

**TOWN OF VALDESE  
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
NOVEMBER 4, 2024**

The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Monday, November 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall, 102 Massel Avenue SW, Valdese, North Carolina. The Council meeting was live-streamed on YouTube @townofvaldese. The following were present: Mayor Charles Watts, Mayor Pro Tem Gary Ogle, Councilwoman Rexanna Lowman, Councilwoman Heather Ward, and Councilman Glenn Harvey. Also present were: Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel, Town Attorney Tim Swanson, Town Clerk Jessica Lail, and various Department Heads.

Absent: Ward 2 Vacant Seat

A quorum was present.

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

Rev. Dr. Josh Lail, pastor of the Valdese First Baptist Church offered the invocation. Following the invocation, Mayor Watts led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION – RETIRING PLANNING DIRECTOR LARRY JOHNSON:** Mayor Watts presented Mr. Johnson with a Resolution of Appreciation:

**Whereas, Larry Johnson** began his career with the Town of Valdese on May 16, 1979, retiring after 32 years of service on May 21, 2011, but returned part-time shortly after, demonstrating a deep commitment to the Town; and

**Whereas**, over the past 45 years, **Larry Johnson's** leadership and expertise have greatly benefited Valdese, shaping its growth and enhancing residents' quality of life; and

**Whereas, Larry Johnson** has exemplified professionalism in managing the planning and zoning needs of the community, balancing growth with preservation, and fostering a collaborative approach to sustainable development that has contributed to the economic, environmental, and social well-being of Valdese; and

**Whereas, Larry Johnson** has been pivotal in transformative projects, including affordable housing initiatives, new subdivisions, sidewalk infrastructure, and the relocation of Town Hall, as well as establishing Citizens for Affordable Housing, which provided new homes for low- and moderate-income first-time homebuyers; and

**Whereas, Larry Johnson's** impact extends beyond Valdese through his service on numerous boards and committees, including the Planning Board/Board of Adjustments, WNC Railroad, Animal Control Appellate Board, Street Paving Panel, and Burke United Christian Ministries. Additionally, he was a committed member of the Burke County Affordable Housing Task Force, Burke Hospice & Palliative Care Board, and he served as Vice-Chair of the UNC Health Quality and Patient Safety Committee, making a difference across the community; and

**Whereas**, throughout his career, **Larry Johnson** has built countless meaningful relationships with both citizens and colleagues, leaving behind a legacy of wisdom, thoughtful guidance, and memorable expressions, such as his well-known phrases: "Be comfortable with your uncomfortableness," "Word on the Street," "It would behoove you," and his use of insightful terms like "privy" and "cognizant" and consistently emphasized the "Four C's" Christ, Compromise, Commitment, and Communication. At the end of each day, he always offered his signature reassurance: "Call me if you need anything and give my regards"; and

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the Town of Valdese expresses its heartfelt appreciation to **Larry Johnson** for his years of outstanding service, commitment, and contributions as Planning Director, and extends best wishes for his future endeavors; and

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**Be It Further Resolved**, that the Town Council of the Town of Valdese, North Carolina, hereby expresses its sincere appreciation and gratitude to **Larry Johnson** for his service and leadership to the Town of Valdese during the past 45 years and extends congratulations and best wishes upon his 2<sup>nd</sup> retirement.

Adopted this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2024.

/s/ Charles Watts, Mayor

**APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILPERSON – BRADY LINKOUS, 301 ST. GERMAIN AVE SE:** Mr. Linkous expressed concern over Councilman Harvey's leadership and its impact on the town. Mr. Linkous criticized Councilman Harvey for his handling of the municipal building issue, the delayed hiring of a town manager, and low employee morale due to frequent changes in leadership and public criticisms of staff. Concerns were also raised about Councilman Harvey's approach to public safety and his attempts to limit staff comments during meetings. Mr. Linkous urged the Council to assert themselves, involve the community in decisions like the Ward 2 appointment, and prioritize open, inclusive leadership. Mr. Linkous emphasized the importance of holding leaders accountable for the town's progress.

**POOL COVER – NANCY TUCKER, 210 FOREST DR NE, VALDESE:** Ms. Tucker provided the Town Clerk with a copy of her public comment.

**I am here once again to talk about our Valdese Recreation Swimming Pool and the need for the permanent building to insure access to year round swimming.**

**The Recreation Center is doing everything possible to keep us swimming. There are blankets placed over the water each evening to help keep the water warm. The blankets are removed each morning when the outside temperature is 40 degrees or above or the blankets are removed in the afternoon if the mornings are too cold. We have been so very fortunate with the warm weather lately that many swimmers continue to show up and are enjoying the 80-degree pool water. Even the high school swim teams are still practicing in Valdese. This is even more important because at our pool, there are starting blocks for the swimmers to practice their starts – something that is not offered at other county pools. Swimming outdoors in November in Valdese is only possible because of the nice weather and the hard work of the Valdese Rec staff. I want to thank them for their dedication. They are doing an amazing job.**

**You may only want to hear from Valdese residents about the desire for the permanent pool building, but there are many non-residents that use our pool. These people bring in extra revenue with their recreation memberships, pool parties and they do spend money in our town while here. So the availability of year round swimming is important to our area, the youth and adults, more than just our town.**

**The bids for construction of the pool building will be in soon, maybe by next week. I hope you, all council members, are ready to take positive action, move forward and get this permanent pool structure approved. Valdese Town Council has many important issues on the agendas but by next month you have the chance to get this one project started and off your agendas and get some positive news coming out of Valdese Town Council. Be more like**

*Larry Johnson: be responsive to the needs of the people*

**REPLACING COUNCIL MEMBERS – JEAN-MARIE COLE, 705 BERTIS ST, VALDESE:** Ms. Cole expressed concerns about the recent process for replacing a mid-term council member. Ms. Cole felt the intention was to fill the position quickly to ensure Ward representation during ongoing projects; however, the approach caused delays and public dissatisfaction. Issues included the lack of input from Ward residents, perceptions of secrecy and "backdoor politics," and the loss of a qualified candidate. Ms. Cole proposed a clearer process: allowing Ward residents to submit resumes within two weeks, giving the council two weeks to review candidates, and making an appointment at the December meeting to ensure readiness for January projects. Ms. Cole also suggested establishing a transparent, public procedure for future mid-term replacements to prevent similar challenges.

**JULY 4 DATE – JIM JACUMIN, 3690 MILLER BRIDGE RD, CONNELLY SPRINGS:** Mr. Jacumin shared the story of Red Gibson, a local veteran whose patriotism and dedication profoundly impacted the community. Mr. Jacumin said Red lived humbly in various makeshift homes, and was known for wearing military attire and marching daily to the overhead bridge in Icard with an American flag. Mr. Jacumin noted that tragically, Red was murdered in 2004, which was a loss deeply felt by his family and the town. Mr. Jacumin emphasized the sacrifices of veterans like Red, urging the Council to honor their legacy by preserving the significance of July 4. He reminded everyone that the freedoms enjoyed today are the result of immense sacrifices, calling for thoughtful consideration of actions impacting this sacred day.

**HURRICANE DISASTER/4 JULY – BLENDIA ICARD, 409 PINEBURR AVE SW, VALDESE:** Ms. Icard shared her experience of losing her home during the recent hurricane when a tree destroyed her house. Ms. Icard shared despite temporarily relocating 20 miles away; she is committed to rebuilding in Valdese, emphasizing her deep love for the town. Ms. Icard praised the Police, Fire Department, and Public Works for their exceptional service and care during the disaster. Ms. Icard also highlighted the importance of preserving Valdese's charm and community spirit, including its Fourth of July celebrations, which draw visitors from across the region. Ms. Icard would like to see it celebrated on the fourth. She expressed heartfelt gratitude to town employees for their compassion and encouraged efforts to keep Valdese a great place to live, work, and visit.

**TRANSPARENT – RICK MCCLURD, 408 GARROU AVE SE, VALDESE:** Mr. McClurd shared concerns about transparency in the process of filling town council seats, citing his own experience when applying for Ward 1. Mr. McClurd recounted confusion over Ward boundary changes that had not yet been finalized but were used to disqualify his application. Mr. McClurd said that the decision appeared to be influenced by individuals in Town Hall who did not want them considered for the position. Mr. McClurd also highlighted examples of perceived favoritism and lack of transparency in other Council appointments. He referenced instances where candidates were selected or disqualified without proper procedures, including appointing individuals who had not submitted resumes. Mr. McClurd emphasized the importance of focusing on qualifications rather than personal preferences and called for greater transparency and fairness in Council decisions.

**CONSENT AGENDA: (enacted by one motion)** Councilman Harvey removed two items from the Consent Agenda: A - Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of October 7, 2024 and D - Approval of Ordinance Declaring Road Closures for the Town of Valdese 2025 Annual Events.

**APPROVED CLOSED SESSION MINUTES OF OCTOBER 7, 2024**

**APPROVED PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDINGS WORKSHOP MINUTES OF OCTOBER 24, 2024**

**APPROVED CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE – BERRYTOWN PROJECT**

TOWN OF VALDESE  
 BERRYTOWN WATERLINE PROJECT  
 CAPITAL PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCE  
 CDBG-I PROJECT NO.: 18-I-3094  
 CDBG-I PROJECT NO.: 23-I-4160  
 CDBG-NR

Be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Valdese that pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following project ordinance is hereby adopted.

Section 1. The project authorized is the **Berrytown Waterline Project** which will replace approximately 8,215 LF of water lines to serve 81 homes, community fire hydrants and other appurtenances along Berry School Avenue, Berrytown Avenue, Berrytown Street, Bost Johnson Avenue, Bost Johnson Avenue Extension, and CV Johnson Drive in Burke County (project area). A \$56,000 portion of the grant will be utilized for planning purposes. This grant will fund the engineering report, environmental review record, and administrative tasks such as development of compliance plans and project reporting.

Through a CDBG-NR grant, the Town will upgrade waterlines and service connections to approximately fifty (50) low and moderate income households located along Berry School Avenue, Berrytown Avenue, Berrytown Street, Bost Johnson Avenue, Bost Johnson Avenue Extension, and CV Johnson Drive. All of the CDBG-NR funds will benefit low- and moderate-income persons.

Total project costs are \$3,036,775 and will be 100% funded by CDBG-I and CDBG-NR grants.

Section 2. The officers of this unit are hereby directed to proceed with the capital project within the terms of the program ordinance and the budget contained herein.

Section 3. The following revenues are anticipated to be available to contribute to this project:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Assigned Account Number</u>
CDBG-I Planning Grant	56,000	55.3000.000
CDBG-I Construction Grant	2,180,775	55.3000.001
CDBG-Neighborhood Revitalization Grant	800,000	55.3000.002
	-----	
	\$ 3,036,755	
	=====	

Section 4. The following amounts are appropriated for the project:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Assigned Account Number</u>
Planning-Engineering Report (ER)	26,000	55.8120.000
Planning-Environmental (EID)	25,000	55.8120.001
Planning-Administration (CP&FHP)	5,000	55.8120.002
Construction-Water Improvements	2,013,098	55.8120.003
Construction-Administration	167,677	55.8120.004
Water Connections (CDBG-NR)	763,225	55.8120.005
COG Administration (CDBG-NR)	33,275	55.8120.006
Planning (CDBG-NR)	3,500	55.8120.007
	-----	
	\$ 3,036,755	
	=====	

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Section 5. The finance officer is hereby directed to maintain within the Project Fund sufficient specific detailed accounting records to provide the accounting to town council required by the program procedures, loan agreement(s), grant agreement(s) and state regulations.

Section 6. Funds may be advanced from the Utility Fund for the purpose of making payments as due.

Section 7. The finance officer is directed to report quarterly on the financial status of each project element in Section 4 and on the total revenues received or claimed.

Section 8. The budget officer is directed to include a detailed analysis of the past and future cost and revenues on this project in every budget submission made to this board.

Section 9: Copies of this project ordinance shall be made available to the budget officer and the finance officer for direction in carrying out this project.

Adopted this 4th day of November 2024.

/s/ Charles Watts, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Town Clerk

Councilman Harvey made a motion to approve the aforementioned items on the Consent Agenda, seconded by Councilwoman Ward. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

**End Consent Agenda**

**ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA:**

**A - APPROVED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 7, 2024**

**1<sup>st</sup> Motion:** Councilman Harvey made a motion to amend the October 7, 2024 Town Council Minutes by replacing the summary of the Police Chief’s 25-minutes presentation with a simple reference to the complete video recording of the presentation that is available on the Town’s YouTube channel, seconded by Councilwoman Ward.

**Discussion:** Councilman Harvey does not feel the summary does justice to the presentation or Town employees and is not pertinent to what was on the table. Councilwoman Ward would like for more of what Chief Sharpe said to be shared because it was important information. Councilwoman Lowman feels that being in the minutes is a good way to share that information. Councilman Harvey said it was not a verbatim transcript; it is a summary and noted that there were mistakes and typos.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Motion:** Councilwoman Ward made a motion to table the approval of the minutes until the next Council meeting so we can see what the mistakes are, seconded by Councilman Ogle.

**Vote:** Councilman Ward – Yes, Councilman Ogle – Yes, Councilman Harvey – No, Councilwoman Lowman – No. Due to the tie vote, Mayor Watts voted No to table it.

Mayor Watts said since the motion to table the minutes was not passed, we would go back to the first motion for voting. Motion failed.

**Back to 1<sup>st</sup> Motion:** Councilman Harvey made a motion to amend the October 7, 2024 Town Council Minutes by replacing the summary of the Police Chief’s 25-minutes presentation with a simple reference to the complete video recording of the presentation that is available on the Town’s YouTube channel, seconded by Councilwoman Ward.

**Vote:** Councilwoman Lowman – No, Councilman Harvey – Yes, Councilman Ogle – No, Councilwoman Ward – No, Motion failed.

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**3<sup>rd</sup> Motion:** Councilwoman Ward made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of October 7, 2024, as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

**D - NOT APPROVED - ORDINANCE DECLARING ROAD CLOSURES FOR THE TOWN OF VALDESE 2025 ANNUAL EVENTS**

WHEREAS, the Town of Valdese desires to schedule an Fireworks Friday Night, Annual Waldensian Festival; Treats in the Streets; and the Annual Valdese Christmas Parade; and

WHEREAS, part of US 70/Main Street in Valdese will need to be closed for each of these special events; and

WHEREAS, G.S. 20-169 provides that local authorities shall have power to provide by ordinance for the regulation of the use of highways by processions or assemblages;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Valdese pursuant to G.S. 20-169 that the following portion of the State Highway System be closed during the times set forth below:

2025 Fireworks Friday Night (*Description of Closure: 1.19 mi. US 70 Main St from Hoyle St to Eldred St*) on June 27, 2025 from 5:00 PM until 11:00 PM.

2025 Waldensian Festival Kickoff Celebration (*Description of Closure: 1.19 mi. US 70 Main St from Hoyle St to Eldred St*) on August 8, 2025 from 5:00 PM until 11:00 PM.

2025 Waldensian Festival Celebration (*Description of Closure: 1.19 mi. US 70 Main St from Hoyle St to Eldred St*) on August 9, 2025 from 5:30 AM until 11:00 PM.

2025 Valdese Treats in the Streets (*Description of Closure: 1.19 mi. US 70 Main St from Hoyle St to Eldred St*) on October 31, 2025 from 3:30 PM until 6:30 PM.

2025 Valdese Christmas Parade (*Description of Closure: 1.19 mi. US 70 Main St from Hoyle St to Eldred St*) on December 6, 2025 from 9:30 AM until 12 Noon.

Signs shall be erected giving notice of the limits and times of these street closures as required by G.S. 20-169.

Councilman Harvey raised concerns that earlier this year, in June, he received complaints from local restaurant owners about the Town of Valdese being closed on July 4. He noted that residents had to visit neighboring towns to celebrate, which impacted local businesses financially. He reminded the Council of his prior inquiry in June about plans for July 2025, especially with July 4 falling on a Friday. While open to alternatives, Councilman Harvey emphasized the need for clear reasoning if the celebration is scheduled earlier than the actual holiday. He suggested postponing action on this matter until an independent study could gauge residents and businesses' preferences for celebrating Independence Day and would make that in a motion, Councilwoman Ward seconded it.

Councilwoman Ward expressed her strong support for celebrating on July 4, referencing the initial discussions in 2013 about combining the event with Family Friday Night. She highlighted that the last time Valdese celebrated the holiday on a Friday was in 2014 and advocated for a major celebration in 2025.

Councilman Harvey clarified that he had not made a formal motion and was seeking input from other Council members.

Councilwoman Lowman stated she was open to reviewing the costs of holding the event on July 4 and agreed that a thoughtful approach and further study were necessary.

Councilwoman Ward made a motion to hold the 2025 Independence Day celebration on Friday, July 4, seconded by Councilman Ogle. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

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Mayor Watts directed Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel to provide a cost analysis for holding the event on July 4. Councilman Harvey noted that the cost for the Independence Day celebration comes out of next year's budget.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Councilwoman Lowman made a motion to add Ward 2 Vacancy to the agenda, seconded by Councilwoman Ward. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

**ADDED: WARD 2 VACANCY**

**1<sup>st</sup> Motion:** Councilwoman Lowman made a motion to authorize the Manager to solicit nominations and applications from the community for the vacant Ward 2 Town Council seat so that we can consider all interested qualified applicants for the position, seconded by Councilwoman Ward.

**Discussion:** Councilman Harvey asked if we were going to ask for applications and resumes or just applications. Councilwoman Lowman said just applications. Councilman Harvey would like to have a time limit on submitting applications. Councilwoman Lowman said that in the past, interested citizens have submitted a resume as well. Councilman Harvey reviewed the process in 2022 and was concerned about issues it brought.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Motion:** Councilman Ogle made a motion to amend the original motion to add a resume process, seconded by Councilwoman Ward. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Motion:** Councilwoman Ward made a motion to amend the original motion to extend the application process to December 2, seconded by Councilman Ogle.

**Discussion:** Councilman Harvey is concerned that December 2 is too soon for people to submit applications. Councilman Ogle would like to see it stay open until the first meeting in January 2025.

**Vote:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> motion failed.

**4<sup>th</sup> Motion:** Councilman Ogle made a motion to leave the application process for Ward 2 until January 6, 2025, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

**5<sup>th</sup> Motion:** Councilwoman Lowman made a motion to authorize the Manager to solicit nominations and applications from the community for the vacant Ward 2 Town Council seat so that we can consider all interested qualified applicants for the position, adding two amendments: resume requirement to the application process, and amendment to leave the application process open until January 6, 2025, seconded by Councilwoman Ward. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

**PROCLAMATION FOR BURKE COUNTY, NC NONPROFIT DAY (AKA 1BURKEGIVES)** Mayor Watts read the following Proclamation:

Proclamation  
Burke County, NC Nonprofit Day  
(aka 1BurkeGives)

Whereas, charitable nonprofit organizations throughout Burke County save taxpayers thousands of dollars through their services and contribute significantly to the high quality of life for all citizens; and

Whereas, these organizations are committed to serving the educational, cultural, civic, health, religious, human and animal services, recreational, philanthropic, environmental, and other diverse needs of Burke County; and

Whereas, the staff and volunteers of all Burke County nonprofit organizations are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of community service, donating their time and effort to making a difference in the lives of others; and

Whereas, Tuesday, December 3, 2024, in observance of "Burke County, NC

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Nonprofit Day” (aka 1BurkeGives) provides a unique opportunity for the citizens of Burke County to join together in appreciation and support of the many contributions made by nonprofit organizations to our continued wellbeing while boosting awareness for continued growth.

Now, therefore, I, Charles Watts, Mayor of the Town of Valdese, do hereby proclaim Tuesday, December 3, 2024, as Burke County, NC Nonprofit Day (aka 1BurkeGives) and encourage all citizens to recognize the positive impact nonprofit organizations have on the quality of life of the citizens of Burke County.

/s/ Charles Watts, Mayor

Sherry Watts, Treasurer for Burke County United Way accepted the Proclamation and shared more information about the 1BurkeGives day on Tuesday, December 3, 2024. For more information visit 1burkegives.org.

**JULY 4 BUDGET CLARIFICATION:** Mayor Watts requested clarification on the budget for the July 4 event from Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel. Mr. Weichel explained that the activities for the July 4 celebration must be booked in advance, and as a result, the associated costs are accounted for in the current year’s budget as prepaid expenses.

**REVIEW OF DESIGN-BUILD APPROACH TO 215 MAIN ST RENOVATION** Councilwoman Lowman has talked to many citizens that are excited that we purchased the building at 215 Main Street and that we were looking to put a Police Department on Main Street.

Councilwoman Lowman made a motion that we authorize the Manager to issue a request for qualifications for design-build of a Public Safety Building in two phases, Phase one shall consist of the schematic design for comparison of budgetary purposes of **1.** A Police Department at 215 East Main Street, Valdese and **2.** A combined Fire and Police Department at 200 Massel Ave SW, Valdese. Phase two – The Manager shall present a DBIA contract for either the renovation of a Police Department at 215 East Main Street or a DBIA contract for construction of a combined Fire and Police Department at 200 Massel Ave SW. The options for the Phase 2 contract shall be based upon the general contractors professional input of each construction option, as well as the budgetary schematic design completed in Phase one for Councils consideration. This will look at both areas and give up input with renovating the 215 East Main Street and then what the cost would be for design-build with a Fire and Police Department at the 200 Massel Ave site that is next to the Town Hall, seconded by Councilwoman Ward.

Councilman Harvey noted that all the numbers that have been presented to date is summarized in the agenda packet.

**Vote:** The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

**200 MASSEL AVE FIRE STATION STATUS** Mayor Watts noted that this matter had already been discussed.

- I. **CONSIDERATION OF THE DESIGN-BUILD APPROACH TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BUILDING**
- II. **CONSIDERATION OF THE DESIGN-BUILD APPROACH TO SITE PREPARATION**

**APPROVED BUDGET AMENDMENTS**

- I. **HURRICANE HELENE STORM RESPONSE AND REPAIRS** Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel presented the following Budget Amendment for Hurricane Helena Storm damages that will be reimbursed by FEMA and insurance. Mr. Weichel noted that the funds will come out of our Fund Balance but will be put back in when reimbursed.



Budget Amendment # 4-10

Subject: Hurricane Helene storm response and repairs

Description: This will adjust the budget to account for the costs involved across all departments in both the General and Utility funds. Costs include damages to equipment, materials and items necessary for storm response, electrical contractor, and additional overtime required from employees. These costs will be submitted for reimbursement by a combination of FEMA and insurance.

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
10.3990.000	General Fund Balance Appr.		31,776
30.3990.000	Utility Fund Balance Appr.		679,817
Total		\$0	\$711,593

Amounts appropriated for expenditure are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
10.4250.021	Overtime	212	
10.4350.021	Overtime	732	
10.5600.021	Overtime	1,263	
10.5800.021	Overtime	350	
10.4350.150	Maintenance and Repairs	8,716	
10.6200.151	Park Repairs	15,428	
10.6250.150	Maintenance and Repairs	5,075	
30.8100.021	Overtime	8,024	
30.8110.021	Overtime	232	
30.8120.021	Overtime	1,883	
30.8110.160	Maintenance and Repairs	158,085	
30.8100.130	Generator Fuel	9,464	
30.8100.160	Maintenance and Repairs	502,129	
Total		\$711,593	\$0

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

Councilwoman Ward made a motion to approve the Budget Amendment 4-10, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

- II. **PUBLIC WORKS GENERATOR** Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel presented the following Budget Amendment for a Public Works generator. Mr. Weichel noted that during Hurricane Helena, Public Works was without power and could not run the pumps for gas and diesel fuel. A private company had to lend us a generator, which helped during this situation. Mr. Weichel said this generator would be towable so it could be used at other facilities with the right connections in place. Mr. Weichel noted that this is just for the generator and we would have to do another budget amendment for the connections.

Budget Amendment # 5-10

Subject: Public Works Generator

Description: This amendment stems from the need for a generator at the Public Works facility. During this recent emergency response, the Town's main response team was out of power for several days until a generator owned by a private company was loaned to Public Works so they could efficiently operate. This purchase would be for a towable generator allowing versatility of use during power outages if PW still has power.

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
10.3990.000	General Fund Balance Appr.		33,000
	Total	\$0	\$33,000

Amounts appropriated for expenditure are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
10.4250.740	Capital Outlay	33,000	
	Total	\$33,000	\$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.

Councilman Harvey made a motion to approve the Budget Amendment to purchase a Public Works generator, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

- III. **WATER PLANT FILTER CONSOLE CONTROLLER AND PROGRAMMABLE LOGIC CONTROLLER UPLIFT** Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel presented the following Budget Amendment for a Water Plant Filter console controller and programmable logic controller uplift. Mr. Weichel noted that this was not storm related, it is in our CIP for the future but the units are failing and we need to take action now. Mr. Weichel shared a few pictures with the Council to explain why it is needed at this time.

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Raw Water Intake

Four pumps:  
3 @ 4160 volts  
1 @ 480 volts



Pumps 1, 2, & 3



Motor Control Cabinet

4160 volts  
One each for pumps 1, 2, & 3



Motor Control Cabinet  
internal parts that  
were underwater



Motor Control Cabinet  
for Pump #4 @ 480 volt

Older unit was able to activate  
to help us limp the water plant along.

In the meantime, parts were taken off  
one of the 4160 volt units at the  
Finish Water Pump Station  
to reenergize one of the  
4160 volt units at the  
Raw Water Pump Station

Eaton (manufacturer of the MCC's)  
has been on site for testing and inspection.  
They have ordered the parts needed to get  
our main pumps back to operating.



Budget Amendment # 1-30

Subject: Water Plant filter console controller and programmable logic controller upfit

Description: To prevent flooding inside the Water Treatment facility, this amendment is to replace the filter effluent valve controller (six total) with a touch screen panel , these are all mounted on top of the filter console. The current digital controllers are failing which is causing the valves to not operate correctly. Each filter console inside the cabinet will all be upfitted with PLC's which will control the filter height that a operator will input on the touch screen controller.

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
30.3990.000	Utility Fund Balance Appr.		37,380
	Total	\$0	\$37,380

Amounts appropriated for expenditure are hereby amended as follows:

Account	Description	Increase/ Debit	Decrease/ Credit
30.8100.740	Capital Outlay	37,380	
	Total	\$37,380	\$0

Section II:

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

Councilwoman Ward made a motion to approve Budget Amendment 1-30, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

**LEAD SERVICE LINE INVENTORY PROJECT UPDATE** RJ Mozeley with McGill Associates provided an update on federal regulations impacting the Town’s drinking water, specifically the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Lead and Copper Rule. This rule requires all public water systems to develop an inventory of service lines, including those owned by the Town (from the meter to the main line). The Town began this process over a year ago and successfully secured funding, including principal forgiveness and a 0% interest loan, to support the work.

Mr. Mozeley noted that a desktop analysis was completed, and the Town submitted its initial inventory to the state agency on October 16, 2024. This analysis identified properties with unknown materials or galvanized service lines (treated as lead under the rule) for further investigation.

Next steps include:

1. Public Notification: By mid-November, letters must be sent to affected properties, detailing their status (unknown or galvanized).
2. Follow-Up Testing: Early 2025 will see “soft digs” to physically verify service line materials, reducing unknowns before the October 16, 2025, deadline when replacement mandates take effect.

Mr. Mozeley emphasized that routine testing has never detected lead in the Town’s water system, and no lead service lines have been identified through the desktop analysis. However, residents may have questions after receiving the letters, and Town staff and Council members should be prepared to address concerns.

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Councilman Ogle inquired about the availability of grant funding to assist with this project. Mr. Mozeley explained that some funding for the inventory phase is derived from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation. He added that while federal funding is available for the construction phase, it is likely not in the form of grants. Mr. Mozeley also noted that if funding is used to replace a service line, the replacement would need to extend all the way to the house.

**PROJECT UPDATES (PENDING AND ONGOING)**

- I. **HOYLE CREEK EXCAVATION AND CONSTRUCTION** Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel said the project is fully funded with \$2.2 million in grant money, including ARPA funds, and focuses on stream restoration and constructing a safe walkway alongside the road. This initiative addresses safety concerns by diverting pedestrians from the road onto a cinder path that connects to the park. Several qualified firms were interviewed through the RFQ process, and the most qualified firm has been selected. Mr. Weichel noted that contract negotiations are ongoing, with adjustments primarily focused on pricing. The goal is to present the agreement for approval at the December meeting. As ARPA funds must be spent by the end of 2026, there is urgency to move the project forward despite challenges with contractors.
  
- II. **LOVELADY TO LAKESIDE PARK SIDEWALK PROJECT** Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel said the Lovelady to Lakeside Park Sidewalk Project involves an 80/20 funding match, with the Town's share estimated at \$286,000, spread over three to four years. The project is reimbursement-based, requiring the Town to front costs and receive 80% reimbursement. Mr. Weichel notes the municipal agreement between NCDOT and the Town, required for federally funded projects, is still under review by NCDOT's Local Programs Office. Once approved, the Council will authorize it, enabling a request for funding authorization from the Federal Highway Administration for preliminary engineering and design. Mr. Weichel said while the goal was to have the agreement ready for the December agenda, delays at NCDOT may push this to January 2025. The WPCOG has been assisting with the project, with staff transitioning to get up to speed. This sidewalk will provide a safer pedestrian route along Lovelady Road, connecting the community to Lakeside Park.
  
- III. **DOT RESURFACING AGREEMENT** Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel noted the Lead Service Line Inventory Project involves identifying and addressing unknown water service line materials. Of approximately 4,000 customer accounts, 60 are confirmed galvanized, while the rest remain labeled as unknown. The process may require soft digs, including some in the middle of streets, potentially impacting street resurfacing plans. Mr. Weichel emphasized the need to coordinate these projects to avoid paving over areas that may later need excavation.

DOT project – Mr. Weichel shared he reached out to the assigned contact, District 13 Engineer Travis Henley, for updates following a recent storm. Mr. Henley advised that due to significant storm damage in western North Carolina, DOT resources, including the paving contractor Maymead, are being redirected to address \$5 billion in recovery work, including \$700 million for I-40 repairs. Given these challenges, Mr. Henley suggested the Town consider administering its own contract for paving. Efforts to follow up with Henley have been delayed due to his emergency workload, leaving limited progress on the DOT project. Discussion for the need to pause paving plans until the lead service line inventory is further along to avoid resurfacing streets that may later be disturbed for utility work was discussed.

**INTERIM MANAGER'S REPORT:** Mr. Weichel presented the following announcements:

Numerous events are scheduled for the months of November and December. A Holiday Event Calendar has been included in the reading materials for your reference. Please review the calendar for detailed information on upcoming activities.

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Town Offices Closed on November 11 in Observance of Veterans Day & November 28 & 29, 2024 in Observance of Thanksgiving

Next Agenda Review Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 18, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Council Chambers, Valdese Town Hall

Next Regular Council meeting scheduled for Monday, December 2, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Council Chambers, Valdese Town Hall

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:** Councilwoman Lowman asked Mr. Weichel to update the Council on where we are at with the estate sale on 215 Main Street East. Mr. Weichel said as part of the Police Department renovation project, the first step involved the department tagging items they deemed necessary to keep. Following this, staff, including the Town Clerk, Ms. Lail, and Chief Sharp, documented all remaining items through photographs to create an inventory. These photos were shared with several auction companies to gauge interest. Two companies, Deitz Auction and Auctions Unlimited, declined due to a lack of viable items. Heavner Auction reviewed the photos but expressed no interest, aside from a safe the Police Department had already retained for their use. Iron Horse Auction conducted an on-site visit but did not proceed with an auction. With no viable auction options, staff moved the tagged items out of the building and relocated the remaining furniture downstairs. Local businesses and the merchants committee were then invited to claim any items that could be repurposed.

Councilwoman Ward expressed gratitude for the work of Patriot Relief, which has been in Valdese building 30 temporary tractor sheds for individuals living in tents in the mountain regions. These efforts include providing mailboxes, donated anonymously, to help recipients receive FEMA checks and complete necessary paperwork, addressing challenges often overlooked. Samaritan's Purse was also praised for their extended relief efforts in Watauga County, with operations continuing until November 30. Councilwoman Ward encouraged others to volunteer; noting how the experience offers a deeper appreciation for what we often take for granted and highlights the blessings in Valdese compared to the devastation elsewhere. Patriot Relief and Samaritan's Purse were commended for their contributions, with a call for contractors, electricians, and volunteers to join their efforts. Those interested can contact Star Franklin or Lee Brown, who are leading local initiatives. Councilwoman Ward encouraged the community to keep affected mountain residents in their thoughts and prayers.

Councilman Harvey provided a copy of his comments to the Town Clerk:

"The western part of NC has never known more weather-related death and destruction than Hurricane Helene, which roared through here on September 27. The response from the survivors of Helene across the State, especially from Catawba County westward, has been nothing short of amazing. The outpouring of love for fellow mankind has been unprecedented in thousands of examples, showcasing our community's unity and strength in the face of adversity received national news coverage, if not as much as it should have.

Hundreds, if not thousands of Valdese residents have been helping the victims of Helene in numerous ways – from contributions of time and money. The contributions have been made through dozens of local churches and countless nonprofit organizations that many of us had never heard of. Many of those operations, such as Samaritan's Purse, Mercy Chefs, Crowdsourc, the Cajun Navy, and other national agencies, set up base camps in tents in the mountains and on church campuses, establishing communication centers for their operations and with remote residents through Starlink's broadband internet. While we have been reading about relief missions in Morganton, Long View, and other neighboring towns, there did not appear to be a Valdese-based event that merited news coverage until this past weekend. A nonprofit group of Realtors and contractors descended upon Valdese Friday. Approximately 100 volunteers from across NC, SC, and GA unloaded shells and materials on Church Street to construct twenty-three buildings to house people in Swannanoa and other communities living in tents where their homes once stood.

As those insulated shelters, complete with generators, refrigerators, mattresses, and lights, are being delivered to desperate but thankful people, are we reading about Valdese's role in this unique relief effort? No, and that is the sad segue to my second topic.

Valdese employees learned about this project midweek, and our police and public works staff immediately jumped in and offered support. Otherwise, that was about it. Did our town newsletters inform citizens about this wonderful, Valdese-based demonstration of love and hope? Friday's did not—perhaps another day. And what about our local news media? Last Friday, all of the local newspapers and TV stations in Asheville and Charlotte were notified of this Valdese event.

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What have we read about Valdese in local newspapers since Friday? HATE—and that is a sad commentary on the publicity given to Valdese.

HATE promotes readership, whereas LOVE doesn't deserve coverage. The Saturday edition of one of our local papers gives special placement to the most hateful email messages ever sent to the Valdese Town Council. That message of hate that Roger Heavner received was what drove him to resign. That messenger of hate is the most powerful force in Valdese. His message of hate determines who will or will not serve on the Valdese Town Council.

This is a sad place for our town to be, with the examples of love of humanity all around us.”

Mayor Watts thanked Councilwoman Lowman and Councilwoman Ward for their multiple trips to the mountains and the supplies and donations that were delivered. Mayor Watts shared that Treats in the Streets and the Bluegrass concert at the Old Rock School had big turnouts. Mayor Watts announced that Larry Johnson would be the 2024 Grand Marshal for this year's Christmas Parade. Mayor Watts noted that Mr. Johnson was the longest serving employee the Town has ever had.

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 8:15 p.m., there being no further business to come before Council, Councilwoman Ward made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman. The vote was unanimous.

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Town Clerk

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Mayor

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