



# TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 9:00 AM  
Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

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## MINUTES

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**PRESENT:** Blitz Estridge, Commissioner  
Mary Gelbaugh, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Mark Jones, Commissioner  
Natalie Newman, Commissioner  
Johnny Phillips, Mayor  
Brad Waldrop, Commissioner  
Paige Dowling, Town Manager  
Amanda Murajda, Town Clerk  
Eric Ridenour, Town Attorney

**ABSENT:**

### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Phillips 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, Dave Russell, and Marie Cochran.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

### APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Luther Jones thanked the board for approval of the solicitation ordinance. Marie Cochran addressed the board and reminded them of the proclamation approved in 2023 for Victoria Casey-McDonald day on February 26<sup>th</sup>.

### MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Phillips reported that he had attended the Essentials of Municipal Government class and it was a great learning opportunity.

### COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Gelbaugh noted that she attended the quarterly library board meeting. Commissioner Waldrop reported that he is working with a group on overhead utilities on Mill Street as part of a revitalization project. Commissioner Jones commended Jake Scott on the work at Allen Street and Bryson Park. Commissioner Estridge requested that signs stating no tractor trailer vehicles be installed on East Sylva Circle. Commissioner Newman announced that the Appalachian Studies Association will be holding a conference at WCU March 7-9, 2024.

**MANAGER'S REPORT:** Interim Manager Hicks reported the following:

- Departmental budget requests were submitted. The next budget work session is March 21<sup>st</sup> following the regular board meeting.
- Both the downtown public restroom project and the Bridge Park green infrastructure project will see lots of progress in the upcoming weeks. Both projects are under construction at this time.

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

- Scott is working with Bliss Products on playground equipment concept ideas. He has requested that they reflect poured-in-place rubber as well as ADA accessible equipment.

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- Scott has asked Odell Thompson to construct a drawing for a picnic pavilion at Bryson Park
- The public restroom project has encountered unsuitable soil.
- The Bridge Park project has also encountered unsuitable soil and rock.
- Duke Energy expects a mid-summer completion date of the new Main Street light poles.

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

- The department is currently planning for Town events coming up.
- They still have 2 job vacancies.
- There will be a Community Care symposium on March 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Joshua Geiger received the Officer of the Year award.
- Robbie Carter received the Supervisor of the Year award.
- Hatton updated the board on calls for service.

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

- 192 calls so far in 2024—this is up 70 from the previous year.
- New employee, Allen Orcutt, began today.

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

- Greening Up the Mountains is full for all vendors.
- Updated Highway 107 project information will be posted on the Town’s website.
- Friends of Main Street program created to encourage involvement.

**TWSA BOARD REPORT:** Manager Dowling reported that the annual meeting will be March 5, 2024.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**MILL STREET DESIGN PRESENTATION:** Bernadette Peters gave a presentation on a 5-year revitalization project for the Mill Street area.

**PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION:** Last week, Julie Donaldson celebrated 25 years with the Jackson County Chamber. Mayor Phillips signed the proclamation in the agenda packet. Bernadette Peters presented this to Julie as a surprise. The Town of Sylva is very grateful for Julie’s work and dedication to Sylva and Jackson County.

**SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST—INNOVATION BREWING @ GREENING UP THE MOUNTAINS:** Innovation Brewing is requesting the special event permit for the beverage arts area at Greening Up the Mountains. This permit comes to the board for approval each year. *Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the special event request. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**RESCHEDULE MARCH PLANNING BOARD MEETING TO MARCH 21, 2024 AT 5:00 P.M.:** *Commissioner Newman made a motion to reschedule the March Planning Board meeting to March 21, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**CLOSED SESSION:** *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to NCGS. 143-318-11(a)(3) to consult with the town attorney and (6) for personnel at 9:48 a.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

*Commissioner Jones made a motion to come out of closed session. The motion carried with a unanimous vote and the Board entered into regular session at 10:39 a.m. No action was taken during closed session.*

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 a.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

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Johnny Phillips  
Mayor

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Amanda W. Murajda  
Town Clerk