

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
January 13, 2026

THE WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL held a regular meeting on Tuesday, January 13, 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 6:03 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 Manager
Jesse Fowler, Deputy Manager
Candace Poolton, Town Clerk/Assistant to the Manager
Martha Bradley, Town Attorney
Luke Kinsland, Recreation Director
Elizabeth Teague, Development Services Director
Olga Grooman, Assistant Development Services Director
Laura Yonkers, Deputy Director of Sustainability
Hutch Reese, Deputy Director of Operations
Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey
Police Chief David Adams
Page McCurry, Human Resources Director

The following members of the media were present:

Paul Nielsen, The Mountaineer

1. Welcome/Calendar/Announcements

Mayor Gary Caldwell welcomed everyone and announced that Town Offices will be closed for MLK Jr. Day and the next Council meeting is January 27th.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mac Moody- Mr. Moody said he is against the Pride Parade.

C. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to add item j. to the consent agenda, "Approve the signing of a letter that allows the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a hazard mitigation study on the waterways in Waynesville and the ETJ . 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 December 9, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - b. Motion to approve the Call for a Public Hearing for January 27, 2026, to consider text amendments to remove the mandatory waiting period requirement for the resubmission of map and text amendments, Land Development Standards (LDS) Section 15.14.6.
 - c. Motion to approve the Budget Amendment for Parks and Recreation, PARTF grant local match and application.
 - d. Motion to approve the Budget Amendment for PW Streets and Sanitation replacement vehicle.
 - e. Motion to approve the installation of a "Stop Sign" at Eagles Gap Road where it intersects Laurel Ridge Road.
 - g. Motion to approve the Gateway to the Smokies Ten Miler Special Event Permit
 - h. Motion to approve the Martin Luther King Jr. March Special Event Permit
 - i. Motion to approve the Pride On Main Special Event Permit
 - j. Motion to approve the signing of a letter that allows the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a hazard mitigation study on the waterways in Waynesville and the ETJ.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to remove item f. "Contractor Approval for Wastewater Treatment Plant Potable Water Supply for Disc Filters" from the consent agenda and place it onto the regular agenda and approve the consent agenda as amended. The motion passes unanimously.

E. PRESENTATIONS

4. Life Saving Chiefs Award
 - Chief David Adams, Luke Kinsland, Wes Woodbery

Chief Adams presented the Life Saving Chief's Award to Waynesville Recreation Center lifeguard staff, Cassie Todtenhagen, Claire Bishop, Kylie Wood, Michaela Staudinger, Addison Goodman. He recognized staff for their prompt, professional response to a recent serious accident that occurred on the pool deck. He said that their quick actions, teamwork, and accurate response were critical to the outcome of the incident and exemplify the high standard of safety and preparedness maintained at WRC.

5. Lt. Tamara Vander Day retirement and the granting of her duty weapon.

- Chief David Adams

Chief Adams thanked Lt. Tamara Vander Day for her dedicated 30 years of service to the Waynesville Police Department. He requested that the Town of Waynesville release and grant to Lt. Vander Day her duty weapon, which is a Glock 9mm Semi-Auto handgun serial # CBSM918.

6. Retirement of Telecommunicator Shelia Trull

- Chief David Adams

Chief Adams congratulated Shelia Trull on her retirement following 30 years of dedication to the Town of Waynesville.

7. Lieutenant Promotional Ceremony

- Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey

Fire Chief Mehaffey congratulated Fire Marshal Darrell Calhoun on his retirement after 27 years with the Town.

Fire Chief Mehaffey congratulated Jason Webb, Trey Silver, and Luke Palmer for their recent promotion to lieutenant.

8. Basecamp Afterschool & Summer Program Update Presentation

- Cameron Kanetzke, Programs Supervisor

Cameron Kanetzke and Allison Fuller presented an update on the Basecamp afterschool and summer programs. In their presentation, they included data that showed increased attendance, expansion to seven Haywood County schools, successful community partnerships through “Basecamp on the Go,” and outcomes from special events and school out-programming. They said that the 2024 Summer Camp season generated more than \$115,000 in revenue while serving 85–105 children weekly with minimal complaints. They outlined ongoing challenges related to van reliability and safety, along with a proposed fee schedule adjustment modeled after the existing afterschool rate structure. Mr. Kanetzke thanked Council for adjusting the fee schedule, and that they’ve seen families that haven’t able to afford camp in the past, are no able to participate. Mr. Kanetzke said given the number of programs they offer and the number of kids they transport, the vans are unreliable and they need to consider getting new vans. Councilmember Sutton said he will talk to Luke about the vans. Mr. Hites said staff will work on the report to buy a van which will come out of General Fund.

9. Dogwood Health Trust Grant Presentation

- William Hite, ESB Chair

Environmental Sustainability Chair William Hite reported that The Town of Waynesville has been awarded a \$487,532.40 grant from Dogwood Health Trust to launch the *Waynesville Command Center Collaborative Initiative*, aimed at enhancing the region’s emergency response capabilities. He explained that the grant will fund the installation of a solar/battery backup system at the Public Works building located at 129 Legion Drive,

ensuring a reliable emergency operations base for Waynesville and Haywood County. He added that this system will help coordinate disaster recovery efforts and restore essential utilities, especially during weather-related crises, by reducing dependence on the main electric grid.

Councilmember Feichter asked about C-LEAP deliverables and if one of the goals is to be able to replace peak shaving diesel generators. Mr. Hite said that is one of the three goals. Councilmember Dickson said they may be able to leverage more money because the IRA will allow a tax credit up to 40% back.

G. NEW BUSINESS

10. Contractor Approval for Wastewater Treatment Plant Potable Water Supply for Disc Filters

- Laura Yonkers, Deputy Director of Public Works-Sustainability

Deputy Director Laura Yonkers reported that Ashe Construction and Management (ACMI) has been selected to install a dedicated potable water supply line at the Town of Waynesville Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) to provide clean, non-reclaimed water for backwashing the facility's disc filters. She explained that the use of potable water is necessary to properly clean the disc filters, maintain treatment efficiency, and ensure continued compliance with regulatory and operational standards. Ms. Yonkers said that this project will improve system reliability, reduce maintenance issues associated with inadequate backwashing, and support the long-term performance of the wastewater treatment process.

Ms. Yonkers stated that WWTP disc filters are a critical component of the treatment process, providing primary treatment of the wastewater influent and that proper backwashing of these filters is essential to prevent fouling, maintain flow capacity, and ensure consistent effluent quality. The current lack of a dedicated potable water supply for backwashing limits the effectiveness of the cleaning process. She explained that the selected contractor will:

- Install a new potable water line to serve the disc filter backwash system
- Coordinate connections with existing WWTP infrastructure
- Ensure all work meets applicable codes, standards, and safety requirements
- Restore disturbed areas upon completion
- Coordinate with Town staff to minimize operational disruptions

Ms. Yonkers said that once this is approved, the project should begin during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2025-26 and should last approximately 6 weeks, subject to weather conditions and material availability.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to approve the resolution of tentative award of the WWTP Potable Water Project to ACMI. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Addition of part-time positions for Water Treatment and Waste Treatment Plants to support 24/7 operations.

- Laura Yonkers, Deputy Director of Public Works-Sustainability

Deputy Director Laura Yonkers reported that the town of Waynesville's public works department is requesting approval to add part-time positions at both the water treatment and wastewater treatment plants to assist in maintaining the required 24/7 operational coverage. Ms. Yonkers explained while the new employees are actively working towards the necessary state licensure, they are not yet licensed to operate the plants independently. She added that obtaining proper licensure in North Carolina typically takes six to nine months. Ms. Yonkers stated that funding for the proposed part-time positions will be provided through existing Enterprise funds and that the anticipated cost is expected to be offset by a reduction in overtime expenses and will not require an increase in current rates or additional budget appropriations. Councilmember Feichter if these are permanent positions. Ms. Yonkers said these would be temporary until the new hires are fully licensed.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to approve the addition of part-time operator positions for both the water treatment and wastewater treatment plants. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Contractor Approval for Public Works Bank Stabilization Project

- Hutch Reece, Deputy Director of Public Works-Operations

Deputy Director Hutch Reece reported that Rhino Design Build LLC has been selected to perform the Public Works Bank Stabilization Project, which is necessary to address erosion and structural degradation resulting from the impacts of Hurricane Helene. He explained that the project area directly affects residential properties adjacent to the Public Works Complex and requires careful execution to protect public infrastructure, neighboring properties, and environmental resources. Mr. Reece said that while Rhino Design Build LLC was not the lowest bidder, the firm achieved the highest overall score through the Town's established evaluation process. He said the selection was based on a comprehensive assessment of qualifications, relevant experience, project approach, schedule, and demonstrated ability to complete the work safely and effectively under site-specific constraints. Mr. Reece added that this approach ensures the best overall value to the Town and minimizes risk associated with construction in a sensitive, residentially adjacent area.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to approve the award of the Public Works Bank Stabilization Project to Rhino Design Build LLC. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Freeman, to authorize initiation of the project during the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (FY25-26). The motion passed unanimously.

13. Award of Construction Contract and Approval of Project Budget – Vance & Recreation Park Ballfields (Helene Damage Repair)

- Luke Kinsland, Parks and Recreation Director

Recreation Director Luke Kinsland reported that after soliciting bids for the Vance & Recreation Park Ballfields project, staff recommends awarding the construction contract to John Burgin Construction in the amount of \$154,085. This work includes field reconstruction and related improvements necessary due to damage sustained during Hurricane Helene. He added that staff requests approval of an overall project budget of

\$700,000 for the complete rebuild of the ballfields. He explained that while John Burgin Construction will perform the primary field work, the Town will separately bid and contract fencing, lighting, bleachers, and scoreboards. Mr. Kinsland emphasized that the Town will be saving money everywhere they can. He stated that Mr. Burgin said he could complete the fields before March 1st.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to award the construction contract for the Vance & Recreation Park Ballfields project to John Burgin Construction in the amount of \$154,085. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve an overall project budget of \$700,000 for the Vance & Recreation Park Ballfields rebuild project. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hites said they will submit the projects for FEMA reimbursement.

Regarding Dutch Fisher Field, Mr. Kinsland said that Mr. McKay stated they are very close to being able to play ball and they just need to resolve the mole issue.

14. Establishment of Project Budget – Dog Park Project

- Luke Kinsland, Parks and Recreation Director

Recreation Director Luke Kinsland reported that staff requests approval to establish an overall project budget of \$430,741 for the Town's Dog Park project. He explained that this project's budget is based on CDC's construction cost estimate and includes additional project elements (site construction, fencing, lighting, landscaping, shade structures, and park amenities necessary to support the size and intended use of the dog park) identified during planning to ensure a complete, functional, and durable facility. He said roughly \$275,000 of the budget will be for grading and storm drainage. Mr. Kinsland said they are applying for a \$200,000 PARTF grant and they have already received a grant from the Tourism Development Authority, which would bring expenditures down to \$200,741. Mr. Hites added that the project will be submitted to FEMA for reimbursement.

Councilmember Freeman said it is a tremendous amount of money for a dog park and that the majority of people who visit the dog park don't live in Waynesville, so they're not paying for it. She agreed to vote in favor of the project if the estimate is tentative. Mr. Hites suggested applying for more funds from the TDA. Councilmember Feichter agreed that it seems expensive and asked if the dog park could be placed in the original place. Mr. Hites said it would cost over \$300K to put it in the same place, just for it to possibly flood again. Mr. Kinsland said they can work on this project in phases, so they aren't paying for the entire project in one budget cycle. Mr. Hites added that to help cut down on mobilization costs, they are bidding the fencing needed for all projects, lighting, etc.

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to establish an overall project budget of \$430,741 for the Dog Park project. The motion passed unanimously.

15. Comprehensive Pay and Classification Study: Phase One Public Safety

- Page McCurry, Human Resources Director

Human Resources Director Page McCurry requested that Council consider a Memorandum of Agreement between the North Carolina League of Municipalities (“League”) and the Town of Waynesville (“Town”) for a comprehensive pay and classification study administered over a two-year cycle and recommendations for updates to the Town’s personnel policy to reflect current laws, regulations, and best HR practices. She said this Phase will focus on Fire and Police, and part of Public Works (enterprise fund divisions). Ms. McCurry said that best practice is to do a pay study every three years, and the last study was done six years ago.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the North Carolina League of Municipalities, and its subcontractor, The MAPS Group, to conduct a comprehensive Public Safety Classification and Pay Study and a review of the Personnel Policy, for a total fee of \$16,400.00 plus estimated expenses. The motion passed unanimously.

H. COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

16. Manager’s Report

- Town Manager, Rob Hites

There was nothing to report.

17. Town Attorney’s Report

- Town Attorney, Martha Bradley

There was nothing to report.

I. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Mayor Caldwell said the Cemetery Committee is wanting to meet with the Town Attorney.

J. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to adjourn at 7:54pm. The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

Gary Caldwell, Mayor

Robert W. Hites, Jr. Town Manager

Candace Poolton, Town Clerk