

City of Tontitown, Arkansas

Council Packet Memo

To: Mayor Angela Russell and Members of the City Council

From: [Your Name], [Your Title or "Citizen Requestor"]

Date: _____, 2025

Re: Ordinance Amending Tontitown Code §§30.05 and 30.06 — Invocation & Public Comment Procedures

Purpose

Adopt an ordinance that (1) adds an Invocation immediately after Roll Call, (2) keeps Public Comment by Citizens of Tontitown early in the meeting, and (3) moves Public Comment by Non-Residents to the end of the agenda; and aligns §30.06 agenda preparation duties with these updates.

Summary of Changes

§30.05 – Order of Business

- Adds Invocation at (C), immediately following Roll Call.
- Retains Public Comment by Citizens of Tontitown in its current early position (after financial reports).
- Moves Public Comment by Non-Residents to the last item before Adjournment.

§30.06 – Agenda Preparation & Compliance

- Requires the Clerk-Treasurer (in consultation with the Mayor) to prepare agendas consistent with the revised §30.05, including the Invocation and the two public comment placements.
- Confirms any reordering requires a majority vote of the Council.

Rationale

- **Civic tradition & decorum:** Adding an Invocation after Roll Call provides an orderly, solemn start to proceedings without delaying core business.
- **Prioritizing residents:** Keeping citizens' comments early ensures resident input is heard before deliberations on new business.
- **Efficiency & fairness:** Scheduling non-resident comments at the end preserves meeting flow while still providing a meaningful opportunity to speak.
- **Clarity:** Codifying the order removes ambiguity and supports consistent agenda preparation and chairing.

Emergency Clause Justification

Immediate effectiveness is needed to avoid confusion in upcoming meetings, ensure orderly public participation, and maintain efficient conduct of city business.

Recommendation: Adopt the ordinance as presented.

DRAFT ORDINANCE No. 2025-XX

City of Tontitown, Arkansas

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TONTITOWN MUNICIPAL CODE §§30.05 AND 30.06 TO ADD AN INVOCATION AFTER ROLL CALL AND TO ESTABLISH PROCEDURES AND AGENDA ORDER FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AT REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, Arkansas Code Annotated §14-43-501(b)(1)(A) provides that the city council of a city of the first class shall determine the rules of its proceedings; and

WHEREAS, The City Council of Tontitown has previously adopted rules of order codified at Tontitown Code §§30.05 and 30.06 governing the agenda and order of business; and

WHEREAS, The City Council finds it in the best interest of the City and its residents to (a) add an Invocation (prayer) following Roll Call, and (b) clarify procedures for public comment, giving priority to citizens and taxpayers of Tontitown while still providing non-residents an opportunity to be heard.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TONTITOWN, ARKANSAS:

Section 1. Amendment to Code §30.05 (Order of Business)

Tontitown Municipal Code §30.05 is hereby amended to read as follows:

- (A) Call to order;
- (B) Roll call;
- (C) Invocation (prayer);
- (D) Pledge of allegiance;
- (E) Approval of the agenda;
- (F) Approval of the minutes;
- (G) Approval of the city financial reports;
- (H) Public Comment by Citizens of Tontitown (limited to residents or taxpayers of the City);
- (1) Museum;
- (2) Police;
- (3) Fire;
- (4) Public works;
- (5) Building;
- (6) Planning.
- (I) Old business; presentation of ordinances, resolutions, motions, or discussion items;
- (J) New business; presentation of ordinances, resolutions, motions, or discussion items;
- (K) Reports from the Mayor, the City Council, and the City Attorney if any;
- (L) Announcements;
- (M) Public Comment by Non-Residents (limited to individuals who do not reside or pay property taxes within the City); and
- (N) Adjournment.

Section 2. Amendment to Code §30.06 (Agenda Authority; Compliance)

Tontitown Municipal Code §30.06 is hereby amended to include the following:

(A) The Clerk-Treasurer shall prepare the agenda for each regular meeting in consultation with the Mayor, and such agenda shall reflect the order of business prescribed in §30.05, including the Invocation following Roll Call and the separate periods for Public Comment by Citizens of Tontitown and Public Comment by Non-Residents in their designated places.

(B) No changes in the prescribed order of business shall be made except by majority vote of the City Council.

(C) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the Mayor or a majority of the City Council from placing additional business items on the agenda consistent with state law and these rules.

Section 3. Procedures for Public Comment

1. 1. Each speaker, whether citizen or non-resident, shall be limited to three (3) minutes, unless extended by a majority vote of the City Council.
2. 2. Speakers shall address their remarks to the Council as a whole and not to individual members.
3. 3. The presiding officer may rule out of order any comments that are disruptive, repetitive, or irrelevant to city business.
4. 4. A sign-in sheet shall be maintained by the Clerk-Treasurer to record the names, addresses, and topics of individuals requesting to speak.

Section 4. Consistency with State Law

This ordinance shall be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act, A.C.A. §25-19-106, and the constitutional rights of the public.

Section 5. Codification

The City Clerk-Treasurer is directed to codify these amendments into Tontitown Municipal Code §§30.05 and 30.06.

Section 6. Findings

5. 1. Meetings of the Tontitown City Council must be conducted in a fair and orderly manner that promotes efficiency in the handling of city business.
6. 2. Citizens of Tontitown, as residents and taxpayers, have a direct and primary interest in the matters acted upon by the City Council, and therefore should have priority in addressing the Council.
7. 3. Non-residents may also wish to provide comments, and it is in the public interest to provide an orderly opportunity for them to be heard without disrupting the timely conduct of city business.
8. 4. Without immediate clarification of the agenda structure—including the addition of an Invocation after Roll Call and placing non-resident comments at the conclusion—there is a risk of confusion, inefficiency, and potential disputes in upcoming council meetings.

Section 7. Emergency Clause

It is therefore found and determined that establishing a clear and orderly process for public participation in City Council meetings and adding an Invocation to the agenda are essential to the efficient conduct of municipal business, to the preservation of transparency, and to the promotion of public peace, health, and safety; an emergency is hereby declared to exist, and this ordinance shall be in full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval.

PASSED AND APPROVED this ___ day of _____, 2025.

APPROVED:

Angela Russell, Mayor

ATTEST:

[Name], Clerk-Treasurer

Tontitown Code §30.05 – Order of Business

Redline-style comparison (Current vs. Proposed Amended). Includes Invocation after Roll Call; citizens' comment remains early; non-resident comment moved to end.

Current §30.05	Proposed Amended §30.05
(A) Call to order;	(A) Call to order;
(B) Roll call;	(B) Roll call;
(C) Pledge of allegiance;	(C) Invocation;
(D) Approval of the agenda;	(D) Pledge of allegiance;
(E) Approval of the minutes;	(E) Approval of the agenda;
(F) Approval of the city financial reports;	(F) Approval of the minutes;
(G) Public comment;	(G) Approval of the city financial reports;
(1) Museum;	(H) Public Comment by Citizens of Tontitown (limited to residents or taxpayers of the City);
(2) Police;	(1) Museum;
(3) Fire;	(2) Police;
(4) Public works;	(3) Fire;
(5) Building;	(4) Public works;
(6) Planning.	(5) Building;
(H) Public comment;	(6) Planning.
(I) Old business; presentation of ordinances, resolutions, motions or discussion items;	(I) Old business; presentation of ordinances, resolutions, motions, or discussion items;
(J) New business; presentation of ordinances, resolutions, motions or discussion items;	(J) New business; presentation of ordinances, resolutions, motions, or discussion items;
(K) Reports from the Mayor, the City Council and the City Attorney if any;	(K) Reports from the Mayor, the City Council, and the City Attorney if any;
(L) Announcements; and	(L) Announcements;
(M) Adjournment.	(M) Public Comment by Non-Residents (limited to individuals who do not reside or pay property taxes within the City); and
	(N) Adjournment.