

MINUTES

Sawmills Town Council Meeting Sawmills Town Hall

December 16, 2025
6:00 PM



Council Attendance:

Keith Warren, Mayor
Melissa Curtis, Mayor Pro-Tem
Rebecca Johnson
Bobby Mosteller
Joe Wesson

Absent:

Clay Wilson

Staff Attendance:

Chase Winebarger, Town Manager
Dustin Millsaps, Planning Director/Assistant Town Manager
Kelly Melton, Finance Officer
Terry Taylor, Town Attorney
Abby Rich, Town Clerk
Olivia Baldwin, Utility Billing Clerk
Casey Bowman, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Mayor Keith Warren called the December 16, 2025, meeting to order at 6:00pm.

2. Invocation

Pastor Larry Miller with Free Will Baptist Church provided the invocation for those in attendance.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Cash Baldwin, Holden Bowman, and Ryder Bowman led the Pledge of Allegiance for those in attendance.

4. Adopt Agenda

Councilman Wesson made the motion to adopt the agenda, with a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. October 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Councilman Mosteller made the motion to adopt the October 21, 2025, meeting minutes. With a second from Councilman Wesson, the motion passed unanimously.

6. Installation of Elected Officials

Town Attorney Terry Taylor provided the Oath of Office to the following newly elected members of the Town Council:

Keith Warren, Mayor
Rebecca Johnson, Councilwoman

7. Public Comment

There were no individuals who signed up to provide public comments.

8. Action Items

a. Approval of Amended Grant Project Ordinance- Helene Disaster Response & Recovery

Finance Officer Kelly Melton came to the podium to provide an update concerning an amendment to the Grant Project Ordinance for Helene Disaster Response and Recovery, as attached. The purpose of this amendment is to align the Town's finance records with FEMA's records. Mrs. Melton continued by telling the Council it is unlikely that FEMA will cover the cost to remove each tree the Town has identified as a hazard. A fund balance appropriation of \$330,000 was proposed to cover these expenses if necessary.

Councilman Mosteller made the motion to approve the amended Grant Project Ordinance and Resolution as attached. With a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion passed unanimously.

b. BRIC Grant Application

Finance Officer Kelly Melton informed the Council that the Town had applied for a BRIC grant in 2021. As of April 2025, the current administration no longer wanted to fund this grant. Last week the North Carolina Attorney General joined the lawsuit against this action and the ruling was overturned. The Town is now hopeful it will receive these funds. As of now, Mrs. Melton is the only individual allowed that has authority to represent the Town on behalf of this grant. Mrs. Melton is proposing that Ben Willis with the WPCOG be added as an authorized representative on behalf of the Town.

Councilwoman Johnson made the motion to approve adding Ben Willis as an authorized representative on behalf of the Town. With a second from Councilwoman Curtis, the motion passed unanimously.

**c. Adoption of NCDCNR Retention Schedule-
General and Program Records Schedule**

Town Clerk Abby Rich asked the Council to approve the 2021 Program Records Schedule: Local Government Agencies also commonly referred to as the NCDCNR General and Program Records Schedule.

Councilwoman Curtis made the motion to approve the adoption of the 2021 Program Schedules. With a second from Councilman Wesson, the motion passed unanimously.

d. Approval of 2026 Holiday and Disconnect Schedule

Councilman Mosteller made the motion to approve the 2026 Holiday and Disconnect Schedule. With a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion passed unanimously.

e. Approval of 2026 Meeting Calendar

Councilwoman Curtis made the motion to adopt the 2026 Meeting Calendar as attached. With a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion passed unanimously.

9. Manager Updates/ Recommendations

a. Fire Department Merger- Request for Hiring of Chief

Manager Winebarger requested the authority to hire a Fire Chief to assist with the ongoing merger with Sawmills Fire Department. The Council and Manager Winebarger discussed the need for the Fire Chief and the job description.

Councilwoman Curtis made the motion to approve the Town Manager Authorization to proceed with hiring of a Fire Chief. With a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion passed unanimously.

10. Council Updates/Recommendations

Councilman Mosteller thanked Pastor Miller and everyone in attendance. Councilwoman Curtis said Merry Christmas and Councilwoman Johnson echoed those remarks. Councilman Wesson said the Veteran's Ceremony was a huge event with a great turn out. He also echoed sentiments for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Mayor Warren thanked everyone for coming and wished them a Merry Christmas. Councilman Wesson thanked Manager Winebarger for all he does in running the Town Offices.

11. Closed Session §143-318.11(a)(3)

Councilwoman Curtis made the motion to enter Closed Session pursuant to NC G.S. 143-318.11(a)3 and (a)6. With a second from Councilman Mosteller, the motion passed unanimously.

12. Return to Open Session

Councilwoman Curtis made the motion to return to open session. With a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion passed unanimously.

- a. Councilwoman Curtis made the motion to approve the MOU with Sawmills Fire Department as attached, contingent upon the Sawmills Fire Department signatures being obtained. With a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion passed unanimously.

13. Adjourn

With there being no more business to attend to, Councilwoman Curtis made the motion to adjourn at 7:00pm. With a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion passed unanimously.

Approved this the 20th day of January 2026.

Town of Sawmills by:

Keith Warren, Mayor

Attest:

Abby Rich, Town Clerk