

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
February 24, 2026

THE WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL held a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 24, 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 6:05 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
- Alex Mumby, Land Use Administrator
- Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey
- Assistant Fire Chief Cody Parton
- Luke Kinsland, Recreation Director
- Hutch Reece, Public Works Deputy Director of Operations

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 the Annual planning Retreat on February 27th, there's an open house at the Rec Center for the new Master Plan on the 25th, and a Council review session on the 26th.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

Terry Clark- Mr. Clark said he moved here five years ago and he is concerned about accelerated growth. He said he supports healthy growth that protects the quality of life of the people who live here. Mr. Clark requested that Council vote against the 192 Ratcliff Cove annexation.

C. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to delete from the agenda, items 7 “Pride on Main: Special Event Permit Amendment Request” and to approve the agenda as amended. 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 February 10, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - b. Motion to approve amended contract to extend audit date.
 - c. Motion to recommend the appointment of Kathy Lalonde to the County Commissioners to serve on the Waynesville Planning Board as the ETJ representative
 - d. Motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing the staff to submit a “Lead Service Line Grant/Loan

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to add to the consent agenda, “recommend the appointment of Kathy Lalonde to the County Commissioners to serve on the Waynesville Planning Board as the ETJ representative” and to approve the “Resolution Authorizing Staff to submit a ‘Lead Service Line Grant/Loan’” and approve the consent agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

E. PRESENTATIONS

3. Promotions and New Hires
 - Chief Chris Mehaffey and Assistant Chief Cody Parton

Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey announced Fire Marshal Claudio Fuentes’ and Lieutenant Jonathan Brooks’ promotions and recognized the full time hiring of Dustin Rohe and Lucas Williamson.

F. PUBLIC HEARING

4. Public hearing to consider a map amendment (rezoning) for the 4.96-acre parcel at 38 Hall Top Road, Waynesville, NC (PIN 8616-13-3822).
 - Alex Mumby, Land Use Administrator

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to open the public hearing at 6:20pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Land Use Administrator Alexy Mumby reported that on January 29th, 2026, the Town received a rezoning application for the 4.96-acre property at 38 Hall Top Road. He explained that the property currently lies within the Town's corporate boundaries and is zoned Hall Top Residential Low Density (HT-RL). Mr. Mumby said the applicant is requesting to rezone the property to the Dellwood Residential Medium Density (D-RM) zoning district which is currently the zoning district that is along the portion of Russ Ave north of the bypass. He described the property as being adjacent to the multi-tenant commercial center which contains Big Lots and Firestone and is zoned Russ Ave Regional Center (RA-RC). He said the proposed rezoning would allow for a multifamily residential development on this property as a permitted use and the base density would increase from 6 units per acre to 8 units per acre, but the maximum density allowed with a Special Use Permit would stay the same at 12 units/acre. Mr. Mumby said regardless of rezoning, up to three-story buildings are allowed on the property. He reviewed the purposes and uses allowed by each aforementioned zoning district. He explained that with the proposed rezoning, Child and Adult Day Cares and Multi-Family housing would be allowed, but Golf and Country Clubs, Animal Support Production, and Crop Production would no longer be allowed. He explained that the road is NCDOT maintained right now, but the Town may require improvements to the roads that would go to the development.

Mr. Mumby said the proposed rezoning could create opportunities for cluster or multi-family housing and increase the land's value. Under the proposed zoning, Mr. Mumby explained that this property could never meet the same density, scale, or height of the Mountain Creek Apartments, nor does it have the acreage for the number of units included in the Palisades at Plott Creek. However, Mr. Mumby said the option for multi-family development creates an opportunity for re-investment, growth, and high tax value.

He added that staff appreciates that the Hall Top neighborhood is a well-established area of single-family homes and that the applicant is in a due diligence process to see if a rezoning is possible, and if it is not, then there other options for the redevelopment of this property. Mr. Mumby said that under current zoning, this property could accommodate an estimated 10 or more single family homes or a larger townhome development of approximately 24 units.

Councilmember Dickson said that the 2035 Future Land Use Map was adopted in 2020 by the same Council, and the community decided what future development in Waynesville should look like. He said the community decided this property was projected to be medium to high density, and the applicant it only seeking medium density rezoning. Councilmember Feichter asked if the property is served by water and sewer. Mr. Mumby said they would be able to have access to water and sewer and the developer would be responsible for the cost associated with it. Councilmember Sutton said that the current zoning would allow up to 12, three-story townhomes. Councilmember Sutton clarified that changing the ordinance, which is what rezoning would do, requires a legislative hearing, not quasi-judicial.

Bobby Funk (development director for Mills Construction)- Mr. Funk said Mills Construction hopes to build affordable senior housing on the property. He said that everything they develop is owned and managed by the Mills Team. Mr. Funk said they will have to extend the water main to increase water pressure. He acknowledged concerns of nearby residents regarding stormwater runoff, and he said they will comply with the Town's stormwater ordinance and have a stormwater retention area on site. He reminded Council that the actual development would go through the site plan process and go through the quasi-judicial process. He said the proposed development will address the housing needs in Waynesville, which include affordable housing for people aged 55 and older.

Councilmember Feichter asked if the development would be dependent on tax credits for the affordable housing aspect. Mr. Funk said they don't know if it's going to be financed through affordable tax credits, but could be funded through other sources, and they could move forward with building the apartments even if they were denied the tax credits. Councilmember Sutton mentioned the proposed project would do well as affordable housing because it's close to shopping centers.

Vicki Mangieri- Ms. Mangieri said she lives in a rural community near Hall Top. She said there are many bad accidents on Russ Ave and Phillips. Ms. Mangieri said if there are 59 proposed units, then that means 100 or more people could live there, and that means more vehicles driven by people of an age group that would contribute to more accidents. She requested that Council consider the impact of the housing to infrastructure. She said the rest of Hall Top is also very dangerous. She stated that she is not against growth or housing, but she is opposed to this rezoning.

Nancy Crawford- Ms. Crawford reported that she lives on Phillips Road. She said her property has been flooded and water runoff is currently an issue. She also said that traffic is already a major issue and vehicles back up past her house, blocking her driveway. She said she is opposed to this rezoning.

Becky Phillips- Ms. Phillips said she lives on Phillips Road and cited similar concerns and issues as Ms. Crawford. She said she is opposed to this rezoning.

Terry Clark- Mr. Clark said he is a business owner and sits on the Smoky Mountain Event Center board. He said the rezoning seems sugar coated and lacks common sense. He said he disagreed with the 2035 Plan.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to close the public hearing at 7:06pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilmember Feichter said annexation and rezoning is what shapes Waynesville and it defines growth. He said the property is not typical for the area as it sits close to the expressway, is relatively flat, and the Future Land Use (FLU) Map shows the area as being rezoned to medium to high density. He said the FLU was adopted intentionally to help guide decisions like this. Councilmember Feichter said infrastructure already exists and high density uses are already allowed nearby.

Councilmember Dickson said the traffic problems are an issue. He said that he lives across from Plott Creek apartments that have over 200 units, and the concerns about traffic ended up being unfounded. He said that many studies have been done, and Waynesville does have an aging population, and the problem will get worse.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to find the rezoning request as being consistent with the 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan and is reasonable and in the public interest in that it continues to promote smart growth principals in land use planning and zoning by encouraging infill, mixed-use, and context sensitive development, and that it creates a range of housing opportunities and choices by promoting a diverse housing stock including market rate, workforce housing, and affordable options that appeal to a variety of households. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to approve the rezoning because it continues to promote smart growth principals in land use planning and zoning by encouraging infill, mixed-use, and context sensitive development. The motion passed unanimously.

G. OLD BUSINESS

5. Bid Award – Waynesville Dog Park Construction Project
- Luke Kinsland, Recreation Director

Recreation Director Luke Kinsland reported that bids for the Waynesville Dog Park project were publicly opened on February 17, 2026, and after reviewing all submitted bid packages and verification of contractor licensure, the project engineer, Civil Design Concepts, recommends awarding the construction contract to Southern Appalachian Grading and Excavation, Inc. He said their proposal includes the base bid and Alternate #2 (stockpiling existing volleyball court sand and moving it to the new site by the Bi-Lo pavilion) for a total amount of \$220,000. He said this bid includes site grading, mulching, drainage improvements, and parking. Mr. Kinsland explained that the base bid does not include fencing, lighting, or landscaping, which will be included in a later phase. He said that Council could choose to table lighting for another year to what the Town receives for FEMA reimbursement and PARTF grant. Mr. Kinsland said that bids for fencing the dog park and ballfields will come in tomorrow.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to award the construction contract for the Waynesville Dog Park project to Southern Appalachian Grading and Excavation, Inc., in the amount of \$220,000, as recommended by Civil Design Concepts. The motion passed unanimously.

H. NEW BUSINESS

6. Waynesville Chili Cookoff Stroll: Special Permit Application and Request for Temporary Social District
- Kirk Noonan, Board Chair – Waynesville Rotary Club

Rotary Club Chair Kirk Noonan reported that the Waynesville Rotary Club is planning to host their annual Chili Cookoff Stroll on Main Street, and they are requesting the Town Council to permit a temporary social district during the event to be held on February 28th 12pm-4pm. He said the proposed temporary social district would exist within the same boundary as the temporary social district previously permitted during the TDA's Ice Festival special event.

Councilmember Dickson asked Mr. Noonan, that as a business owner, how the first Ice Fest Social District went. Mr. Noonan said he saw a 30-50% increase in sales because of the social district.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to approve the Waynesville Rotary Club's application for a special event permit to host the 2026 Waynesville Chilli Cookoff Stroll. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve a temporary social district to be permitted during the 2026 Waynesville Chili Cookoff Stroll with an identical boundary to that of the previously permitted temporary social district established for the TDA's Ice Festival special event. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Approve Submission of NC Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program and match of up to \$13,000
- Councilmember Dickson

Councilmember Dickson said the Environmental Sustainability Board would like to get permission from Council to submit a NC Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program grant in the amount of \$59,000. He said that if they received the grant, he would request that Council match up to \$13,000. He said the grant would be used to contract services of a consultant to produce a tree inventory, assess all of Town trees (on Town property and rights of way), and to develop a tree management plan and budget.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to approve ESB to apply for grant and pledge up to \$13,000 from General Fund as a match for the grant. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Recreation Center HVAC Replacement and Indoor Air Quality Improvements – Weight Room and Aerobics Room
- Luke Kinsland, Recreation Director

Recreation Director Luke Kinsland requested that Council appropriate funding for HVAC improvements at the Waynesville Recreation Center to address ongoing equipment failures and long-standing seasonal indoor humidity issues affecting facility operations, safety, and user comfort. He said that a recent evaluation identified that Unit 8, which serves key program areas, has experienced a major refrigerant leak and is no longer repairable and that the indoor air handler, manufactured in 1999, is nearing the end of its useful life and presents a risk of additional failures. Since the 2008 HVAC installation in the weight and aerobics rooms, Mr. Kinsland said the Town has experienced recurring humidity and condensation issues in those spaces during the summer months. He explained that while staff has mitigated the issue in the short term by utilizing portable dehumidifiers within the rooms, this approach is not sustainable, requires ongoing staff intervention, and does not address the underlying mechanical deficiencies of the system.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to appropriate funding in the amount of \$29,344 for the replacement of HVAC Unit 8 and the installation of dehumidification and airflow improvements in the weight and aerobics rooms at the Recreation Center. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Solid Waste Routing Software
- Hutch Reece, Deputy Director of Operations

Public Works Deputy Director of Operations Hutch Reece reported that the Solid Waste Division is requesting authorization to purchase and implement solid waste routing software. Over the past five months, Mr. Reece

said the Operations team evaluated four software providers specializing in municipal solid waste collection and selected *Trash Flow*, a company with more than 35 years of industry experience. Mr. Reece explained that *Trash Flow* will modernize the sanitation operations through real-time route tracking, service verification, and data-driven performance metrics. He said the system will improve route efficiency, reduce missed collections, balance workloads, and help control fuel and overtime costs. He added that it provides measurable data to support staffing, fleet planning, and long-term operational decisions. Mr. Reece said that this investment increases service reliability, accountability, and transparency while positioning the Town for sustainable growth.

He presented the financial impact, which is already budgeted in the Streets and Sanitation operating budget:

- **One-time implementation fee:** \$4,575 (licensing, program setup, and features)
- **Annual technical and cloud support:** \$1,269
- **Monthly recurring fleet software cost:** \$247.50 (TeleRoute installation on existing vehicles)

Councilmember Feichter requested that Mr. Reece take a snapshot before the software is implemented so they can measure the effects of the software moving forward (fuel cost savings, etc).

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to authorize Public Works staff to proceed with the purchase and implementation of TrashFlow software as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

G. COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

10. Manager's Report

- Town Manager, Rob Hites

Town Manager Hites reminded Council that they have a retreat on the 27th.

11. Town Attorney's Report

- Town Attorney, Martha Bradley

Nothing to report.

H. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to cancel the March 10th, 2026 Regular Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilmember Dickson said there have been many complaints about Sunnyside Road.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to direct Development Services to meet with the Annexation applicant (Queen Development) and NCDOT to come up with a plan to address the problems with Sunnyside Road. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilmember Dickson cited NCGS 136-18 (27) that allows for private agreements between the Developer and NCDOT.

I. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to adjourn at 7:51pm. The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

Gary Caldwell, Mayor

Robert W. Hites, Jr. Town Manager

Candace Poolton, Town Clerk