

News from Woodfin

Summer 2023 Newsletter

From the Mayor

A lot has been happening since our last news letter. The Greenway project along with the whitewater wave project is progressing with more and more being done to speed up progress. At present, we are working on the permitting which is holding up some of the work at the present time, especially where the river is concerned. We are steadily working on this part, but it just takes time. Keep watching and you will soon begin to see some progress (for more information on the park and it's status refer to page 6).

In addition to a lot happening behind the scenes for Riverside Park and the Wave, you will also soon to see more going on at our Silver-Line Park. New rest rooms are coming along with the possibility of pickle ball courts.

In other news, we are hopeful that we will have a location for a new Town Hall in the near future. We are really in need of more room as Woodfin is continually growing and more space is needed for our Police Department and other town staff members.

While you might hear a lot from press releases relating to various projects, I hope the citizens of Woodfin will continue to share your opinions with us. I very much value your opinions and thoughts as we move along.

Should you need to contact me at any time, please feel free to call or set up a meeting with me at the Town Hall. After all, I am here to serve you.

Jerry

Meet Your Elected Officials

Woodfin Town Council

Woodfin's council members serve staggered, four-year terms. Four of the seven seats are up for re-election this fall, including mayor. Please consider attending one of the upcoming candidate events open to the general public:

- The League of Women's Voters Candidate Meet & Greet - **Thursday, Oct. 12th, 6-9 p.m.**
- Candidates Forum - **Thursday, Oct. 26th, 5-9 p.m.**

Both events will be held at the Woodfin Community Center located at **23 Community St.**

Mayor M. Jerry VeHaun

JerryVeHaun@Woodfin-NC.gov | Term: 2019 - 2023

After serving as Woodfin's mayor for 20 years, Jerry has made the decision not to run this fall making room for new leadership. We are grateful to Jerry for his guidance and support over these many years and we look forward to working with Woodfin's next mayor on the town's goals and priorities.

Vice Mayor Jim McAllister

JimMcAllister@Woodfin-NC.gov | Term: 2021 - 2025

Currently serving as Vice-mayor, Jim has made the decision to run for the office of the mayor this fall. If elected, the council will appoint someone to fill Jim's council seat.

Council Member Judy Butler

JudyButler@Woodfin-NC.gov | Term: 2019 - 2023

Council member Butler was appointed in February 2022 and will not be running this fall. We appreciate Judy's willingness to step in and share her knowledge and experience to help guide the town over the last couple years.

Council Member Eric Edgerton

EricEdgerton@Woodfin-NC.gov | Term: 2021 - 2025

Council member Edgerton was elected in 2021 and will continue to serve through 2025.

Council Member Elisabeth Ervin

ElisabethErvin@Woodfin-NC.gov | Term: 2019 - 2023

Council member Ervin was appointed in February 2022 and has filed to run this fall to hold on to her council seat.

Council Member Ronnie Lunsford

RonnieLunsford@Woodfin-NC.gov | Term: 2019 - 2023

Council member Lunsford was elected in 2019 and has served on Woodfin's Town Council for over 15 years but has decided not to run this fall. We thank council member Lunsford for his interest and support in making Woodfin a strong community—we will miss his good nature and fun-loving sense of humor.

Council Member Hazel Thornton

HazelThornton@Woodfin-NC.gov | Term: 2021 - 2025

Councilmember Thornton was elected in 2021 and will continue to serve through 2025.

We wish all of the candidates well as they pursue their campaigns this fall!

Mayor: Jim McAllister & Jason Moore

Council: Elisabeth Ervin (i), Johanna Young, Ken Kahn, Josh Blade

Town Manager

Progress Report

Dear friends,

It's hard to believe that it has been over a year since I joined the staff in March of 2022. In the last newsletter, I reported on some of the accomplishments and what we might look forward to in the coming year. I'm happy to report that we have made good progress on many of those items, as summarized below.

- Initiating construction of the new Riverside Park and Taylor's Wave. Important milestones to initiate construction have been achieved but the construction schedule has shifted to avoid work during the months where the river levels are highest. We expect to break ground in the first quarter of 2024 with the bulk of the river work to occur in the summer months.
- Completion of an inventory and assessment of the town's stormwater infrastructure. Complete! We are now reviewing the inventory and working on a priority list for repair and maintenance.
- Completion of a feasibility-needs assessment for a new Town Hall / Town Center. Underway with an anticipated completion this fall.
- Completion & adoption of the town's Comprehensive Plan. Underway with an anticipated adoption date before the end of the year. A draft of the plan will be available for public review and input this fall.
- Exploring additional park amenities at Silver Line Park. A community survey identified pickleball courts as the highest priority so the town has contracted with a local design firm to update the park masterplan to add pickleball courts and permanent restroom facilities. Restrooms are expected this fiscal year with pickleball courts planned for a later phase.
- Fully staffing our Police Department and other strategic public safety enhancements. The town council prioritized public safety this year by approving a new Captain position as part of the current 2024 FY budget, while successfully recruiting several new officers. Other enhancements included on-call pay, tuition reimbursement, new vehicles

and radios, the launch of several new community policing initiatives, and plans for a new evidence processing area.

- Initiating feasibility studies for multi-modal improvements to Riverside Dr. and a greenway connection between Woodfin and Weaverville. A recent effort to obtain a grant to study improvements along Riverside Dr. was unsuccessful, however, the Town did receive a grant to study the feasibility of a greenway connection between Woodfin and Weaverville along with a second grant to look at multi-modal improvements throughout the town.

While we work to address council and community priorities, our regular work plans allow opportunity for other accomplishments and we are proud to share some other announcements:

- Congratulations to Lt. Christopher Ammons on his promotion to Captain and to officer Brad Wright on his promotion to Detective.
- Congratulations to Officer Colbey Mahaffey on being recognized as "Officer of the Year".
- Town staff were successful in securing two additional grants to help fund the improvements to Riverside Park and Taylor's Wave.
- Town staff received two transportation grants to 1) study the feasibility of a greenway connection between Woodfin and Weaverville, and 2) to develop a multi-modal plan throughout the town.
- Congratulations to Adrienne Isenhower on her promotion to Project and Facilities Director.
- Woodfin Police Department revived the National Night Out event this year with a better than expected attendance. Planning for next year has already begun!
- Town Finance staff received another clean audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, which will aid the Town in maintaining our positive rating with creditors and regulatory agencies .

Administration

Important News & Events



There's a lot happening in Woodfin—here's a summary of some of the more noteworthy news items and events.

Woodfin Business Association

Are you a business owner or manager in Woodfin? If so, please consider joining the new Woodfin Business Association at our upcoming event at Silver-Line Park on Thursday, September 28th at 5:30 pm. The town is assisting in completing the legal process and we plan to be fully operational this Fall. We hope to see you and your family at Silver-Line Park on the 28th.

Discouraging the use of single-use plastics

At their regular August meeting, the Woodfin Town Council passed a Resolution in support of banning single-use plastics including plastic bags, plastic and Styrofoam take away food containers, straws, and utensils. This ban will not go into effect until Buncombe County adopts a county-wide ordinance. In the interim, voluntary compliance is encouraged.

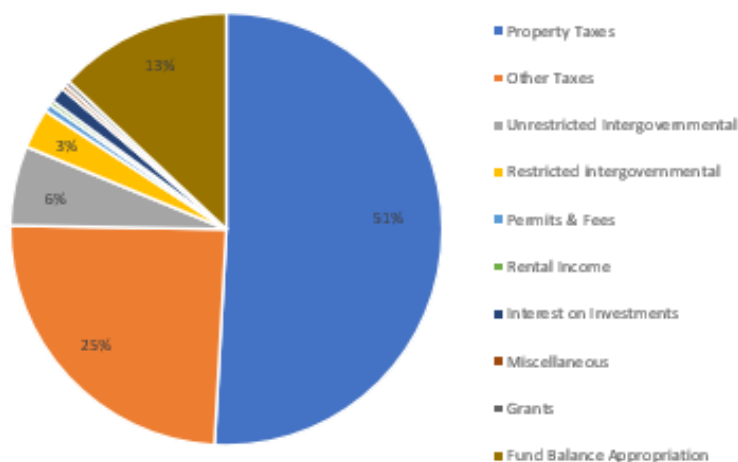
Stormwater Program and Fee

Residents should have received an invoice for a new stormwater fee to support the town's stormwater program mandated by the state of North Carolina. This fee will be used primarily for education, enforcement and monitoring, and for maintaining the town's stormwater infrastructure. Please visit the town's stormwater page with FAQs for more information. www.woodfin-nc.gov/ (look for the "Stormwater Fee" banner at the top).

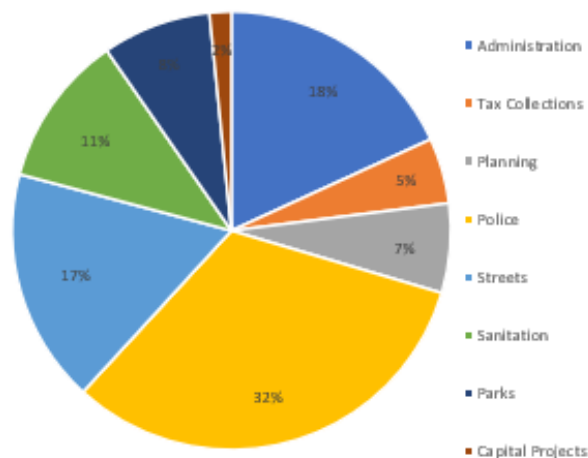
Budget Update and Highlights

The town's general fund budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 went into effect on July 1st and totals approximately \$8M. Here's a simple breakdown of both the town's Revenues and Expenditures.

FY24 Revenues



FY24 Expenditures



Stay connected to what's happening in the town!

If you would like to receive alerts and notifications via email or phone, sign-up on the town's website at www.woodfin-nc.gov/ (go to the "Sign up for Alerts" button at the bottom of the page) or call (828) 253-4887 and staff can enter your information into the system.

You can also follow us on social media (see back page of the newsletter for QR codes and web addresses).

Administration

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Community Partner Program

In our last newsletter we announced that the Town of Woodfin Town Council adopted the Community Partner Program that established an open and transparent process that would allocate town funds to local service providers in the areas of **Education, Neighborhood & Community Development**, and **Human Services**. As part of this program, the town issued grants to **ABCCM, River Link, Buncombe County Schools** and **Catholic Charities**. The town also passed a Resolution to support **Asheville Buncombe Community Land Trust** to help secure affordable housing in Woodfin, and renewed in-kind donated facilities and services to support the Woodfin Community Market and the annual Woodfin Elementary School 5K event. We are pleased to share the following report on those respective grant recipients.

Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM)

ABCCM began as a small collaboration of churches in 1969 and has grown to over 300 member churches today. Just as it was in 1969, ABCCM's mission is to provide emergency assistance for families in crisis. With Woodfin's support, ABCCM was able to assist 30 Woodfin families over the last six months. This support included:

- Rental assistance to 19 households, preventing displacement
- Utility assistance to 11 households, maintaining essential services to families experience hardship and stress

In addition, 10% of those families served were non-native English speaking, and 100% were connected to other services. ABCCM's volunteers make it possible for the North Samaritan Crisis Ministry located at 403 Weaverville Hwy. to help our neighbors in need with food, clothes, and other household items. If you have items to donate, you may stop by between the hours of 10AM—2PM, Monday-Friday.

Asheville Buncombe Community Land Trust (ABCLT)

The ABCLT is a non-profit in our region whose mission is to provide permanently affordable housing to people of low-moderate income, allowing them to thrive, prosper, and break the cycle of poverty. The Town of Woodfin passed a resolution committing up to \$200K in matching funds to ABCLT to secure up to four permanently affordable homes in Woodfin. Stay tuned for news on ABCLT's progress in Woodfin.

Woodfin Community Market & Catholic Charities

As we mark the 3rd anniversary of the Woodfin Community Market, we'd like to acknowledge those entities and volunteers who have made this possible. MANNA Food Bank has provided food for this market from the beginning. During the early stages of the pandemic, only prepackaged boxes of food could be offered to individuals but, now the foodbank is back to the "client choice" model which allows people to select the foods they prefer as if shopping in a grocery store. The Town of Woodfin stepped in early on to offer use of the Woodfin Community Center, a perfect facility for this outreach, allowing visitors to be inside regardless of the weather to shop for their families and those who cannot make it to the market in person.

In early 2021, Catholic Charities joined in to offer their services as an existing MANNA partner agency. Not only did Catholic Charities provide their own team of volunteers, they have also been providing some essential non-food items such as diapers and other personal hygiene products to those visiting the market. A grant from the Town of Woodfin has allowed Catholic Charities to increase and expand the supply of non-food essentials. Catholic Charities also manages the volunteer sign up process and keeps track of the monthly data that MANNA requires to support this work.

To all of you who have worked so hard to make this monthly event possible, thank you! To date, we have served over 4,000 families representing over 20,000 individuals.

River Link

The Town was happy to support our new partner, River Link, with a grant that brings river-based, experiential learning to Woodfin Elementary students providing a combination of in-class and field based science education to the town's children.

Donate Now!

The town's community partners will continue to serve Woodfin residents through the end of the year; however, future funding will be dependent on community support. Please consider making a donation to these and other programs. Donations may be made online at www.woodfin-nc.gov/ (go to the "Donate Now" button). Thank you!

Community Profile

Church of the Redeemer

We recognize that the strength of our community is due in large part to our residents, but also to our local businesses and institutions. We thought it would be nice to profile some of the valuable contributions that our business and service partners provide.

A Local Historic Landmark

The Church of the Redeemer is a small, native stone cruciform chapel built in the Romanesque style and sited on a bluff overlooking the French Broad River in Woodfin. As one of town's few historic landmarks, the Church of the Redeemer embodies both artful construction and local history. The building features leaded stained glass in round-arch windows, including a Tiffany window signed by Louis Tiffany, banded slate roof tiles on a hammer beam roof, and finely crafted rood and rood screen introduced in the late teens. Dr. Francis Willis, a British physician, constructed the building on his private estate between 1886 and 1888 as a place of worship primarily for his patients. Influenced more by his British heritage than that of his adopted country, Dr. Willis broke the color line that separated the races. He not only attended to the physical needs of both whites and blacks but invited them to worship in common brotherhood. To serve the black communicants, however, a special cottage was erected, but the increasing presence of Jim Crow legislation and its effects upon the society soon brought an end to the black ministry. In 1898 Willis gave the church and land to the Asheville Missionary District of the Episcopal Church in America, later to become the Western Diocese



Leaded stained-glass window by Louis Tiffany honors fallen soldiers of WWI.

of North Carolina. Originally called St. Philip's, the chapel was consecrated as the Church of the Redeemer on June 29, 1901. The building is only about 50 feet in length with thick stone walls constructed of locally quarried ashlar. Also included on the property is a small cemetery behind the church.

The Church is atypical for its geographical context and represents the opening up of western North Carolina to, and consequently the importation of, national and international culture following the arrival of the railroad in the late 1880's.

Led by Rev. Bob Reese and other church leaders, the Church remains active today with 45 member families and continues to serve residents with Holy Eucharist every Sunday at 9:45 a.m. and Thursdays at 11:00 a.m. Followed by a free lunch. All are welcome!

Tours can be arranged by calling the church at (828) 253-3588.



A hand-carved rood screen was added in 1920 and separates the sanctuary from the pulpit.

Parks & Recreation

Woodfin Greenway & Blueway Update

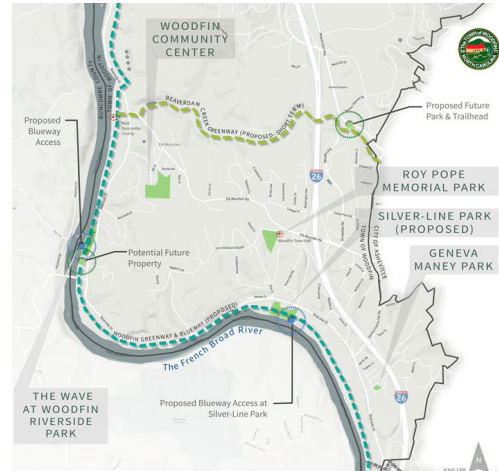
The WGB is the town's largest capital project to date and invests in the community's health and wellness through the construction of new, and the renovation of existing, park facilities including Silver-Line Park, Riverside Park, Taylor's Wave, and the French Broad River (a.k.a. Hwy. 251) and Beaverdam Creek Greenways. Beginning with residents' support of a 2016 General Obligation bond referendum, this project has been in the works for over seven years and continues to be fueled by the commitment and dedication of town leaders, community partners, outdoor advocates, and town staff.

Silver-Line Park

Through a generous land donation by the Silver family and the town's purchase of some additional property, Silver-Line Park was completed in the spring of 2022. Later, in 2023, town leaders made the decision to demolish the existing building due to its poor structural integrity, making way for additional park amenities. The town is currently working with consultants to add permanent restroom facilities in FY2024. Based on community feedback, the consultants are also planning for the addition of pickleball courts which would be constructed at a later date.

Riverside Park & Taylor's Wave

Plans for the existing Riverside Park grew with the acquisition of some adjacent land (the old Waste Pro site) along the French Broad River. This led to an ambitious expansion/renovation plan that included Taylor's Wave, an in-stream, man-made, whitewater wave feature in the French Broad River that will bring a new recreational opportunity to our region. Other park features include: boat access, car & trailer parking, two pavilions, restrooms, walking trails, and a Wave viewing area. The permitting requirements for the Wave are extensive, requiring significant engineering, planning and design, and agreement from other easement holders. Good progress has been made on permitting and issuance of both our state and federal permits is expected by the end of the year. Additional steps before construction will include posting the Request for Proposals (RFP), reviewing bids, and selecting a contractor. Construction is planned to begin in the first or second quarter of 2024 to avoid high water levels in the river.



French Broad River & Beaverdam Creek Greenways

Buncombe County has been a valuable partner on WGB from the beginning and agreed to project manage and construct the greenway portions of project. Beginning with the French Broad River Greenway, construction is anticipated to overlap construction of Riverside Park and Taylor's Wave and begin in the latter half of 2025.

Thanks to our Partners!

A project of this magnitude and impact is only possible with the support of a talented team and dedicated community partners. We are fortunate to have experienced team members helping with the planning and coordination of this exceptional project, and our fortune has been increased through the support of our funding partners who share in a collective vision for our region.

The WGB Team

- The Town of Woodfin
- Buncombe County
- River Link
- Consultants Marc Hunt, Eric Hardy & Rich Amory
- Equinox Environmental, S2O Design & HNTB Engineering

Our Funders

- The Town of Woodfin Taxpayers
- Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
- The Federal Highway Administration
- Buncombe County Government
- National Park Service, Land & Water Conservation Fund
- NC Parks & Recreation Trust Fund
- Hedrick Industries
- Pigeon River Fund

Town of Woodfin

Where Community Matters



www.Woodfin-NC.gov

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv81LNHe8tyBLiG13Jlsufw>



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Woodfin Resident

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News and Updates from the Town of Woodfin, NC