



TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 5:30 PM
Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

MINUTES

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Phillips called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT: Jake Scott and Robbie Carter

VISITORS: Justin Castle, Kendall Link, Nelia Waldrum and Antoinette MacWatt.

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: None.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Phillips reported a request from residents on King's Mountain regarding a dangerous area near the switchback curve. A steep drop of approximately 300 feet exists off the road, and residents have requested installation of a short section of guardrail for safety. Public Works Director Jake Scott indicated he would feel more comfortable with board approval before proceeding. The board agreed to place the item on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Multiple board members expressed appreciation for the work of Public Works, particularly Jake Scott and his crew, for their efforts during the recent snowstorm. The team worked overnight to keep roads clear and safe. Board members also thanked healthcare workers and first responders for their service during the storm. Residents were encouraged to support local businesses in Sylva and throughout Jackson County, especially with Valentine's Day approaching. Commissioner Waldrum reported attending a recent community discussion about the impact of data centers in North Carolina. Topics discussed included water consumption by data centers, potential infrastructure strain, noise concerns and questions about job creation. It was noted that there are approximately 100 data centers across North Carolina, primarily concentrated around Charlotte. Some communities have considered moratoriums while evaluating potential impacts. Waldrum suggested Sylva consider being proactive regarding potential land-use planning related to data centers. Commissioner Estridge reminded everyone that Beech Mountain Restaurant is a new eatery open in Dillsboro and The Jarrett House is hoping to open in April.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Dowling reported the following:

- Attended the NC City and County Managers Association conference in Winston-Salem. Important sessions were on using AI in local government and collaborating with partners.
- She commended the Public Works for how hard they worked around the clock during the recent 11" snowstorm.
- TWSA's annual meeting is March 3rd at TWSA's office. The social time begins at 4:00 p.m. and the meeting at 4:30 p.m. There will be an overview of TWSA and their ongoing projects. Many ongoing and upcoming projects impact city limits.
- Jackson County is holding a joint meeting with municipalities March 10th at 6:00 p.m. at the Burrell Building at SCC.
- The Police Chief applications are due Feb. 20th.

NEW BUSINESS:

FIRE DEPARTMENT PUMPER TRUCK PURCHASE APPROVAL & RESOLUTION OF FINANCING: Manager Dowling reported that the Town received three bids on the pumper truck that ranged from \$528,800-\$559,314. The fire department wants to go with an alternative bid that piggybacks the current pumper ordered from Safe Industries. The cost is \$544,800 and it will have four-wheel drive. The purchase will come from the FD capital reserve fund (\$250,000), \$80,000 from contributed capital, \$14,800 in investment earnings, and a \$200,000 loan from the Town's Capital Reserve Fund. *Commissioner Estridge made a motion to approve the purchase. The motion carried with a unanimous vote. Commissioner McGuire made a motion to approve the resolution of financing. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST: GREENING UP THE MOUNTAIN BEVERAGE ARTS: *Commissioner made a motion to approve the Beverage Arts request for Greening Up the Mountains. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST: CONCERTS ON THE CREEK ALCOHOL SERVICE: *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve alcohol service at Concerts on the Creek. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

PRESENTATION—JACKSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY COMPLEX—ANTOINETTE MACWATT:

Antoinette MacWatt, a representative of the Friends of the Jackson County Public Library, presented information regarding the history and importance of the Jackson County Public Library complex.

Key points included that the historic courthouse was condemned in 1988, a joint town-county effort began in 2004 to evaluate sites for a new library, and in 2007, architects recommended renovating the courthouse and constructing a new library building as a unified complex. Significant funding was raised from Jackson County taxpayers, the Town of Sylva, The Friends of the Library, and private donors and foundations. MacWatt emphasized that donors contributed funds with the expectation that the library and renovated courthouse would remain a single integrated complex.

Concern has been raised about possible changes to the lease agreement between Jackson County and the library complex that could separate the courthouse from the library system. MacWatt requested the Town of Sylva consider expressing support for renewal of the existing lease structure and maintaining the courthouse and library as a unified complex.

Board members discussed the request and indicated they would consider the matter and potentially revisit it at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:01 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Johnny Phillips
Mayor

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk