

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held on Tuesday, June 1, 2021 at 6:00 pm in the Assembly Hall of the Municipal Building.

The following members of the Governing Body were present:

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

Others present:

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

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

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

Public Hearing for G.S. 160D Regulations and Chicken Keeping - The Public Hearing was opened at 6:03 pm. Ashley Kale, WPCOG, was present and reiterated last month's review of the revisions and reminded the Board that most of the changes were required by the state. Some modifications were made to definitions and the town had a few changes to add. As told in last month's meeting, the revisions do not change the Town's Zoning Ordinance, it just cleans up the outdated language and consolidates county and local government ordinances for better clarity.

The second portion of the public hearing deals with the revisions to the chicken keeping ordinance. Teresa Kinney, WPCOG was present and reviewed the changes which were discussed in last month's meeting. She also made them aware that it is recommended that moving forward a Zoning Compliance Permit be required for all chicken keeping activities. The Board also voted in last month's meeting to add a maximum of 25 square feet of enclosed housing as a condition.

With no one present for comment on either of the amendments to the ordinance and no further discussion, a motion was made by Alderman Anthony, seconded by Alderman Johnson to close the public hearing at 6:07 p.m. and the vote was unanimous.

Petitions and Communications – Rick Ramsey was present to address the Board concerning the vote at last month's meeting to terminate his lease for the property near the Prices building that he is currently leasing from the Town. Mr. Ramsey asked if his lease was being terminated based on community complaints or some other reason. Alderman Anthony stated that it wasn't due to complaints, the main reason is because in the near future the town would be starting the clean up process on the Drexel Properties and the new prospects may need that area. Alderman Cline also agreed with Alderman Anthony and stated that we are making preparations for any new prospects. Mr. Ramsey asked if the town would reconsider if he kept the two trailers backed up to the fence because they are handy to him and everything else was removed from the property. Also, he suggested that the lease be changed to a 30-day lease, reviewed month to month. Alderman Anthony asked that if this were approved would he be able to move those trailers out quickly if the town needed to make the property available for new prospects. Mr. Ramsey stated that he would definitely be able to move them if needed. Alderman Yount stated that he has seen a lot of trailers being moved onto properties as storage and the town doesn't receive any

tax monies on these storage units. Mayor Ritchie asked if the Board would like to extend the lease for Mr. Ramsey as long as everything is removed from the property except for the two trailers and a motion

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was made by Alderman Anthony, seconded by Alderman Yount to approve the extension with a 30 day lease agreement as stated by Mayor Ritchie and the vote was unanimous.

Code Enforcement Letters and Drexel Properties – Mayor Ritchie stated that zoning letters had been sent out to some residents with time restraints and he had been contacted concerning these letters. The resident complaints were in reference to the appearance of their property versus the appearance of the Drexel Properties. Mayor Ritchie asked for a timeline on when the town could start moving forward with clean-up for Drexel Properties. He stated he would like to be able to give the public a timeline for starting the clean up and also all Board members would be on the same page on the information given to the public. Manager Bradshaw informed the Board that the paperwork was still in process which would run through July. She also stated that we have been awarded the grant funding, but we do not have the money yet and when the project starts the town will have to pay up front and then be reimbursed. She stated that reimbursement of monies could take up to 90 days. Manager Bradshaw stated that if everything goes well with paperwork, we could see activity by October. She also stated that we should remind the public that the town did not create the problem at Drexel Properties and the town has been working diligently since we acquired the property to get it cleaned up. She stated that the engineering request for qualifications will go out in July.

FY 2021-2022 Budget Presentation – Manager Bradshaw gave a brief rundown of the highlights from the proposed 2021-2022 Budget. The proposed budget is \$4,435,384.00 which is \$917,185.00 less than the amended FY 2020-2021 Budget. The budget allows the town to remain a full-service town. Tax rate will remain at \$0.38/\$100. Electric and Water/Sewer rates will remain the same. State mandated renewable energy will increase by \$0.04 cents for regular customers and \$0.22 cents for commercial customers. Solid waste fees will remain the same. No equipment purchases for Public Works. Budgeted Camper Top for Fire Department. Funds are budgeted for the roof repairs and HVAC systems for two units at the R.O. Huffman Center. Cost of Living increase of 2% effective January 22, 2022. Health Insurance Premiums increase by 18%. Alderman Anthony asked if Enon Baptist still helps with fair parking and if the budget only includes the town's part of the parking funds. Manager Bradshaw stated that was correct. Alderman Anthony also asked if the small business center rental fees were the same for all three units and he was told that everyone pays the same. Manager Bradshaw stated that she was still looking into possibly putting a batting cage in the Zumba room at the center. Some discussion was made concerning the vacancies in the Public Works Department. Manager Bradshaw stated that we do have an electrical lineman position open in which we would need someone with experience and certificates, and we also have vacancies for general laborers which we have contracted with temporary services to help with those vacancies. With the electrical lineman position, the individual has to do all jobs not just lineman work and most applicants want to only do lineman work. Mayor Ritchie called for a public hearing for approval of the proposed 2021-2022 Budget. A motion was made by Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Anthony to set the public hearing for the June 22nd meeting for approval of the proposed 2021-2022 Budget and the vote was unanimous.

Resolution Adopting G.S. 160D Regulations – A motion was made by Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Yount to adopt the resolution for G.S. 160D Regulations/Text Amendment #01-2021 and the vote was unanimous. A copy of the resolution is attached as part of the minutes.

Resolution Adopting the Zoning Amendment/Chicken Keeping – A motion was made by Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Yount to adopt the resolution to amend the zoning ordinance dealing with chicken keeping and the vote was unanimous. A copy of the resolution is attached as part of the minutes.

Fire Department Position Request – Chief Jerry Baker was present to review the fire department need to hire a paid fire position. He stated that at last month's meeting he does not think he got his point across. He introduced Nikki Hudson with Burke County EMS to explain the need for this position on the medical side. She stated that the biggest call volume for departments is medical and paid daytime personnel is needed to improve patient outcome. EMS may take up to 11 minutes to get here and having a first responder that could be on the scene in possibly 4 minutes could make a difference in survivability of a patient. Truman Walton, Asst Fire Chief at Valdese, stated that we have a lack of volunteerism these days. Having someone on duty during the day means quicker response time, better maintenance on equipment and could result in a higher ISO inspection rating. Mr. Walton gave a few examples of ways to increase ISO rating which include .04 points for a full-time person, 1 ½ points for hose testing and 7 points for hydrant flow testing and many others. Chris Brown, Drexel Fire Dept volunteer, wanted to explain to the Board the importance of a full-time person because that most volunteers have full time jobs and can't always leave work when a call comes in. The department needs a dedicated person for everyday which would help patient outcome. Jerry White, Drexel Fire Dept volunteer and part time fireman for Lovelady Fire Dept., stated having a person during the day would mean that person could leave the department immediately and be on the scene to get things started. Mayor Ritchie said the Board has a lot to think about and discuss. He asked if the Board would like to act now or study on it. Alderman Johnson asked what keeps the volunteer people from not showing up since there is a paid person there? He is concerned that the full-time person would be doing everything. The firemen that were present stated that would not happen. Alderman Johnson asked if Glen Alpine and George Hildebran have full-time people. Truman Walton said that Glen Alpine has one part-time person and George Hildebran has one full-time person. It was stated that only 4 departments in the County do not have a paid person during the day. Chief Baker explained that in the first year of this position, it will be tough because there is so much to get done. Alderman Anthony asked what the policy is for leaving for a fire call. Chief Baker stated that one person can leave department and be on the scene to get started. Also, Alderman Anthony asked if Chief Baker would be supervising this position. Chief stated that he would periodically check on the person and they would have a list of things that have to be done and checked off each day. Mayor Ritchie has concerns with the liability on the town with one person leaving on the truck for a call. This town could not handle a lawsuit like this could cause if something would happen to the person on the scene by himself. Jerry White said with Lovelady Fire, we can run a call alone but there will be several on their way for back up. Chief Baker stated one person can leave on the truck with more firemen coming. They are trained not to go inside if they are by themselves. Truman Walton stated that Valdese Fire Dept does allow the truck to leave the base with one person. It was discussed concerning how many fire calls per year and for 2020 the department had only one structure fire and 168 medical calls. Alderman Cline asked how many volunteers live inside town limits and Chief Baker thinks approximately 8 or 9. Chief Baker also stated that they have 10 out of 18 active volunteer firemen that he can count on. If the position is approved, then the volunteers would have to sign up for the days they can work and at this time about 4 or 5 of the firemen would be available to do the job. A motion was made by Alderman Cline, seconded by Alderman Johnson to allow time for Board to study on this decision and the vote was unanimous.

Drexel Community Fair – Don Deal was present to review the financial report for the Drexel Community Fair. He reviewed the expenditures for 2020 and the fact that the new website happened before COVID-19 hit which was a large expense. Some printing was done before they knew that there would not be any fair events for the year. Maintenance work and office repairs were needed expenditures. He stated that in 2020 the fair funds did go in the hole. Some discussion was made on the way the fair is set up and the different ways they make

their profit. It was mentioned that reports are public record and will be attached with the minutes and can easily be available to public if needed. A copy of the Fair Financial Reports for years 2016 through 2020 and are attached as part of the minutes.

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Recreation Report – Football sign ups are going on now. Baseball and T ball finished up last week. Cornhole tournament will be this month. Ragball will be in August.

Police Report – Chief Treadway reviewed the police reports for April and May, 2021. He also brought to the Boards attention the letter of recognition for Officer Hildebran. On May 13, 2021, a call came in for 500 N. Main St. for a drug overdose, Officer Hildebran responded quickly and started CPR on the subject and continued doing so until medical personnel arrived. He also administered NARCAN. He potentially saved the subject's life. Mayor Ritchie would like for the Board to do something in recognition and appreciation for his quick actions and response in this situation. Alderman Yount said that a lot of departments gave ribbons. Alderman Cline made a motion to have a plaque made and ribbon for Officer Hildebran, seconded by Alderman Johnson and the vote was unanimous. Board would like to present this at the June 22nd meeting.

Departmental Reports – The Council reviewed the financial and tax reports for May, 2021. A copy of each report is attached as part of the minutes.

Attorney Report – Attorney Willcox stated the only thing to report at this time is research on the sale of two mobile home parks located at 415 and 475 Bryant Road. Teresa Kinney thinks that we may need legal advice in this situation. Individual is interested in purchasing the properties and has a lot of questions that needs some research.

Planning and Zoning Reports – Teresa Kinney, WPCOG Planner, stated that it's been a busy month with lots of subdivision questions and building projects.

Fire Department Position – Board decided to discuss the fire department position in further detail. Alderman Yount stated that his main concern with the position is that he is afraid the volunteers won't work as hard since they have a paid person working each day. Mayor Ritchie is concerned with the liability portion of responding to fire calls with only one fireman on the truck. Alderman Anthony has concerns about supervision for the paid person. Mayor Ritchie stated that it would be nice if we had police that were trained in fire. Chief Treadway suggested they need to work on recruiting, they need more bodies. At the end of the day, you have to look at your call volume. Alderman Cline states that he doesn't think the dedication is there. Alderman Yount said our department is the dirtiest department in the County. Alderman Cline personally doesn't think we should pursue hiring the part-time position. A motion was then made by Alderman Cline that we do not pursue a part-time fire position and the motion was seconded by Alderman Anthony. Before the vote was called, Alderman Johnson spoke up and stated that he thinks we need to still think about it. He explained that if a 911 call is made you would want someone on the scene quick and first responders are needed. He suggested we hire on a temporary basis to see if it works for maybe a year and then reevaluate to see if we get our monies worth. Mayor Ritchie asked if the Board wanted to re access before finalizing the decision. Alderman Cline stated again that he is concerned about responsibility and legality of the position and whether or not they would loaf on the job. Alderman Cline agreed to withdraw his motion at this time in order to discuss further. Alderman Yount suggested we try the position on a six-month trial. Mayor Ritchie asked if the Board would be ready to make a

decision by June 22nd? Alderman Johnson made a motion to table the decision until the June 22nd meeting, seconded by Alderman Yount and the vote was unanimous.

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Miscellaneous –

- Next Board Meeting June 22nd at 6 pm
- Public Hearing for Budget adoption June 22nd
- Public Meeting June 10th at ROH Center for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for public input at 6 pm
- Alderman Yount asked if there has been any progress on 506 Park Ave. Manager Bradshaw stated that the property has been issued an order to demolish and it is also in foreclosure process. Alderman Yount wanted to report the overgrown grass.

Adjournment – A motion was made by Alderman Yount, seconded by Alderman Johnson to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:52 p.m. and the vote was unanimous.

TOWN CLERK _____

MAYOR _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____

