



REGULAR MEETING

September 16, 2025, at 8:30 a.m.

Town Board Meeting Room

9 S. Main Street

MINUTES

Downtown Waynesville Commission (DWC) Chair Jon Feichter called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with the following members present:

Jerry Jackson
Joyce Massie
Sam Kearney
Bob Williams
Kirk Noonan

Staff members present: Beth Gilmore, Executive Director, DWC
Grace Brackett, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator

Others present: Corrina Ruffieux, Executive Director, Visit Haywood
Tavia Thomas, RE/MAX Executive

During public comment, Visit Haywood Executive Director Corrina Ruffieux said Haywood County has been chosen to host the Society of American Travel Writers 2026 Annual Conference on October 4-8, 2026, at Lake Junaluska Conference & Retreat Center. She said Haywood County “is honored” to have the opportunity to host more than 100 travel journalists and content creators from across the country as part of the conference. Visit Haywood’s summer Elk Bucks promotion ends in September and will shift to a shop local campaign to run from October through December. Business owners are encouraged to sign up for Elk Bucks before September 30.

There were no board comments. No adjustments were made to the agenda.

A motion by Kirk Noonan to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Joyce Massie, carried unanimously.

Executive Director Gilmore provided the financial report.

A motion by Joyce Massie to approve the financial report, seconded by Sam Kearney, carried unanimously.

Executive Director Gilmore asked board members to save the date for a special-called board meeting on November 10 at 4:00 p.m. in Sylva. N.C. Main Street leaders are coming to facilitate a joint board training workshop for the DWC and Sylva Main Street Board of Directors.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

1. PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

Promotions Chair Sam Kearney shared plans to develop an “Appalachian True Life” story series. Kearney told board members about a story telling workshop she attended with staff and other board members and plans to develop a collection of personal stories about people who live, work, create and perform within the Municipal Service District. The plan is to conduct interviews, take pictures and videos to prepare story packages for every business. Gilmore also shared plans for a special collection of stories, “Recollections”, focused on the district’s history that will be presented as part of the 40th Anniversary celebration in January.

DWC Chair Feichter gave an update on website updates and marketing. Website content management and marketing should be treated as two separate issues, he said. After meeting with Director Gilmore and Kanipe Owner, Darrell Kanipe, Feichter said it is too late to cancel the contract with Kanipe for website management. Kanipe told Feichter in a recent meeting that the DWC is obligated to provide notice of cancellation at least 90-days before the expiration of the contract and therefore “missed our window. That simplifies the question because we are tied to him” for 12 months, he said. “Marketing is a different thing entirely.”

Feichter laid out three options for marketing. Currently, two proposals have been submitted by Kanipe Creative and Slingshot, Inc. A third option is to rely on DWC staff to plan marketing in-house. Since the proposals were submitted, the DWC has hired our own “whizzbang marketing guru, Grace,” Feichter said. “Personally, I would like to see Grace provide us with a plan that she would implement.”

DWC Board Member Kirk Noonan questioned if that wasn’t already decided during the August board meeting.

Gilmore said the decision at time was with regards to website management- not marketing. Board members agreed in August to bring website management in-house, under Grace’s direction. That’s no longer an option if the DWC remains bound to the contract with Kanipe. The existing contract with Kanipe covers website hosting and annual security updates. All other changes, including the addition of new pages to the site, will likely come at an additional cost for Kanipe to perform the work because Grace has limited permissions. By bringing marketing decisions in house, the DWC can allocate all marketing dollars to the direct placement and distribution of ads.

Feichter said he would like Grace to prepare a marketing plan proposal that outlines the market and platforms that she recommends.

A motion by Kirk Noonan to have staff prepare a marketing plan proposal for the FY 2025-26 advertising budget, seconded by Jerry Jackson, carried unanimously.

Event Coordinator Joyce Massie asked for an update on event plans.

Board member Noonan said the Fall social is set for September 22 at The Roost Chop House. Invitations have been emailed and printed for distribution. Gilmore reiterated the need to receive an estimate/invoice, so she is prepared to pay. BINGO cards have been finalized and printed. Chris Minnick has been lined up to play music, and Bethany Cullen has been booked to draw personal sketches of guests.

Director Gilmore gave an update about the Church Street Art & Craft Show on October 11, requesting volunteers for a variety of tasks. Board members decided not to set up a tent to sell merchandise again until the Town is equipped to accept card payments. Gilmore said Finance Director Ian Barrett is working to get the town set up for credit card payments but has encountered a series of setbacks. Chair Feichter said he will follow up with Barrett for an update.

DWC Board Member Massie asked if the electrical outlets at Miller Street have been repaired. Gilmore said she reached out to Public Works Director Ricky Bourne with requests for outlet repair, alleyway light bulb replacement, street maintenance needs and concerns over the Wall Street dumpsters. Director Bourne agreed to repair the outlets at Miller Street for live music, replace string light bulbs in the alleyway and address issues with the dumpsters. He is reviewing other concerns raised over street maintenance.

DWC Board Member Kearney said she plans to follow up with Main Street district merchants next week to find out who will participate in the Halloween Treats on the Street event.

Board members discussed plans for the Christmas Tree lighting on November 22, looking for ways to encourage guests to stay on Main Street for shopping and dining after the tree is lit. Director Gilmore suggested adding an element to the event like a “cookie stroll” that would drive traffic to shops and restaurants. She agreed to research ideas for board consideration.

2. DESIGN COMMITTEE

A. Church Street Lights Project:

Design Chair Kirk Noonan said stanchions have been fabricated for the Church Street lights project and are ready for powder coating. The cost for powder coating will take the project over budget.

A motion by Jerry Jackson, seconded by Joyce Massie, to pay \$1,726.43 from the DWC’s materials & supplies account for powder coating the stanchions for the Church Street lights project carried unanimously.

DWC Board Members set a goal to have string lights installed over Church Street no later than the Christmas tree lighting on November 22.

B. Miller Street shade project:

After a brief discussion about shade options for Miller Street, Design Chair Noonan agreed to work with the design committee to develop a concept and project budget for full board review. In the meantime, Director Gilmore agreed to research options for a commercial grade umbrella as a temporary solution.

C. Alleyway lights:

Gilmore said string lights have been ordered for the small alleyway beside the Modern Deer store. She will finalize contracts for installation and schedule the install after a design has been finalized.

D. Depot mini park:

DWC Board Members requested design ideas from the Design Committee for enhancements to the Depot Mini Park. Director Gilmore agreed to ask about power washing the brick pavers.

3. ECON. VITALITY COMMITTEE

Chair Feichter and Director Gilmore are in training with Placer to learn how to utilize the platform and process data. Committee members are working on a policy and procedures to submit for TOW Council review regarding how Placer data will be made available to private businesses within the MSD. Feichter said he will research sample policies.

The next DWC board meeting will be held on October 21, at 8:30 a.m.

A motion to adjourn by Sam Kearney, seconded by Kirk Noonan, carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

ATTEST:

Jon Feichter, Board Chair

Beth Gilmore, Executive Director