

TOWN OF WEBSTER

Minutes for June 7, 2017 Board Meeting



The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Webster met for their regular monthly meeting at the Webster Town Hall, 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: none

OTHERS PRESENT: Avram Friedman (Canary Coalition) and assistant Kelsey O'Donnell.

GENERAL MEETING

Guest Speaker: Avram Friedman

Mr. Friedman addressed the Town Board as Executive Director of the Canary Coalition. He urged the board to adopt a resolution that he distributed to the board. This resolution is being presented around the country as part of a nationwide campaign, begun by scientists at Stanford University, attempting to address the climate crisis engulfing the world. They have developed a “prescription” – a comprehensive study of each state in the U.S. to determine how to meet 100% of our energy needs with renewable energy no later than the year 2050. This “Climate Solutions Project Plan” is based on the Jacobson Solutions Project.

The international scientific community is nearly unanimous in agreeing that this type of action is needed to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. Scientists need local communities all over the country to voice their support of this plan. Climate change impacts our local community with extreme and changing weather conditions and stress on our region’s economic and natural resources. Last year we experienced one of the worst droughts on record; wells dried up and forest fires were rampant. Our air quality was in the ‘red zone’ and was detrimental to residents’ health.

The scientific community is also seeing more tropical diseases and insects migrating north as the climate warms. Previously unknown diseases and insects are beginning to appear in Western North Carolina. Even fish in Lake Glenville were found to have an unhealthy mercury content due to area coal-burning power plants. Our air, rivers, streams and water quality are being threatened by climate change brought on by the burning of fossil fuels.

Mr. Friedman recommends we take advantage of addressing public policy that deals with climate change. The Town of Webster would be proactively addressing this issue for the sake of residents’ physical and economic health. Our area could experience job growth from the industries that are needed to address this climate change. Additionally, health improvements could be expected, positively impacting the local economy. “The Solutions Project” website contains complete information about projected impacts of climate change and action plans.

Commissioner Grant asked what other municipalities have agreed to adopt the resolution. Mr. Friedman responded that Sylva, Boone, and Watauga County Commissioners have adopted it. These were the first ones to whom the resolution was introduced. The resolution is being presented to other municipalities in WNC and the Piedmont, and has been introduced on the state level. The more local towns that sign on, the greater the pressure will be for the state and eventually the nation to respond.

Commissioner Moses asked how we balance attracting tourism with a reduction of fossil fuels and pollution. Mr. Friedman stated that this plan addresses emissions and reasonable solutions, rather than attempting to eliminate cars completely. Therefore, it should not impact our tourism industry.

Mayor Rodes asked if traffic is the major contributor to air pollution in our area. Mr. Friedman said that in reality we suffer much more from coal-burning power plants in the region than we do from air pollution caused by vehicles. For example, mercury is a particulate matter that starts in power plants and travels through the air, where it drops on plants, animals and people alike. It enters the food chain and bio-accumulates. The Mayor then asked what specific



actions could the Town of Webster take to make a difference. Mr. Friedman responded that adoption of the resolution is a first step. The Board speaks for the population of the town, which should add to the pressure on the North Carolina Legislature to address climate change. Other actions include pushing other legislation towards energy solutions, offering tax credits for clean energy, and leading by example by putting solar panels on government buildings as a powerful symbol of the Town's commitment to addressing climate change. The Board thanked Mr. Friedman for the presentation, and Mr. Friedman thanked the board for their time and attention.

Approval of Agenda

The board members reviewed the proposed agenda.

MOTION: Commissioner Moses made a motion to accept the agenda. Commissioner Leigh Anne Young seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the May 3 council meeting were presented for review.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor's Report

Town Hall Leak. There was a leak in the Town Hall that caused flooding in the storage closet and main meeting room. A plumber repaired the leak at a cost of \$190 plus \$69 for a new faucet. Mayor Rodes purchased storage crates (in accordance with the previously discussed plan to store seasonal decorations, tools, etc.), cleaned out the utility room, and moved extra chairs to the basement. The Mayor also bought a step ladder, 5 blinds, 2 curtain rods, a surge protector, and outdoor cushions for a total of about \$390. Drapes for the meeting room are available for \$60. Commissioner Moses asked if the old curtains could be donated; Mayor Rodes stated they are faded blue with white lines through them. Mayor Rodes asked the board if they wished to purchase curtains. The board consensus was to purchase the 2 sets of curtains for under \$60.

Apartment Update: Mayor Rodes said that we have had several inquiries on the apartment. The rent is \$700, with a security deposit of \$700. The lease will continue to state no smoking and no pets.

Property & Liability Insurance has been renewed and Workers' Comp has been finalized.

Budget: The Public Hearing for Webster's proposed FY 2017-18 Budget will take place at 5:00 pm on June 14, 2017. The Budget hearing will be followed by a special meeting of the Town Council for the purpose of adopting the proposed budget.

Board of Adjustment: At 5:15 p.m., a Public Hearing for the SCC Variance Request, regarding the proposed Health Science Building will be held. After receiving public comment, Webster's Board of Adjustment will be sworn in, and convene to consider SCC's Variance Petition. Jackson County Commissioners appointed their ETJ representative, and their ETJ Alternate to Webster's BOA on June 6th. Leigh Anne Young, the BOA alternate, will serve in place of Janice Blanton who will be out of town on June 14th.

Planning Board: Mayor Rodes asked the board for assistance in seeking people to be involved in the Planning Board. Commissioner Young said that she would help look for willing participants. It is legally allowable for members of one town board to also serve on another. Young asked if there are guidelines on what type of residents must make up the



board. Mayor Rodes responded that at least one resident from the ETJ is needed for the Planning Board, and that getting a motivated, involved Planning Board in place is essential for moving forward with finishing our Land Use Plan and ordinance review.

JC Transportation Plan: Maps from the Jackson County Comprehensive Transportation Plan were distributed to the board. Mayor Rodes noted that there were a few errors on the maps, and asked the board to review the complete proposed CTP online. Board approval for Jackson County’s CTP will be added to the July Agenda.

Financial Report

Danell Moses presented the end-of-month detailed and summary reconciliation reports and the up-to-date budget report for May 2017:

Beginning town checking account balance per May report:	\$ 88,984.41
Cleared expenditures totaled	\$ 23,496.13
Deposits	\$ 3,647.92
Checking cleared balance Macon	\$ 79,195.92
Macon CD 12 (April balance)	\$ 25,060.16
Macon CD 48 (April balance)	\$ 37,250.30
Ending Town fund balance	\$141,506.38

Council Member’s Report

Commissioner Bryson checked to find out if any meetings are coming up for the Greenway. None are scheduled at this time.

Commissioner Young received her notary stamp and is now available to notarize.

OLD BUSINESS:

Budget. Board members reviewed the Proposed FY 2017-18 Budget.

- Young asked about the large decrease in the planning, travel and training. The board did not use most of that money during the last year so the amount was decreased. However, new board members will be coming on board in the next year so more training could be needed.
- The board discussed the CDs that the Town owns. Discussion centered around whether money should be moved from the CDs to the current budget. Commissioner Moses said that a cushion is available in the Miscellaneous Fund, and that if we did indeed need those funds, the penalty would not be egregious enough to prevent the Board from accessing them.
- Fire protection cost increased, but is accounted for in the proposed budget. Income in Ad Valorem Taxes will decrease. Per Will Morgan, Ad Valorem is personal property so we need to change the name of the line item, “Ad Valorem Taxes – vehicle” to “Motor Vehicle Taxes.”
- The budget needs to have the footnotes properly placed.
- Commissioner Phillips asked about the difference between “Repairs” and the “Repair Fund.” “Repairs” is for immediate use for repairs. Repair Fund is a savings account for planned repair/maintenance.
- Mayor Rodes suggested that we use the typical \$800 budget surplus from the Law Enforcement line item, to hire additional police patrols for Halloween. It would be smart to have coverage at both ends of town, and that we may want to ask for it in advance, because both of our county patrolmen now have young children to take trick-or-treating, so finding other patrolmen to work that night will be necessary. The current budget allocation covers that anticipated cost.



Payroll: Joyce Pope, Town Clerk, presented information to the Board about doing a Payroll upgrade to QuickBooks at a cost of \$390/year plus \$2/employee per month. The total would be \$441 for the first year. After the first year the quoted price was \$390 per year plus \$2/employee per month for a total of \$558. The Clerk will find out if an upgrade to QuickBooks 2017 is included in the addition of the payroll module.

MOTION: Commissioner Moses moved to purchase the upgrade. Young seconded. Motion passed.

Pressure Washing: The board discussed having the property pressure washed. Mayor Rodes asked the board for approval to call her contact and arrange for the Town Hall building to be power washed. The previous quote from Jeremy Cody was \$475 for a professional, low-pressure, steam clean. Phillips said he could get an estimate from Randy Ammons about pressure washing if the board wished.

MOTION: Commissioner Grant moved to approve power washing if it is under \$500. Young seconded. Moses voted nay. All others voted yay. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approval of LGC Contract and Engagement Letter: The Board agreed to use the services of Burleson & Earley. The cost will be \$3850 for the audit and for the preparation of annual statements at \$1050.

MOTION: Commissioner Bryson moved that the Board sign the contracts. Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion carried.

2. Approval of Duke Energy contract: Will Morgan stated that Michele Smith read and approved the Engagement Letter. Mayor Rodes stated that the Town may be held responsible for moving equipment and power poles if the road were widened; Attorney Smith said that whoever moves to widen the road would bear the cost. The State of North Carolina (NC DOT) may pay the Town if they decided to move the power poles, and the Town would relay those funds to Duke Energy. Rodes wanted to be certain that if we approve/adopt the County's plan, that the Town would not then be liable for costs to relocate Duke's equipment due to said plan's future widening projects. The contract can be broken by either party, with 90 days notice.

MOTION: Commissioner Phillips moved that the Board sign the contract. Commissioner Grant seconded. Motion passed. The Mayor and Clerk signed the contract. Will Morgan notarized the document, and will send it.

3. Landscaping / Additional Storm Clean-Up: Justin Woodard worked on the beds at the Veterans' Monument and did clean up after the storm. The Mayor advised the Board that the bill for May was \$1895. This bill included cutting all new edges, regular work and storm cleanup. Mayor Rodes will advise Woodard Landscaping that if a bill exceeds \$900, he needs to get prior approval from the Mayor. . The board was asked if additional storm cleanup is needed. The board feels that property owners and the county may still do more, and that we wait, and assess this again next meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Moses made a motion that \$1300 be moved from Miscellaneous into Landscaping to cover this additional cost. Phillips seconded. Motion carried.

4. Clean Energy Resolution: The Board considered the resolution presented by Mr. Friedman and the resolution prepared by Commission Young.

MOTION: Commissioner Grant moved that we adopt the resolution presented by Mr. Friedman. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Moses. Motion carried. Mr. Friedman will email an original resolution to the Clerk that will have signature lines.



- 5 Town Hall Maintenance: The Mayor presented a wish list of small items that board members can donate. Items are needed for a small tool kit. The Clerk bought a small first aid kit. Old towels could be used for cleanup projects.

Additional note: prior to the next meeting, the Mayor and the Clerk will develop a 'swearing in' form for the new Board of Adjustment members.

Reminder - Next Meeting: June 14, 2017 at 5:00pm

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Commissioner Moses made a motion to adjourn. Young seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 7:12pm

Tracy Rodes, Mayor

Joyce Pope, Town Clerk