



# TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, August 28, 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  
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 9:00 a.m.*

**STAFF PRESENT:** Keith Buchanan (Assistant Fire Chief), Robbie Carter (Asst. Police Chief), Chris Hatton (Police Chief), Jake Scott (Public Works Director).

**VISITORS:** Steve Steinbrueck, Jay Spiro, Tammy Haskett, Rick Price, Lisa Leatherman, Sam McGuire, Kelly Donaldson, Julie Donaldson, Heather Baker, Scott Baker, Nick Breedlove, Corey Bryson, Laurie Bryson, Kathy Mathews, Michael Hopkins, Charles Wolfe, Wanda Wolfe, Taylor Armstrong, Robert Jumper, Todd Vineyard and Thom Brooks.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to add an item to the agenda for the Fire Department to purchase replacement pumps. The motion carried with a unanimous vote. Commissioner Brown made a motion Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

### MAYOR'S REPORT

None.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:** Commissioners reported the following:

Gelbaugh—Expressed her appreciation for the new Charles Elers Center.

Waldrop—Gave an update from the recent Library Board meeting and thanked the public for attending.

Waldrum—He will continue to host listening sessions with constituents.

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

- Town offices will be closed for Labor Day September 1<sup>st</sup>. The Monday trash route will run on Tuesday.
- The Town received 3 proposals for the Scott's Creek Slope Stabilization. JMT, GEI, and BLE all submitted Statements of Qualifications.
- There is a maintenance technician position open in the Public Works department.
- The floodplain mapping public meeting will be held September 29<sup>th</sup> at the Department on Aging at 5:30 p.m.
- Tax bills will be mailed within the next few days.

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Jake Scott, Public Works Director, reported the following:

- The FY 2024-2025 Solid Waste report has been submitted. The department collected 239.8 tons of brush and 786.6 tons of solid waste
- Working with Odell Thompson on the design for remodeling Poteet Park restrooms.

- Zach Sorrells applied for and received an NCLM grant for work signs.
- Scott has been appointed to the District 9 Preparedness Committee.
- Streetlights on Mill Street and at the fountain have been installed.
- Mast arms have been painted.
- The department has one maintenance technician vacancy.

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

- Department continues to work on training and presentations for conferences
- Reviewed calls for service.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Keith Buchanan, Assistant Fire Chief, reported the following:

- Calls for service have increased and currently stand at around 1069 since January.
- The department will have their ISO Inspection on September 8, 2025.
- The department will conduct fire and life safety training in October.

**MAIN STREET REPORT:**

- Cycle NC was a successful event held in the Town of Sylva.
- Mountainwest Brew Fest will be held September 13, 2025, at Bridge Park.
- The last Concert on the Creek will be September 5, 2025.

**TWSA BOARD REPORT:**

- TWSA and WCU are working on an interconnect between their agencies to help supply water.

**PINNACLE PARK REPORT:**

- Thank you to Lisa Leather and Duke Energy for a grant of \$25,000

**NEW BUSINESS**

**SPECIAL PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD PRESENTATION:** Manager Dowling and Mayor Phillips presented Julie Donaldson, former Director of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, the Order of the Long Leaf Pine award for her outstanding service to Jackson County and the Town of Sylva.

*Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to approve the award. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: SECTION 4, ARTICLE 1: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES:** Corey Bryson addressed the board as a representative from the MSSA and explained that the board was requesting to extend the hours to 10:00 p.m. for all days of the week. *Commissioner Estridge made a motion to approve the amendment. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**PROCLAMATION FOR CONSTITUTION WEEK 2025:** Mardy Ashe, on behalf of the local DAR chapter, requested the Town adopt a proclamation declaring September 17-23, 2025, Constitution Week. *Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the proclamation. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**SPECIAL EVENT STREET CLOSURE RESOLUTIONS:**

- (A) **EVENT RESOLUTION—TREAT STREET:** A request has been made by the Main Street Sylva Association to close Main Street for the purpose of having a “Treat Street” festival for Halloween on October 31, 2025.
- (B) **EVENT RESOLUTION—WCU HOMECOMING PARADE:** A request has been made by Western Carolina University to close Main Street for the purpose of having a homecoming parade on November 7, 2025.
- (C) **PARADE RESOLUTION—CHRISTMAS PARADE:** A request has been made by the Main Street Sylva Association to close Main Street for the purpose of having a Christmas parade on December 7, 2025.
- (D) **EVENT RESOLUTION—GREENING UP THE MOUNTAINS:** A request has been made by the Main Street Sylva Association to close Main Street for the purpose of having the Greening Up the Mountains festival on April 25, 2026.
- (E) **EVENT RESOLUTION—JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> CELEBRATION:** A request has been made by the Main Street Sylva Association to close Main Street for the purpose of having a July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration on July 4, 2026.

*Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve all of the event street closure resolutions. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**FIRE DEPARTMENT VERIFICATION FROM MUNICIPALITY RESOLUTION:** **Manager** Dowling stated this resolution is needed from the Board in order for the Fire Department to complete their ISO Rating Process. The inspection will hopefully lower the tax rating to decrease the insurance premiums for homeowners and business owners in the Town. *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**RESOLUTION FOR EXEMPTION FROM QUALIFICATION-BASED SELECTION PROCESS—POTEET PARK RESTROOM:** The Resolution for Exemption from the Qualification Based Selection process will allow the Town to contract for architectural services without going through the RFP process since the fee will be under \$50,000. The Town would like to contract with Odell Thompson for drawings of the Poteet Park restroom to make it easier for contractors to bid on the project. The expectation is to begin the renovation after the Pottery Festival in November. The park will be closed while the restrooms are being remodeled. *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**FIRE DEPARTMENT WATER PUMP REPLACEMENTS:** *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to appropriate \$13,500 from Interest on Investments (10-329-0000) into Facility Maintenance Capital (10-590-7400) to purchase two replacement pumps for the Fire Department building. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 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