

**TOWN OF VALDESE  
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 2, 2026**

The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Monday, March 2, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall, 102 Massel Avenue SW, Valdese, North Carolina. 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:

A quorum was present.

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

Pastor Tamika Garrison offered the invocation and Mayor Huffman led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENT** Town Clerk Lail shared that no one had signed up for public comment.

**CONSENT AGENDA: (enacted by one motion)**

**APPROVED SPECIAL CALLED MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2026**

**APPROVED BUDGET AMENDMENT – PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS**

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
35.3480.004	Sale of Properties		\$60,815.68
35.3480.001	ABC Distributions		\$51,006.25
	Total	\$0.00	\$111,821.93

Amounts appropriated for capital projects are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
35.5100.040	A&E Services		\$163,178.07
35.5300.200	Design Build Services	\$275,000.00	
	Total	\$275,000.00	\$163,178.07

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.

**APPROVED CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – UTILITY LINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

**MARCH 2, 2026, MB#33**

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
56.3000.000	Utility Fund Transfer		\$354,000.00
56.3000.100	Loan Proceeds		\$1,365,000.00
	Total	\$0.00	\$1,719,000.00

Amounts appropriated for capital projects are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
56.8120.400	Construction	\$1,719,000.00	
	Total	\$1,719,000.00	\$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.

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, 2025:

Section I:

The following revenues available to the Town will be increased:

Account	Description	Decrease/ Debit	Increase/ Credit
30.3970.812	Loan Proceeds	1,365,000.00	
	Total	1,365,000.00	0.00

Amounts appropriated for expenditure are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
30.8120.740	Capital Outlay		1,365,000.00
	Total	0.00	1,365,000.00

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.

**APPROVED REQUEST FROM WALDENSIAN STYLE WINES TO SELL WINE AT ANNUAL EVENTS**



Eddie & Brenda Zimmerman  
Waldensian Style Wines  
2340 Quail Run  
Connelly Springs, NC 28612

Town of Valdese,

Waldensian Style Wines respectfully requests to sell wine at the following events:

- Craft Market – Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026 from 9am-4pm behind the Old Rock School
- Independence Day Celebration on July 4, 2026 from 5:00pm until 11:00pm  
(In the designated area in the 100 block of West Main Street in Downtown Valdese)
- Annual Waldensian Festival
  - August 7, 2026 from 5pm until 11pm
  - August 8, 2026 from 12pm until 11pm(In the designated area in the 100 block of West Main Street in Downtown Valdese)
- Christmas in November Craft & Gift Show located at the Old Rock School (Waldensian Room)
  - November 12, 2026 from 4pm until 8pm
  - November 13, 2026 from 9am until 2pm

All our wines are listed as North Carolina wines. Waldensian Style Wines does have a Special Event permit and will follow the guidelines enforced by the North Carolina ABC Commission. Waldensian Style Wines – Dolce Vita, Inc. maintains a Liquor Liability Policy with the Town of Valdese listed as additional insured for all events listed above.

Sincerely,

Eddie Zimmerman  
Waldensian Style Wines Owner  
828-403-1414

**APPROVED LEASE AGREEMENT AT THE OLD ROCK SCHOOL WITH DR. KYLE BARNES** Lease agreement with Dr. Kyle Barnes for rental space at the Old Rock School, in the amount of \$60.00 per month.

**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 Councilwoman Zimmerman to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**PRESENTATION FROM VEDIC** Ms. Telisha Goossens, Loan Officer for VEDIC, stepped forward to the podium. Ms. Goossens shared that the VEDIC office was located in downtown Valdese, inside the Old Rock School. Ms. Goossens identified that VEDIC used to be located in the Town Hall, but that they had since moved, and were loving their new space. Ms. Goossens disclosed that VEDIC had three (3) staff members, Kerri Poteat, Executive Director, Eddie McGimsey, Business Development, and herself, Telisha Goossens, Loan Officer.

Ms. Goossens moved forward to give a history of VEDIC, stating VEDIC was created over ten (10) years ago, and worked with small businesses and entrepreneurs in North Carolina to help them realize their dreams by providing access to capital and trusted guidance for startups or current businesses.

Ms. Goossens discussed the impact of VEDIC on the local economy, noting that VEDIC to date had produced 210 total loans, totaling \$10,708,018, which were loaned to small businesses in the State of North Carolina. Ms. Goossens continued that VEDIC strived to create and retain jobs in the local, small business, market, stating that in Burke County alone, VEDIC had created or retained 870 jobs. Ms. Goossens

mentioned other counties that VEDIC had been able to assist in, citing Mitchell County as its most recent partner. Ms. Goossens shared that total jobs which had been created or retained by VEDIC presently totaled over 1,100.

Ms. Goossens stated that small business loans were generally a higher risk area, and proudly shared that VEDIC's default rate was 3.8%. Ms. Goossens expressed that VEDIC strived to partner with the small businesses to help see them succeed with additional resources, not only by offering access to funding, but by partnering with them post-loan to ensure success. Ms. Goossens disclosed that since VEDIC's inception, their loan loss had only been 1.4%, which represented \$152,086, out of the over \$10,000,000 in loans they had created and generated.

Ms. Goossens moved to discuss the origins of VEDIC's loan funds. Ms. Goossens stated that VEDIC had received a Burke Golden Leaf grant, which totaled \$250,000 in original loan funds. Ms. Goossens continued that the Total Loan fund for this particular source of funding now totaled \$919,481, citing that VEDIC regenerated this Grant into additional funds. Ms. Goossens then spoke about the Valdese Rural Center Revolving Loan Fund, noting that this was a grant from the Rural Center, which originally totaled \$125,000, and was intended only for businesses within Valdese. Ms. Goossens shared that his Fund had revolved to a total of \$492,285.

Ms. Goossens shared that VEDIC focused on minority lending, including female populations, populations of various ethnicities, veteran populations, etc. Ms. Goossens disclosed that 51% of all loans went to minority populations, which totaled \$6,033,189.18 in loans.

Ms. Goossens shared another funding source, which was the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grand Revolving Loan Fund. Ms. Goossens stated that VEDIC had received \$500,000 in ARC grants, and had so far loaned \$355,000 of those monies out, throughout 37 loans.

Ms. Goossens stated that VEDIC's current loan portfolio consisted of 61 loans, noting that VEDIC's three (3) staff members serviced all of those loans and business owners. Ms. Goossens disclosed that the present outstanding balance of those 61 loans totaled \$3,164,240, from an original loan amount of \$3,779,250

Mr. McGimsey shared he was responsible for collaborating with the aforementioned 61 borrowers, and that he provided two (2) services, which included keeping up with loan payments and screening applicants. Mr. McGimsey stated he was the first one within VEDIC to identify individuals who may need help or who may be in distress, noting that there were a lot of individuals who met those thresholds during COVID. Mr. McGimsey continued that, during COVID, VEDIC granted monies, which they had on hand, for emergency loans to individuals/businesses who were working with their banks, or trying to get grants. Mr. McGimsey stated that these emergency loans were made with the understanding that once those individuals/businesses received the bank loans or grants, they would immediately repay VEDIC. Mr. McGimsey disclosed that all emergency loans were fully recovered.

Mr. McGimsey stated that VEDIC borrowed most its money from the USDA, at 1% interest, and then relented it. Mr. McGimsey expressed that VEDIC had a good access to capital, which they could loan, but that they were still responsible for the repayment themselves. Mr. McGimsey noted that most of the loans VEDIC received were over a thirty (30) year period, while the loans they made were generally on five (5) to ten (10) year terms. Mr. McGimsey continued that this allowed VEDIC to work with clients who potentially struggled to make timely payments.

Mr. McGimsey pointed out that the majority of VEDIC's borrowers had an approximate credit score of 600, noting that this was an at-risk group. Mr. McGimsey expressed that VEDIC did not compete with banks and that it required candidates to have a rejection from a bank, prior to proceeding with any business loans.

Mr. McGimsey identified VEDIC's service area, stating it was all rural counties, which included Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Iredell, McDowell, and Rutherford.

Mr. McGimsey identified that VEDIC had updated its application procedure to now allow for electronic applications and split its application into a two (2) step process, a pre-application and a full loan application.

Mr. McGimsey communicated that he oversaw the pre-application process, identifying viable borrowers before moving them forward to a full loan application.

Mr. McGimsey noted that a lot of the grant funds which VEDIC received were also received by other entities, but that those entities granted the funds to businesses rather than loaning them. Mr. McGimsey gave credit to Mr. Jeff Morris and Mr. Rick McClurd for deciding on a revolving loan fund, and allowing VEDIC to manage it.

Ms. Goossens gave a preview of the application pages, application criteria, and also noted that VEDIC generated loans up to \$250,000. Ms. Goossens discussed the steps of processing the loans, which included face to face meetings with the clients, document requests, and an overview of the applicants plans. Ms. Goossens continued that after initial meetings, the loan application was shared with the Loan Review Committee, which consisted of members of the local community. Ms. Goossens stated that after approval was received from the Loan Review Committee, the application moved on to the VEDIC Board, which consisted of members of the community and community representatives.

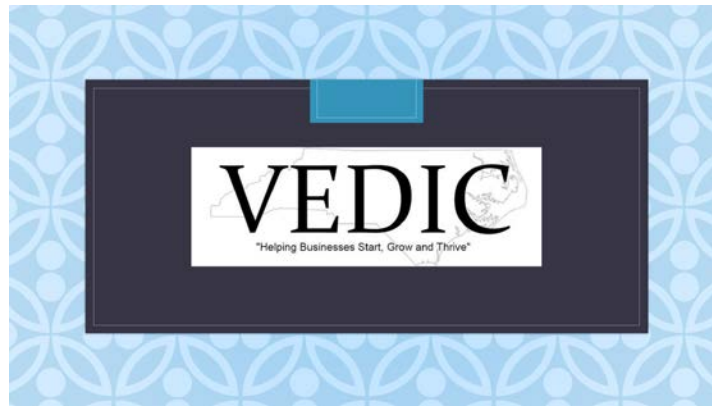
Mr. McGimsey then broke down loan statistics, specifically within the Town of Valdese, stating that out of the \$10,000,000 total loaned, \$2,500,000 was loaned within the Town, and that out of the 800 created jobs, 126 were created within the Town.

Mr. McGimsey stated that VEDIC's work was very relationship-driven and close to home, explaining that the Town of Valdese had been instrumental in VEDIC's creation, having sponsored the organization, provided free office space, established its charter, and funded its initial startup costs. Mr. McGimsey noted that VEDIC began very small but gradually grew its impact within the community. Mr. McGimsey shared several examples of local projects VEDIC had supported, including a small loan to Grace Jewelers which helped keep the business open, assistance with construction for a truck service garage near the Old Rock School, participation in financing improvements associated with the Old Mill project, and loans connected to 100 Main when it became a restaurant. Mr. McGimsey also mentioned involvement within a local Brewery, where VEDIC helped fund the installation of a kitchen during its second opening, which later contributed to the success of the current restaurant which had taken over.

Mr. McGimsey explained that VEDIC's loans often served as a catalyst for property improvements, encouraging landlords to renovate and upgrade electrical, plumbing, and other building systems when new small businesses occupied a space. Mr. McGimsey stated that these improvements not only supported business development but also contributed to increased property values and local tax base growth. Mr. McGimsey emphasized that Valdese and Burke County remained VEDIC's primary focus areas, noting that the organization did not broadly advertise or seek to expand beyond its hometown roots. He concluded by expressing appreciation for the Town's longstanding commitment and support, stating that although Valdese was not a large town, it made a significant difference, and VEDIC aimed to return that impact through its continued work in the community.

Mayor Huffman asked if Council had any questions. Councilman Ogle stated he had been on the VEDIC committee for almost two (2) years, expressed how professional VEDIC's staff was, and noted they had done a great job. Councilman Ogle thanked VEDIC for what they had done for Valdese.

Councilwoman Radabaugh echoed Councilman Ogle's thanks. Councilwoman Radabaugh stated that she was not from Valdese and appreciated VEDIC's presentation to educate her and other citizens of Valdese about the work VEDIC was doing and had done. Councilwoman Radabaugh added that without VEDIC, a lot of businesses could not get loans, and acknowledged, as a business owner herself, that there was not a lot of opportunity out there.



## VEDIC Office



Our office is conveniently located in downtown Valdese on Main Street, inside the historic Old Rock School

400 Main Street  
West  
Valdese, NC



## VEDIC STAFF



Kerri Poteat  
Executive Director



Eddie McGimsey  
Business Development



Telisha Goossens  
Loan Officer



## VEDIC MISSION

VEDIC works to promote a thriving North Carolina economy through partnering with small businesses and entrepreneurs to realize their dreams by providing accessible capital and trusted guidance.

# Economic Development Impact & Analytics

Kerri Poteat

## LOAN PRODUCTION TO DATE

**\$10,708,018**  
**210 Total Loans**

## JOBS CREATED/RETAINED TO DATE

	Sum of Jobs FT/PT
Alexander	4
Burke	870
Caldwell	23
Catawba	69
Cleveland	3
Irredell	22
McDowell	83
Meck	1
Mitchell	5
Rowan	34
Rutherford	31
Grand Total	1135

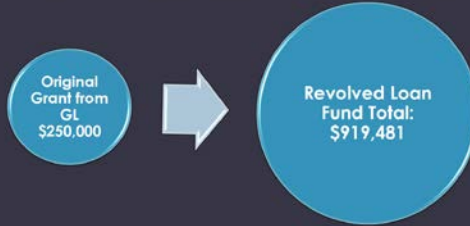
## DEFAULT RATE

**3.8%**  
**8 of 210 Loans**

### LOAN LOSS % SINCE INCEPTION

**1.4%**  
\$152,086

### BURKE COUNTY GOLDEN LEAF REVOLVING LOAN FUND TO DATE



### VALDESE RURAL CENTER REVOLVING FUND TO DATE



### MINORITY LENDING

#### LOAN DEMOGRAPHICS



APPALACHIAN REGIONAL  
COMMISSION GRAND REVOLVING  
LOAN FUND TO DATE

**\$500,000 ARC Grants**

**\$355,000 = 37 Loans**

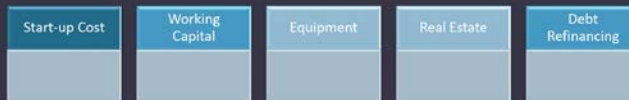
CURRENT LOAN PORTFOLIO



Technical Assistance  
& Business Development

Eddie McGimsey

Loan Types



## Service Area

VEDIC is authorized to service any area in North Carolina that meets the USDA eligibility requirements.

- Rural areas outside a city or town with a population of less than 50,000.
- Counties of focus:
  - Burke
  - Caldwell
  - Catawba
  - Iredell
  - McDowell
  - Rutherford

## Business Development



- Preliminary review of Pre-Application
- Tailored recommendations based on business needs and length of time in operation
- Two requirements to work with VEDIC- (USDA Guideline) Business plan & Bank Denial Letter



## Client First Steps

### Pre Application

[www.vedinc.com](http://www.vedinc.com)



## Technical Assistance

- ❖ Technical Assistance continues for the life of the loan.
- ❖ Relationship is continuously monitored through periodic site visits, and financial updates

## Loan Officer & Underwriting

Telisha Goossens



- Minimum FICO- 600
- Overall creditworthiness
- History
- Payment patterns
- Obligations

## Loan Processing

- Face to face meeting with client
- Documents requested varies based on each request.
- Each piece adds to the overall picture of the borrower's ability to succeed

## Loan Review Committee

- Committee is comprised of members of the community
- Loan officer presents findings and recommendations for discussion
- Committee reviews and makes a recommendation to the Board



## LOAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Charles Conley Office Manager, Burke County United Way</li> <li>❖ Sharon Jablonski Director of the Department of Cultural &amp; Creative Development, City of Morganton</li> <li>❖ Nancy Page Retired-Personal Banker, Wells Fargo Bank</li> <li>❖ Tonia Stephenson President &amp; CEO, Burke County Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Marla Thompson Town of Long View</li> <li>❖ Lily Laramie Director, Small Business Center WPCC</li> <li>❖ Suzanne Wallace Director, Small Business Center Mitchell Community College</li> <li>❖ Sherry Griffin Part Time/Retired- Western Piedmont Council of Governments</li> </ul>
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## Board Review

Business Plan

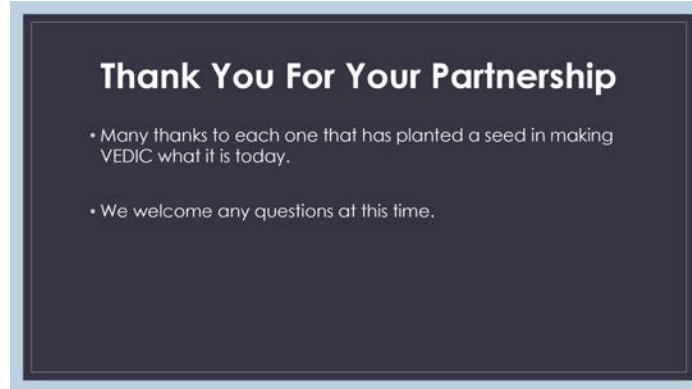
- The VEDIC Board is comprised of leaders from the community, SBC, COG
- Loan package presented along with the Loan Review Committee recommendation
- The Board of Directors makes the final loan approval decision

## VEDIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025-2026

<p><u>BOARD MEMBERS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brian Barrier</li> <li>John Branstrom</li> <li>Randy Burns</li> <li>William Carroll</li> <li>Kylie Gera</li> <li>Sherr Long Griffin</li> <li>Todd Herms</li> <li>Rick Justice</li> <li>Sharon Jablonski</li> <li>Lily Laramie</li> <li>Rick McClurd</li> <li>Gary Ogle</li> </ul>	<p><u>Crystal Reed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Karen Robinson</li> <li>Tonia Stephenson</li> <li>Bo Weichel</li> <li>Donna Zamora</li> </ul>	<p><u>Executive Board Members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chairman- Marla Thompson</li> <li>Vice Chairman- Butch McSwain</li> <li>Treasurer- Johnny Berry</li> <li>Secretary- Jessica Bargsey</li> </ul>
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## 2025-2026 Contributors

Burke County	Town of Valdese	City of Morganton	Town of Connelly Springs
Town of Drexel	Town of Hildebran	Town of Rhodhiss	Town of Rutherford College
Town of Long View	ARC Grant	USDA RMAP Technical Assistance Grant	



**STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT – POLICE DEPARTMENT** Police Chief, Marc Sharpe, announced the departure of Officer Jason Xaysana and thanked him for his service to the Town. Chief Sharpe then introduced a reserve officer in training who would soon be coming on full time with the Town, Officer Jonathon Kulp, and welcomed him to the Town of Valdese. Chief Sharpe shared that it was his two (2) year anniversary in Valdese and that over that time he had been tasked with restoring the Police Department. Chief Sharpe disclosed that within that 24 months, the Town had lost two officers, but that those officers were immediately replaced by a reserve officer in waiting.

Chief Sharpe explained that when he arrived, he focused immediately on morale and retention, noting the department seemed “beaten down” and needed rebuilding. Chief Sharpe discussed that while salary was one of the most significant challenges and remained a work in progress, he also prioritized improving the department’s image, equipment, uniforms, training, policies, officer wellness, confidence, responsibilities, and accountability.

Chief Sharpe described the department’s early emphasis on rebuilding pride and visibility by redesigning the police patch with officer input and adopting a renewed image that could be displayed at festivals, parades, and other community events. Chief Sharpe introduced the challenge coin program and highlighted it as a symbol of the department’s core values, noting that officers carry the coins and that residents can also obtain them to promote accountability to those standards.

Chief Sharpe noted that the department transitioned to new uniforms at no additional cost by changing styles during the normal uniform replacement cycle, selecting designs intended to improve comfort and reduce strain from traditional duty-belt equipment. Chief Sharpe disclosed that he personally purchased the initial challenge coins to launch the program and later sustained it through sales, and Chief Sharpe added that a citizen donation funded new leather gear to match the updated uniforms.

Chief Sharpe reported that equipment modernization was also a key priority, identifying that patrol rifles in use when he arrived were outdated, were from the Vietnam era, and had cycled through multiple agencies before reaching Valdese. Chief Sharpe shared that through public donations the department obtained new patrol rifles and handguns, added optics to improve accuracy in high-risk situations, and conducted associated training to enhance safety for officers and residents.

Chief Sharpe emphasized that the department updated vehicle striping and branding to be more reflective, visible, and consistent with the new image, noting that this improvement was also supported through public donation. Chief Sharpe noted that these changes were part of a broader effort to strengthen morale and make the Valdese Police Department a place officers and residents could be proud of.

Chief Sharpe compared retention trends, explaining that he was told the department had lost 52 officers over a five (5) year period prior to his arrival, while his first 24 months reflected only two (2) departures, with another potential departure anticipated. Chief Sharpe explained that to help retain staff, the department expanded job enrichment opportunities, including “train-the-trainer” pathways and specialized instruction roles.

Chief Sharpe highlighted that Sergeant Beck became a firearms instructor and now certifies and qualifies officers annually across handgun, patrol rifle, and shotgun platforms. Chief Sharpe announced that qualification scores had reached the highest overall levels the department had seen, attributing improvements to enhanced training, upgraded equipment, and increased effort. Chief Sharpe added that raising standards improved officer and citizen safety and reduced long-term exposure related to civil liability.

Chief Sharpe identified a major readiness gap when he arrived, noting the entire department was not CPR trained despite police often being first on scene. Chief Sharpe explained that the department brought in an instructor so all officers are now trained in CPR and basic first aid, and Chief Sharpe added that officers also received tactical casualty care and Narcan training that was now incorporated into recurring in-service cycles.

Chief Sharpe reported that since implementing CPR training, officers had already performed CPR in approximately six (6) incidents that previously would have required waiting for fire or EMS. Chief Sharpe described this as a meaningful operational improvement that strengthened coordinated emergency response when police arrived first and could begin care before other responders.

Chief Sharpe discussed strengthening training capacity and recruitment visibility, noting that the department had no general instructor certifications when he arrived. Chief Sharpe explained that instructor development allowed Valdese to be visible within Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) environments, helped recruit future officers, and reinforced the department's reputation as a quality place to work. Chief Sharpe noted that officers, including Sergeant Beck and Sergeant Angley, were taking part in BLET instruction efforts, and Chief Sharpe identified a partnership with Western Piedmont Community College as a strategy for increased visibility and credibility.

Chief Sharpe described additional job enrichment roles, including a designated fleet maintenance and vehicle design lead who assisted with striping coordination and day-to-day fleet upkeep. Chief Sharpe noted that the department also assigned a social media manager who oversaw the department's Facebook presence and was also being trained to serve as a Public Information Officer to support transparency and timely public updates.

Chief Sharpe announced the creation of a chaplain program, noting that seven (7) chaplains from various denominations were brought together to support officer wellness. Chief Sharpe explained that chaplains provided an additional avenue for conversation and support, participated in ride-a-long's, assisted with debriefings after critical incidents, and offered spiritual guidance when requested, complementing HR's EAP resources.

Chief Sharpe disclosed that he personally purchased "Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement" for every officer and incorporated the book into voluntary devotionals focused on the realities of cumulative trauma and stress. Chief Sharpe noted that officers face far greater exposure to critical incidents over a career than the average civilian, and Chief Sharpe explained that the chaplain program helped identify red flags and encouraged early support when needed.

Chief Sharpe shared that Valdese officers contributed case studies to a book written by a local retired pastor and that this material had been used broadly beyond the local area. Chief Sharpe noted that the department continued to use this content as part of ongoing devotional programming which was available to officers on a voluntary basis.

Chief Sharpe discussed additional programs implemented to expand operational capability, noting the acquisition of an ATV through public donation. Chief Sharpe explained that the ATV was used for festivals, trail patrol, and searches, and Chief Sharpe shared that it was used during large events to assist residents who became overheated or needed help returning across town.

Chief Sharpe reviewed the drone program and noted that two (2) certified pilots were now operating the drone, which was recently used during a missing juvenile search to clear park areas more quickly. Chief Sharpe explained that drone capability supported more efficient search operations and strengthened coordination with fire and rescue during multi-agency incidents.

Chief Sharpe described the department's trespassing program as a response to persistent problem areas associated with unsheltered populations and drug activity. Chief Sharpe explained that the program uses posted signage and participation from property owners to enable consistent enforcement of trespassing statutes and to support broader efforts to address recurring issues.

Chief Sharpe highlighted community outreach efforts and announced the launch of Operation Blue Santa. Chief Sharpe explained that the goal was to help 12 children at Christmas, but community support enabled the department to assist 24 children, and Chief Sharpe noted that every officer participated and contributed, with support from residents, council, churches, and community partners.

Chief Sharpe discussed technology and administrative upgrades that improved operational efficiency, including creating a shared-drive library of approximately 140 departmental forms in printable and fillable PDF format. Chief Sharpe explained that many forms include built-in guidance for investigative steps, such as death investigations, missing persons, and sexual assaults, helping officers collect consistent information and perform duties more efficiently.

Chief Sharpe described additional investigative tools, including a search warrant index officers could adapt for probable cause development, as well as drug tax references and related resources. Chief Sharpe noted that the department added software such as TLO for investigative support and QuickLaw to provide immediate access to statutes and ensure officers can confirm statutory elements in real time.

Chief Sharpe reported that the District Attorney evidence portal was established and being used, allowing officers to upload case files, video, audio, and photographs directly to the DA rather than producing and delivering large paper packets. Chief Sharpe explained that this shift brought Valdese in line with modern practices used across the county and improved the overall flow of cases to prosecution.

Chief Sharpe discussed ongoing work to improve report writing, noting the department obtained access to the county's report writing system at no cost, but officers had not been trained on its capabilities. Chief Sharpe explained that a manual was obtained and training sessions were being developed to ensure officers could fully use the system for reporting, attachments, and case documentation.

Chief Sharpe expressed pride in the department's accomplishments and credited officers for working hard to meet higher expectations and rising standards. Chief Sharpe identified three major challenges that continue to hurt the department: salaries, facilities, and additional staffing.

Chief Sharpe emphasized that competitive pay was necessary to maintain experience and quality, noting that referenced salary statistics were outdated and current statewide ranges place Valdese behind the market. Chief Sharpe disclosed that two recent departures occurred for higher pay elsewhere, including one officer who left for an \$11,000 increase at a smaller department within Burke County, and Chief Sharpe recounted the officer's statement that he "couldn't eat on what-ifs" and needed a guaranteed paycheck.

Chief Sharpe explained that each departure created a significant operational burden, including overtime, scheduling disruptions, and replacement of experienced officers with new graduates who were still developing. Chief Sharpe underscored that facilities were a critical need, explaining that Town Hall was not a police department and did not provide appropriate spaces for interviews, evidence storage, digital evidence handling, or victim privacy. Chief Sharpe identified safety concerns for other Town staff who encounter intoxicated individuals or persons attempting to turn themselves in, and Chief Sharpe emphasized that police business should be conducted in a dedicated police facility occupied by police personnel.

Chief Sharpe explained that the department's staffing levels were thin, noting limited patrol coverage and minimal administrative capacity while still being responsible for evidence handling, investigations, citizen complaints, program development, policy writing, equipment management, media relations, and other operational requirements. Chief Sharpe discussed that many agencies would have dedicated roles such as a detective, training coordinator, or equipment manager, while Valdese currently juggled these responsibilities across a small team.

Chief Sharpe highlighted how thin staffing affected public safety during major events, describing the July 4, 2024 fireworks crowd and explaining that simultaneous incidents prevented officers from staffing traffic control points, resulting in congestion and limited capacity to manage both enforcement and crowd safety. Chief Sharpe urged collaboration and solutions rather than assigning blame, warning that delays allow costs to rise and needs to become further past due. Chief Sharpe thanked council and attendees for listening and acknowledged that his remarks were lengthy but intended to clearly outline the department's progress and remaining needs.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman acknowledged the large discrepancy in salaries and asked how much money it cost the Town to train an officer who came in. Chief Sharpe estimated that after all was said and done, it would probably cost the Town \$100,000. Councilman Ogle clarified that this was the cost for a single officer. Chief Sharpe responded in the affirmative and noted that the loss of an officer also put additional strain on the department, that it created a hole that needed to be filled.

Mayor Huffman stated that he had the opportunity to work along side Chief Sharpe since being elected, and that Chief Sharpe was a man of integrity, the epitome of service before self, and that Valdese was lucky to have him. Mayor Huffman acknowledged the Council had heard him, and that it would do its best to do something.

Councilman Ogle asked what the three things were that Chief Sharpe had identified as the departments biggest needs. Chief Sharpe recounted that these were salaries, facilities, and additional help. Chief Sharpe then spoke to how these three needs all interact with one another.

Councilman Ogle asked how many officers Chief Sharpe needed. Chief Sharpe stated that over a period of time he would like to get one (1) full-time detective and two (2) additional evening officers. Chief Sharpe stated this would create a situation where one could have a supervisor in training in the midshift, as a corporal, with another patrol officer, which would keep four (4) officers, in Town, patrolling for a majority of the time. Chief Sharpe added that this would also allow for the opportunity to send officers out to training.

Councilwoman Ward stated that before one could have anything in a town, one needed safety. Councilwoman Ward apologized to the public across the board. Councilwoman Ward expressed that this hit home for her as she came from a law enforcement family. Councilwoman Ward stated there would be hard decisions the Town would have to make over the next few months, and that she wanted to encourage the Council, and members of the audience, to share the state of department presentations that had recently been given to help understand the scope of these decisions.

Chief Sharpe expressed how grateful he was that the Town had citizens who cared enough about the department and the Town to help "put icing on their cake" and "make their new Cadillac look good," but that if one were to lift the hood, there would not be anything there. Chief Sharpe continued that if one took off the icing, the cake would be hardened and crumbled. Chief Sharpe restated there were things that needed to be addressed, that these things were not one (1) persons fault, but that they had just been left for too long. Chief Sharpe expressed that he did not come to the Town not to fix the aforementioned issues.

Councilwoman Zimmerman expressed appreciation that Chief Sharpe had brought these issues to the attention of the Council. Councilwoman Zimmerman indicated that it took courage from Chief Sharpe to come forward and speak with such candor about what his needs were. Councilwoman Zimmerman recounted Councilwoman Ward's comments that there were decisions to be made over the next couple of months. Councilwoman Zimmerman thanked Chief Sharpe for his time.

# Valdese Police Department



State of the Department  
2026



## Valdese Police Department: State of the Department *Current Staff*

- Chief Marc A. Sharpe 300
  - Administrative Assistant Harley Chesek-Brown 319
  - Animal Control/Code Enforcement Sean Link 316
- Assistant Chief/Detective James Buchanan 301
- Sergeant William Beck 302
  - Officer Adam Marlowe 313
- Sergeant Billy Hicks 305
- Sergeant Michael Branch 303
  - Officer Tyler Watson 312
- Sergeant Tyler Angley 304
- Officer Matthew Smith 310
  - Officer George Isbell 315
- Officer Jason Xaysana 311
- Officer Roger Rutherford 314
- Reserve Officer Tim Williams 320
- Reserve Officer Paul Phillips 321
- Reserve Officer Levi Henry 323
- Reserve Officer Michael Hicks 324
- Reserve Officer Jonathon Kulp 325



## Issue: Morale and Retention State of the Department *Accomplishments*

### • Morale and Retention:

Let's be proud of who we are, what we stand for, and where we are going.  
(I want your input and thoughts)

Salary was not the only issue (although one of the most significant):

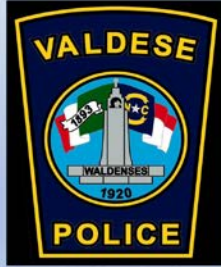
What has been addressed internally with continued work in progress.

Image	Equipment	Uniforms	Training	Polices
Wellness	Confidence	Responsibility	Accountability	



## Issue: Morale and Retention State of the Department *Accomplishments*

- Image: Let's be seen and Identified by OUR brand.



Newly designed patch by VPD employees put into use during yearly uniform order.



Department tent and table for festivals, special events, job fairs, and other programs.



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

- New Programs: Challenge Coin Program
- Promotes officer involvement to a TEAM effort and approach.
- Displays dedication to core values of VPD and law enforcement Code of Ethics, by carrying our symbol as part of your uniform. Taking great care not to tarnish that symbol, it's an addition to the badge more closely defined with the department.
- Building a new culture and image by disseminating the Challenge Coin to citizens promotes citizen involvement in programs. It also allows us to share our core values to create new bonds between citizens and officers.



## Issue: Morale and Retention State of the Department *Accomplishments*

- Image: Let's be seen and Identified by OUR brand.
- Department Challenge Coins, Symbol of our core values.

Front



Back





Issue: Morale and Retention  
State of the Department  
*Accomplishments*

- Image: Let's be seen and Identified by OUR brand.
- Valdeese officers sporting newly issued uniforms. New leather gear acquired through private citizen public donation.



Issue: Morale and Retention  
State of the Department  
*Accomplishments*

- Image: Let's be seen and Identified by OUR brand.
- New patrol rifles and pistols with optics acquired by private citizen donation.



Issue: Morale and Retention  
State of the Department  
*Accomplishments*

- Image: Let's be seen and Identified by OUR brand.
- New car striping acquired by private citizen donation.





## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

- **Morale and Retention:**

Training: Become more self sufficient, train instructors to train officers.

Provides job enrichment, input, accountability, and instills confidence.

- Sergeant obtained Firearms Instructor Certification, who is training and improving firearms training within the department.
- An additional Firearms Instructor is planned for the future.
- Highest overall qualifications scores ever within the department.
- Saves Officers Lives and citizens.
- Saves Town and Department Money.



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

- **Morale and Retention:**

Training Updates: Firearms and Optics, Patrol Rifles and Optics.  
Leather gear, Pepper spray, Taser equipment.

(Accomplished through public donation at no cost to all citizens)

Someone cares!

- Training provided by us. (New Instructors)
- Dinner at the Range, work together, eat together, train together.
- Improved bonding of officers. Involvement improves accountability.
- Recert training in Taser, Pepper Spray, ASP, Driving.
- Proud of our accomplishments and our improvements
- Our officers are now part of that!



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

- **Morale and Retention:**

Training: Become more self sufficient, train instructors to train officers.

Valdese Police Departments improved basic medical response.

- Training CPR, AED, Ambu Bag and Basic First Aid instructor, NARCAN.
- Part of yearly In-service.
- More services for citizens, saving lives, helping the community.
- Medical care for officers and catastrophic events. (Preparedness)
- Shared experience, sale and promotion of VPD to new officers.



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

- **Morale and Retention:**  
Training: Become more self sufficient, train instructors to train officers.

Promote Valdeese Police Department and its officers.

- Additional officer obtained Basic Instructor training with more to follow
- Officers taking part in BLET Training.
- Partnership with WPCC, making VPD known and more visible as a quality place to go work.
- Additional input in the LE community.
- Shared experience, sale and promotion of VPD to new officers.



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

- **Departmental Improvements; New Completed Training Opportunities:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firearms and Optics training</li> <li>• CPR and AED</li> <li>• FTO</li> <li>• First line supervision</li> <li>• Crime scene processing</li> <li>• CPR instructor</li> <li>• General instructor</li> <li>• Tactical Medical Response</li> <li>• OC Spray</li> <li>• Taser</li> <li>• Officer Safety</li> <li>• Business Response (SAFT)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASP Baton</li> <li>• Narcan</li> <li>• Homeless response</li> <li>• LEMA</li> <li>• Criminal Justice Standards Workshop</li> <li>• ATV Operations</li> <li>• Drone Piloting</li> <li>• Drug enforcement</li> <li>• Driver Training</li> <li>• Crime Scene Processing</li> <li>• Tactical First Aid</li> <li>• School Response</li> </ul> |
|--|---|



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

- **Morale and Retention:**  
Job Enrichment Opportunities: Designated an officer to oversee fleet maintenance, new car design and striping. Another as our social media manager and departmental PIO, to connect with the public on important police information as needed and monthly statistics for departmental transparency.



Departmental Statistics: 10/1/2025 - 10/31/2025	
Safety Incidents	100
Arrests and Incarcerated Inmates	150
911 Calls	1200
Community Activities	25
Vehicle Stops	180
Traffic Citations	30
Domestic Violence Incidents/Arrests	10
Reports Made	50
<b>Total Inmates</b>	<b>1000</b>

**Valdeese Police Department**  
November 3, 2023

The human remains discovered on Freely Street II on November 6, 2022, have been transported to the South Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) for forensic examination for identification and determination of the cause and manner of death.

The following outlines the standard process for the examination and investigation of human remains:

**Transportation:**  
The remains are transported to a local morgue or, if an autopsy or specialist analysis is required, to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner's facility in Aiken.

**Analysis and Autopsy:**  
At the OCME, forensic pathologists and anthropologists conduct detailed examinations. This process may include an autopsy, toxicology testing, and osteological examination if the remains are skeletal.

**Identification:**  
Identification efforts may involve DNA analysis, dental record comparisons, and the evaluation of any personal articles discovered with the remains.

**Final Report:**  
Once the examination and investigation are complete, a final autopsy report will be issued. This process can take several months.

The Valdeese Police Department will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available.



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

- **New Programs: Chaplains Program**

- A chaplain's board was created consisting of multi-denominational pastors to promote the following:
- Officer wellness
- Provide spiritual guidance when requested
- Create a safe space for venting and receiving counsel on handling the many strains and stresses of being a police officer.

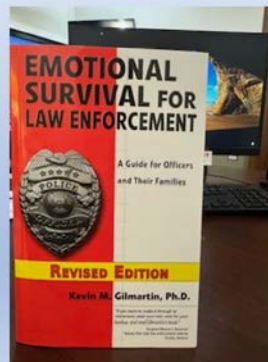
The Chaplain's assist in building a new culture and image which inspires the officer's thoughts:

- "I care because I have input, someone is listening, and someone cares."
- "I am working at being a better overall person."
- "The work I put into myself will provide a higher quality employee to the town, our department, and the citizens; as well as present member of my family."



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

- **Departmental Improvements; Officer Wellness and Support from Chaplains**



Taking care of employees:

A Typical civilian on average are exposed to:  
2 to 3 "critical incidents and 3 to 4 traumatic events during a lifetime.

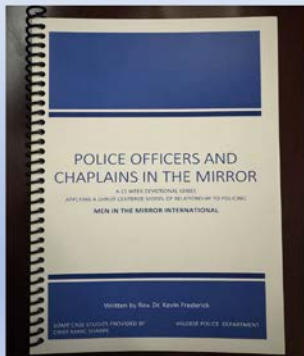
A Police Officer on Average are exposed to:  
178 "Critical Incidents" and 400 to 600 "traumatic events" during a career.

Our Chaplains discuss the issues and provide a safe environment for our staff to deal and heal. Debriefs are scheduled for those involved in critical incidents and traumatic events.



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

- **Departmental Improvements; Officer Wellness and Support from Chaplains**



Taking care of employees:

Time spent between officers and our Chaplains produced information which provided case studies from our officers which are now being utilized in published material to help officers identify their wellness needs worldwide. US and foreign countries.



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

- Departmental Improvements: Continued efforts to improve. New Programs being created by Public Donation:



ATV Program: Street Festivals Parks, wooded area suspect apprehensions.



Drone Program: Training selected officers to become Drone Pilots through the FAA for search and arrest operations, air patrol for festivals and events, and mutual aid assistance.



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

- Trespassing Program: Trespassing signs erected on property with the owner's consent or request have helped combat unsheltered crime in addition to offering identified resources as well as enforcing areas where drug crime issues are a problem within Town Limits.



## The Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

- Departmental Improvements: Community Outreach Efforts, Public Donations from Business and Citizens to help our Children:



### "Operation Blue Santa"

Our Police Department working with Churches, Businesses, and Citizens to provide for children who have less.

In turn, creating trust between law enforcement and the younger generation which will allow them to see police as a trusted resource when needed.

Our Goal was to help 12 children this past year; our accomplishments exceeded 24 children.

Rewarding for all involved!



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

- Departmental Improvements: Continued efforts to improve.
  - 1- Shared Drive Access: has allowed the creation of folders with new and expanded information at officer's fingertips.
    - (i.e. Form Index, Search Warrant Index, Drug Tax Index, Drug Stats)
  - 2- Software Improvements:
    - TLO, Quick Law
  - 3- DA Evidence Portal Established and in Use



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

- Departmental Report Writing System obtained through County. Huge financial break for the department and the town of Valdese. We took a cheaper way to provide report writing capabilities but provided NO TRAINING!

Currently in work!

- 1- Officer's and staff received no official training for its use
- 2- Material recently obtained to create training program for the programs full use and capabilities to include evidence input, as well as upload capabilities for various case attachments, sketches, and photos.



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

- Identified Pressing Issues for the Valdese Police Department:
  - "Public Donations for your favorite icing are fine but the cake should be supplied by the Town."
  - What is hurting us?
    - Salaries
    - Facilities
    - Additional Staff



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

Those were accomplishments over the past 24 months lets identify future needs:



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

**SALARIES:** The stats in that video are over (10) ten years old!

The demands of the job hasn't changed, being a Police Office is still tough. However, higher expectations exist for training and education which require higher salary to maintain quality and experience!  
We need to catch up!

Current North Carolina Police Officer Salary Rates:

Low end:	\$49,000.00 to \$55,000.00
Mid (Most common Range):	\$60,000.00 to \$62,000.00
High End:	\$70,000.00 to \$90,000.00



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

Over the past 23 to 24 months, you have seen some of the internal issues and the things this leadership has tackled and worked to improve on limited means. Those items have helped morale temporarily but not completely.

We have lost two officers in the last 8 months which have been replaced with newly hired reserve officers that were hired to fill additional help needs. Both officers left for more money. The latest went to a smaller police department for a \$ 11,000.00 pay increase doing the same job in our own county.

Hats off to them, We invested 4 years in his training and experience, and replaced him with an officer right out of BLET, he didn't want to leave, his heart was here, but he went for the money. We can't compete with departments half our size.  
Officer Quote:, "Chief I can't eat on what if's, I have a guarantee to go to".



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

I would ask each council member to close your eyes for a moment and listen to a hypothetical.

### FACILITIES:

Your child just became a victim of a sexual assault, together you respond to your town's makeshift police department, they have no interview room, an evidence room not to state mandated standards, no privacy for you and your child, and you have to sit and wait in an open area while they call in the Chief or Asst. Chief who just left after being there over 12 hours to provide guidance on your case to file a report because the two officers on duty are tied up on a vehicle accident resulting in a DWI arrest and that's all the help they have right now. The Chief directs you and your child to the hospital and contacts a nurse to meet with you, while he is in route to meet you as well, he is on the phone trying to locate a suspect and attempting to utilize neighboring agencies for help who are also busy. The suspect is located and the interview has to be conducted in a borrowed location at a local church while attempting to piece together a recording device to meet standards for the interview because no interview room exist. I will not go into all of the evidence issues. Welcome to Valdese! This is only one case example.

- Is that the response you want for you and your child? Simply put! We have to address and repair this!



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

- Facilities are a must! However, we have to be able to pay the officers to put in the facilities or our building will be empty.

Must follow State mandates, recommendations, and statutory authority to conduct day to day business within a Police Department.

- Evidence procedures and guidelines.
- Proper evidence handling and storage, refrigeration, digital evidence.
- Victim, Witness, and Suspect Audio Video Recordings.
- Officer Safety Issues.
- Other Valdese Staff safety issues. (Violent intoxicated subject in lobby)
- Police Business needs to be conducted in a Police Department occupied by Police.



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

Additional Staff: We need more help!

We have two regular Patrol officers on the streets most of the time. Two administrative staff and one assistant to run day to day Police Operations, handle evidence, conduct serious investigations, handle complaints, speak with citizens, develop programs, write policy, handle equipment needs, speak with the media, and many other unnamed items.

Other departments would have at least one full time detective to handle the more serious cases that come in which are not handled by patrol. A person to handle the majority of the equipment and a person to schedule and maintain training. We are juggling many, many, many hats.



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

### Additional Staff:

To help spread what needs to be done and meet expectations you must be able to send officers for additional training. One officer gone for a class turns the department upside down. An officer out sick or injured turns things upside down.

The smaller staff presents major scheduling issues, limited training opportunities, stunts employee growth, and greatly effects the ability to enforce laws, make arrest, and be available for emergencies, which puts the overall safety of citizens in question and at risk.



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

### Additional Staff:

Events, Festivals, Concerts, Car Shows, Parades; These are fun times for the Town; the Police Department is stretched thin. We want everyone to have a good time but, we also want to ensure your safety!

#### Example:

4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks 2024. Every officer we have was working, Reserves, and full-time staff, REACT assisting with traffic. As the fireworks came to a close, officers began heading to traffic assignments. Calls on Main Street erupted, A subject with a gun near a downtown business, two vehicle accidents, a fight involving 4 subjects in front of another business, and an intoxicated subject on main. Every call came in at once, while we were attempting to move and funnel 20,000+ people out of the downtown area in cars and on foot leaving the area.



## Valdese Police Department *State of the Department*

### Help us address the needs:

- (1) Salary: To maintain experience and quality, we have to pay more. We are losing experience that we have trained to smaller agencies. We must have officers to put in facilities.
- (2) Facilities: We our outdated and not keeping up with technology and evidence requirements to meet todays needs and mandates. The longer this goes the further behind we get.
- (3) Additional Staff: Is needed to provide the needs requested and provided to our citizens while maintaining a healthy well trained police department.



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

Rome wasn't built in a day!

However, many of these needs are past due!

Let's stop playing the blame game and begin to work together  
to address these needs and find solutions!!

The clock is ticking as we get further behind and the costs continue to rise!



## Valdeese Police Department *State of the Department*

That's all Folks! But, just for Today.

Thank you for listening!



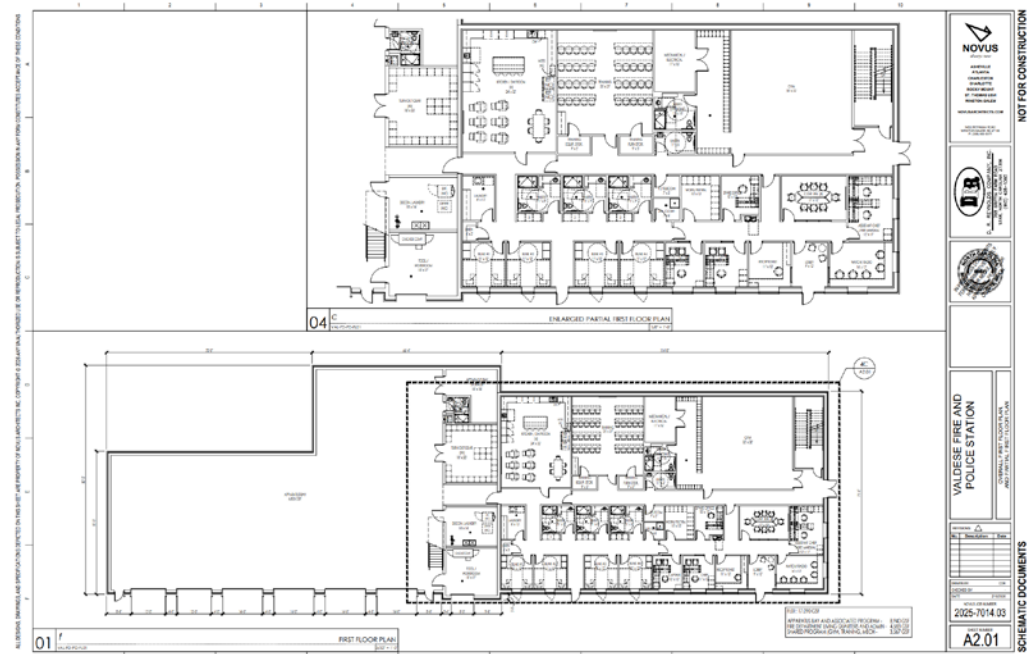
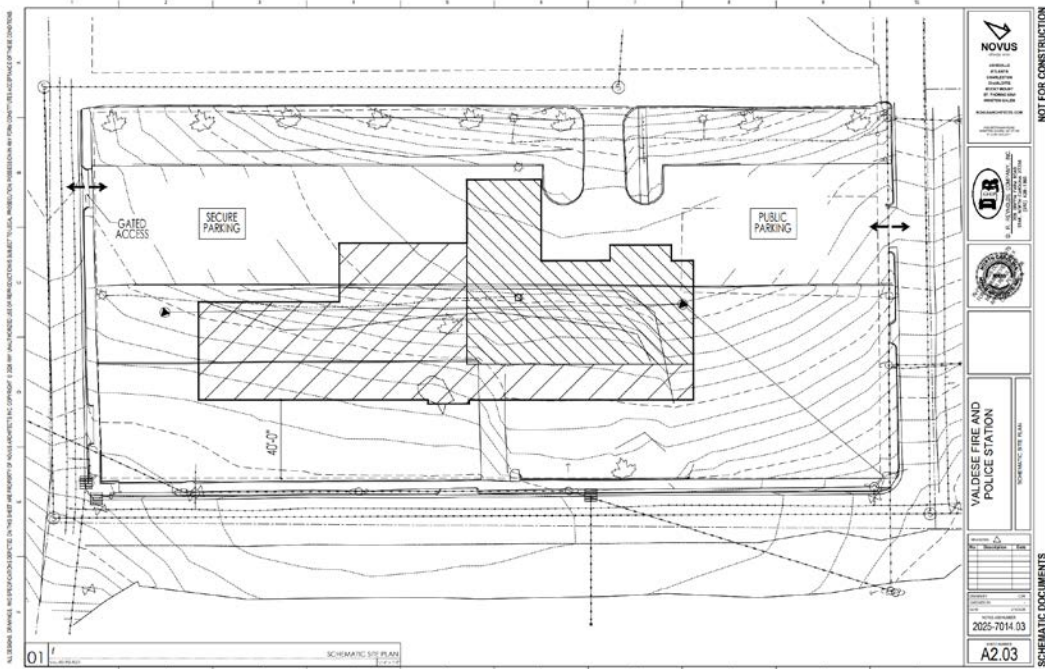
**PUBLIC SAFETY FLOOR PLAN PRESENTATION** Town Manager, Todd Herms, shared that the Council had an opportunity to review the floor plans for the public safety building and noted that copies were available within the agenda packet. Town Manager Herms stated that the facility was designed with the help of both Chief Sharpe, and Fire Chief Truman Walton. Town Manager Herms disclosed that throughout his career he had built a police department and two (2) fire departments, and added that the Town's two (2) Chief's had a lot of needs, not wants. Town Manager Herms continued that there were no requests for an extra big day room for a large TV, requests that were made were essential. Town Manager Herms gave examples of requests which were made, such as a shower, so fire fighters could get the contaminants off their uniforms and a secure entryway so one can bring a wanted person into the police department without walking past citizens in the lobby. Town Manager Herms expressed he was thankful to the Town's two (2) chiefs and noted that they had the best intentions throughout the design process.

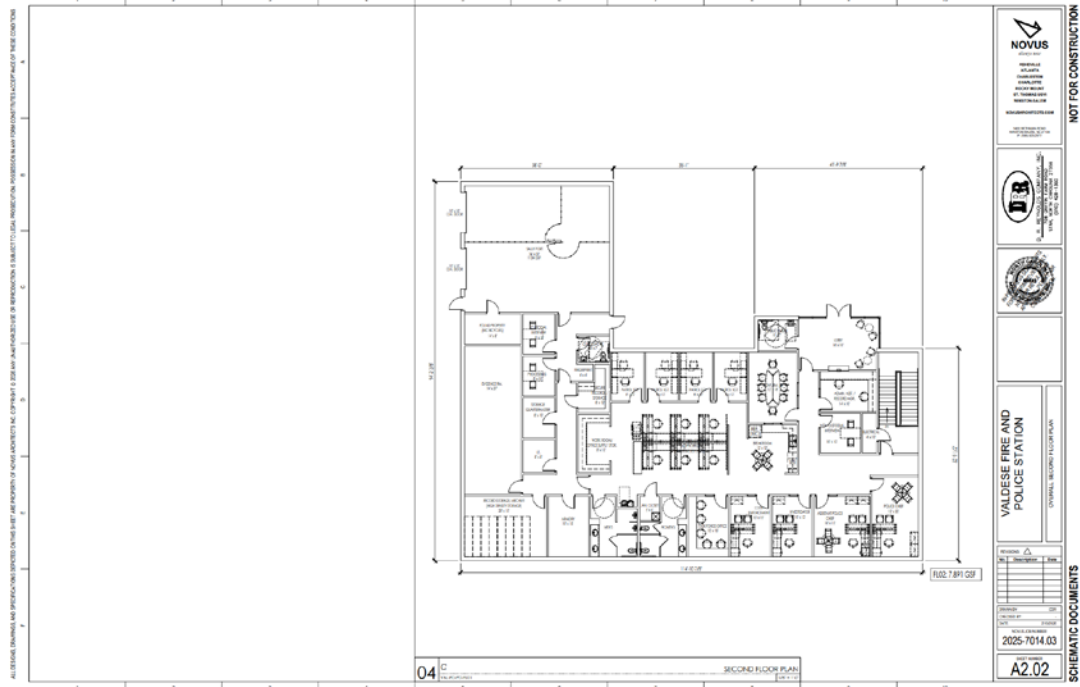
Town Manager Herms discussed shrinking the footprint of the facility to get it as small as possible due to limitations of the budget. Town Manager Herms spoke to the size of the work spaces, that patrol officer cubicles were seven (7) feet by seven (7) feet and that some offices were eight (8) by ten (10) feet. Town Manager Herms believed that this was the smallest one could legally make an office with a desk. Town Manager Herms reiterated that both Chief Walton and Chief Sharpe worked hard to get the footprint to what it was now.

MARCH 2, 2026, MB#33

Town Manager Herms shared that the Town was looking toward doing a metal and split place block exterior, but that costs and materials were still being explored. Town Manager Herms stated that the presented plan took a lot of work and involved a lot of man hours. Town Manager Herms reported that the Town was in the process of creating poster boards to keep copies of the plans in the Town Hall lobby, in case anyone wanted to view them. Town Manager Herms continued that work was being done with Ms. Morrissa Angi, Community Affairs Director, to display the plans on the Town's website as well.

Town Manager Herms concluded that everyone understood what was being worked on, and that the Town was ready to move forward if there were no objections from Council.





**APPROVED ACCEPTANCE OF PROPERTY DONATION: 101 FAT AVENUE NE** David Andersen, Parks and Recreation Director, thanked Chief Sharpe and his officers for helping keep everyone safe in the parks and recreation world, noting that a safe venue for children to play could not be offered without the help of the police department.

Mr. Andersen stated that Council should have memos regarding the acceptance of property donation for 101 Fat Avenue Northeast, which was the property directly across from Children’s Park. Mr. Andersen introduced Mr. Tom Kenney, from Foothills Conservancy, and stated he would be giving additional information about the property.

Mr. Kenney introduced himself and explained that he represented Foothills Conservancy, a regional nonprofit land trust serving the Western Piedmont and the Foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Mr. Kenney stated that the organization’s office was located in Morganton and that he was present to request that the Town Council approve acceptance of a property donation located across the road from Children’s Park.

Mr. Kenney provided background on Foothills Conservancy and noted that the organization had previously partnered with the Town of Valdese and Ms. Beth Heile with Friends of Valdese Recreation to acquire property at Lake Rhodhiss which was now known as Lakeside Park. Mr. Kenney explained that the partnership raised significant funds around 2018–2019 to secure the property and that the resulting park had become a major recreational asset and regional attraction.

Mr. Kenney also discussed the establishment of the Wilderness Gateway State Trail, which was authorized by the North Carolina State Parks system in 2019. Mr. Kenney noted that citizens and outdoor recreation advocates within Valdese played a key role in helping create a loop of the trail which connected into the Valdese community and surrounding outdoor resources.

Mr. Kenney explained that the property under consideration was located across from Children’s Park along Fat Avenue and East Main Street and included frontage along Micol Creek. Mr. Kenney stated that discussions about acquiring the property began in 2022 with Town staff, the Friends of Valdese Recreation, and Parks Director David Andersen after the property owners, Dennis Jaschab and his wife, expressed interest in selling the land for park and recreation purposes.

Mr. Kenney disclosed that Foothills Conservancy completed the due diligence process, secured grant funding from the State of North Carolina, and purchased the property in 2023. Mr. Kenney explained that Foothills Conservancy currently owned the property and was now offering to donate it to the Town for inclusion within the Town's Parks and Recreation system.

Mr. Kenney described the parcel as vacant land adjacent to Micol Creek and located directly across from Children's Park. Mr. Kenney noted that the creek passes beneath Highway 70 through a large culvert and suggested that the location could potentially provide a safe pedestrian connection between Children's Park and the newly acquired property. Mr. Kenney stated that the property could create opportunities for additional public trails, a possible parking expansion for Children's Park, and other outdoor recreational amenities for residents and visitors.

Mr. Kenney emphasized the broader economic and community value of outdoor recreation and trail systems. Mr. Kenney observed that tourism development authorities throughout Burke County and neighboring counties actively promoted outdoor recreation to attract new residents, retirees, and business investment, and Mr. Kenney stated that trails and recreation amenities play an important role in supporting those economic development goals.

Mr. Kenney provided additional context regarding funding opportunities associated with the Wilderness Gateway State Trail. Mr. Kenney noted that the North Carolina General Assembly established the "Complete the Trails" program to fund land acquisition and trail development for the state's trail system. Mr. Kenney explained that Foothills Conservancy successfully applied for grant funding through that program and anticipated reimbursement for the Micol Creek property acquisition.

Mr. Kenney stated that some grant funds remained available for any additional due diligence the Town wished to conduct. Mr. Kenney emphasized that Foothills Conservancy had already completed most of the necessary work to make the potential transfer as efficient and seamless as possible for the Town.

Mr. Kenney then discussed the broader alignment of the property with the Wilderness Gateway State Trail corridor. Mr. Kenney explained that the trail generally ran from Old Fort toward Lake Lure, through Southern McDowell County, South Mountains State Park, and surrounding game lands before turning Northeast toward Valdese. Mr. Kenney noted that the proposed trail loop included Lakeside Park and McGalliard Falls Park and that they were still identifying the most appropriate routes through Valdese that would provide convenient access to downtown businesses while maintaining an enjoyable outdoor trail experience.

Mr. Kenney concluded by explaining that the Micol Creek property could potentially serve as a future trail corridor while also providing immediate recreational benefits due to its proximity to Children's Park. Mr. Kenney thanked the Council for its time and consideration and offered to answer any questions regarding the proposed donation.



# FOREVER AND FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

## Our Mission

Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina inspires conservation in Western North Carolina by permanently protecting land and water for the benefit of people and all living things.

## Our Vision

Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina envisions a thriving region to live and visit, with clean water, healthy forests, productive farmland, diverse wildlife, access to outdoor recreation, and communities that value conservation.

# MICOL CREEK

5.69 ACRES | TOWN OF VALDESE

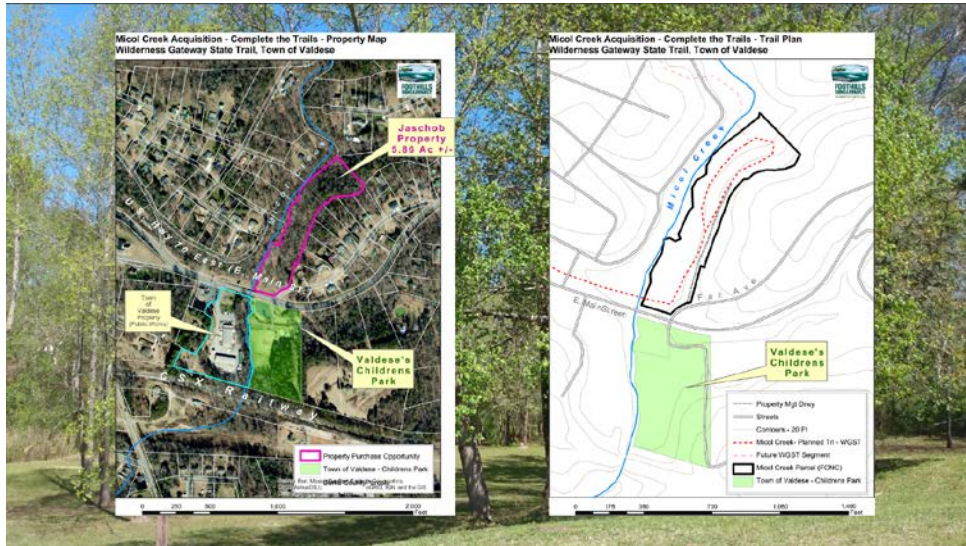


# SUMMARY OF REQUEST

## TOWN OF VALDESE APPROVAL

- ACCEPT DONATION OF MICOL CREEK PROPERTY FROM FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY OF NC



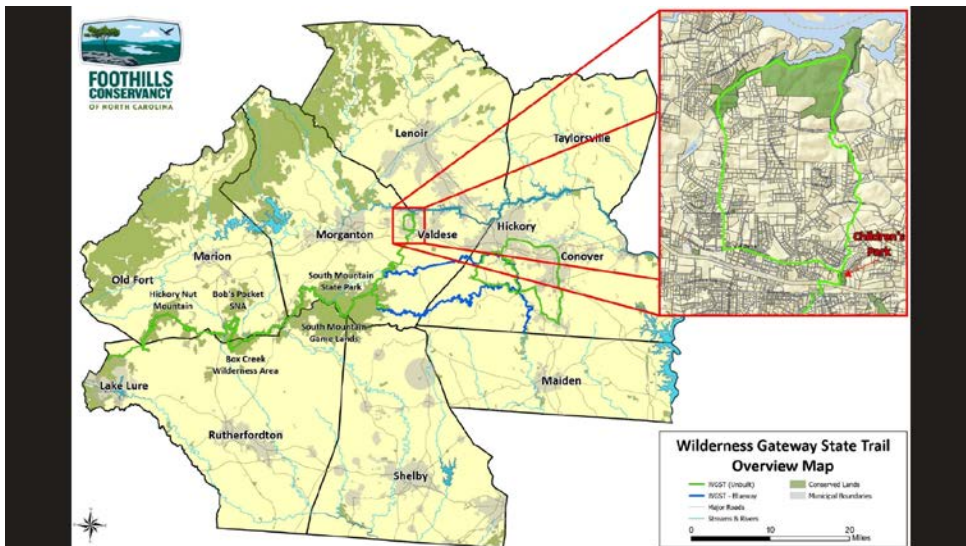


## PROJECT BACKGROUND

### WILDERNESS GATEWAY STATE TRAIL

#### NC COMPLETE THE TRAILS GRANT

- REIMBURSEMENT TO FCNC FOR INITIAL LAND PURCHASE COST
- PROVIDES UP TO \$15,000 (TRANSACTION LEGAL FEES, PROPERTY SURVEY, HISTORIC/CULTURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT)



# PROJECT OUTCOMES

## PUBLIC TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES:

- TRAILHEAD // WILDERNESS GATEWAY STATE TRAIL
- FUTURE CONNECTION // LOVELADY ROAD/ VALDESE LAKESIDE PARK
- ADDITIONAL PARKING // CHILDREN'S PARK



February 17, 2026

### MICOL CREEK PROPERTY DONATION – Town of Valdese's Childrens Park

Dear Mayor & Town Council,

Foothills Conservancy proposes to donate and transfer to the Town of Valdese a 5.69-acre tract of vacant land on US 70 East in the Town of Valdese for public trail and park purposes. The tract is across US 70 from Children's Park. (Exhibit A)

Using a NC Complete the Trails grant awarded to Foothills Conservancy, our land trust will reimburse our land purchase and transaction costs to acquire the tract in December 2022. Our intention in purchasing the land was to transfer it to the Town of Valdese for public trail and park purposes, including a future section of North Carolina's Wilderness Gateway State Trail. The grant funds awarded include up to \$15,808 in transaction (diligence) costs, including a survey.

We respectfully request the Town of Valdese's consideration to accept the land donation. Foothills Conservancy anticipates completing the land donation to the Town of Valdese this year.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Kenney".

Tom Kenney, Land Protection Director  
Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina

EXHIBIT A

Map

Micol Creek Acquisition - Complete the Trails - Property Map  
Wilderness Gateway State Trail, Town of Valdese



Mayor Pro Tem Lowman made a motion to accept the property donation, known as 101 Fat Avenue Northeast, Valdese, NC 28690, from Foothills Conservancy. Seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh.

Councilwoman Ward asked what the budget impact would be in regard to park staff mowing and maintaining the property. Mr. Andersen responded that he had staff look at the property that morning to double check their estimates and disclosed that it would take them approximately a half hour to mow the additional property. Mr. Andersen reported that this would lead to an approximate cost of \$500 annually.

Councilwoman Zimmerman noted that she did not realize until recently that pedestrians would be able to go underneath the road, as she was previously concerned about the crossing of US-70. Councilwoman Zimmerman thought this was a neat feature for folks to use.

The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**APPROVED RESOLUTION APPROVING CONVEYANCE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY TO A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION** Councilwoman Zimmerman disclosed that she was on the Board of the Waldensian Heritage Foundation, and that she needed to be recused from the conversation. Mayor Huffman acknowledged Councilwoman Zimmerman's recusal.

Fire Chief, Truman Walton, stated that the 1932 Mack Firetruck was the first firetruck purchased brand new by the Town when the fire department was created in 1932. Chief Walton continued that the old Mack Firetruck served as one of the first out engines for the Fire Department until the early 1970s. Chief Walton shared that at the time Morganton and Valdese were the only two (2) fire departments in the area, stating that the old Mack Firetruck covered and responded to most of the Eastern half of Burke County. Chief Walton shared that when Chief Charlie Watts was with the Town he had driven the old Mack Firetruck up Interstate-40 to go to the J. Iverson Riddle Parade.

Chief Walton stated that the resolution which was before Council would allow for the donation of the truck to the Waldensian Heritage Foundation, which was better known as the Waldensian Heritage Museum. Chief Walton reported that the Waldensian Heritage Foundation would house the old Mack Firetruck in their

basement for members of the public to view as they wished. Chief Walton added that the only downside was that the old Mack Firetruck would no longer be able to be utilized during parades.

Chief Walton expressed that if they were to get rid of the old Mack Firetruck, and it would leave the Town, he would be against it. Chief Walton added that he thought this was a great option to preserve the old Mack Firetruck within the Town and house it in the Museum.

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING CONVEYANCE OF PERSONAL  
PROPERTY TO A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION PURSUANT TO THE  
PROVISIONS OF N.C.G.S. § 160A-279**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Valdese owns certain personal property consisting of a 1932 Mack Type 50 Fire Engine, Vehicle Identification Number 6BG681057 (the “Truck”); and

**WHEREAS**, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160A-279 authorizes a city or county to convey personal property it owns to any public or private nonprofit entity that carries out a public purpose. Any such conveyance must include covenants or conditions ensuring that the property is used for a public purpose by the recipient. The procedural requirements of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160A-267 apply to such conveyances; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council of the Town of Valdese has declared the Truck to be surplus, obsolete, or unused personal property; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Valdese desires to convey the Truck to the Waldensian Heritage Foundation, Inc., a North Carolina nonprofit corporation recognized as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (the “Foundation”); and

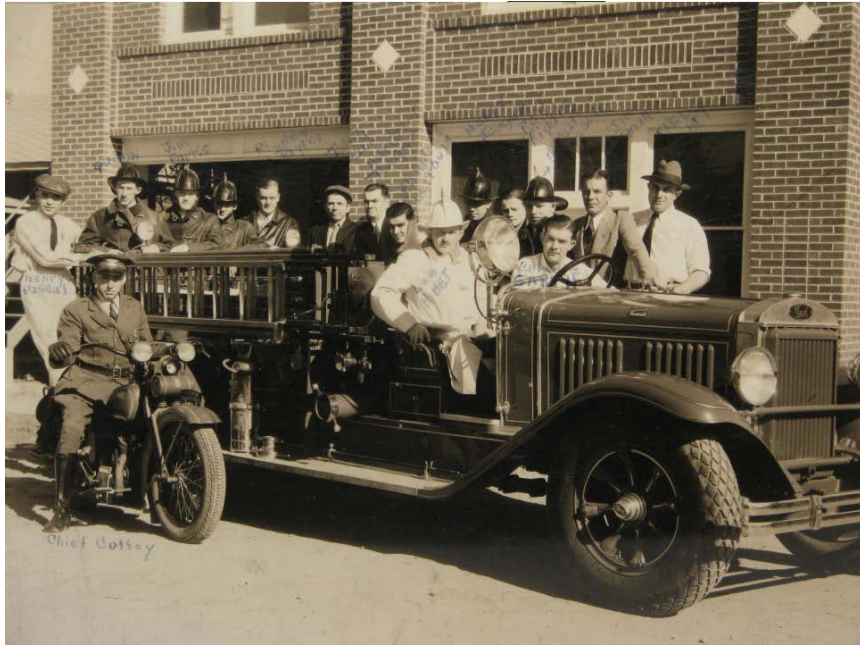
**WHEREAS**, the Foundation houses, preserves, stores, and maintains artifacts relating to the Waldensian people who first settled the Town of Valdese, for the purpose of preserving and promoting the history and heritage of the Town; and

**WHEREAS**, the Foundation will use the Truck as a publicly accessible display item for the education and enjoyment of residents and visitors; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council finds that the Foundation’s preservation and public display of the Truck serves a public purpose and benefits the citizens of the Town of Valdese.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Town Council for the Town of Valdese that:

1. The Mayor is authorized to execute all documents necessary to convey title to the Truck to the Foundation, in accordance with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160A-279.
2. The conveyance is made in consideration of the public purpose served by the Foundation’s preservation, maintenance, and public display of the Truck as part of the Town’s historical heritage. Upon transfer of title, the Foundation assumes all responsibility for the possession, storage, maintenance, condition, and use of the Truck.
3. The Truck shall be used by the Foundation solely for historical preservation, educational purposes, and public display consistent with the public purpose described in this Resolution.



A motion was made by Councilman Ogle to adopt the resolution donating the 1932 Mack Firetruck. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman.

Councilman Ogle acknowledge that representatives from the Waldensian Heritage Foundation were present and asked if they had any comments. Mr. John Heilman expressed appreciation that the Town of Valdese had considered the Foundation to house the old Mack Firetruck. Mr. Heilman provided that the Museum had just redone the basement flooring, and that other vehicles would be housed with the old Mack Firetruck. Mr. Heilman thanked the Council for thinking of the foundation and allowing them to house the vehicle.

The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**APPROVED RESOLUTION WITHDRAWING MASSEL AVE SIDEWALK PROJECT APPLICATION**

Mr. Rapp presented the following:

“This item is a resolution to withdraw the Massel Avenue Sidewalk Project, BL-0166, from the Greater Hickory MPO’s Transportation Improvement Program.

The Greater Hickory MPO periodically issues a call for transportation projects through its Locally Administered Projects Program, which provides funding assistance to local governments for eligible infrastructure improvements. Sidewalk projects are one of those eligible improvements.

This project was previously submitted through the Greater Hickory MPO's LAPP Program and was programmed into the TIP for a curb-and-gutter sidewalk along Massel Avenue SE from Rodoret Street S to Carolina Street SE.

The total estimated project cost was \$950,000, with \$760,000 in federal STBG-DA funding. As it is a pedestrian/bike project under LAPP, it would require a 20% local match, which would equal approximately \$190,000.

Given increasing cost pressures across multiple municipal priorities the Town's local share and long-term financial commitments associated with the project are cost prohibitive at this time.

Withdrawal of the project would return the \$760,000 in federal funds to GHMPO's LAPP discretionary pool for future reallocation and free up the \$190,000 in Town funding commitments previously associated with the project.

Staff therefore recommends approval of the resolution."

**TOWN of VALDESE**

**RESOLUTION**

Resolution to withdraw the Massel Avenue Sidewalk Project, BL-0166, from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan

**WHEREAS**, the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) issued a call for projects to agencies in its jurisdiction for Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP); and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Valdese submitted an application and funding was programmed for Preliminary Engineering, Right-of-Way & Utility Acquisition, and Construction for a curb and gutter sidewalk along Massel Avenue SE, Valdese starting at Rodoret Street S and ending at Carolina Street SE, identified as BL-0166 in GHMPO's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP); and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Valdese has determined that the sidewalk required by the LAPP Grant is cost prohibitive both as a singular project as well as it being cost prohibitive overall to the Town budget due to other competing projects which rose in costs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Valdese is returning \$760,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant - Direct Attributable (STBG-DA) funds to GHMPO's LAPP discretionary funding.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Town of Valdese Town Council requests that the Western Piedmont Council of Governments withdraw the Massel Ave Sidewalk Project, BL-0166, from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION IS ADOPTED THIS \_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 2026.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keith Huffman, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jessica Lail, Town Clerk

(corporate seal)

A motion was made by Councilwoman Ward to adopt the resolution to withdraw the Massel Avenue Sidewalk Project Application. Seconded by Councilwoman Zimmerman.

Councilman Ogle clarified that the adoption of the resolution would free up \$190,000 of Town funding commitments previously associated with the project. Mayor Huffman responded in the affirmative. Councilman Ogle stated that he wanted the Citizens of Valdese to know that the Council was working hard to make sure the police and fire department happened, and that this money could be used for that purpose.

The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**APPROVED - BUDGET AMENDMENT – PD PERSONNEL BUDGET** Assistant Town Manager, Bo Weichel, stated that Chief Sharpe had alluded to this amendment earlier. Mr. Weichel reported that the budget amendment was in the amount of \$9,942 and was serving two (2) purposes. Mr. Weichel disclosed that the budget amendment was covering the vacation payout of a police officer which had left the Town, continuing that this could not be included in the normal operating budget as one could not predict when an employee would leave.

Mr. Weichel stated that the second purpose was to increase the pay for reserve police officers from seventeen dollars (\$17) an hour to twenty-seven dollars (\$27) an hour. Mr. Weichel added that the seventeen dollar (\$17) an hour figure was not attracting anyone.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman noted that the Agenda Packet stated that local hospitals were paying forty dollars (\$40) an hour for security services, continuing that even though the Town was moving to twenty-seven dollars (\$27) an hour, it was still below the forty dollars (\$40) an hour being paid by local hospitals for security services.

Mr. Weichel stated that the twenty-seven dollar (\$27) an hour figure would be carried forward with the proposed budget which was to come, adding that the present budget amendment would go through to June 30, 2026.

**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, 2026:

**Section I:**

The following revenues available to the Town will be increased:

Account	Description	Decrease/ Debit	Increase/ Credit
10.3990.000	General Fund Reserves		9,942
Total		\$0	\$9,942

Amounts appropriated for expenditure are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
10.5100.020	Wages	4,110	
10.5100.050	FICA taxes	646	
10.5100.065	Deferred Contributions	206	
10.5100.070	Retirement System	660	
10.5100.022	Part time reserve officers	4,320	
Total		\$9,942	\$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.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman to approve the budget amendment to the PD Personnel Budget. Seconded by Councilwoman Ward. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**APPROVED AMENDMENTS TO THE CODE ENFORCEMENT AND ANIMAL CONTROL – CODE OF ORDINANCES** Chief Sharpe shared that the current code of ordinances was outdated and needed to be updated. Chief Sharpe noted that the animal control and code enforcement officer’s roles were under public works. Chief Sharpe stated that he, and Officer Sean Link, Code Enforcement Officer, had collaborated with Town Attorney Swanson to modify the Code of Ordinances to restructure these roles into the Police Department.

Chief Sharpe stated that he and Officer Link had collaborated with the City of Hickory for code enforcement training, and tried to adapt some of their practices in the Town of Valdese. Chief Sharpe noted that it was helpful that Town Attorney Swanson also worked for the City of Hickory, as the Town worked to align their code with Hickory's.

Chief Sharpe reported that wording was added in the Town's nuisance violations to include things related to the Controlled Substances Act, to help assist with drug situations. Chief Sharpe added that the appeals process had also been moved under the Chief of Police. Chief Sharpe shared that Officer Link had spent a lot of time rewording and reworking forms that went along with the Town's code enforcement program to get them all in line with the changes being made. Chief Sharpe stated that Town Attorney Swanson had overseen and reviewed the proposed changes.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Ward to approve the proposed amendments to the Code Enforcement and Animal Control chapters within the Town's Code of Ordinances. Seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh.

Councilwoman Zimmerman asked if the ordinance would replace the existing ordinance or come in addition to the existing ordinance. Town Attorney Swanson stated that it would replace the existing ordinance.

The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

*A comprehensive overview of the Amendments to the Code Enforcement and Animal Control chapters of the Code of Ordinances can be obtained from the Town Clerk's Office. Please Contact the Town Clerk at (828) 879-2117.*

**APPROVED RESOLUTION FOR POSTING SECURITY NOTICE 24 HOUR VIDEO SURVEILLANCE IN**

**USE** Chief Sharpe stated that the Town had various town-owned buildings that had audio and video surveillance. Chief Sharpe identified that the facilities were the Old Rock School, Public Works, the Recreation Center, and added that Town Hall should have them.

Chief Sharpe expressed what the Police Department wanted to do was put stickers on the doors that let the public and citizens know that those properties were under video surveillance 24-hours a day, and that the surveillance records were maintained and reviewed by the Valdese Police Department. Chief Sharpe reported that this made the recordings investigative records, and that by being investigative records they were protected differently. Chief Sharpe noted that by being investigative records the recordings would not be open for public view or public request, adding that a court order would have to be issued in order for files to be released.

# SECURITY NOTICE

## ■ 24-HOUR VIDEO SURVEILLANCE IN USE

This Town of Valdese building is monitored at all times by video recording systems for public safety and security purposes, in accordance with North Carolina law.

Security cameras are maintained under the authority of the  
**Valdese Police Department.**

Entry into this facility constitutes notice of video monitoring.

### A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE VALDESE POLICE DEPARTMENT AS THE CUSTODIAL AUTHORITY FOR AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDINGS FROM TOWN-OWNED SECURITY CAMERAS AND ESTABLISHING NOTICE OF SURVEILLANCE

WHEREAS, the Town of Valdese owns and operates facilities for governmental purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Town utilizes audio and video security camera systems at certain Town-owned properties to enhance public safety, protect municipal assets, support investigations, and deter unlawful activity; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council finds that centralized custodianship and review of such recordings by trained law enforcement personnel promotes accountability, evidentiary integrity, and proper handling of materials related to complaints, investigations, and criminal matters; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina law provides specific procedures and protections governing access to and disclosure of law enforcement investigative materials and recordings; and

WHEREAS, the Town desires to clarify administrative authority, handling procedures, and public notice regarding such recordings in a manner consistent with applicable law;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Town Council of the Town of Valdese, North Carolina, as follows:

#### Section 1. Designation of Custodial Authority

All audio and video recordings generated by security camera systems installed on or within Town-owned properties shall be placed under the custodial authority of the Valdese Police Department.

The Valdese Police Department is authorized to:

- a. Review and access recordings in response to complaints, incidents, or potential violations of law or Town policy;
- b. Preserve recordings for evidentiary or investigative purposes;
- c. Maintain chain-of-custody and retention practices consistent with law enforcement standards; and
- d. Administer internal procedures governing access, handling, and storage.

#### Section 2. Investigative and Evidentiary Use

When recordings are reviewed, retained, or used in connection with complaints, investigations, or criminal matters, such recordings shall be treated as law enforcement investigative material and handled in accordance with applicable North Carolina statutes governing disclosure, evidentiary use, and judicial authorization.

**MARCH 2, 2026, MB#33**

Nothing in this Resolution is intended to supersede, expand, or restrict statutory rights or obligations established under North Carolina law. Disclosure shall occur only as permitted or required by law.

**Section 3. Public Notice of Surveillance**

The Town shall display informational signage at public entrances to Town-owned buildings or facilities where security camera systems operate. Such signage shall inform the public that:

- Audio and/or video surveillance may be in use;
- Recordings are maintained under the authority of the Valdese Police Department; and
- Access to recordings is governed by applicable North Carolina law.

**Section 4. Administrative Implementation**

The Chief of Police is authorized to develop administrative procedures necessary to implement this Resolution, including:

- Retention schedules;
- Access protocols;
- Security and storage standards; and
- Documentation practices.

**Section 5. Severability**

If any portion of this Resolution is determined to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

**Section 6. Effective Date**

This Resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

**ADOPTED and APPROVED** this the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

**TOWN OF VALDESE:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
By: Keith Huffman  
Its: Mayor

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jessica Lail, Town Clerk

[AFFIX SEAL]

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman to approve the resolution. Seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh.

Councilman Ogle asked for more explanation in regard to an example case of camera footage at Town Hall. Chief Sharpe responded that if there was a camera present, and it possibly extended into the street, one could have a fight occur on camera. Chief Sharpe continued that the Police Department would then monitor that video, and maintain it as an investigative record. Chief Sharpe stated that otherwise, anyone could request it, obtain it, and view it. Chief Sharpe expressed that if the resolution were passed that footage would not be open to public view, that a court order would have to be obtained, which would be followed by a review from Town Attorney Swanson. Town Manager Herms added that this brought the Town up to standard, and that this was thought to have already been done.

The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**MANAGER’S REPORT** Town Manager Herms stated he was pleased to announce that if one rode up the road they would see a pool bubble in the air. Town Manager Herms added that it was not complete yet, and that there were still some issues, but that those issues were being worked through. Town Manager Herms reported that the issues consisted of first-time installation stuff and that he was confident that the Town would get through the issues, and that the pool bubble would go up much smoother in the years to follow.

Town Manager Todd Herms reported:

Numerous events are scheduled throughout the month of March. 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, March 30, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Council Chambers, Valdese Town Hall

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Councilwoman Radabaugh thanked Mr. Andersen for his due diligence over the past year as he worked towards getting the pool bubble erected. Councilwoman Radabaugh expressed that everyone was looking forward to being able to swim in the colder weather, and that she knew every member of the Council was happy to see it go up as well. Councilwoman Radabaugh looked forward to seeing everyone at the pool.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman thanked Chief Sharpe for his report on the state of the police department. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman expressed that the Council was listening and appreciated the police and fire staff, and what they did each and every day.

Councilwoman Radabaugh reported that the Council had the pleasure of touring the Town's different facilities over the past month, and that they were able to meet with several of the individuals that worked for the Town, adding that she appreciated every one of them. Councilwoman Radabaugh also thanked Chief Sharpe, stating that she knew his presentation was not easy to put together, that he was very informative, and that he should know that the Council appreciated him coming to work every day. Councilwoman Radabaugh added that she knew the facility he worked in was not the facility he should be working in and that the Council was doing their best.

Councilwoman Ward voiced that everyone should share the state of the department presentations. Councilwoman Ward articulated that Chief Sharpe's presentation had made her emotional, as she saw what the Town's public safety people were going through, adding that the presentation was truly moving. Councilwoman Ward proposed the reinstatement of the Citizens Academy so citizens would be able to see what the departments were going through. Councilwoman Ward added that she had gone through the Citizens Academy in the past and reported that it was eye opening to her.

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 7:53 p.m., there being no further business to come before Council, Councilwoman Ward made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman. The vote was unanimous.

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Town Clerk

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Mayor

mr