

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
September 22, 2026

THE WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL held a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 22, 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 6:00 pm with the following members present:

Mayor Gary Caldwell
Mayor Pro Tempore Chuck Dickson
Councilmember Jon Feichter
Councilmember Julia Boyd

The following staff members were present:

Page McCurry, Assistant Town Manager & HR Director
Martha Bradley, Town Attorney
Candace Poolton, Town Clerk/Assistant to the Manager
Chris Mehaffey, Fire Chief
Cody Parton, Assistant Fire Chief
Olga Grooman, Interim Development Services Director
Alex Mumby, Land Use Administrator
Cody Stiles, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent

The following members of the media were present:

Paul Nielsen, The Mountaineer

1. Welcome/Calendar/Announcements

Mayor Gary Caldwell welcomed everyone and announced that First Friday will be October 2nd, the Church Street Arts and Crafts Show will be the 10th, and the next Council meeting will be October 13th. Councilmember Dickson added that the Travel Writers Association will be in town the first week of October.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ellen Pitt- Ms. Pitt gave an update on the DUI Task Force. She reported no complaints about the new Social District. Ms. Pitt said Kratom has been a rising issue.

A motion was made by Councilmember Feichter, seconded by Mayor Caldwell, to allow an extension to Ms. Pitt's public comment time. Councilmember Feichter and Mayor Caldwell voted in the affirmative. Councilmembers Boyd and Dickson voted against. The motion does not pass.

C. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Boyd, to add to the consent agenda item e. "Appointment to the ElectriCities Non-Power Agencies Board". 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 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 September 8th, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes.
 - b. Motion to appoint Lorelei Garnes' to the Waynesville Housing Authority.
 - c. Motion to approve the Budget Amendment for the Town Council.
 - d. Motion to call for a public hearing for October 13th to consider an application to designate 437 Boundary St as a Local Landmark.
 - e. Motion to appoint Interim Rick Howell as Waynesville's representative on the ElectriCities Non Power-Agencies Board of Commissioners. Motion to appoint Page McCurry as Waynesville's alternate representative on the ElectriCities Non Power-Agencies Board of Commissioners.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Boyd, to adopt the consent agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

E. PROCLAMATION

3. Public Power Week
 - Mayor Gary Caldwell

Mayor Caldwell proclaimed October 4th-10th as Public Power Week. He recognized North Carolina's more than 70 public power cities and towns, including Waynesville, and their exceptional and reliable electric service.

F. PRESENTATION

4. Presentation by ES Engineering, P.C. and EnviroScience, Inc. on the Richland Creek and Vance Greenway Restoration Project.
 - Emily Tarsa, Ph.D.; Haley Valdez, P.E.; Angelina Hotz, P.E.; Julie Bingham, CERP ES Engineering, P.C. and EnviroScience, Inc.

Interim Development Services Director Olga Grooman introduced Haywood Waterways Director, Preston Jacobsen, and the EnviroScience staff, who are utilizing a \$2 million grant to restore several areas of Richland Creek.

Preston Jacobsen spoke about Haywood Waterways and all the work they've done since Helene, including their paid clean-up crew removing 260,000 pounds of trash out of waterways in Haywood. He highlighted several educational programs they provide, including Kids in the Creek. He told Council that this project will be the largest restoration project in Richland Creek's history.

Emily Tarsa reviewed Phase I of the restoration project. She said her team will focus on repairing storm damage, improve public access and recreation, stabilizing river banks, improve stream habitats, treat runoff before it reaches the creek, remove levies, and connect sections of the greenways.

Haley Valdez reviewed the restoration design and what the design is targeting.

Mr. Jacobsen said the entire project should be done in three to four years, but this section of creek will be restored by next Spring.

Councilmember Feichter asked if the restoration would help mitigate flooding. Mr. Jacobsen said that it will improve resiliency, but that flood mitigation could take decades. He said this project is one of the top five projects in national district, and there is a good chance that there will be \$100 million awarded in the future that would improve flood mitigation efforts.

Councilmember Dickson asked if Town staff will have to maintain the work that's done. Mr. Jacobsen said HWA will assist with the cost to maintain, but the work is designed to be zero maintenance with the goal of not adding work to staff. Councilmember Dickson said the Tree Board would be interested in assisting.

G. PUBLIC HEARING

5. Public Hearing to consider text amendments related to periodic fire inspection standards and requirements for the installation of key boxes for change in occupancy classification, Chapter 30- Fire Prevention and Protection of the Waynesville Code of Ordinances.

- Olga Grooman, Interim Development Services Director

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Boyd, to open the public hearing at 6:46pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Interim Development Services Director Olga Grooman reported that the proposed text amendment is requested by the Town Fire Marshal and amends Chapter 30- Fire Prevention and Protection of the Waynesville Code of Ordinances. She presented the two proposed changes:

1. The first amendment would reference the most recent inspection schedule established by the most recent Fire Code, instead of prescribing specific fire inspection schedules for different types of structures based on occupancy classification.
2. The second amendment would specify that the Fire Code Official can require an approved fire department key box in an approved location when there is a change in occupancy classification in commercial structures, if the fire box is not already installed.

There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Boyd, to close the public hearing at 6:50pm. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Boyd, to approve the ordinance as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

H. NEW BUSINESS

6. Consideration of Budget Amendment – Water Treatment Plant Critical Improvements

- Cody Stiles, Water Treatment Plan Superintendent

Water Treatment Plan Superintendent Cody Stiles reported that staff requests the approval of a budget amendment appropriating \$130,500 from approximately \$400,000 in excess Water revenues realized during the prior fiscal year to address critical and necessary improvements at the Water Treatment Plant. He explained that the requested funding will address three immediate priorities: roof repairs (\$73,000), filter-bed media replenishment (\$20,000), and watershed road repair and stabilization (\$37,500).

Councilmember Feichter asked about the road near the entrance of watershed. Mr. Stiles explained that road was fixed with FEMA funds, and that the requested funds to help build, in-house, an access road around where the slide washed the road out.

A motion was made by Councilmember Boyd, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to approve the amendment to the Water Treatment Plant budget, Fund/Account 61-7122-00 – Capital Projects (Water Treatment Plant Improvements), appropriating \$130,500 from available excess Water revenues realized during the prior fiscal year, and to authorize staff to proceed with the necessary repairs, maintenance, contractual services, filter-bed media replenishment, and watershed road repair and stabilization activities described herein. The motion passed unanimously.

I. COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

7. Town Attorney's Report- Legislative restriction on local government zoning authority

- Town Attorney, Martha Bradley

Town Attorney Martha Bradley reported that recent legislation has placed limits on municipal down-zoning. She explained that attorneys across the state still don't know exactly what "no down-zoning" means because the statute is broadly written. She explained that the new laws that support applicant rights also eliminated the waiting period to reapply if their permit is denied. She said applicants who were denied now have a longer time and more grounds to sue and attorney fees have to be assigned and paid by the municipality if they lose. Ms. Bradley said the development may proceed while taxpayers pay for the town's defense costs. She said that municipalities cannot require developers to provide on-site parking.

Councilmember Dickson asked if the Town were to be sued, is there insurance that could cover legal fees? Ms. Bradley said it depends if it was a case of improper judgement or an intentional constitutional violation, which

would not be covered. She emphasized that citizens need to voice their concerns with state lawmakers, because Council is not legally able to deny development.

Councilmember Feichter said that this is not good news because Council has no recourse to regulate development within Town limits or the ETJ. Ms. Bradley said Council could retract the Town’s urban services boundary. She also suggested that Council could adopt an economic development zone to try to direct development to one area, but they can't force anyone to develop in certain areas.

J. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Councilmember Dickson requested that staff look into the sign ordinance and remove the political signs on Town property if able to do so.

Councilmember Boyd reminded everyone of the Sarges Dog Walk and Soiree Under the Stars this Saturday.

K. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Boyd, to adjourn at 7:38pm. The motion passed unanimously.

ATTEST:

Gary Caldwell, Mayor

Rick Howell, Interim Town Manager

Candace Poolton, Town Clerk