



TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, December 12, 2024 at 5:30 PM
Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

MINUTES

PRESENT: Jonathan Brown, Commissioner
Blitz Estridge, Commissioner
Mary Gelbaugh, Mayor Pro-Tem
Mark Jones, Commissioner
Johnny Phillips, Mayor
Brad Waldrop, 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: Mike Beck (Fire Chief), Keith Buchanan (Assistant Fire Chief), Lynn Bryant (Finance Officer), and Robbie Carter (Assistant Police Chief).

VISITORS: Lake Silver, Carol Hall, Chuck Hall, and Sheila Gahagan.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Lake Silver from Congressman Chuck Edwards' office addressed the board and gave an update on Hurricane Helen work.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: Commissioner Gelbaugh inquired about why planning board meetings were not happening. Commissioner Jones thanked town staff for the Christmas lunch and commended Rolling Start for their tremendous work in the community. Commissioner Brown noted that he participated in a ride-a-long with the public works department and thanked them for all they do for the town.

MAYOR'S REPORT: None.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Dowling reported the following:

- Manager Dowling addressed questions related to the planning board and explained that the planning board has not met. The zoning overhaul resulted in the correction of several issues that would have normally been before the planning board. The lack of development on Highway 107 because of R5600 has eliminated applications that would have been for them to review.
- FEMA Update: All town administration staff and Jake Scott met with FEMA representatives December 2nd and had what is called the Recovery Scoping Meeting to discuss the Town's damage inventory from Hurricane Helene. The Town is submitting the funding request for a replacement of the retaining wall on the Town Hall side of Scotts Creek, but there is a possibility that FEMA will repair a percentage of the retaining wall. The Town will be subject to an environmental review along with a historic review.
- The leaf vacuum is broken. Parts have been ordered but it will likely be next week before it can be operational again. There is a notice on the Town website, and a post on Facebook. Public Works will prioritize leaf pickup as soon as the vacuum is back up and running.

- Bartlett Operations has been working to reframe the restrooms in the pavilion at Bryson Park. Due to the location of the sewer line, the Town will not be able to extend the shelter. We can still add picnic tables with umbrellas to provide additional seating. The pavilion renovation is expected to be complete by the end of March.
- Public Restrooms: The second punch list walk through on the restrooms was completed Thursday. Hopefully they can be open to the public on Monday. We are planning a ribbon cutting at Greening Up the Mountains.
- Duke Energy is still installing the new streetlights on Main Street. The contractor anticipates working another week on Main Street before moving to Mill Street. Replacement of the lights at the intersections will need to be coordinated between Duke and NCDOT.
- 107/R-5600 Update: Tree clearing should start happening soon. Tree clearing will occur prior to April 15th and before Duke starts moving their poles. 90 percent plans are being reviewed. NCDOT hopes to let the project on schedule with the caveat that utilities will still be in the process of being relocated. Once construction begins, the project is estimated to take four to five years to complete.
- Parade Recap: Thank you to everyone who worked or participated in the parade. It was a great event. We had as many entries as we have in years past. The crowd was smaller due to the cold weather and holiday weekend, but we heard lots of positive feedback from those in attendance. Town staff identified a few minor changes to make the parade next year smoother at the end.
- Town offices will be closed for Christmas December 24-26th.

NEW BUSINESS

PROCLAMATION OF RECOGNITION—SALLY MAE CAMPBELL: Mayor Phillips noted that Mrs. Campbell was being recognized as a Town of Sylva resident for 107 years. The proclamation declares January 1, 2025 as Sally May Campbell Day in the Town of Sylva. *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to approve the proclamation. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

AUDIT REPORT: Sheila Gahagan, CPA presented the financial statements and auditor's report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024. A clean audit opinion was given with no findings. Gahagan encouraged the board to review the report and to read the management discussion.

FIRE DEPARTMENT PUMPER TRUCK PURCHASE APPROVAL: Mayor Phillips explained the Fire Department would like to purchase a new pumper truck. He called for a motion to approve the purchase of a commercial pumper truck and appropriate \$495,300 from the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund to the Fire Department general capital budget. *Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the purchase of a pumper truck and to appropriate \$495,300 from the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund to the Fire Department general capital budget. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

SCHEDULE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2025: Mayor Phillips reviewed the 2025 meeting schedule for the Economic Development Committee as follows:

February 13, 2025
April 10, 2025
June 12, 2025
August 14, 2025
October 9, 2025
December 11, 2025

Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the schedule. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

ADJOURNMENT: *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Johnny Phillips
Mayor

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk