

Town of Swansboro
Board of Commissioners
February 10, 2026, Regular Meeting

In attendance: Mayor William Justice, Mayor Pro Tem Jeffrey Conaway, Commissioner Douglas Eckendorf, Commissioner Tamara Pieratti, Commissioner Tim Vannoy, and Commissioner Wayne Herbert.

Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Pledge

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm and Mayor Justice led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

Citizens were offered an opportunity to address the Board regarding items listed on the agenda. No comments were given.

Adoption of Agenda

On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Herbert, the agenda was unanimously adopted.

Business Non-Consent

Visitors Center Conceptual Engineered Drawings

Town Manager Jon Barlow presented revised floor plans for the visitor center redesign, drawn by Jon Freshwater with Crystal Coast Engineering. The design maximized the use of a small space to increase bathroom facilities for transient boaters. The plan includes one unisex handicapped bathroom accessible from the hallway, a women's facility with four toilets and one shower, a men's facility with three urinals and two toilets, both facilities having two sinks and baby changing stations, plus an office space with counter for staff security and retail space for brochures and event use. Manager Barlow noted that local contractors were reviewing the plans for cost estimates, which should be available soon.

In response to inquiries from the Board, Manager Barlow confirmed the following:

- The project engineer and the building inspector have both verified that the existing structure was stable and did not require any additional reinforcement.
- The layout of the space was designed to support food service needs during events and festivals, allowing staff to operate efficiently.
- Staff have already begun preparation work, including scraping and caulking, and these tasks were being completed in-house to help reduce contracted expenses.

The Board provided clear directions for staff to proceed with obtaining contractor bids for the project.

Onslow County Fire Rescue Commission Representation

Town Manager Barlow reported on Onslow County's plan to reestablish the Fire and Rescue Commission with a new structure as part of a countywide fire services master plan. The commission would be comprised of ten members: four representatives from volunteer fire districts, one licensed insurance agent, the county finance officer, county emergency services director, one county commissioner, one municipal government representative, and an ex officio member from Camp Lejeune Fire Service.

The concern raised was that three municipal fire services (Swansboro, Jacksonville, and North Topsail Beach) must share one representative seat, with unclear selection process and term lengths. Fire Chief Jacob Randall had expressed interest in serving as Swansboro's representative.

Applications were being accepted through the county website, with the master plan expected to be released April 1st. County commissioners will make the final appointments.

The Board agreed to monitor this situation and discuss it further as more information becomes available.

Future Agenda Topics

Future agenda items were shared for visibility and comments. In addition, an opportunity was provided for the board to introduce items of interest and subsequent direction for placement on future agendas. No additional items were introduced; however, several concerns were raised, and staff outlined how each will be addressed:

- Staff noted that the February 11, 2026, budget workshop would be a presentation by department heads reviewing the current year's budget performance and challenges, serving as a kickoff for next fiscal year's budget preparation process.
- Staff would reach out to the local NCDOT division to request a review of the traffic signal system and obtain feedback on potential updates.

Public Comment

Citizens were offered an opportunity to address the Board for no more than five minutes regarding items not listed on the agenda. No comments were made.

Manager's Comments

Town Manager Barlow commended staff for their effective response to the recent snowfall, noting the two-day closure and absence of facility damage, and added that any consideration of purchasing snowplows would require further evaluation and would be discussed during budget planning.

Additionally, he reported that negotiations for the EOC/PSB project contract were ongoing with a draft expected at a future meeting, he also noted that the June 30 SKIFF grant deadline was approaching and indicated that staff would seek an extension if needed due to similar delays statewide.

Board Comments

All board members expressed appreciation for the town's storm response during the recent snowstorm, highlighting the effectiveness of real-time communication, the dedication of public safety and public works staff, and the overall smooth handling of the snowfall event.

Mayor Pro Tem Conaway noted recurring trash buildup at Municipal Park, specifically old cat food cans, and requested that the issue be addressed again.

Commissioner Herbert thanked those in attendance and online viewers, noting that someone once told him about a small crowd at town meetings might indicate things were running smoothly.

Mayor Justice expressed appreciation for progress toward Medal of Honor recognition for Major Capers, commended the storm response and communication efforts, thanked the Methodist Church for providing warming shelter services, recognized community members who assisted with snow removal, noted upcoming participation in a county municipal meeting, and reported that legislative efforts were underway to secure an extension for the \$3 million grant.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Vannoy, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.