



# TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

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

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## MINUTES

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

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

**ABSENT:** 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) Chris Hatton (Police Chief) and Jake Scott (Public Works Director).

**VISITORS:** None

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Commissioner McGuire 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 expressed his gratitude for town staff and the work they do.

### COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Several board members recognized the success of the annual "Cleaning Up the Mountains" cleanup efforts and thanked volunteers, staff, and organizers. Board members noted the significant litter cleanup efforts throughout town and surrounding roadways. Board members also discussed attendance at the recent Homeless Round Table meeting and expressed appreciation for the collaborative discussion among organizations and community members regarding homelessness and future solutions.

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

- A budget work session is scheduled immediately after this meeting.
- A meeting is scheduled with the engineers who completed the Fisher Creek Dam report in May to ask questions and clarify sections of the report.
- Chief Hatton's retirement is April 30 from 2-4:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Historic Courthouse.
- Aimee Sumner will be sworn in as Police Chief May 1 at 3:00 p.m. at the top of the Courthouse steps.
- Board members were encouraged to ensure they are receiving League of Municipalities legislative newsletters.

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

- Final inspection for Poteet Park was scheduled for that day, with a temporary certificate of occupancy expected.
- The RTP Trail at Pinnacle was complete pending final inspection.
- A kickoff meeting for the Ritz lot improvement project was scheduled for May 5.

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- Appreciation was extended to volunteers and community members assisting with beautification projects, spreading mulch, tree trimming, graffiti removal, landscaping, and litter cleanup.

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

- The police department is currently fully staffed.
- Officers are excited about upcoming community events.
- Community support for the department remains strong.
- Increased officer visibility and downtown foot patrols have been well received.

Chief Hatton thanked the Town Manager, current and former boards, and town staff for their support during his tenure. He emphasized the importance of retaining and supporting quality staff as the town continues to grow. Board members thanked Chief Hatton for his years of service and leadership.

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

- A total of 501 calls for service so far in 2026.
- Congratulated Chief Hatton on his retirement.

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

Peters thanked volunteers and organizations that participated in downtown cleanup efforts, including:

- WCU Community Engagement Group
- Rotary Club
- Fusion Spa
- Donna Reynolds and other volunteers

Festival information was provided, including:

- Shuttle parking availability from the Justice Center and Jackson Plaza.
- Additional parking fundraising locations at local churches and businesses.
- Information booth locations throughout the festival area.
- Encouragement for attendees to bring reusable water bottles due to the festival's prohibition on single-use plastics.

The board was also informed of the upcoming "Empower Her" women's networking breakfast on May 13 at Southwestern Community College.

**PLANNING BOARD REPORT:** Manager Dowling reported that the oath of office had been administered to newly appointed member, Rob Burns.

**TWSA BOARD REPORT:** The board received an update that TWSA secured a \$5 million revolving loan for gravity sewer rehabilitation from Harolds through Skyland Drive.

Additional updates included:

- Proposed average residential rate increase of \$4.97 per month.
- Ongoing grant work for the water treatment plant.
- Progress on the wastewater treatment plant project near Harolds.

## NEW BUSINESS

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION AND DECLARATION OF SURPLUS PROPERTY:** The Town Manager explained that state statutes allow the board to declare a retiring law enforcement officer's badge and firearm as surplus property and transfer them to the retiring officer. *Commissioner McGuire made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST—WARD PLUMBING EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION—ALCOHOL SERVICE:** *Commissioner McGuire made a motion to approve the special event request. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 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