

**TOWN OF DUCK
TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
March 4, 2026**

The Town Council for the Town of Duck convened at the Paul F. Keller Meeting Hall at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4, 2026.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Monica Thibodeau; Mayor Pro Tempore Sandy Whitman; Councilor Brenda Chasen; Councilor Kevin Lingard; and Councilor Marc Murray.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Manager Drew Havens; Development and Infrastructure Director/Assistant Town Manager Connor Winstead; Town Attorney Robert Hobbs; Police Chief Jeffrey Ackerman; Fire Chief Matthew Dudek; Public Information and Events Director Kristiana Nickens; Finance Administrator Lauren Creech; and Town Clerk Lori Ackerman.

OTHERS ABSENT: None.

Mayor Thibodeau called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Mayor Thibodeau asked Willo Kelly of the Outer Banks Association of Realtors to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Thibodeau led the moment of silence.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Thibodeau opened the floor for public comments. She noted that comments will be limited to three minutes as there was a timer for the time limit.

Police Sergeant Joseph Knight was recognized to speak. Police Sergeant Knight explained that he is part of the Law Enforcement United organization, which has law enforcement officers riding bicycles from Atlantic City, New Jersey to Washington, DC, which was approximately 200 miles. He stated that the ride starts on May 9, 2026 and he and hundreds of other riders will meet on May 12, 2026 from all over the country. He added that each officer rides in honor of a specific fallen officer whose names are engraved on the National Law Enforcement Memorial Wall. He noted that he was asking for Council and the audience's support for this ride by donating to Law Enforcement United as he has a personal goal of raising \$1,750 for the cause.

There being no one else wishing to speak, Mayor Thibodeau closed the time for public comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes from the February 4, 2026, Regular Meeting; Government & Education Access Channel 2026-2027 Proposed Budget; and Budget Amendment

Councilor Chasen moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion carried 5-0.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Dare County League of Women Voters

Christine Fleisher of the Dare County League of Women Voters was recognized to speak. Ms. Fleisher presented the 2026 Citizens Guide to Council and the audience. She thanked the Town for their support of the guide each year.

Outer Banks Association of Realtors

Willo Kelly and Janice Scarborough of the Outer Banks Association of Realtors were recognized to speak. Ms. Kelly and Ms. Scarborough went on to present a \$5,000 check for the Town's Septic Health Initiative program.

QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARING

There were no Quasi-judicial public hearings at this time.

LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no Legislative public hearings at this time.

OLD BUSINESS/ITEMS DEFERRED FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Discussion/Consideration of Appointing an Individual to Serve on the Planning Board

Mayor Thibodeau stated that there was an opening on the Planning Board for a term to expire on May 1, 2028 to fill the unexpired term of Tom Burton. She stated that staff advertised the vacancy and received six applications. She noted that Jeannine Cotner had withdrawn her application, adding that Warren Stembridge, Miriam Rollin, Anthony Parisi, Robert Lotze, and Irine Devroude were present for this meeting and would introduce themselves to Council and the audience.

Warren Stembridge of 106 Beachcomber Court was recognized to speak. Mr. Stembridge went on to introduce himself to Council and the audience and explained why he wished to be appointed to the Planning Board.

Councilor Chasen asked Warren Stembridge if he has completed any local volunteer work. Warren Stembridge stated that he did not because he's been working full-time but wanted to start. Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman pointed out that there was beach grass planting on March 6 and 7, 2026, encouraging him to volunteer for that. Mr. Stembridge stated that he would be happy to help.

Miriam Rollin of 149 Plover Drive was recognized to speak. Ms. Rollin went on to introduce herself to Council and the audience and explained why she wished to be appointed to the Planning Board.

Anthony Parisi of 1540 Duck Road was recognized to speak. Mr. Parisi went on to introduce himself to Council and the audience and explained why he wished to be appointed to the Planning Board.

Councilor Chasen asked Anthony Parisi which states he had a professional engineering license. Anthony Parisi stated that it was in Virginia and California.

Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman asked Anthony Parisi if he had done any volunteer work for the Town. Mr. Parisi stated that he was on the damage assessment committee a few years ago.

Robert Lotze of 117 Dune Road was recognized to speak. Mr. Lotze went on to introduce himself to Council and the audience and explained why he wished to be appointed to the Planning Board.

Irine Devroude of 134 Olde Duck Road was recognized to speak. Ms. Devroude went on to introduce herself to Council and the audience and explained why she wished to be appointed to the Planning Board.

Mayor Thibodeau opened the nominations. Councilor Chasen nominated Irine Devroude. Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman nominated Irine Devroude. Councilor Lingard nominated Warren Stembridge. Councilor Murray nominated Anthony Parisi. Mayor Thibodeau nominated Robert Lotze.

Mayor Thibodeau closed the nominations.

Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman and Councilor Chasen voted for Irine Devroude. Councilor Lingard voted for Warren Stembridge. Councilor Murray voted for Anthony Parisi. Mayor Thibodeau voted for Robert Lotze.

Irine Devroude was appointed to the Planning Board for a term to expire on May 1, 2028.

Discussion/Consideration of the Potential Purchase of a Fire Truck

Fire Chief Matthew Dudek was recognized to speak. Fire Chief Dudek gave a short presentation and background on why the Duck Fire Department needs a new ladder truck,

pointing out that it was 24 years old and had cost the Town \$100,000 in repairs in 2025. He stated that the used truck that was discussed at the Council Retreat ended up not working out so now the fire department would need to purchase a new one. He explained that the other option would be a stock unit that uses a basic design, minor modifications would be needed specific to the Duck Fire Department, and there was a less than 365-day delivery time. He added that there was a custom option that would take a lot longer with the lead time with more options that would need to be customized.

Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman asked Fire Chief Dudek what he needed from Council. Fire Chief Dudek explained that if Council gave permission, he would need to run it through all of the shifts and the proposals. He added that he would like permission to proceed with getting a stock unit.

Mayor Thibodeau clarified that Fire Chief Dudek's preference would be to go with a new truck. She further clarified that the engine that Fire Chief Dudek drove was a stock vehicle. Fire Chief Dudek explained that it was very similar, adding that the differences were not worth \$430,000. He stated that the stock unit would work for the fire department as it was a workable piece of apparatus. Mayor Thibodeau clarified that it would have a ladder which helps with the Town's ISO rating. Fire Chief Dudek stated she was correct. Mayor Thibodeau added that because it was new, the Town would not be looking at a lot of repairs. Fire Chief Dudek agreed, adding that the existing truck had a lot of repairs in the past year.

Councilor Chasen asked what the warranty would be on the new stock. Fire Chief Dudek explained that it was typically five years on the engine, 50 years on the frame, five years on the axles, three years on the ABS systems, 10 years on the cab components, 10 years on the paint, five years on the transmission, five years on the pump, three years for parts and labor, three years for the hydraulic systems, and a one year comprehensive bumper to bumper warranty from when the vehicle is delivered.

Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman asked how many days Truck 11 has been in service this calendar year. Fire Chief Dudek thought it was three or four days.

Councilor Murray asked if buying a stock unit would be leaving the full custom approach that was causing some of the problems on Truck 11. Fire Chief Dudek stated that it would, adding that the stock unit will not put the department at a disadvantage or be a problem in the future. Councilor Murray asked if water could be delivered from the unit without having someone on the ladder. Fire Chief Dudek stated that it could.

Councilor Lingard thought Council was happy to write a check for \$1.7 million at the Retreat. He added that he had no problem adding \$60,000+ to that for the stock vehicle.

Councilor Chasen asked what will need to be added to the stock unit in order to be used. Fire Chief Dudek explained that there were other expenses, but if the Town went with the proposal he gave, the Town would receive a rebate from the engine manufacturer of at least \$10,000-\$20,000 depending on EPA credits, which should cover most of what the

department needs. He stated that he was confident that they could equip the rest of the way within the existing budget as well as what they could get for selling Engine 11. Councilor Chasen asked if Fire Chief Dudek thought the Town could get more than \$50,000 for selling Engine 11. Fire Chief Dudek thought he could, adding that he thought he could get at least \$100,000 for it. Mayor Thibodeau clarified that it would include the radios. Fire Chief Dudek stated she was correct.

Mayor Thibodeau asked Town Manager Havens to explain how this will affect the budget. Town Manager Havens explained that this was programmed for Fiscal Year 2028 in the CIP, which was when the Town was going to replace the truck. He stated that the opportunity came to look at a used engine which led to the opportunity to purchase a stock unit. He stated that if the Town waits until it's programmed, which was one of the options Council had, it would not cost \$1.7 million but would increase as well as having an additional lead time. He felt it was a good opportunity and it made sense to move forward with the purchase if Council authorized it. He added that it would require a \$65,000 prepay and the Town could prepay it and then he would seek proposals for installment financing for 10 years and reimburse the Town with the proceeds of installment finance. He pointed out that the Fund Balance could not be used right now while staying within a comfort margin that the Town's policy dictates. Mayor Thibodeau clarified that the Town would look to finance it over 10 years. Town Manager Havens stated she was correct, adding that it would be his recommendation.

Councilor Lingard asked how it would affect the Town's insurance rating if Truck 11 died and could not be used. Fire Chief Dudek explained that the requirement for the rating was that there be a certified operational aerial ladder within 3.5 miles of the business district of the Town. He noted that it puts the mutual aid partners out of the question and would result in a drop, but he wasn't sure how far and would get the Town in the 3 or 4 range. He pointed out that the reason was because of the height of the buildings, a fire engine has to be able to reach the highest buildings as well as the larger square footage buildings. Councilor Lingard clarified that if Truck 11 were to die, it would affect the insurance premiums of everyone that owns property in Duck. Fire Chief Dudek stated that it was a possibility.

Mayor Thibodeau asked with regard to the delivery, if Council approved this purchase, it would take a year to finish it and the fire department would hold onto Truck 11. Fire Chief Dudek stated she was correct, adding that it would be approximately 1 year.

Councilor Murray understood that the Town was avoiding an EPA requirement that would not be avoided if the Town waited until 2028. He asked what that was. Fire Chief Dudek explained that there was a change in emission standards that come into effect in 2027, adding that the new engine would be part of the new emission controls and was a standard practice.

Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman clarified that there would be a \$430,000 savings to the Town if the engine was purchased now. Mayor Thibodeau stated that was what was in the CIP. Fire Chief Dudek stated that the CIP was \$2.2 million which was based on an

apples-to-apples replacement of the existing apparatus. Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman clarified that the \$430,000 could be a lot higher. Fire Chief Dudek stated that it would increase every year due to new engines and motors having an increased cost due to the EPA compliance.

Councilor Murray clarified that the new stock units were available now because they were trying to get out new old stock motors that do not meet the new EPA requirement. He further clarified that Council was comparing purchasing a custom truck in 2027/2028 with a new stock truck now. He asked if the new stock option would be available in 2027/2028 and what the cost would look like. Fire Chief Dudek explained that the body style was pretty much the same and they would continue with that line because they prebuild a lot of the components. He stated that as far as the power plants go, it would depend on what the pricing was on the compliance with the new emission standards. He pointed out that they did not have pricing on that and were not able to give him numbers on that.

Councilor Chasen stated that she liked it and thought the Town should get the ladder truck in order to keep up the ISO rating. She thought it was a good option for the fire department. Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman pointed out that the Town currently has a ladder truck but it was unavailable and has only been in service for three days over the entire year. Mayor Thibodeau agreed, adding that it was an issue. Councilor Lingard stated that it was a very expensive band aid. Councilor Murray thought it made sense to move forward with it. Mayor Thibodeau thought it was a good deal.

Councilor Murray clarified that it was already in the CIP for 2027/2028 and the Town was not taking delivery until the 2027 timeframe. Town Manager Havens stated that the 2027/2028 would be if the Town had ordered it in that year. Mayor Thibodeau pointed out that Council would be looking at additional funding for Public Safety altogether with the building and other expenses.

Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman moved to have the Town Manager and Fire Chief discuss with the vendor for the purchase of a new fire truck not to exceed \$1.8 million.

Town Manager Havens explained that the motion should be to accept the proposal from Atlantic Emergency Solutions to purchase a 2027 Pierce Enforcer 107-foot aerial for \$1,769,492 and to authorize the Town Manager to sign the agreement. He added that a second motion would be needed for a budget amendment to appropriate the Fund Balance in the amount of \$1,769,492 and increase the Fire Department Capital Outlay budget by that same amount. He asked that the budget amendment motion be completed first.

Councilor Lingard moved to approve budget amendment #8 to appropriate the Fund Balance in the amount of \$1,769,492 and increase the Fire Department Capital Outlay budget by that same amount.

Town Attorney Hobbs asked Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman to withdraw his original motion. Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman withdrew his motion.

Motion carried 5-0.

Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman moved to authorize the purchase of a 2027 Pierce Enforcer 107-foot aerial for a price not to exceed \$1,769,492 and to authorize the Town Manager to execute the documentation.

Motion carried 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business to discuss.

ITEMS REFERRED TO AND PRESENTATIONS FROM THE TOWN ATTORNEY

Town Attorney Hobbs stated he had no report.

ITEMS REFERRED TO AND PRESENTATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

Departmental Updates

Town Manager Havens stated that due to the Retreat happening the previous week that included updates for each department, only the financial report would be completed.

January FY 2026 Financial Presentation

Finance Administrator Lauren Creech was recognized to speak. Administrator Creech gave a short presentation on the January Fiscal Year 2026 financials to Council and the audience.

MAYOR'S AGENDA

Mayor Thibodeau stated that she was invited a few months ago to look at the Town's rental property and helped Town Manager Havens complete some minor updates on redecorating the home. She stated that she had received a letter that was addressed to former Mayor Kingston regarding the Town's ordinance on dogs on the beach. She stated that the letter spoke to having Council review the ordinance, adding that she thought the ordinance was something special that has worked fairly well. She stated that she wanted to hear about any incidents that were happening and if there were other issues. She stated that she wanted to bring it to Council to see if there was a desire to review the ordinance.

Councilor Chasen stated that she has dogs and keeps them on a leash while on the beach, but there were a lot of dogs that run around, chase balls, and go into the ocean. She

thought it made sense to allow dogs on the beach without a leash to play. She added that it has been her experience that dog owners have been very responsible and make sure that their dogs are with them. She thought the ordinance was fine as it stood and had not heard that there was an issue that needed to be dealt with.

Councilor Lingard thought it was an opportunity to remind dog owners that dogs are friendly, adding that his dog was friendly and he keeps his dog with him, especially if someone approaches him, until his dog receives approval for the dog to approach the individual. He stated that while an adult may know that a dog was friendly, a small child or little dog may not know that. He pointed out that it was owners being responsible which was on the owners. He added that even though one knows their dog was friendly, others coming toward the dog may not know that. He thought it was a good practice to be a responsible dog owner.

Councilor Murray agreed with Councilor Lingard's comments, adding that it was a good reminder for dog owners to be responsible. He agreed that the ordinance was something that makes the Town special, but he would be open if Council could get some information regarding the number of incidents as well as the nature of them. He pointed out that the incidents in the letter that was received was that nothing bad had happened but there was a perception issue. He thought it could be traumatic to someone that doesn't like dogs. He knew that the police did not patrol the beach and wasn't sure how Council would receive that information.

Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman asked how many incidents there have been on the beach. Police Chief Jeffrey Ackerman was recognized to speak. Police Chief Ackerman stated that he did not know the figure, but it was minimal. He stated that most incidents were very similar to the one that was referenced in the letter that Mayor Thibodeau had received, adding that it was a perception that an incident was going to happen but did not actually occur. He reminded Council that the ordinance does state that even though leashes were not required, the owner was required to be in control of their dog and if their dog was to take off and bite someone, the owner would be in violation of the ordinance, regardless of the leash. Town Manager Havens pointed out that it was just on the beach, adding that dogs needed to be leashed everywhere else in Town.

Mayor Thibodeau asked if the information could be part of the weekly police report. Police Chief Ackerman stated that he could complete some research on it but the problem was that most of the data would be legacy data from the old records management system and would be pretty limited. He added that incidents have not been a major issue in the years he's worked for the Town.

Mayor Thibodeau thought it sounded like Council was in favor of keeping the ordinance as is as well as reminding the public to keep their dogs under verbal command if the dog was not on a leash while on the beach and to respect everyone's right to enjoy the beach.

Councilor Murray asked if there was something on the beach card with the beach rules that has something about dogs and if not, if it could be added. Public Information and

Events Director Kristiana Nickens was recognized to speak. Director Nickens stated that she did not recall but would check, adding that it could be added. Councilor Murray thought it would be a great place to remind dog owners that their assessment of their dog might differ from their dog's reality. Councilor Chasen thought Councilor Murray's suggestion was a great idea. Mayor Thibodeau agreed, adding that dog owners need to be reminded of the rules.

Mayor Thibodeau stated that she was still working very diligently with the housing foundation and will have a report to give after their next meeting.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman welcomed Irine Devroude as the newest Planning Board member. He reminded Council and the audience of beach planting for the next two weeks if anyone was interested in volunteering to help.

Councilor Chasen thanked everyone for the Retreat. She gave an update on the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau gross sales for each town and Dare County to Council and the audience.

Councilor Lingard stated that with regard to the letter that Town Manager Havens and Mayor Thibodeau had received regarding dogs on the beach, the person that wrote the letter had requested that the rest of Council remove him from the board. He stated that he found the letter offensive in that the person was comparing him to a communist era official, which he found to be extremely offensive. He suggested that if the person who wrote the letter wished to have him removed from Council, that they move to Duck, register to vote, register for the election, and try to get elected to replace him.

Councilor Murray stated that he recently attended the Albemarle RPO meeting and gave an update to Council and the audience.

OTHER BUSINESS

Additional Public Comments

Mayor Thibodeau opened the floor for public comments.

Bob Fitchett of 113 Cofield Court was recognized to speak. Mr. Fitchett asked with regard to the 2002 Truck 11, when it was purchased. He didn't think it was in 2002. Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman stated that he did not remember. Mr. Fitchett asked if the truck was purchased new. Town Manager Havens explained that it was purchased by the Duck Volunteer Fire Department but he wasn't sure what year, adding that the Town did not purchase it. Bob Fitchett asked if it was purchased new. Mayor Thibodeau thought it was new. Town Manager Havens stated that it was a brand-new truck and the fire department likely took delivery of it in 2003. Fire Chief Dudek explained that it was delivered in 2002 and was most likely spec'ed in 2000 to start the process. Mr. Fitchett

stated that he wasn't sure if it was a previously owned truck. Mayor Thibodeau thought it was custom built by the Duck Volunteer Fire Department.

There being no one else wishing to comment, Mayor Thibodeau closed the time for public comments.

Mayor Thibodeau noted that the next meeting would be the Regular Meeting on Wednesday, April 1, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman moved to enter closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute Section 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged.

Motion carried 5-0.

The time was 2:35 p.m.

Upon return from closed session, Town Attorney Hobbs stated that Council consulted with the attorney on a legal matter, he gave an update and additional advice, but no action was needed.

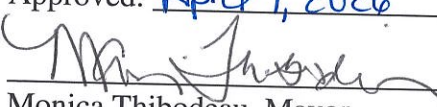
ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tempore Whitman moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried 5-0.

The time was 2:53 p.m.


Lori A. Ackerman, Town Clerk

Approved: April 1, 2026

Monica Thibodeau, Mayor

