



REGULAR MEETING

May 20, 2025, at 8:30 a.m.

Town Board Meeting Room

9 S. Main Street

MINUTES

The Downtown Waynesville Commission Vice Chair Joyce Massie called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with the following members present:

Jerry Jackson
Jay Spiro
Sam Kearney
Kirk Noonan
Jessica Garrick
Jon Feichter
Hannah White

Staff present: Beth Gilmore, Executive Director, DWC

Others present: Corrina Ruffieux, Executive Director, Visit Haywood

Paul Nielsen, Mountaineer Publishing
Eva Hansen, Kiwanis Past President and Secretary
Patrick Ryan, Kiwanis President

Vice Chair Massie introduced new board members, Sam Kearney and Jerry Jackson, and welcomed them to the board.

Public Comments-

Kiwanis Club President Pat Ryan and Secretary Eva Hansen appeared before the DWC to request funds to purchase American flags for display on Main Street during certain occasions honoring military veterans and national holidays. Kiwanis volunteers have reached out to more than 50 Main Street businesses and 21 have committed to purchase a flag. Ryan said he would like to see flags lining Main Street entirely. People always thank Kiwanis volunteers for putting out the flags. "It means something to (people)," he said.

Eva Hansen said flags are an important part of honoring military veterans, noting that North Carolina has more veterans than any other state. We are asking for a public/private partnership at a cost of \$50 per flag. Today, we are asking for \$2,000. Kiwanis will pick up the rest of the cost.



DWC Members Feichter, Garrick and Jackson committed to buy a flag for their buildings. Jackson offered to also relay the message to other merchants. Feichter agreed to put information on the DWC website where business owners can commit to buying a flag for Main Street.

Visit Haywood Executive Director Corrina Ruffieux distributed a Partner Program Guide to all DWC board members with information about programs and services available through Visit Haywood and samples of promotional brochures. She encouraged board members to take advantage of the Open Haywood Campaign and help spread the word to local business owners. She notified the board that a video production team would soon be in town to film open business activity and would return mid-June for a larger scale photo shoot.

There were no board comments.

Kanipe Creative Owner, Darrell Kanipe, provided an overview of the 2024-25 DWC Marketing Campaign and a review of campaign analytics.

DWC Board Member Noonan said we need to communicate with merchants more clearly about how to utilize and update business information on the website. Board member Garrick said merchants need detailed instructions about how to update website listings.

Kanipe offered to provide a training workshop to instruct merchants and said there is also a pdf available with instructions. Noonan said it would be better to make the PDF readily available for merchants to access on their own. Garrick suggested the DWC provide an avenue for merchants to request updates to web content on a quarterly basis.

A motion by Kirk Noonan to approve the minutes of the March 18 DWC meeting, seconded by Jessica Garrick, carried unanimously.

DWC Executive Director Gilmore gave the financial report, outlining funds that remain available to be spent before the end of the fiscal year.

She distributed copies of the proposed FY 2025-26 budget. Gilmore explained that the proposed budget for FY 2025-26 has been presented to Council. She said based on what's proposed, it's not looking good for the DWC. Cuts have been made to the accounts that typically fund special events, she explained, noting there are zero dollars proposed for the "equipment rentals" account which pays for event essentials like portable toilets, festival tents and stages.



Gilmore said the reductions could be a mistake. She plans to address those concerns with Town Assistant Manager Jesse Fowler and Finance Director Ian Bartlett after the meeting. It's unlikely that Town leaders will want us to cancel events, she said. I think this is an oversight.

Vice Chair Massie asked if there is anything board members can do to urge council members not to cut those funds.

DWC member Feichter encouraged other board members to attend the public hearing on May 27. "It's imperative that we really take a hard stance. We really need that money," he said, vowing to advocate for a budget that supports special events.

Director Gilmore pointed out the remaining funds available for spending in the current budget, noting that town spending will be cut off on May 30 and any projects that need to be funded during this fiscal year need to be submitted for payment quickly.

After a brief discussion about the status of pending design projects, board members agreed to spend the remaining funds on materials necessary for the Church Street lights project and if possible, the Miller Street shade project.

A motion by Jay Spiro, seconded by Jon Feichter, to allocate remaining funds to finish the Church Street lights and Miller Street Shade projects carried unanimously.

Board member Spiro and Feichter said they would like to see progress made on the mural project, as well.

Board member Garrick says replacing the kiosks on Main Street is also an "urgent need, maybe more so than the mural," she said. "People need to be able to find their way around."

Vice Chair Massie referenced an email stating Dave Barone's resignation from the board, noting that his vacancy as Chair needed to be filled. She nominated board member Jon Feichter.

Feichter accepted the nomination, stating "I have had a passion for Downtown Waynesville since I was old enough to walk." Feichter served as a member of the Downtown Waynesville Association board for almost 10 years and has a long history with the Main Street community. "It would be an honor to serve as chair of the DWC," he said.

A motion by Joyce Massie, seconded by Jay Spiro, to nominate Jon Feichter for Town Council's appointment as DWC Chair carried unanimously.



A motion by Jon Feichter, seconded by Jessica Garrick, for Joyce Massie to remain Vice Chair, carried unanimously.

ANNUAL WORK PLAN COMMITTEE REPORTS

Following the resignation of Grace Mason from the DWC Board, the Organization Committee no longer has a chair. Board members agreed that the committee should include DWC executive officers and proceed without a designated chair.

Executive Director Gilmore said there is no update regarding the formation of a nonprofit as an extension of the DWC. We are waiting for the town attorney to submit document drafts for the board's review. Board member Feichter said he met with Gilmore, Assistant Town Manager Jesse Fowler and Town Manager Rob Hites to discuss objectives and the structure of the nonprofit board and agreed that a "small" five-to-seven-member board comprised of DWC board members would be sufficient. Feichter agreed to invite Town Attorney Martha Bradley to provide an update on the nonprofit during the next DWC board meeting on June 17.

Promotions Committee Chair, Jessica Garrick, said she would like to continue serving on the Promotions Committee and helping with special events, but is no longer available to serve as promotions chair due to growing demands in her personal life and with her business.

Executive Director Gilmore distributed a proof of the district brochure for board approval. Board members noted a list of necessary revisions and suggestions that Gilmore agreed to pass along to designers.

Board member Spiro suggested making the brochure available on the downtownwaynesville.com website.

Executive Director Gilmore said the "Scannable signs" that were created by Kanipe are ready for printing and installation. She has requested pricing for a variety of options, including table tents, window clings, and a variety of outdoor mounted sign designs and will provide those details when she receives them. Board member Noonan said he likes the idea of using window clings. Other board members said they were interested in considering a combination of options.

Executive Director Gilmore asked for board input on the recent Appalachian Heritage Festival and about the feedback received from merchants and vendors through the impact survey. Gilmore said large scale events like the Heritage festival require "all hands-on deck" and requested more involvement from the board in planning and executing events. She thanked Board Member Jackson for his willingness to serve as "show director" of the 2026 festival noting his



extensive amount of experience working with John C Campbell and Penland School of Craft. “Heritage events are not my wheelhouse,” Gilmore said. “But they are right up Jerry’s ally. He’s perfect for that role.”

Gilmore said there were challenges planning this year’s event, including elements that went over budget, inclement weather and last-minute cancellations. Tracking vendors was complicated due to most vendors being transferred over from two separate Fall shows that were cancelled due to Hurricane Helene, but that significant strides were made and new connections were established with resources that will make next year’s festival better than ever.

Board member Jackson agreed it requires a team to put on successful events and applauded Gilmore’s work. He believes this year’s festival was a success, the feedback positive considering the weather and challenges posed by last minute cancellations. He would like to see more heritage craft themed events. Board member Kearney said she would like to see a tighter and more curated vendor pool.

In her director’s report, Gilmore referenced feedback from N.C. Main Street leaders noted in the 2024 assessment results and encouraged board members to spend time reviewing the report in detail. It’s important that we work to address the areas where we need higher scores, she said, including maintaining active committees, making regular presentations to Town Councilmembers, recruiting “underrepresented” board members and maintaining an annual work plan that aligns with the organization’s budget.

A motion to adjourn by Kirk Noonan, seconded by Jay Spiro, carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

ATTEST:

Joyce Massie, Vice Chair

Beth Gilmore, Executive Director