



TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, July 9, 2026, at 5:30 PM
Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

MINUTES

PRESENT: Blitz Estridge, Commissioner
Samuel McGuire, Commissioner
Joseph Waldrum, Commissioner
Brad Waldrop, Mayor Pro Tem

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

ABSENT: Perry Matthews, Commissioner
Johnny Phillips, Mayor

CALL TO ORDER

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

STAFF PRESENT: Members of the Sylva Fire Department, Robbie Carter (Assistant Police Chief) and Aimee Sumner (Police Chief).

VISITORS: Nelia Waldrum and Deborah Smith.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Pro Tem Waldrop reported that the July 4th celebration in town was a great success.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Commissioner McGuire reported that he attended the Historic Preservation Committee meeting on June 16, 2026, and they are working on events for Mountain Heritage Day and other events.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Dowling reported the following:

- Employment updates: Detective Chris Cobb has taken a position in Florida with state investigations. Officer Katie Roberts has been promoted to detective. There are currently three patrol officer vacancies and a temporary maintenance position in Public Works.
- FEMA is requiring a Phase 1 archaeological survey for the Scotts Creek wall project due to the amount of proposed ground disturbance. The State Historic Preservation Office issued a letter in February stating they did not have concerns with the project area so it was thought the step could be avoided, but it has to be done to move forward with FEMA. Dowling has signed an amended contract with JMT to submit a Phase 1 report responding to FEMA's request. The cost of the archaeological survey is \$12,500. This is the fastest way to move the project forward and get past this hurdle.
- The next step with the PARTF grant is to issue an RFQ for a design-build team to build the trails and other elements.

NEW BUSINESS:

FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR AWARD: Mayor Pro Tem Waldrop presented the Firefighter of the Year award to Belinda Clawson.

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT—CHAPTER 24-6: UNREASONABLE LOUD OR DISTURBING SOUND LEVELS: The proposed ordinance amendment to Chapter 24 regulates data centers in the noise ordinance. Regulating the data center as part of the noise ordinance is reasonable because Sylva does not have large tracts of land to accommodate one. Zoning ordinances cannot outright ban uses, so this amendment restricts the use by noise and distance. *Commissioner McGuire made a motion to approve the ordinance amendment. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATE: The personnel policy update is a result of the pay plan the MAPS Group presented March 26, 2026. It addresses minor public employment legislative requirements but does not include significant changes to our current personnel policy. *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the policy. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT REQUEST—ALCOHOL SERVICE—CENTER FOR DOMESTIC PEACE: The Center for Domestic Peace is applying to serve alcohol September 12, 2026 at the Blue Ridge Peace Festival. Innovation Brewing and Lazy Hiker will be the beer vendors. Since the event serves alcohol on town property, board approval is required. *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the request. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

CLOSED SESSION: *Commissioner Estridge made a motion to enter closed session at 5:47 p.m. pursuant to NCGS. 143-318-11(a)(6) for personnel. 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 5:55 p.m. No action was taken during closed session.

ADJOURNMENT: *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Brad Waldrop
Mayor Pro Tem

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk