

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
April 14, 2026

THE WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL held a regular meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 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 6:06 pm with the following members present:

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

The following staff members were present:

Rob Hites, Town Rob Hites, Town Manager
Jesse Fowler, Deputy Manager
Martha Bradley, Town Attorney
Candace Poolton, Town Clerk/Assistant to the Manager
Elizabeth Teague, Development Services Director
Olga Grooman, Assistant Development Services Director
Alex Mumby, Land Use Administrator
Police Chief David Adams
Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey
Assistant Fire Chief Cody Parton

The following members of the media were present:

Paul Nielsen, The Mountaineer

1. Welcome/Calendar/Announcements

Mayor Gary Caldwell welcomed everyone and announced that the next Council meeting is April 28th and Appalachian Heritage Festival is this weekend.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

C. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to move the Public Hearing to be placed at the beginning of the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to add "Rural Fire Tax" to the agenda and approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

D. PUBLIC HEARING

2. Public Hearing to consider a request for annexation of the western portion of the 57.5-acre parcel located at 192 Ratcliff Cove Road, Waynesville, NC 28786 (PIN 8625-08-4616).
 - Olga Grooman, Assistant Development Services Director

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to open the public hearing at 6:07pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Assistant Development Services Director Olga Grooman reported that the proposed area of annexation is the property that is a part of Phase II of the Valleywood Farms subdivision, which is proposed to include 148 single-family residential lots. She reported that on February 19, 2026, the Planning Board approved a major subdivision for the development of these 148 single-family lots. She said that Phase II is adjacent to the existing Phase I of the Valleywood Farms, which consists of 115 single-family residential lots and that Phase II will be developed across two (2) properties: the western portion of the subject property at 192 Ratcliff Cove Road (PIN 8625-08-4616) and the adjacent 9.98-acre property to the north at 40 Ratcliff Cove Road (PIN 8615-99-9587). Ms. Grooman stated that the northern property is already located within the Town's corporate limits.

Ms. Grooman explained that the subject property at 192 Ratcliff Cove Road is currently located within the Town's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), but upon annexation, the property would be incorporated into the corporate limits of Waynesville and would be eligible for municipal services, including sewer service. She said that the applicant does need to include a legal description just for that property that's being proposed to be annexed.

Councilmember Dickson stated that the 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted by the current Council, and that 500 people in the community, the Planning Board, and a steering committee all helped with developing the plan. He asked how the property proposed for annexation was zoned according to the 2035 plan. Ms. Grooman said it is zoned residential low to medium density, which means that it could have three to four units per acre. Councilmember Dickson reminded everyone that the 2020 plan that was adopted in 2000 had the same zoning and density requirements for that property. Ms. Grooman explained what an urban services boundary means, and said that this property is within that boundary. She said that the proposed development has 2.4 units per acre in density, which means the developer could have proposed more homes. Ms. Grooman said that staff have reviewed traffic studies, public civic space, environmental impacts, and stormwater. She added that the sewer plant has the capacity for the proposed development as well. Councilmember Dickson asked Ms. Grooman about Valleywood Phase I and the building inspections that were done. She said that the most experienced building inspectors were assigned to Phase I and building codes were strictly enforced. Councilmember Dickson asked about the amenities in Phase I that have not yet been completed. Ms. Grooman said all the amenities and subsequent projects must be completed before they receive their final CO. Councilmember Feichter clarified that the Town did not request annexation, the applicant did. He agreed that the proposed annexation and development fits with the 2035 plan, but the work

done on the plan preceded Valleywood Phase I. He asked if we knew then what we know now, would they have still adopted the 2035 plan as written?

Patrick Bradshaw, Civil Design Concepts- Mr. Bradshaw said he is petitioning for the annexation on behalf of the developer. Councilmember Dickson asked about the 9.5 acres of civic space and what that will be. Mr. Bradshaw said the last thing the developer will do in the neighborhood is finish the civic space, because the residents will decide what they want constructed. He added that the developer is dedicating an easement to the Town to connect the greenway to Asheville Highway. Mr. Bradshaw clarified that the developer is not in control of the northern side of Sunnyside, but the NCDOT has been working with the developer, and the entrance near the roundabout is the most desirable entrance. He said that NCDOT did allow them to widen the second entrance that would be proposed on Sunnyside.

Councilmember Feichter said that while the Town does not initially pay for installation of infrastructure, they will be responsible for the long-term maintenance.

Councilmember Sutton asked if the infrastructure is inspected by the town. Mr. Bradshaw said yes, and it is inspected and certified by engineers after the contractor is done.

The following individuals spoke during the public hearing, *not in favor* of the annexation. Individuals cited concerns about loss of farmland, the burden on infrastructure if a development is built on the property, the poor quality of DR Homes, uncontrolled growth, and the impact a development would have on the environment and wildlife:

Tray Ballance
Don Smart
Tabbitha Ross
Mandy Stasi
Martha Mills
Michael Hertel
Harrison Smith
Michelle Drotis
Deborah Kazcar
Mark Ray
Margaret Matlos
Bart Jones
Paul Pratt
Debbie Castogno
Mark Jaben
Kenneth Jackson
Ryan Manning

A motion was made by Councilmember Feichter, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to close the public hearing at 7:20pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilmember Feichter said growth is inevitable, how we grow is a choice, including annexation. He said that when property is annexed into the town, it permanently obligates the town to provide services. He explained that Valleywood Phase I meets the minimum standards. Councilmember said of the 75 out of 115

homes that have been sold, the median sale price was \$440,000, when the median household income in the area is \$55,000. He emphasized that annexation is how the Town chooses what kind of growth happens.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to adopt the attached Ordinance to approve the annexation of the described property. Councilmembers Dickson, Freeman, and Sutton voted in favor. Councilmember Feichter voted against. The motion passed.

E. 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.

3.
 - a. Motion to approve the March 24, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - b. Motion to authorize Public Works staff to purchase a replacement tire balancing machine for Fleet Services in the amount of \$22,431.73.
 - d. Motion to approve the Steppin' into Spring Special Event Permit
 - e. Motion to approve the Pride on Main social district ordinance
 - f. Motion to adopt the attached Resolution adopting the Town of Waynesville's Comprehensive Stormwater Plan.

Councilmember Dickson suggested removing the Steppin into Spring Special Event Permit from the consent agenda until after the Special Event Fee Schedule has been approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to remove item "c. Apple Harvest Festival Special Event Permit" and approve the consent agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

F. PROCLAMATION

4. Arbor Day Proclamation
 - Mayor Gary Caldwell

Councilmember Dickson read the Arbor Day Proclamation and invited everyone to a tree planting event on April 22nd at the Rec Park.

G. OLD BUSINESS

5. Special Event Permitting Fees
 - Jesse Fowler, Deputy Manager

Deputy Manager Jesse Fowler reported that special event fee structures vary widely throughout the state of North Carolina, but that municipalities and counties tend to use a tier system based off of event attendance. He said that in his research, he saw that municipalities and counties charge as much as \$500 for larger events such as all-day festivals. Mr. Fowler explained that some municipalities use an itemized model where the applicant pays a fee for each service that the event will require, such as barricades, Police, and electrical connections for example, but that would take way too much staff time to deal with fee itemization. After reviewing the fee structures in large, medium, and small municipalities, Mr. Fowler presented town staff recommendations, which include a tiered structure based on categories, rather than attendance:

*Stage Rental Fee: \$100 - \$300

*Football Games: \$250 - \$500

Tier 1: Neighborhood Events \$0 - \$50

- Minor barricade deployments with no staff present during event.

Tier 2: Rolling Road Closures \$50 - \$100

- No barricade deployments with rolling road closures managed by on-duty Patrol staff.

Tier 3: Road Closures and Festivals \$150 - \$500

- Long term barricade deployments with PD, Fire, and Public Works staff present during event.

Tier 4: Foot Races Less than 5K \$200 - \$500

- Foot races which are no longer than 3 miles.

Tier 5: Foot Races 5K and greater \$300 - \$500

- Foot races which are 3.1 miles and longer.

There was discussion about offering non-profits discounts on event fees. Councilmember Dickson said it's difficult to offer discounts when events cost the Town \$1000. Councilmember Sutton requested that Mr. Fowler finds out the last date each event was held. Councilmember Sutton said non-profits could be charged less, but the Town could be sponsors of the events. Councilmember Dickson suggested that school system hire officers directly.

Councilmember Sutton proposed that any 5K or greater race have a fee of \$500, street closures and festivals have a fee of \$500, and non-profits are charged \$250 and include the Town as a sponsor.

6. Resolution Authorizing the Acceptance of a SRF Loan/Grant for Canton, Clyde, Waynesville Emergency Water Interconnect

- Rob Hites, Town Manager

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that the Towns of Canton, Clyde, and Waynesville are jointly planning a water interconnect that links the three municipalities with an emergency water interconnect. He said the grant/loan will permit each town to have a ready supply of water in cases of emergency. Mr. Hites explained that while the line will permit the flow of emergency water, each town will negotiate a water sales agreement with Waynesville to purchase such water. He said the agreement would determine the cost of the water, the maintenance of the line, whether the line will be kept in service at all times and who will pay for any costs above that of the grants. Mr. Hites explained that the Interconnect has received \$18,401,498 in grants and SRF Loan with 100% principal forgiveness. He said the project should take three to four years and may eventually connect to Buncombe County.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to Approve the resolution accepting the SRF award. The motion passed unanimously.

H. NEW BUSINESS

6. Rural Fire Tax
 - Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey

Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey requested that Council support an increase in the outside Rural Fire District tax rate. He suggested the rate increase based on the issues with getting reimbursement from FEMA and needing revenue for station improvements. Chief Mehaffey stated that every fire district in the county has requested an increase to 10 cents, or rates have already increased to 10 cents.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to approve the resolution to increase the Rural Fire Tax District rate to ten (10) cents. The motion passed unanimously.

7. April 2026 SRF Application
 - Rob Hites, Town Manager

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that he Town has been awarded \$14,990,531 in SRF Funds at 100% principal forgiveness to raise above the 500-year flood stage the “Little Champion” junction box” and the junction box within the plant. He added that the SRF Loans will fund the design and construction of a new septic hauler receiving station and provide an environmentally friendly UV disinfection station to replace Chlorine as a disinfectant. Mr. Hites explained that the Spring SRF Loan/Grant cycle offers the Town an opportunity to increase our flood “resiliency”. Staff proposed the following projects:

“The proposed project provides additional WWTP resiliency and protection for future flood events and improves the plant’s ability to manage and treat high wet weather flows and septic waste. The project includes converting two previously decommissioned primary clarifier tanks for aerated flow equalization and aerated sludge holding, floodproofing and upgrading three process pump stations, installing bypass piping to the proposed flow equalization tank, and rehabilitating the decommissioned mechanical bar screen to install upstream of the proposed flow equalization tank. The project also includes upgrading the reuse water system with a filtration system and associated pumps and enhancing the proposed septage receiving station for improved treatment and automation. The upgrades included in this project will improve wastewater treatment service during flood events and the ability to separate grease from septic.”

Councilmember Dickson said this would allow the Town to charge different rates for septic.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve a resolution authorizing the Town to apply for Spring SRF Grant/Loan. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Approve Resolution amending the 2025-26 Water and Sewer Capital Improvement Plans
 - Rob Hites, Town Manager

Town Manager Rob Hites reminded Council that in a previous agenda item, staff recommended that they give authorization to apply for improvements to the water and sewer system during the Spring cycle of the State SRF loan/grant process. He explained that one of the requirements of the application is that the applicants have a Capital Improvement Plan that contains the projects that are being requested for funding through the grant(s).

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve a resolution amending the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for water and sewer. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Authorization for Installation of 8-Inch Sewer Main – Balsam Edge Subdivision

- Laura Yonkers, Deputy Director-Sustainability, Public Works Department

Deputy Director Laura Yonkers reported that at the February 14, 2023, Town Council meeting, Council approved a Town grant in the amount of \$306,750 to support the installation of an 8-inch sewer line extension to serve the Balsam Edge Subdivision. She said the project includes extending 8-inch sewer infrastructure along Abel Lane and utilizing directional boring under Howell Mill Road to connect the subdivision to the Town’s existing sewer system. She explained that the project is necessary to provide reliable wastewater service to the development and to support low-income housing. She said the Town has committed **\$306,750** in grant funding for this project.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to authorize the use of a third-party contractor, Chonzie, Inc., to complete the project in a timely and efficient manner for the quoted amount of \$258,740. The motion passed unanimously. Budget amendment Sutton and Dickson.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to approve the associated budget amendment. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Request for Council approval to apply for a grant to update the Town of Waynesville’s Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan.

- Alex Mumby, Land Use Administrator & Olga Grooman, Assistant Development Services Director

Assistant Development Services Director Olga Grooman reported that the Town’s Pedestrian Plan serves as a guiding document for the development, construction, and maintenance of its pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks, trails, and greenways. Originally completed in February 2010, Ms. Grooman said the plan includes designated areas for sidewalk construction, missing connections, standards for design, gaps in accessibility, and addresses how these facilities interact with other modes of transportation, such as transit. She explained that the Pedestrian Plan should be updated periodically, and there is currently a grant opportunity through the NC DOT’s Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) for local government to create new plans or update existing plans. She said the potential award for the plan update would be \$49,000, with a required 20% local match (approximately \$9,800). Ms. Grooman said that staff also intend to pursue other sources of funding, such as a Medford Grant, to help offset the local match.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve of applying for the grant to update Waynesville’s Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Appointment of Members to the Tree Board

- Councilmember Chuck Dickson

Councilmember Dickson said the ordinance establishing the Tree Board call for seven members to be appointed by the Town Council, with one of those members being delegated from the Environmental Sustainability Board. The Environmental Sustainability Board recommended the following applicants to be appointed:

- Alexander Byers
- Richard Garret Thomason
- Cheryl Waters-Tomey
- David Ford
- Callie Deines
- Carl Martin
- Kay Kirkman (Delegated ESB member)

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to appoint the members of the Tree Board that were recommended by the Environmental Sustainability Board. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Request for economic incentives for 60 Senior Living Apartments on Hall Top Road

- Rob Hites, Town Manager

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that Bobby Funk, Development Director of Mills Construction, requests that the Town Council approve incentives to aide in the financing of a 60 unit Senior Living Apartment Development on Hall Top Road. He said the incentives will aid the developer in paying the system development fees that are charged by the water and sewer department. He said that incentives must be paid by the General Fund in the amount of \$68,172 so it would pay the enterprise funds the cost of the system development fees.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to schedule a public hearing for April 28, 2026, at 6:00 pm to consider a request by Mill Construction for economic incentives to aid the development of a low to moderate income housing development known as Saxony Manor Senior Apartments. The motion passed unanimously.

I. COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

13. Manager’s Report

- Town Manager, Rob Hites

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that WNC Paving is currently paving ahead of schedule. He said they are already working on Boyd Avenue, which is a \$314,000 project. After they finish Boyd, Mr. Hites said they will begin paving a section of Brown Avenue.

Mr. Hites said the legislature will be meeting to discuss freezing towns' and counties' ability to adjust tax rates after revaluation.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to adopt the resolution in opposition of state legislation that limits local property tax authority and threatens core public services.

14. Town Attorney's Report

- Town Attorney, Martha Bradley

Nothing to report.

J. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Councilmember Dickson said he will be absent at the next meeting.

K. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to adjourn at 8:46pm. The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

Gary Caldwell, Mayor

Robert W. Hites, Jr. Town Manager

Candace Poolton, Town Clerk