

Town of Talking Rock Monthly Meeting Minutes

May 7th, 2026

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

I. Attendance

Board:

James Bryant

Lynda Cagle

Jason Little

Darlene O'Connell

Tony Hawf

Mark McDonnell

City Manager/Clerk: Amanda Buntin

Others in attendance:

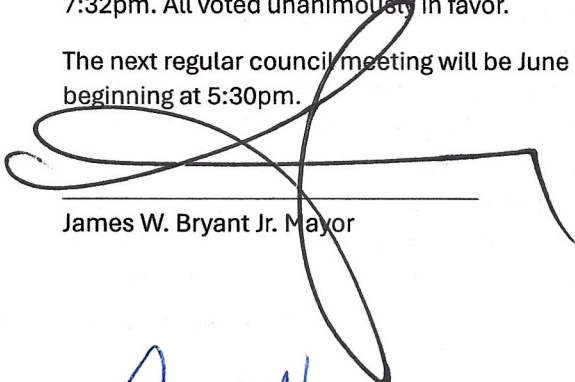
Jene Bryant, Taylor from Pickens Progress, Cheryl Sams, James Baumann, Pastor Joe Wiggington, Queenie and Mike-Owners of Lateral Drift.

I. Pledge of Allegiance

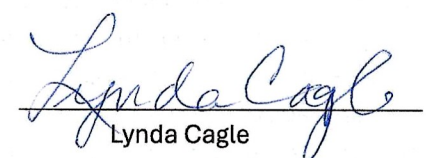
- II. Mayor Announcements:** Mayor Bryant announced that he met with Mr. Stancil last week regarding the new fire department and reported that the project is progressing very well. He stated that the facility should be ready within the next few weeks. Plans for the new department include a full-time employee, as well as designated training and sleeping quarters. A dedication ceremony is expected to be held approximately two weeks after the facility opens, and the mayor and council expressed that it would be a meaningful opportunity for the community to show its support for the town's firefighters. Mayor Bryant also thanked everyone involved in the Mountains Makers Market, noting that it has been highly successful since its inception and continues to grow. On average, the market hosts between 20 and 22 vendors each Sunday. Individuals interested in participating in or becoming a vendor were encouraged to contact the city manager for additional information. In addition, a special event held in May and organized by Chris Evens was described as a great success. The event featured 94.9 The Bull radio station, as well as several musical performances. The mayor and council indicated that events of this nature could provide significant long-term benefits to the town by creating opportunities for community gatherings and special events. Mayor Bryant further stated that, should the council wish to continue pursuing such events, a special events ordinance would need to be drafted and approved. He also announced that the 3rd Annual Bronco Stampede Event will be held on June 6th in Talking Rock. The mayor thanked all sponsors, with special recognition given to the main sponsor, Shottenkirk Ford, for its substantial support in helping make the event possible. Finally, Mayor Bryant introduced Joe Wiggington, the new pastor of Talking Rock Baptist Church. The town expressed its enthusiasm about working alongside the church for the betterment of the community. Pastor Wiggington then addressed the council briefly, sharing that he is excited to be in the town and looks forward to serving both the community and the town.

- III. **Approval of April 2026 Meeting Minutes and April Special Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made by Tony Hawf, seconded by Lynda Cagle to approve the April Meeting Minutes and the April Special Meeting Minutes. All voted unanimously in favor.
- IV. **Approval of April 2026 Financial Report:** A motion was made by Jason Little and seconded by Lynda Cagle to approve the April Financial Report. All voted unanimously in favor.
- V. **Maintenance Report:** Jim Baumann announced that the new mulch was put down in the park with the help of the Pickens County jail inmates. There will be new Dog waste stations placed at the park in the next few weeks. The local library had also donated a few books to the little library at the pavilion.
- VI. **Old Business: Vote on Short-Term Rental (STR) Regulatory Ordinance.** A motion was made by Mark McDonnell to adopt a new chapter to the Town code establishing permitting, safety standards, and operational requirements for STR. It was seconded by Lynda Cagle. All voted unanimously in favor.
- VII. **Vote on the Zoning Text Amendment (Home Occupations):** A motion was made by Jason Little to amend the Town Zoning Ordinance to permit short-term rentals as a "Home Occupation" within the specific zones. It was seconded by Lynda Cagle. All voted unanimously in favor.
- VIII. **Vote on Municipal Excise Tax of 5%:** A motion was made by Darlene O'Connell to adopt an ordinance to establish a 5% excise tax rate on public accommodation and lodging in Talking Rock GA. It was seconded by Lynda Cagle. All voted unanimously in favor.
- IX. **Adjourn:** A motion was made by Tony Hawf to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Lynda Cagle at 7:32pm. All voted unanimously in favor.

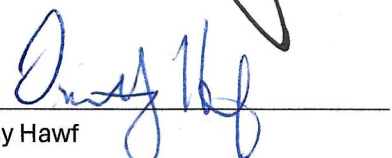
The next regular council meeting will be June 3rd, 2026, at 7pm with the working group session beginning at 5:30pm.



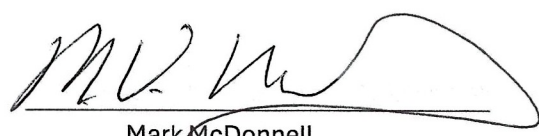
James W. Bryant Jr. Mayor



Lynda Cagle



Tony Hawf



Mark McDonnell



Jason Little



Assisted by: Amanda Buntin



Darlene O'Connell