**Town of Walden**

Meeting Minutes

December 8, 2020

**call to order of the regular meeting**

Mayor Lee Davis called the regular monthly meeting of the Town of Walden to order utilizing the Zoom online platform, in accordance with Governor Lee’s orders.

**roll call**

Fern Lockhart called the roll and noted the presence of Mayor Lee Davis, Alderwomen Sarah McKenzie and Lizzy Schmidt, and Town Attorney Sam Elliott.

**Approval / Correction of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie noted a necessary correction on the minutes of November 10, 2020. Under New Business, #2, Alderwoman Lizzy Schmidt was erroneously listed as Lizzy Davis.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE CORRECTED MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 10, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

**recognition of mayor bill trohanis by the mayor and aldermen**

Mayor Lee Davis noted the many years of work and contributions by former mayor, Bill Trohanis. In recognition for this work, the board has drafted a proclamation recognizing Mr. Trohanis. The proclamation is read aloud by Mayor Davis, and a copy of it is attached as an exhibit to these minutes. Mr. Trohanis expressed his appreciation for the recognition.

**communications from mayor davis**

Mayor Lee Davis began his comments by welcoming Alderwoman Lizzy Schmidt to the board. He noted that he, Alderwoman McKenzie and Alderwoman Schmidt would pledge to work together through discussion and compromise. Further, he noted that the board would listen to one another and, most importantly, they will listen to the residents of the Town of Walden.

Mayor Davis also recognized the serious situation Hamilton County is experiencing relative to COVID-19. Updates regarding the pandemic will be posted on Walden’s social media pages and also the website as they are received by the Hamilton County Mayor and Governor Bill Lee.

In closing, Mayor Davis thanked Town Recorder Fern Lockhart for the two hand-made wreaths displayed on the front columns of town hall. He further invited residents to come by and see the wreaths created by Fern, and also the lit Christmas tree on the porch.

**roads report**

Mayor Davis stated that a clean-up day for the W-Road is scheduled for December 20, 2020, from 8:00 AM until 11:00 AM. With cooperation from Hamilton County and the sheriff’s department, the W-Road will be closed during this time. This clean-up will encompass the entirety of the W-Road itself, along with Anderson Pike to St. Augustine Church. Mayor Davis expressed the need for volunteers, and also his hopes that this type of work spanning different communities may be the start of a positive change to the past culture of litter and trash being dropped on the W.

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie expressed concerns about proper social-distancing during this event. Mayor Davis agreed with the importance of having a safe clean-up day. All volunteers should meet at the McCoy property at 7:45 AM on December 20. In order to assist with proper COVID-19 protocols, volunteers will be sent out in small groups to specified areas of the road. SORBA (Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association) volunteers will also be helping with this clean-up day, as they are working to complete a new mountain-biking trail along Mountain Creek Road and up Signal Mountain.

**Police Report**

No report.

**financial report**

The Financial Report has been completed and is attached as an exhibit to these minutes.

**codes enforcement**

Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt read the Codes Enforcement Report from Dan Maxwell. Mr. Maxwell contacted the permit office to verify receipt of a permit for the construction underway at 2912 Anderson Pike. Mr. Maxwell also followed up with all recipients of code violation letters mailed in November. Lastly, Mr. Maxwell was in contact with Town Attorney Sam Elliott for assistance with some specific violations that have not yet been corrected after several notifications.

**WRES Report**

Bill Thornton spoke for the Walden’s Ridge Emergency Services, thanking former mayor Bill Trohanis for his constant support of WRES. He also thanked the town’s citizens for their support in completing the new WRES Fire Hall, and for their continuing generosity in supporting the needs of WRES. Mr. Thornton reviewed emergency calls for the month of November. During this month, WRES responded to 14 alarms – six medical and eight fire-related. In closing, Mr. Thornton stated his hopes of having an open house in early 2021 for residents to visit and view the new fire hall, but this will only occur once the COVID-19 pandemic has been controlled.

**Bachman council**

No report.

**pumpkin patch**

John Barlew expressed his appreciation for the support of Mr. Trohanis over the past years, and also for the volunteers who assisted with cleaning the playground during the month of November. Mr. Barlew closed by asking citizens to be mindful of the protocols to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Mayor Lee Davis suggested that the Pumpkin Patch board work on a process for accepting online donations.

**McCoy farm & gardens**

Mickey Robbins welcomed the new administration to the Town of Walden. He thanked the community at large and the Tucker Foundation for assisting in the completion of several capital improvement projects. These projects include: both stone entrances, new fencing, expanded parking, and updates to the HVAC system and water infrastructure. Further, a new YouTube video series (headed up by Sally Ford) has been started which highlights the trees, gardens, and flowers on the McCoy property. Rewards were received for the flower gardens and the arboretum. The McCoy board is still planning to hire a part-time Executive Director.

**dog park**

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie reported that aerating and seeding was completed last month, along with the addition of new mulch. Mayor Lee Davis also noted an increased use of the Puppy Patch.

**land use study committee**

No report.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **appointment of vice mayor lizzy schmidt**

MAYOR LEE DAVIS MOVED TO APPOINT ALDERWOMAN LIZZY SCHMIDT AS VICE MAYOR, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **appointment of angela cassidy and steven bush to the land use study committee**

Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt began the discussion by introducing Angela Cassidy, who holds a Master’s from Georgia Tech in City Planning. Further, it is recommended that Steven Bush, who had previously resigned from the committee, be reinstated to continue serving on the Land Use Study Committee.

VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT MOVED TO ACCEPT THE APPOINTMENTS OF ANGELA CASSIDY AND STEVEN BUSH TO THE LAND USE COMMITTEE, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **proposed resolution #2020-539, appointing herbert thornbury as municipal judge for a two-year term**

Mayor Lee Davis opened the discussion by explaining that Herbert Thornbury had previously lived in Walden for several years, but has recently moved out of the town. He has served as the municipal judge for Walden since 1990, but his most recent term is ending. It is recommended that he be appointed to another two-year term at this time.

MAYOR LEE DAVIS MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #2020-539, APPOINTING HERBERT THORNBURY AS MUNICIPAL JUDGE FOR A TWO-YEAR TERM, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **proposed resolution #2020-540, authorizing appropriations of $5,000 for financial aid of mccoy farm and gardens, a non-profit civic organization whose services benefit the general welfare of the residents of the town of walden**

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie read aloud the resolution.

MAYOR LEE DAVIS MOVED TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2020-540, AUTHORIZING A DONATION OF $5,000 FOR MCCOY FARM AND GARDENS, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **proposed resolution #2020-541, authorizing appropriations of $5,000 for financial aid of bachman community center, a non-profit civic organization whose services benefit the general welfare of the residents of the town of walden**

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie read aloud the resolution.

MAYOR LEE DAVIS MOVED TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2020-541, AUTHORIZING A DONATION OF $5,000 FOR THE BACHMAN COMMUNITY CENTER, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **proposed resolution #2020-542, authorizing appropriations of $70,000 for financial aid of the walden’s ridge emergency service, a non-profit civic organization whose services benefit the general welfare of the residents of the town of walden**

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie read aloud the resolution. Mayor Lee Davis further clarified that the $70,000 total is broken down as follows: a $25,000 payment towards the new fire truck, and $45,000 to assist with general operational expenses.

VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT MOVED TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2020-542, AUTHORIZING A DONATION OF $70,000 FOR THE WALDEN’S RIDGE EMERGENCY SERVICES, SECONDED BY MAYOR LEE DAVIS, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **proposed resolution #2020-543, a resolution designating the individuals authorized to counter-sign checks in the absence or disability of the mayor or town treasurer**

Mayor Lee Davis explained that this resolution was necessary in order to allow new Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt to sign checks for the town. Mayor Davis and Alderwoman McKenzie already have this authority.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2020-543, AUTHORIZING VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT TO SIGN CHECKS, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **advisory committees vs initiatives – discuss need and formation**
2. **parks**
3. **mabbitt springs parking**
4. **falling water parking**
5. **public space gardens**
6. **infrastructure**
7. **culvert / accident problem at larry skaggs’ house on wilson**
8. **speeding issue and potential solutions**
9. **enforcement**
10. **speed bumps for some roads? pros and cons**
11. **dark skies initiative**

Mayor Lee Davis began by noting that #8 and #9 under “New Business” are related. Mayor Davis stated that there are many talented citizens in the Town of Walden, and several have expressed an interest in having more of an ownership in the town through volunteerism. Mayor Davis suggested that these advisory committees produce recommendations for the issues noted above and bring them to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for consideration. Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie and Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt both expressed their support for the formation of these committees.

Town Attorney Sam Elliott reminded the board that these proposed committee meetings must be held in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. All requirements must be met, such as the keeping of minutes from each meeting. He further noted that these meeting need to be coordinated with Town Recorder Fern Lockhart to ensure proper compliance. Recorder Lockhart also advised that the passing of this ordinance will require a resolution to be written and passed for each individual committee prior to formation.

1. **first reading of proposed ordinance #2020-336, an ordinance to establish a citizens’ advisory committee for the town of walden**

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE #2020-336, ESTABLISHING A CITIZENS’ ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE TOWN OF WALDEN, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **discussion on potential website update by civicplus**

Mayor Lee Davis began the discussion with a consideration to update the town’s website, located online at: [www.waldentn.gov](http://www.waldentn.gov) The goal is to include more information for citizens and to make the site more interactive. Recently, the website was updated to include the written minutes from recent town meetings. Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie agrees with the idea of including more information and making town business as transparent as possible. Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt concurs.

Mayor Davis mentions the possibility of working with “CivicPlus,” a website development company based in Manhattan, KS, that specializes in creating and maintaining websites for small towns and municipalities. Mayor Davis is interested in housing all historic documents on the websites, as well as creating portals of information for all town activities and non-profits. It was recommended by Town Recorder Lockhart to delay a decision until at least April, when budget discussions for FY:22 begin. In the meantime, Mayor Davis will work to collect more information from CivicPlus and perhaps other web companies. Alderwoman McKenzie and Vice Mayor Lizzy Davis are in agreement with this plan. Depending upon the annual cost, either quotes (+$3,000) or sealed bids (+$10,000) may be required.

1. **any other new business**

Mayor Lee Davis began a discussion on reinstating Christmas bonuses for all town employees. Town Recorder Fern Lockhart confirmed the availability of funds in the payroll line item, since work hours for several employees were decreased during the COVID-19 shutdown period. Mayor Davis suggested that up to $4,000 be set aside for employee bonuses, with the bonus rate being the equivalent of one week’s pay for each employee.

VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT MOVED TO APPROVE REINSTATEMENT OF CHRISTMAS BONUSES FOR ALL TOWN OF WALDEN EMPLOYEES, AS WRITTEN ABOVE, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. **second reading of proposed ordinance #2020-334, an ordinance to add a new title 14 to the walden zoning ordinance, relative to signs and advertisement**

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE ORDINANCE #2020-334, AS WRITTEN, UPON THIS SECOND READING, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **any other unfinished business**

There is no other unfinished business.

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITIZENS**

1. Angela Cassidy expressed her appreciation for being appointed to the Land Use Study Committee. She looks forward to using her expertise in serving the Town of Walden.
2. Hiram “Bo” Chamberlain asked Mayor Davis if he had any contact information on the individuals who are charged with upkeep and maintenance on the frisbee golf course that is behind the Pumpkin Patch playground. Mayor Davis asked Mr. Chamberlain to contact Town Hall the following day to retrieve the requested information.
3. David Bishop extended a welcome to new Mayor Lee Davis and new Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt. He further expressed an interest in the Walden parks, and is looking forward to working with the new administration.

The meeting adjourned by motion and unanimous roll call vote.

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 Respectfully submitted:

 Fern Lockhart, Recorder

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 Approved:

SES Lee Davis, Mayor