

# MINUTES

## Sawmills Town Council Meeting Sawmills Town Hall

March 17, 2026  
6:00 PM



### **Council Attendance:**

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

### **Staff Attendance:**

Chase Winebarger, Town Manager  
Dustin Millsaps, Planner/Assistant Town Manager  
Kelly Melton, Finance Officer  
Terry Taylor, Town Attorney  
Abby Rich, Town Clerk  
Jimmy Wilson, Fire Chief  
Hope Moore, Human Resources Director

### **1. Call to Order**

Mayor Keith Warren called the March 17, 2026, meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

### **2. Invocation**

Mark Dula with Poovey's Chapel Baptist Church provided the invocation for those in attendance.

### **3. Pledge of Allegiance**

Lawson Wilkes with Poovey's Chapel Baptist Church provided the Pledge of Allegiance for those in attendance.

### **4. Adopt Agenda**

Councilman Clay Wilson made the motion to adopt the agenda. With a second from Councilman Joe Wesson, the motion passed unanimously.

## **5. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

### **a. February 17, 2026, Meeting Minutes**

Councilman Wesson made the motion to adopt the meeting minutes. With a second from Councilwoman Curtis, the motion passed unanimously.

### **b. February 17, 2026, Closed Session Meeting Minutes**

Councilman Mosteller made the motion to approve the meeting minutes. With a second from Councilwoman Curtis, the motion carried unanimously.

## **6. Public Comment**

There were no individuals signed up for public comment.

## **7. Action Items**

### **a. Approval of Capital Project Ordinance- Grant Project Budget Ordinance Under the Helene Local Government Capital Grant Program**

Finance Officer Kelly Melton came to the podium to ask for the approval of grant funding awarded. The Town received the funding on February 7<sup>th</sup> and the approval of this project ordinance will allow the Town to spend these funds. The funds are being used to purchase dirt to replace what was washed away from a sewer pipe during Hurricane Helene. These funds will supplement the cost that was not approved by FEMA.

Councilman Wilson made the motion to approve the acceptance of the grant funding. With a second from Councilwoman Johnson, the motion carried unanimously.

### **b. Rezoning- Lower Cedar Valley Road**

Town Planner Dustin Millsaps came to the podium to present a request to rezone 4016 Lower Cedar Valley Rd. This property was originally zoned as High Density and the rezoning request is for General Manufacturing.

Councilman Wilson made the motion to approve the rezoning at 4016 Lower Cedar Valley Rd. Councilman Mosteller made a second to the motion. Councilman Wilson amended his original motion to include the consistency statement and the reasonability statement as stated below. The motion carried unanimously.

*Consistency Statement: This rezoning will be consistent with the Town of Sawmills Comprehensive Plan 2017. There are two main ways that this rezoning is consistent with the plan, and both are from the 'FUTURE LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS'. Specifically, recommendation ten which is to "Diversify town's economy". This recommendation is to work alongside Caldwell County EDC to recruit new industries to the town to expand the town's economy. Also, recommendation 14 from the*

*same recommendation section also recommended that the town promote “Industrial diversification”. Which would again be another reason that this rezoning is consistent with the comprehensive plan.*

*Reasonableness Statement: This rezoning is believed to be reasonable because it is consistent with other commercial areas which helps promote future economic growth corridors. This rezoning is in the public’s interest because it has the possibility to create jobs and promote economic growth if the rezoning goes through.*

**c. Potential Land Acquisition- Voluntary Donation**

Martha Hobbs and Daniel Dobbs approached the town concerning a piece of property they would like to donate. The County Tax Office had threatened foreclosure. It’s worth \$15,000, and back taxes are \$1,300. Acquiring the property through donation is cheaper than foreclosing, the Town must pay the back taxes. There are two powerline easements, and the property size is 0.77 acres.

Councilman Wilson made the motion to accept the donated property and pay the back taxes. With a second from Councilman Wesson the motion carried unanimously.

**d. Debris Contract Award**

Mayor Warren called each Council member to conduct a straw poll. This was needed to keep the process rolling with FEMA. By a unanimous vote from the Council, the contract was approved with McGill and Associates.

Councilman Wilson made the motion to confirm and ratify contract for the amount of \$375,000. With a second from Councilman Wesson, the motion carried unanimously.

**e. 2026 Audit Contract**

Finance Officer Kelly Melton requested the approval of the 2026-2027 audit contract in the amount of \$14,500. The contract will remain with Lowdermilk, Church & Co. LLP.

Councilwoman Johnson made the motion to approve the audit contract with Lowdermilk, Church & Co. LLP. With a second from Councilman Mosteller, the motion carried unanimously.

**BRIC Grant Update**

Finance Officer Kelly Melton informed Council the BRIC Grant is currently at a standstill. The Attorney General feels good about the pending legislation involving the BRIC grant.

**Helene Funding Update**

Finance Officer Kelly Melton provided Council with an update regarding the current status of the FEMA funding for Sawmills Veterans Park.

**f. Voluntary Annexation- Call for Public Hearing**

Town Clerk Abby Rich informed the Council Tri-County Speedway has submitted all paperwork for a voluntary annexation.

Councilman Wilson made the motion to call for a public hearing regarding the annexation request at the April 21<sup>st</sup>, regular meeting. With a second from Councilman Wesson, the motion carried unanimously.

## **8. Informational Items**

The Council was reminded of the upcoming car show and Easter egg hunt. Additionally, Town Attorney Terry Taylor informed the Council the Spring Lake MHP Lawsuit has been settled. The three mobile homes placed without permits will be removed and Mr. Hamby will be providing the Town with a \$5,000 donation.

## **9. Manager Updates/ Recommendations**

Manager Chase Winebarger informed Council that Fire Chief, Jimmy Wilson and HR Director, Hope Moore have started in their positions. Manager Winebarger also asked the Council to consider fines on tall grass. Other updates included updates on First Amendment auditors in the area, individuals doing donuts in the recreation parking lots, the new mass alert system being utilized, and the opportunity for the Town to get an intern from UNC Chapel Hill.

## **10. Clerk Updates/Recommendations**

Town Clerk Abby Rich informed the Council all projects are still going well and provided a brief update on Social Media traffic.

## **11. Council Updates/Recommendations**

The Sawmills Town Council thanked individuals for attending.

## **12. Closed Session §143-318.11(a)(6)**

Councilman Wilson made the motion to enter closed session pursuant to §143-318.11(a)(6) at 6:45 PM. With a second from Councilman Mosteller, the motion passed unanimously.

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

## **13. Open Session**

Discussion regarding permitting by right or going through the planning board.

## **14. 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 21 day of April 2026.**

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**Keith Warren, Mayor**

**Attest:**

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**Abby Rich, Town Clerk**