



# TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 5:30 PM  
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  
Joseph Waldrum, 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 5:30 p.m.*

**STAFF PRESENT:** Lynn Bryant (Finance Officer), Jake Scott (Public Works Director), Robbie Carter (Police Lieutenant) and Chris Hatton (Police Chief).

**VISITORS:** Dave Russell, Nelia Waldrum, Heather McGuire, Luther Jones, Taylor Dills, Hazel Dills, Charlie Myers, Pam Myers, Donna Carpenter, Kathy McGuire, Lisa Leatherman, Judy Geiger, Dan Geiger, David McGuire, Tammy Matthews, Jeanell Youngbird, Shari Matthews, Caitlyn Fortenberry, Tammy Brown, Patric McGuire, Jeanne McGuire, David Nestler and Shawn Oberlies.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Commissioner Gelbaugh 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 board members for their service to the Town.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:** Commissioner Gelbaugh thanked everyone and expressed her feelings on serving the last 12 years on the board. Commissioner Waldrop thanked volunteers for stocking the Sylva Support Stop. Commissioner Waldrum and Estridge thanked Gelbaugh and Brown for their service as board members. Commissioner Brown thanked the community for the opportunity to serve as a board member.

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

- Thank you to everyone who participated in, volunteered, or worked the Christmas Parade this past Sunday. This was likely the biggest turnout of groups and floats. It was a very successful day, and it takes everyone to make it happen. Thank you all for your hard work.
- Diamondback Premier Contracting has received the Notice to Proceed to renovate the Poteet Park restrooms. They anticipate starting the first week of January and completing the project by the end of March. Instead of stall partitions, the restrooms will be four separate units like in the public restroom and at Bryson Park.

- Nathaniel Pressley, an undergraduate student at WCU is going to intern with the Town next semester for 10 hours a week.
- Town offices will be closed December 24, 25, and 26 for Christmas and January 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **PINNACLE PARK**

The Recreational Trails Program grant is for two trail sections and a foot bridge at Pinnacle Park. The project cost is \$115,000 and \$92,000 is funded by the RTP grant. NC Land and Water and NCDEQ issue the permits and approvals to proceed. In order to obtain approval, the Town needs a Pinnacle Park Maintenance Plan, Erosion Control and Sediment Plan, and Stormwater Plan. YRU Contracting are the trail builders that were selected in October. They are planning to work this winter. The three plans should be adopted separately.

**MAINTENANCE PLAN:** *Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the maintenance plan. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**EROSION CONTROL AND SEDIMENT PLAN:** *Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the maintenance plan. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**STORMWATER PLAN:** *Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the maintenance plan. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**PRESENTATIONS OF APPRECIATION:** Mayor Phillips presented awards of appreciation to outgoing board members Mary Gelbaugh (Mayor Pro Tem) and Jonathan Brown (Commissioner).

**SWEARING-IN CEREMONY:** Judge Alan Thornburg administered the oath of office to the re-elected mayor and new commissioners.

Johnny Phillips, Mayor  
Perry Matthews, Commissioner  
Samuel McGuire, Commissioner  
Joseph Waldrum, Commissioner

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**MAYOR PRO-TEM APPOINTMENT:** **Commissioner Waldrum** made a motion to appoint Brad Waldrop as Mayor Pro Tem (Vice Mayor). *The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**OATH OF OFFICE TO MAYOR PRO-TEM:** Judge Alan Thornburg administered the oath of office to the newly appointed Mayor Pro Tem, Brad Waldrop.

**ENGINEERING PRESENTATION FOR SCOTTS CREEK:** Jake Scott, Sylva's Public Works Director, gave a presentation to the Town Board on the Scotts Creek retaining wall behind Town Hall. He gave an overview of the project to have the wall repaired. JMT has been selected to design the repair. Joel Setzer from JMT was available to answer any questions the board had. The Town issued an RFP twice and we received three proposals. JMT's proposal was selected for engineering and design services.

### **RESOLUTION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES RELATED TO SCOTTS CREEK**

**RETAINING WALL:** The resolution authorizes the Town Manager to contract with JMT on behalf of the Town for engineering for the Scotts Creek retaining wall. The engineering cost is \$368,139, which includes engineering design and geotechnical engineering. JMT will contract with S&ME for the geotechnical work and testing. The preliminary cost estimate for the Scotts Creek wall, including engineering, is \$1,386,168.01. FEMA's cost estimate for reimbursement currently totals \$1,177,761, (not including hazard mitigation) but they have assigned an engineering percentage based on the project cost rather than the methodology of the repair. The Town's FEMA representative and NC Emergency Management representative have been working with staff in hopes the FEMA Cost Review Center will increase the percentage based on complexity of the project. Joel Setzer has provided documentation that FEMA is currently reviewing. FEMA has included an additional \$234,362.78 for hazard mitigation, which brings the total FEMA offer to \$1,412,124.11, which is just above the preliminary cost estimate, but FEMA needs to provide a breakdown of what hazard mitigation measures are included. As it stands now and until we receive a breakdown from hazard mitigation, the project cost is within about \$90,000 difference from what

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FEMA is offering the Town for this repair. Staff is hopeful it can be clarified by the end of December and obligate the funding. *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**SCHEDULE HOLIDAY LUNCH FOR DECEMBER 18, 2025, AT 12:00 PM:** *Commissioner Estridge made a motion to schedule the holiday lunch for December 18, 2025, at 12:00 pm. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**FY 2026-2027 BUDGET CALENDAR:** *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the FY 2026-2027 budget calendar. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:13 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

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Johnny Phillips  
Mayor

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Amanda W. Murajda  
Town Clerk