

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**May 26, 2026**

**THE WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL** held a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 26, 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 6:06 pm with the following members present:

Mayor Gary Caldwell  
Councilmember Jon Feichter  
Councilmember Anthony Sutton  
Councilmember Julia Boyd

The following staff members were present:

Rob Hites, Town Rob Hites, Town Manager  
Martha Bradley, Town Attorney  
Candace Poolton, Town Clerk/Assistant to the Manager  
Elizabeth Teague, Development Services Director  
Olga Grooman, Assistant Development Services Director  
Ian Barrett, Finance Director  
Alex Mumby, Land Use Administrator  
Police Chief David Adams  
Fire Chief Chris Mehaffey  
Assistant Fire Chief Cody Parton  
Page McCurry, Human Resources Director

The following members of the media were present:

Paul Nielsen and Becky Johnson, The Mountaineer

1. Welcome/Calendar/Announcements

Mayor Gary Caldwell welcomed everyone and announced that the next Council meeting is June 8<sup>th</sup> to further discuss the budget, and the next regular Council meeting will be June 9<sup>th</sup>. He invited everyone to the ribbon cutting for the Main Street Mural on June 5<sup>th</sup>, during First Friday.

**B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**C. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

***A motion was made by Councilmember Boyd, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to remove item b. from the consent agenda and place it on the regular agenda, and approve the agenda as presented. 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 May 12th, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
- c. Motion to appoint all renewing applicants to serve another term on their respective boards.
- d. Motion to appoint Bill Revis and Steve Lloyd to serve an additional 3-year term.

***A motion was made by Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve the consent agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.***

#### **E. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- 2(b). Call for a public hearing on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, to consider the text amendments for the establishment of the Rural Conservation zoning district and related changes.
  - Alex Mumby, Land Use Administrator

Councilmember Sutton explained that the proposed public hearing includes three general proposals, when each proposal should be a separate hearing and discussion. He said one proposal is for the establishment of the Rural Conservation zoning district, one is for a town-wide reduction in special use permit density, and the other is a 45 foot height cap over all low-density districts.

Mr. Mumby asked if Council would also like the symbology changes to be presented as a separate item as well. Council agreed that it should.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Boyd, to call for a public hearing on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026 to consider the text amendments for the establishment of the Rural Conservation zoning district and that the other aforementioned proposals go back to the Planning Board as two separate items. The motion passed unanimously.***

3. A public hearing to consider the amendments to the Conditional District for Chick-fil-A Restaurant, Land Development Standards (LDS) Sections 15.2.5.D.
  - Olga Grooman, Assistant Development Services Director

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to open the public hearing at 6:06pm. The motion passed unanimously.***

Assistant Development Services Director Olga Grooman reported that the subject property is a Chick-fil-A located at 45 Barber Boulevard and is zoned Russ Avene Regional Center Conditional District (RA-RC-CD). Ms. Grooman reviewed the history of the zoning for that area: the original Conditional District (CD) for Ingles Markets- consisting of a grocery store (Ingles), I-market, gas station, and a site for a drive-thru restaurant- was approved by the Waynesville’s Board of Aldermen on February 8, 2011. She explained that on October 19, 2015, the Chick-fil-A came back to the Board to relocate the drive-thru restaurant building from the center of the parcel to the southeastern side of the lot and change the driveway locations for safety and better traffic flow, with the restaurant being constructed in 2016.

Ms. Grooman presented the proposed amendments resulting from the Planning Board public hearing:

- **Second drive-thru lane:** addition of a second drive-thru lane along the southeastern side of the building and expansion of the existing drive-thru lane. It would result in two (2) ordering and order fulfillment lanes in the drive-thru area and will expedite guests’ ordering and departure.
- **Sidewalk, curb and gutter, and retaining wall:** addition of a second drive-thru lane at the pick-up window side of the building will require the removal of the sidewalk along this side of the property, the installation of a retaining wall, the replacement of the existing curb and gutter, and the installation of a proposed NC DOT vehicle impact guardrail.
- **Landscaping:** addition of the lane will also result in the elimination of existing landscaping, specifically five (5) Maple Trees and various ornamental shrubs along the southeastern portion of the site, as indicated on the attached Landscape Plan. The applicant proposes to replace most of the landscaping and “return the site to as close to existing conditions as possible.”

Following extensive discussion regarding the loss of landscaping and the importance of appearance of the Russ Avenue corridor, the Planning Board recommended the approval of the amendments to the existing Conditional District with the following conditions:

1. Pay a fee-in-lieu to the Town for the removal of the sidewalk section along the subject property’s southeastern side due to the addition of a second drive-thru lane.
2. Work with Town staff and replace the landscaping to be removed from the subject property (LDS Chapter 8).

Ms. Grooman explained that the addition of a second drive-thru lane will require removal of existing landscaping and paving of currently green landscaped areas, which will increase the impervious surface on site. She said that any increase in impervious surface is considered a substantial change under LDS.

Jacob Smith, Applicant- Mr. Smith explained that the volume of customers has doubled from what they had originally predicted ten years ago. He said they are proposing these changes because Chick-Fil-A is concerned they will not be able to meet the demands of the community and he expressed concerns about staff and customer safety. He explained that they will be moving the sidewalk and replacing the five maples with seven other, large trees that will be placed around the parking lot area.

Councilmember Sutton pointed out that the new proposal does not meet the tree canopy requirement. He expressed concern that if Council awards these amendments, it will signal to other potential applicants that have similar site configurations in the corridor to seek a similar amendment for operational expansion.

Ms. Grooman explained the proposed sidewalk relocation would serve more properties. Councilmember Feichter disagreed that this proposal meets Goal 5 in the consistency statement because Chick-Fil-A is a corporate fast food chain and not part of a “makers economy”. He also requested evidence of increased traffic to the restaurant. He said that in his experience, that traffic through the drive-thru does not seem unmanageable, and therefore does not necessitate all of the changes required that would take away from the character of Russ Avenue Corridor. Councilmember Boyd expressed concerns over the loss of the sidewalk and existing foliage. Mr. Smith said that while Chick-Fil-A is corporate, the Waynesville restaurant is owned locally by Robert and that evidence of unmet demand was discovered based on a survey.

Craig Justus, Attorney for Ingles-Mr. Justus said that Ingles would prefer the sidewalk to be relocated. Councilmember Sutton suggested that if Ingles wants a sidewalk at the other location, that Ingles just build the sidewalk regardless. Mr. Justus said that the Land Use Plan encourages more transportation and the drive-thru expansion for Chick-Fil-A would do that. He disagreed with the definition of “street trees”, since technically the area where are supposed to be trees is not a street. Ms. Grooman recited the ordinance defining a street and based on the definition, that area is considered a street and would be required to meet the tree canopy requirement. Ms. Teague said the street trees are part of the conditional district requirement, but it’s technically not a town street. Ms. Teague said in the past they have required trees in public right of way frontages. She added that the Town has historically been flexible with accepting alternative landscaping for compliance.

There was no public comment.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to close the public hearing at 6:57pm. The motion passed unanimously.***

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to find the Conditional District Map Amendment as proposed as inconsistent with the 2035 Land Use Plan and not reasonable and not in the public interest in that it does not meet Goal 5 of the Comprehensive Plan because it does not create opportunities for a sustainable economy and does not promote the growth of existing local businesses and Waynesville’s “maker economy.” The motion passed unanimously.***

***A motion was made by Councilmember Boyd, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to deny the Conditional District Map Amendment. The motion passed unanimously.***

4. Budget Public Hearing
  - Ian Barrett, Finance Director

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to open the public hearing at 7:01pm. The motion passed unanimously.***

Finance Director Ian Barrett presented the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. The recommendations included:

- A 10% water and sewer rate increase
- A 3.19% electric rate increase
- No property tax rate increase
- Bringing first responder pay to market
- No Cost of Living Adjustment(COLA), but will keep a 2.5% Career Track

Human Resources Director Page McCurry reported that COLAs help make salaries compression proof. Council agreed that a 1% COLA for employees that were not impacted by the pay study would be preferred. Mr. Barrett said that would amount to \$62,023. Town Manager Rob Hites said there’s no money in the budget to compensate people who were involved in the last part of the study, but historically, if they are having a good budget year, they can fund the third part of the pay study.

Mr. Barrett reviewed the capital improvement requests from each department: IT Upgrades and worker onsite, replacing aging HVACs in town, replace aging ADA compliant Rec Center van, sewer line and pipe replacement, WWTP bridge repair, clarifier pumps at the sewer plant, and electric improvements on Allsion Acres and Richland Street.

Council reminded everyone that their budget workshop was continued to June 8<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am in the Municipal Building.

There was no public comment.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to close the public hearing at 7:17pm. The motion passed unanimously.***

## **F. OLD BUSINESS**

5. Canton/Clyde/Waynesville Emergency Water Interconnect Agreement
  - Rob Hites, Town Manager

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that the Towns of Canton, Clyde and Waynesville have received State Revolving Loans totaling 15.5 million dollars and a Haywood County contribution of \$2,006,840 to construct an emergency potable water interconnect. He said the interconnect will be designed to provide a minimum of 2 million gallons per day of water to Haywood County’s incorporated towns to aid in providing fire flows, and emergency water due to failures in the water systems or water treatment plants. He explained that the Waynesville section will end at a 250,000-storage tank located on Ratliff Cove; the Clyde section will extend from the tank to the Town of Clyde Booster Pump Station and meter located on 19/23 near the road to the Carolina Blvd. Tank, and the Canton section will begin at the meter station and extend to Canton’s existing water distribution system on UD 19/23 near Balckwell Drive. He said this project will be considered as a single project managed by staff of the Town of Waynesville with staff of the Town of Canton and Clyde serving an unofficial administrative body, and because of that, Waynesville will be compensated for its actual expenses for managing the financial side of the project. Mr. Hites said acquiring rights-of-way will be the responsibility of each individual municipality and that grants will pay for the property acquisition and right-of-way agent’s fees. He emphasized that developers and property owners will not be allowed to tap into this line, it is only for emergency use.

Mr. Hites said that Clyde will purchase 40,000 gallons of water from Waynesville each day in order to keep the water potable in the line, so it is more readily available in the event of an emergency. He stated that the project should take three years to complete.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Boyd, to approve the Interconnect Agreement. The motion passed unanimously.***

6. Selection of Architectural Firm to design Fire Station #2
  - Councilmember Julia Boyd

Councilmember Julia Boyd reported that staff issued a Request for Qualifications to solicit proposals for Architectural Services for drafting a "Preliminary Architectural Report". Councilmember Boyd explained that a review panel composed of Fire and Administrative staff and herself reviewed six proposals and invited three for interviews. After interviewing the firms, Councilmember Boyd reported the committee recommends McMillan, Pazdan, Smith Architects, Asheville Office to the Council. Mr. Hites explained that the Town received a \$2.97 million dollar earmark from Congressman Edwards, and in order to "qualify" for the earmark the Town must go through the USDA's grant application process. He outlined the process with the first step being that the Town selects an architect who must prepare a Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR) to submit, then the contract that the Town would negotiate would include a lump sum price for preparing the PAR and, if USDA approves the earmark, will provide the remainder of the architectural services typically provided in a design, bid, build contract. He said that if the USDA does not qualify the Town for the earmark, the architectural contract would be placed on hold until adequate funding is secured. In addition to the \$2.97 million earmark, the Town will need to obtain a loan to finance the balance of the project, estimated to be \$3 million. As a "Phase II" of the contract, Mr. Hites said the Town may wish to engage the architect to renovate Fire Station #1 to accommodate four bunk rooms and a second locker room. He added that would be an optional Phase that the Council may choose to use as Fire Station #2 moves through the process. Mr. Hites said it may take up to 36 months to begin construction, and three years to build.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Boyd, to approve McMillan, Pazdan, Smith (MPS) Architects as the design firm for Fire Station #2 and authorize the committee to negotiate a lump sum contract to prepare a PAR and a fee for the remaining architectural services. The motion passed unanimously.***

## **G. NEW BUSINESS**

7. Budget Amendment for the Fire Department Vehicle Repair
  - Cody Parton, Assistant Fire Chief

Assistant Fire Chief Cody Parton reported that the Fire Department's 2010 Pierce fire truck requires a complete engine replacement. He explained that due to a variety of vehicle issues this year, the Department does not have funds to cover this emergency repair. He said the Finance Department will cover the repairs and is requesting the Council's approval to reallocate funds from various line items to support the fire department. AC Parton said they have been renting a truck for \$5000 a month and Councilmember Sutton suggested the Town possibly rent their truck to other municipalities once they replace it with the new one.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Boyd, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve the FD/Finance Budget Amendment. The motion passed unanimously.***

8. Special Event permit for Waynesville First Friday
- Jerry Jackson, Salmagundi Gallery Owner & Event Organizer

Jerry Jackson, Event Organizer for First Fridays, requested approval of a Special Event permit for Waynesville’s First Friday event, including a social district, for the monthly events held June through December 2026. Councilmember Sutton requested that the event permit has the box checked “yes” under “serving alcohol”.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve the Special Event permit for Waynesville First Friday and the proposed social district guidelines. The motion passed unanimously.***

9. Policy Adoption: Sale of Burial Plots in Undetermined Areas of Historic Cemetery Property
- Matthew Wright, Public Facilities Supervisor

Public Facilities Supervisor Matthew Wright explained that many of the burial records for the plots located within the historic section of Greenhill Cemetery are incomplete or lost to time and fire. He said the lack of records causes issues for staff when trying to determine which plots are already occupied when attempting to sell plots to new customers. He said that the proposed policy prohibits the sale of new plots in order to prevent accidentally selling any lots that are occupied, or that are rightfully owned by somebody else without our knowledge. Councilmember Feichter confirmed that plots that have verified ownership can still be buried in the historic area or transfer their deeds.

Councilmember Sutton asked how many plots do not have a recorded burial. Mr. Wright said approximately 35% or more of the historic section does not have records. Mr. Hites recommended that staff hire a LiDAR company to find out which plots are occupied. He said there are grants available that can be used to locate ownership of plots. Councilmember Feichter reminded staff that it is the advisory board’s duty to make a recommendation to Council, not the other way around.

Councilmember Feichter introduced Mark Garden. Mr. Garden explained that he has been thoroughly researching the historic area of the cemetery and has been trying to track down proof of ownership of a plot so he can be buried with his wife’s family. He requested that if he pays for the GPR for two lots in the historic area, could he purchase a plot there. Mr. Wright said if the proposed policy gets approved, that Mr. Garden’s wishes and efforts would preclude the policy. Mr. Wright said he will call a special meeting of the cemetery committee to discuss the policy for recommendation to Council.

## **H. COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF**

10. Manager’s Report
- Town Manager, Rob Hites

Nothing to report.

11. Town Attorney's Report

- Town Attorney, Martha Bradley

Nothing to report.

**I. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

Councilmember Sutton said he will be presenting on WNC Rail appropriations at the next Council meeting.

**J. ADJOURN**

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to adjourn at 8:21pm. The motion passed unanimously.***

ATTEST:

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Gary Caldwell, Mayor

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Robert W. Hites, Jr. Town Manager

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Candace Poolton, Town Clerk