



TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, July 23, 2026, at 9:00 AM
Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

MINUTES

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

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

ABSENT: Joseph Waldrum, Commissioner
Brad Waldrop, Mayor Pro Tem

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) Maleah Mathis (Police Lieutenant), Robbie Carter (Assistant Police Chief) and Jake Scott (Public Works Director).

VISITORS: Harold Hensley, Stacy Knotts, Christina Matheson,

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner McGuire made a motion to remove the Fisher Creek Dam Presentation and move it to the August 13th meeting when all board members will be present. The motion carried with a unanimous vote. Commissioner McGuire made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Phillips reported on a recent land slide on Ridgeway Street. Staff will be evaluating repairs.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Commissioner McGuire met with the Historic Preservation Committee and thanked Haven Bryant who put together a potential Jackson County Heritage recognition program, illustrating cultural, social, political or architectural significance places in Jackson County. Commissioner Estridge updated the board on the main street fountain repairs.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Dowling reported the following:

- Employment Update: Austin Whitehead has accepted a Patrol Officer position. He previously worked for the Sheriff's Department. The Town is currently accepting applications for the Town Clerk position.
- Mayor Phillips and Manager Dowling met with Rep. Anna Ferguson to request a technical correction for the funding in the State budget. The request revised the wording to be "repairs to City and public works infrastructure" instead of "repairs to the public works maintenance building".
- The Southwestern Commission's annual meeting is Monday, July 27th at 5:00 p.m. at Betty's Creek.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REPORT: Jake Scott reported the following:

- Sylva received several inches of rain quickly late Friday afternoon July 17th that caused flooding in areas around Town. Public Works has been working to clean up the damage. There was a slope failure near the top of Ridgeway Street. It is approximately 30 feet long between two sections of the road in a switchback curve. There were a few

private properties affected by the slide. This will be a significant expense to the town. There was not an emergency declaration made. Scott and Dowling met with Rich Adams of Wurster and there is an estimate of \$400,000 to \$500,000 to repair the slide area.

- Community Table Update—in August there will be intense foundation repairs to the building. The Community Table is going to split the cost of repairs with the Town.
- Scotts Creek Retaining Wall project—The phase 1 archaeological study has been completed and there were no findings of concern. The report is currently being prepared so that it can be sent to FEMA to continue the process.
- The Pinnacle Park PARTF RFQ will be published soon.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT: Robbie Carter, Assistant Police Chief, reported the following:

- Reviewed service calls for the month.
- Staffing updates: one vacancy has been filled, leaving two positions still open.
- Galadriel LaVere has partnered with Vaya Health for CIT training.
- Department continues to work on additional training and community involvement.

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

- 1021 calls so far this year.

MAIN STREET REPORT: Bernadette Peters, reported the following:

- July 4th Celebration was very well attended
- Presented to the Sylva Rotary Club
- NC Main Street has funded a professional video shoot for July 31st for each of it's Main Street programs.

PLANNING BOARD REPORT: None.

TWSA BOARD REPORT: None.

NEW BUSINESS

SYLVA PRIDE PARADE APPEAL REQUEST: Mayor Phillips explained that a policy has been created in the past to allow the closure of Main Street for 5 events. He explained that the board needed to discuss the cost associated with parades. Commissioner Matthews reported that Sylva Pride is willing to have fundraisers to cover the cost of the parade. Phillips noted that he spoke with each board member and asked if they wanted to wait till all members were present. Dowling explained that the appeal would need to be decided at this meeting because NCDOT must be notified with the correct timeframe for a street closure. Phillips continued that strong consideration to treat everyone the same, welcoming and inclusive for everyone. Commissioner McGuire noted that this was a divisive topic and would like Sylva to be a welcoming place. Mayor Phillips added that it was also the board's responsibility to be fiscally responsible and there are several major repairs in progress. The board continued discussion about the event. Phillips called for a motion on the appeal.

Commissioner Matthews made a motion to approve the appeal for a 2-block route for the Sylva Pride Parade. Phillips asked if the motion included a payment for \$2,280 from Sylva Pride. Matthews explained that the fundraising by Sylva Pride was a show of good faith. McGuire added that he thought a compromise should be that the Town pays half of the cost and Sylva Pride pays half. The board discussed a deadline for the payment. Matthews amended his motion to be that the appeal was approved for a 2-block route with the Town and Sylva Pride each paying half of the cost of the event with the payment due by August 20, 2026. The motion carried with a 2-1 vote. Voting in the affirmative were Commissioners McGuire and Matthews. Voting against the motion was Commissioner Estridge.

Commissioner Matthews made a motion to approve the road closure for the event. The motion carried with a 2-1 vote. Voting in the affirmative were Commissioners McGuire and Matthews. Voting against the motion was Commissioner Estridge.

ADJOURNMENT: *Commissioner McGuire made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 a.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Johnny Phillips
Mayor

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk