

**TOWN OF CARTHAGE
APPEARANCE COMMITTEE - REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 4, 2026
5:30 P.M.**

AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
Members of the committee may add or remove items on the agenda. A majority vote or unanimous consent is required before proceeding with the meeting.
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 4. REPORTS**
 - a. Manager's Report (Updated from February)
- 5. NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. Approve the January 12, 2026 and February 9, 2026, regular meeting minutes.
 - b. 2025 Recap and 2026 Planning (*Tabled from February*)
 - c. Adoption of 2026 Meetings Calendar (*Tabled from February*)
- 6. OLD BUSINESS**
- 7. FINAL COMMENTS**
- 8. ADJOURNMENT**

**Meetings are held in the Board Room inside the McDonald Building
located at 207 McReynolds Street.**

Manager's Report

TO: Appearance Committee
FROM: Emily D. Yopp, Town Manager
DATE: February 9, 2026 (Updated for March 4, 2026 meeting)

Update on Downtown Revitalization Project

In your last Manager's Report, I informed you that we were preparing to present Phase 1 of the Downtown Plan to the Moore County Board of Commissioners for approval to install rain gardens on their property (the historic courthouse island) as well as seek a funding partnership for \$104,000 to purchase plants to go in the gardens as Carthage's grant will not pay for these items.

The County chose not to participate at this time but has expressed interest in revisiting the request in a future phase. Town staff have updated the plan to include only the pedestrian refuge islands and crosswalks in Phase 1 and will be adding in Phase 2, the northwest parking corner, to utilize the entirety of the grant funding. Current project schedule is as follows:

- Publish bid documents February 6th
- Bidding period closes March 11th.
- Choose Contractor for project by April 1st and begin contract negotiations.
- Begin construction May 18th.
- Finish construction by November 30th.

UPDATE AS OF 3/3/2026

This project has now moved into the bidding phase to solicit a contractor to complete Phases 1 and 2. The bidding period will end March 13, 2026. We must have a minimum of three qualified bids to move forward with the project.

Update on New Town Hall Project

The town hall project is also preparing for bidding. The Michael Graves team is compiling all bid documents and preparing for the prequalification process to ensure that contractors who are not experienced with historic properties, or who are otherwise not qualified to do this type of project, will be identified or otherwise ineligible to place a bid for this project.

UPDATE AS OF 3/3/2026

This project is now in the Request for Pre-Qualifications stage. The Town is seeking to pre-qualify general contractors for site, exterior, and interior renovation work at 208 Monroe Street. Prequalification Forms for the project are available on our website. Relevant project experience and other factors will be weighted. Applicants must attain a minimum score of 80% to be prequalified. All completed pre-qualification statements must be submitted on or before March 16, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.

Budget Season Begins

The FY 2026-27 budget season is upon us! The committee should consider any budget requests it would like to make to the Board this season and plan to have those requests turned in to the Town Manager at your next meeting on **February 9th**. The Budget Retreat that was scheduled to take place on Saturday, March 7th may be rescheduled for March 14th. Staff will need to have most if not all budget requests prepared for the Board's consideration ahead of this meeting.

UPDATE AS OF 3/3/2026

The budget workshop has been confirmed for Saturday, March 14th. The committee should forward to the Town Manager any budget requests they would like to make for FY 26-27.

The committee's current balance is \$6,621.00.

**Town of Carthage
Appearance Committee**

Regular Meeting - January 12, 2026

Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Committee member Ashley Coates called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Also present in person were committee member Pam O'Connor and Town Manager Emily Yopp. Committee Chair Erin Rembert was unable to attend.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ashley Coates moved to approve the agenda. Pam O'Connor seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

REPORTS

Manager's Report

Town Manager Emily Yopp provided several updates:

Downtown Revitalization Project: Mrs. Yopp reported that she and the design team would be presenting Phase 1 of the Downtown Revitalization Project to the Moore County Board of Commissioners. She noted the meeting had been rescheduled from the 15th to the 14th (Wednesday). Since Phase 1 primarily affects the historic courthouse, which is county-owned property, they need to update the Commissioners on the plans. Mrs. Yopp will be requesting \$104,000 from the County to provide plants for the rain gardens around the circle, as plants and accessories are not covered by the town's grant, which only funds construction. She expressed hope that this would be a good opportunity for partnership between the county and town.

New Town Hall Project: Mrs. Yopp updated the committee on cost estimations for the new town hall. She explained that initial estimates came in higher than expected, but after pushing back, there were significant drops in the estimates. The renovation costs are still coming in around \$1 million. Mrs. Yopp explained that having accurate cost estimates is important for comparison when bids come in, as significantly lower bids could indicate potential for change orders throughout the project, which might drive the total cost well above the original estimate. She noted that some of the costs were higher because certain specialized work, like column restoration, requires contractors from outside of the area since local contractors with the skills and knowledge to do this work may not be available for such work.

Mrs. Yopp further explained that since the grant funding was used to purchase the property and complete the design, there isn't enough money left in the grant to fully cover the renovations. The Board of Commissioners will need to finance the remaining portion, which makes having accurate estimates crucial for budget planning. She mentioned that while they could apply for additional grants, there aren't many grants available for public buildings.

Budget Season: Mrs. Yopp reminded the committee that budget season is beginning, and they should consider any budget requests to be submitted by the next meeting on February 9th. The budget workshop with the Board is scheduled for March 7th. The committee's current balance is \$6,621, which has accumulated from the annual \$800 allocation plus fundraising.

NEW BUSINESS

October 13, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

The committee reviewed the minutes from the October meeting.

Ashley Coates moved to approve the minutes. Pam O'Connor seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

2025 Recap and 2026 Planning

The committee decided to postpone the 2025 recap and 2026 planning discussion to the February meeting when all members could be present. They did have a preliminary discussion about the Buggy Festival, where the committee traditionally has a booth next to the Historical Committee booth. Last year, the committee sold branded merchandise (glasses, tote bags, cups, and stickers) as a fundraiser, which was more successful than previous years' raffles. Committee members discussed potentially continuing with merchandise sales but reducing the number of stickers ordered.

Adoption of 2026 Meetings Calendar

The committee discussed the proposed 2026 meeting schedule but decided to postpone the formal adoption until the next meeting when all members could be present. Town Manager Yopp noted that October 12th was approved by the Board of Commissioners to be observed and the Town Hall will be closed, so an alternative date would need to be selected for that month's meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

FINAL COMMENTS

Committee members shared personal anecdotes and discussed planning for upcoming events.

ADJOURNMENT

Ashley Coates adjourned the meeting at 5:53 PM.

**Town of Carthage
Appearance Committee**

Regular Meeting – February 9, 2026

Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Committee member Ashley Coates called the meeting to order at 5:36 PM. Also present in person was committee member Pam O'Connor and Town Manager Emily Yopp. Committee Chair Erin Rembert was unable to attend due to illness.

Vice Chair Ashley Coates immediately moved to recess this month's hearing to March 9th. Pam O'Connor seconded the motion. Motion carried 2-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Ashley Coates adjourned the meeting at 5:43 PM.

TO: Appearance Committee
FROM: Emily Yopp, Town Manager
SUBJECT: 2026 Meetings Calendar
DATE: March 4, 2026

Please review the 2026 meeting calendar. The committee may make any adjustments, additions or deletions prior to adopting this calendar. As a reminder, the ordinance establishing the committee requires a regular meeting be held at least quarterly, although the committee typically meets monthly.

Please note:

- The 2026 Buggy Festival is to be held May 9th.
- **Town Manager will be out of the country June 5-14.** The Town Clerk will need to attend to take the minutes.
- The Carthage Board of Commissioners recently voted to observe Columbus/Indigenous People Day and so Town Hall will be closed. **Committee will need to move their meeting to that following Tuesday or choose a different date.**
- The Carthage Christmas Parade is Saturday, December 12th.

2026 (Proposed) Appearance Committee Meeting Calendar	
JANUARY	12
FEBRUARY	9
MARCH	9 Changed to 3/4
APRIL	13
MAY	11
JUNE	8
JULY	13
AUGUST	10
SEPTEMBER	14
OCTOBER	
NOVEMBER	9
DECEMBER	14