

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 30, GENERAL PROVISIONS, SUBSECTION 30.049 (B)(2), CITIZEN PRESENTATIONS/COMMENTS; TO AMEND THE PROVISIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.

WHEREAS, the Town of Awendaw recognizes that the strength of our community lies in the active and engaged participation of our residents, and we enthusiastically value the input of all residents;

WHEREAS, the Council is fully committed to providing opportunities for all to speak by adopting clear, fair, and efficient procedures that foster broad participation while ensuring the timely and respectful conduct of essential town business;

WHEREAS, this ordinance is a pro-resident measure designed to maximize accessibility and create a positive, orderly environment where diverse community voices can be heard and considered.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it Ordered and Ordained by the Council of the Town of Awendaw, S. C. that Chapter 30: General Provisions, Subsection 30.049(B)(2): Citizen presentations/comments of the Code of the Town of Awendaw, South Carolina, shall be amended as follows which shall positively govern and welcome public comment during Town Council meetings:

(2) *Citizen presentations/comments.*

(a) Persons wishing to make formal reports or requests to Council shall so notify the Clerk no later than 48 hours prior to the Council meeting and shall provide the Clerk with a written copy of such report or request to be made to Council. The Clerk shall add all such citizen presentations to the formal agenda of the Council meeting.

~~—(b) Other persons wishing to speak shall be recognized by the Mayor or other presiding officer of the meeting, in accordance with the following priority of order: persons who have notified the Clerk prior to the meeting of their desire to speak and have furnished the Clerk with a written copy of their comments to be made to Council; persons who have notified the Clerk prior to the meeting of their desire to speak but have not furnished a copy of their comments to the Clerk; and all other persons indicating a desire to speak.~~

~~—(c) Thirty minutes are allowed for citizens' presentations/comments and shall be divided equally among those wishing to speak.~~

(b) Other persons wishing to speak may do so by signing up on the Public Comment Sign-In Sheet, available at the meeting location, before the start of the meeting, to ensure their opportunity to speak. For the record and follow-up purposes, speakers are requested to provide their name, address, and the general topic they wish to address. Speakers will be called in the clear, transparent order in which they signed up. To help maximize participation and time efficiency for the community, groups addressing the same issue are encouraged to select a dedicated spokesperson.

(c) A total of thirty (30) minutes shall be dedicated to public comment at each regular meeting, a period which may be extended at the discretion of the mayor or presiding officer to accommodate community interest. Each individual's comments will be limited to three (3) minutes. Additional time may be allocated at the discretion of the mayor or presiding officer.

(i) To comply with the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and to ensure that meetings are conducted in an efficient and orderly manner, Council members shall neither respond nor take immediate action on concerns or comments publicly expressed. However, all concerns and comments will be appropriately considered by the Council. Council members are committed to engaging with citizens who speak at Council meetings after the meeting concludes and may propose action items relating to public comments to be considered at future Council meetings.

(d) The mayor or presiding officer shall responsibly steward the public comment session to ensure fairness and respect. The mayor or presiding officer shall have the authority to:

(i) Responsibly extend or reduce individual speaking times based on the number of speakers or time constraints to ensure broad resident participation.

(ii) Modify the total time allocated for public comment when necessary to accommodate the community's needs.

(iii) Maintain a professional and respectful environment, reserving the right to kindly redirect or terminate remarks that are disruptive, unduly repetitive, or do not pertain to the business of the Town.

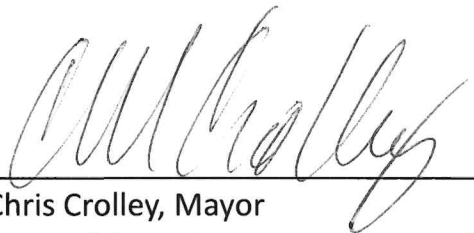
(iv) Complaints or allegations involving individual town employees – with the exception of department heads or executive-level officials – will be addressed through proper administrative channels, not in public sessions. Additionally, references to private individuals, including residents or non-public figures, are not permitted unless directly relevant to the matter under discussion and presented respectfully.

(v) Any exercise of discretion will be strictly fair and non-viewpoint based, reinforcing the commitment to hearing all voices.

(e) The mayor or presiding officer may allow additional time for speakers representing recognized community organizations or groups, at their discretion, to ensure comprehensive input from structured community entities.

(f) The provisions of this section shall apply to all regular and special meetings of the Town of Awendaw Council unless otherwise specified by state law.

THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY UPON FINAL READING.



Chris Crolley, Mayor
Town of Awendaw

First reading: January 8, 2026

Second and Final Reading: February 5, 2026



~~John F. Steed, Clerk of Council~~
Katharine E. Watkins
Town Administrator

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