



TOWN OF WEBSTER
August 3, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes

The Webster Board of Commissioners met at the Webster Town Hall on Wednesday, August 3, 2022, at 5:15 p.m. for the monthly board meeting.

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

Absent: None

Public Present: Doug Farmer, Julie Van Leuven, Kate McKittrick, Tonya Basse, Brandon Core and Maximilian Core

Call to Order/Ethics Statement: Mayor Tracy Rodes called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m. and read the Ethics Statement. No board member expressed any conflict of interest.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Approval of Agenda:

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

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the June 22, 2022, Specially Called meeting and July 14, 2022 Specially Called meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for review.

MOTION: Commissioner Donaldson moved to approve the June 22 and July 14 minutes. Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Doug Farmer, candidate for Jackson County Sheriff, introduced himself to the board and provided his background on his law enforcement career, including working with Macon County, Highlands and Sylva Police Departments, and training law enforcement units in Iraq. He is currently serving as an auxiliary officer for Sylva. Mr. Farmer outlined his plan for addressing the drug epidemic by targeting dealers, stopping the flow of drugs from Mexico and China, and partnering with other agencies for targeted enforcement. Other goals included increasing transparency within the department through the addition of a Public Information Officer, increasing patrol units to six officers per shift and establishing community patrol districts, reinstating K-9 units in the school system, and having two officers in the Cashiers area.

Mayor Rodes reported that the main concern facing Webster was speeding, and noted that deputies traditionally did not want to write tickets. Mr. Farmer stated that he would work to see traffic enforcement carried out throughout the county, as several towns and communities were facing the same issue. Commissioner Collins asked Mr. Farmer how he would address drugs within the Detention Center, to which Mr. Farmer outlined a plan to increase searches and suspend work release programs as needed to alleviate drugs being smuggled in.



Julie Van Leuven addressed the board with concerns about the new subdivision development being built adjacent to SCC. She first noticed Great Blue Herons' nests around March 2019, and began observing them as she walked the SCC Nature Trail through 2021. She was able to identify up to eleven nests over the course of the three years. She did not share her findings publicly as she wanted to protect the birds from being disturbed. She is very concerned about the road that has been cut along the ridgeline destroying the nesting area. She has contacted the North Carolina Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and to the owner of the development, Brett Byers. Mayor Rodes suggested that she contact John Jeleniewski with County Zoning to make sure they are aware of the situation. Tonya Basse noted that she had contacted Tyler Goode to see if they could help identify nesting areas with drone photography.

Brandon Core reported that he attended the Jackson County Historic Commission meeting on July 26. The focus of the meeting was on WCU's Mountain Heritage Day, but work on design standards and ordinances will continue.

CONSENT AGENDA

Financial Report: May and June financial statements were provided prior to the meeting. July transactions currently include income of \$5,039.20 and expenses of \$22,560.02 Account balances as of today are:

\$ 194,835.66- First Bank Business Essentials
\$ 85,534.71- First Bank Money Market

MOTION: Commissioner Dale Collins moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Allen Davis seconded. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mayor's Report:

- Wards Plumbing and Heating installed the new heating and air conditioning unit today. Mayor Rodes noted that the installation team did a good job of completing the installation prior to the meeting.
- The State of Emergency declared by the state of North Carolina and Jackson County will be rescinded on August 15. The Town will also need to rescind the SOE drafted by Mayor Rodes. A Coates Cannon post has been issued to address the procedures for Zoom meetings once the SOE has expired.
- Michael Bonen-Clark has signed a new lease for the apartment that will end on June 30, 2023. Mayor Rodes suggested that the rent be increased prior to being renewed again due to increases in water and electrical utilities.
- Mayor Rodes has had a conversation with John Jeleniewski about the home being constructed by Kituwah LLC near the church. Mr. Jeleniewski explained that any lot that was subdivided prior to the adoption of minimum lot requirements and zoning regulations are considered buildable lots and are not required to meet the minimum standards of lot sizes. Commissioner Collins suggested that it would be beneficial to the board if county planning/permitting staff could attend a meeting to give a brief explanation of the permitting process and application of ordinances.



- Mayor Rodes has contacted Robin Sharrett and Robert Henderson for an estimate for replacing the windows and several other projects at town hall.
- Mayor Rodes reminded all council members who were elected in 2021 that they need to complete their required 2 hour ethics training course before November.

Council Members' and Clerk's Report:

- Commissioner Young reported that the Picnic Committee is targeting October 2nd for the Community Picnic. She will reach out to Lisa Leatherman at Duke Energy and look for other options for grants to assist with the cost of the picnic.
- Commissioner Collins mentioned the need for fireproof cabinets for all historically significant documents. Based on concerns for ethics transparency Mayor Rodes stated that it would not be appropriate to sell her filing cabinets to the Town. Attorney Morgan said he would be willing to research to see if there was an ethical way to achieve this. Mayor Rodes has three Fireking file cabinets that are priced half of retail and could potentially save the town \$4,500.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Town Hall Repairs and Maintenance Update:** Covered during Mayor's Report.
2. **AC/Heating System Replacement Update:** Covered during Mayor's Report

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to amend the agenda to include discussion of the Great Blue Heron nests. Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion carried.

Commissioner Young would like to see conservation measures written into ordinances to preserve natural habitats. Commissioner Donaldson noted that, with limited staffing, the Town does not have the ability to police all building permits. Additional discussion centered on education and awareness being essential to prevent future encroachments on active nesting areas.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Commissioner Collins moved to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Next Meeting:

September 7, 2022

Tracy Rodes, Mayor

Debbie Coffey, Town Clerk