

# TOWN OF WEBSTER

## Minutes for May 4, 2016 Board Meeting



The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Webster met for its regularly scheduled meeting at 1411 Webster Road. Mayor Tracy Rodes called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Commissioner Billie Bryson, Commissioner Allan Grant, Commissioner Danell Moses, Commissioner Larry Phillips, Commissioner Leigh Anne Young, and Mayor Tracy Rodes

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Will Morgan, Michele Smith, Louise Stephens

### *GENERAL MEETING*

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#### **Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Moses asked that the agenda be amended to

- Move Legislative Business Item 3 Tax Increase to the Item 1 position;
- Add Old Business Item 4 Ethics Training;
- Add New Business Item 3 Burleson & Earley contract

Commissioner Bryson said Legislative Business Item 1 Vote on Tentative Budget should be moved to be Item 3. Commissioner Grant added Old Business Item 5 Resolution Condemning House Bill 2.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Phillips motioned to approve agenda as amended; Commissioner Young seconded. Motion carried.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes for the April 6 meeting and April 15 planning session were presented for review. No amendments were presented for April 6 minutes.

Amendment of in last paragraph of the April 15 minutes, “apprized” should be spelled “apprised.”

**MOTION:** Commissioner Phillips motioned to approve the April 6 minutes as presented; Commissioner Grant seconded. Motion carried.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Phillips motioned to approve the April 15 minutes as amended; Commissioner Grant seconded. Motion carried.

#### **Informal Comments by Public**

Louise Stephens thanked Commissioner Phillips for encouraging resident participation in the Webster Cemetery Clean-Up day on April 16 resulting in Shawn and Jackson Paulus volunteering.

### *CONSENT AGENDA*

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#### **Financial Report**

Danell Moses presented the end-of-month reconciliation and budget report for April 2016:

Beginning town fund balance per March report:	\$139,373.15
Deposits	1,519.07
Cleared expenditures totaled	2449.22
Checking balance Macon	138,443.00
Ending town fund balance	\$138,443.00

**MOTION:** Commissioner Phillips provided a motion to approve the financial report and Commissioner Bryson provided a second. The motion carried.

### *ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS*

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#### **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Rodes

- Went to help at the Cemetery Clean Up Day, but everyone was already gone.
- Attended the Empty Bowl fundraiser at Community Table and suggested commissioners attend if possible next time. She offered to call and find out a good time for us to volunteer. Michele Smith, a Community Table board member, said that over 2,000 meals were served in March. Commissioner Young suggested that we could hold a pantry food drive at Town Hall to help the Community Table as well.
- Wrote a letter of support for the designation of Jackson County as Trout Capital of North Carolina to Joe Sam Queen, Brian McMahan, and Joe Davis.



- d. Met with Moses and Lisa Leatherman of Duke Energy to discuss the renewal of the town's contract. She is passing the document along to Town attorney, Michele Smith, for review and advice.
- e. Talked to media about HB2 and that the Town would discuss the possibility of a tax raise at this meeting.

### **Council Member's Reports**

Commissioner Phillips said that the repairs to the basement had not solved the issue and further research would be conducted. He said one remedy would include running a drain line through the middle of the basement floor to the outside area. Moses said she would find out the name of a product one of her friends had used successfully to address a similar issue at his house.

Commissioner Phillips said he'd also talked to Sylva officials regarding the holiday decorations. Mayor Rodes said it was \$3,000 for six lights. She told the board that Lisa Leatherman was going to provide an estimate of how much it would cost to install an electrical outlet on the light poles. Commissioner Moses said that we would have to pay to have the lights installed. Commissioner Phillips said we could look at MoscaDesigns.com. Commissioner Bryson suggested we could budget money toward putting up holiday decorations.

Commissioner Moses suggested the board project an amount to spend then see if the lights are too cost prohibitive, we could look at putting up banners or signs throughout town that we could change throughout the seasons.

## *LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS*

### **1. Vote on Tax Increase**

- a. Mayor Rodes said we were getting \$32,000 in ad valorem and we're now projected to get \$24,000. She asked if anyone knew how long it had been since Webster raised taxes. Smith said that increases usually happen with re-evaluation.
- b. Commissioner Bryson said she would vote against a tax increase.
- c. Commissioner Phillips mentioned that we have a cushion of money in the general fund and invested in CDs totaling \$61,000. Rodes said that we need to have reserve funds for projects that the town is interested in. He said we needed to work with the planning board to develop a chronology of what we want to accomplish so we can show the public on what we want to spend a tax increase.
- d. Commissioner Young said that she agreed we needed to come up with a plan but if we wait it won't be any easier to bring it up a year later when we'd be the odd man out. Commissioner Phillips agreed but asked how we would justify that now.
- e. Commissioner Moses said we are very frugal and move monies from our budget to our future budget each year. She said we're thinking about saving for specific projects as indicated in our proposed 2016-2017 budget with the sidewalk savings fund line item and the repairs savings fund line item. She said she would vote against a tax increase.
- f. Commissioner Phillips asked if we need to continue to be a town and wanted to know what we provide as far as services to the residents. Commissioner Bryson said if we're not a town, Sylva would come in and double our taxes. He asked how much a difference it would make if we raised one or two cent increase.
- g. Commissioner Moses said if we have a solid budget, there is no need to raise it now. If we find the need to raise the rate in the future, we could explain to residents that we held out as long as we could. Commissioner Young said that would leave us with a status quo budget but we can't cover cost of community engagement activities that we're stating we want in the Land Use Plan. If we want to make that a focus of our mission, we'll need money. Moses said we're doing a little bit more each year by joining the historical societies, Circles, and Jackson County Chamber.
- h. Commissioner Grant mentioned that the property tax rate is very low: he said unless we have anticipated a great increase in the callout in monies, we should wait to raise taxes. He asked if there is a recommended "cushion" of what we're required to maintain by the state. Commissioner Phillips said he thinks that is \$10,000. Commissioner Phillips said we should consider involving the Planning Board.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Moses moved that we table the discussion and said she would come up with a table of what an increase per quarter cent up to 7 cents. Commissioner Bryson seconded. Motion passed.

### **2. Vote on investments of CDs at Entegra Bank**

- a. \$25,000 for 12 months at .4%
- b. \$37,000 for 48 months at 1.15%

**MOTION:** Commissioner Bryson moved that we invest the stated amounts in the 12 month and 48 month CDs at Entegra Bank. Commissioner Grant seconded. Motion passed.



### 3. Vote on proposed 2016-2017 budget.

- a. Moses asked the board to look in the planning session minutes which included the budget the board had formulated during that session and at the proposed budget Commissioner Bryson had formulated after the planning session included in the meeting materials. Moses explained that some of the discrepancies between the two budgets included the amount for income, advertising, audit services, and repairs. Commissioner Bryson said she had compared amounts from different years and had padded here and there so we could avoid moving funds every month.
- b. Mayor Rodes asked if we were really spending \$2000 in office supplies. Moses indicated that office expenses cover Terminix service, paper, software services, anti-virus software, Google services, and fire extinguisher services.
- c. Commissioner Grant said he didn't want us to forget the main word at the top of this document is "proposed" and we should keep in mind the figures will change throughout the year. Mayor Rodes said she agreed and that the board had talked in depth at the planning session meeting and the budget shown in those minutes should be very close.
- d. Commissioner Moses said that the accountant said we should do the council stipends quarterly. She said we needed to vote on the council stipends, the memberships, and the budget. Mayor Rodes asked Michele Smith if we could vote on the budget with the council stipends and memberships as part of the bigger budget. Smith indicated that since we had minutes including conversations about those specific topics, the vote would include them.
- e. Commissioner Bryson asked if we were going to adopt the budget from the planning session or her new budget. She said that she felt she had wasted her time working on the budget after the planning session. Moses said she had tried to explain how the line items Bryson had changed had been originally calculated. Bryson said she had reasons: she went through all the items and added up everything and did actual cost from July to March, then estimated out until June. Moses asked if specific items needed to be changed. Bryson said she had realistically padded some of the items such as miscellaneous, office supplies, and a few others. She indicated she had worked on the budget at WCU and had done the budget for the town until Moses took it over: she said she basically used her years of expertise to come up with the numbers.
- f. Mayor Rodes asked Moses to check the numbers carefully before the upcoming public hearing. Moses indicated she had checked the numbers and double checked the numbers before she brought them to the planning session. Mayor Rodes told the board she had worked on the budget for several years and she trusted Moses' numbers to which Bryson responded, "Oh, so you don't trust me!" Mayor Rodes said that was not what she meant but Moses' numbers are based on actual expenditures and take into account what is needed for the future. Mayor Rodes said she wanted to make sure no line items are missing and that she wanted to finish this. Bryson said nothing was missing and that she had also started the required letter to the state.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Grant moved that we approve Bryson's tentative budget. Commissioner Young seconded. Bryson and Phillips voted yes. Moses voted no. The motion passed.

### 4. Adopt new mission and vision statements

- a. The new mission statement is:  
"The mission of the Town of Webster is to encourage citizen involvement to ensure a secure environment for all of its residents."
- b. Commissioner Young mentioned that during the Planning Board meeting, the vision statement created at the planning session was edited to read "The town seeks to preserve its small town, residential nature by encouraging broad-based community participation that promotes an attractive, welcoming community with a strong sense of place and history." Moses said we should change the "seeks to" to something more solid like "the Town will" since it is a vision statement. Commissioner Young re-read as "The town will preserve its small town, residential nature by encouraging broad-based community participation that promotes an attractive, welcoming community with a strong sense of place and history."

**MOTION:** Commissioner Grant moved that we accept the new mission statement and vision statement. Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion passed.



## *OLD BUSINESS*

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### **1. Land Use Plan editing and timeline discussion**

- a. Mayor Rodes asked if everyone had read the second iteration of the Land Use Plan. Commissioner Bryson said that Blanton had done a great job: Rodes agreed. She said that what we have is good enough to go on to the planning board for further editing.
- b. Mayor Rodes said Blanton had left a question about amendments for the Land Use Plan. She said that if residents come to the town with suggestions for amendments, the town would pass those edits to the planning board, the planning board would update and move back to the council for adoption.
- c. Mayor Rodes said the next steps in the process would be the planning board would edit, the county planner Mike Poston would review, then Michele Smith would review for legal suggestions.
- d. Mayor Rodes said council should identify areas where growth is expected in the next few years.
- e. Commissioner Moses suggested that after everything was finished, and before the document was put forth for legal review, that we hire a local, professional editor who could review with the eyes of someone who could identify areas that needed work for clarity to an outsider. She knows of a professional editor who lives in Tuckaseegee who would charge \$50 per hour for review.
- f. Mayor Rodes said the timeline would need to shift. She said a more realistic date would be September for an end product. She said Janice was welcome to attend all editing sessions.
- g. Commissioner Grant said that some charts are missing titles. Moses said she provided Blanton charts from the factfinder.org chart, but we would need to address copyright issues before using them.
- h. Mayor Rodes said she would contact Blanton to thank her. The document will now be forwarded to the planning board.

### **2. Website suggestions for headings follow up from planning session**

- a. Commissioner Young said she thought we could break the site into the following:
  - Webster – facts, history, tourism info (Trout Waters, Walking Tour Guide)
  - Town Government – mayor and commissioners, other boards, agenda, minutes, and budgets
  - Ordinances & Maps – ordinances, zoning maps and other maps
  - Documents – zoning rules, Land Use Plan, ordinances
  - Local Events Calendar – special events and announcements
- b. Mayor Rodes said we should be clear on what we call ourselves since we have Town Board, board meetings, Planning Board, planning meetings, planning sessions, etc.
- c. Commissioner Young said other local towns use governmentoffice.com. She said they might offer something more user friendly in their templates. She said Forest Hills has a lot of different categories. Moses said a guy from Drake told her we might could use their site for hosting for a greatly reduced price. She said she didn't want to have a convoluted, busy site like Forest Hills.

### **3. Signage Ordinances for G1 and B1**

- a. Mayor Rodes said Moses would be coming back with information from SCC regarding their signage. She said we should have some ordinances written before we find out what they are planning. Moses said SCC invited her to the committee and she would take back information to the planning board.
- b. Mayor Rodes said she would like to discuss the three points that the planning board talked about in their suggestion at the next meeting so the council can respond back to the planning board with suggestions. She said that she would spend time looking at other town's sign ordinances. Moses said she shouldn't have to do that because that is the planning board's job: she indicated she had researched and found the DNR Covenants. Mayor Rodes said we can use the DNR Covenants to shape our ordinances.
- c. Commissioner Phillips asked if anyone knew what was going on in the DNR Park. Commissioner Moses indicated we need to get in touch with the DNR because, according to their covenants, they have to provide the town for approval all plans for the landscaping square footage, footprints, plans, etc before moving forward with any projects. Mayor Rodes said she would talk to Jelenewski to see if they had talked to him.

### **4. Ethics Training**

- a. Moses provided Bryson, Phillips, and Young with the materials necessary to participate in the Ethics Training on May 18 at 10 AM in Town Hall.



**5. Resolution Condemning House Bill 2**

- a. Commissioner Grant mentioned that during the last meeting we adopted his motion but that this is a formal resolution against the reprehensible bill designed to reduce the power of municipalities.
- b. Commissioner Grant read the attached Resolution to Appeal HB2.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Moses motioned to approve the resolution: Commissioner Phillips seconded. Motion carried.

***NEW BUSINESS***

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**1. Trout Capital Designation**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Moses motioned to approve support of the Trout Capital Designation for Jackson County including Webster. Commissioner Grant seconded. Motion carried.

**2. 2016 Regional Board Workshop for Planning and Development Regulation in Kernersville, NC**

- a. Commissioner Moses asked the board to approve her attendance including the fees and mileage.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Bryson motioned to approve the workshop. Commissioner Grant seconded. The motion passed.

**3. Burleson and Earley contract**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Bryson motioned to approve the audit contract with Burleson and Earley. Commissioner Phillips seconded. The motion passed.

***ADJOURNMENT:***

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Commissioner Bryson motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Phillips seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

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Tracy Rodes, Mayor

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Danell Moses, Town Clerk