

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. This meeting will take the place of the July meeting.

The following members of the Governing Body were present:

Mayor: Danny Ritchie
Alderman: Dennis Anthony
Alderman: Matt Johnson via phone
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 June minutes by a motion from Alderman Cline, seconded by Alderman Anthony.

Public Hearing for 2020-2021 Budget - A motion was made by Alderman Anthony, seconded Alderman Cline to open the public hearing at 6:08 pm. Mayor Ritchie asked for anyone with comments. Alderman Anthony stated he has questions concerning the vehicle replacement for the police department. He asked about the vehicles staying in service for 10 years then why do we have to replace every 2 years. Chief Treadway stated that the cars do stay in service for 10 years but by 80,000 miles the cars start having computer and mechanical issues. Alderman Anthony asked if the cars have warranties and Chief Treadway said yes but its only for 3-4 years without buying an extended warranty. Chief Treadway stated that Mason's car was in the shop at this time and will be too costly to repair so there is the need to replace his vehicle. Alderman Anthony questioned the need for officers to take their vehicles home and whether this was just adding to the mileage on the cars. Chief Treadway said that yes it does but driving the distance home could help the vehicle since it is continuously driving around town at slow speeds and stopping and going so much which tends to be hard on a vehicle.

Alderman Anthony also stated that he disagrees with the cost of living increases for the part time employees. He stated that full time employees should definitely get the increase but he doesn't feel the part time should receive the increase each year. Alderman Cline added that he doesn't know of any businesses that gives the part time help raises or benefits. Manager Bradshaw stated that she wanted to clarify that the part time employees do not receive any insurance or retirement benefits. Alderman Cline states in his opinion raises for part time employees should be waived. He also said that we need to be prepared for the storm and keep our budget as low as possible. Alderman Anthony states that we should to try to keep from having a possible tax increase in the future. Alderman Cline would like for things to stay the way they are now and he is just looking out for the needs of the town. Mayor Ritchie states that if the town gets to the point of financial need then we would probably have to cut the recreation department altogether because we couldn't afford to keep it open. Manager Bradshaw stated that the budget is conservative and when we get some industry on Drexel Properties we will be in good shape and this will help our tax base tremendously.

With no further comments, the public hearing was closed at 6:28 pm by a motion from Alderman Anthony, seconded by Alderman Cline.

2020-2021 Budget Approval - Alderman Johnson per phone made a motion to accept budget as presented, seconded by Alderman Anthony and a no vote from Alderman Cline along with a no vote from Alderman Anthony. Mayor Ritchie asked Alderman Anthony about his motion and then a no vote and Alderman Anthony stated he was trying to get it on the floor for vote. Attorney Willcox stated he had never seen that happen before. Alderman Anthony stated he would accept the budget as proposed if part time employees do not receive cost of living increases. Alderman Cline also stated that he would accept budget if part time employees do not receive cost of living increases. Mayor Ritchie asked if the town can make an exclusion in the budget and still approve it. Attorney Willcox stated that we could have another vote for budget with new figures and Mayor Ritchie stated the board could be contacted by phone for approval. A motion was made by Alderman Anthony, seconded by Alderman Cline for a change to be made to the proposed 2020-2021 Budget with a no vote from Alderman Johnson. Mayor Ritchie asked Alderman Johnson to expand on his no vote. Alderman Johnson stated that the employees of the town are our greatest asset and they are all important and he does not agree with waiving their cost of living increase. Another motion was made by Alderman Anthony, seconded by Alderman Cline to adopt the budget with the exclusion of the part time employee cost of living increases and the vote was unanimous.

August Fair – Don Deal was present to update the Board on the fair. He stated that things have gotten worse and they have decided that there will be no fair this year. He will be having a meeting with the fair board on June 24th and they will have further discussion but at this time he feels they all are aware that the fair will not be happening this year. He states the bottom line is that with the health departments regulations and the fact that they don't want to make a bad matter worse. He said they may not even be able to open food booths because of social distancing and he doesn't even know if the governor will open the state back up. He also doesn't want to expose his board members or anyone else involved. Mayor Ritchie said that his family goes all the way back to the first fair and he also is concerned that the governor won't open the state back up completely and they will have sunk money into getting things ready and then can't open. Mr. Deal says the main thing is health. Alderman Anthony stated we don't need the liability if someone should get the virus. Mr. Deal said that he was told that the town wouldn't be liable but you never know. Chief Treadway stated that he also has a concern with the country's civil unrest at this time. A motion was made by Alderman Anthony, seconded by Alderman Cline to accept the recommendation by Mayor Ritchie to the fair board in accordance with state mandates that the fair not open this year and the vote was unanimous. Mayor Ritchie stated he appreciates all the hard work put forth by Don Deal for the fair and Mr. Deal stated he appreciates the town also.

Electric and Water/Sewer Rate Schedule – Manager Bradshaw stated the only change in the electric rate schedule would be an increase in the renewable energy fee mandated by the state. She stated the water/sewer rates would have an increase in sewer rates by 4% because Town of Valdese has proposed an increase which we need to pass on to the customer. A motion was made by Alderman Cline, seconded by Alderman Anthony to approve the electric and water/sewer rate schedules and the vote was unanimous.

WPCOG Agreements – Manager Bradshaw presented the Agreement for Technical Planning Assistance, Agreement for GIS Maintenance and Services, Agreement for Code Enforcement Services and Agreement for TPA-Comprehensive Plan. These have all been discussed at a prior meeting. A motion was made by Alderman Anthony, seconded by Alderman Cline to approve the above-mentioned agreements from Western Piedmont Council of Governments and the vote was unanimous. A copy of each agreement is attached as part of the minutes.

NCDOC-RIA Resolution for Water/Sewer Grant – Manager Bradshaw explained that this resolution would allow the finance officer to complete paperwork and be accountable for managing the Infrastructure Grant for Drexel Properties we received in the amount of \$647,100. A motion was made by Alderman Anthony, seconded by Alderman Cline and the vote was unanimous. A copy of the resolution is attached as part of the minutes.

Drexel Police Department Update – Chief Treadway made the Council aware that Officer Mason Eastwood has taken a position with ALE and his last day will be June 29th. His replacement will be Dustin McKinney which is one of our reserve officers and he will be starting on July 1st. Officer McKinney works with the Town of Valdese at this time and has also worked with the Burke County Sheriff’s Department along with being a reserve for the town for several years. Attorney Rod Willcox stated that he supports hiring Officer McKinney and that he is a top-notch officer.

Miscellaneous –

- Next meeting will be August 4, 2020 at 6 pm
- Mayor Ritchie read a letter of appreciation from Girl Scout Troop 10742 to the town for the support that given to them for their trip to Florida.
- Alderman Anthony asked about advertising for the Drexel Properties site. Manager Bradshaw said that the property has been submitted several times on certain projects. She also stated that a proof of the advertising sign for the property was sent from Electricities. It was asked if we would need to have a sign placed on I-40 and they said the expense would not be worth it. Alderman Anthony asked about what we do next if someone is interested in the property and Manager Bradshaw said it would depend on the needs of the customer.

Adjournment – A motion was made by Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Anthony to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:56 p.m. and the vote was unanimous.

TOWN CLERK _____

MAYOR _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____

