

**TOWN OF VALDESE  
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 5, 2026**

The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Monday, January 5, 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 6:03 p.m.

The invocation was offered by Reverend Matt Matthews of Waldensian Presbyterian Church, Valdese. Mayor Huffman then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENT GUIDELINES:** Mayor Pro Tem Rexanna Lowman read the following open forum/public comment guidelines: The Council shall provide at least one period for public comment per month during a regular meeting, unless no regular meeting is held that month. Any individual or group who wishes to address the Council shall inform the Town clerk, any time prior to the start of the meeting, and provide their name, address and subject matter about which they wish to speak. Person(s) must be present if they wish to address the Council. Comments should be limited to five minutes per speaker.

Open Forum is not intended to require Council or staff to answer impromptu questions. Speakers will address all comments to the entire Council as a whole and not one individual member. Discussions between speakers and the audience will not be permitted. Speakers will maintain decorum at all times. Speakers are expected to be courteous and respectful at all times regardless of who occupies the Council chairs. These guidelines will help ensure that a safe and productive meeting is held and all those wishing to address the Council will be afforded the opportunity.

Town Clerk Lail shared that no one had signed up for public comment.

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

Councilwoman Ward made a motion to remove items E and F from the Consent Agenda, asking if they could be discussed after the Proclamations of Appreciation. Seconded by Councilwoman Zimmerman. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**APPROVED SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 24, 2025**

**APPROVED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2025**

**APPROVED CLOSED SESSION MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2025**

**APPROVED BUDGET AMENDMENT – POLICE VEHICLES**

Valdese Town Council Meeting

Monday, January 5, 2026

Budget Amendment #

3-10

Subject: Patrol vehicle with upfitting

Description:

**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		65,000

Total                    \$0                    \$65,000

Amounts appropriated for expenditure are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
10.5100.740	Capital Outlay-Police	65,000	

Total                    \$65,000                    \$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.

**MOVED TO NEW BUSINESS RESOLUTION ABOLISHING TOWN COMMITTEES**

**MOVED TO NEW BUSINESS RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING UPSET BID PROCESS – 0 PRALEY ST SW**

**End Consent Agenda**

**ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA:** Item E, Resolution Abolishing Town Committees, and Item F, Resolution Authorizing Upset Bid Process – 0 Praley St. SW, were both moved to be discussed in New Business.

Mayor Huffman asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman to approve the remaining items on consent agenda, Items A through D. Seconded by Councilwoman Ward. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION – RECOGNIZED AND COMMENDED THE DRAUGHN HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY VOLLEYBALL TEAM FOR THEIR HISTORICAL 2024-2025 SEASON**

Mayor Huffman read the proclamation as follows:

## **PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION FOR DRAUGHN HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY VOLLEYBALL TEAM**

**WHEREAS**, the Draughn High School Varsity Volleyball Team achieved a historic and record-setting season during the 2024–2025 school year, exemplifying excellence, dedication, teamwork, and sportsmanship; and

**WHEREAS**, under the leadership of Head Coach Triniti Lambert in her second year and Assistant Coach Kelsey McGuire, the Wildcats completed the season with an outstanding 23–6 overall record, becoming the first volleyball team in Draughn High School history to surpass the 20-win mark; and

**WHEREAS**, the team compiled an 11–1 conference record, earning both the Western Piedmont Conference Regular Season Championship and the Western Piedmont Conference Tournament Championship; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wildcats advanced to the fifth round of the NCHSAA State Playoffs, reaching the Regional Finals, the deepest postseason run in program history and finishing just one game short of a state championship appearance; and

**WHEREAS**, following their postseason success, the team ranked 94th out of 444 teams statewide and 4th among all 3A programs in North Carolina, demonstrating elite performance at the state level; and

**WHEREAS**, the Varsity roster included Rebecca Feimster, Macy Auton, Ashlyn Heavner, Ava Kurtz, Kristyn Cozort, Braylen Clontz, Ava Aldridge, Shelby Proffitt, Bailey Mozeley, Amoree Pino, Lillian Collins, Peyton Brewer, Ella Anthony, Bella Whitson, and Kylie Corpening, with significant contributions from JV/Varsity swing players Madelyn Radabaugh, Olivia Miller, and Hayden Moss; and

**WHEREAS**, individual accomplishments further distinguished the season, including Bailey Mozeley (Senior) and Macy Auton (Junior) surpassing 1,000 career perfect receptions; and

**WHEREAS**, five student-athletes were selected to the All-Conference Team: Bailey Mozeley, Macy Auton, Shelby Proffitt, Bella Whitson, and Kylie Corpening; and

**WHEREAS**, Bailey Mozeley was named Western Piedmont Conference Player of the Year for the second consecutive year, and Coach Triniti Lambert was named Conference Coach of the Year for the second consecutive year, reflecting sustained excellence in leadership and performance; and

**WHEREAS**, the Draughn High School Varsity Volleyball Team has brought pride and distinction to their school, families, and the broader Valdese community through their accomplishments and conduct;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Town Council of the Town of Valdese that the Council hereby recognizes, commends, and congratulates the Draughn High School Varsity Volleyball Team, its coaches, and student-athletes for their historic and exceptional 2024–2025 season;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be presented to the team and entered into the official records of the Town of Valdese as a lasting expression of appreciation and community pride.

Adopted this the 5<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026.

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Keith Huffman, Mayor

The Players and Coaches from the Draughn High School Varsity Volleyball Team then posed for photos and were congratulated by the Mayor, Council Members, and Members of the Public.

**PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION – RECOGNIZED AND COMMENDED THE 2025 BURKE BRAWL WRESTLING TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONS, DRAUGHN HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLERS**

Mayor Huffman read the proclamation as follows:

## **PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION FOR DRAUGHN HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLERS**

**WHEREAS**, the 2025 Burke Brawl Wrestling Tournament was successfully hosted on December 19, 2025, at J. C. Draughn High School, bringing together all four Burke County high schools in a spirited display of athletic competition; and

**WHEREAS**, J. C. Draughn High School was proudly represented by tournament champions, Senior Gaston Garrison, Junior Diamond Vasquez, Junior Lucas Foley, and Freshman Larry Sarver, whose performances reflect dedication and hard work both on and off the mat; and

**WHEREAS**, this success is a testament to the leadership and commitment of Coaches Alex Garrison and Matt Smith, whose guidance continues to develop student-athletes and strengthen the wrestling program;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, I, Keith Huffman, Mayor of the Town of Valdese, do hereby recognize and commend the athletes and coaches of J. C. Draughn High School for their outstanding achievements at the 2025 Burke Brawl Wrestling Tournament.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be presented to the team and entered into the official records of the Town of Valdese as a lasting expression of appreciation and community pride.

Adopted this the 5<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026.

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Keith Huffman, Mayor

The Wrestlers and Coaches from Draughn High School then posed for photos and were congratulated by the Mayor, Council Members, and Members of the Public.

### **APPROVED RESOLUTION ABOLISHING TOWN COMMITTEES**

Councilwoman Ward made a motion to postpone the abolishment of the Committees until the Council's February 2, 2026 meeting. No second was provided and the motion failed.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman made a motion to abolish the listed Town Committees. Seconded by Councilwoman Zimmerman.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman disclosed that three (3) of the aforementioned committees had no one serving on them at the present moment. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman identified the Utilities Infrastructure Committee, and the Street Maintenance Committee as committees which never had any members. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman continued that the Facilities Review Committee had former Councilman Glenn Harvey recommending for the Committee to be abolished at its last meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman then looked at the Merchants Advisory Committee, where she reported that the Merchants Committee had not been under the purview of the Town until the Committee had been appointed in 2024. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman expressed that the Merchants Committee was still welcome to do their own thing, but that when they were under the Town's purview they had to follow the Town's rules. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman noted that the Merchants Committee wanted to sell hamburgers and hotdogs to raise funds, but were unable to as the Town would not allow them to raise money. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman stated that the committee did not have a lot of freedom under the Town's purview. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman shared that no one was against the Merchants Committee, that it had existed for many years, and that she thought the Committee would be able to have more freedom if they were not under the Town. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman expressed that these were her reasons for abolishing the committees.

Councilwoman Ward stated that she knew that the committees had not had any participation and that she understood former Councilman Harvey wished to abolish the Building Committee. Councilwoman Ward shared that the Merchants had approached her, noting that this was the one committee the Town had that had more people putting in applications than there were spots on the committee. Councilwoman Ward disclosed that the only reason they had missed their past two (2) meetings was due to the fact that the Committees Chair was unavailable during the meeting times. Councilwoman Ward revealed that she had received several calls from the Merchants on the Committee, who stated they were upset that it was being looked at to be abolished. Councilwoman Ward expressed that if there was anything she would look at, it would probably be the Merchants Advisory Committee. Councilwoman Ward understood they could not raise money, that it would not be anything like the Valdese Merchants Association, but that it felt like it gave them more teeth in what they were bringing to the table, rather than them coming in and presenting to Council, it gave them a chance to discuss amongst themselves. Councilwoman Ward stated that it did not affect anybody, that she was the only one on the Merchants Advisory Committee, as a liaison. Councilwoman Ward reported she would encourage the Town to keep this committee as the members had been contacting her to keep it, that she understood the abolishing of the others, but that she would urge Council to keep the Merchant Advisory Committee, just as an advisory role and not as anything else. Councilwoman Ward stated if one wanted to start the Valdese Merchants Association back up, that would be great, but that it fell by the wayside.

Mayor Huffman shared that he had received a phone call from Eddie Jolly, who had planned on speaking at the meeting on behalf of the Merchants Committee, and that based on their conversation he had withdrawn his wishes to speak and had no objections to the Committee being abolished. Mayor Huffman disclosed that the last written comments that were provided to the Council from the Merchants Committee were dated back to October of 2024. Town Manager Herms added that from a staff perspective, there was no input whether or not to have the committees, but if they were to exist, they were subject to the same public body laws as the Council. Town Manager Herms explained that this meant they had to have minutes and that all meetings had to be published and open to the public, stating that he did not believe that either one of those things had occurred. Councilwoman Ward stated that they had presented those factors to the Chair, reporting that he did not get those things to the Council and that this was on him. Town Manager Herms affirmed that he was not for or against the committees, but that whatever committees created by the elected body were subject to the same procedures as the Council or the Planning Board.

Councilwoman Zimmerman added that it was her understanding that the merchants did have a connection back to the town via the Main Street Committee, that this was an avenue where staff worked with the merchants. Councilwoman Zimmerman stated that there was a connection back to the town, whether they had their own organization or individually worked through Community Affairs, that such an avenue existed. Councilwoman Zimmerman expressed it would be great if they wanted their own committee, but that she did not know that it needed to be under the auspices of the Town.

Councilwoman Ward stated that if this was the case, she would like to do a roll call vote before they got rid of the Citizens Advisory Committees, just so that it was on the record. Mayor Huffman specified that he respected Councilwoman Ward's wishes, but that this was not a part of the Council's procedures, and that unless there was further discussion, the vote would continue.

Town Attorney Swanson clarified that the Council's Rules of Procedures actually stated that it was not a roll call vote, that it was just verbal yes and no. Town Attorney Swanson stated for a roll call vote to occur a motion would have to be made to approve that formally.

Councilwoman Ward made a motion to have a roll call vote. Seconded by Councilman Ogle. The motion failed with two (2) votes for (Councilwoman Ward and Councilman Ogle) and three (3) votes against (Mayor Pro Tem Lowman, Councilwoman Radabaugh, and Councilwoman Zimmerman).

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF VALDESE TOWN COUNCIL ABOLISHING THE MERCHANTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AD HOC FACILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE, AD HOC EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE COMMITTEE, AD HOC UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW COMMITTEE, AND AD HOC STREET MAINTENANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

WHEREAS, N.C.G.S. 160A-146 authorizes the Town Council for the Town of Valdese to create, change, abolish and consolidate boards and commissions and to organize Town government in order to promote orderly and efficient administration of Town affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council believes that the current Merchants Advisory Committee, Ad Hoc Facilities Review Committee, Ad Hoc Efficiency Task Force Committee, Ad Hoc Utilities Infrastructure Review Committee, and Ad Hoc Street Maintenance Committee should each be abolished to facilitate more efficient governance and operations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Valdese Town Council hereby abolishes the Merchants Advisory Committee, Ad Hoc Facilities Review Committee, Ad Hoc Efficiency Task Force Committee, Ad Hoc Utilities Infrastructure Review Committee, and Ad Hoc Street Maintenance Committee.

ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

THE TOWN OF VALDESE,  
a North Carolina Municipal Corporation

(SEAL)

/s/ Keith Huffman, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Town Clerk

The motion passed with thee (3) votes for (Mayor Pro Tem Lowman, Councilwoman Radabaugh, and Councilwoman Zimmerman) and two (2) votes against (Councilwoman Ward and Councilman Ogle) and the listed committees were abolished.

**NOT APPROVED - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING UPSET BID PROCESS – 0 PRALEY ST SW**

Councilwoman Ward made a motion to postpone authorization until the Council's February 2, 2026 meeting, due to lack of information and Council possibly needing to discuss further in closed session. Seconded by Councilwoman Zimmerman.

Councilwoman Zimmerman explained that the Town did not have the property advertised for sale, and that she did not see the purpose of the resolution. Mr. Weichel shared that anytime the Town received an offer on a property, it came in the form of a resolution to Council. Mr. Weichel stated that this resolution was not to sell the property, that it would just advertise that the Town was receiving upset bids for the property. Mr. Weichel disclosed that one (1) bid had already been received, and if the resolution were to be approved, all that would be done was advertisement of the property to see if anybody else had interest in it. Mr. Weichel stated that if there was no other interest, at the next Council meeting, the Council would decide on whether they wanted to sell the property or not.

Town Attorney Swanson clarified that the decision of whether or not to sell the property would always come back to Council for approval, that this was not that decision. Mr. Weichel added that the resolution was just to allow staff to advertise that they had received an upset bid, and that other bids were being taken in case there were other individuals interested in the property that could pay more for the property.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman asked if the Town was allowed to put a price on the property or if they just had to take what somebody offered, followed by the upset bid process. Mr. Weichel stated that if Council felt as if the offer was not a fair price for the property, they could decline the offer and it would not go forward. Town

Attorney Swanson added that the Town could solicit offers, that they could go out and say "I think the property is worth X and want that amount," and then if an offer was received the upset bid process would be started.

Councilwoman Ward stated that this was a lot of information, that she wished the Council had before the item was put on the consent agenda. Councilwoman Ward stated that this was the great thing about having pre-agenda meetings, that they knew what was happening. Councilwoman Ward asked if it would be better for her to withdraw the motion. Town Attorney Swanson stated that there was a motion on the table, and a second, and that he thought the easiest path forward would be to take a vote on the motion. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman asked if the Council was to vote to table the item, would they then no longer be able to discuss it. Town Attorney Swanson responded in the affirmative, that if it were to be tabled, it would not be decided on the present day, but that if the motion was denied the Council would go back to the agenda item itself and discuss the upset bid process.

The motion failed with two (2) votes for (Councilwoman Ward and Councilman Ogle) and three (3) votes against (Mayor Pro Tem Lowman, Councilwoman Radabaugh, and Councilwoman Zimmerman).

Councilwoman Zimmerman made a motion to reject the resolution. Seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh.

Councilwoman Zimmerman believed that the property had not been up for sale or advertised, and that she thought that if the Council were to sell it in the future it would be advertised accordingly with an appraised value. Councilwoman Radabaugh agreed that it needed to be open to the public so that they had more opportunity to know the property was for sale.

The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

#### **STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT – PARKS AND RECREATION**

Mr. Andersen stated he wanted to provide a quick update on the state of the department of Valdese Parks and Recreation. Mr. Andersen started off by answering the biggest question, stating that the pool was being worked on. Mr. Andersen shared that rebar cages were being put into the trenches and that the contractors were working hard, noting that they worked both on New Years Eve and New Year's Day.

Mr. Andersen expressed that 2025 had been a big year for the Parks and Recreation department, that he would start the presentation with some larger trends, and then move through his brief presentation. Mr. Andersen disclosed that the National Recreation and Parks Association numbers stated 63% of Americans were highly likely to consider parks and recreation amenities when choosing where to live and that 68% of Americans strongly agreed that parks and recreation was an important service offered by local governments. Mr. Andersen stated that the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, using Bureau of Economic Analysis statistics, cited that \$1,200,000,000,000 of economic output went to outdoor recreation in the United States, which equated to 2.3% of GDP. Mr. Andersen reported that satellite numbers from the North Carolina Department of Commerce stated that 2.1% of state GDP came from outdoor recreation. Mr. Anderson continued that 2.8% of jobs and 1.9% of payroll compensation, within the State of North Carolina, came strictly from outdoor recreation and supporting vocations. Mr. Anderson communicated that Burke County itself saw an increase in tourism dollars from 2023 and saw a 7.6% growth in tourism related employment.

Mr. Andersen reported that within the Town, citizens desired improvements and opportunities for recreation, as was outlined within the March 18, 2024 adopted strategic plan, which cited a large number of responses which indicated that opportunities and improvements for parks and recreation and public spaces were important.

Mr. Andersen recounted that the past year saw them successfully apply for the Accessible Parks Grant which saw the ramp addition to the front of the community center, as well as the tennis courts and the pool structure. Mr. Andersen was also happy to say that in approximately 10 minutes from the present moment, their first American Sign Language class was taking place at the Burke County Public Library with funds from the North Carolina Recreation and Parks Association New Initiative Grant. Mr. Andersen stated that long-standing events and traditions were continued, such as the Fun Fish Event, Junior Lifeguarding, and

the Great Waldensian Foot Race. Mr. Andersen reported that they worked with other Town departments such as the Community Affairs department for treats in the streets, and that they worked with other folks as well, like the Old Colony Players, with a highly successful Tales on the Trails event in October.

Mr. Andersen stated that they had introduced or brought back new things which would hopefully become traditions, such as the Outdoor Adaptive Recreation Day, which brought roughly 75 participants and twelve (12) different organizations to McGalliard Falls to see how the could continue to be a part of the outdoors. Mr. Andersen continued that they had their first adaptive hike on October 15, 2025, with roughly 50 participants of various ability levels and that they had the Triad Trackers wheelchair basketball team help them break in the new ramp and participate in a demo day. Mr. Andersen disclosed that their involvement with Burke County Special Olympics had allowed them to have further growth, and allowed them to grow from 115 registrations to 225 registered participants. Mr. Andersen stated that they were exploring the establishment of an inclusive recreation advocacy group and getting feedback as they moved forward with the year.

Mr. Andersen asked how this all happened. Mr. Anderson reported that they had five (5) full time staff, including himself, roughly 60 part-time that were active regularly, and that they had some seasonal folks that were present as they came back from college or on holidays. Mr. Anderson continued that they had center program supervisors, various fitness class instructors, their lifeguards, their counter staff downstairs, such as John Ray – the legend, their concession staff, and their park maintenance staff. Mr. Andersen shared that three (3) staff members had been with the Town for over 25 years and two (2) staff members who had been with the Town for over 15 years.

Mr. Anderson stated that they could not do their work without their volunteers, that just on the coaching side of things they had roughly 50 coaches that volunteered their time to help with their youth athletic programs throughout the course of the year. Mr. Anderson continued that the Friends of the Valdese Rec group, in the ten (10) years since they started, had logged just shy of 10,500 hours of volunteer service through all parks, not just Lakeside.

Mr. Anderson then referenced the participants chart in the PowerPoint. Mr. Anderson noted that some were overlapping, but that they had served over 1,000 participants in all of their different age groups, but that in this case, a lot of them were for the younger folks in Town. Mr. Andersen observed that these participants were not just residents of Valdese, but that some were from Rutherford College, Connelly Springs, Marion, and Hickory.

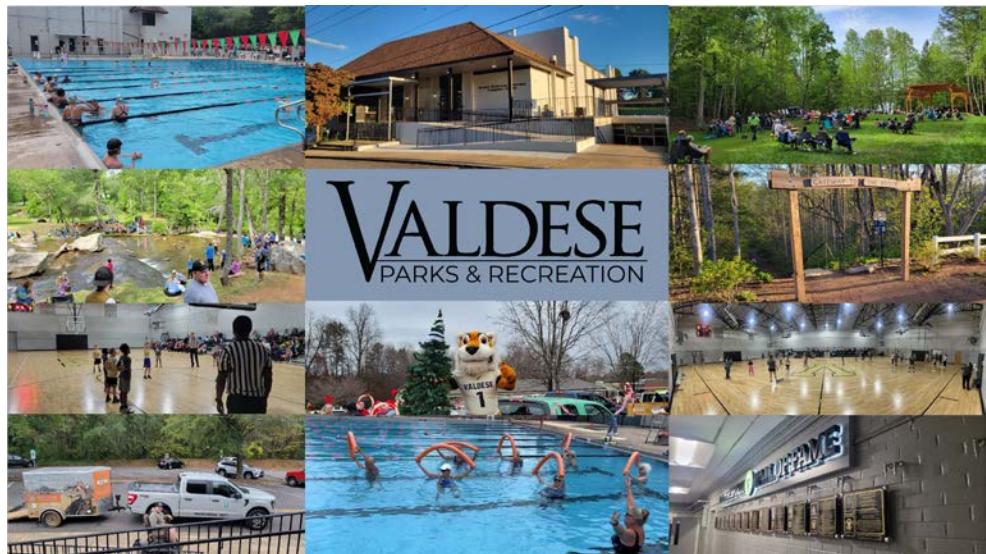
Mr. Anderson asked where all these things took place. Mr. Anderson stated that those five (5) people, plus 60, were responsible for maintaining and programming the Valdese Community Center which included the bowling alley, concession stand, fitness center, gymnasium, tennis/pickle ball courts, and Rotary Park. Mr. Andersen noted that Rotary Park was right above the pool, with picnic tables and grills, that they worked well with the Rotary Club, and that the Club did a lot to help maintain that space. Mr. Andersen looked at Children's Memorial Park, which had a ball field, picnic shelter, creek access, play equipment, and a batting cage, Fletcher Field, which had two ball fields, a concession stand, and was a part of the same plat as McGalliard Falls Park, which itself had the Meytre Grist Mill, a picnic shelter, grill, two falls overlooks, and greenway access. Mr. Anderson then looked at the Valdese Downtown Park, which was lovingly referred to as the splashpad, which had a splash pad, picnic shelter, multi-purpose building, and play equipment. Mr. Andersen moved to discuss the Tiger Gym, which was from the old Valdese High School and Junior High, stating that the facility was used largely as a practice facility, which was something the Department must have as their 14 basketball teams would be unable to practice otherwise. Mr. Andersen looked at Temple Field, where the Town worked with Burke County Public Schools to maintain this space. Mr. Andersen also identified Valdese Lakeside Park, which was over 300 acres and included a dog park, a pavilion, a fishing pier with a canoe and kayak launch, where Councilwoman Radabaugh may meet one if they were to borrow a kayak for the day. Mr. Andersen continued that there were also 12 miles of trail, including the only two (2) miles of Wilderness Gateway State Trail currently on the ground. Mr. Andersen stated that it was a part of the larger Burke River Trail system and included the McGalliard Creek Bridge. Mr. Andersen summarized that all of the aforementioned places were part of what the Parks and Recreation Department looked after and took care of throughout the year.

Mr. Andersen then looked forward and discussed what was next for the Department as one looked toward 2026. Mr. Andersen referenced that this would be discussed in the 10-year plan which was up for adoption, but that they also wanted to work to implement strategic plans, such as the Core Study which was adopted several years back, to bring more of the recreation economy which was previously mentioned. Mr. Andersen noted that a grant application for Children's Park would also be discussed, which included playground equipment, stream bank repair, a new scoreboard, restroom upgrades, and better landscaping around the memorial.

Mr. Andersen expressed that they were excited about the reopening of the pool, reestablishing year-round programming, and working with partners and the community to increase offerings to more community members. Mr. Andersen mentioned that these collaborations may be through the Friends of the Valdese Rec, Special Olympics of Burke County, Foothills Conservancy, Burke County Public Schools, and a lot of local Businesses which helped as well. Mr. Andersen provided that Bimbo Bakeries generally spent a good chunk of time doing projects around the parks, as well as Kellex, Emerge Ortho, UNC Health Blue Ridge, and Pepsi. Mr. Andersen added that if one had ever come to Fun Fish, that all drinks were provided to the Town by Pepsi at no cost.

Mr. Andersen concluded that this was the state of the Department and asked if there were any questions.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman commended Mr. Andersen on what a great job he and his staff had done, the recreation services they provided, and noted that they were provided to both the youngest citizens, and the oldest citizens of Valdese. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman noted that she was proud of the Town for the recreation facilities that they were able to provide to the Citizens. Councilwoman Radabaugh also thanked Mr. Andersen, stated that it had been a pleasure to work with him through the Rec Commission, and acknowledged all the hard work he had done. Councilwoman Radabaugh added that there was a lot of time and energy that went on behind the scenes day-in and day-out, and stated she commended and appreciated Mr. Andersen.



## The People

Staff:

5 Full Time Staff

61 Active, Part Time Staff

Center & Program Supervisors

Instructors

Lifeguards

Counter Staff

Concession Staff

Park Maintenance Staff

3 Staff with 25+ Years; 2 Staff with 15+ Years

16 Years Old to 83 Years Old

Volunteers:

Coaches: ~50 coaches/annually

Friends of the Valdese Rec: 10,458+ Hours since 2015

Program Name	2025 Participants
Baseball	83
Softball	53
Cheerleading	40
Football	64
Volleyball	38
Fun Fish	162
Indoor Soccer	66
Basketball (Including Micro)	129
Microbasketball	47
Outdoor Soccer	49
Tee Ball	55
Torpedo Swim Team	81
Junior Lifeguard	8
Spring Homeschool PE	34
Summer Swim Lessons	151
Total Participants	1060



## The Facilities

- Valdese Community Center
  - Bowling Alley, Concession Stand/Grill, Fitness Center, Gymnasium, Pool, Tennis/Pickleball Courts
- Rotary Park
  - Picnic Tables, Grill
- Children's Memorial Park
  - Ball Field, Picnic Shelter, Creek Access, Play Equipment, Batting Cage
- Fletcher Field
  - Two Ball Fields, Concession Stand
- McGalliard Falls Park
  - Meytre Grist Mill, Picnic Shelter, Grill, Falls Overlooks, Greenway Access
- Valdese Downtown Park
  - Splash Pad, Picnic Shelter, Multi-Purpose Building, Play Equipment
- Tiger Gym
- Temple Field
- Valdese Lakeside Park
  - Dog Park
  - Pavilion
  - Fishing Pier with Canoe/Kayak Launch
  - 12 + Miles of Trails
    - Greenway/ Wilderness Gateway State Trail/ Burke River Trail
  - McGalliard Creek Bridge



## What's Next?

- 10 Year Plan Adoption and Implementation
- Work to implement adopted strategic plans and bring Valdese more of the Recreation Economy
- Grant Application for Children's Park (Due January 30, 2026)
  - Playground Equipment
  - Stream bank repair
  - Scoreboard
  - Restroom Upgrades
  - Memorial Landscaping
- Re-Open the Pool and Re-establish Year Around Aquatic Offerings
- Work with Partners and Community to Increase Offerings to More Community Members
  - Friends of the Valdese Rec
  - Special Olympics of Burke County
  - Foothills Conservancy
  - Burke County Public Schools
  - Local Business Partners: Bimbo Bakeries, Kellex, EmergeOrtho, UNC Health Blue Ridge, Pepsi



**ADOPTED PARKS AND RECREATION 10 YEAR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Mr. Andersen reported that the Comprehensive Plan was put together by the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) as a part of a contract entered into in 2024. Mr. Andersen expressed that this was an important piece for the Department as it helped them score high on grant applications and also brought direction in the form of citizen input from citizen peer group meetings. Mr. Andersen noted that this data was gathered through several public meetings and a survey which had 321 responses. Mr. Andersen reported that the WPCOG spent a good amount of time in different facilities, spoke to staff and members of the public, to see exactly what the Town wanted to have moving forward.

Mr. Andersen stated that this was the first comprehensive plan since one was adopted in 2013. Mr. Andersen recommended the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilwoman Radabaugh made a motion to adopt the Parks and Recreation 10-year Comprehensive Plan. Seconded by Councilwoman Ward.

Councilwoman Zimmerman stated the plan was quite comprehensive, as its name suggested, and that it was a great document for individuals to review. Councilwoman Zimmerman asked what the alignment was referring to in the identified areas of concern. Mr. Andersen answered that this was put together by the WPCOG, that these were items that concerned Staff and needed to be a priority, and that the alignment reflected that there was alignment between citizen and staff input.

The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

**APPROVED – AUTHORIZATION TO APPLY FOR HELENE/PARTF GRANT FOR CHILDREN’S PARK**

Mr. Andersen mentioned he had previously noted this item in his first presentation and that he would reference back to this presentation. Mr. Andersen shared that the State had authorized funding through the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) Program, which was a long running grant program that the Town had applied for and received many times. Mr. Andersen stated that this was a bit of an abbreviated application as there were only a couple of months to put it together.

Mr. Andersen indicated, as had been the case with PARTF grants previously, he required approval from the local governing board for the application. Mr. Andersen shared that the Town did have private funds for their donor match, noting that this was a one (1) to one (1) match. Mr. Andersen reported that the funds were created by the NC General Assembly specifically for areas that were impacted by Hurricane Helene.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman asked how much Mr. Andersen was requesting. Mr. Andersen responded that at the present time they were looking for roughly \$130,000. Mayor Pro Tem Lowman asked if Mr. Andersen had a match for \$130,000. Mr. Andersen responded in the affirmative.

Councilman Ogle clarified that the stream bank restoration was one of the bigger things being requested. Mr. Andersen responded that the two big items for this particular project were the creek bank, making it more accessible, more of a play space, and stabilizing it so it was not a hazard. Mr. Andersen continued that the second item was upgrading the playground equipment which was over 30 years old. Councilman Ogle stated that there was no doubt that it needed to be replaced.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman made a motion to approve the authorization for the application of the Helene PARTF Grant for Children’s Park. Seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**PUBLIC HEARING TO MODIFY UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

Mayor Huffman opened the public hearing at 6:51 pm. Mr. Rapp presented the following:

“This item is a requested text amendment to Section 1.2, “Applicability,” of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

When the Town of Valdese adopted the Unified Development Ordinance, Council included a temporary provision that allowed applicants to choose between using the old zoning ordinance or the new UDO.

That was done with the expectation that the General Assembly would revise the State's down-zoning statute, which would have made the January 1, 2026 date in the ordinance legally valid.

That change has not yet happened at the state level. Because of that delay, the January 1, 2026 date currently in the ordinance needs to be adjusted to remain compliant with state law.

This amendment simply extends that transition date by six months, to July 1, 2026.

It's important to note that this is a technical and procedural change only. It does not change zoning districts, permitted uses, development standards, or how properties are regulated. It strictly adjusts the timeline language in Section 1.2.

The goal is to give the General Assembly additional time to act on proposed legislation, including SB 382, which is expected to be addressed during the Spring legislative session.

The Planning Board reviewed this amendment at its November 17, 2025 meeting and unanimously recommended approval.

Notice of this public hearing was properly advertised in The Paper on December 20 and December 27, 2025, in accordance with statutory requirements. Staff did not receive any written comments prior to tonight's meeting.

Following the public hearing, staff recommends:

- Adoption of the consistency statement, and
- Adoption of the text amendment to Section 1.2 of the Unified Development Ordinance, extending the effective date to July 1, 2026.

That concludes my presentation, and I'm happy to answer any questions."

Mayor Huffman asked if there were any members of the public that wished to speak for, or against, the proposed amendment. No comments were provided. Mayor Huffman Closed the public hearing at 6:53 pm.

## **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF VALDESE TO AMEND THE TOWN OF VALDESE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

**WHEREAS**, in 2014, the Town of Valdese (the "Town") adopted a comprehensive land use plan entitled "The Valdese Vision: A Land Use Action Plan for the Future" (the "Plan") to guide growth, development, and investments made in the Town and focus on land use, environmental protection, and infrastructure planning; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2025, the Town of Valdese adopted a Unified Development Ordinance ("UDO") intended to combine the zoning, subdivision, and Flood Damage Prevention Ordinances into one comprehensive document that simplifies the Town's Ordinances into a more readable document; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 1.2 of the UDO provides for an effective date of January 1, 2026.

**WHEREAS**, Part III, Subpart III-K of Senate Bill 382 ("SB 382") entitled LOCAL GOVERNMENT, amends N.C.G.S. § 160D-601(d) by prohibiting local governments from enacting or enforcing any amendment to zoning regulations (e.g., text amendments to zoning ordinances) or zoning maps (e.g., rezonings) that would constitute "down-zoning" without first obtaining the written consent of all property owners whose property would be subject to such an amendment; and

**WHEREAS**, due to the complications SB 382 creates for local governments, it is unclear at this time whether SB 382 will be repealed and/or what impacts, if any, SB 382 will have on the UDO. Council desires to extend the applicability provisions of the UDO until July 1, 2026 to comply with SB 382 while awaiting further clarity from the General Assembly; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Board met on November 17, 2025 and voted five in favor and zero against recommending that the Town Council amend Section 1.2 of the UDO to delay the effective date until July 1, 2026;

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Valdese has held a duly advertised public hearing to consider public comments regarding the proposed UDO amendment and found the proposed UDO amendment is consistent with the Plan.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED** that the Town Council of the Town of Valdese that:

**SECTION 1:** The UDO is hereby amended to extend the effective date thereof as described in the attached Exhibit 1 designated "Town of Valdese UDO Amendment: Section 1.2 Applicability."

**SECTION 2:** This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

**ORDAINED** by Town Council for the Town of Valdese, North Carolina, this \_\_ day of January, 2026.

THE TOWN OF VALDESE,  
a North Carolina Municipal Corporation

/s/ Keith Huffman, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Town Clerk

Councilwoman Zimmerman made a motion to approve the recommended text amendment to the UDO as presented. Seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**VALDESE TOWN COUNCIL UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT  
CONSISTENCY STATEMENT**

On January 5th, 2026, the Valdese Town Council ("Council") met to consider a Proposed Text Amendment to Section 1.2 "Applicability" of the Unified Development Ordinance after receiving a recommendation for approval from the Town of Valdese Planning Board. Upon consideration of the Comprehensive Plan (defined below), ordinances, and other materials presented, the Valdese Town Council makes the following findings and conclusions:

1. In 2014, the Town of Valdese adopted a comprehensive land use plan entitled "The Valdese Vision: A Land Use Action Plan for the Future" (hereinafter the "Plan"). The Plan identifies the type of community that Valdese wants to become in the future and the strategies that the Town will use to guide development and land use activities.
2. In 2025, the Town of Valdese adopted a Unified Development Ordinance ("UDO") intended to combine the zoning, subdivision, and Flood Damage Prevention Ordinances into one comprehensive document that simplifies the Town's Ordinances into a more readable document.
3. Section 1.2 of the UDO provides for an effective date of January 1, 2026.
4. Part III, Subpart III-K of Senate Bill 382 ("SB 382") entitled LOCAL GOVERNMENT, amends N.C.G.S. § 160D-601(d) by prohibiting local governments from enacting or enforcing any amendment to zoning regulations (e.g., text amendments to zoning ordinances) or zoning maps (e.g., rezonings) that would constitute "down-zoning" without first obtaining the written consent of all property owners whose property would be subject to such an amendment.
5. Due to the complications SB 382 creates for local governments, it is unclear at this time whether SB 382 will be repealed or what impacts, if any, SB 382 will have on the UDO. Council desires to extend the

applicability provisions of the UDO until July 1, 2026 so as to comply with SB 382 while awaiting further clarity from the General Assembly.

6. North Carolina General Statute 160D-605(a) provides, in pertinent part, as follows:

When adopting or rejecting any zoning text or map amendment, the governing board shall approve a brief statement describing whether its action is consistent or inconsistent with an adopted comprehensive or land-use plan. The requirement for a plan consistency statement may also be met by a clear indication in the minutes of the governing board that at the time of action on the amendment, the governing board was aware of and considered the Planning Board's recommendations and any relevant portions of an adopted comprehensive or land-use plan. If a zoning map amendment is adopted and the action was deemed inconsistent with the adopted plan, the zoning amendment has the effect of also amending any future land-use map in the approved plan, and no additional request or application for a plan amendment is required. A plan amendment and a zoning amendment may be considered concurrently.

7. Council finds that the proposed amendment to the UDO is consistent with and supports the Valdese Vision: A Land Use Action Plan priorities in that it, among other things, it aims to bring the UDO into compliance with current state statutes pending a final decision on SB 382.
8. The Planning Board met on November 17, 2025 and voted five in favor and zero against recommending that Council amend Section 1.2 of the UDO to delay the effective date until July 1, 2026.

Based upon the recommendation of the Planning Board and the findings from the Public Hearing, Council, having found the Proposed Text Amendment to Section 1.2 "Applicability" to be consistent with the Plan, approves the Proposed Text Amendment to section 1.2 "Applicability."

THE TOWN OF VALDESE,  
a North Carolina Municipal Corporation

/s/ Keith Huffman, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Town Clerk

A motion was made by Councilwoman Zimmerman to approve the Unified Development Ordinance Text Amendment Consistency Statement. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**CONTINUED INDEFINITELY – RESOLUTION ABOLISHING THE VALDESE HOUSING AUTHORITY**

Town Attorney Swanson recounted that this item had been tabled at the last meeting to give him more time to explore how it would be resolved. Town Attorney Swanson disclosed that he needed more time to explore resolutions. Town Attorney Swanson suggested, instead of the item returning to the Agenda repeatedly, that Council could make a motion to table the item indefinitely. Town Attorney Swanson noted that when the opportune time arose he would bring the item back to Council.

Councilman Ogle made a motion to table the resolution indefinitely. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**APPOINTMENT TO THE VALDESE PLANNING BOARD – ALTERNATE POSITION**

Mayor Huffman disclosed that there were two applicants for the position.

Mayor Pro Tem Lowman made a motion to appoint Charlie Watts to the Planning Board, as an alternate. Seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh. The motion passed with four (4) votes for (Mayor Pro Tem Lowman, Councilwoman Radabaugh, Councilman Ogle, and Councilwoman Zimmerman) and one (1) vote against (Councilwoman Ward).

**MANAGER'S REPORT** Town Manager Todd Herms reported:

Bluegrass at the Rock welcomes the Malpass Brothers – January 10, 2026, at 7:30 p.m., Old Rock School Auditorium – tickets available at [visitvaldese.com](http://visitvaldese.com)

Members of the Valdese Town Council will attend the Essentials of Municipal Government course on January 15 and 16, 2026 in Asheville, NC. A quorum may be present, but no Town business will be discussed.

Members of the Valdese Town Council will be taking site visits to different departments in January. A quorum may be present, but no Town business will be discussed.

Town Offices Closed on January 19, 2026, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday.

Old Colony Players Present: Disney Pixar Finding Nemo Jr., January 29, 30, 31 at 7:30 p.m. & February 1 at 2:30 p.m., Old Rock School Auditorium

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

Members of the Valdese Town Council will be attending the Rotary Club, on January 6, 2026. A quorum may be present, but no Town business will be discussed.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Councilwoman Zimmerman shared that she appreciated the State of the Department Agenda Item which was started on the present day. Councilwoman Zimmerman also thanked Mr. Andersen for presenting. Councilwoman Zimmerman believed this was a welcome agenda item going forward, and that she looked forward to their insights, discussions, challenges, improvements, and what they had accomplished.

At 7:00 pm, 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 Zimmerman. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

At 7:14 pm, Councilwoman Ward made a motion to go out of Closed Session, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lowman. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 7:15 p.m., there being no further business to come before Council, Mayor Pro Tem Lowman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Radabaugh. The vote was unanimous.

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Town Clerk

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Mayor

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