouse square. Norwood and Gabe Cumming presented their plans to Commissioners Hunter and Davie (and Mr. Freeman) of Finance Committee on November 2. Their project is to renovate the first floor of their building into a pie shop, leased retail space and office. Acceptance of the grant, if awarded, would be contingent on approval of a bank loan to Norwood-Cumming for the balance of the cost of the project. Commissioner Hunter said it was a wonderful presentation, very thorough and a worthy project. Commissioner Mooring asked about the town obligation which Mr. Freeman explained would be 3% of the grant amount, which would be in the value of administration and support rather than cash, as well as making a good faith effort to recover the funds should the project fail. The proposal is based on the creation of seven jobs, 5 in the pie shop and 2 in a consulting firm. Following discussion about the definition of the jobs created and the language of the application Commissioner Davie moved that the Town support the application of Norwood-Cumming for a Rural Center Building Reuse and Renovation grant of \$60,000; Commissioner Hunter seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Finance and Administration

Commissioner Hunter reported that the six checks exceeding \$10,000 appeared appropriate:

MIT	\$11,033.74	Monthly employee health insurance
Warren county	\$16,720.13	Water purchase
Sheehy Ford	\$24,411.61	Public Works pickup truck

Other reports were included in the consent agenda. Mr. Freeman noted that for the first month since December 2008 the current month Sales and Use Tax Revenue exceeds the previous year, and that revenues and expenditures were on target.

Human Resources/Information Technology

Mr. Freeman reported that Eddie Long of the Street Department continued his recovery from shoulder surgery but was not yet back to work. He also said that Teresa Clifton of the Water Sewer Department had announced her retirement effective November 26.

Public Safety

There being no questions about the monthly activity report Commissioner Blalock asked Chief Younts to review staffing. He said that all positions were filled and officers on the road. He said Officer Alford was completing his advanced field training and would be released for independent duty on December 1. Commissioner Davie asked about the status of the investigation into the recent shooting and vehicle theft at Hardees; as an on-going investigation Chief Younts could only answer that the vehicle had been recovered in Roanoke Rapids.

Chief Younts then went on to discuss the recently announced information technology grants for Police Departments. The maximum grant amount is \$50,000 which would required a match of \$12,500. He said it covered a variety of technology, including phone systems, servers, networked copier/printers and would be an opportunity to update the old equipment at Town Hall. The server is at least five years old and not designed to be a server, and the phone system will not support basic functions such as caller ID. He said the application would require Board approval and was due at the end of January, with awards announced on April 1 and funds available on July 1. This schedule would allow the matching funds to be budgeted for the next fiscal year. Commissioner Blalock moved that the Board approve the application for this technology grant; Commissioner Mooring seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mayor Gardner reminded the Board that the Fire Department would hold its biggest annual fund raiser of the year on Thanksgiving, and encouraged all to attend.

Beautification/Facilities

Commissioner Tippet introduced the subject of the feasibility study for Town Hall renovations and asked Mr. Freeman for a review. He reminded the Board that it had decided to wait for audit results before approving an unbudgeted expenditure for this feasibility study which would be necessary for an application to the USDA or any other funding agency. With the favorable audit results reported by Mr. Winston he recommended that the Board approve a budget amendment to approve the proposal from O'Brien & Gere for \$12,575 to produce the study, prepare the USDA application and presentation. Commissioner Mooring so moved; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mrs. Tippet noted that the old poles abandoned when Progress Energy installed new ones last year were being removed. It was noted that a long length of wire was hanging from a pole at South Main and Franklin Streets and Mr. Freeman said he would call either cable or phone company about it. Mr. Blalock asked about the new parking signs and Mr. Perkinson said he had ordered posts and they should be installed in the next two weeks.

Public Works

Mr. Perkinson reported that the Ridgeway Street sidewalk project had been progressing very well, with the cooperation of good weather, and was probably within two weeks of completion. Commissioner Hunter suggested that an official event celebrate the completion of the project, such as a ribbon cutting, group walk or kids on bikes.

Mr. Perkinson announced that the Wastewater Treatment Plant had passed its recent annual inspection with no negative comments. He also described a current repair at the Cochrane water tank on North Main Street that had required most of the department that day but was nearly complete.

Mr. Freeman reported that the negotiations relating to the WWTP operating contract had slowed as he was to return with a budget that showed the plant as an entirely separate entity rather than a department of the town. He said he has been working on a written summary of the contract and background.

Revitalization/Historical

Mr. Freeman reported that Harvest Market on October 23 had gone smoothly though turnout was not as much as had been hoped. There was considerable competition that day with perfect weather that drew people to other events such as a one-day record for attendance at the state fair.

He said plans for the Town Café event at the Armory on November 16 were well under way and it was hoped that more than 100 people would participate. Mayor Gardner encouraged all commissioners to attend.

Planning, Zoning and Annexation

There was no report.

Unfinished Business

Mayor Gardner said that Warren County Code Enforcement Administrator Baron Williams had completed five fire inspections the previous week and planned more in the coming week. As these inspections focus on occupied buildings Commissioner Davie expressed his concern about the potential danger from those that are unoccupied. His understanding is that a notice on the door of an unoccupied building constitutes an inspection, but is not the same as a thorough inspection. Mayor Gardner said that the town can assist the fire inspectors in various ways such as researching contact information of property owners.

Mayor Gardner reported that he and Mr. Freeman had met with Warren County Health Director Andy Smith, Board of Health Chairman Jerry Bolton and Environmental Health Director Jessica Crawford the previous Friday. Mr. Smith had provided a list of what the health department could and could not do by statute. In general, the department has no authority over private property and the way people choose to live, although malfunctioning septic systems are an environmental hazard that can be acted on (though not broken tops which are safety but not public health hazards). There authority is primarily over commercial food preparation and sales, schools, nursing homes, day care and similar facilities. Mayor Gardner said it was helpful meeting.

Announcements

Mayor Gardner announced that the Colonial Lodge apartment building was to undergo substantial renovation, and that the owner had requested a letter of support from the Board to help support his application for grant funding. Commissioner Mooring moved that the mayor write such a letter of support; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

There being no additional business Commissioner Banzet moved that the meeting be adjourned; Commissioner Blalock seconded the motion and Mayor Gardner declared the meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Freeman
Town Administrator