TOWN OF VALDESE
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 5, 2026

The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Monday, October 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall, 102 Massel Avenue SW, Valdese, North Carolina. The Council meeting was live-streamed on YouTube @Townofvaldese. The following were present: Mayor Keith Huffman, Mayor Pro Tem Rexanna Lowman, Councilman Gary Ogle, Councilwoman Heather Ward, Councilwoman Melinda Zimmerman, and Councilwoman Shannon Radabaugh. Also present were: Town Manager Todd Herms, Assistant Town Manager/CFO Bo Weichel, Town Attorney Tim Swanson, Town Clerk Jessica Lail, and various department heads.

Absent: None

A quorum was present.

Mayor Huffman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The invocation was offered by Reverend Matt Matthews of the Waldensian Presbyterian Church, Valdese.

Mayor Huffman led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS
Mayor Huffman stated that the informational items were prepared and provided in advance to the Council to support ongoing decision making. He continued that these materials were available to the general public on the Town of Valdese website, as well as by email sent to individuals who had requested to be added to the Sunshine List.

APPROVED AGENDA
Mayor Huffman noted the required addition of a closed session to the Agenda, pursuant to North Carolina GS 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney retained by the Town in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the Town attorney and the Town Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. Seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
Councilwoman Zimmerman made a motion to approve the minutes for the September 14, 2026 Regular Meeting and the September 14, 2026 Closed Session Meeting. Seconded by Councilwoman Ward. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS:

WILDERNESS GATEWAY STATE TRAIL – VALDESE: PROPOSED ACCEPTANCE OF NINE (9) PARCELS
Beth Heile, Executive Director of the Burke River Trail Association, introduced Shane Prisby, Trails Program Director for Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina, to discuss a proposed opportunity to advance the Wilderness Gateway State Trail through Valdese.

Ms. Heile provided background on the Town's partnership with Foothills Conservancy, which began in 2015 with the acquisition of approximately 300 acres that now comprised Valdese Lakeside Park. Foothills Conservancy secured a $684,000 grant to assist with that acquisition and served as the nonprofit partner for the Wilderness Gateway State Trail. She explained that the proposed trail route would extend from South Mountains State Park, across Mineral Springs Mountain, through the Exit 111 area, and into Children's Park and Valdese Lakeside Park.

Ms. Heile also highlighted the Conservancy's previous acquisition of a 5.63-acre parcel North of Children's Park through Complete the Trails Program funding, which was subsequently transferred to the Town for

recreational use, additional parking, and trail access. She explained that the proposed acceptance of nine (9) parcels along Campbell Avenue would provide a similar opportunity to establish a trail connection between Exit 111 and Children's Park. Ms. Heile then turned the presentation over to Mr. Prisby to explain the proposed acquisition and transfer process.

Mr. Prisby explained that the nine (9) parcels, currently owned by two (2) separate property owners, were located primarily along Micol Creek and Campbell Avenue, with portions extending toward Woodland Street SE. He noted that much of the property was within the floodplain or floodway, with additional development limitations resulting from steep topography and existing sewer infrastructure. As a result, the parcels had limited potential for residential development but presented an opportunity to establish a future trail corridor.

Mr. Prisby outlined the Conservancy's long-term vision of connecting South Mountains State Park to Valdese through Mineral Springs Mountain, Exit 111, Children's Park, and Valdese Lakeside Park. He emphasized that acquiring continuous trail corridors was a lengthy process and that securing available properties was an important step toward establishing such connections. He also highlighted the potential recreational, tourism, and economic development benefits associated with the proposed trail.

Regarding the acquisition process, Mr. Prisby explained that Foothills Conservancy had been working with the property owners and had applied for funding through the State's Complete the Trails Program. If funding was awarded and the transactions were completed, Foothills Conservancy would purchase the properties, conduct the necessary due diligence, and subsequently transfer ownership to the Town. He noted that the funding would require deed restrictions preserving the properties for future state trail development.

Mr. Prisby also addressed concerns regarding long-term maintenance and the removal of the properties from the tax base. He explained that the Burke River Trail Association and Friends of the Valdese Rec had volunteered to assist with future trail stewardship and maintenance. He further noted that trail construction would not occur until a meaningful, connected trail segment could be established and that the properties' existing physical limitations significantly restrict their development potential.

Mr. Prisby concluded by requesting that the Council formally agree to accept the nine (9) parcels should Foothills Conservancy successfully complete the acquisitions and transfer process. He then offered to answer any questions from the Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman expressed support for the proposal but requested clarification regarding the responsibilities that would be expected of the Valdese Recreation Department. She noted that these responsibilities must be further evaluated and established prior to closing. Mr. Prisby confirmed Burke River Trail’s and Friends of the Valdese Rec’s intention to maintain the property and explained that Foothills Conservancy, as the designated organization for development of the Wilderness Gateway State Trail, would remain an ongoing partner and resource for the Town throughout trail development and into the future.

Councilman Ogle inquired about two (2) additional parcels shown on the map that were not included in the proposed acquisition and asked how the trail would connect across those properties.

Mr. Prisby explained that securing the nine (9) parcels would provide an opportunity to approach the remaining property owners about potential acquisitions or trail easements. He noted that the current acquisition was somewhat time-sensitive, as the participating property owners would like to complete the transaction within the current tax year.

Councilman Ogle asked whether the additional property owners had been contacted. Ms. Heile explained that the two (2) parcels were owned by the same family, who were currently out of state. She noted that the family's residence was located considerably uphill from the proposed trail corridor along Micol Creek and that the other parcel had significant development limitations. She stated that efforts were underway to contact the owners and expressed optimism about reaching an agreement.

Councilman Ogle then asked how the trail would be affected if the property owners declined to participate. Ms. Heile explained that the project would wait until the owners were willing to participate, emphasizing that property owners would not be forced to accommodate the trail. She reiterated the importance of securing the nine (9) currently available parcels while continuing to pursue additional connections as opportunities

arose. Mr. Prisby reiterated that the Wilderness Gateway State Trail was a long-term project and that Foothills Conservancy was committed to working patiently with willing property owners to establish the necessary trail connections over time.

Councilwoman Ward asked whether the Council was being requested to make a formal decision that evening. Town Manager Herms clarified that staff was seeking a consensus from the Council regarding the proposed acceptance of the properties. He explained that, contingent upon the Council's support, a formal resolution would be prepared for consideration at the next Council meeting, either as a consent agenda item or a separate action item.

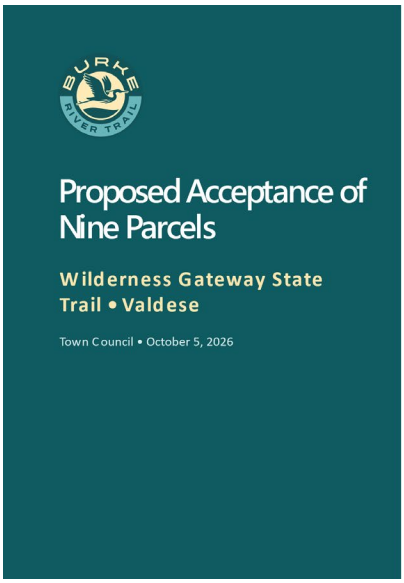
Councilwoman Ward expressed support for the proposed trail development but emphasized the importance of allowing the public an opportunity to voice any questions, concerns, or support regarding the project. She also stressed the need to ensure that the properties and future trail would be properly maintained.

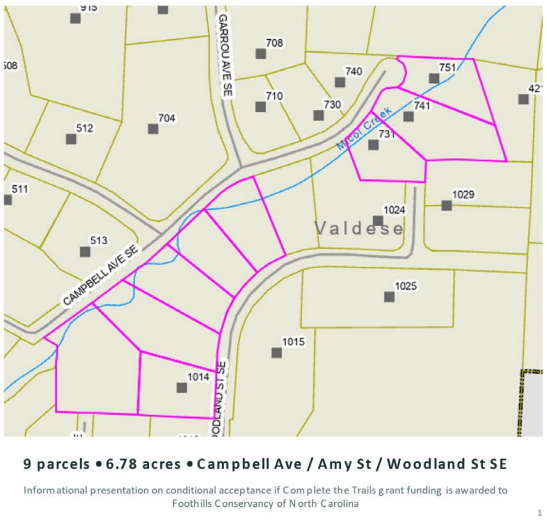
Ms. Heile explained that the property owners hoped to complete the transaction before the end of the year for tax purposes and were seeking confirmation of the Council's willingness to accept the properties before proceeding with the formal paperwork in November. She also reiterated that Friends of the Valdese Rec and the Burke River Trail Association would remain involved in the long-term maintenance and stewardship of the proposed trail, as they had with Valdese Lakeside Park.

Councilwoman Ward asked whether the restrictions on future development would apply only to the portion of the property occupied by the trail or to the entire parcel. Town Attorney Swanson explained that the restrictions would depend on the extent of the property interest acquired. He continued that if only a portion of a property were acquired through an easement, the restrictions would apply to that portion, adding however, that if the entire parcel were acquired, the restrictions would apply to the entire property.

Mr. Rapp clarified that the proposed acquisition would include the entirety of all nine (9) parcels, with a combined tax value of approximately $100,000. He noted that the properties contributed relatively little to the Town's tax base and agreed with the assessment that their steep topography would make development difficult, requiring substantial grading and site preparation.

Ms. Heile added that the owners of six (6) of the parcels had previously attempted to market their properties for sale but encountered difficulty due to their limited development potential. She explained that a realtor subsequently contacted her about possible conservation opportunities, prompting her to reach out to the other property owner, who had experienced similar difficulties selling the land. She emphasized that the proposed acquisition involved properties with limited development potential rather than prime developable land.





The Decision Before Council

A conditional commitment now identifies Property ownership & disposition before property acquisition occurs.

Acceptance of 9 parcels

- Six Dickey parcels (adjoining)
- Three Byland parcels (adjoining)
- **Total Acquisition Area = 6.78 acres (+/-)**

Conditioned on a NC "Complete the Trails" (CTP) grant award

Acquisition would move forward only if Foothills Conservancy (FCNC) receives Complete the Trails funding and acquisition conditions are satisfied or the parties make a direct donation.

Final details pending (* if CTP grant awarded**)**

Due Diligence Period -Title review, CTP Program-required Deed Restrictions, Environmental Risk Assessment,
Property Management Agreement (proposed) with BRTA? for review by the Town Manager and Town Attorney.

Proposed Council action

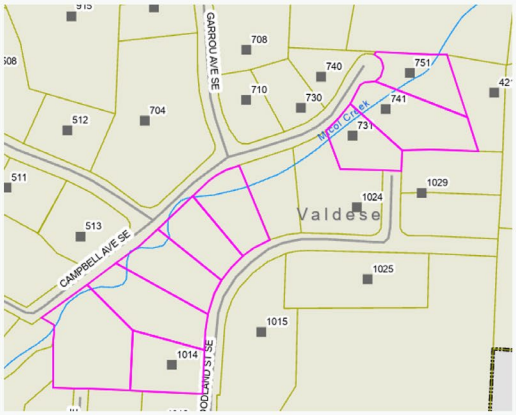
Conditional acceptance of the nine acquisition parcels (6.78 acres total +/-) for public trail / passive recreation use if **CTP** grant is awarded to FCNC, pending satisfactory legal and property due diligence reviews.

Need now ? .. before CTP awards are announced.

Landowners have year-end (2026) timing considerations, and the next regular Council meeting would be November 2.

The Nine Parcels

A connected Micol Creek corridor along Campbell Avenue SE, Amy Street SE and Woodland Street SE.



Dickey / Garrou — 6 parcels • 4.68 acres

0 Campbell Ave SE (4)
0 Amy St (1)
1014 Woodland St SE (1)

Byland — 3 parcels • 2.10 acres

731 Campbell Ave SE
741 Campbell Ave SE
751 Campbell Ave SE

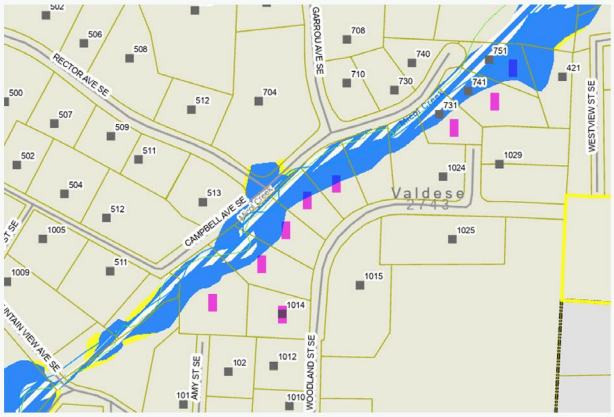
Proposed long-term use

Micol Creek – green space corridor conservation, floodplain protection, and future ***Wilderness Gateway State Trail.***

The Nine Parcels

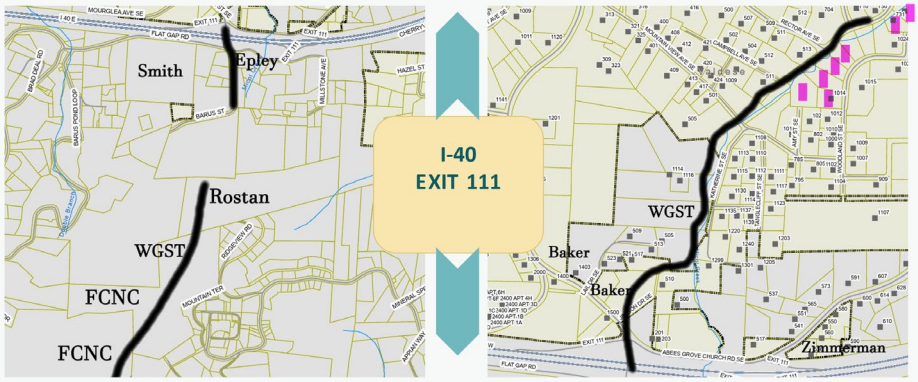
Flood plain along Micol Creek

Subject Parcels



A Strategic Link Through Valdese

The nine parcels sit within a larger planned WGST connection between South Mountains, Exit 111, and Valdese. Proposed Route



South Mountains / WGST corridor

Toward Valdese / Children's Park

Wilderness Gateway State Trail: Official State Vision

NC State Parks/Trails Program 's three pillars: conservation, recreation, and tourism benefits



Planned use: Hiking, with some horseback riding, biking, and paddling sections

Existing WGST: Lakeside Park's 2-mile Valdese Greenway – first miles designated by the State
Next Up: Section on Micol Creek Parcel and Sidepath on Lake Rhodhiss Drive

Conservation

Protect riparian and other important habitats and connect larger natural areas.

Recreation

Create pathways and walkable connections that provide recreation and exercise where people live and work.

Tourism

Connect scenic areas and downtowns to attract visitors from across North Carolina and beyond.

Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina is the recognized nonprofit partner for WGST under the Complete the Trails Program

Two Practical Council Considerations

Maintenance responsibilities and the relationship to potential residential tax base can be addressed explicitly.

1 Maintenance

Proposed operating approach

- Burke River Trail Association and Friends of the Valdese Rec provide volunteer trail maintenance
- Trail work and stewardship can be coordinated with Valdese Parks & Recreation

Council can require a written maintenance understanding as part of the final transfer process.

2 Housing / Tax Base

Current development context

- The parcels follow Micol Creek and are substantially affected by floodplain conditions
- Local real-estate assessments provided to project partners have described the lots as poorly suited for residential development
- The landowners are choosing trail / open-space use

Planning/GIS staff can verify floodplain and buildability information before closing.

Valdese Has Already Used This Partnership Model

Micol Creek provides a recent local example of Complete the Trails funding leading to Town ownership.

1	2	3	4	5
LANDOWNER	FCNC	PARTNERS	TOWN	PUBLIC USE
Property identified for public trail / park use	Acquired property using Complete the Trails funding	Worked through due diligence and transfer	Valdese accepted 5.63 acres into public ownership	WGST corridor + Children's Park open space

September 2026: Foothills Conservancy completed transfer of 5.63 acres along Micol Creek to Valdese for public recreation and a future WGST connection.

Future Context: Exit 111 as a Western NC Gateway

A long-range concept that helps explain why preserving the trail corridor now may matter later.



WNC Gateway
Visitor Center/Rest Area

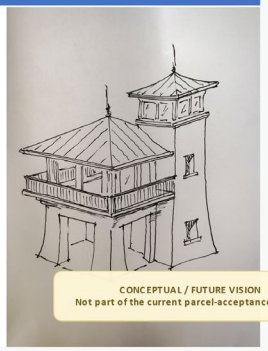
WEST OF I-40 EXIT 111, VISITORS WILL FIND

- **7 State Parks**
- **6 State Trails**
- **1 State Natural Area**
- 1 State Museum - Mountain Gateway Museum – Old Fort
- 2 State Historic Sites - Vance Birthplace & Thomas Wolfe Memorial



WILDERNESS GATEWAY STATE TRAIL WILL CROSS EXIT 111

Trail to Valdese



CONCEPTUAL / FUTURE VISION
Not part of the current parcel-acceptance action

What Conditional Acceptance Would Accomplish

It would establish a clear path forward while preserving normal legal and due-diligence review.

1	**Clarify the final owner**	FCNC and the landowners would know the Town of Valdese intends to accept the properties if the grant is awarded or if properties are donated.
2	**Keep the grant process moving**	Complete the Trails funding can be used for acquisition and eligible transaction costs if awarded. FCNC's grant application requested $24,213 for property acquisition and $24,600 for due diligence transaction costs (survey, attorney fees, title examination & closing costs)
3	**Protect a planned trail corridor**	The nine parcels would be available for passive recreation and future WGST development.
4	**Allow due diligence safeguards before closing**	Town staff and counsel can verify title, floodplain/buildability of the 9 parcels, deed terms, and arrange for property management with the assistance of nonprofit partners.

Possible motion: conditionally accept the nine identified parcels if the Complete the Trails grant is awarded or if all parcels are donated, subject to satisfactory legal review and due diligence.

Town Manager Herms asked whether the Council was agreeable to bringing a formal resolution regarding the proposed acceptance of the nine (9) parcels back for consideration at the November Council meeting. The Council reached a consensus to proceed with bringing the resolution forward for formal consideration.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS:

APPROVED – HB 162 – TEXT AMENDMENT (UDO)

Mayor Huffman called the public hearing to order at 6:20 p.m.

Mr. Rapp presented the following:

"Good evening Mayor, Council. This first public hearing tonight is for a proposed text amendment to the Town's Unified Development Ordinance regarding off-street parking.

This amendment is being brought forward in response to House Bill 162, which was enacted as Session Law 2026-39. Beginning January 1, 2027, State law will prohibit local development regulations from requiring a minimum number of off-street parking spaces.

While the legislation eliminates the Town's ability to require a minimum number of parking spaces, it does not eliminate our ability to regulate parking areas themselves. The Town may continue to regulate matters such as access and circulation, landscaping, screening, and maintenance. The legislation also does not affect off-street loading requirements.

Both of the Town's zoning ordinances currently establish minimum parking requirements for a variety of uses. For example, the ordinances currently require one-and-a-half spaces per multifamily unit, and establish minimum ratios for commercial, industrial, office, warehouse, and other uses based upon square footage.

The primary purpose of the proposed amendment is therefore to remove those numerical parking minimums while retaining the Town's existing standards governing the design and construction of parking areas that are provided. Within the UDO, Section 5.4 would be renamed from "Off-Street Parking Requirements" to "Off-Street Parking Standards."

If a property owner or developer chooses to provide parking, however, that parking would still be required to comply with the applicable Town standards. The overall result is that the Town would no longer dictate how many parking spaces a development must provide, but would continue to regulate the safety, design, appearance, and functionality of parking areas when they are provided.

The Planning Board reviewed the proposed amendments at its August 17 meeting and unanimously recommended approval.

Noticing requirements have been met.

I'll be happy to answer any questions Council may have."

Councilwoman Ward asked whether parking decks would still be permitted under the proposed amendment. Mr. Rapp clarified that property owners could continue to provide as much parking as they desired, but the Town could no longer require a minimum number of off-street parking spaces.

Councilwoman Ward suggested that the Town consider constructing a parking deck and potentially charging for its use as a means of generating revenue and addressing parking concerns. She noted that on-street parking had become an issue in several residential neighborhoods, particularly within her Ward. Mr. Rapp acknowledged these concerns and expressed his willingness to explore potential solutions to help alleviate parking issues.

Councilwoman Zimmerman asked how the proposed amendment would affect developments that had already received zoning approval with required parking spaces. Mr. Rapp explained that existing approvals would remain valid and developers could proceed with their previously approved plans. However,

developers would also have the option to submit revised plans and amend their zoning permits to remove parking spaces that were previously required under the Town's ordinance.

Mayor Huffman opened the floor to Public Comment, none was provided.

Mayor Huffman closed the public hearing at 6:24 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman made a motion to adopt the Ordinance Amending Sections 2.9.3, 2.10, 4.2.1, 4.3, 4.4.1, 5.4, and 11.2 of the UDO and to adopt the attached consistency statement. Seconded by Councilwoman Zimmerman. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

APPROVED – HB 162 – TEXT AMENDMENT (2024 ZONING ORDINANCE)

Mayor Huffman called the public hearing to order at 6:26 p.m.

Mr. Rapp presented the following:

“The second public hearing is for the corresponding amendment to the Town’s 2024 Zoning Ordinance.

The purpose and effect of this amendment are substantially the same as the UDO amendment we just discussed. It removes the Town’s minimum off-street parking requirements while retaining the standards that apply to parking areas when parking is provided. Most of the changes are essentially identical to those from the previous hearing.

There are a few differences simply because of the way the older Zoning Ordinance is structured. Otherwise, the intent is the same: no Town-required minimum number of parking spaces, while retaining the Town’s applicable standards for parking that is provided.

The Planning Board also unanimously recommended approval of these changes at its August 17 meeting. Noticing requirements have been met.

I’ll be happy to answer any additional questions.”

Mayor Huffman opened the floor to Public Comment, none was provided.

Mayor Huffman closed the public hearing at 6:27 p.m.

Councilwoman Zimmerman made a motion to adopt the Ordinance Amending Articles D, E, F, and G of the 2024 Zoning Ordinance and to adopt the attached consistency statement. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

APPROVED – VALDESE BLUFFS AGREEMENT/MOU

Mayor Huffman called the public hearing to order at 6:29 p.m.

Town Manager Herms explained that the Valdese Bluffs Development Agreement had previously been presented to the Council but had since undergone additional revisions following negotiations between the Town, Burke County, and the developer. Following consultation with Town Attorney Swanson, staff determined that the revised agreement should be brought back before the Council to ensure consistency with the County's version and clarify the terms of the agreement.

Town Manager Herms noted that one significant change was that the actual cost came in approximately $48,000 below the original estimate. He emphasized that the purpose of bringing the agreement back before the Council was to ensure that all parties were working from the same terms and to prevent any future misunderstandings.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman expressed that she liked that the agreement contained financial protections for both the Town and the County.

Mayor Huffman opened the floor to Public Comment, none was provided.

Mayor Huffman closed the public hearing at 6:30 p.m.

Councilman Ogle made a motion to approve and ratify the Development Agreement between Burke County, the Town of Valdese, and Natural Land Alliance Inc., and the Memorandum of Understanding, subject to any final revisions by the Town Attorney. Seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENT
Town Clerk Lail shared that there were no sign-ups for public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA: (enacted by one motion)

APPROVED – LEASE AGREEMENT AT OLD ROCK SCHOOL WITH VEDIC

CALLED FOR PUBLIC HEARING – HOUSE BILL 372 – TEXT AMENDMENT (UDO)

CALLED FOR PUBLIC HEARING – HOUSE BILL 372 – TEXT AMENDMENT (2024 ZONING ORDINANCE)

End Consent Agenda

ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA: None.

Mayor Huffman asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Councilwoman Zimmerman. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT – WATER PLANT
Eric Wilson, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent, presented the Water Department's State of the Department Report. Mr. Wilson stated that during his five (5) years with the Town, numerous repairs and improvements had been completed at the Water Treatment Plant and its associated facilities. These improvements included upgrades to motor control cabinets for the raw and finished water pumps, replacement of valves and valve operators for all six (6) filters, upgrades to filter controls, and improvements to booster stations, including new controls and programmable logic controllers.

Mr. Wilson also highlighted infrastructure maintenance efforts, including repairs to the access road at the raw water pump station and removal of hazardous trees near the water storage tank and raw water pump station. He noted that several aging valves throughout the system had been repaired or replaced, with additional work continuing as funding became available. He explained that these improvements would assist with system isolation and maintenance during the upcoming approximately $5 million grant-funded upgrade project.

Mr. Wilson reported that the department was fully staffed with nine (9) employees, including eight (8) North Carolina-licensed operators. He expressed confidence in the department's progress and emphasized continued collaboration with other Town departments. He concluded by stating that ongoing improvements were intended to restore the plant's operational capabilities and allow it to reliably produce up to twelve (12) million gallons of water per day.

Mayor Huffman expressed appreciation for Mr. Wilson and the Water Department staff, commending their efforts to repair, upgrade, and improve the Town's water infrastructure. He emphasized the essential role of the Water Department in providing a reliable water supply to residents and thanked the department for its continued dedication and hard work.

Councilwoman Ward shared observations from her attendance at the North Carolina League of Municipalities Legislative Summit, noting that aging water infrastructure and the increasing costs associated with its maintenance and replacement were significant concerns for municipalities across the state and

nation. She emphasized that rising water system costs were not unique to Valdese and expressed appreciation for the Water Department staff's efforts to maintain a safe and reliable drinking water supply.

Mr. Wilson reiterated the importance of maintaining water and wastewater infrastructure, noting the significant costs associated with repairing and replacing aging systems. Town Manager Herms added that substantial increases in the cost of treatment chemicals had further contributed to the financial challenges facing the department.

Councilwoman Zimmerman commended Mr. Wilson and Town staff for their teamwork and collaborative efforts to maintain the Town's water system. She acknowledged the competitive nature of securing grant funding and expressed appreciation for the staff members involved in identifying and pursuing funding opportunities. She emphasized the complexity of the Water Treatment Plant's operations and the essential role of its employees in providing reliable water service to the community.

Town Manager Herms emphasized the importance of the Water Department's work in ensuring that residents had access to safe, reliable drinking water. He noted that maintaining this level of water quality required considerable knowledge and expertise and expressed his appreciation for Mr. Wilson and his staff.

APPROVED – BUDGET AMENDMENT – WWTP ELECTRICAL REHAB FOR AERATOR PROJECT

Mr. Weichel explained that the project began approximately three (3) years ago and was initially intended to replace three (3) mechanical aerators dating back to the early 1980s. He noted that funding for the aerator replacements was included in the FY 2025–2026 budget.

Mr. Weichel explained that while the electrical components were functional during the initial planning stages, the soft starters, wiring, and electrical feeders serving the aerators had since deteriorated and now required replacement before the new equipment could be placed into operation. He reported that the project was approximately 95% complete and that the electrical improvements represented the final step necessary to bring the aerators online.

Mr. Weichel requested a budget amendment of $48,800 from the Utility Fund to complete the necessary electrical rehabilitation work.

Councilwoman Zimmerman asked whether the improvements would allow the aeration basin to return to operation. Assistant Town Manager Weichel confirmed that the basin would be operational upon the completion of the project.

Valdese Town Council Meeting — Monday, October 5, 2026

Budget Amendment # 1-30

Subject: WWTP Electrical rehab for Aerator project

Proposed Action:
BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the Town of Valdese that, pursuant to Section 15 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following amendment is made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027:

Section I:
The following revenues available to the Town will be increased:

Account	Description	Decrease/ Debit	Increase/ Credit
30.3990.000	Utlity Fund Balance Appr.		48,800
	Total	$0	$48,800

Amounts appropriated for expenditure are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
30.8110.740	Capital Outlay	48,800	
	Total	$48,800	$0

Section II:
Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board, to the Budget Officer and the Finance Officer for their direction.

Councilwoman Zimmerman made a motion to approve Budget Amendment 1-30. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

APPROVED – BUDGET AMENDMENT – VALDESE COMMUNITY CENTER TREE REMOVAL

Mr. Weichel presented a proposed budget amendment for tree removal at the Valdese Community Center. He explained that several large trees located within the parking lot had deteriorated, resulting in falling limbs that had damaged vehicles and raised safety concerns.

Mr. Weichel stated that an arborist evaluated the trees and recommended removal rather than trimming, as the deterioration was likely to continue. He noted that the Town intended to replace the trees with smaller varieties in the future. The estimated cost of removal was $7,800. Although the project was initially being considered for the next budget cycle, recent incidents involving falling limbs prompted staff to recommend proceeding sooner to address potential safety hazards.

Town Manager Herms expressed support for proceeding with the tree removal, noting that the potential cost of property damage or personal injury could significantly exceed the proposed $7,800 expenditure. He emphasized the importance of addressing the safety concerns identified by the arborist before further incidents occurred.

Valdese Town Council Meeting — Monday, October 5, 2026

Budget Amendment # 3-10

Subject: Tree removal at Valdese Community Center parking lot

Proposed Action:
BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the Town of Valdese that, pursuant to Section 15 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following amendment is made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027:

Section I:
The following revenues available to the Town will be increased:

Account	Description	Decrease/ Debit	Increase/ Credit
10.3990.000	General Fund Balance Appr.		7,800
	Total	$0	$7,800

Amounts appropriated for expenditure are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
10.6200.150	Maintenance & Repair Buildings	7,800	
	Total	$7,800	$0

Section II:
Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board, to the Budget Officer and the Finance Officer for their direction.

Councilwoman Zimmerman made a motion to approve Budget Amendment 3-10. Seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

APPROVED – CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – CHILDREN'S PARK UPGRADES

Mr. Weichel presented a proposed Capital Project Ordinance Amendment for the Children's Park Upgrades Project. He explained that the project ordinance was originally adopted in May 2026 and was funded entirely through donations and fundraising efforts by Friends of the Valdese Rec. The proposed amendment would recognize an additional $9,320 raised since May 2026 and make those funds available for further park improvements.

Valdese Town Council Meeting — Monday, October 5, 2026

Capital Project Ordinance Amendment # 1-33

Subject: Childrens Park Upgrades

Proposed Action:
BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the Town of Valdese that, pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the capital project ordinance for various capital projects funded from a variety of sources is hereby amended as follows.

Section I:
Revenues available to the Town to complete the projects are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Decrease/ Debit	Increase/ Credit
33.3900.001	Grant-Friends of Valdese Rec		$9,320.00
	Total	$0.00	$9,320.00

Amounts appropriated for capital projects are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
33.6200.000	Upgrades	$9,320.00	
	Total	$9,320.00	$0.00

Section II:
Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board, to the Budget Officer and the Finance Officer for their direction.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman made a motion to approve Capital Project Ordinance Amendment 1-33. Seconded by Councilwoman Ward. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

PROJECT UPDATES

LENOIR-VALDESE WATER INTERCONNECT PROJECT

Mr. Weichel provided an update on the Lenoir Water Interconnect Project. He reported that the project's Public Water Supply permit application and Duke Energy line crossing application had been submitted and were under review. Plans and specifications were also being finalized for submission to NCDOT for an encroachment agreement and to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) for erosion and sedimentation control approval.

Mr. Weichel further explained that easements along the proposed water line route in Caldwell County were being developed, and the City of Lenoir's right-of-way consultant had begun the easement acquisition process. He noted that the project remained primarily in the permitting and easement acquisition stages.

BERRYTOWN WATERLINE PROJECT

Mr. Weichel provided an update on the Berrytown Waterline Project, reporting that all necessary permits had been obtained. He explained that the project was awaiting completion of income surveys by the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to identify qualifying connections within the low- to moderate-income service area. Once completed, the final bid documents could be prepared, with the project expected to be advertised for construction bids within the coming weeks.

Mr. Weichel explained that the bidding process would remain open for approximately 30 days, followed by bid evaluation, contractor selection, contract execution, and a pre-construction conference. He anticipated that a construction contract would be presented to the Council within the next two (2) to three (3) months, with construction expected to begin around February or March 2027.

SEWER LINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT
Mr. Weichel provided an update on the Sewer Line Replacement Project, reporting that the project had received approval for its sewer extension permit, while the Public Water Supply and erosion and sedimentation control permits remained under review by the NCDEQ. He noted that easement mapping was also underway for several properties where proposed sewer improvements would extend beyond existing easement boundaries.

Mr. Weichel explained that once all necessary permits and easements were secured, the project would be advertised for construction bids, followed by contractor selection, contract execution, and a pre-construction conference. Construction was anticipated to begin in early spring 2027. He acknowledged that the permitting process could be lengthy but emphasized that the project continued to make progress.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman asked for clarification regarding the anticipated construction start date. Mr. Weichel indicated that construction could begin around March, April, or May 2027, depending on the completion of permitting and other outstanding approvals. He noted that the project timeline currently depended on third-party reviews and that staff would have greater control over scheduling once the necessary permits were obtained.

Mayor Huffman asked about the anticipated duration of construction. Mr. Weichel estimated that the overall project would take approximately twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months to complete. Town Manager Herms clarified that the project included several utility improvements beyond sewer line replacement and that staff intended to prioritize the sewer improvements during construction.

MANAGER'S REPORT
Town Manager Todd Herms reported:

Numerous events are scheduled throughout the end of the year. An Event Calendar is included in the reading materials for your review and provides details on upcoming activities.

Next Regular Council meeting scheduled for Monday, November 2, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Council Chambers, Valdese Town Hall

Town Manager Herms expressed his appreciation for the hard work and dedication of Town staff across all departments throughout the summer. He emphasized the strong sense of teamwork among employees and department heads, noting their willingness to assist one another and take on responsibilities outside their regular duties. He commended staff for their continued commitment to serving the community and encouraged the Council and public to recognize their efforts.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:
Councilwoman Ward thanked the Police Department and others involved in responding to a recent incident involving a loose donkey in Town, noting the unusual situations that Town personnel were sometimes called upon to handle.

Councilwoman Ward also expressed appreciation to the Valdese Lions Club for donating a bench near Temple Field. She noted that the bench was made from recycled plastic bottles and would provide additional seating for spectators attending football games. She thanked the Lions Club for its continued contributions to the community.

Councilman Ogle gave a special shout-out to the "mule wrestlers of the Valdese Police Department," recognizing Sergeant Michael Branch, Officer Adam Marlowe, and Officer Tyler Watson, along with Animal Control Officer Sean Link, for their efforts in safely capturing and returning the loose donkey to its owner. He thanked them for their assistance and dedication.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman encouraged continued community support for the Valdese Police Department's Blue Santa program, which provided Christmas assistance to students at Valdese Elementary School. She also announced the Old Colony Players' upcoming production of Disney's Descendants: The Musical, scheduled for October 22–24 at 7:30 p.m. and October 25 at 2:30 p.m. Additionally, she highlighted the organization's fundraising campaign to upgrade the Valdese Amphitheatre in preparation for the 60th

anniversary of the historic outdoor drama From This Day Forward in 2027. She encouraged the community to support these efforts.

Town Manager Herms wished Mayor Pro Tem Lowman a Happy Birthday.

Councilwoman Zimmerman reflected on the 250th anniversary celebration held at the Old Rock School in late August. She commended Morrissa, Annie, Town staff, and community volunteers for organizing the event, particularly recognizing those who portrayed historical figures. She also praised Dr. Lane's photography presentation, which featured images highlighting American history and the Valdese community. She expressed her appreciation to everyone involved in making the event a success.

Councilwoman Radabaugh encouraged residents to support local youth athletics by attending recreational and school sporting events, noting the positive impact that community support had on young athletes. She also expressed appreciation to Beth Heile for her continued dedication to the Town's parks and trails and thanked Eric Wilson for his presentation on the Water Department.

Mayor Huffman expressed his sincere appreciation to the Valdese Police and Fire Departments for allowing him to spend time with their personnel over the previous two (2) weeks and gain firsthand insight into their daily operations and the important services they provided to the community.

CLOSED SESSION

At 6:57 p.m., Mayor Pro Tem Lowman made a motion to go into Closed Session under NC General Statute 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney retained by the Town in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the Town Attorney and the Town Council, which privilege is hereby acknowledged. Seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

At 7:07 p.m., Councilwoman Ward made a motion to go out of Closed Session, seconded by Councilwoman Zimmerman. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:08 p.m., there being no further business to come before Council, Councilwoman Zimmerman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh. The vote was unanimous.

_____ _____

Town Clerk Mayor

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