

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, February 24, 2026 - 9:00 AM

Council Chambers, 1121 N. Lake Park Boulevard, Carolina Beach, NC



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barbee called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

PRESENT

Mayor Lynn Barbee

Mayor Pro Tem Deb LeCompte

Council Member Jay Healy

Council Member Wayne Rouse

Council Member Vince Losito

ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Deputy Town Manager Ed Parvin

Finance Director Debbie Hall

Town Clerk Kim Ward

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Employee Recognition

Public Utilities Director Mark Meyer recognized Darius Grady for five years of service, praising his potential as a future leader within Public Utilities. Mr. Meyer also recognized Arnold "Stu" Frye for 10 years of service, commending his reliability and his role in maintaining team morale.

2. Presentation of the Facility Study Results by Creech & Associates

Brent Green of Creech & Associates shared results from the yearlong facility study, which included a space needs assessment and a facility master plan meant to figure out ways to meet the needs. Four master plan components were presented: the Public Works campus on Bridge Barrier Road, the municipal complex, Fire Station 1, and the Community Quad at Cape Fear Boulevard and 3rd Street. The study encompassed 14 departments and projected space needs over a 20-year horizon using a 3% annual growth rate derived from 11 population and development metrics.

The study identified significant space deficits across all reviewed facilities, with Town Hall (including Police) and Parks & Recreation representing the largest shortfalls. Mr. Green presented several long-term options for reorganizing and updating facilities, and he also identified a possible short-term measure of adding up to eight workstations within the existing Town Hall atrium.

Mayor Barbee commended the presentation and said it provided good context. He asked what the next step in the process is other than Council feedback. Mr. Oakley said they would need to select between options, prioritize projects based on interdependencies, develop long-range cost estimates, and identify funding mechanisms such as general obligation bonds and grants.

3. Bike/Ped Committee Update

Bike/Ped Committee Chair Rodney Kidd gave an update on current activities:

- The Bicycle Friendly Community application, due in June, has been substantially completed and is ready to be turned over to staff for finalization.
- The Carolina Beach Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan steering committee work from the prior year was noted, with the committee expressing readiness to prioritize next steps upon Council direction, with liaison Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte identified as the lead going forward.
- The NC BikeWalk Transportation Summit, a statewide advocacy event, will be hosted at the Courtyard by Marriott Carolina Beach Oceanfront September 17-19.

Mr. Kidd also noted the following volunteer activities:

- Event bike racks
- Tour de Island
- Police Department Bike Rodeo
- Community educational opportunities geared toward biking, pedestrian safety, and trail maintenance

Council Member Losito asked whether some of the event-oriented activities might be better served through a non-profit structure to access broader volunteer pools and funding.

Mayor Barbee said if the committee needs funding, the Town has seen great success raising money through non-profit organizations. Mr. Kidd said as of now, nothing is requiring any funding.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte clarified that the Bike Rodeo and Summit are already facilitated through non-profit organizations, and the committee is a volunteer mechanism for them.

Council gave consensus in support of the committee's work and directed Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte to bring the committee's prioritized project list to Council for feedback.

4. Committee Appointment – Bike/Ped

Mayor Barbee announced the following committee appointment:

- Bike/Ped: Tom Hayes

5. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley gave an update on various projects:

- Cybersecurity incidents: All staff procedures were followed correctly and no fault rested with Town employees. Staff is actively reviewing the budget to identify savings through unfilled

positions and deferred projects to ensure the incident would not impact the Town's fund balance or future programs. Ongoing vigilance efforts include additional staff training and a public cybersecurity workshop on March 3 from 9:00 to 11:00 AM in Council Chambers.

- Potential Tropical Cyclone 8 (PTC 8): The Town has been reimbursed over \$1.1 million in expenses, including staff time, equipment use, repairs, and property damage.
- Lake Park Boulevard striping: This is still pending due to contractor scheduling and weather constraints.

Council Member Rouse asked about a prescribed burn in the State Park. Mr. Oakley said details would be communicated to the public through outreach materials.

Public Works Director Brian Stanberry provided an update on Mobi-mats as an alternative to wooden beach access walkways. He identified three access points – Clam Shell Lane, Seahorse Lane, and Seagull Lane – as candidates for conversion.

Council member Rouse asked about the material. Mr. Stanberry said it's a vinyl composite type of material that rolls out.

Council Member Rouse inquired about cost savings. Mr. Stanberry said wooden access replacements cost approximately \$70,000–\$80,000, while a Mobi-mat installation is estimated at approximately \$7,000.

Council Member Healy asked if the mats would need daily maintenance. Mr. Stanberry said they will just need to be blown off periodically.

Mayor Barbee said dunes are designed to move, so it makes more sense to put a mat on them instead of a thick structure. He said Mobi-mats may not be the answer everywhere, but they are worth trying.

Council Member Rouse noted that the mats would be an easier option for people with ambulatory issues.

Mr. Stanberry said he is excited to assess the mats and see how they do, noting that they hope to have them in place by spring.

6. Presentation on Future Grant Opportunities

Community Development Director Jeremy Hardison presented an overview of current and upcoming grant opportunities:

- Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) access grants: final application due by the end of July
- New Hanover Community Endowment: possible improvements to the existing Gazebo stage area and Community Building complex; other funding possibilities were noted
- National Coastal Resilience Fund grant: This has progressed through Phase 1 and is now in Phase 2 focused on project identification
- Land and Water Conservation Fund grant: identified as a potential complement for acquiring low-lying lots near Lake Park or the North End for flood protection purposes

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program: 28 applications submitted and currently undergoing engineering evaluation for home elevation; a stormwater infrastructure component of the same grant was also noted as a potential application
- Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO): annual cycle grant application in preparation, contingent on N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) confirmation of a terminus point, with the goal of extending sidewalk and crosswalk improvements toward Alabama Avenue
- Cape Fear Council of Governments: stormwater mapping grant of just over \$69,000 was reported as awarded and underway, with expected completion within six months; this is focused on mapping stormwater flow direction, discharge points, and water quality improvements

Mayor Barbee commended staff for the Town's improved approach to grant seeking, noting that long-range plans – such as the facility study and Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan – are essential to being competitive in grant applications.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 10:35 AM.