

**MAYOR**  
Jessie Bellflowers

**MAYOR PRO TEM**  
Hope Page

**TOWN MANAGER**  
Chancer McLaughlin



**TOWN BOARD**  
Cynthia Hamilton  
Grilley Mitchell  
Bryan Marley  
Lisa Tremmel

**TOWN CLERK**  
Ashley Wyatt

**TOWN OF HOPE MILLS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Meeting Agenda – March 2, 2026**  
**7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting**

Mayor Bellflowers called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and welcomed those in attendance.

**STAFF PRESENT**

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin, Town Clerk Ashley Wyatt, Police Chief Stephen Dollinger, Fire Chief Matt Cain, Town Planner Emily Weidner, Public Works Director Don Sisko, Parks and Recreation Director Lamarco Morrison, and Town Attorney Katie Barber Jones.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bellflowers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA – ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS**

*Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Marley and unanimously approved.*

**OFFICIAL COMMENTS**

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin presented an extensive 14-page manager's report, highlighting several key initiatives. He emphasized the excellent work of school resource officers who are actively engaging students beyond just providing security. The report featured upcoming events including the spring litter sweep and community yard sale, and highlighted various committee opportunities for citizen involvement. He also formally announced the retirement of Finance Director Drew Holland, Camden Commons was featuring Target as the anchor tenant and the upcoming opening of the Hive of Hope Mills. Additional updates included Heritage Park phase two grant applications, Parks and Recreation mental health workshops, basketball court repairs following vandalism, and various NCDOT construction progress on local roundabouts.

**Board Member Comments**

Commissioner Hamilton welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

Commissioner Mitchell, speaking as president of the veterans of Cumberland County, offered support to any military families impacted by recent events.

Commissioner Marley welcomed attendees and requested the possibility of a community reopening event for the basketball courts when repairs are completed, similar to previous community gatherings.

Commissioner Tremmel reminded everyone to vote the following day.

Mayor Pro Tem Hope Page shared leadership insights.

Mayor Bellflowers welcomed attendees and expressed condolences for service members killed in action, emphasizing support for all military personnel currently deployed in the Middle East. He reported on significant progress toward public transportation in Hope Mills.

### **Presentations**

#### **Proclamation Recognizing National Women's History Month**

Mayor Pro Tem Hope Page read the proclamation recognizing March 1-31, 2026 as National Women's History Month into the record.

#### **Proclamation Recognizing National School Breakfast Week**

Commissioner Tremmel read the proclamation designating March 2-6, 2026 as National School Breakfast Week into the record.

#### **Proclamation Recognizing Town Charter Day**

Mayor Bellflowers read the proclamation recognizing March 9, 2026 as Town Charter Day into the record.

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **ZNG-013-25 Rezoning Of 0.68 +/- Acres From R15 To R7.5 Residential District**

Town Planner Xavier Robinson presented the rezoning request for 0.68 acres located at 0 Legion Road, the empty lot at the southwest corner of Broward Trail and Legion Road. The request seeks to rezone from R15 to R7.5 residential district for the undeveloped property.

Mr. Robinson explained the property had access to water and sewer utilities from both Legion Road and Broward Trail, and the Southwest Cumberland land use plan designation of low density residential supports the request.

*Commissioner Marley moved to open the public hearing. Commissioner Mitchell seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

There were no speakers.

*Commissioner Marley moved to close the public hearing. Mayor Pro Tem Page seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

*Commissioner Marley moved to approve ZNG-013-25 for the rezoning request to R7.5 residential district. Commissioner Hamilton seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Carlene Bailey, a Hope Mills resident spoke on behalf of the homeless population and advocated on their behalf.

Karen Saracen questioned the homeless committee's activities after learning they served food to a Fayetteville encampment for Thanksgiving. Through a Freedom of Information Act request, she discovered months of planning to serve the Gillespie Street encampment near Walmart. She expressed concern about Hope Mills tax dollars. She also noted that while the Historic Preservation Commission was required to remove artifacts from storage due to space needs, the homeless committee was requesting storage approval

Ron Gosyniak reported discovering the town's complete credit card information, including number, expiration date, and security code, was posted online over the weekend in tab 7 related to a shredding company contract. He noted the information was removed by Monday but questioned accountability for the mishap. He also challenged questioned the fuel surcharge in the same contract, suggesting that fuel prices had not increased 126% in the past 12 months as claimed, but have actually decreased. He went on to question who negotiates the contracts.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

*Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve the consent agenda items A through D, Commissioner Hamilton seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Consideration and approval of the Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes: February 6, 2026 Special Budget Meeting, February 16, 2026 Regular Meeting, and February 16, 2026 Special Meeting

Consideration and approval of the Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes: January 20, 2026 Closed Session

Acceptance of Monthly Financials- January 2026

Approval of the Household Hazardous Waste & Shred event for 4/18/26 and authorize Town Manager to execute corresponding contracts.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Hope Mills Board Of Commissioners Rules And Procedures Recommended Updates**

Mayor Bellflowers emphasized the need to establish "board expectations" regarding communication among board members and with town staff. He stressed the importance of treating each other and dedicated town staff with dignity and respect.

Commissioner Hamilton identified outdated language in rule number 10 regarding special meeting notifications, specifically requirements to mail notices to newspapers and radio stations that are no longer followed.

Town Clerk Ashley Wyatt confirmed the 48-hour notice and bulletin board posting requirements remain statutory, but agreed that removing outdated mailing language could occur since electronic notifications happen.

Commissioner Marley recommended the entire board review all rules and procedures to make informed collective decisions rather than addressing individual items. The agenda indicated discussion would occur at this meeting with approval scheduled for March 16th.

Commissioner Mitchell requested that commissioners with specific issues or suggestions email them to all board members before the March 16th meeting to facilitate efficient discussion. The board reached consensus on this approach.

The mayor established that any changes must be submitted to Ashley and Dan by close of business Monday, March 9th, allowing Dan Tuesday for review before inclusion in the Wednesday agenda packet. Town Attorney Katie Barber- Jones suggested providing red-line versions showing proposed changes for clarity during the meeting.

Regarding committee chair briefings, the board discussed scheduling internal committee chairs to present every other month at the second meeting, while external committee briefings by board members would occur at the first meeting of those same months. They agreed to move committee chair presentations from the end of the agenda to item number 3, before presentations, allowing chairs to leave after their reports if desired.

#### **Status Of Bylaws Of Current Committees**

Town Clerk Ashley Wyatt reported the ongoing review of all committee bylaws, with materials sent to committee chairs and copied to respective board liaisons. Since her tenure, only Cultural Arts, Economic Development, and Homelessness committees have been created, making this an appropriate time to review all committee bylaws simultaneously. Some responses have been received, with final submissions expected by April for board approval as they are completed.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **Consideration And Approval Of Strategic Plan Final Invoice And Corresponding Budget Amendment #21**

Finance Director Drew Holland presented the final strategic plan invoice requiring budget amendment #21 for \$22,275.

Commissioner Hamilton expressed concerns about the open-ended contract lacking specific amounts, start dates, end dates, or "not to exceed" provisions, viewing this as a liability for the town.

Mr. Holland confirmed this was the final invoice with no additional charges forthcoming.

Commissioner Marley questioned why the invoice arrived several months after the October 20-21, 2025 strategic plan presentation and adoption and why the total cost reached approximately \$95,335 compared to the original \$85,000 estimate.

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin acknowledged initial concerns but explained that staff reviewed each line item to verify all services were rendered prior to strategic plan delivery. Every consultant visit occurred at the town's request, including activities like manning booths at opening day events that contributed to additional costs. He also confirmed his recommendation to pay the invoice based on thorough research showing legitimate services rendered prior to project completion.

Commissioner Marley agreed to support the manager's recommendation despite concerns about the process.

Commissioner Hamilton initially moved to officially terminate the contract to prevent future invoices, but Town Attorney Katie Barber Jones advised against this precedent, explaining that service contracts naturally conclude upon delivery of the required product.

Commissioner Hamilton rescinded her motion.

Mayor Pro Tem Page questioned the timing of receiving a September-dated invoice only in January.

Mayor Bellflowers admitted his initial frustration upon seeing the late invoices, emphasizing his detailed review to ensure all services occurred within the proper timeline. He confirmed the necessity of payment. He acknowledged this as a learning experience, with Town Attorney Katie Barber Jones confirming future contracts could include 30-day invoice submission requirements and "not to exceed" amounts.

*Commissioner Marley moved to approve budget amendment number 21 for \$22,275. Commissioner Mitchell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

### **Consideration And Approval Of Replacing Police Fleet Vehicle #169 And Corresponding Budget Amendment #22**

Finance Director Holland explained the need for budget amendment #22 in the amount of \$18,350 to replace police vehicle #169. While the town leases all vehicles through Enterprise, equipment costs exceeding a certain percentage of vehicle value must be purchased outright rather than included in lease agreements.

Commissioner Mitchell inquired about exploring alternative options for future situations, with officials confirming this represents the only viable option given current circumstances and the age of the replaced vehicle.

*Commissioner Marley moved to approve budget amendment number 22 for \$18,350. Commissioner Hamilton seconded and the motion carried unanimously.*

### **Consideration And Approval Of A Storage Location For The Homelessness Committee**

Commissioner Hamilton, serving as liaison, explained the storage needs arose during discussions with committee chair Deanna Royal and another member Miss Connie. She stated that the committee requires accessible storage for supplies since volunteers work all hours and need access without disturbing town staff or accessing locked buildings.

Committee Chair Deanna Royal reported developing partnerships with local faith-based organizations to provide storage and kitchen space at no cost to the town budget. She also secured an Amazon donation contract, emphasizing the importance of moving forward quickly on storage arrangements.

Town Clerk Ashley Wyatt confirmed the homelessness committee had spent only 6.6% of their fiscal year budget, retaining 93.4% of allocated funds.

Commissioner Mitchell categorized homelessness into voluntary and involuntary situations, noting his 15-year experience with individuals who choose homelessness versus those needing assistance due to drugs, alcohol, mental health, or incarceration. He emphasized the importance of collaboration and helping people become "unhomeless" rather than enabling dependency.

### **LIAISONS UPDATE ON EXTERNAL COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

Commissioner Bryan Marley – RLUAC

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin reported on the Regional Land Use Advisory Commission meeting, as Commissioner Marley was unavailable.

Commissioner Cynthia Hamilton – Cumberland County Air Quality Ambassadors Committee, Cumberland County Continuum Of Care Committee

Commissioner Hamilton reported the last meeting lacked a quorum due to members' work and travel conflicts. They discussed food distribution activities mentioned during public comments and shared information from the point-in-time count with the Continuum of Care meeting she attended.

Mayor Pro Tem Hope Page – FAMPO TAC, Prime Movers Committee, Cultural Arts

Mayor Pro Tem Page expressed enthusiasm for the Prime Movers Committee's progressive initiatives, highlighting their scholarship application. The committee planned Women's History Month activities collaborating with Cultural Arts to place historical signs around the lake and walking areas.

The Cultural Arts Committee was developing projects including special needs children's programs, summer camp collaborations with Parks and Recreation and Artist Village, and a significant mural project.

Mayor Jessie Bellflowers – Mayor's Coalition; Mid-Carolina Council Of Governments; FCEDC Municipal Advisory Meeting Liaison

Mayor Bellflowers reported on the February 6th Cumberland County Mayor's Coalition meeting in Falcon and advised the next meeting is scheduled for May 15th. He highlighted Town Clerk Ashley Wyatt's dual role serving as clerk for both Hope Mills and the Cumberland County Mayor's Coalition, which meets quarterly.

The mayor reported attending the North Carolina League of Municipalities Mayors Association winter meeting February 11-12 in Pinehurst with 135 mayors present. He emphasized the importance of having community project funding proposals ready for the April short session.

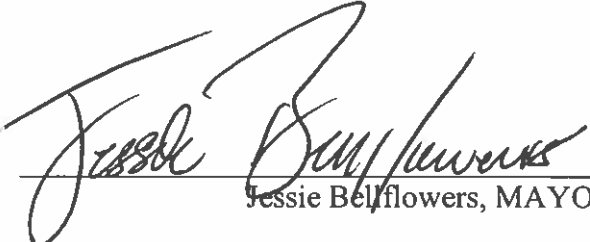
Lastly he spoke to State Auditor Dave Bullock addressing internal policies, credit cards, procurement policies, and oversight issues in municipalities.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Seeing no additional business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm.

*Motion by Commissioner Mitchell, seconded by Commissioner Marley, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.*

**ADOPTED this 18<sup>th</sup> Day of March 2026.**

  
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Jessie Bellflowers, MAYOR

**ATTEST:**

  
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Ashley Wyatt, MMC Town Clerk

