



TOWN OF WEBSTER
September 2, 2020, Board Meeting Minutes

The Webster Board of Commissioners met remotely on September 2, 2020, via Zoom for a regularly scheduled board meeting at 5:15 p.m.

Members/Staff Present: Mayor Tracy Rodes; Vice-Mayor Leigh Anne Young; Commissioners Allen Davis, Kelly Donaldson, Allan Grant, and Danell Moses; Town Clerk Debbie Coffey; Attorney Will Morgan

Members Absent: None

Public Present/Public Comment: None

GENERAL MEETING

Call to Order/Ethics Statement: Mayor Tracy Rodes called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. and read the Ethics Statement. No board member expressed any conflict of interest.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Grant seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the August 5, 2020, Public Hearing and Meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for review.

MOTION: Commissioner Grant moved to approve the Minutes. Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Financial Report:

July Financial statements were provided prior to the meeting. August transactions currently include income of \$2,491.71 and expenses of \$4,090.86. Current Account Balances as of today are:

\$ 39,105.81 - Select Business Checking

\$ 84,896.68 - Select Banking and Trust Money Market

MOTION: Commissioner Moses moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Young seconded. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mayor's Report:

- The mayor has received and answered several emails regarding the tax rate increase for this fiscal year, most notably from James Barnard, manager of Reedwood Manor Apartments, and resident Nick Breedlove. Mayor Rodes has responded to each email and followed up with Mr. Barnard on several occasions. She has explained that the town sets the tax rate for all property and cannot offer tax adjustments for individual persons or businesses. The county will conduct a



property revaluation next year, and individual appeals can be made to the county starting in February.

- Mayor Rodes expressed that her emailed statements to the complainants were misrepresented in the *Sylva Herald* article. There was no comparison made between Webster and Sylva or Highlands, however she did attach the county's tax rate chart to show that the new tax rate is still the lowest among incorporated municipalities. There was ample and extended time after the public hearing, for public comment to be made before the FY 2020-21 budget was adopted.
- Webster may want to consider adopting a minimum Fund Balance Policy in the future. She noted the Village of Forest Hills' \$100,000 Minimum Fund Balance Policy as an example for a town of similar size.
- One residential building permit was issued for July in Webster.
- Mayor Rodes thanked Commissioner Young for her work on the town website. She requested the Noise Ordinance be updated on the website to show the current revision. She would also like to have minutes that contain both Public Hearing and General Meeting Minutes be identified as containing both.
- As of yesterday, Jackson County has 561 Covid-19 cases with 50 cases in isolation. A cluster has been identified at WCU. She mentioned a study showing that antibodies remain in people with confirmed cases for four months after recovery. This study could be useful information in the search for a vaccine. Governor Cooper has advanced North Carolina to Phase 2.5, which allows more openings and events.
- TWSA has received the first wastewater report showing Covid-19 levels. The next data report will be useful for comparison when JCPS and WCU students are back in school.
- Mayor Rodes expressed appreciation to The Jackson County Satellite Rotary Club work on a community project in Webster last week. One part of that project was replacing the corkboard on the bulletin board at the Post Office. The town may look into additional maintenance of this area in the future.
- Elite Landscaping has sprayed weeds growing in the sidewalk expansion cracks in town, but it has not been as effective due to increased rains. Additional upkeep may be needed in the future, including new sealant in the seams.

Council Members' and Clerk's Reports:

Commissioner Young attended the virtual Jackson County Pedestrian Plan meeting last week. The link to the Jackson County Walks Pedestrian and Greenway Master Plan Storymap has been posted on the town facebook page and shared with all board members. She also noted that the Planning Board met virtually last month and is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, September 23. The board will vote on permanently changing the meeting date at that time. The Land Use Plan is developing quickly and a draft should be available soon.



OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of the Noise Control Ordinance: Clarification was added to Sections 1.2 and 1.3 to restrict unreasonably loud and excessive noise between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. Attorney Morgan recommended verbiage be changed to define excessive noise as ‘Unreasonably Loud and Disturbing Noise.’ He also noted that UNC SOG guidelines do not mandate a public hearing be held prior to adopting this type of ordinance, but boards may do so if they choose. Due to this change, it was the consensus of the board to update the draft document on the website and approve the ordinance at the October meeting.

2. Jackson County Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) Discussion: The application was revised to total estimated expenditures of \$6,322.54. Mayor Rodes noted that the new chairs, described as non-upholstered, are upholstered, but not in fabric, and can be easily disinfected. The cost of cleaning the existing chairs was removed from the estimate, and an air purifier was added to the list of items to be purchased. The number of tables was reduced to two, and other estimates were adjusted accordingly. Jackson County Commissioners have not approved the applications at this time. Commissioner Donaldson will check with county officials on the approval status.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve the amended application as submitted and to begin making purchases as soon as the application is approved by Jackson County. Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Frontier Upgrade: The current agreement is for 6MG and costs approximately \$114.00 per month. The clerk was quoted 12MG for \$89.99, 25MG for \$104.99, and 35MG for 109.98. These quotes did not include the \$10.31 surcharge and tax or regulatory fees. The technician also said the modem would need to be replaced at a one-time cost of \$20.00.

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to upgrade to the 35MG package. Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion carried.

2. Trick-or-Treating Event: Mayor Rodes has concerns about the traditional Trick-or-Treating event the town usually participates in. Commissioner Donaldson stated that Sylva or the JC Recreation has not made a final decision yet about their usual activities. Commissioner Grant recommended making a decision tonight, to be proactive in making an early decision. Commissioner Young agreed, noting that Webster serves a larger population than just children living in town.

MOTION: Commissioner Grant moved to defer Trick-or-Treat this year, but review next month if alternative activities are available. Commissioner Davis seconded. Motion carried.

3. Groundhog Overpopulation: Commissioner Young requested a letter be mailed to property owners behind the Penland home who have an overgrowth of kudzu. The kudzu is spreading onto neighboring property and providing a nursery for overpopulation of groundhogs. The groundhogs are destroying gardens and burrowing under outbuildings, which can lead to foundation damage. The property should be maintained under Webster’s Zoning Ordinance, Article 8.1. She suggested that if the landowners are



unwilling to clean the property, the town should do so and bill the property owner. Attorney Morgan advised that the Zoning Ordinance is referencing improved property and does not apply to unimproved property. He stated that in this situation the groundhogs and kudzu are considered a naturally occurring condition. Mayor Rodes feels a letter from neighboring residents to the owners would be more appropriate at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOTION:** Commissioner Young moved to adjourn. Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.*

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Tracy Rodes, Mayor

Debbie Coffey, Town Clerk