

Town of Walden
Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2021

CALL TO ORDER OF THE REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Lee Davis called the regular monthly meeting of the Town of Walden to order.

The following interested citizens were present at the Walden Town Hall: Winston Robbins, Margha and Joe Davis, Carol and Bruce Bishop, Doug and Betsy Goodfellow, Mickey Robbins, Johannes Dewet, Ellen Young, John Barry, Kristin Allen, Angela and Mike Cassidy, Jon Cook, Karen Stone, Joe and Julie Hollis, Frances and Greg Connor, Tony Wheeler, and Jean and Bill Trohanis.

Fern Lockhart opened the meeting with a prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Fern Lockhart called the roll and noted the presence of Mayor Lee Davis, Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt, and Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie. Town Attorney Sam Elliott was also present.

APPROVAL / CORRECTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2021, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

REPORTS

Mayor Davis stated that the town will be moving to a quarterly reporting schedule going forward.

ROADS REPORT

No report.

POLICE REPORT

Deputy Gregg Carson reported that there are no major crime issues occurring on the mountain at this time, but he also reminds citizens to keep their cars locked when they are parked outside. Deputy Carson also reports that he has been working on "high visibility radar" patrol to help reduce speeding. Thus far, only warning citations have been issued.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The financial report, given by Town Recorder Fern Lockhart, is attached as an exhibit to these minutes.

CODES ENFORCEMENT

Mayor Davis reported that the only codes issue will be addressed in New Business tonight.

WRES REPORT

No report.

BACHMAN COUNCIL

Katy Murphy extended thanks to the council for approving the donation to Bachman Community Center. This money will be utilized for some energy-efficiency improvements, including new exterior doors, window repairs, and solar panel installation. Additionally, the Bachman store is projected to finish at least \$10,000 over budget this year. Finally, Ms. Murphy extended a personal "thank you" to Town Recorder Fern Lockhart, for her help and assistance over the past several years.

PUMPKIN PATCH

No report.

MCCOY FARM & GARDENS

Mickey Robbins reported that McCoy continues to work at moving beyond COVID. The new storage shed is nearing completion, with electrical wiring currently being installed. The wedding schedule is beginning to pick up, and Cynthia Pennington is actively seeking to book events at the venue. McCoy's bluebird project is continuing, as is the apple orchard project. The annual fund drive is ongoing, and the McCoy board appreciates all donations. In closing, the McCoy gates will be open by 7:30 AM on Sunday, December 19, so that all volunteers for the W Road cleanup may gather there.

DOG PARK

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie reported that they are actively seeking quotes to have mulch installed in the large dog section of the park.

LAND USE STUDY COMMITTEE

Angela Cassidy reported that the draft Land Use Plan should go before the Regional Planning Agency (RPA) early next month. The RPA's public meeting regarding the plan will be at 1:00 PM on January 10, 2022. Their recommendation will be returned to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for a vote.

WALDEN'S RIDGE CIVIC LEAGUE

The report, given by Karen Stone, is attached as an exhibit to these minutes.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

John Barry reported that the Budget Committee has met twice recently in consideration of a funding request from McCoy Farm and Gardens. The Budget Committee recommends approval of this request. Mr. Barry also reported that the Town of Walden should be receiving over \$630,000 in COVID relief funds from the federal government, but there are very specific guidelines as to how the money may be legally utilized. The next meeting will be held at Town Hall on January 13, 2022, at 9:30 AM.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Mariah Prescott reported for the Parks and Recreation Committee, noting that the Mabbitt Springs workday was postponed due to inclement weather. The new date will be posted on social media once it is scheduled. The workday at Falling Water Falls is still scheduled for January 15, 2022 (9:00 AM).

ROADS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

No report.

NEW BUSINESS

1. CONSIDERATION OF THE APPLICATION FOR A CURB CUT PERMIT AT 5014 SAWYER ROAD.

Mayor Davis reported that Mack McCarley, Town Engineer, reviewed the application and the property, and he saw no issues with the location of the proposed curb cut. He recommends approval.

VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT MOVED TO APPROVE THE CURB CUT PERMIT AT 5014 SAWYER ROAD, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

2. CONSIDERATION / APPROVAL OF BIDS FOR 3700 WILSON AVENUE CULVERT.

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie reported that bids were accepted until 11:00 AM on December 7, 2021. The bids ranged from \$59,000 to \$89,000, with one late bid coming in at over \$100,000. The Town Engineer met with the low bidder to ensure proper planning for completion of the job, and Mr. McCarley does recommend that Higgins Construction, the low bidder, be awarded the job.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE LOW BID OF \$59,000, BY HIGGINS CONSTRUCTION, FOR REPAIR OF THE CULVERT AT 3700 WILSON AVENUE, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

3. PROPOSED RESOLUTION #2021-556, A POLICY FOR THE APPROPRIATE USE OF TOWN CREDIT CARDS.

Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt summarized the policy, which was secured through MTAS.

VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #2021-556, A POLICY FOR THE APPROPRIATE USE OF TOWN CREDIT CARDS, SECONDED BY MAYOR LEE DAVIS, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN VIA ROLL CALL VOTE.

4. PROPOSED RESOLUTION #2021-557, \$50,000 DONATION TO THE MCCOY FARM AND GARDENS FOR REPAIRS TO THE BARN. RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE.

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie noted that this funding will come from a \$77,000 grant received from the state this past year, the appropriation of which is unrestricted. Mickey Robbins reported that the McCoy board is working hard to seek matching funds for this donation.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE A DONATION OF \$50,000 TO MCCOY FARM AND GARDENS FOR REPAIRS TO THE BARN, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

5. PROPOSED RESOLUTION #2021-558, AUDIT CONTRACT OF \$14,140 FROM JULY 1, 2021 – JUNE 30, 2022.

MAYOR LEE DAVIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUDIT CONTRACT OF \$14,140 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

6. APPROVE LINE-ITEM TRANSFERS:

- \$70,000 FROM LINE ITEM 41000-999 (MISCELLANEOUS) TO LINE ITEM 41000-111 (SALARIES)
- \$16,000 FROM LINE ITEM 41000-999 TO LINE ITEM 41000-113 (CONTRACT LABOR OFFICE)
- \$50,000 FROM LINE ITEM 46000-440 (STATE GRANT) TO LINE ITEM 41000-235 (DONATION TO MCCOY FARM AND GARDENS)
- \$9,000 FROM LINE ITEM 46000-440 (STATE GRANT) TO LINE ITEM 43100-260 (CULVERT REPLACEMENT)

Town Recorded Fern Lockhart summarized the above-proposed transfers, which can be approved by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen through a single motion.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE LINE-ITEM TRANSFERS AS DETAILED ABOVE, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

7. APPROVE HIRING OF GARRETT TATE AS PART-TIME EMPLOYEE, CONTRACT LABORER SINCE AUGUST, 2021.

Mayor Lee Davis stated that Mr. Garrett Tate has been assisting Donald Lockhart with maintenance and roadways, working as a 1099 contractor. Mayor Davis recommends hiring Mr. Tate as a part-time employee of the town.

VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT MOVED TO APPROVE THE HIRING OF GARRETT TATE AS A PART-TIME EMPLOYEE, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

8. APPROVAL OF RATE OF PAY FOR ACCOUNTING / BOOKKEEPING SERVICES AS NEEDED, JENNIFER WAYCASTER.

Mayor Lee Davis summarized this recommendation, noting a pay rate of \$100 per hour, up to 12 hours weekly, for accounting / bookkeeping services by Jennifer Waycaster.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE A PAY RATE OF \$100 PER HOUR, UP TO 12 HOURS WEEKLY, FOR JENNIFER WAYCASTER, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

9. DISCUSSION ON CONSTRUCTION AT 201 CLEGG STREET.

Mayor Lee Davis introduced this discussion, asking for a show of hands for all persons in attendance for this issue. There are nine citizens in attendance for this discussion. The homeowner of 201 Clegg Street, Mike Myers, is present. Mayor Davis noted that several citizens have called, visited, or emailed Town Hall with complaints and concerns about the current construction that is underway at this address. Mayor Davis read aloud a report from Dan Maxwell, Codes Officer. That report, dated December 10, 2021, is attached as an exhibit to these minutes.

Attorney Sam Elliott stated a need for verification that the setbacks for the new construction conform with the Walden Zoning Ordinance. Attorney Elliott asked if there were any plans to have a bedroom in the structure, to which Mr. Myers replied, "No. It will be a non-occupied building." Mr. Myers committed to Attorney Elliott and to the Town that he would "work directly with the County" to secure a permit as soon as possible. Attorney Elliott reiterated that there could be a problem if the Town is ever faced with evidence that anyone is living in the structure, and Mr. Myers again stressed that it would not be occupied. Codes Officer Maxwell will verify the setbacks once proper permits have been secured.

Mayor Davis asked Mr. Myers if he had anything further to say, and Mr. Myers referred to the email from Mayor Davis. He asked Mayor Davis if he was compliant in parking a motor coach in his driveway, as he does not know of any ordinance prohibiting this. Mayor Davis noted there is no restriction of this nature – he simply wanted to make Mr. Myers aware of the concerns from other citizens.

Mayor Davis invites any other attendees to contribute to the conversation if desired. Ms. Carol Bishop noted that the homeowner's RV is not a major concern. She notes a concern over a rumor that other RVs will be coming to park there in the future, and also a concern over the two-story building that appears to be a dwelling.

Mr. Myers closed out the conversation by inviting his neighbors to come speak to him about any issues or concerns at any town. Attorney Elliott noted that in extreme circumstances, it could be required that the building be torn down.

10. ANY OTHER NEW BUSINESS.

There is no other new business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. SECOND READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE #2021-341, AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A MORATORIUM ON THE ISSUANCE OF BUILDING PERMITS IN A DESIGNATED AREA OF THE TOWN OF WALDEN UNTIL COMPLETION OF A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF A TOWN CENTER.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FINAL READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE #2021-341, A MORATORIUM ON THE ISSUANCE OF BUILDING PERMITS IN A DESIGNATED AREA OF THE TOWN OF WALDEN UNTIL COMPLETION OF A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF A TOWN CENTER, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

2. PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING FERN LOCKHART.

The proclamation recognizing Fern Lockhart has been tabled to a future meeting.

3. ANY OTHER UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

There is no other unfinished business.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITIZENS

There are no communications from the citizens.

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Davis.

SES

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fern Lockhart", written over a horizontal line.

Respectfully submitted:
Fern Lockhart, Recorder

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lee Davis", written over a horizontal line.

Approved:
Lee Davis, Mayor