

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

**John Freeman**  
Administrator

**TOWN OF WARRENTON**  
*"Historically Great - Progressively Strong"*  
P. O. Box 281  
Warrenton, NC 27589-0281  
PHONE (252) 257-3315 FAX (252) 257-9219

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**October 12, 2009 Board of Commissioners Minutes**

The October 12, 2009 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	
Commissioner Bobby Edmonds	
Commissioner John Mooring	
Commissioner Mary Hunter	
Commissioner Audrey Tippet	

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The first order of business was consideration of the proposed agenda. Commissioner Edmonds moved that the agenda be approved. Commissioner Mooring seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mayor Gardner then presented the minutes from the meeting of September 14, 2009 for approval. Commissioner Mooring moved that the minutes be approved; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Edmonds and carried unanimously.

**Public Comments**

There being no member of the public who wished to address the Board Mayor Gardner moved on to committee reports.

**Committee Reports**

**Zoning**

Commissioner Mooring reported that he had requested that John Freeman seek comments about the proposed Vacant Property Registry from Tyler Mulligan, the SOG faculty member who had presented a workshop on January 8, 2009 about this and related subjects. There had been past discussion about whether the proposed Vacant Property Registry could stand on its own (as Mr. Mooring and several others proposed) or needed a Minimum Housing Standard to give it authority (the opinion of Town Attorney Styers). Mulligan had responded with specific suggested changes and the opinion that as long as the Vacant Property Registry did not overlap the Minimum Housing Standards it could stand alone. Mr. Mooring asked Mr. Freeman to distribute Mulligan's comments to the Board.

## **Public Works**

With Director Bill Perkinson absent for vacation Commissioner Hunter reviewed his written monthly report. Regarding Public Works he reported that there had been a number of water leaks successfully repaired, that the Peck Dam was maintaining its level and that the department was catching up on mowing of water and sewer rights-of-way that had fallen somewhat behind during the extended illness of the employee primarily responsible.

For the Waste Water Treatment Plant he had listed a number of repairs and maintenance procedures accomplished. He also listed draining and cleaning clarifier no. 2 in preparation for an engineering report requested by county manager Linda Worth. Mr. Freeman elaborated on Perkinson's report, saying that the effort involved with draining the clarifier was necessary in support of the county effort to obtain rehabilitation funds. Application has been made through the DCA, and officials there required current information. The effort required that employees Perkinson and Kenny Champion stay up until 4:30 am the night before to oversee the draining of the tank. Following the inspection it took several days to bring the unit back on line and balanced. The engineer completed his report with an estimate of \$869,000 for repairs to the clarifiers and SCADA automated control system.

## **Beautification/Streets/Sanitation**

Mr. Perkinson's reports transitioned to Streets and Sanitation as he had reported on the overhaul of the leaf machine in preparation for the upcoming leaf collection season. The impeller and liner have been replaced due to excess erosion, and a variety of relatively minor repairs were made. The leaf truck has also been serviced and is ready for the season. Commissioner Tippet reported that Perkinson had told her that these leaf machine repairs were necessary every two years because of the heavy use it is subjected to.

His report also addressed the maintenance of the Town cemetery and the impact of the cancellation of the Inmate Community Service Program. The prisons have now cancelled all inmate work programs so that it is not even possible to train Town employees to supervise inmates, for which the Board had asked for a cost analysis. A promising alternative has been found as Tar River Landscaping did a good job of mowing and trimming for \$350 and would provide monthly service for a contracted price of \$275. There was general agreement that this was the option to follow, with two concerns to be addressed.

- First, the funding source for such an un-budgeted expense. Mr. Freeman reported that the combined overtime and part time budgets for Streets and Sanitation are \$7134 of which \$439 has been spent, leaving \$6695. Because cemetery maintenance would most likely be performed as overtime or part time he recommended utilizing this as the source. The annual cost of \$3300 to contract with Tar River Landscaping would still leave \$3395 in these budget categories.
- Second, there was general agreement that expectations should be spelled out in a contract, such as how to deal with litter so that it does not get shredded by mowers, who decides how often the mowing should be done (Styers—such as 2 or 3 times monthly), that limbs should be stacked and where they should be placed. Mr. Styers said the Franklinton contract could be used as a model or source.

Commissioner Mooring moved that Mr. Freeman be authorized to negotiate a contract that dealt with these concerns; Commissioner Edmonds seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Tippet also said she had noticed that E&R, the contractor replacing power poles, was leaving large bundles of wire hanging from poles. Commissioner Mooring explained the process of pole replacement which is that the owner of the poles installs a new pole and moves its service, leaving the old pole beside it. The other utilities then are required to move their service from old to new pole within a certain time period, after which the old pole is removed and the dirt piles used to

fill them. He suggested that the reported hanging wires belonged to the secondary utilities who had not yet moved them to the new poles. Mr. Freeman said that he had made frequent calls to Progress Energy about problems with E&R, and while Progress Energy had been responsive E&R had not.

Mr. Freeman reported that the Citizens Advisory Board had nominated Rev. Allen Kelley to fill the seat vacated by Travis Ormsby. Commissioner Blalock so moved; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mooring raised the question about whether there could be a rule or ordinance that required all new utility work to be underground. Mayor Gardner said it would probably not be possible but that the question could be put to the Utilities Commissioner to see if it could be mandated. There was some discussion about past proposals to remove the overhead wires from Main Street, with Mayor Gardner saying that one was to move the service to parallel streets so that buildings were served from the back, and more recently, that the utility companies would put their services underground if the Town dug the holes. Commissioner Edmonds asked if Frontier Energy had announced any plans to extend natural gas service. Commissioner Mooring said that his understanding was that a petition from residents would give the local office more influence. There was some discussion about starting petitions and resident Bill Miller offered to take care of South Main Street, Mr. Mooring offered to take care of North Main Street and Mr. King Marshall Street. The greatest influence would be for potential customers who would use natural gas as a major energy source for heating and hot water heaters, not minor use such as gas logs.

### **Revitalization/Historical**

Commissioner King reviewed plans for Harvest Market, which is to take place on Saturday, October 24 from 10:00-5:00. He asked all commissioners to attend, and said that the Revitalization Committee would welcome volunteers. In answer to Mr. King's request, Mayor Gardner agreed to make opening remarks at 10:00.

### **Public Safety**

Mr. Freeman announced that Chief Younts was not in attendance due to illness but that he had said that the department had been busy and averaged 12 reports daily with Officer Campbell handling 17 in one day. Because of that volume all reports were not yet entered for statistical analysis. He also reported that the second new police car had been delivered and graphics were currently being applied, and would next be taken to Granville Communications for equipment installation.

Commissioner Edmonds reported that his granddaughter had loved the Bicycle Rodeo conducted by the Police Department the previous Saturday, and that there was a crowd and all had enjoyed it. Mayor Gardner said that they had given away a lot of helmets for safety.

Commissioner Edmonds said that there had been no calls for Red Cross assistance, and Mayor Gardner said there had been no fire department calls for major fires.

### **Human Resources**

At the request of Commissioner Banzet Mr. Freeman reported on several Human Resources items. Public Works employee John Limer has been cleared for full duty following an extended absence for recovery from surgery. Adrienne Alston has been hired for the position of finance clerk, working as finance assistant and at the Water Department customer service window.

He also reminded Board to submit their health insurance waiver forms as required for participation in the Town health insurance plan.

## **Finance Report**

Commissioner Blalock had reviewed the checks in excess of \$10,000 and reported them appropriate.

Mr. Freeman reviewed the reports for the year-to-date through September, saying that both revenues and expenditures are in line as budgeted with 25% of the year completed. Cash flow had improved compared with the previous year, the General Fund by nearly \$48,000 and the Water Sewer Fund by \$18,000, in spite of the continued decline in Sales and Use Tax Revenue which continued to be about 11% less. He reported that the annual Powell Bill allotment of \$27,079 had been received and was also 11.7% less than the previous year (this also had been anticipated in the budget) Off-setting those decreases was continued higher ad valorem tax revenue, up 43% for the month of September and 40% year-to-date.

Mr. Freeman also reported that the annual audit for fiscal year 2008-09 had been completed and submitted to the LGC for approval, and that auditor Jim Winston is scheduled to present it to the Board at the November meeting. In a preliminary review of the draft it looks as if fund balance has improved to \$67,400, up from \$2070 the previous year and -55,000 two years ago, a \$122,000 swing in a positive direction.

## **Unfinished Business**

Mayor Gardner said that he had asked Mr. Freeman to report on the annexation process begun two years ago. He said there had been a moratorium set by the legislature last year and while it looked as if limiting legislation might be passed, in fact nothing has yet changed. Mr. Freeman said that a Resolution of Consideration had been passed two years ago and that the Department of Community Assistance had presented their analysis of eligible areas which were represented on the map submitted in February 2008 and included in the Board preparation materials for this meeting. Mayor Gardner asked the Board to take this opportunity to look at next steps, to decide if annexation should proceed and which areas should be addressed. He said that population was more important than area as per capita calculations are the basis for determining state shared revenues. Commissioner Blalock asked if the staff member at DCA would be available to present the process and answer Board questions. He also reminded the Board that all Town services would need to be provided. Commissioner Mooring referred to the newly completed sewer map as helpful. Mayor Gardner said that residences in Eligible Area D (Eaton, King and White Streets) are not served by sewer lines but that the Town could offer to take over responsibility for their septic systems. This would be at the owner's option and the systems would have to meet Town specifications beforehand. He said the question would go to the Planning/Zoning/Annexation Committee which would review it and present recommendations to the Board. Commissioner Tippet raised a question about the farmland along Ridgeway Street that lies between population areas and Mayor Gardner said that farmland is difficult to annex although it remains untaxed as long as it remains farmland. Commissioner Blalock said he has noticed how far Red Oak had expanded through annexation in a rural area, partly in response to Rocky Mount's aggressive annexation program. Mayor Gardner said that the Town could obtain additional Powell Bill funding by adding King Street (which leads to the Town maintenance complex) and similar streets. He also said the wooded island created by the previous annexation of Hayley Street would be eligible this time as it is surrounded. Commissioner King also suggested that it would be helpful to have the DCA staff member or consultant available to answer Board questions. Town Attorney Styers said that the process is for the Board to list its targeted areas for annexation, which the Town Administrator would then send to DCA for research and review. Commissioner Mooring moved that the question be referred to the Planning/Zoning/Annexation committee for its recommendations; Commissioner Tippet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

## **New Business**

Mr. Freeman presented three requests for sewer adjustments in excess of \$100. All were the result of significant leaks that did not go through the sewer:

- Aaron and Harriett Allen, 508 Eaton Ave.—watering, a reduction of \$165.38; Commissioner Blalock moved to approve; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- Kerri Ann Connelly, 123 N. Front Street—water leak from ice maker line that required replacing the floor, a reduction of \$198.49; Commissioner Blalock moved to approve; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- Vivian Towns, 294 Red Hill Loop Road—underground water supply leak reported as repaired by landlord Willoughby Harris, a reduction of \$639.71; Commissioner King moved to approve; Commissioner Banzet seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **Resolutions**

Mayor Gardner presented a resolution in support of the 2010 Census. The Census Bureau has requested that local governments pass resolutions to show their support for the census as a means of encouraging participation. Commissioner Blalock moved that the resolution be approved; Commissioner King seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **Announcements**

Mayor Gardner reminded the Board that early voting for the Town election was to begin on October 15 at the Board of Elections office.

There being no further announcements or business Commissioner Blalock moved to adjourn, and Commissioner Mooring seconded the motion; the meeting adjourned at 8:04pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Freeman  
Town Administrator