

**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 –February 6, 2026**  
**12:00 p.m. Special Budget Meeting**

Mayor Bellflowers called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM and welcomed those in attendance.

**NOTE:** Commissioner Bryan Marley arrived at 12:32 pm. Mayor Bellflowers left at 1:05pm and returned at 2:54pm.

**STAFF PRESENT**

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin, Town Clerk Ashley Wyatt, Deputy Town Clerk Coronda Regan, Finance Director Drew Holland, and Consultant Jessica Day.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bellflowers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**OPENING REMARKS**

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin and Finance Director Drew Holland provided opening remarks regarding the budget process for FY 2026-27. They emphasized that the meeting represented a change in how the town approached its budget planning by connecting it with the strategic plan. Town Manager McLaughlin noted that while they had previously used a community investment plan to guide their budget decisions, they were now working to align those efforts with the comprehensive strategic plan approved in October.

Finance Director Holland explained that the meeting would help identify board priorities that would directly feed into staff preparations for the March 6th retreat at Camp Rockfish, where department heads would present their budget proposals.

Mayor Bellflowers shared information from that morning's mayor's coalition meeting, noting that the general assembly would be returning to craft the state budget in coming months. He emphasized the importance of strategically identifying projects that might receive funding from state legislators. He advised the board to be realistic about funding expectations, focusing on strategic projects that had the best chance of gaining support.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA – ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS**

The agenda was approved by unanimous vote of the board.

## **PRESENTATION**

### **Strategic Context & Organizational Insights (Budget Priorities of FY26-27)**

Consultant Jessica Day introduced herself and shared her background. She explained how she connected with Hope Mills through a conference where she had presented on strategic planning implementation.

Ms. Day reviewed the objectives for the session, which included helping the board align their strategic plan with budget priorities. She asked board members to share their expectations for the meeting, with responses including:

- Learning how to align the strategic plan with the budget
- Gaining knowledge about the process
- Identifying clear priorities
- Determining implementation steps

Ms. Day provided an overview of the town's strategic plan, reviewing the five key goals:

- Downtown vibrancy, economic growth, and community character
- Public safety and neighborhood enhancement
- Infrastructure, transportation, and environment
- Parks and recreation, social events, and culture
- Effective governance and organizational excellence

She then shared highlights from a recent departmental retreat, where staff had identified strengths, challenges, and potential actions aligned with the strategic plan. Key themes included:

- The need for clear direction and proactive planning to manage rapid growth
- Staff concerns about focusing too much on negative comments
- The importance of continuing education and transparency
- A desire for stronger collaboration across departments

A discussion followed about communication and transparency, with several board members emphasizing the importance of effective communication between staff, elected officials, and the public.

Commissioner Mitchell highlighted the value of transparency, noting how previous successes like the dam replacement had benefited from clear public communication.

The board also discussed the respective roles of the council and staff in strategic planning, with Commissioner Marley emphasizing that the board's role was to set policy and approve the budget, while allowing staff to implement those decisions using their expertise.


The session laid groundwork for the upcoming March 6th retreat where the board and staff would continue budget planning aligned with strategic priorities.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Seeing no additional business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.

*Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Page, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.*

**ADOPTED this 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of March 2026.**

  
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Jessie Bellflowers, MAYOR

**ATTEST:**

  
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Ashley Wyatt, MMC Town Clerk

