

**TOWN OF WEBSTER**  
**December 6, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes**



The Webster Board of Commissioners met at the Webster Town Hall, located at 1411 Webster Rd., Webster, on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 5:30 p.m. for the December Commissioners Meeting.

**Members/Staff Present:** Mayor Tracy Rodes, Commissioners Leigh Anne Young, Brandon Core, Danell Moses, Dale Collins and Allen Davis, Town Attorney Will Morgan and Town Clerk Stephanie Gibson.

**Public Present:** Chris Cox, Billie Jo Bryson, Jana Fulton, Walter Turner, Pamela Judson, Celeste Pratt and Bronwyn Burleson, Auditor.

**Call to Order/Ethics Statement:** Mayor Tracy Rodes called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and read the Ethics Statement. No board member expressed any conflict of interest.

**Oaths of Office for Commissioners and Board of Adjustment Members:** Commissioners Davis and Core, and Board of Adjustment members Jana Fulton, Walter Turner, Pamela Judson, and Celeste Pratt were sworn in by Mayor Rodes.

**Approval of Agenda:**

*MOTION: Commissioner Davis moved to approve the agenda, Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion carried.*

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes for November 1, 2023 were emailed prior to the meeting for review.

*MOTION: Commissioner Davis moved to approve the November Minutes. Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

*PUBLIC COMMENT*

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None.

*CONSENT AGENDA*

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**Financial Report:** Financial statements for November were emailed prior to the meeting for review. November transactions currently include income of \$9,222.15 and expenses of \$6,589.62. ARPA funds remaining as of November 30, 2023, are \$2,000.00. Account balances as of November 30 are:

\$108,964.17 - First Bank Business Essentials  
\$306,289.55 - First Bank Money Market

Commissioner Moses asked for the Profit and Loss Budget vs. Actual Report and Stephanie said she would send it via email.

*MOTION: Commissioner Moses moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Core seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

*NEW BUSINESS*

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**1. FY 2022-23 Audit Presentation:** Bronwyn Burleson of Burleson & Earley presented the board with draft copies of the Audit for FY 2022-23 and discussed the reports and financial statements. Ms. Burleson presented the report as an unmodified, clean opinion with the only significant deficiency being the lack of segregation of duties of town staff. Due to the small size of the town's staff, it is technically impossible to fully segregate duties. The town has implemented oversight to provide checks and balances in handling town funds to mitigate risks associated with this deficiency. The assets and deferred outflows of resources of the Town of Webster exceeded its liabilities and deferred and deferred inflows of resources at the close of the fiscal year by \$549,882. The government's total net position increased by \$117,142 due to increases in the governmental activities net position. The increase is due primarily due to recognition of grant revenues of \$62,069 from the CSLFR Grant Fund. As of the close of the current fiscal year, the Town's reported ending general fund balance was \$385,217.

*MOTION: Commissioner Core moved to accept the Audit as presented. Vice Mayor Young seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

**2. Organizational Review:** After discussion, the Board determined that Leigh Anne Young would remain as mayor pro tempore. It was also noted that Town Clerk, Stephanie Gibson, would remain as Finance Officer, and that her formal appointment to that position was Jan. 30, 2023 when her bonding was finalized.

**3. Letters of Appreciation:** Mayor Rodes asked the board to sign letters of appreciation to Rusty Ellis and Don Adams who are retiring. She said that she will email the dates and times of their retirement receptions to the board. Letters will be mailed to their home addresses.

**4. January Meeting:** Consensus of the Board was to reschedule the January 3 meeting to January 10, 2024 at 5:30 pm. Stephanie will email The Sylva Herald to advertise the meeting change.

*OLD BUSINESS*

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**1. Webster Signage:** Commissioner Young presented updated options for revised signs from Tyler with Signs and Designs. Tyler provided mockups of two styles of signs with similar color and wording variations, both oval in design. She said that Tyler said that restoration would be needed about every 8 years for the sign(s) and about 5 years on the posts. After reviewing the samples and speaking with Tyler about potential changes, the board discussed options. Mayor Rodes said she had contacted Steven Buchanan with DOT to ask whether the proposed sign size (60" X 36" with posts 72"h) was acceptable, and whether replacement of the existing signs would require approval of an additional application or MOA. She asked if there was a better site for the sign near the Dept. on Aging.

*MOTION: Commissioner Moses moved to postpone the discussion until receiving feedback on the proposed sign size from DOT. Commissioner Davis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

**2. STR Rental Draft Ordinance:** Attorney Morgan reviewed and made edits to some of the language in the proposed ordinance since the Board felt that the current language may be unclear about change of ownership and discussed what specifically constitutes a change of ownership,

such as when a spouse or business partner dies. Commissioner Core expressed concern about the delay of acting on the STR recommendations. Consensus of the board was for the proposed regulations to be reviewed once more by the Planning Board with Attorney Morgan's edits and present a revised copy with definitive verbiage for the board to review and discuss at the January meeting and to hold a public hearing in February.

**3. Planning Board Topics:** Commissioner Young said that the Planning Board did not meet because they have no tasks at the moment since completing the STR recommendation. Mayor Rodes asked if the Planning Board could meet and review the STR recommendations with Attorney Morgan's edits and to discuss whether it reflects their intent regarding a change of ownership.

Grant writing was discussed as a need and potential topic for the Planning Board. Hiring a grant writer to obtain and administer grants was discussed as a possibility. There was also discussion about a possible ordinance review, and whether a municipal attorney or consultant would be engaged. Discussion will be continued in January.

Mayor Rodes said that Chris Cox spoke with her about his address not actually being in Webster. He said that when he went to vote, they were told that their address was not in town limits and possibly not in the ETJ. He asked if he is able to continue on the Planning Board. Mayor Rodes said that she would follow up to confirm that his address is in the ETJ and if so, he may remain on the Planning Board.

**4. Webster Park Update:** The shelter kit construction is completed. Mayor Rodes asked Rusty for an update on the electricity, slab, and funding reimbursement paperwork. Rusty replied that he hoped to get the slab poured within the next two weeks. The slab footprint will extend about 10 feet in the front. The meter box is set and after the slab is poured the lighting and outlets will be installed. Rusty has spoken with Darlene Fox (who has been named as Don Adams interim replacement) about overseeing this project until his replacement is on-boarded. He will get the contractors to send their invoices to Darlene for payment, and will meet with Michael Hopkins to fill him in on the monthly reports that are due.

#### *ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS*

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#### **Mayor's Report:**

- **SWCD (SCDC) Regional Center Closures:** Mayor Rodes said she spoke with Sheila Hoyle, SCDC Director, and she shared that they were planning to move several offices that are currently located in Sylva and the surrounding area into the SWCD center building. Of the 40 children from Jackson County that were impacted due to the closure, almost all have been placed with help from Mountain Projects, and other private centers. There is still a need for placement for babies. Previously Sheila said that the Old School building was not for sale, and would continue to be used for their offices, family resource programs, and possibly as a teacher training and outdoor learning center. There may be an opportunity for some type of partnership between SCDC, Webster, and others. Board consensus was for Mayor Rodes to continue talks with Sheila and to contact Russ at the SWC to explore potential partnerships.

- **County Grants:** The Jackson County Commissioners did not include municipal grant funding in this year's budget.
- **Town Hall Property Management:** Mayor Rodes said that the quote from Adrienne for monthly housekeeping services was \$75, but the housekeeper is not insured. Will recommends that we find someone who is insured and also obtain some additional info. (proof of insurance) from Blue Ridge Rentals. Adrienne confirmed that she will schedule with Terminix for service.
- **Traffic Update:** Mayor Rodes emailed the November speed sign data reports to Stephanie to include in the Board agenda packets.
- **DOT Approval for Signage:** The MOA paperwork was submitted to DOT, but we haven't received approval to install the crosswalk signs yet. Mayor Rodes reached out to Steven Buchanan to touch base about the paperwork submitted and asked if he had any idea where we were in that approval process as far as a projected timeline. Buchanan has forwarded her email which also included a question about size requirements regarding the replacement of both welcome signs to Chris Lee for input.

**Council Members' and Clerk's Report:**

**Traffic Safety Committee Report:** The Traffic Committee did not have a meeting in October.

**Historic Preservation Meeting:** Commissioner Core thanked Billie Jo Bryson for her support of the Historical Society. He said that he and some of the board had discussed meeting at the Methodist Church on December 16th at 6pm to go Holiday Caroling and potentially having a firepit and roasting marshmallows. It was consensus that the Town provide funds for the luminaries and hot chocolate for the event. Commissioner Core said that Dillsboro had offered the use of their urns, and other equipment that might be needed. He also asked for suggestions that might assist elderly in hearing the caroling and recommended creating a flier to handout prior to the date notifying homeowners and asking that they leave their lights on if interested in hearing the caroling or turning them off if they preferred not to hear caroling.

*ADJOURNMENT*

*MOTION: Commissioner Davis moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.*

**Next Meetings:** Rescheduled Regular Meeting: Wednesday January 10, 2024, at 5:30 pm, Webster Town Hall, 1411 Webster Rd.

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Tracy Rodes, Mayor

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Stephanie Gibson, Town Clerk