

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**January 14, 2025**

**THE WAYNESVILLE TOWN COUNCIL** held a regular meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, 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 Tem Chuck Dickson  
Councilmember Jon Feichter  
Councilmember Anthony Sutton

Councilmembers Absent:

Councilmember Julia Freeman

The following staff members were present:

Rob Hites, Town Manager  
Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager  
Candace Poolton, Town Clerk  
Elizabeth Teague, Director of Development  
Olga Grooman, Assistant Director of Development  
Page McCurry, Director of Human Resources  
Brittany Angel, Human Resources Coordinator  
Ian Barrett, Finance Director

Members of the Media:

Paul Nielson, The Mountaineer

1. Welcome/Calendar/Announcements

Mayor Gary Caldwell welcomed everyone and reminded everyone that town offices are closed on January 20<sup>th</sup> for MLK Day, and the next Council meeting is January 28<sup>th</sup>.

**B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Debi Hall:** Ms. Hall said there are parking issues in Hazelwood. She said in the past, she has advocated for 30 minute parking along the stores in Hazelwood. She said in the past when she has brought up timed parking spaces, her request was denied based on the inability to enforce. Ms. Hall requested forming a parking committee and having timed parking.

**Chad Brown:** Mr. Brown said he has been the owner of Hazelwood Gun and Tactical since 1989 and parking has always been an issue. He stated that Ms. Hall requested a 15 minute loading zone sign in front of her business, so that one spot would be 15-minute loading and the other would be a handicapped parking spot. He said that none of the business owners in the area are in favor of loading zone in that area. He said that he parked his truck one day in front of her store because her employees parked where he normally parks -in a private gravel lot that in which he has permission to park. Mr. Brown said her employees have been parking in front of other businesses for months.

**Andrea Brown:** Mrs. Brown said that Council had previously voted against having loading zones or timed parking in Hazelwood. She said that Mr. Brown has parked in front of Ms. Hall’s business all day before, but Ms. Hall cannot complain when her employees park in front of other people’s businesses. Mrs. Brown said she is worried that Ms. Hall will “police” the loading zone herself and none of the other business owners in Hazelwood will be able to use the space.

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

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to replace the lease agreement in item 2d with a lease agreement provided by Town Attorney Bradley. 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 10, 2024 Regular Scheduled Meeting Minutes
  - b. Motion to approve the revision of the Town of Waynesville Personnel Policy to specify employer contributions for Town sponsored 401 (k) plan are available only to full-time employees of the Town.
  - c. Motion to approve the police budget amendment as presented.
  - d. Motion to approve renewing lease for third term with a \$500 annual increase to match previous increases.
  - e. Motion to approve the Whole Bloomin’ Thing Special Event Permit
  - f. Motion to call for a Public Hearing for February 11, 2025, to consider a request for annexation for three (3) parcels:
    1. Unaddressed 2.77-ac parcel off East Street, PIN 8615-88-4442, zoned as Raccoon Creek Neighborhood Residential Conditional District (RC-NR-CD)
    2. 0.45-ac parcel, at 97 Allison Acres Drive, PIN 8615-88-3857, zoned as East Waynesville Urban Residential Conditional District (EW-UR-CD)
    3. Eastern portion of a 3.37-ac parcel at 18 Allison Acres Drive, PIN 8615-88-1632, zoned as East Waynesville Urban Residential Conditional District (EW-UR-CD)

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

**E. PRESENTATIONS**

3. Presentation by Jo Melo

- Joanne Melo

Ms. Melo referenced local daytime noise ordinances. She said that she and her neighbors are dealing with dogs barking all day and night long, dogs that are running loose, and dogs that are chained up and living in poor conditions. Ms. Melo played video of dogs howling and loudly barking. Her neighbor, Pete, said he doesn't want to come home the noise is so bad, and he is considering selling his home. Ms. Melo said she and her neighbors can no longer enjoy their properties.

Town Manager Hites said the Town has no governmental control over animals, that would have to be taken care of by Haywood County Animal Control. He encouraged her and her neighbors to call the Waynesville Police Department for the noise issues.

4. Presentation by Dr. John Mason

- Dr. John Mason

Dr. John Mason proposed establishing a "Walk-In Clinic" for local government employees and their families, in which the clinic would give the employees an alternative to the Urgent Care units and the Emergency Room at Haywood Regional Hospital. He said the employee fees would be paid through their Town sponsored health insurance policies. Dr. Mason said there is a huge problem in Waynesville in trying to get primary care.

Dr. Mason presented three proposals: Proposal #1-evaluate the feasibility of having a town walk-in clinic. Proposal #2-Meet with Chief Executive Officer of Haywood Regional Medical Center on establishing primary care walk-in clinic to serve employees of Waynesville, Maggie, Clyde Canton. Proposal #3-Send out a questionnaire to employees to see if they would use such a benefit.

Councilmember Feichter said that staff seem to be doctor averse and asked what role the clinic would play in helping doctor averse employees. Dr. Mason said the benefit of having the town walk-in clinic is employees and their families are seeing the same person each time which allows him to build a relationship with staff.

Councilmember Dickson asked if establishing the clinic would require any changes to the Town's current insurance. Dr. Mason said the town would have to get liability insurance for the providers of the practice. He added that Blue Cross Blue Shield rates could possibly go down because the walk-in clinic would reduce the amount of people using Urgent Care and ER.

Councilmember Feichter and Sutton offered to join the meeting with Chief Executive Officer Chris Brown. Councilmember Feichter suggested Dr. Mason begin working with Mr. Hites to see if the clinic is a viable opportunity. Mr. Hites suggested setting up a meeting with the other local town managers to see if they would also be interested in an employee only walk-in clinic.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to authorize the staff to work with Dr. Mason and staffs of the other Towns, County, and Council to explore the potential for the clinic. The motion passed unanimously.***

**F. PUBLIC HEARING**

5. Continuation of the Public Hearing from December 10, 2024, Council meeting to consider text amendments related to floodplain regulations.
- Assistant Director of Development Services, Olga Grooman

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to re-open the public hearing at 6:51pm. The motion passed unanimously.***

Assistant Director of Development Services Olga Grooman reported that after discussion at the last Council meeting, the text proposes an amendment to the ordinance to increase the required elevation from 1 ft to 2 ft above the base flood elevation (BFE) for all new construction and substantial repairs within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) regulatory floodplain which includes the floodway and “100 year” floodplain as designated on the FIRM maps. Ms. Grooman added that the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has adopted a new rule that requires new construction (building permit applications submitted on or after January 1, 2025) within the regulatory floodplain to be elevated at least 2-feet above the base flood elevation (BFE) to qualify for Federal Housing Administration (FHA) insured mortgages.

Ms. Grooman said the proposed text amendments seek to strengthen the Town of Waynesville’s floodplain protection requirements and align them more closely with the recommendations of the North Carolina Department of Emergency Management. She said strengthening local floodplain ordinances could help reduce future risks to life and property, while promoting public safety and community resilience. Ms. Grooman said the proposed text amendments are based on the post-storm damage assessments, as well as feedback and recommendations from the NC Division of Emergency Management and the National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator, which recommend a minimum freeboard of 2 ft for structures.

Ms. Grooman presented the following neighboring communities that have already adopted a freeboard higher than 1 ft:

1. Town of Sylva: 2 ft
2. Jackson County: 2 ft
3. Town of Franklin: 2 ft
4. Town of Highlands: 2 ft
5. City of Brevard: 2 ft
6. Town of Black Mountain: 2 ft
7. Buncombe County: 2 ft
8. Town of Fletcher: 3 ft
9. City of Hendersonville: 2 ft
10. Henderson County: 2 ft
11. City of Asheville: 2 ft

Ms. Grooman added that nearby communities that still have a 1-ft freeboard include Haywood County, Canton, Clyde, and Maggie Valley. Ms. Grooman said that the Development Services department inspected a

total of 446 structures for damage and watermarks, and 342 of these structures had at least some level of damage. She said that there are currently 42 flood related permits, but most of them are HVAC replacements. Ms. Grooman emphasized that staff are not proposing any change for 500-year flood plain.

Councilmember Feichter asked about neighboring communities that have 2 BFE, and if that standard was enacted before or after Helene. Ms. Grooman said before. Councilmember Sutton asked if the other communities are planning on raising their BFE. Ms. Grooman said the Town of Clyde Planner is planning on presenting it to their Aldermen.

Public Comment:

**Alex McKay:** Mr. McKay said he against the proposed text amendment. He reminded Council that two years ago, they said they were going to look at FEMA maps. Mr. McKay said he took the damage reports provided by Development Services Department and calculated how high the foundations would have to be as required by the proposed text amendment. He showed several examples of the water marks from Helene and compared them to how high the foundations would have to be with the text amendment. He said very few homes at BFE were flooded. Mr. McKay suggested getting accurate data before making a decision.

**Debi Hall:** Ms. Hall said the bottom line is the town can try to protect homeowners by raising the BFE, but flooding can still happen. She said her parents in Clyde raised their house after Fred, and it still flooded.

Councilmember Dickson suggested that staff investigate the cost for more flood studies. Councilmember Feichter agreed with having staff look into flood maps. He said that he likes the text amendment in theory but worries that the practical application would place a substantial burden on residents who are already hurting.

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

***A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to direct town staff to look into cost of preparing new flood maps of Hazelwood and other areas in town affected by flood. The motion passed unanimously.***

## **G. NEW BUSINESS**

6. Formation of a 501(c)3 Nonprofit as an extension of the Downtown Waynesville Commission (DWC)
  - Beth Gilmore, Executive Director, Downtown Waynesville Commission

DWC Executive Director Beth Gilmore reported that the Downtown Waynesville Commission (DWC) would like to establish a non-profit as an extension of the organization to use as leverage for grants and fundraising opportunities that are not available to municipalities. After numerous discussions with N.C. Main Street leaders and a preliminary discussion with Town Attorney Martha Bradley, she said that the DWC feels that a 501 (c)3 is the most appropriate non-profit classification for their purposes. Ms. Gilmore stated that Town Attorney Bradley has agreed to work with the DWC to guide them through the process of forming the non-profit, preparing and filing documents on their behalf. On July 16, Ms. Gilmore stated the DWC board voted unanimously to create a "Friends of Downtown Waynesville" 501(c)3 for the purpose of raising funds and

channeling new grant opportunities with the goal of enhancing the DWC's operating budget with new sources of revenue. Ms. Gilmore said the non-profit will operate as an extension of the DWC according to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Town of Waynesville, which will define the role of the nonprofit and standard operating procedures. She said the next steps include working with Ms. Bradley to form the nonprofit, define its role, and establish the terms of the MOU. Ms. Gilmore added that the quasi-public model is common among Main Street Communities throughout North Carolina and among 72 designated communities, 35 are operate as quasi-public. She said she will bring the information back to Council for their review.

Councilmember Dickson asked what grant opportunities were not available given the DWC's current status. Ms. Gilmore said there are quite a few that they do not qualify for. Councilmember Dickson asked if Council could have some control over the organization's spending. Ms. Bradley said that concern can be addressed in an organizational documentation.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Dickson, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to allow DWC staff to proceed in the development of a non-profit extension of the DWC. The motion passed unanimously.***

7. Consideration and possible approval of a logo for the Waynesville Historic Preservation Commission
  - Alex Mumby, Land Use Administrator

Land Use Administrator Alex Mumby reported that the Waynesville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) would like to create a logo to represent them on their projects and official communications. Mr. Mumby said that the proposed logo features the Springhouse which is the last remaining structure of the White Sulphur Springs Hotel. He added that tourists came to Waynesville from across the country to visit the hotel and enjoy the natural sulfur springs on the property and the original hotel burned down in 1892 but remains an important part of Waynesville's history. Mr. Mumby showed Council two options available to choose from. He said the new logo would be used in conjunction with the Town of Waynesville Seal.

Mr. McKay reminded everyone that the Cemetery tour will be May 3<sup>rd</sup>, in conjunction with Appalachian Heritage Festival.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve the Waynesville Historic Preservation Logo A with the Times New Roman font. The motion passed unanimously.***

8. Upgrade meter reading technology to be compatible with our software meters
  - Ian Barrett, Finance Director

Finance Director Ian Barrett reported that toward the end of 2024, we received a quote to upgrade our meter reading software from N\_Sight to Neptune 360. He said that the town has been using meter readers that were lent to our department by the supplier to continue reading, but the time has come where we need to upgrade to provide a long-term solution and to keep such an integral part of our department running accurately. Mr. Barrett said the old system, N\_sight, is no longer being supported, thus making this upgrade essential to our operations. He suggested that in order to ease the financial burden, the purchase of this software would be split between Finance, Water, Sewer, and Electric, since it pertains to all of those departments, with the total cost to upgrade being \$17, 834.50 (includes setup and training, the software itself, and mapping services).

Councilmember Dickson asked about the timeline for AMI. Mr. Barrett said that will be further in the future, but he has discussed it with the liaison and it's on his radar. He said the process of switching to AMI will not be seamless, but they will be doing the implementation side of things, which should go smoothly.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Feichter, to approve upgrading our current meter reading software to allow for an efficient and timely delivery of billing. The motion passed unanimously.***

9. Designate the parking place adjacent to the handicapped space and 500 Hazelwood Avenue (Farm to Cake bakery) as a fifteen-minute loading zone.
  - Rob Hites, Town Manager

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that Ms. Hall approached staff with a request to establish a fifteen-minute loading zone in the parking space adjacent to her business. He said the current space is the only non-handicapped accessible space adjacent to her business. Currently, Mr. Hites said the space is occupied by vehicles much of the day leaving patrons without easy access to her business.

Councilmember Sutton suggested the handicapped spot needs to be in a more central location to Hazelwood businesses.

Councilmember Dickson suggested making all of the spaces in front of the businesses 30-minute parking zones. He said a community forum could help figure out parking solutions but could also create more disagreement. Mr. Hites said there is more handicapped parking in the off-street parking lot because having a handicapped spot on the main road could be dangerous. Mr. Hites explained how enforcement but would be challenging, and in Statesville, they would wait until someone had \$3000 in parking tickets and then take them to small claims court. Councilmember Dickson said it is up to the employer to direct employees to not park on the street.

Council agreed to direct staff to consult with an engineer to do a study on parking in Hazelwood.

10. 280 Georgia Avenue (Finance/Fire Dept.) Renovation bids
  - Rob Hites, Town Manager

Town Manager Rob Hites reported that the renovation of the finance department/fire department involves repairing flood damages to the building, bringing the restrooms to ADA standards, and replacing the lighting with LED fixtures. He said the contract will require the bidder to complete the work in 90 days from the date of "Notice to Proceed". Mr. Hites noted that parking lot repairs are not a part of the contract since the asphalt plant may not be in operation during the time specified in the bid document, but the repairs should be covered in the insurance settlement. He added that the lowest bidder, Enterprise G Inc. did not possess a valid NC Contractor's license at the time of bid opening, thereby excluding them from qualifying as a valid bidder.

Councilmember Dickson asked if flood proofing is included in the proposal. Mr. Hites said the flood proofing must be in a separate bid. He said he has been looking for an architect that specializes in flood proofing.

***A motion was made by Councilmember Feichter, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to approve bid for John Burgin Construction Co. for renovation of Finance/Fire Building. The motion passed unanimously.***

- 11. Depot Street Bids
  - Rob Hites, Town Manager

***A motion was made by Councilmember Sutton, seconded by Councilmember Dickson, to approve the low bid of Appalachian Sitework for a bid price of \$174,989.49. The motion passed unanimously.***

**H. COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF**

- 12. Manager's Report
  - Town Manager, Rob Hites

Nothing to report.

- 13. Town attorney
  - Martha Bradley, Town Attorney

Nothing to report.

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

Councilmember Sutton reported that he attended that NCACP meeting. Councilmember Feichter thanked Council for their kind words regarding his mother, Libba Feichter. He said that she served on the Town Board and was extremely passionate about her service to the board and her community. Councilmember Dickson reminded everyone that Saturday is the MLK walk and Monday is the prayer breakfast. He also reported that he recently met the new Public Works Director, Ricky Bourne and is impressed with his expertise. He recommended that everyone checks out Energy Saver NC online regarding home electrification and appliance rebates.

**J. ADJOURN**

***A motion was made by Councilmember Feichter, seconded by Councilmember Sutton, to adjourn at 8:00pm. The motion passed unanimously.***

ATTEST:

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Gary Caldwell, Mayor

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Robert W. Hites, Jr. Town Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Candace Poolton, Town Clerk