

Town of Melbourne Beach

TOWN COMMISSION WORKSHOP

March 4, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

COMMUNITY CENTER – 509 OCEAN AVENUE

MINUTES

Commission Members:

Mayor Alison Dennington
Vice Mayor Terry Cronin
Commissioner Anna Butler
Commissioner Tim Reed
Commissioner Sherri Quarrie

Staff Members:

Town Manager A. Marie Smith
Town Clerk Amber Brown

1. Call to Order

Mayor Alison Dennington called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

2. Roll Call

Town Clerk Amber Brown conducted roll call.

Commission Members Present

Mayor Alison Dennington
Vice Mayor Terry Cronin
Commissioner Anna Butler
Commissioner Tim Reed
Commissioner Sherri Quarrie

Staff Members Present

Town Manager A. Marie Smith
Town Attorney Ryan Knight
Fire Chief Gavin Brown
Finance Manager Jennifer Kerr
Town Clerk Amber Brown

3. Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of Silence, and Civility Pledge

Mayor Alison Dennington led the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence, and read the Civility Pledge.

4. Public Comments

5. New Business

- A. Discussion on non-ad valorem assessments and hiring of a consultant for the structure of them – Commissioner Tim Reed

Commissioner Tim Reed introduced the agenda item and said the Town currently uses ad valorem taxes primarily. Spoke about the differences between ad valorem versus non ad valorem taxes, ad valorem has to do with the assessed value of a property, non-ad valorem does not. This topic came up partially because of new firefighter positions and the costs

Town of Melbourne Beach, Florida
Minutes - Town Commission Workshop
March 4, 2026

associated with that, roughly \$300,000. To date, the new firefighter positions have not been hired.

Commissioner Sherri Quarrie called a point of order due to the Fire Department salaries being off topic.

Mayor Alison Dennington said the point of order is overruled.

Commissioner Tim Reed spoke about how in the agenda item to be addressed, he did specifically say they were going to discuss the costs associated with the Fire Department. Referenced the city of Kissimmee's website that has an explanation of how they do their assessment that is a helpful example.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight presented information on special assessments, relevant Florida Statutes, and Florida Case Law. Said there are two requirements for a non-ad valorem special assessment. First, the property assessed must derive a special benefit from the improvement, service or facilities provided. And second, the assessment must be fairly and reasonably apportioned among the properties that receive the special benefit. Fire services do provide a special benefit.

Mayor Alison Dennington confirmed that emergency medical services are provided by the County, not by the Town. Said the first requirement would be covered.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight said even if there was an agreement with the county for EMS or medical transport in the future, then those would not be allowed.

Fire Chief Gavin Brown pointed out that there are some caveats so other cities that implement this non-ad valorem, do not implement 100% coverage through the Fire assessment because some things fall outside of the purview of the special benefit to the property.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about how any revenue raised by fire assessment must be used for the Fire Department. Every year there would be a resolution passed stating what the rate would be. Any apportionment must be reasonable and not arbitrary. Could have multiple tiers, tier one would be charged to all properties, i.e. \$100, tier two could charge based on value or square footage of home.

Vice Mayor Terry Cronin asked for clarification on how the rate based on value is different from the value for an ad valorem tax.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about how it is not tied into the market value of the property, it would just be a structure, so it is one cost.

Commissioner Sherri Quarrie spoke about how the County does it based on square footage, and whether it is commercial, residential or multifamily.

Town of Melbourne Beach, Florida
Minutes - Town Commission Workshop
March 4, 2026

Fire Chief Gavin Brown spoke about how the consultant will take fire call data and determine how much the department benefits an individual property versus general areas.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight provided a handout from another municipality as an example of a fire assessment calculation for a partial cost recovery. Spoke about the procedure moving forward, they have an RFP they are working on. If the Town would like to add a special assessment, they would have to hire a consultant.

Mayor Alison Dennington confirmed that a consultant would be able to access the Fire data. Confirmed if there is an attorney working on it, they would handle it the whole way through.

Vice Mayor Terry Cronin asked about the urgency of this issue and if they are wasting their time if the legislature does not change the laws.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about how the urgency is a policy decision for the Commission to make, they need to be thinking a year ahead.

Mayor Alison Dennington spoke about how it is for the immediate concern because it takes a long time. Does believe something will go on the ballot regarding this.

Commissioner Sherri Quarrie spoke about how the next meeting should have an agenda item to vote on this.

Commissioner Tim Reed agreed with needing to be proactive rather than reactive. It is important to have it done professionally and address commercial, residential, homestead, undeveloped properties, etc. The first step is to go out for RFP for the consultant.

Town Attorney Ryan Knight spoke about how the Commission already approved going out for RFP and it would not need to come to the Commission prior to going out.

Dawn Barlow – 1710 Pine St – Asked for clarification on if the RFP would cover all non-ad valorem and not just a Fire assessment as the stormwater has not been updated for many years. - 51:32

Commissioner Tim Reed said it is not limited to just Fire; the idea is that they could expand it and stormwater is a perfect example.

Mayor Alison Dennington asked about increasing the stormwater assessment now without using the consultant.

Town of Melbourne Beach, Florida
Minutes - Town Commission Workshop
March 4, 2026

6. Adjournment

Commissioner Anna Butler moved to adjourn; Commissioner Sherri Quarrie seconded; Motion carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 pm.



Alison Dennington
Mayor

ATTEST:



Rachel Pembroke (Sep 17 2026 17:05:59 EDT)
Rachel Pembroke
Transcriptionist