

MINUTES

Sawmills Town Council Meeting Sawmills Town Hall

January 20, 2025
6:00 PM



Council Attendance:

Keith Warren, Mayor
Melissa Curtis, Mayor Pro-Tem
Rebecca Johnson
Bobby Mosteller
Clay Wilson

Absent:

Joe Wesson

Staff Attendance:

Chase Winebarger, Town Manager
Kelly Melton, Finance Officer
Terry Taylor, Town Attorney
Abby Rich, Town Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mayor Keith Warren called the meeting to order at 5:59 PM.

2. Invocation

Danny Wright, with Sunrise Baptist Church provided the invocation for those in attendance.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Chris Anders, SRO, CCSO, led the Pledge of Allegiance for those in attendance.

4. Swearing in of Clay Wilson

Town Attorney Terry Taylor provided the Oath of Office for Councilman Clay Wilson.

5. Agenda Adoption

It was noted an additional item, Item 9 (d) needed to be added to the agenda. Councilman Wilson made the motion to adopt the agenda. After second from Councilman Mosteller, the motion passed unanimously.

6. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. **November 18, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes**
Councilman Wilson made the motion to approve the minutes. After a second from Councilwoman Powell, the motion carried unanimously.
- b. **November 18, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes**
Councilwoman Curtis made the motion to approve the minutes. After a second from Councilman Wilson, the motion carried unanimously.
- c. **December 16, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes**
Councilman Wilson made the motion to approve the minutes. After a second from Councilwoman Powell, the motion carried unanimously.
- d. **December 16, 2025, Closed Session Minutes**
Councilman Wilson made the motion to approve the minutes. After a second from Councilwoman Curtis, the motion carried unanimously.

7. Public Comment

There were no individuals signed up for public comment.

8. Items for Decision

- a. **Awarding of Veteran’s Park Debris Clean-Up Project** **James Inman,
McGill &
Associates**
 - i. **Discussion of Project**
Finance Officer Kelly Melton came to the podium to provide an overview of the project up to this point. The project was submitted to FEMA on January 20, and the Town is now waiting for FEMA to review the project.
 - ii. **Approval of Amended Grant Project Ordinance – Helene Disaster Response & Recovery**
Finance Officer Kelly Melton remained at the podium to discuss an amendment to the Grant Project Ordinance. (attached) This amendment allows appropriation to be made from the General Fund. Manager Winebarger informed the Board there is an urgency to begin this project due to the Long-Eared Bats’ migration schedule. There was a discussion about the amount needed to begin project work. This amount was stated to be approximately \$3,100,000. The Council discussed what action the Town would take if FEMA did not obligate funding for the project. Councilman Wilson made the motion to approve this amendment to the project ordinance with the provision that Council would receive a monthly report from the project. With a second provided by Councilman Mosteller, the motion passed unanimously.
 - iii. **Awarding of Contract**
James Inman with McGill and Associates came to the podium to provide an overview of the bidding process for the Veteran’s Park Debris Clean-Up. After a re-bid of the project, the Town received bids from Stitt’s Tree Maintenance LLC, County Boy Landscaping, and Mountain Crest LLC. Mr. Inman told the Council all companies that provided bids were vetted by McGill, and McGill and Associates are recommending the Council award the

contract to Mountain Crest LLC. Councilman Wilson made the motion to award the Veteran's Park Debris Clean-Up Project to Mountain Crest LLC. With a second from Councilman Mosteller, the motion passed unanimously.

9. Finance

a. 2024-2025 Audit Presentation

Rick Hammer presented a summary of the 2024-2025 audit for the Council.

b. Budget Amendment- Various Departmental Expenditures

Finance Officer Kelly Melton came back to the podium to present a budget amendment for various departmental expenditures. (attached) These include personnel changes for the merger with Sawmills Fire Department, administrative costs for the new website and supplies, an increase in fees from Republic Services, new software services, increases in Parks and Recreation for background checks, and increases for the Water/ Sewer Fund due to personnel changes. Councilman Mosteller made the motion to approve the budget amendment. With a second from Councilman Wilson, the motion carried unanimously.

c. Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of OSBM Grant Funding

Finance Officer Kelly Melton informed the Council the Town was approved for a grant awarding over \$58,000. These funds will be used to replace dirt that was displaced around sewer lines on Bakers Circle. Councilwoman Curtis made the motion to accept the OSBM grant funding. (attached) With a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion carried unanimously.

d. Purchase of Fire Truck

Finance Officer Kelly Melton informed the Council that Sawmills Fire Department had placed an order for a fire truck to be delivered in 2027. The Fire Department had worked with Blue Ridge Energy to secure a loan with USDA. Due to the merger between the Town and the Fire Department, Blue Ridge needs a letter from Council stating its intent to proceed with the USDA application after the merger. The letter must also state the Town understands there is a 20% match. Mrs. Melton told the Council the Fire Department already had the funds set aside for this purchase and no payment is made until the truck is picked up. Councilman Wilson made the motion to approve sending a letter from the Council to Blue Ridge Energy stating the intent to proceed with the USDA application after the merger. With a second from Councilman Mosteller, the motion carried unanimously.

10. Public Comment

No individuals signed up to provide public comment.

11. Manager Updates/ Recommendations

Manager Winebarger provided his updates to the Council. These included an overview of

funds being brought in from the Woodshed facility, water issues on Greenwood Terrace, an update on the 321-a water project, the HWY 321 intersection construction, a new alert system for the Town, a list of upcoming events, a brief overview of downzoning, an update on the Town Hall project, and asked Town Clerk Abby Rich to provide updates concerning the website transition and clerk software.

12. Council Updates/Recommendations

The Council thanked the attendees for coming.

13. Closed Session §143-318.11(a)(3)

Councilman Wilson made the motion to enter closed session. With a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion carried unanimously.

14. Return to Open Session

Councilman Wilson made the motion to return to open session. With a second from Councilman Mosteller, the motion carried unanimously.

15. Adjourn

With there being no more business to attend to, Councilman Wilson made the motion to adjourn. With a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion carried unanimously.

Approved this the 17 day of February 2026.

Keith Warren, Mayor

Attest:

Abby Rich, Town Clerk

