

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 6, 2026
8:30 a.m. Special Meeting

Mayor Bellflowers called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM and welcomed those in attendance.

STAFF PRESENT

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin, Town Clerk Ashley Wyatt, Parks and Recreation Director Lamarco Morrison, Director of Public Works Don Sisko, Deputy Director of Public Works Bruce Clark, Fire Chief Matt Cain, Deputy Fire Chief Robert Hurlburt, Police Chief Stephen Dollinger, Stormwater Administrator Beth Brown, Human Resources Director Leanne Carlucci, and Planning Director Emily Weidner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bellflowers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

The agenda was approved by unanimous vote of the board.

OFFICIAL COMMENTS

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin welcomed all staff and board members and outlined the day's schedule.

PRESENTATIONS

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT – Jessica Day

Consultant Jessica Day facilitated a comprehensive strategic planning session focused on aligning the town's priorities with its strategic plan. She began with introductions where participants shared their hopes for the session.

Ms. Day presented examples of successful strategic planning to illustrate the importance of forward-thinking planning. She also highlighted successful public sector examples, including Singapore's housing initiatives, Pittsburgh's transition from steel to technology, and Charlotte's investment in light rail infrastructure.

She covered the strategic planning framework of discover, decide, and the deliver phases and demonstrated how to implement each aspect.

CIP OVERVIEW/ FINANCE UPDATE

Finance Director Drew Holland presented the Community Investment Plan (CIP) and provided an update on the town's financial position. He explained that the CIP serves as a roadmap for all projects needed in the town, detailing costs and funding sources.

He went on to explain about cash flow, explaining that the town spent more money from reserves than in previous years. He detailed how property tax collection timing creates seasonal cash flow challenges, with the town's lowest cash month typically being October. The town's cash reserves dropped from \$6 million to approximately \$3 million in October 2025, which he attributed to the increased operational costs and the loss of sales tax revenue.

Commissioner Mitchell asked what needed to be done to ensure the town was financially healthy.

The recommendation was the following: For the upcoming budget year, major capital purchases would need to be delayed until December to preserve cash flow during the critical fall months.

Mayor Bellflowers asked if there were any substantial reoccurring costs annually.

Mr. Holland advised that street lights, training for employee certifications, and contracts were all reoccurring costs.

Commissioner Marley asked if the town knew how much revenue was coming in after the revaluation of taxes.

Mr. Holland advised that it was likely the projection he listed in the proposed budget.

DEPARTMENT STAFFING

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin opened the discussion on staffing needs being the top priority identified at the previous council retreat. Each department head was given the opportunity to then itemize their staffing needs. (The Inspections Director was not available to be present.)

BOND PROJECT INFORMATION PARKS & RECREATION PROJECTS

Parks and Recreation Director Lamarco Morrison presented several major projects requiring funding decisions:

Recreation Center: Two location options were discussed - the Hodges property or potentially the proposed sport's complex location.

Commissioner Marley suggested that the board revisit the proposal of the golf course as the location for the baseball sports complex.

Commissioner Hamilton expressed concerns regarding the public not having input as to what occurs with the golf course.

Mayor Bellflowers asked for a consensus.

It was the consensus of the board not to revisit the proposal of the golf course as the location for the baseball sports complex and that a decision on the matter should be put to a vote of the people through a bond on the next election ballot.

Sports Complex: Discussions centered on a 300-acre property off Route 301, but would require significant infrastructure investment. No action was taken.

Lake Park Parking Lot: A \$1.3 million project with potential grant funding opportunities to help mitigate costs to taxpayers. No action was taken.

Senior Center: This segment highlighted challenges in providing adequate space for senior programming, with the current senior center renovations being the immediate need were discussed. It was decided the potential land purchases for the initiative would be discussed at a future closed session of the board.

BOND PROJECT INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin and Public Works Director Don Sisko presented the critical need for street infrastructure improvements. A pavement condition study noted that the town's street network had a condition index of only 68.3, with only 28% of streets in good condition. The total replacement value was estimated at \$35 million, with \$11 million needed to bring streets to standard.

The presentation emphasized that securing a bond would help address town-maintained streets in existing neighborhoods. Major streets identified for improvement included several key thoroughfares throughout the town.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF DAVENPORT PUBLIC FINANCE INVOICE AND CORRESPONDING BUDGET AMENDMENT #23 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$36,750

Finance Director Drew Holland explained that the invoice presented and corresponding budget amendment related to previous bond preparation work with Davenport Public Finance. The town had authorized work in a previous year.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve the Davenport Public Finance invoice and corresponding budget amendment in the amount of \$36,750. Commissioner Tremmel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The board then discussed the bond options that had two approaches:

- General Obligation Bond requiring voter approval in November 2026
- Limited Obligation Bond not requiring voter approval, available sooner but without public input

Commissioner Hamilton expressed strong preference for voter approval in decisions that would increase taxes.

The board reached consensus to proceed with the General Obligation Bond option for the November 2026 ballot.

PUBLIC SAFETY: FIRE/POLICE SUBSTATION AND POLICE VEHICLE ROTATION

Chief Dollinger explained space constraints at the current police facility, originally designed for 41 officers but now housing 59. Critical issues included inadequate female locker facilities and maxed-out evidence storage. He presented a rental option requiring a decision by June 1st, with monthly costs around \$6,000-7,200 depending on configuration. He also reported significant improvement in fleet condition, with high-mileage vehicles (over 125,000 miles) reduced from 75% to 15% of the fleet. The department requested 5 vehicle replacements in the upcoming budget to eliminate remaining high-mileage vehicles, some exceeding 200,000 miles.

Fire Chief Cain presented the need for a substation to improve response times for emergencies and ISO ratings.

TRANSPORTATION

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin presented potential regional transportation initiatives being studied by the City of Fayetteville with input from neighboring communities such as Hope Mills.

DEVELOPMENT AT I-95 EXIT

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin provided updates on Exit 41 development opportunities, noting continued interest from developers despite previous challenges.

Commissioner Hamilton expressed concerns about rumors of a potential extended stay hotel in that area and potential law enforcement impacts.

TRADE STREET

The final priority addressed downtown revitalization along Trade Street. Mr. McLaughlin outlined the vision for a walkable, pedestrian-friendly corridor similar to Charleston's historic districts, incorporating public-private partnerships and redevelopment opportunities.

He announced plans to attend the NC Main Street Conference to explore the state's two-year Main Street program, which would provide design assistance and development strategies for downtown areas.

STAFF COMMENTS

Several staff members emphasized ongoing needs:

HR Director Leeanne Carlucci advocated for completing implementation of the previously conducted pay study, noting that many employees remain underpaid compared to benchmarks and surrounding agencies who were offering competitive salary increases.

Police Chief Dollinger reported that pay concerns were the top issue raised in annual one-on-one meetings with officers.

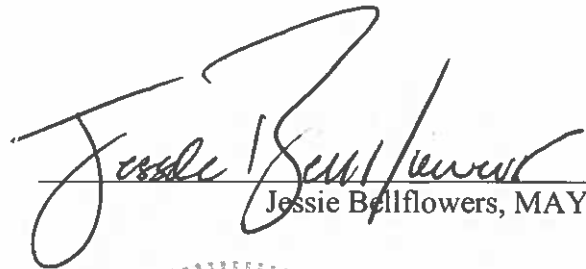
ADJOURNMENT

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Seeing no additional business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:17 pm.

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

ADOPTED this 18th Day of March 2026.



Jessie Bellflowers, MAYOR

ATTEST:



Ashley Wyatt, MMC Town Clerk

