



# TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, March 26, 2026, 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  
Perry Matthews, Commissioner  
Samuel McGuire, Commissioner  
Johnny Phillips, Mayor  
Joseph Waldrum, Commissioner  
Brad Waldrop, Mayor Pro Tem

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:** Mike Beck (Fire Chief), Bernadette Peters (Economic Dev. Director) and Jake Scott (Public Works Director).

**VISITORS:** Tracy Fitzmaurice and Dave Russell.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Commissioner Waldrum 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:** None.

### MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Phillips thanked the Public Works Department for having Vance Street and Municipal Drive resurfaced.

### COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Commissioner McGuire commented on the value of a recent municipalities meeting, highlighting regional collaboration opportunities. He also commended Tracy Fitzmaurice for years of service with the Jackson County Library. Commissioner Waldrum shared that the improvements at Pinnacle Park looked very good. He also announced an upcoming 5K benefiting the Southwestern Child Development Commission. Commissioner Estridge shared his experiences touring the *Sylva Herald* building and attending a county business meet-and-greet event, noting discussions about affordable housing initiatives. Commissioner Matthews expressed appreciation for EMS, fire, and police response to a recent pedestrian accident downtown, and the public was encouraged to remain attentive in crosswalk areas.

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

- RTP Trail construction is nearing completion, with final work expected within the next week.
- Department heads were reminded that the grant spending deadline is March 31.
- Greening Up the Mountains Festival scheduled for April 25 (10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.); all vendor spaces are filled.
- Chief Hatton's retirement reception will be held April 30 from 2:00–4:00 p.m. at the Historic Courthouse atrium.
- A report on the Fisher Creek Dam is expected soon.
- Engineering work continues on the Scotts Creek wall despite FEMA meeting delays related to the federal government shutdown.
- Town Hall will be closed April 3 for Good Friday.

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

- Vance Street and Municipal Drive resurfacing and repainting completed and reopened.
- RTP Trail inspection showed strong progress; bridge construction underway with project completion expected shortly.
- Poteet Park restroom renovations are nearing completion ahead of festival deadlines.
- New garbage truck has been delivered.
- Air quality testing underway at multiple town locations in partnership with Western Carolina University.
- Seasonal maintenance activities begin, including pothole repair, mowing, pruning, and park preparation.
- Ritz Lot project planning includes geotechnical exploration to address known unsuitable soils and sinkhole risks; contingency funds included in estimates.
- DOT monitoring settling asphalt near the fountain; no major townwide sinkhole concerns currently identified.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT:**

None.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Mike Beck, Fire Chief, reported the following:

- A total of 354 calls for service so far in 2026.

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

- Successful Bloom Business Appreciation Dinner attended by approximately 200 business owners.
- Request for additional volunteers for Greening Up the Mountains, particularly for end-of-day teardown shifts.
- Downtown Cleanup scheduled for April 18 at Bridge Park.
- Attendance at the North Carolina Main Street Conference with implementation of new initiatives planned.
- Announcement that the Sylva Depot Plaza public restrooms received a North Carolina Main Street Award for Best Infill Project — the town's first such award.

**PLANNING BOARD REPORT:** None.

**TWSA BOARD REPORT:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**RECOGNITION OF APPRECIATION:** The Board presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Tracy Fitzmorris recognizing 35 years of dedicated service to the Fontana Regional Library and Jackson County Public Library.

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF JACKSON COUNTY LIBRARY:** Commissioner Waldroup introduced and read a resolution in support of the Jackson County Library. *Commissioner Waldroup made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**LOCAL NEWS DAY PROCLAMATION:** *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the proclamation. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**RESOLUTION OF EXEMPTION FROM ARCHITECT/ENGINEER/SURVEYOR QUALIFICATIONS-BASED SELECTION—RITZ PARKING LOT:** The resolution for exemption from qualification-based selection allows the Town to hire an engineer to develop the preliminary engineering report for the downtown stormwater inlet rehabilitation in the Ritz lot. The exemption will allow the Town to move forward with the next critical step for the SmallBiz grant from the NC Commerce Department. *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**FY 2025-2026 AUDIT CONTRACT:** The Town received two proposals for the audit contract. Staff is recommending the Board award the contract to Gould Killian CPA Group, P.A. for a total not to exceed \$39,500. *Commissioner McGuire made a motion to approve the contract. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST:** The Farmer's Market is requesting alcohol at Bridge Park for their salsa showdown fundraiser September 19th. Innovation is the beer vendor. This request comes before the board since the event is held on Town property. *Commissioner McGuire made a motion to approve the request. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Regular Board Meeting March 26, 2026

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 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