



**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.
WEDDINGTON TOWN HALL
1924 WEDDINGTON ROAD WEDDINGTON, NC 28104
AGENDA**

1. Call to Order

The Regular Town Council Meeting of the Town of Weddington was called to order by the Mayor at 7:00 PM on Monday, September 14, 2026, at Weddington Town Hall, 1924 Weddington Road, Weddington, NC 28104.

2. Determination of Quorum

A quorum was established with all Council members present. It was noted that Councilmember Ladner would be departing early at approximately 8:45 PM.

Present: Mayor Jim Bell, Mayor Pro Tem Tom Smith, Councilmember Darcey Ladner, Councilmember Ellen McLaughlin, Councilmember Tripp Soukup

Staff Present: Town Administrator/Clerk Doug Gailey, Administrative Assistant Debbie Coram, Finance Officer Lelsie Gaylord, Permit Technician Aditya Roy, Town Attorney Kevin Bringewatt and Deputy David Plyler

Visitors Present: Paisley Gordon, Rob and Cathy Dow, Joseph and Gladis Marvil, Liz Holtey, John Houston, Sonja Houston, David Burgess, Clayton Jones, Rick Turner, Erica McKinley, Chris Faulk, Bill Deter, DM Bunch, Michael Shea, Paul Pennell, Stefan Nemenz, Tom Snyder, Wendy Shaw, Jacky Grine, Joyce Plyler, Mark Horoschak, Doug and Courtney Warner, Wendy Squire, Alex Nainovan, Tracy Stone

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance

4. Additions, Deletions and/or Adoption of the Agenda

The Mayor requested that agenda item 11.B.i — Consideration and Possible Adoption of Resolution 2026-05 regarding Centralina Regional Council membership — be moved up to be

heard together with the related Centralina presentation under item 8.1, as both items addressed the same subject matter.

Motion- A Motion to adopt the agenda as amended was made Mayor Pro Tem Smith.

Vote- The motion carried unanimously

5. *Conflict of Interest Statement: In accordance with state law, it is the duty of every Council member to avoid conflicts of interest. Does any Council member have any known conflict of interest with respect to any matters on the agenda? If so, please identify the conflict and refrain from any participation in the matter involved.*

The Mayor read the Conflict of Interest Statement into the record. No Council members declared any conflict of interest with respect to any matters on the agenda.

6. Mayor/Councilmember Reports

Mayor Bell reported that Senate Bill S4505, the zip code bill, passed the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on August 6th by a bipartisan vote of 10 to 5. Thank-you letters were sent to Senators Rand Paul, Rick Scott, and Johnny Isakson for their efforts in advancing the legislation.

Councilmember McLaughlin expressed personal gratitude to the Rotary Club for recognizing the heroism of September 11th. He reported that, following conversations with the Town of Marvin regarding shared employment recruitment challenges, she and Town Administrator Doug Gailey met with Centralina Regional Council representatives and found the engagement highly beneficial. She also provided an update on ongoing drainage and runoff issues affecting the Bromley subdivision resulting from the Luna development, noting that a meeting had been held with two affected homeowners and Toll Brothers, and that a follow-up meeting was being scheduled to address remaining concerns.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith thanked the Rotary Club and former Mayor Horn for their work in displaying commemorative flags, which were to remain up through Veterans Day in recognition of the 25th anniversary of September 11th. He reported that the next WUMA meeting was scheduled for the 24th at 3:00 PM at Mineral Springs. Regarding road improvements, he noted that work on the stoplight at Antioch Church Road and Forest Lawn Drive was expected to begin within the next two months, with the contractor currently completing work at another intersection. He acknowledged that no additional road paving projects beyond the current fiscal year's contracted streets had been announced.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith then addressed publicly circulating misinformation regarding a proposed town park project. He stated that claims of a \$10,000,000 park expenditure were factually inaccurate and that no Council member had ever proposed or supported a project of that cost. He provided context on the Town's financial reserves, noting that Weddington currently holds \$9,700,000 in cash reserves, which substantially exceeds both state and town-mandated minimum reserve requirements. He further noted that a public input workshop was scheduled for Saturday,

September 19th, from 1:00 to 5:00 PM at Weddington Middle School, and encouraged residents to attend and provide feedback.

Councilmember Ladner delivered a prepared statement addressing the same misinformation circulating on social media and in local media. She clarified that as of August 31st, the Town's general fund held \$6,800,000 in unassigned fund balance, separate from \$820,000 in assigned fund balance, and that the Town holds \$9,200,000 in total liquid cash and investments. She emphasized that no Council member had reviewed, supported, or voted on a \$10,000,000 park project. She addressed the claim that the Council had eliminated community input, stating that the September 19th workshop was specifically designed to accommodate working families by using a larger venue and a weekend time slot. She outlined the park planning timeline as follows: resident input in September, public feedback presentation in October, Council review in November, and a potential final design delivery by year-end. She encouraged residents to participate and stated that all related documents, contracts, and estimates are handled in open session under applicable legal and ethical protocols.

Councilmember Soukup noted that he had recently passed his two-month anniversary as a Council member and reported that he was continuing to integrate into Council processes, participating in staff interviews, and engaging with Centralina Regional Council and other ongoing projects.

The Mayor echoed the comments of his colleagues regarding misinformation, cautioning residents to seek information directly from Council members rather than relying on social media. He invited the public to contact Council members with questions and reiterated the importance of attending the September 19th community input session.

7. Public Comments

Mariciel Goldstein, 6123 Greystone Drive, addressed the Council on behalf of the Weddington Action Network to report on a community petition opposing the advancement of the town park project. She stated that the petition, launched on August 31st, had collected approximately 700 signatures within two weeks. She clarified that the intent of the petition was not to permanently stop the park project, but to pause its progress until residents could be provided with full transparency regarding the scope of work, estimated costs, tax implications, staffing requirements, maintenance logistics, traffic impact, parking needs, and safety and security considerations. She requested that a formal town survey be distributed to all residents before any decisions are made, and acknowledged that the September 19th workshop appeared to be a constructive step toward resident engagement. She also raised a question about how all residents were being notified of the upcoming meeting and the availability of relevant information.

In response to questions from Councilmember McLaughlin, Ms. Goldstein confirmed that the petition's purpose was to pause, not to permanently stop, the project, and expressed appreciation for the planned community meeting. Council members noted that all town business is conducted in open session and that transparency remains a guiding principle throughout the process.

Clayton Jones, Panhandle Circle, addressed the Council regarding the Town's financial reserves, questioning whether the accumulation of nearly \$10,000,000 in reserves indicated that tax rates had historically been set higher than necessary. Mayor Pro Tem Smith responded that a significant portion of the reserve balance resulted from federal ARPA and COVID-related funding received during the pandemic, which the Town retained while maintaining its standard operating budget. He further explained that state regulations prohibit municipalities from intentionally running a negative budget to draw down reserves or reduce tax rates. Mr. Jones also raised the issue of ADA accessibility at Town Hall, noting that certain areas of the building, including restroom facilities, may not be fully accessible to residents with disabilities.

Richard Turner, a long-term Weddington resident, addressed the Council regarding the park planning process. He acknowledged the Council's explanations regarding the \$10,000,000 figure but suggested that much of the public confusion could have been avoided had community input been solicited at the outset, before the project advanced. He questioned where the original idea for the park had originated and expressed the view that determining public desire upfront would have been a more effective approach. He also noted that Weddington's historically larger lot sizes and rural character distinguish it from other municipalities and expressed the opinion that road and traffic improvements should take priority over recreational amenities.

8. Presentations

1. Presentation from Centralina Regional Council regarding membership benefits. *Kasia Thompson, Director of Strategic Engagement and Technical Services, and Lynne Hair, Director of Regional Planning, presented on behalf of Centralina Regional Council. Ms. Thompson provided background on the organization, noting that Centralina was formed in 1969 under federal legislation, has operated in North Carolina since 1972, and currently serves 9 counties and 70 member communities. The organization employs 50 staff members across 6 departments including strategic engagement and technical services, regional planning, community and economic development, workforce development, and the Area Agency on Aging.*

Ms. Thompson outlined the benefits of membership, including access to educational and professional development resources, strategic guidance and best practice information, peer and expert networking, and federal and state advocacy. Fee-based technical services available to members — at rates generally lower than the private sector — include grant writing support, facilitation, strategic planning, staffing studies, and HR policy guidance. Annual membership dues are \$3,687, calculated at approximately \$0.25 per resident.

Ms. Hair described the regional planning services available, including comprehensive land use plan development, development ordinance creation and amendments, GIS mapping services, planning and board of adjustment training, and on-call planning support. She noted that Centralina had already been providing on-call planning assistance to Weddington for several months and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with the town.

Council members raised questions about the relative cost of technical services for members versus non-members, the value of membership given recent staff hirings, and whether a long-term contract would be required. Ms. Thompson confirmed that member rates are more favorable than non-member rates, that the annual membership can be discontinued with appropriate notice, and that no long-term contractual obligations are imposed. Town Administrator Doug Gailey expressed his support for membership, citing the value of having subject matter experts available for consultation, particularly as the Town builds its planning capacity and considers strategic planning work.

This item was considered in conjunction with agenda item 11.B.i, the adoption of Resolution 2026-05.

Motion- To approve Resolution 2026-05 to rejoin with other municipalities in the membership of the Centralina Regional Council was made by Councilmember McLaughlin.

Vote- The motion carried unanimously.

Centralina representatives indicated that membership approval would be presented at their October 14th Board of Delegates meeting, and invited the Town to appoint a delegate or send a representative in the interim.

2. Initial Presentation from Copper Builders for Maple Gate subdivision Parcel 06147008A

Lynne Hair, Regional Planning Director for Centralina, introduced the item and provided a planning staff overview. She noted that the applicant, Copper Builders, is seeking approval for a 27-lot single-family residential subdivision on approximately 42 acres located off Weddington Matthews Road in the RCD zoning district. Single-family residential is a permitted use within RCD. Staff's review indicated that the proposal meets most minimum requirements under the Town's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), including lot size minimums of 40,000 square feet, required setbacks (50-foot front, 40-foot rear, 15-foot side, 25-foot corner side), tree save requirements of 30 percent, and a 100-foot landscape buffer along Weddington Matthews Road. The overall density is approximately 1.5 units per acre.

Ms. Hair flagged several items requiring further attention: the UDO's provision that no more than 50 percent of required open space may consist of wetland area, which the applicant would need to address through updated calculations; tree save areas located on platted lots rather than common area, which could create maintenance issues in the absence of a functioning HOA; the need to identify the type and buffer width of streams running through the property; and the requirement that the main driveway entrance receive DOT approval.

Paul Pinnell of Urban Design Partners presented on behalf of the development team, joined by Michael Shay and Stephan Nemes of Copper Builders. Mr. Pinnell described the project as a low-impact development, emphasizing that the site would not be mass graded. Public roads would be constructed with drainage swales, homes would be built on a foundation style, and clearing would be limited to areas immediately associated with individual homesites. The development proposes three ponds, including an existing farm pond, a mail facility, and a monument entry feature incorporating natural stone, iron fencing, and timber. Lot pads are planned at 80 by 80 feet to allow flexibility in home design.

Mr. Pinnell addressed wetlands and stream features on the site, noting that a jurisdictional delineation had been completed identifying wetlands and two intermittent streams. The development plan avoids the secondary stream area entirely. He also reported that a professional consultation for endangered species, including the Schweinitz's sunflower, was conducted approximately 2.5 months prior with no presence identified, and that a follow-up site visit was scheduled for that week during the sunflower's bloom period to confirm those findings.

Mr. Shay provided background on the property owner's decision to select Copper Builders, noting that the landowner intends to remain on the property and that Copper Builders was chosen for their reputation as an infill builder with a record of attention to detail and sensitivity to existing neighbors. Mr. Nemes described the anticipated product as high-end custom homes ranging from approximately 4,000 to over 7,000 square feet, with projected prices from \$2,000,000 to over \$3,000,000, featuring premium exterior materials including stone, brick, and stucco.

Council discussion focused on several issues. Councilmember McLaughlin raised the matter of the proposed emergency access connection to Fernhurst Terrace, a private road within the adjacent Bromley community. Mr. Pinnell acknowledged that this connection would require ongoing discussions with the Bromley HOA, noting that the gate is proposed as a Knox box emergency-access-only connection and would not serve as a general public thoroughway. The applicant noted that there may be a potential benefit to the Bromley community if the connection enables NCDOT to assume maintenance responsibility for a portion of the private road, though the bridge design presents a separate complication as it was not built to NCDOT standards. Council members raised questions about whether the bridge could structurally support emergency vehicles, whether a cul-de-sac or turnaround provision would be required given the road configuration, and the proximity of the proposed side-load driveways to existing Bromley properties. Mr. Pinnell stated that the setback on the affected side lot had been increased from approximately 15 to 30 feet in response to feedback from a prior community meeting. He also confirmed that a tree save area supplemented with additional plantings would be provided adjacent to existing residential properties even though the UDO does not require buffering between like uses.

The Mayor and Council encouraged the development team to maintain high quality and value standards consistent with the character of Weddington, and noted that the project would next proceed to La Bella Engineering review and the Town's Planning Board prior to returning to Council. No formal action was taken on this item.

9. Public Safety Report – Deputy Plyler

Deputy Plyler reported routine activity for the prior month, including over 600 patrols, over 80 business checks, and over 120 security checks. He highlighted a sobriety and safety checkpoint conducted in coordination with the Union County Sheriff's Office, the NC Highway Patrol, and the Town of Waxhaw at a location adjacent to the Weddington town line near Southbrook Church. The checkpoint, which ran from 8:00 PM to 1:00 AM, resulted in over 60 charges and 7 arrests, including 4 DUI impairment arrests. A magistrate, jail nurse, and detention staff were on site, enabling on-scene processing and booking. One notable incident occurred at the outset of the checkpoint when the second vehicle stopped attempted to flee, nearly striking a deputy before being pursued and apprehended. Upon search of the vehicle, deputies recovered drugs, money, and firearms. Deputy Plyler noted that the individual had been traveling in the direction of Weddington at the time of the stop. The Mayor commended the effort and the level of interagency coordination involved in organizing the checkpoint. In response to a Council question regarding school traffic, Deputy Plyler noted that traffic patterns near school zones appeared consistent with those of prior years.

10. Consent Agenda

- A. Approve August 3, 2026 Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. Appointment of Town Administrator/Clerk Doug Gailey as Deputy Finance Officer
- C. Appointment of Councilmember Tripp Soukup as the responsible Councilmember for reviewing the bank statement reconciliation

Motion- To approve the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Mayor Pro Tem Smith

Vote- The motion carried unanimously.

11. Discussion/Action items

A. Old Business

- i. Discussion on proposed updates to the Nuisance Ordinance
Code Enforcement Officer Matt Rea presented the proposed revisions to the Town's Nuisance Ordinance, describing the update as a modernization of the existing code intended to streamline administrative processes, provide additional enforcement options, and better reflect the character of Weddington. He noted that

since the previous Council review, changes had been made in response to Council feedback, including simplification of the dead animal definition, a blanket exemption for agricultural uses from the grass height provision, and revisions to the appeals process to route appeals through the Town Administrator or Town Planner rather than the full Council.

Two sections — parking regulations and home occupation standards — were removed from the current ordinance in light of recent changes in state law that will require more comprehensive review and separate action. The parking provisions will involve amendments to both the municipal code and the UDO, as state law no longer permits parking minimums for any use. Home occupation provisions will be addressed solely through the UDO. A sound ordinance amendment is also planned, with further discussion needed on its placement within the municipal code and/or UDO. The applicant indicated these additional items would be brought back to Council in October or November.

Council discussion confirmed that Section D-919 (Temporary Structures and Uses), which covers recreational vehicles, was excluded from the current vote as it requires Planning Board review prior to Council action. Council expressed support for proceeding with the remaining provisions.

Motion- To approve the revised Nuisance Ordinance, excluding Section D-919, was made by Mayor Pro Tem Smith.

Vote- The motion carried unanimously.

B. New Business

- i. Consideration and possible adoption of Resolution 2026-05 to rejoin with other municipalities in the membership of the Centralina Regional Council.

This item was heard in conjunction with the Centralina presentation under agenda item 8.1. See that section for full discussion and the recorded vote.

- ii. Discussion and possible affirmation of the Council's desire to hire Part Time Permit Technician Aditya H. Roy.

The Mayor introduced Aditya H. Roy as a candidate for the part-time Permit Technician position. Mr. Roy holds a Master of City and Regional Planning from UNC Chapel Hill and a Bachelor of Science in Public Health, also from UNC Chapel Hill. His relevant experience includes a Development Finance Fellowship with the UNC Development Finance Initiative, service as Senior Editor of the Carolina Planning Journal, and an internship with the City of Charlotte. Council members expressed strong support for the candidate, noting his thorough engagement with the UDO and his initiative in the permitting process.

Motion- To affirm the hiring of Aditya H. Roy as Part-Time Permit Technician was made by Mayor Pro Tem Smith.

Vote- The motion carried unanimously.

- iii. Discussion and possible affirmation of the Council's desire to hire Ryne Ratti as the Town Planner.

The Mayor introduced Ryne Ratti as the candidate for Town Planner. Mr. Ratti is a Marine Corps veteran, having served in special operations with multiple deployments to Afghanistan. His professional background includes service as Transportation Planner/Analyst with the Nevada Department of Transportation, where he led development and management of Nevada's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, coordinated multimodal transportation projects, and ensured compliance with federal planning requirements. He holds extensive experience in land use coordination, public involvement, project review, policy implementation, data analysis, and interagency collaboration. He is currently pursuing additional certification through Harvard University.

Council members commented on the strength of the candidate relative to others considered during the search process, the deliberate nature of the search to find the right fit for the team, and the value Mr. Ratti's experience in strategic planning and GIS would bring to the Town. Councilmember Bell noted that Mr. Ratti demonstrated a consistent commitment to self-improvement that aligned well with the Town's needs.

Mr. Ratti was sworn in as Town Planner by the Mayor following the vote.

Motion- To affirm the hiring of Ryne Ratti as Town Planner was made by Councilmember McLaughlin.

Vote- The motion carried unanimously.

- iv. Appointment of Ryne Ratti as the Floodplain Administrator

Motion- To appoint Ryne Ratti as the Town's Floodplain Administrator was made by Mayor Pro Tem Smith.

Vote- The motion carried unanimously.

- v. Direction to Town Administrator

Mayor Pro Tem Smith presented several items for staff follow-up, which Council discussed and affirmed by consensus:

Dark Intersections/Street Lighting: Mayor Pro Tem Smith reported that Union County had identified two intersections within Weddington as candidates for safety lighting improvements — specifically, the intersection of 12 Mile Creek Road and Beulah Church Road, and potentially the intersection of 12 Mile Creek Road and Newtown Road. He noted that the county indicated Union Power, in coordination with NCDOT, would install the fixtures, with the municipality responsible for ongoing monthly utility costs. Staff was directed to contact the county's representative, Bjorn Hansen, to obtain cost and process information for the Beulah Church intersection. Separately, Council directed staff to explore whether the Newtown Road intersection could be addressed on a cost-sharing basis with the adjacent jurisdiction.

Three-Way Stop Study at 12 Mile Creek Road and Beulah Church Road: Council directed staff to request that NCDOT conduct a study to evaluate the feasibility of converting the current one-way stop at 12 Mile Creek Road and Beulah Church Road into a three-way stop configuration, given the documented history of traffic incidents at the location. Mayor Pro Tem Smith noted that no improvement to this intersection is currently included in NCDOT's five-year plan.

Park Property Fire Ant Treatment: Mayor Pro Tem Smith requested that staff obtain cost estimates for treating the town-owned park property for fire ants, noting that the warm season is the appropriate time for effective treatment. Council directed staff to explore the use of agricultural treatment services for this purpose.

Mast Arm Traffic Light Replacement: Mayor Pro Tem Smith noted that the replacement of existing light poles with mast arm fixtures at the main intersection near Town Hall has been a budgeted item for multiple years. Council directed staff to contact NCDOT's representative to obtain cost information and process requirements, with awareness that such projects typically require two budget cycles to complete.

Roundabout Landscaping: Mayor Pro Tem Smith noted that funding for landscaping improvements at the roundabouts on Weddington Road — specifically the one near Town Hall and the one near the school — has been included in the current year's budget. Council directed staff to confirm pricing with the town's landscaping contractor, Lance Barbie, and initiate the planting process by the appropriate season, with planting expected to begin in November.

Street Light Repairs: Mayor Pro Tem Smith noted that multiple streetlights on the west side of Providence Road appear to be non-functional. Staff was directed to investigate the cause and coordinate repairs. Staff noted that two previously damaged poles are on order and that payment has been issued to Gary Electric for their installation, with work expected to occur shortly.

GIS System Renewal: Councilmember McLaughlin directed staff to renew the Town's GIS system membership or subscription, noting that the newly hired Town Planner has extensive GIS experience and the system would be placed into active use.

12. Reports

A. Update from Park and Events Committee

Town Administrator Doug Gailey reported on behalf of Committee Chair Gail Butler, who was unable to attend. The committee is actively planning the annual Christmas Lighting Event, scheduled for November 20, 2026. The event will include the traditional appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Claus, food trucks, entertainment, and new holiday elements to be announced at the October meeting.

B. Transportation Report

The Mayor reported that the Charlotte regional transportation organization's vote on a pending matter is scheduled for Wednesday, September 23rd. As a board member of the short-range regional transportation organization, the Mayor noted the vote is expected to draw significant public and media attention.

C. Update from Finance Officer and Tax Collector

Finance Officer Leslie Gaylord reported that monthly financial reports for August were included in the Council packet. She noted that the Town is currently operating at an apparent loss for the month, which is typical at this stage of the fiscal year, as the majority of property tax revenue is not collected until November and December. Tax bills have been sent, with a technical due date of September 5th and a delinquency date of January 6th. She indicated that she will bring a budget amendment to the October meeting to address adjustments related to recent hirings and other changes. She also reported that the fiscal year 2025 audit has been submitted to and received by the Local Government Commission (LGC), with comments received that day to be addressed. Auditor Ann Craven is expected to present the completed audit to Council at the October meeting, at which time the contract for the fiscal year 2026 audit will also be executed.

D. Update from Town Planner

No report was provided, as Town Planner Ryne Ratti had just been appointed. A report will be included beginning at the October meeting.

E. Update from Town Administrator and Clerk

Town Administrator Doug Gailey provided two updates. First, regarding a previously directed appraisal of the town's cell tower site, he noted that the matter remains pending FAA review related to a flight plan consideration and that further progress would be deferred until that review is complete. A qualified appraisal firm has been identified but placed on hold.

Second, he reported that a cost estimate had been obtained for five 15.6-inch laptop computers for staff use, with a total cost of \$4,303. Council expressed general support and directed staff to confirm whether existing Microsoft 365 licensing arrangements would accommodate the additional devices.

F. Council Comments

Councilmember McLaughlin expressed gratitude to staff and the Town Administrator for managing a heavy workload during the recent period of staff transition and expressed optimism about the team now being assembled.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith thanked members of the public for their attendance and engagement, and commended existing staff for maintaining operations during the period in which multiple positions were being filled simultaneously. He expressed confidence in the newly assembled team.

Councilmember Soukup expressed enthusiasm about the direction of the Town's staffing and looked forward to the team's collective impact going forward.

The Mayor announced that Council would be approving and swearing in members of the Weddington Youth Council at the October meeting, and encouraged residents to attend the September 19th park input workshop and to contact Council members directly with any questions about town matters.

13. Closed Session Pursuant to NCGS 143.318.11(a)(3)

- A. To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body.

The Council recessed for a brief break prior to entering Closed Session.

14. Adjournment

The council meeting was adjourned at 10:11 pm. Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to adjourn and the motion carried unanimously