

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 16, 2026
5:30 p.m. Special Meeting

Mayor Bellflowers called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and welcomed those in attendance.

ABSENT: Commissioners Bryan Marley

STAFF PRESENT

Town Manager Chancer McLaughlin, Town Clerk Ashley Wyatt, Police Chief Stephen Dollinger, and Deputy Fire Chief Robbie Hurlburt.

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.

PRESENTATIONS

Overview Of Municipal Police Operations - Stephen Dollinger, Chief Of Police

Chief Dollinger presented an overview of the Hope Mills Police Department operations. He reported that the department is currently authorized for 59 sworn officers, 11 traffic control officers, and 5 civilian employees including animal control. Current staffing stands at 58 sworn officers with one vacancy that will likely be filled by March. The department has 9 traffic control officers instead of 11, which he noted is a difficult position to fill due to the specific work hours required. All civilian positions are filled.

Chief Dollinger detailed the organizational structure which includes four divisions: Patrol, Special Operations, Investigations, and School Resource Officers. He emphasized that the department has a diverse workforce with 30.5% female officers, 20.3% African American officers, along with Hispanic, Native American and officers of other ethnicities. He highlighted that officers speak multiple languages including Russian, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, French, Moroccan, English, and Afrikaans, which helps them serve the community better.

The Chief discussed technology used by the department, including 20 license plate readers, real-time crime center cameras, and drone capabilities. Regarding drones, he explained plans to expand drone usage by training officers on each patrol squad to operate them. The drones would be purchased using asset forfeiture funds, which would also cover training costs.

In response to questions from the Board, Chief Dollinger confirmed that drones would be standardized across the department for consistent training, and explained that they help with search operations, surveillance, and providing intelligence before high-risk entries.

Chief Dollinger described the department's canine unit consisting of 6 specialized teams: 1 bloodhound for tracking, 2 explosive detection canines, and 3 multi-purpose dogs for narcotics detection, article searches, tracking and suspect apprehension.

The presentation highlighted the department's focus on community policing, with over 126 events conducted in 2025, including programs like "Shop with a Cop," "Breakfast with Badges," and "National Night Out." The Chief also noted the value of having an on-staff victim advocate who helps victims obtain protective orders, create safety plans, and access necessary resources.

Chief Dollinger emphasized the department's commitment to training, including participation in the West Point Leadership Program, the League of Municipality Supervisor Training Program, and various job-specific training opportunities.

The Chief explained the department's participation in the Southeastern North Carolina Violent Crime Task Force, which includes multiple municipalities and federal agencies.

Commissioner Hamilton expressed concerns about safety, describing automatic gunfire and nighttime shooting that frightens residents. Chief Dollinger acknowledged the difficulty in addressing the issue when shooters are in county jurisdiction where shooting is legal, making enforcement challenging.

Town Manager McLaughlin also noted that even if shooting was not permitted in the County, the Hope Mills Police Department did not have the authority to take any action in another jurisdiction despite its close proximity.

Overview Of Municipal Fire Operations - Matt Cain, Fire Chief

Deputy Fire Chief Robbie Hurlburt presented on behalf of Chief Cain, who was unable to attend the meeting. He began by sharing the department's mission statement and vision, which emphasizes providing high-quality emergency services to the community.

Deputy Chief outlined the core services of the department, which operates 24/7/365. These include fire suppression, emergency medical services, special operations (hazmat, technical rescues, water rescues, vehicle extrications), and fire prevention/public education.

The department consists of 38 full-time staff (with one position frozen from last year's budget and one current vacancy) and 8 volunteers. The department operates a three-shift system (A, B, C) with 11 personnel per shift, except A shift which currently operates with 10 due to the frozen position.

He also discussed the department's key priorities: life safety as the highest priority, incident stabilization, property conservation, and serving with integrity, respect, teamwork, and professionalism.

He reported that the town currently has one fire station covering 9.2 square miles (approximately 133.3 road miles) with a population of 18,102. He noted that the department is researching a potential second station location on Legion Road at Pinewood Drive.

Deputy Chief provided statistics from 2025, noting that the department responded to 2,123 calls with an average response time of 5 minutes and 10 seconds.

Community engagement metrics showed 26 station tours conducted, interactions with 17,985 children and 13,200 adults, 188 fire inspections, 30 car seat installations, 86 community events, and 21 smoke alarm installations.

In response to questions, he explained that volunteers undergo a 90-day training packet and the same certification process as paid firefighters. Regarding partnerships with other municipalities, he clarified that the department has mutual aid agreements with county fire departments and three full-service contracts with outlying areas. He also confirmed that the department has two outdated drones that need replacement and is working on getting more certified drone pilots.

Mayor Bellflowers noted the potential for cross-department drone use between police and fire, and it was agreed this would be beneficial because drones with infrared capabilities could help identify hot spots during fires and assist in search operations.

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no additional business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:34 pm.

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

ADOPTED this 2nd Day of March 2026.


Jessie Bellflowers, MAYOR

ATTEST:


Ashley Wyatt, MMC Town Clerk

