

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
Town of Sylva Board of Commissioners  
August 13, 2020

The Town of Sylva Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on August 13, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. hosted in the Board Room of Municipal Hall, 83 Allen Street, Sylva, N.C. and held electronically by Zoom meeting.

**PRESENT:** Lynda Sossamon, Mayor  
Greg McPherson, Commissioner  
Mary Gelbaugh, Commissioner  
Ben Guiney, Commissioner  
David Nestler, Commissioner

Michael Morgan, Town Manager  
Amanda Murajda, Town Clerk  
Eric Ridenour, Town Attorney

**ABSENT:** Barbara Hamilton, Vice-Mayor

Mayor Sossamon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Lynn Bryant (Finance Officer), Chris Hatton (Police Chief), Jake Scott (Public Works Director), Mike Beck (Fire Chief) and Mallary Caraway (Fire Coordinator).

**VISITORS:** Julie Donaldson (Chamber), Kelly Donaldson (Chamber), Sande Lolli (Chamber), Lisa McBride (Main Street Committee President) and John Wermuth.

**AGENDA:** *Commissioner McPherson made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**CONSENT AGENDA:** *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Sossamon announced that the Mayor of Washington, NC had recently passed away from complications of COVID-19.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:** Commissioner Gelbaugh recognized schoolteachers, parents and students for their hard work in adjusting to a different school year. She also noted that more internet service was needed. Commissioner Nestler noted his disappointment in the County Commissioner's decision to leave the Confederate Statute in place. He added that he would like citizens to be aware that since their decision, orange cones and fencing have been installed and police presence occurs 24 hours per day. He also voiced concerns about threats being made online. He would like the board to consider condemning the statute as a public safety threat before someone gets seriously hurt. Nestler requested to add a discussion about this to the next board meeting. Commissioner McPherson congratulated the recent SMHS graduates and commended the school system for their hard work in making it happen during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also expressed his disappointment in Jackson County's decision to keep the Confederate Statute in its current location. Commissioner Guiney gave an update on the COVID-19 pandemic from the hospital. He also discussed the possibility of adding more outdoor seating around town for patrons to use.

**MANAGERS REPORT:** Interim Manager Mike Morgan reported that he and Jake Scott had met with construction firms who are working on recommendations for repairs. Those recommendations should be available in a few weeks. Morgan also noted that the applicants who submitted RFPs for the zoning ordinance update are being reviewed and a recommendation will be available at the next meeting.

**MAIN STREET REPORT:** Julie Donaldson, Kelly Donaldson and Sande Lolli from the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, presented to the board a monthly update on the Main Street Committee. The Chamber was contracted to serve as the Main Street Director. The team updated the board on current statistics, training, brochures, member databases and upcoming events.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Mallary Caraway and Mike Beck reported on call statistics, 2019 including 786 calls, and their upcoming ISO Rating which will be in September.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**MAIN STREET PROGRAM DISCUSSION:** The FY 2020-2021 budget allowed for the Town to enter into a contract with a firm to serve as the Main Street Program Director. The Jackson County Chamber of Commerce was chosen to serve in this capacity. Commissioner McPherson voiced his concerns over the process of hiring for the position. He added that not opening this position to other applicants limited their options for diversity. Commissioner Nestler also voiced his concern with the choice. He believes the Main Street board should have been consulted and would like the process to be changed going forward. Interim Manager Morgan explained that the Main Street board had not previously been involved in the hiring process. Commissioner Gelbaugh reiterated that the Chamber is doing a great job and it is appreciated. However, she added that other boards of the Town request applications to fill vacancies and the same should have been done with the Main Street position. Lisa McBride, current President of the Main Street Sylva Association, noted that the Chamber was doing a good job and the amount of services provided by them were more as an agency than an individual could provide. John Wermuth, former President of MSSA, expressed to the board that he was not pleased with how the hiring process was conducted.

**CARES ACT FUNDING RESOLUTION:** Interim Manager Mike Morgan discussed the CARES Act Funding available from Jackson County. He presented to the board staff's recommendation for using the CARES Act money. The board discussed their ideas of how the money should be used as well. *Commissioner Nestler made a motion to pass the resolution accepting the CARES Act money from Jackson County. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

*Commissioner Guiney made a motion to appropriate \$20,000 from Fund Balance to Non-fixed Capital of respective departments to go ahead and purchase equipment included in the resolution for the Cares Act money. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

**FIRE DEPARTMENT VERIFICATION FROM MUNICIPALITY RESOLUTION:** Interim Manager Morgan stated this resolution is needed from the Board in order for the Fire Department to complete their ISO Rating Process. The inspection will hopefully lower the tax rating to decrease the insurance premiums for homeowners and business owners in the Town. *Commissioner McPherson made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Commissioner Guiney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

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Lynda Sossamon  
Mayor

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Amanda W. Murajda  
Town Clerk