



**MINUTES
TOWN OF NAGS HEAD
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RETREAT
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 26, 2026
AND FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2026**

The Nags Head Board of Commissioners met for a Board Retreat over a two-day period.

- Day 1: Thursday, February 26, 2026, 8 am – 5 pm
- Epstein Bath House, Milepost 15, South Virginia Dare Trail, Nags Head
- Day 2: Friday, February 27, 2026, 8 am – 5 pm
- Breakfast and tour start: Nags Head Town Hall, 5401 S Croatan Hwy, Nags Head
 - Tour end and afternoon session: Public Services Complex, 2203 South Lark Avenue, Nags Head

Emily Groo of Zelos facilitated the retreat. The retreat agenda is attached to and made a part of these minutes as shown in Addendum "A".

Attendees:

Board of Commissioners and Attorney

- o Ben Cahoon, Mayor
- o Megan Lambert, Mayor Pro Tem
- o Bob Sanders, Commissioner
- o Megan Vaughan, Commissioner
- o Molly Harrison, Commissioner
- o John Leidy, Town Attorney

Staff

- o Andy Garman, Town Manager
- o Amy Miller, Deputy Town Manager/Finance Officer
- o Stephen Panaro, Deputy Finance Director
- o Perry Hale, Chief of Police
- o Chris Montgomery, Deputy Police Chief
- o Nancy Carawan, Director of Public Services
- o David Ryan, Town Engineer
- o Kelly Wyatt, Director of Planning and Development
- o Joe Costello, Deputy Planning Director
- o Randy Wells, Fire Chief
- o Shane Hite, Deputy Fire Chief
- o Jan Mielke, Director of Human Resources
- o Karen Snyder, IT Administrator
- o Katie Anzalone, Deputy Town Clerk
- o Brittany Phillips, Town Clerk

Session purpose and outcomes

To launch the newly composed Board with a clear plan for their future work together

Session outcomes:

- Improved team collaboration and cohesion
- Clarified governance roles and responsibilities
- Shared expectations for communication
- Deepened understanding of Town operations and key projects
- Reaffirmed commitment to the Strategic Plan

Retreat Agreements

The Board and staff set agreements for how they want to treat each other during the retreat and moving forward.

Atmosphere – What kind of atmosphere do you want in today’s retreat and moving forward?

- Collaborative

- Relaxed
- Understanding
- Positive
- Constructive
- Open
- Exploratory
- Direct
- Genuine
- Realistic
- Humor

Challenges – What do you want to do when conversation get tough?

- Be respectful
- Receptive
- Stop + think
- Space to consider
- Constructive
- Forward-looking
- Honest
- Honor all perspectives
- Think about communication
- Compromise
- Consensus-building
- Be supportive
- Common goal
- Don't assume

Accountability – How do you want to hold yourselves accountable to creating this atmosphere?

- Call a flag on the play
- Let's restate so we all have the same understanding
- Model for each other
- Ask for clarification
- Pause when needed
- Constructive, not terminating
- Don't interrupt
- Honest about accountability
- Communicate directly
- Bring in appropriate parties
- Don't ruminate
- Listen
- Alignment

These are our desired agreements even in times of.... stress, high stakes, and transition.

Team Building Activity

In preparation for the retreat, the Board and staff completed a Everything DISC assessment (by Wiley) to better understand individual work styles and strengthen team collaboration. The facilitator reviewed the results with staff, helping build a shared language for communication and improving overall team effectiveness.

The Board and department heads identified key elements of the desired culture, including strong respectful leadership, clear implementation of organizational values, ongoing learning and professional growth, accountability, and open, sincere communication that accounts for differing communication styles. They also emphasized being forward-thinking in protecting resources, recognizing and celebrating staff accomplishments, maintaining momentum on priorities while continuing to be challenged at a high level, and fostering a supportive environment that reduces fear of failure.

Boardsmanship Presentation from Town Attorney

Attorney Leidy's presentation outlined the legal authority, roles, and responsibilities of the mayor and board of commissioners, emphasizing effective governance, ethical conduct, and adherence to North Carolina statutes. It also highlighted key requirements related to conflicts of interest, open meetings, public records, and confidentiality to ensure transparent, lawful, and high-performing local government operations.

Communication norms and protocols

The Board discussed and agreed to norms and protocols for communicating with the community, Town staff, and each other.

How the Board will communicate with the community

The Board discussed communication with the community, including who is responsible for responding, timelines for replies, and expectations for consistent and coordinated messaging.

- The Mayor is still the spokesperson.
- The Mayor won't commit to anything the Board hasn't already discussed.
- The Mayor will respond as quickly as possible.
- If it is a staffing issue, the Mayor will respond and prompt Town Manager to respond.
- If Mayor is unavailable for more than a short time, Mayor Pro Tem will serve as the spokesperson.
- The Board is not prevented from replying directly to a resident but should CC all other Commissioners and the Mayor.
- The Board should verbally thank residents for providing public comments during public meetings.

How the Board will communicate with staff

The Board discussed communication with staff, including appropriate channels, roles, and expectations to ensure clear, consistent, and professional coordination.

- All requests, actions, and questions should go through Town Manager.
- Urgent information can go directly to the Department Director but still copy Town Manager.
- Information comes from Town Manager to Board.
- Do not text. Use email from Town account to communicate only.
- Ensure all Commissioners have email working on their preferred devices.
- Town Manager to Board: If no objection, then I'm moving forward. Give appropriate timeframe for response.
- If a letter is sent from the Board on official Town letterhead, it goes on the next consent agenda to create a formal record.

How the Board will communicate with each other

The Board discussed communication with each other, emphasizing transparency, proper use of shared tools, and clear processes for coordinating discussions and decision-making.

- Town Clerk will create a shared calendar based on the "All Mayor Board" email address and share instructions for use.
- Share speaking engagements in your official capacity with each other by adding to the shared calendar.
- Town Clerk will share Town policy about speaking on behalf of Town.
- No texting; it creates additional steps if there is a FOIA request.
- Board can request items be added to agenda by asking the Mayor or Manager, or Commissioners can add items to their own agenda and let residents know as much.
- Be as open and transparent as possible.
- Avoid bringing up a topic and making a decision about it in the same meeting.

Town of Nags Head Tour

On the morning of Day 2, the Board, the Town Manager, and the Town Clerk toured Nags Head and were hosted by staff at a variety of locations including:

- Police Department
- Town Hall 2nd Floor
- Juncos Street Beach Access to see the dune infiltration system
- Seagull Drive North Beach to review beach conditions
- Fire Station 21
- Soundside Event site
- Fire Station 16
- Lifeguard Housing

The Board expressed appreciation for the pride in work and professionalism demonstrated by staff at every location visited during the tour. Board members also recognized the need for more functional and updated Town facilities, particularly for public safety staff, as well as the importance of planning ahead to ensure a safe and resilient beach and surrounding landscape.

Pay and Classification Study

Following the tour, the Board received a presentation on the recent pay and classification study and agreed for staff to move forward with the items presented, with the understanding that they will return to the Board for formal approval.

Strategic Plan

With the hands-on context of the morning’s site visits, the Board and staff reaffirmed the Town’s strategic direction by reviewing and updating the 2024 Strategic Plan. Working in teams, they assessed progress on action items, identified completed efforts, and added new items where needed.

Based on today’s work, the Strategic Plan will be updated and brought to the Board for approval at their April or May meeting.

They identified the initiatives below as priorities and assigned owners for each.

#	Initiative	Owner
2.12	Update the Town’s Parks and Recreation Plan	Joe
2.13	Determine if the Board wants to pursue a Boardwalk or CORD	Joe
1.4	Complete Stormwater Management Master Plan/Develop implementation plan with list of projects for annual Capital Improvement Program	David
1.5	Complete Water System Master Plan/Develop implementation plan with list of projects for annual Capital Improvement Program	Nancy
4.5	Develop Phase 2 of the Town Campus Master Plan	Town Manager, Fire Dept.
1.7	Develop creative strategies to increase participation in the Septic Health Initiative.	Kelly
4.6	Create a communication campaign highlighting Town accomplishments, staff, and services	Roberta and Dept. Heads
4.12	Continue Legislative Advocacy	Board, Town Manager, Lobbyist
4.8	Create Organizational Development Strategies	Jan

ADJOURNMENT

Facilitator Emily Groo received positive feedback from attendees on the retreat; the Board Retreat was adjourned at 5 pm on Friday, February 27, 2026.

Brittany A. Phillips, Town Clerk

Date Approved: April 15, 2026

Mayor: _____
Benjamin Cahoon