

Town of Talking Rock Monthly Meeting Minutes

March 5th, 2026

Mayor James Bryant called the meeting to order at 7:01pm

I. Attendance

Board:

James Bryant

Jason Little

Lynda Cagle

Darlene O'Connell

Tony Hawf

City Manager/Clerk: Amanda Buntin

Others in attendance:

Mari Livsey, Jene Bryant, Jim Bauman, Chris Evans, Sandra Perdue

II. Call Meeting to Order:

III. Pledge of Allegiance:

IV. Announcements: Mayor Bryant expressed appreciation to the city manager for her contributions since joining the Town, noting that training and online classes have been valuable assets for both her and the community. The mayor stated that the Town is actively considering the creation of a Short-Term Rental (STR) Ordinance in response to citizen interest. As the Town experiences growth, the Mayor and Council aim to proactively address developments by implementing relevant ordinances. The mayor announced that several ordinances will be discussed during this meeting and upcoming sessions, encouraging citizens to monitor public hearing announcements in print and online. Chris Evans attended the meeting to propose an event scheduled for May 2026. The Mayor and Council reviewed his plan positively, though certain requirements remain outstanding. Mr. Evans was instructed to secure event insurance, ensure proper security, and arrange for police presence. He agreed to provide documentation of compliance to the Town Clerk. If these requirements are met, Mr. Evans will be permitted to proceed, pending final review by the City Manager. It was noted that the Town currently lacks a formal event ordinance; however, such regulation is being developed and is expected to be completed before Mr. Evans' event. The council provided Mr. Evans with guidance based on anticipated ordinance provisions to facilitate compliance. Mayor Bryant also announced the Town's Easter celebration, scheduled for March 28th, and encouraged community participation in the event.

V. Approval February 2026 Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Tony Hawf, seconded by Darlene O'Connell to approve the February 2026 meeting minutes. All voted unanimously in favor, except Caleb Gay who was not present.

VI. Approval of February 2026 Financial Reports: A motion was made by Darlene O'Connell to approve the February 2026 Financial Reports, seconded by Lynda Cagle. All voted unanimously in favor, except Caleb Gay who was not present.

VII. Summary of Maintenance: Jim Baumann announced that he had been working on trimming all the hedges in and around the park. Mr. Baumann also announced that last week we had to have the septic tank pumped at the park, and that he was told it's due to the items being flushed down the toilets and not necessarily that the tank is full. This is a common accordance with commercial places and public restrooms. The mulch and planting flowers are next on the list of things to be completed at the park.

VIII. Old Business:

- A. **Discussion of annexation and rezoning of parcel #021 026 002-** This was put on hold due to some issues with land surrounding the parcel that is needing annexed. We believe we have now solved this issue and can continue with the annexation process.
- B. **Review and Discussion of a Short-Term Rental (STR) Draft-** After much discussion it was decided that we need to put the noise ordinance and the STR together into one public hearing and all together in one meeting. To do this it will have to be put on hold for another month to work out all the details involved.

IX. New Business:

- A. **Discussion regarding a potential noise ordinance-** The council examined various considerations associated with implementing fines and fees referenced in the draft ordinance. Members agreed that the Town should first determine whether to establish a local court or arrange an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Pickens County, or potentially Gilmer County. It was resolved that work on the ordinance would continue during this process, with the goal of establishing appropriate decibel level limits for each zone as efforts progress toward securing an IGA or holding court in Talking Rock.
- B. **Discussion on a Potential Special Events Ordinance:** The City Manager indicated that it is an appropriate time to initiate the development of both a special events ordinance and an event center ordinance. This recommendation is prompted by the continued growth of the Town and increasing interest from residents wishing to host events, as well as business owners seeking to establish rentable event centers. The Council concurred with the City Manager's assessment, particularly following Mr. Evans's presentation of his proposed event for May 2026. The City Manager noted that work on these ordinances will begin following the completion of the noise ordinance and short-term rental (STR) ordinance.

- X. **Adjourn:** A motion was made by Darlene O'Connell to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jason Little at 7:26pm. All voted unanimously in favor, except for Caleb Gay who were not present.

The next regular council meeting will be April 2nd, 2026, at 7pm with the working group session beginning the same day at 5:30pm.

James W. Bryant Jr. Mayor

Lynda Cagle

Tony Hawf

Jason Little

Darlene O'Connell

Assisted by: Amanda Buntin