



TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 5:30 PM
Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

MINUTES

PRESENT: Blitz Estridge, Commissioner
Mary Gelbaugh, Mayor Pro-Tem
Mark Jones, Commissioner
Natalie Newman, Commissioner
Johnny Phillips, Mayor
Brad Waldrop, Commissioner

Richard Hicks, Interim Town Manager
Amanda Murajda, Town Clerk
Eric Ridenour, Town Attorney
Paige Dowling, Town Manager

ABSENT:

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Phillips called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT: Lynn Bryant (Finance Officer), Jake Scott (Public Works Director), Robbie Carter (Police Lieutenant) Aimee Sumner (Lt. Detective), John Thomas (Assistant Police Chief) and Chris Hatton (Police Chief).

VISITORS: Kenyon Thweatt, Destri Leger, Charles Allen, Daniel Allen, Chuck Hall, Carol Hall, Dave Russell, Luther Jones, David Nestler, Jon Brown, DeMakus Staton, Beth Dennis, Ellerna Forney, and LaShonda Eaddy.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Estridge made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: DaMaKus Staton addressed the board and introduced his non-profit called Reflection of Inspiration which helps individuals attain their goals and aspirations to serve the community.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Phillips thanked Richard Hicks for serving as Interim Town Manager. Phillips has asked NCDOT to help with street light painting.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: Commissioner Gelbaugh mentioned that she had been approached about the smell of Jackson Paper. She reminded everyone of several articles in the Sylva Herald and a book written by Jason Gregory which explains it is vapor. Commissioner Waldrop requested to have additional information on the Town website regarding the Highway 107 project. Commissioner Jones also thanked Mr. Hicks for his service and welcomed Paige Dowling back to the Town. Commissioner Estridge noted it was sad to see Speedy's Pizza and Bryson Farm Supply taken down. Commissioner Newman requested a MOU about the Victoria Casey-McDonald sculpture be added to a future agenda.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Richard Hicks, Interim Town Manager, reported the following:

- The Fire Department will be conducting training burns in the next few weeks.
- The Police Department still has 2 vacancies.
- Town Hall will be closed on February 19, 2024 for the President's Day holiday.

PUBLIC HEARING

COMMUNITY INPUT: BRYSON PARK PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT: Jake Scott gave an opening presentation showing concept ideas of playground equipment to be installed. Charles Allen spoke to say he would like to have a multi-use court installed as well as a larger covered pavilion. LaShonda Eaddy addressed the board about the park's namesake. She explained some history related to her Bryson family. She requested the board speak to the Bryson Family. *Being no further comment, Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to close the hearing at 6:08 p.m.*

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: SECTION 30-14: STREETS AND SIDEWALKS—PUBLIC SOLICITATION:

Kenyon Thweat addressed the board and offered his support for the public solicitation ordinance. As a profession, he has worked with individuals who suffer with housing and health issues. Destri Leger noted that she is concerned with the ambiguity of the ordinance and the way it would be enforced. Commissioner Newman read an email from Craig Garrett who expressed that there was no need for the ordinance. *Being no further comment, Commissioner Jones made a motion to close the hearing at 6:18 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: SECTION 30-14: STREETS AND SIDEWALKS—PUBLIC SOLICITATION:

Mayor Phillips asked for a motion to approve the ordinance as presented. *Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the ordinance as presented.* Commissioner Waldrop commented that he did not think the ordinance as written was constitutional. He added that the content did not seem constitutional. Commissioner Gelbaugh noted that she has concern on the activities prohibited because it's impossible to discern that. Chief Hatton explained that this is a civil ordinance, and the officer decides. Gelbaugh noted that the ordinance, if passed, could be edited in the future. Commissioner Newman asked what the other commissioners wanted to see in regard to constituents' requests. Newman asked a series of questions of Chief Hatton for clarification. Commissioner Jones mentioned the safety on Highway 107 during the Highway 107 construction project. The board continued to discuss the ordinance. *Mayor Phillips called for a vote on the motion on the floor. The motion carried with a 3-2 vote. Voting in favor of the motion were commissioners Gelbaugh, Jones and Estridge. Voting against the motion were Commissioners Newman and Waldrop.*

MAINSTREET LIGHTING: SELECTION OF LIGHTING FOR MAINSTREET: At the January 25, 2024 board meeting, the board heard a presentation on street light options for replacing lights on Main Street. The board discussed the three options available. *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to choose the Monticello Street Light for the replacement. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

RESOLUTION OF INTENT: SCHEDULE PUBLIC HEARING TO RENAME A PORTION OF MUNICIPAL

DRIVE: A request was made to have Municipal Drive, from the Fire Department to the intersection of Allen Street, renamed to Vance Street in memory of RO Vance, a long-time Sylva business owner, fire department member and supporter of the Town of Sylva. The public hearing would be on March 14th and vote to follow that. *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to schedule the public hearing. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

RESCHEDULE MARCH 28, 2024 REGULAR BOARD MEETING TO MARCH 21, 2024 AT 9:00 A.M.: The regular meeting needs to be rescheduled to March 21st due to the budget meeting schedule. *Commissioner Newman made a motion to reschedule the meeting. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

ADJOURNMENT: *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Johnny Phillips
Mayor

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk