



# TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION

Thursday, February 27, 2025 at 9:00 AM  
Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

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## MINUTES

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**PRESENT:** Jonathan Brown, Commissioner  
Blitz Estridge, Commissioner  
Mary Gelbaugh, Mayor Pro-Tem  
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:** Sara White, Sarah Hirsch, Ricardo Ball and Sarah West.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

### MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Phillips expressed his support for the Community Care program.

### COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Brown noted that PBS aired a wonderful program on the Community Care Program. He added that Jackson County was working on a skate park plan.

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

- Budget Process: Department heads have submitted their budget worksheets. Administration is working to compile them. The next budget work session will be March 27<sup>th</sup> immediately after the morning board meeting.
- Vacancy: Applications for the Board vacancy are due to Town Hall March 5<sup>th</sup>. The applications we receive will be distributed to the Board March 13<sup>th</sup>. These will be distributed in open session for review. The Board will vote by ballot on March 27<sup>th</sup> to fill the vacancy. The newly appointed commissioner will be sworn in April 10<sup>th</sup>. The new commissioner will participate in the March 27<sup>th</sup> budget work session after being selected.
- A preconstruction meeting for the new firetruck is February 28<sup>th</sup>.
- The March 13<sup>th</sup> agenda will have two separate requests for zoning map amendments.
- Allison Joseph has resigned from the Planning Board. The Board needs to be thinking of a replacement to fill the remainder of her term. The term will expire on December 31, 2026.
- Clearing for utilities along NC 107 started yesterday (Feb. 24). The former Jackson Vet Clinic building is scheduled to be torn down the first week of March. This is the last remaining structure to be removed. The construction let date is July 16, 2025.
- TWSA's Annual Meeting is Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.
- Greening Up the Mountains vendor spaces are full. The festival is Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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

- Bryson Park Update: new roof, siding and interior framing completed; tile, shading structures and site furnishings soon.
- Preliminary pricing being established for FEMA on the wall failure behind Town Hall.
- Litter sweep will take place over the next few weeks.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Chris Hatton, Police Chief, reported the following:

- Working with community groups on local needs for housing.
- Still have one personnel vacancy.
- NC SOG will be filming in Town in a few weeks on the Community Care program.
- Reviewed calls for service.

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

- Calls for service have increased.
- A preconstruction meeting for the new fire truck will be Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>.

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

- GUTM vendor spots are now full.
- Conducting meetings for merchant networking.
- The Main Street program received national accreditation again this year.

**PLANNING BOARD REPORT:**

- The Planning Board will meet February 27<sup>th</sup> to review two zoning map amendment requests

**TWSA BOARD REPORT:**

- TWSA's annual meeting is March 4, 2025

**NEW BUSINESS**

**PRESENTATION FROM UNIDXS:** Ricardo Ball, UNIDXS Executive Director, gave a presentation to the board about the organization's mission and services provided. UNIDXS is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting inclusion, diversity and the rights of the Latinx community, as well as for anyone in need in the WNC region.

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF NCDOT HIGH IMPACT LOW-COST FUNDS—SKYLAND DRIVE:** NCDOT is able to use funding called High Impact Low Cost Funds for resurfacing that was done on Skyland Drive when the sidewalk was completed. Resurfacing was not part of the original contract, but the scope was broadened and combined with another project in Maggie Valley in order to attract bidders. Passing this resolution will help align the Town's portion of the construction costs with what we have budgeted. NCDOT is paying 80% of the cost of the sidewalk and the Town is paying 20% of the cost. The Town's expenditures for the Skyland Drive sidewalk will total \$377,009.84. *Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the resolution, and the motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**ORDINANCE ADOPTING AND ENACTING NEW CODE OF ORDINANCES:** Every ten years municipalities recodify the Code of Ordinances. Essentially, we contract with a company to make sure all amendments have been added to the Code of Ordinance, that the ordinances match what is published online, that the references and links are still valid, and that our ordinances do not conflict with state laws. The Board needs to adopt the ordinance in the agenda packet to officially recodify the Town's Code of Ordinances. *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adopt the new code of ordinances, and the motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**CLOSED SESSION:** *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to NCGS. 143-318-11(a)(6) for the Town Manager's Evaluation at 9:45 a.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

*Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to come out of closed session. The motion carried with a unanimous vote and the Board entered into regular session at 10:06 a.m. No action was taken during closed session.*

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 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