



# TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Thursday, September 28, 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, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Ben Guiney, Commissioner  
Greg McPherson, Commissioner  
David Nestler, Mayor  
Natalie Newman, Commissioner  
Brad Waldrop, Commissioner

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

**ABSENT:**

### CALL TO ORDER

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

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

**VISITORS:** Luther Jones, Marie Cochran and Faustine McDonald.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

### MAYOR'S REPORT

None.

### COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Guiney reported that he attended the Outdoor Economy Conference. He also thanked the Sylva Fire Department for their work on a recent fire at a building owned by the hospital. Guiney thanked Jake Scott for being proactive and putting out notice that Keener Street would be closed for repair. Commissioner McPherson noted that the new WCU flags on Main Street looked great. He attended a HERE meeting recently and reiterated the importance of working with homelessness. Commissioner Newman asked the board for thoughts on installing a plaque in memory of Dan Schaeffer at Bridge Park. Manager Dowling suggested a plaque to match those already in place. The board was of the consensus to have a plaque installed.

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

- Employment Update: John Crisco was hired to fill the Maintenance Technician position in Public Works. Also, Officer Cody Ruckart will be transferring to a job with the Haywood County Sheriff's Office.
- Richard Hicks (Interim Manager) will visit Sylva on October 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The public restroom bid opening is October 10<sup>th</sup>. The Board will need to approve an amended project ordinance on October 12<sup>th</sup> along with a resolution authorizing the contract.
- The Bridge Park Expansion Project bid advertisement is out. The bid opening will be Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>. The board will need to approve the contract Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>.
- The new Skyland Drive sidewalk completion date is March 23, 2024.
- An update from NCDOT on the R-5600/NC 107 project update has been requested.

Regular Board Meeting September 28, 2023

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

- Scott gave an update on Allen Street repairs.
- Downtown restroom bid questions are complete; there were 4 bidders at meeting at the pre-bid meeting.
- Worling with Equinox on Pinnacle Park master plan.
- Pre-bid meeting for Bridge Park project will be October 6<sup>th</sup>.
- NCDOT is conducting bridge inspections on Allen Street and Harold Street.
- Selected contractor for invasive removal and waiting on approval from the NC Division of Land and Water.
- Traffic striping will be next week.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT:** None.

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

- Training burns will continue on 10/2/2023.
- 1047 calls so far for 2023 which is up 20% from this time last year.
- Increase in Narcan use in the last month.
- The fire department had a 4-minute response time to a call for a fire on Eastgate Drive.

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

- Outdoor economy conference was a good success.
- Jennifer Kathy from the Mainstreet Historic Preservation Office visited 2 properties on Main Street who will potentially apply for historic tax credits.
- The Main Street team, along with the Chamber of Commerce and TDA has helped 19 businesses relocate as a result of the NC Highway 107 project. 15 of those have remained in the city limits of Sylva.

**TWSA BOARD REPORT:** None.

**PINNACLE BOARD REPORT:** Mayor Nestler reported the following:

- Invasive removal contract work will get underway soon.
- A public input session will be held at the Library Community Room on Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup> for the public to give input on wishes for Pinnacle Park.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**PUBLIC ART PROPOSAL—AFFRILACHIAN ARTIST PROJECT:** Marie Cochran and Faustine McDonald addressed the board about an art proposal to install a figurative sculpture to honor the life and legacy of Victoria Casey-McDonald. Victoria Casey-McDonald was born and raised in Jackson County. She was a grassroots oral historian and that made her a regional treasure for the black community.

**REQUEST FROM WATR—LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLANNING GRANT FUNDING:** WATR is requesting the Board provide a support letter for a water quality management planning grant the Southwestern Commission is helping them apply for. Commissioner McPherson extended sincere thanks to Ken Brown for working with WATR on water quality. *Commissioner McPherson made a motion to approve the letter of support. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**SCHEDULE A BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MEETING—OCTOBER 12, 2023:** Manager Dowling explained that the Town had received a request for a variance for property on Keener Street that would require a Board of Adjustment meeting. *Commissioner Newman made a motion to schedule the Board of Adjustment meeting on October 12, 2023. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Commissioner Guiney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:01 a.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

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David Nestler  
Mayor

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Amanda W. Murajda  
Town Clerk