



# TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

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

---

## MINUTES

---

**PRESENT:** Jonathan Brown, Commissioner  
Blitz Estridge, Commissioner  
Mary Gelbaugh, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Mark Jones, 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), Robbie Carter (Assistant Police Chief) and Chris Hatton (Police Chief).

**VISITORS:** Nick Breedlove

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

### MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Phillips reported that all board members are invited to an event with the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad on September 6, 2024.

### COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Gelbaugh reported that she attended the annual river release meeting for the upcoming year with Duke Energy. She also attended the Library Board's quarterly meeting. The Library will be assisting with voter registration in the upcoming weeks and they have received a grant to purchase and supply Wi-Fi boxes to residents. Commissioner Jones reported that he attended the Mountain Projects Board regular meeting. He added that UCM will be the benefactor of the Matt Stillwell concert food drive. He also requested a flagpole be added at Bridge Park and a Town flag be designed. Commissioner Estridge attended the MSSA Board retreat. He encouraged everyone to shop and dine locally.

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

- The Matt Stillwell Hometown House Party and Bridge Park ribbon cutting is Saturday from 6:00-8:00 p.m.
- Dowling will be attending the WNCMA Manager's meeting on Friday, August 23, 2024. The topic discussed will be emergency management and storm preparation.
- The estimated substantial completion date on the public restroom is August 30<sup>th</sup>. They worked on water and sewer installation last Friday.
- We should have a contract soon from Bartlett Operations for the Bryson Park pavilion.

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

- More progress on the new downtown bathrooms as water and sewer connections have been made.
- Downtown streetlights will hopefully be installed by the end of October.

Regular Board Meeting August 22, 2024

- Bryson Park—grading and drainage work for the bases are complete; Bartlett Construction will begin work on the pavilion as soon as the playground installation is complete.

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

- The department is working through a state audit.
- The department is currently planning for the Walk for Hope event in October.
- Currently one vacant position.
- Reviewed call history.

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

- Just over 925 calls so far in 2024.
- Open House will be the first Saturday in October.
- The department will begin looking at purchasing a new fire truck in the near future.

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

- Main Street economic impact report distributed and reviewed.
- Seven applicants have now been recipients of the façade grant program.

**TWSA BOARD REPORT:** Manager Dowling reported TWSA was looking at a low-interest loan for the Clearwell project.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**JACKSON COUNTY TDA PRESENTATION:** Nick Breedlove, JCTDA Director, gave a presentation focused on Sylva’s specific tourism statistics, recent community impact, current and upcoming grant opportunities, state of the tourism industry, and strategic plans for advertising and marketing.

**FY 2024-2025 FEE SCHEDULE AMENDMENT—DISCUSSION ONLY:** Manager Dowling explained that the changes are proposed for Bridge Park fees for alcohol vendors, food trucks, and vendor tents. Staff are proposing these increases because the types of events Bridge Park is being rented for are changing and it is primarily used for large events. The park rental fee will remain the same at \$50 for two hours (with a discount for town residents) but it is proposed to change the alcohol fee to \$25.00 per vendor. The previous fee was a flat \$50.00. The Town Board will continue to approve alcohol requests. Staff is also suggesting adding a flat fee for up to six food trucks of \$75.00. In the past, food trucks were approved with a separate permit fee of \$30.00-\$65.00 based on the type of event. The final suggested change is adding a \$100 fee if the park rental includes vendor tents. This is the rate for up to 30 tents, which is all we can feasibly fit for most events on the grass. These fees will help offset maintenance costs and electricity, but the fees will reflect the types of events the park is now being rented for.

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:23 a.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

---

Johnny Phillips  
Mayor

---

Amanda W. Murajda  
Town Clerk