

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**July 8, 2025**

**THE WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL** held a regular meeting on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, at 6:00pm in the Town Hall Board Room located at 9 South Main Street Waynesville, NC.

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Gary Caldwell called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm with the following members present:

Mayor Gary Caldwell  
Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Dickson  
Councilmember Jon Feichter  
Councilmember Anthony Sutton  
Councilmember Julia Freeman

The following staff members were present:

Rob Hites, Town Manager  
Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager  
Martha Bradley, Town Attorney  
Elizabeth Teague, Development Services Director  
Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey  
Luke Kinsland, Recreation Director

Members of the Media:

Paul Nielsen, The Mountaineer

1. Welcome/Calendar/Announcements

Mayor Gary Caldwell welcomed everyone and announced that there is a Mountain Street Dance on July 18<sup>th</sup> and the next Council meeting is July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Councilmember Sutton announced that the French Broad MPO is seeking public input on its 2050 transportation plan.

**B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

25 speakers were heard during a session that extended 75 minutes in duration. The speakers offered words of praise to the Council for permitting the recent "Pride Festival" to be held on Main and Wall Street in the Downtown. They particularly praised the Town for permitting pride flags to be placed within the sidewalk areas of Main Street. Many of the speakers answered comments made on social media regarding the festival celebrating a lifestyle that did not enforce "traditional mountain values". They pointed out that most of the speakers were natives of western North Carolina and residents of Waynesville. They stated that members of

the LGBT community are neighbors, business patrons and active participants in the Town. There were no speakers offering comments on other subjects. Speakers included:

Reverend Mary Clayton-McGlaulin, Henson Sturgill, Bob Clark, Mitzi Simmons, Donna Browning, Candace Hladick, Patrick Outlaw, Randy Outlaw, Ralphene Rathbone, Lynn O'Hara, Carolyn Kemmett, Linda Nelson, Kristy Johnson, Max Ringenbach, Allison Coleman, Sherri Teague, Linda Sexton, Dan Williamson, John Culp, Robin Riggerbach, Ellyse, Courtney Trethric, Tera McIntintosh, Starlene Dawn, Julia Buckner, Helen Ryde, and Carrie Price on behalf of Sandy Crews.

#### **C. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

***A motion was made by Councilmember Feichter, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to remove item "G. 7. DWC grant application for new kiosks". The motion passed unanimously.***

***A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to add three items to the agenda, "Resolutions to Support the State Revolving Loan Application", "Authorization to apply for a TDA Grant for the Dog Park", and "Amendment to the Fee Schedule". The motion passed unanimously.***

#### **D. CONSENT AGENDA**

*All items below are routine by the Town Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a Councilmember so requests. In which event, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered with other items listed in the Regular Agenda.*

2.
  - a. Motion to approve the June 10, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
  - b. Motion to approve the Budget Amendment for the Downtown Waynesville Commission for the TDA Grants.
  - c. Motion to call for a Public Hearing for August 26, 2025, to consider text amendments related to compliance requirements in the landscaping ordinance, Land Development Standards (LDS) Section 8.2.5.
  - d. Motion to call for a Public Hearing for August 26, 2025, to consider text amendments to Stormwater Ordinance, Land Development Standards (LDS) section 12.5.
  - e. Motion to call for a Public Hearing for August 26, 2025, to consider text amendments related to wireless communication facilities, Land Development Standards (LDS) section 3.10.
  - f. Motion to accept the CDBG-I Semi-Annual Compliance Report
  - g. Motion to appoint Leisa Denti to the DWC
  - h. Motion to approve Sarges Downtown Walk

***A motion was made by Councilmember Feichter, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.***

## E. PRESENTATION

### 3. Impact U Flood Memorial Public Art Piece Proposal

- Breanne Haynes and Josie Ostendorff

Josie and Breanne presented the preliminary design for the Helene Memorial Art Piece. Josie said the art piece would be installed in front of the Waynesville Fire Department. They described the art piece that Grace Cathey designed as being a pentagonal bipyramid with cohesive imagery wrapping on all five sides. They said the piece will be made from stainless steel, be laser cut, and eight feet tall, 4.25 feet at its widest point, and two feet across at the base. They outlined the preliminary design as having a brick walkway leading up to and around the art piece with a dry river and landscaping surrounding the sculpture. Josie said the goal is to raise \$20,000 for the sculpture and to secure grants, donations, and in-kind donations to assist with the rest of the project. She said they are hoping to have assistance from the Waynesville Public Works Department for the installation and maintenance portion of the project. She said the memorial is estimated to cost \$15-\$18,000, with Haywood County Schools Foundation acting as the fiduciary agent, and students fundraising for the project. Josie asked the town for assistance in endorsing the project, lighting the art piece, and installing the sculpture. Josie said by September of 2025, the final design will be rendered, and there will be a groundbreaking ceremony on the one year anniversary of Helene. She added that the art will be installed May 2026.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Feichter, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to waive any permit fees that would be required for the installation. The motion passed unanimously.***

***A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to approve the preliminary design of the Impact U Flood Memorial Public Art Piece to be placed by the Fire Department and grant the request for support from the Public Works Department. The motion passed unanimously.***

## F. OLD BUSINESS

### 4. Commit to Civility Course

- Councilmember Jon Feichter

Councilmember Feichter reported that the upcoming Commit to Civility Course is coming up on August 27<sup>th</sup> 1-3pm.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Feichter, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to begin step one of the "Commit to Civility" certification process by attending the virtual training. The motion passed unanimously.***

## G. NEW BUSINESS

### 5. Appointment of Jon Feichter as the Chair to the Downtown Waynesville Commission

- Beth Gilmore, Director of Downtown Waynesville

DWC Director Beth Gilmore requested that Jon Feichter be appointed as the DWC Chair. She said the DWC voted unanimously to support the nomination.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to appoint Jon Feichter as Chair to the DWC. The motion passed unanimously.***

6. Placer.ai subscription

- Beth Gilmore, Director of Downtown Waynesville

DWC Director Beth Gilmore reported that the DWC is requesting that Council approve a three-year contract for a Placer subscription. She said that they would split the cost with the Parks and Rec Department because they would also be utilizing the data. Ms. Gilmore said the DWC can back out of the contract at any time without penalty.

Councilmember Sutton suggested doing a 12-month trial since technology is changing so much and he asked what the DWC is intending to use the application for. Ms. Gilmore stated that the technology would be used to learn who (residents vs. visitors) is visiting downtown, who is attending special events, how long they are staying, and how many are visiting. She said these numbers are crucial for grant applications. Ms. Gilmore said the company is capable of having geofences for the entire MSD district and individual businesses. Councilmember Feichter emphasized that this data will be able to report on how events affect business, how many locals are visiting downtown, and how many people are visiting individual businesses. He added that they would be able to see who and how many are visiting the parks. Councilmember Sutton said he is hesitant to use the geofencing around individual businesses. Councilmember Feichter said he would like to get more feedback from Council on how they should use the Placer technology. Councilmember Dickson asked if staff had reached out to the TDA regarding sharing access to their account. Ms. Gilmore said they have only received two reports from them and Mr. Kinsland added that the TDA doesn't have another license to share the account with Waynesville. Councilmember Dickson asked how much staff time would be required to use this program and organize the data. Ms. Gilmore said they are still working out the process. Councilmember Sutton said that reports could be autogenerated. He suggested that they offer standardized reports to merchants. Mr. Fowler said he foresees them setting up a monthly autogenerated report to help alleviate the need for staff to run reports. Councilmember Sutton suggested the data at the rec center could be used to implement better staffing during busier times.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve a 3-year contract with Placer.ai on behalf of the Downtown Waynesville Commission and Parks and Rec Department, with the stipulation that no individual reports be given to merchants until there's a policy in place and the Council gets quarterly reports that show how the software is being utilized. The motion passed unanimously.***

7. Acceptance of Phase II Cash Flow Loan

- Rob Hites, Town Manager

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that they applied for the Phase I Cashflow Loan in the amount of \$1,500,00 and the Treasurer's office came back with an offer of \$503,482.76, which they accepted on June 10<sup>th</sup>. He said the Phase II amount will not cover the full amount in damages, but it will provide some relieve some of the

expenses from the sewer and water fund. He reminded Council the loan has a 0% interest rate and must be paid back a dollar in the first year, 10% in 2027, 20% in 2028, and the remaining amount in 2029. Mr. Hites said by then FEMA should reimburse. Councilmember Feichter requested an up to date list on what was damaged by Helene and the costs.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to accept Phase II loan offer and agreement. The motion passed unanimously.***

8. Resolutions to Support the State Revolving Loan Application

- Rob Hites, Town Manager

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that the State Revolving Loan Resolutions give staff permission to apply for several loans for the Little Champion sewer improvements and rebuilding the Browning Branch booster pump station. He added that the town should not have to pay them back because Waynesville was affected by Helene.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to adopt the Resolutions for the State Revolving Loan Application for the Browning Branch Booster Pump and Little Champion Sewer projects. The motion passed unanimously.***

9. Approval to apply for a TDA Grant for the Dog Park

- Luke Kinsland, Recreation Director

Recreation Director Luke Kinsland reported that Recreation Department is seeking approval to apply for a TDA Grant in the amount of \$15,000 to support improvements to the new dog park.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Freeman, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to authorize the Recreation Department to apply for a \$15,000 TDA Grant for dog park improvements including shade, lighting, and benches with the project totaling \$30,000. The motion passed unanimously.***

10. Amendment to the Fee Schedule

- Elizabeth Teague, Development Services Director

Development Services Director Elizabeth Teague reported that the Fee Schedule adopted for FY 25-26 left out the fee for Special Use Permits. She is requesting they be placed back in the Fee Schedule at the same rate as last year.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to amend the fee schedule to add Fees for the Special Use Permits as presented. The motion passed unanimously.***

## H. COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

11. Manager's Report

- Town Manager, Rob Hites

Nothing to report.

12. Town Attorney's Report

- Town Attorney, Martha Bradley

Nothing to report.

**I. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

Councilmember Dickson said they do not need go into Closed Session because Council will fill out evaluation forms instead. Mr. Fowler requested they are returned by the 18<sup>th</sup>. He added that there is an Environmental Sustainability page on the town's website now. Councilmember Dickson asked staff to work on a media policy regarding the handling of media and press requests for information or comments.

**J. ADJOURN**

***A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Adjourn, to adjourn at 8:51pm. The motion passed unanimously.***

ATTEST:

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Gary Caldwell, Mayor

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Robert W. Hites, Jr. Town Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Candace Poolton, Town Clerk