



TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 5:30 PM
Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

MINUTES

PRESENT: Blitz Estridge, Commissioner
Perry Matthews, Commissioner
Samuel McGuire, Commissioner
Johnny Phillips, Mayor
Joseph Waldrum, Commissioner

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

ABSENT: Brad Waldrop, Mayor Pro Tem

CALL TO ORDER

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

STAFF PRESENT: Robbie Carter (Asst. Police Chief).

VISITORS: Jared Lee, Kimmie Brownie and Malachi Lunnen.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Jared Lee, resident of Maggie Valley, addressed the Board regarding concerns about the recently constructed skate park located on county property. Mr. Lee expressed dissatisfaction with the skate park's design, lack of skater input during the planning process, and overall usability—particularly for beginner skaters. He stated that the facility lacked flow, was not user-friendly for youth and beginners, and did not reflect best practices or community engagement. Mr. Lee emphasized the importance of involving end users in recreational facility design and questioned the stewardship of public funds used toward the project.

Board members responded by clarifying that:

- The skate park is a Jackson County project located on county property.
- The Town of Sylva contributed funding but did not control design decisions.
- Recreation Department staff and county officials were responsible for planning and implementation.
- Concerns related to design and management should be directed to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners.

MAYOR'S REPORT: None.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Commissioner McGuire expressed appreciation for community engagement during the holiday season, support of local businesses, and thanked educators and school staff as students returned to school. He also noted upcoming participation in the Essentials of Municipal Government program. Commissioner Waldrum thanked town staff for their responsiveness and support across departments. Commissioner Estridge highlighted the importance of continued coordination with Jackson County and noted improvements observed at the local community "stop box," including better organization and cleanliness.

Board members discussed upcoming road construction related to the NC 107 project and emphasized the importance of safety for residents and construction workers.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Dowling reported the following:

- Budget priority rankings are due by January 19, ahead of the budget planning work session on January 22 following the regular meeting.
- Essentials of Municipal Government training will take place January 15–16, with carpool arrangements from Town Hall.
- Renovation work at the Poteet Park restrooms has begun; the park will be closed during construction. Project completion is expected by April at a cost of \$237,600.
- An RFP for a new commercial fire truck has been issued; bids will be opened February 2 at noon.
- A new leaf vacuum has been delivered and is in use.
- A joint meeting with Jackson County is scheduled for March 10 at 6:00 p.m. at the Burrell Building.
- Vacancies remain on the Planning Board and Economic Development Advisory Committee.
- NC 107 project construction activity is expected to begin in April, with initial utility relocations during the first year.

NEW BUSINESS:

AUDIT RFP: Manager Dowling explained that the Town issues a Request for Proposals for the annual audit every few years. This is traditionally a three-year cycle. The last RFP was issued in 2023. This will be sent to firms who have expressed interest in the past and it will be posted on the Town's website. Proposals are due February 13th. After reviewing and checking references, staff will provide a summary and recommendation on February 26, 2026. The audit contract will be on the agenda for Town Board approval March 12, 2026. *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the Audit RFP. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

CLOSED SESSION: *Commissioner Estridge made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to NCGS. 143-318-11(a)(3) and (6) for personnel and to consult with attorney. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Commissioner Estridge made a motion to come out of closed session. The motion carried with a unanimous vote and the Board entered into regular session at 6:12 p.m. No action was taken during closed session.

ADJOURNMENT: *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:12 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Johnny Phillips
Mayor

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk