

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held on Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at 6:00 pm at the R.O. Huffman Center to be able to accommodate everyone with social distancing.

The following members of the Governing Body were present:

Mayor: Danny Ritchie
Alderman: Dennis Anthony
Alderman: Matt Johnson
Alderman: Rick Cline

The following members of the Governing Body were absent:

Alderman: Terry Yount

Others present:

Town Manager: Sherri Bradshaw
Town Clerk: Sherry Dula
Attorney: Rod Willcox

Mayor Ritchie opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

Approval of Minutes: The Council voted unanimously to approve the May minutes by a motion from Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Anthony.

COVID-19 Letter from District 11 to Senators - NC Mayors Advocacy is requesting participation from all Mayors in District 11 to sign a letter that advocates for flexible and direct COVID-19 relief funding for municipalities, to ensure that revenue shortfalls can be addressed. The letter will be sent to Senators Richard Burr and Thom Tillis. Mayor Ritchie presented this to the Board and a motion was made by Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Cline to participate in this letter signing to the Senators and the vote was unanimous. A draft of the letter is attached as part of the minutes.

August Fair – Don Deal was present seeking guidance from the Board on whether to move forward with the August Fair. Mr. Deal said he contacted the Health Department and they informed him of all the safety measures that would need to be taken in order to have a safe event. He knows that with the COVID pandemic this is a serious issue and safety is his biggest concern for the workers as well as the public. There will be lots of restrictions placed on the food booths where temps would have to be taken and documented and the amount of people allowed in the food booths. He also stated that as long as state is under executive order, they would not be able to obtain insurance. Alderman Anthony asked if its possible to move it to a later date. Mr. Deal said that the company who brings the rides usually already has their schedule made out for the year and may not be able to get a new date unless other events were to cancel. He said with the limited amount of staff that he has it would be hard to clean tables and monitor social distancing throughout the park. Also, bathroom cleaning would be an issue also and the barn may be out altogether. Mayor Ritchie asked about scheduling for next year, if they don't come this year, would we still be able to set our date for next year and Mr. Deal said there would be no problem with scheduling for next year. Mayor Ritchie also asked if the fair was financially ok to carry over until next Spring. Mr. Deal said they were fine with finances. Alderman Cline asked Mr. Deal if in his personal opinion he thinks we should have the fair. Mr. Deal says that he wants it to run but his head says no and he really doesn't have the staff to fulfill all the extra safety measures in dealing with the corona virus. Alderman Cline stated that he personally recommends that it would not open. Mr. Deal said that he is leaning toward it not happening this year. Alderman Johnson asked if he thought vendors would return next year and Mr. Deal said that the vendors that participate are stable and he is confident that they will

come back. Alderman Anthony stated that the Health Department would need to be the determining factor. No decision was made definitely but Mr. Deal did say that they have not secured any book

ads yet and we are at the point that it may be too late to bring it altogether. Also, the exhibit hall would be a challenge for social distancing and safety. Mayor Ritchie stated that if the fair board has not made their decision by June 23rd then the Town Board will make a decision but by that point they are probably beyond the planning time needed to set everything in motion for the fair to proceed.

FY 2020-2021 Proposed Budget Presentation – Manager Bradshaw gave a general review of the proposed budget and stated that the 2020-2021 budget has decreased by \$151,871.00 compared to the current budget. The budget will allow the town to continue as a full-service town. She stated the total budget is \$5,070,705.00 and no services are recommended to be eliminated or decreased. Alderman Anthony asked if the cost of living increases were for fulltime employees only and Manager Bradshaw stated that they were across the board for all employees. Alderman Anthony also asked if the Brush Truck for the fire department went out on every call and the manager stated yes it does.

Manager Bradshaw gave highlights of items included in this budget:

- Tax Rate – no change at 0.38 per \$100
- Electric Rates to stay the same
- Water/Sewer Rates – Water will remain the same but since Town of Valdese has proposed a 4% increase to us then it will be proposed that we pass that on to the customer
- Solid Waste will remain the same
- Powell Bill – no repaving in the next 2 years. State Revenue for this fund will decrease
- Salaries – 1.5% pay increase to all employees but will not be implemented until January, 2021
- 15% increase in Health insurance
- No equipment purchases for Public Works with the exception of the one ton dump truck that carried over from last 2019-2020 budget and rehab of electric, water and sewer lines
- Police – Replace oldest vehicle. Walkie replacement but delayed until January
- Fire – \$20,000 budgeted in 2019/2020 Budget will be held over and added to proposed budget because they could not find a brush truck for that amount
- Upgrade of restrooms at R.O. Huffman Center
- Sales Tax Decrease
- Franchise and Powell Bill decrease
- Replacement and upgrade of water connection between City of Morganton and Town of Drexel
- New in-flow meter for the sewer pump station

A motion was made by Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Cline to call a public hearing for June 23, 2020 on the proposed 2020-2021 Budget and the vote was unanimous.

Agreement for Use of Coronavirus Relief Funds – An agreement with Burke County and Town of Drexel for the use of coronavirus relief funds was presented by Manager Bradshaw. Each participating municipality must formally act to acknowledge the COVID Relief Funds and state its desire to receive reimbursement for authorized expenditures. At this time, we only have one expense of payroll for one employee that had daycare issues due to COVID-19 in which the daycare was not open. The town was obligated to pay 2/3 of the salary for up to twelve weeks under the Emergency Families First Coronavirus Relief Act. Only six weeks were paid and employee is back at work. Manager Bradshaw stated that the federal government has not given full details on what expenses are covered under this relief act but we would like to enter into the agreement and put our request in

for reimbursement on the payroll expenses. The county will divide the funds out according to population. A motion was made by Alderman Anthony, seconded by Alderman

MINUTE BOOK # 60

**PAGE 33
JUNE 2, 2020**

Johnson to adopt the agreement for use of Coronavirus Relief Funds under S.L. 2020-4 and the vote was unanimous. A copy of the agreement is attached as part of the minutes.

Departmental Reports – The Council reviewed the Financial and Tax reports for the month of May, 2020. Mayor Ritchie commended Chelsea Carswell, Tax Collector for the exceptional collection rate under the circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic. A copy of each report is attached as part of the minutes.

Drexel Police Report – Chief Treadway was present to the review the police report for the month of May, 2020. Chief Treadway said it had been a pretty quiet month. A copy of the report is attached as part of the minutes.

Attorney Report – Attorney Willcox would like to address the issue of opening the fair in August. He asked if the town owns the land and he was told we do therefore, he states opening the fair may be a liability to the town. He says there would be a great possibility that we could be sued if something should happen. Alderman Cline stated that it would be in the best interest of the town to cancel this years August Fair. Alderman Anthony states he doesn't think it will ease up enough to have it. Mayor Ritchie doubts they would have time to pull it off this year.

Miscellaneous –

- Next meeting will be June 23, 2020 at 6 pm
- Public Hearing for Budget will be June 23rd, 2020 at 6 pm and will serve as the July meeting
- Manager Bradshaw stated that the County is hoping to have a small-scale baseball program after Phase 2 is past at the end of June. If so, all games would be played at Reep Park
- Alderman Cline thanked the Police Department for the work they do. Chief Treadway thanked him and stated that we may be losing Mason Eastwood to Alcohol Law Enforcement with the state

Adjournment – A motion was made by Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Anthony to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:57 p.m. and the vote was unanimous.

TOWN CLERK _____

MAYOR _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____