

Town of Melbourne Beach

TOWN COMMISSION WORKSHOP

May 27, 2025 at 3:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY CENTER – 509 OCEAN AVENUE

MINUTES

Commission Members:

Mayor Alison Dennington
Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow
Commissioner Robert Baldwin
Commissioner Anna Butler
Commissioner Tim Reed

Staff Members:

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro
Town Clerk Amber Brown

1. Call to Order

Mayor Alison Dennington called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Town Clerk Amber Brown conducted roll call.

Commission Members Present

Mayor Alison Dennington
Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow
Commissioner Robert Baldwin
Commissioner Anna Butler
Commissioner Tim Reed

Staff Members Present

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro
Police Chief Tim Zander
Town Clerk Amber Brown

3. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Mayor Alison Dennington led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Public Comments

After being acknowledged by the Mayor, members of the public should state their name and address for the record. The Commission encourages citizens to prepare their comments in advance. Each individual will have three (3) minutes to address the Commission on any topic(s) related to Town business, not on the Agenda.

5. New Business

A. Discussion regarding the FY 2025-2026 budget

Mayor Alison Dennington clarified some things about the packet and discussion topics with the Town Clerk and the Town Manager.

Police Chief Tim Zander spoke about how the purpose of the health and wellness program is for counseling when an officer needs it by a professional who specializes in dealing with police. He spoke about the number of police vehicles and the importance of changing out a car every two years. He spoke about the amount of overtime, which is currently \$14,000 to \$16,000 a year and is not spent on training. -5:25

Commissioner Robert Baldwin commented on the fact that Melbourne Beach is slightly bigger than Indialantic, but their overtime budget of \$55,000 is significantly more.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about budgeting for hurricanes.

Police Chief Tim Zander said they have a separate line for storms; every piece of overtime that is in relation to a storm is tracked differently and charged separately. He requested the Police Pension Board look into implementing a drop plan and spoke about the details of the education incentive pay, which is based on FDLE's requirements. Spoke about the differential pay for night shifts (\$7,680 for 4 stipends for 4 officers), having a stipend for the Detective (\$1,920), a stipend for a Field Training Officer, and how on-call/overtime pay would be significantly more than a stipend. Spoke about health insurance/dependent insurance. Said cutting any benefits for any employees would be detrimental to the Town. - 15:32

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about life insurance and questioned why the Town Manager's policy is a higher value than police officers.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow asked if getting accredited would potentially reduce liability insurance -32.10

Police Chief Tim Zander said that of the Chiefs he has spoken with, they do not think it would reduce insurance. Stressed that he is looking out for the best interest of the Town, and he is open to suggestions.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin asked if the Police Chief could rank the importance of the items, how vehicle maintenance works, and how an additional vehicle would affect it.

Police Chief Tim Zander spoke about putting together a ranked list and sending it to the Commission, and explained how vehicle maintenance works.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow asked if the Police Chief could shave 5% off of the budget, where would that come from?

Police Chief Tim Zander spoke about how it would be difficult to do that because it is already thin. This year is already tight.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about wanting to provide most of what the Police Department is asking for, but would have to decrease things outside of the Police budget.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked if the proposed overtime is adequate. Requested a projection based on the information they have now, including the additional officer.

Police Chief Tim Zander spoke about how the number is pretty close based on prior years' overtime. Will provide information from prior years.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked what the minimum number of cars is needed to operate.

Police Chief Tim Zander said the minimum is 8, which is what they currently have: 2 for day shift, 2 for night shift, 1 for the Police Chief, 1 for the Deputy Chief, one for the Detective, and one for the SRO.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked if the wellness plan is only for the Police or would it also be for the Fire Department.

Police Chief Tim Zander said the funding he requested is only for the Police Department.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked about Fund 172 Ocean Park Parking which includes a police officer salary. Says he is against carrying the salary for a police officer in this fund. Worried the State would have an issue with that or DOGE. All of the police salary should be carried in the police fund. Concerned that this might be an issue. Even if they are okay with it, the cost should appear in the police fund. - 43:05

Mayor Alison Dennington says things can escape the review as a whole if the police fund does not capture everything falling within that department.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin asked if the expenditure only appears in the Ocean Park Fund if the revenue dries up, would the position be terminated. If not, it should show in the Police Department Fund.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how the position would not be terminated, and that the line items could be in the Police Department Fund. Said it was originally under the Police budget, the prior Commission had decided to fund it out of Ocean Park but there is nothing stopping them from being able to change that back.

Mayor Alison Dennington requested the Town Clerk pull the minutes from the meeting from last year's budget meeting when deciding for the position of police officer and see what the vote was. Said there would have to be a new vote.

Town Clerk Amber Brown said she could not pull them now, but she would send all budget meeting minutes to the Commission.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow pointed out that they have the opportunity to discuss what the current Commission wants to do.

Commissioner Tim Reed clarified that he is not advocating we eliminate a position, from a bookkeeping standpoint, believes the cost should be carried with the rest of the officers.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked if the Town Manager could contact the Town Attorney to get an informal opinion from the Attorney General. - 54:02

Commissioner Robert Baldwin spoke about how another option is to move the line items, so there would be no need to get an Attorney General opinion.

Commissioner Tim Reed spoke about how there is a short list of things he thinks the Commission should vote on.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how the budget is there for the Commission to make decisions on.

Commissioner Tim Reed said a few items the Commission should vote on would include COLA, police accreditation, and salary increases outside of the COLA.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked why the summary page does not include the Fire Department cost increase.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how the Commission has not provided any direction on how they would like to cover the cost, and it is a big discussion that has not happened yet.

Commissioner Tim Reed said the Fire Chief has not come back with a second presentation. Said that any move in that direction, he would suggest taking it to a referendum to let the voters decide.

Mayor Alison Dennington suggested applying for the grant, and in the meantime, that would give them time to go to a referendum.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow spoke about how the proposals for the Fire Department are still ongoing and still in negotiation. As it relates to the Fire Department, there has been 1 workshop, and she believes there needs to be more information provided before she would decide if it should go to a referendum or a Town survey.

Commissioner Anna Butler spoke about needing the second workshop before she can make a decision on how to proceed.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro said to have the Town Clerk set up a Special Meeting so the Commission can vote.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin spoke about wanting to schedule another Fire Department workshop. Asked about the meeting with the County, and details about the grant.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro said she did not have more details about the grant, but they were working on getting the criteria.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about receiving information, some of which she was asked not to share, but she thinks some of it should be shared when the workshop happens.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about the meeting with the County. They have an ad valorem and a non-ad valorem assessment. There is a possibility that the Town could join the County's health insurance. Said they spoke about how it would work if they took over, and how soon, and that they would want to keep the volunteers, the current equipment, and the new equipment. Each property would then fall into the County's fire assessments.

Steve Walters – 416 Sixth Ave – Spoke about how there are 4 new Commissioners that have not dealt with the Town Manager before, and asked them to give the Mayor the benefit of the doubt. The Fire Department asked for \$100,000, and now wants a paid department. Wants this to go to a referendum. -1:11:02

Frank LaGrassa – 412 First Ave – Spoke about agreeing with Steve Walters. If you go for the wellness program, make sure it is not abused. He never experienced emotional issues, nor did anyone he worked with.

Cynthia LaGrassa – 412 First Ave – The Town of Melbourne Beach is one tiny square mile, static in population. There are no major improvements, so why aren't taxes going down? The Town should be in maintenance mode, not expansion mode, and should not be compared to Indian Land or Indian Harbour. The asks today sound like a big city ask, not a tiny town ask.

Bruce Larson – 1507 Pine St – Spoke about how preventive mental health is really important to maintain the quality of life. Said for the big picture things, this is preliminary, but the numbers are already decided in the document. The document has stormwater down \$400,000, and the Fire Department increased \$400,000; this proposal has flat revenues and flat expenditures. Said this is a draft, the Town Manager needs to point out the things that still need to be worked on and the things they don't have the numbers on yet. Said he had a letter he was going to send to the Commission.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked the Town Manager when she comes back with the budget, if the big numbers will be included in there.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how the last meeting only went over the police and fire. Since there are 4 new Commissioners, only the General Fund was presented. Said she takes direction from the Commission.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow spoke about wanting the entire budget even if the numbers are just preliminary in order to see the holistic budget. Spoke about having the police salary that comes from Ocean Park, but have it show in the Police Department.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about getting the budget from every other municipality in the county, and ours is the least detailed.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin said the full budget as a draft would be helpful. - 1:34:58

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro asked how the Commission would like the Fire Department to be presented: with the grant, if the County took over, or if Indialantic took over.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about not including it in the budget at all and only proceeding with a referendum.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin spoke about having a summary and then also a schedule for each option for the Fire Department.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow spoke about the 3 options for the Fire Department as still being firmed up now, so present them as is today, and the 3 additional options.

Commissioner Tim Reed spoke about how the cost proposals for the Fire Department would be beneficial to have at the Fire Department workshop. Spoke about how the General Fund should include the disposal of assets for the fire truck when the new one comes in.

Mayor Alison Dennington said she was told that it would be around \$75,000-80,000.

Commissioner Tim Reed verified the Legislative Fund health insurance increased significantly due to the new Deputy Clerk and a spouse.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how the Department of Elections provided her with the figure of \$8,634 for the upcoming elections. Estimating \$10,000 for the Charter Review amendments.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked for an update on the Charter Review figure from the Clerk.

Town Clerk Amber Brown said she cannot get more information because they said they will not provide an estimate, it is based on the number of pages. They were not able to tell her the cost per page.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked about the dues & subscriptions line for the Legislative Fund because the current budget is almost \$3,000, but the proposed budget is only \$855.

Mayor Alison Dennington requested the Town Manager provide an asterisk for some of these items, explaining what they are for.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin said there can be a danger in identifying every single thing. Requested that the Mayor be specific about her priority list.

Commissioner Tim Reed clarified that the Department 13 expenses include HR and Finance. Asked if it included the cost for the third-party employee workplace survey.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how the toxic workshop survey is on the task list, and she has received some quotes for around \$4,000-\$5,000.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked about the increase in legal counsel. - 1:57:00

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro said the increase is due to the projected increase in code enforcement cases and ongoing suits.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about having a code enforcement board and a magistrate.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin spoke about being on the code enforcement board, and it was a trainwreck because the members would not make a difficult decision against their neighbors. Says having an independent special magistrate would be the way to go.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how she reduced services for planning and zoning because over the last 3 years, what has been spent has been less than what they have budgeted. Sometimes they get zoning opinions and other things they do not need it.

Commissioner Tim Reed spoke about Department 19 and how there are 2 of the same line items 510.41.10, and asked about the increases.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how the line item is for communication services, but the difference is that one is for telephone and one is for computer. The increase is due to upgrading to the new Microsoft 365, and upgrading Huntress and Barracuda.

Commissioner Tim Reed verified that the communications budget increase happened this fiscal year and will continue in the next budget.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked the Town Manager to get back to the Commission about how much the communication budget was busted.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked about the healthy environment building line item.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how that is an ongoing line related to mold remediation.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked about the contingency line item and where that number came from. Does it need to be more or less?

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how that line item is not always used, but when unexpected items come up, that is where it comes from. That is the same number as the previous years.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked who receives the 12 licenses for Adobe and why spend \$5,000 on that.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro said that in order to take documents from Word to PDF, you need to have a license from Adobe. Said she can find out who holds the 12 licenses.

Town Clerk Amber Brown said there are other uses; she uses Adobe for e-signatures.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow asked if there is a way to see what was used from contingency for the past 4 years.

Commissioner Tim Reed mentioned that where it said pave and mill one mile of road, there is \$52,000 set aside for this, and asked where that is in the budget.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how a previous Commission came up with that number, and it goes into long-term capital because doing 1 mill of road is not cost-effective. They would wait until they had enough to pave 5 miles of road.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked if there is a record of paving for all of the roads.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro said there is a record, and BSE has done it before.

Commissioner Tim Reed verified that there are about 20 miles of road, and if the Town budgets for 1 mile of road per year, then it takes 20 years. Wants to know what the plan is, if the Town is accurately assessing, recording, and planning to do this. Questioned if the Town is adequately putting money away to repave the roads.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how she will provide the document for the road repaving schedule, what they have paved in the past, and where that money came from.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked about the stipend for the Fire Department and the idea of increasing the stipend to get more volunteers. - 2:20:45

Commissioner Robert Baldwin spoke about how there is a limit to the amount you can pay, or it will no longer be deemed a volunteer Fire Department, and the Mayor asked if the Town Manager could get that number.

Commissioner Tim Reed spoke about Code Enforcement, confirmed the salary was the new person they hired at that rate. Asked about the fire inspector.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how the fire inspector has to be licensed.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked about the Groundskeeper Fund.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how that is for one employee and it is separate in order to track the costs better. Said the salary total cost is 59,917.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow verified that where it says To Date it should be Actual for FY25.

Commissioner Robert Baldwin asked why the licenses & fees went from \$1,000 to \$14,500 for Code Enforcement

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro said that is paying for the vacation rentals software.

Commissioner Tim Reed asked about parking revenue and about changing the fee.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro spoke about how it is set at \$2.50, but there is complete flexibility to increase the fee; it can be changed for weekends, holidays, etc.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked if the Town Manager could get back to the Commission with an example that includes dollar figures if they increased it by number A and B. Suggested increasing it by a flat amount and then have a seasonal increase of spring/summer.

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow spoke about how the parking would go from \$85,000 to \$102,000 if there was a \$0.50 increase. Said she wants to check to make sure they stay competitive with other coastal Towns. - 2:37:25

The Commission discussed getting the full budget and scheduling another budget workshop.

Town Manager Elizabeth Mascaro said they have until September to approve of the budget. Also said she does not usually start this early because she will not have actual numbers until after July, but these meetings are good to work out these ideas. Said she could get the full packet to the Commission by Friday.


The Commission agreed to the following meetings:

- June 2nd at 4:00 pm – Special Town Commission Meeting – Building RFQ
- June 2nd, immediately following – Special Town Commission Meeting – Town Manager Evaluation
- June 2nd, immediately following - Special Town Commission Meeting – Town Manager Position
- June 16th at 5:30 pm – Town Commission Workshop – Fire Department
- June 23rd at 5:00 pm – Town Commission Workshop – Budget

6. Adjournment

Vice Mayor Dawn Barlow moved to adjourn; Commissioner Anna Butler seconded; Motion carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.



Alison Dennington
Mayor

ATTEST:



Rachel Pembroke (Jul 13, 2025 17:49 EDT)
Rachel Pembroke
Transcriptionist

