



TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Thursday, February 23, 2023 at 9:00 AM
Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mary Gelbaugh, Commissioner
Ben Guiney, Commissioner
Greg McPherson, Commissioner
David Nestler, Mayor
Natalie Newman, 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), Keith Buchanan (Asst. Fire Chief), Bernadette Peters (Main Street Director), and Chris Hatton (Police Chief).

VISITORS: Faustine McDonald, Marie Cochran, Judith Lewis, Johnny Phillips, Brad Waldrop, Hannah McLeod and Dave Russell.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Gelbaugh 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

Judith Lewis addressed the board about homelessness, substance abuse and mental health issues that are on the rise in the Town of Sylva. She currently works for Appalachian Community Services.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Nestle reported that he attended the Sylva Art and Design Committee meeting, and they are looking for volunteers.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Guiney thanked the Public Works department for cleaning up the Poteet bathrooms. He asked for an update on the purr pod sculpture and the skate park. Both are close to being completed. Commissioner Gelbaugh noted that she would be attending a workforce conference for retail, hospitality and tourism industry. She thanked Manager Dowling for getting a update for the board on where the Highway 107 construction stands for construction. She would like a completion date from NCDOT.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Dowling reported the following:

- The TWSA annual meeting is March 7th at 4:00 p.m.
- GUTM: Mark and Tammy Haskett are doing an incredible job with Greening up the Mountains planning. There are only a couple of vendor spots left. This is the earliest spots have filled up in the festival. Sponsorships are also coming in higher than last year so there will be additional advertising.
- Budget Update: Departmental budget sheets are due by Friday, March 3rd.
- Restroom Update: Jake Scott and Manager Dowling met with Odell Thompson, the mechanical engineer, and civil engineer to discuss items that need to be included in the bid packet for the restroom construction. The reviewed details for heaters, floor drains, a mop sink, and automatic toilets that hang from the wall for easy cleaning. The next

step is for the architect and engineers to prepare the bid package. The depot site also needs to be rezoned General Business to the Downtown Business District because we cannot meet the site requirements like parking and setbacks.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REPORT: Jake Scott reported the following:

- The Skyland Drive sidewalk project is underway.
- Working on event plans including traffic detours.
- Attended the 2023 WASP meeting of TWSA

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT: Chris Hatton reported the following:

- Planning for the next event season including Greening Up the Mountains.
- Thanked the Public Works department for their assistance with issues at Bryson Park.
- Department has one vacancy.
- Continuing training for department members.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT: Keith Buchanan reported the following:

- Reviewed calls for service for 2023.
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MAIN STREET REPORT: Bernadette Peters reported the following:

- Festival and event season planning is underway.
- Downtown merchants' market will be March 18, 2023.
- Friends Night Out will be March 30, 2023.
- Sylva Brew Hop will be April 1, 2023.
- This will be the 25th anniversary of GUTM.

TWSA BOARD REPORT: Mayor Nestler reported that TWSA had recently updated their personnel policy.

PINNACLE BOARD REPORT:

Mayor Nestler reported that the draft botanical survey had been received and the board is still reviewing. Equinox will tentatively give a presentation to the Town Board at a meeting in April.

NEW BUSINESS

PROCLAMATION—VICTORIA CASEY-MCDONALD DAY-FEBRUARY 26, 2023: Marie Cochran approached both the Town and County requesting the boards pass a proclamation declaring Feb. 26th Victoria Casey-McDonald Day on February 26, 2023, which would've been Ms. Casey-McDonald's 80th birthday. Victoria was a retired teacher. She later wrote books on the life of residents in Black Appalachia. Her daughter, Faustine McDonald thanked the board for their support. *Commissioner Newman made a motion to adopt the proclamation. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

REQUEST FROM NCDOT—US HIGHWAY 23 SPEED LIMIT CHANGES: NCDOT Division Traffic Engineer contacted the town after reviewing the downhill grade of the road and found that it is difficult to reduce speed in this section with increased development. NCDOT has suggested lowering the speed limit from Teakwood Lane to Hospital Road from 45 mph to 35 mph. *Commissioner Guiney made a motion to accept the recommended speed limit changes per NCDOT. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

BOARD OF COMMISSIONER VACANT SEAT: Board members were given copies of application for those interested in serving on the Town Board in the vacant seat. Those applicants included Destri Leger, Guy John Phillips, Jr. and Brad Waldrop. Board members were given a ballot that include the name of each applicant. They were instructed to choose one applicant and sign the ballot. Ballots were read for votes as the following:

Commissioner McPherson—Brad Waldrop
Commissioner Newman—Brad Waldrop
Commissioner Gelbaugh—Guy John Phillips, Jr.
Commissioner Guiney—Brad Waldrop

By vote of ballot, Brad Waldrop is appointed to the Town of Sylva Board of Commissioners. His swearing-in ceremony will be on March 9, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT: *Commissioner Guiney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 a.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

David Nestler
Mayor

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk