



# TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Thursday, January 26, 2023 at 9:00 AM  
Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

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## MINUTES

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**PRESENT:** Mary Gelbaugh, Commissioner  
Ben Guiney, Commissioner  
Greg McPherson, Commissioner  
David Nestler, Vice-Mayor  
Natalie Newman, Commissioner

Paige Dowling, Town Manager  
Amanda Murajda, Town Clerk  
Eric Ridenour, Town Attorney

**ABSENT:** Lynda Sossamon, Mayor

### CALL TO ORDER

*Vice-Mayor Nestler called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.*

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jake Scott (Public Works Director), Mike Beck (Fire Chief), Keith Buchanan (Asst. Fire Chief), Bernadette Peters (Main Street Director), and Chris Hatton (Police Chief).

**VISITORS:** Shannon Queen and Dave Russell.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Commissioner McPherson made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

### APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

*Commissioner Newman made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

### MAYOR'S REPORT

Manager Dowling read a resignation letter from Mayor Sossamon. She is resigning as Mayor of Sylva due to health-related issues. Board members thanked Sossamon for her dedication and service to the Town of Sylva.

Following this, Commissioner Nestler called for a motion to add an item to the agenda to discuss replacement of this vacancy.

*Commissioner Guiney made a motion to add an item to the agenda to discuss board vacancies, including the mayor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

### COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Gelbaugh requested an update on the Highway 107 project at a future meeting. Commissioner Guiney thanked Public Works for fixing pavement issues on Ripple Run. Commissioner McPherson noted that a location had been selected for the purr pod that will be on loan to the Town of Sylva. Commissioner Nestler attended a meeting with Dogwood Trust on a coworking space in the Town of Sylva. He would like to request a joint meeting with the county on housing.

**MANAGER'S REPORT:** Manager Dowling reported the following:

- Budget Work session: A budget planning work session will follow this regular morning meeting.
- Allen Street: Frontier will begin setting poles the next few days for the utility relocations. The cable that has been backordered should ship this week. The Town is close to signing the contract for the slope repair. Staff have been reviewing the latest draft. The Town is still waiting on approval from HUD for the grant documents and project scope submitted for the Cawthorn grant.
- Skyland drive contract has been approved and is underway. Completion is expected in August 2023.

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Jake Scott reported the following:

- Erosion and soil control permits have been approved for Allen Street.
- Ward's Plumbing & Heating completed their day of service and replaced mulch in bump outs in town and painted bathrooms at Potteet Park.
- Repairs of potholes are being completed in town.
- Scott thanked Mayor Sossamon for her service to the Town of Sylva.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Chris Hatton reported the following:

- Hatton thanked Mayor Sossamon for her service to the Town of Sylva.
- Planning for the next event season including Greening Up the Mountains.
- Working on a complete audit of all files of evidence and will be working towards a new filing system.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> intern with Heights Program has completed their term.
- Working on a potential grant to fund a community care liaison.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Mike Beck reported the following:

- Beck thanked Mayor Sossamon for her support of the department and service to the Town of Sylva.
- Reviewed calls for service for December and January. December had 134 calls for service that included 2 calls for CPR, four calls for Narcan, and zero structure fires inside city limits. In their district outside of city limits there were 3 calls for CPR, eight calls for oxygen, 3 calls for Narcan and seven structure fires. January to date had 84 calls that included 2 calls for oxygen, four structure fires and zero Narcan inside city limits. In their district outside of city limits there were three calls for oxygen, one call for CPR, three structure fires and one call for Narcan.

**MAIN STREET REPORT:** Bernadette Peters reported the following:

- Peters expressed her appreciation to Mayor Sossamon.
- JC Municipal grant application denied, and they are working on resubmitting with additional information.
- Greening Up the Mountains planning committee underway; exceeded goal for sponsorship.
- Sylva Brew Hop April 1, 2023, and advance tickets can be purchased.
- Apprentice program for downtown culinary participants is growing.

**TWSA BOARD REPORT:** Commissioner Nestler commended TWSA on their outstanding work during the recent major freeze in the area. Staff worked well to prevent major issues.

**PINNACLE BOARD REPORT:**

Commissioner Nestler reported that there will be a meeting next week.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Discussion on Board Vacancies:** Manager Dowling explained how the process will work for fill the seat of Mayor due to the resignation of Mayor Sossamon. Commissioner McPherson added that he would like David Nestler to serve at Mayor. Dowling explained that the mayor would be sworn in on February 9, 2023 and will serve until the next election in November 2023. That election will then be for a two-year term. Upon the appointment of Nestler, there will need to be an appointment of a Mayor Pro-Tem at the February 9, 2023, meeting. *Commissioner McPherson made a motion to appoint David Nestler as Mayor of the Town of Sylva. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Manager Dowling also explained the process for filling the vacant seat of Commissioner for David Nestler.

**NC Governor's Highway Safety Program—Local Government Grant:** Chris Hatton explained that Shannon Queen was the Governor's Highway Safety Liaison for western NC. That position came with a \$25,000 annual grant award that went to the Sheriff's Department. Since the Town is now holding Shannon's law enforcement certification, the Town can apply for the grant for traffic related expenses if Shannon is the project director. Chief Hatton explained that \$5,000 is for travel expenses to conferences and \$20,000 is for traffic related expenses that can be used on anything up to \$6,000 that doesn't have wheels. *Commissioner Guiney made a motion to approve the NC Governor's Highway Safety Program agreement of conditions and contract for federal funding for traffic safety in the amount of \$25,000 and approve the resolution authorizing Shannon Queen to file on behalf of the Town of Sylva, the application contract. Furthermore, if awarded, approve appropriation of the \$25,000 into the Sylva Police Department budget for expenditures. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**Special Event Request—Innovation Brewing—Beer Garden at Greening Up the Mountains:** Manager Dowling reported that Innovation Brewing is working with the MSSA to sponsor the Beer Garden at Greening Up the Mountains in

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April 2023. *Commissioner Guiney made a motion to approve the application to hold a Beer Garden at the 2023 Greening Up the Mountains festival. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**Special Event Request—Innovation Brewing—Concerts on the Creek —Request for Alcohol:** Manager Dowling explained that Innovation Brewing has requested to sell alcohol at all events for Concerts on the Creek. *Commissioner Newman made a motion to approve the request from Innovation Brewing. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Commissioner Guiney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 a.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

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David Nestler  
Vice-Mayor

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Amanda W. Murajda  
Town Clerk