MINUTES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
OF THE
TOWN OF STALLINGS, NORTH CAROLINA

The Town Council of the Town of Stallings met for its regular meeting on October 26, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at the Stallings Government Center, 321 Stallings Road, Stallings, North Carolina.

Those present were: Mayor David Scholl; Mayor Pro Tempore Brad Richardson; Council Members Steven Ayers, Mike Couzens, Graham Hall, and Jon Van de Riet.

Those absent were: Council Member Laurie Wojtowicz.

Staff present were: Alex Sewell, Town Manager; Assistant Chief James Perry; Max Hsiang, Planning Director; Kevin Parker, Engineering Director; Jessie Williams, Finance Officer; Eunice Donnelly, Parks and Recreation Director; Melanie Cox, Town Attorney; and Chrissy Baucom, Administrative Assistant/Deputy Town Clerk.

Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance and meeting called to order

Mayor David Scholl welcomed everyone to the meeting and Council Member Jon Van de Riet delivered the invocation. Mayor Scholl then led the Pledge of Allegiance and called the meeting to order.

Special Presentation
Samuel Smith, Boy Scout Troop 174
Eagle Scout Project

Parks and Recreation Director Eunice Donnelly introduced Samuel Smith who completed a foot bridge in Blair Mill Park as his Eagle Scout Project for Boy Scout Troop 174.

Public Comments

Joe Horvath stated he wanted to address inconsistencies in the traffic reporting on Stevens Mills Road and the neighborhoods present at the time. It was stated the Town knew of more homes coming to the area. He stated it was 6.2% annual growth. He also stated that on January 8, Mayor Scholl told a neighbor he wanted to see the traffic revisited, had the authority but chose not to revisit it. Mr. Horvath stated that Council Member Van de Riet told him in March that he wanted to see the intersections at Shannamara studied, had the authority but chose not do it. Mr. Horvath stated he had it studied by NCDOT who said it warranted a signal. He said it could have been studied in the TIA but the Council chose not to do it. He stated that Council was considering spending $9000 on communications when the money could

pay for the light. He stated the Council could fine the developer $10,000/acre for clearing too early that could also go toward the light. He wanted to know why anyone would adhere to the Town's rules if they could break them without consequence.

Gina Palandri, 1023 Feather Oak Lane, was concerned about fiber construction and showed pictures to the Council concerning the fiber installation in Callonwood. She stated there were loose cords, gas leaks and cut lines, holes left unfilled, heavy machinery left in people's yards, and water leaks. She stated all those conditions were dangerous. The pictures that Ms. Palandri shared are attached to these minutes and therefore incorporated herein.

Pam Burton, 1101 Sarandon Drive, was concerned about fiber installation in Callonwood and was the HOA president. She did appreciate all the Town Council and Staff were doing about the situation. She stated she that was concerned with all the issues and holes. She stated it was hard to document and thought the companies were hoping the residents would just give up and go away. She stated there was a house fire due to some of the installations from companies that did not have encroachment agreements and stated it was no longer just a nuisance but about real lives. She requested only one company at a time working in the neighborhoods so that it was clear who was causing the problems.

Karen Knudtsen, 3424 Shadow Lake Lane, was concerned about fiber construction. She stated there was an incident where a weapon was drawn and police were called. She was concerned about escalation if other companies came into the neighborhood. She said Google was getting ready to start another phase and she was concerned about more escalation happening from residents who did not want them in their yard.

1. <u>Consent Agenda</u>
   A. Minutes
      (1) 09-14-2026
      (2) 09-28-2026
   B. Ordinance Adopting the Code of Ordinances Supplement 16
   C. Fiber Advocacy Letter
   D. Amended Budget Ordinance 2 – Police Department State Bonuses
   E. Speed Limit Change on Matthews-Indian Trail Road

Council Member Richardson made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was passed unanimously by Council after a second from Council Member Ayers. The *Ordinance Adopting the Code of Ordinances Supplement 16* and *Amended Budget Ordinance 2 – Police Department State Bonuses* are attached to these minutes and therefore incorporated herein.

2. Reports

A. Report from Mayor

Mayor Scholl had no report.

B. Report from Council Members/Town Committees

Council Member Ayers thanked Town Staff for cleaning up the Town owned storage building. He also enjoyed and appreciated Stalloween.

Council Member Hall concurred with Council Member Ayers' comments and mentioned he also had concerns about fiber companies as they were also in his neighborhood.

Council Member Couzens reported that he had been in contact with new owners in Stinson Farms and had invited them to come to speak to the residents of Shannamara. He commended Town Staff on going out to measure the buffers of the site to make sure they were current. Mr. Couzens thanked all the residents who came to the meeting to speak about fiber and encouraged them to reach out to state representatives.

Council Member Van de Riet commended Town Staff for Stallings Fest. He also shared the residents' experiences when it came to the fiber companies.

Council Member Richardson invited everyone to the Porter Ridge/Sun Valley Football game as his company was sponsoring the food for the team for that game.

C. Report from Town Manager/Town Departments

Town Manager Sewell reported the following:

- Budget Line Items Transfer List – The *September 2026 Budget Line Item Transfer List* is attached to these minutes and therefore incorporated herein.
- Thanked the Parks and Recreation Staff for the recent events.

3. Agenda Approval

Council Member Hall requested adding a closed session for attorney-client privilege as Agenda Item 6.B. Council Member Couzens made the motion to approve the Agenda with the above addition. The motion was seconded by Council Member Van de Riet and passed unanimously.

4. Communications Strategic Assessment and Plan Consultant

A. Proposal

Town Manager Sewell reminded the Council that it reviewed the Town's communications and directed several low-cost improvements during the budget process, while opting not to add a dedicated

communications position due to cost concerns. Since that decision, several members of the public had continued to share concerns and ideas about Town communications with Council members. At Mayor Pro Tem Brad Richardson's invitation, the Mayor, Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager met with Dr. Julie Hill to discuss the Town's current practices and opportunities for improvement.

As outlined in the September 25 Council update, Dr. Hill prepared a proposal for an independent assessment and strategic communications plan. Staff recommended approving the proposed engagement with Dr. Hill and the $9,000 budget amendment as an independent assessment would help Council evaluate communications needs and practical options, with attention to resident access to information, staff capacity, and measurable results. The complete proposal is attached to these minutes and therefore incorporated herein.

Dr. Hill was present and discussed the proposal with the Council. Council Member Richardson made the motion to approve Communications Strategic Assessment and Plan Consultant proposal as well as Amended Budget Ordinance 3 for the project. Council Member Van de Riet seconded the motion. The motion passed by a four to one vote with Council Member Couzens opposing. *Amended Budget Ordinance 3 - Communications Strategic Assessment and Plan Consultant* is attached to these minutes and therefore incorporated herein.

B. Amended Budget Ordinance 3

This item was addressed during the previous Agenda Item.

5. Landscaping

A. Potters/Pleasant Plains Intersection

Engineering Director Kevin Parker reminded the Council that at the September 28, 2026, Town Council meeting, Council requested that staff evaluate potential landscaping and beautification opportunities at the intersection of Potter Road and Pleasant Plains Road and return with high-level options for consideration. Staff reviewed the intersection and consulted with a landscape designer regarding plant materials that may be appropriate for the existing roadway medians. The Staff Report on this topic is attached to these minutes and therefore incorporated herein.

Council held consensus to have Staff to continue pursuing the project, refine the preferred concept based on Council feedback, coordinate the proposed improvements with NCDOT, develop a more detailed landscaping plan, and obtain installation and maintenance pricing before returning to Council for further consideration.

B. Town Hall

Engineering Director Kevin Parker explained that landscaping improvements around Town Hall were included in the Town's approved budget to help address erosion while also improving the appearance of several under-landscaped areas. Phase 1 of the project, which focused on the parking lot area, was completed in Fall 2025.

As staff prepared to move forward with the next phase, one item required Council direction: whether to retain the existing mature crape myrtles or remove and replace them as part of the landscaping improvements.

Council held consensus to remove the crape myrtles in front of Town Hall due to their invasive root systems, provided the project remained within budget and the trees were confirmed not to have historical significance.

6. Park Benches *(Couzens)*

Parks and Recreation Director Eunice Donnelly reminded the Council that at its request, Staff was providing Council with preliminary research on the possibility of establishing a memorial bench program in Stallings. A program could give residents and families a meaningful way to honor a loved one while supporting seating in our parks and along greenways. Staff recommended developing a draft policy and a cost-based fee for Council's consideration before opening applications.

Council discussed its options, proposed eligibility rules, locations, fees, and maintenance commitments. It held consensus to have Staff obtain cost estimates for the benches and their maintenance and bring information back for Council consideration.

6.A. Closed Session Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3)

Council Member Richardson made the motion to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3). The motion was seconded by Council Member Hall and passed unanimously by Council.

Council recessed into closed session at 8:24 p.m. and reconvened into open session at 9:15 p.m.

7. Adjournment

Council Member Van de Riet moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council Member Couzens, and the motion received unanimous support. The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Approved on November 9, 2026.

s/David Scholl
David Scholl, Mayor

s/Erinn Nichols
Erinn E. Nichols, Town Clerk

Approved as to form:
s/Cox Law Firm, PLLC
Cox Law Firm, PLLC