



TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, May 28, 2026, at 9:00 AM

Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

MINUTES

PRESENT: Blitz Estridge, Commissioner
Perry Matthews, 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: Samuel McGuire, Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Phillips called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

STAFF PRESENT: Bernadette Peters (Economic Dev. Director) Aimee Sumner (Police Chief), Robbie Carter (Assistant Police Chief) and Jake Scott (Public Works Director).

VISITORS: Nelia Waldrum

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: Nelia Waldrum, a resident of Sylva, addressed the Board regarding several concerns. She encouraged the board to advocate for continued municipal representation on the Jackson County Library Board if governance changes occur. She also expressed concerns regarding newly installed surveillance cameras in and around town and requested discussion regarding their purpose, oversight, and public consent. Waldrum also asked the Board to begin discussions regarding data center development and potential impacts on shared regional resources, noting actions taken by neighboring communities.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Phillips reported receiving a citizen complaint regarding increased traffic volume and speed on Second Avenue. Phillips asked NCDOT to review the area and provide recommendations. Those have been forwarded to staff for implementation.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Commissioner Waldrop thanked citizens who participated in recent public comment periods and emphasized the importance of local civic engagement and participation in municipal government. Commissioner Estridge expressed appreciation to the Sylva Police Department and Jackson County Sheriff's Office for ongoing drug enforcement efforts and the work of the K-9 unit. Commissioner Matthews thanked volunteers who assisted with the Memorial Day flag display, recognizing their efforts in honoring veterans and the holiday.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Dowling reported the following:

- The inspection on the new trail for the RTP grant went very well. The grant representative was very impressed with the trail construction, quality, and drainage.

- The employee wellness fair is June 4th from 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
- Scott Creek Wall Update: The Town has a new FEMA program manager. The public assistance application is still in the environmental & hazard mitigation review phase. Engineering on the wall design is still progressing.
- Poteet Park's permanent sinks should be delivered and installed the end of this week.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REPORT: Jake Scott reported the following:

- The fountain at the bottom of the courthouse stairs has been shut down due to multiple leaks and will remain closed until after the July 4th holiday while repair options are evaluated with Jackson County.
- Discussions continue with engineering consultants and the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality regarding the Fisher Creek Dam and options for reducing its high-hazard classification.
- McAdams Engineering is preparing a preliminary engineering report for the Bricks Lot stormwater project.
- Air quality testing conducted by students from Western Carolina University at Bryson Park showed all measured pollutants below EPA regulatory thresholds.
- The Public Works Department continues recruiting for a temporary maintenance technician position.

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

- Reviewed service calls for the month.
- Reported significant drug trafficking arrests involving major drugs.
- Department continues recruiting for two patrol officers.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT: None.

MAIN STREET REPORT: Bernadette Peters, reported the following:

- Attendance at Greening Up the Mountains was estimated between 5,000 and 7,500 visitors despite rainy weather.
- Vendors reported strong sales and positive event participation.
- Appreciation was extended to volunteers, staff, event organizers, and community partners.
- A recent women's networking breakfast hosted in partnership with local economic development organizations attracted more than 200 attendees.
- The Concerts on the Creek series has begun and will continue weekly through Labor Day.
- The Young Professionals networking event was scheduled for later that evening.

PLANNING BOARD REPORT: Manager Dowling reported that the Planning Board typically does not meet during June and July unless urgent matters arise. She also discussed recent state legislation limiting local governments' ability to enact certain zoning changes without unanimous consent from affected property owners. Board members discussed potential implications for future land-use issues, including data center development.

TWSA BOARD REPORT: Manager Dowling reported:

- Approval of the utility budget and capital project ordinance.
- Continued progress on the Clearwell Project
- Ongoing underground work associated with Wastewater Treatment Plant No.2.
- Next steps for the Pinnacle Park grant project include preparation of an RFP for construction services.

NEW BUSINESS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT: Manager Dowling reported that Luther Jones has served as the Town's appointment to the Jackson County Historic Preservation Commission. He has resigned from the commission. The term expires August 1, 2027. Commissioner McGuire is interested in being appointed to fill the unexpired term. *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to appoint Commissioner McGuire to the Historic Preservation Committee. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE CONTRACT FOR REAL PROPERTY:

Manager Dowling reported that the resolution authorizes the Manager to sign the contract and closing documents for the purchase of property on Vance Street (formally 0 Municipal Drive) in the amount of \$212,500. *Commissioner Estridge made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

CLOSED SESSION: Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to enter closed session at 9:23 a.m. pursuant to NCGS. 143-318-11(a)(5) for contract negotiation. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to come out of closed session. The motion carried with a unanimous vote and the Board entered into regular session at 10:47 a.m. No action was taken during closed session.

ADJOURNMENT: Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:48 a.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Johnny Phillips
Mayor

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk