



Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes February 24th, 2026

1. Call the Meeting to Order

Mayor Isabella Salazar called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present were Mayor Isabella Salazar, Councilor Jimmy Atkison, Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron, Councilor Amber Hitchcock, Councilor Joe Kalisek, Councilor Leona Wylie, Library Director Crystal Weigel, Finance and Administration Director Arnold Ramirez, Town Clerk Amberlee Olivas, Police Chief Scott Conner, Senior Center Director Whitney Jaramillo, Director of Public Works Joe Garcia, Dennis Merrill, Abigail Corrales, David Corrales, James Taylor, Carl Tennison, Denise Null, and Lisa Tupa.

3. Approval/Disapproval of the Agenda

Councilor Leona Wylie moved to approve the agenda. Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilor Jimmy Atkison—Yes, Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron—Yes, Councilor Amber Hitchcock—Yes, Councilor Joe Kalisek—No, Councilor Leona Wylie—Yes. The motion carried.

4. Approval/Disapproval of the Meeting Minutes from 02/10/2026

Councilor Jimmy Atkison moved to approve the meeting minutes from February 10th, 2026. Councilor Joe Kalisek seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilor Jimmy Atkison—Yes, Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron—Yes, Councilor Amber Hitchcock—Yes, Councilor Joe Kalisek—Yes, Councilor Leona Wylie—Yes. The motion carried.

5. Financial Reports

Councilor Amber Hitchcock moved to approve the financial reports. Councilor Joe Kalisek seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilor Jimmy Atkison—Yes, Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron—Yes, Councilor Amber Hitchcock—Yes, Councilor Joe Kalisek—Yes, Councilor Leona Wylie—Yes. The motion carried.

6. Public Comments

James Taylor: Mr. James Taylor does not agree with the proposed tax rate increase. He believes citizens will struggle and businesses. He opposes wanting to ban 18 wheelers in the town. He believes many citizens benefit from being able to park their 18-wheelers on their land as long as they're not blocking driveways and are parked correctly. He believes the town would lose out because truckers will gas up in Lovington and grab breakfast elsewhere. Mr. Taylor questioned why another officer would be needed. Mr. Taylor does not agree with a take-home unit for officers living in Portales, and he does not understand why City Hall employees would need a stipend for their cell phones.

Dennis Merrill: Mr. Merrill does not agree with restricting semi parking. He believes it would restrict opportunities. Many residents choose Tatum over Hobbs and Lovington because of the lack of restrictions. Mr. Merrill believes if the city hall employees receive a stipend, why not the volunteer fire fighters.

7. Mayor, Councilor, And Department Head Comments



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Councilor Jimmy Atkison does not see a problem with 18 wheelers parking in town as long as they're not dumping hazardous materials onto the ground and are parked on their property.

Councilor Amber Hitchcock thanked everyone in attendance.

Councilor Joe Kalisek would like to remind 18 wheelers that engine brake use is prohibited in the Town.

Mayor Isabella Salazar thanked everyone in attendance. Mayor Salazar will be heading to the Lea County Commission Meeting Thursday 02/26/26. She will be requesting \$50,000 for a utility assessment. The town's last assessment was in 2016. Additionally, she will be requesting \$100,000 for the baseball field concession stand and restrooms. She will be requesting \$10,000 for our Senior Center. Mayor Salazar will revisit the MOU housing incentives. As of now, the \$390,000 housing incentive has a remaining \$370,000. The Mayor is optimistic that our next food drive will be held at the former Catholic Church, which is being converted to a food pantry and warming station.

8. Discussion Items

A. Discussion on Revising Ordinance ATV/Off Highway Motor Vehicle Act. (Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron)

Discussion included not allowing 4-wheelers, 3-wheelers, or dirt bikes. Allowing off highway motor vehicles to not exceed 35 MPH, and not allowing them to drive on the state highways.

B. Discussion on Restricting Semi-Trucks and Oversize Trailers from Residential Areas and within City Limits. (Mayor Salazar)

Discussion included allowing them if they are on their property and not dumping hazardous waste. Citizens enjoy being able to park their semi-trucks on their land.

C. Discussion of Proposed adjustments to the Town of Tatum Gross Receipts Tax, Increasing the Rate from 6.5% to 7.26% including Fiscal Impacts and Community Considerations. (Mayor Salazar)

The proposed adjustment is a suggestion from Lea County.

9. Action Item

A. Consideration and Approval to Amend Ordinance Article IV 85-19 on Time Change for meetings from 5:00 PM – 5:30 PM. (Councilor Leona Wylie)

No Motion Made

B. Consideration and Approval to Amend Community Building Contract. (Mayor Isabella Salazar)

Councilor Amber Hitchcock moved to approve the community building contract with one police officer per 125 attendees. Councilor Jimmy Atkison seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilor Jimmy Atkison—Yes, Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron—Yes, Councilor Amber Hitchcock—Yes, Councilor Joe Kalisek—No, Councilor Leona Wylie—Yes. The motion carried.



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C. Consideration and Approval of Authorizing the Submittal of an Application for Fiscal Year 26-27 NMDOT Project Fund. (Finance and Administration Director Arnold Ramirez)

Councilor Leona Wylie moved to approve the submittal of an application for FY 26-27 NMDOT Project Fund. Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilor Jimmy Atkison—Yes, Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron—Yes, Councilor Amber Hitchcock—Yes, Councilor Joe Kalisek—Yes, Councilor Leona Wylie—Yes. The motion carried.

D. Consideration and Approval of Stipends on Cell Phones for Finance and Administration Director, Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk, and Accounts Payable/MVD. (Mayor Salazar)

No motion made.

10. Motion To Enter Into Closed Session

Pursuant to New Mexico Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1 (H), to discuss limited personnel matters as authorized by Section 10-15-1 subsection H-2:

- A. On Call Pay for Police Officers, Maintenance Workers, and Finance and Administration Director
- B. Time Period for Police Officer Cesar Lopez to continue to operate a town owned vehicle while commuting from his residence in Portales to Tatum.
- C. Discussion of personal matters, enforcement of water and wastewater level II certification requirements for maintenance department employees.

At 7:01 PM, Councilor Amber Hitchcock moved to enter closed session. Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilor Jimmy Atkison—Yes, Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron—Yes, Councilor Amber Hitchcock—Yes, Councilor Joe Kalisek—Yes, Councilor Leona Wylie—Yes. The motion carried.

11. Motion to Return to Open Session

At 8:11 PM, Councilor Amber Hitchcock moved to return to open session. Councilor Leona Wylie seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilor Jimmy Atkison—Yes, Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron—Yes, Councilor Amber Hitchcock—Yes, Councilor Joe Kalisek—Yes, Councilor Leona Wylie—Yes. The motion carried.

12. Action on Closed Session Items

Pursuant to New Mexico Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1 (H), to discuss limited Personnel matters as authorized by Section 10-15-1 subsection H-2:

A. On Call Pay for Police Officers, Maintenance Workers, and Finance and Administration Director

No motion made

B. Time Period for Police Officer Cesar Lopez to continue to operate a town-owned vehicle while commuting from his residence in Portales to Tatum.



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Councilor Joe Kalisek moved to rescind allowing Cesar Lopez to continue to operate a town-owned vehicle while commuting from his residence in Portales to Tatum. Councilor Jimmy Atkison seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilor Jimmy Atkison—Yes, Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron—Yes, Councilor Amber Hitchcock—Yes, Councilor Joe Kalisek—Yes, Councilor Leona Wylie—Yes. The motion carried.

C. Discussion of personal matters, enforcement of water and wastewater level II certification requirements for maintenance department employees.

Councilor Leona Wylie moved to approve the disciplinary action on employees for non-compliance. Councilor Joe Kalisek seconded the motion. Roll Call: Councilor Jimmy Atkison—Yes, Mayor Pro-Tem Mary Jiron—Yes, Councilor Amber Hitchcock—Yes, Councilor Joe Kalisek—Yes, Councilor Leona Wylie—Yes. The motion carried.

13. Adjournment

Mayor Isabella Salazar adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

Read and Approved March 10th, 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Isabella Salazar".

Mayor, Isabella Salazar

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Arnold Ramirez".

Finance and Administration Director, Arnold Ramirez