

TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on March 30, 2026

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 09:37 AM in the Town Council Chambers.

Members Present: Bridget Moran, Ted Cooney, Lewis Crampton, Danielle Moore, Julie Araskog, Bobbie Lindsay

Staff Present: Kirk Blouin, Kelly Churney, Town Attorney Joanne O'Connor

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Town Clerk Churney delivered the invocation, and Council President Lindsay led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Council President Pro Tem Crampton and seconded by Council Member Moran to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0.

COMMENTS

1. MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Moore welcomed Bill Manger, Mayor of Southampton, New York, to the meeting. She announced the upcoming re-dedication of the Marjorie Merriweather Post Causeway on April 8 at 10:00 a.m., noting that family members and longtime community acquaintances of Ms. Post have been invited to attend and encouraging Council members to attend as well. The Mayor also noted that, following discussions at a recent Police and Fire Foundation event, a mini-citizen academy may be arranged for interested Council members and others, with further details to be coordinated. Mayor Moore concluded by extending holiday wishes for Easter and Passover.

Council Member Araskog extended holiday wishes for Easter and Passover.

2. PUBLIC - 3 MINUTE LIMIT

Council President Lindsay called for public comment. No one indicated a desire to speak.

ORDINANCES

3. SECOND READING

- 3.1 11-2026** An Ordinance Of The Town Council Of The Town Of Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida, Amending The Town Code Of Ordinances At Chapter 2 "Administration" To Add The Appointment Of Special Magistrates To Preside Over Certain Code Enforcement Violation Hearings By Amending Division 1 "Generally," Sec. 2-367; Amending Division 2 "Code Enforcement Board," Sections 2-401-2-405; Amending Division 3 "Procedure," Sections 2-426-2-427, 2-429-2-430, 2-432-2-437; Providing For Severability; Providing For Repeal Of Ordinances In Conflict; Providing For Codification; Providing An Effective Date.

Chief Caristo explained that the second reading proposes an amendment to the Town's ordinance to allow for the appointment of a special magistrate to preside over certain code enforcement hearings. He noted that some cases, particularly those involving specialized legal areas, such as violations of laws governing illegally moored vessels in the Lake Worth Lagoon, require expertise beyond that of the Code Enforcement Board. The amendment would provide the Town with the flexibility, as permitted by state statute, to utilize a special magistrate when appropriate.

Council President Pro Tem Crampton asked about the issues that the Special Magistrate would hear. Chief Caristo stated that the ordinance would allow the Town to appoint a special magistrate with expertise in specific areas of law to handle complex code enforcement matters. Council President Pro Tem Crampton asked who would determine whether a matter is heard by the Code Enforcement Board or a special magistrate, and how that decision would be made. Chief Caristo stated that he reviews code enforcement cases and determines whether a matter should be heard by the Code Enforcement Board or a special magistrate, consulting with the Town Manager as needed for more complex or specialized cases.

Town Attorney Joanne O'Connor clarified that the special magistrate would handle violations specifically related to Chapter 74 of the Town Code, limiting discretion by assigning those matters to the magistrate rather than the Code Enforcement Board.

Council Member Araskog wondered whether Town Attorney O'Connor should be included in the decision regarding the items heard by the Special Magistrate. Chief Caristo stated that there were few specialized cases the Special Magistrate would hear. Council Member Araskog asked about the budget and wondered if the cost would be monthly or as needed. Mr. Blouin responded that, initially, there may be a need for more time, but eventually it would be on an as-needed basis and incorporated into the budget.

Council Member Moran asked whether funding for the special magistrate and enforcement of lagoon-related regulations would be included as a line item in the upcoming budget for Council review. Town Manager Blouin stated that related costs would be included in the Town's overall litigation and legal services budget, rather than as a separate line item for lagoon enforcement.

Council Member Moran noted that the program was initially expedited using donated funds and emphasized the importance of recognizing it as an ongoing Town expense. Town Manager Blouin confirmed that a portion of the donated funds remains available. Council Member Moran stated that violations under Chapter 74 should be heard by the special magistrate, noting this would strengthen enforcement. Town Manager Blouin agreed, particularly in contested cases, emphasizing the benefit of specialized expertise in maritime and coastal law to ensure cases are properly adjudicated.

Council President Pro Tem Crampton asked where expenditures related to the special magistrate would be reflected in the budget, specifically whether they would appear under the legal budget or the Police Department budget. Town Manager Blouin stated he would coordinate that with Deputy Town Manager Bob Miracle.

Council President Lindsay called for public comment. No one indicated a desire to speak.

Council Member Araskog thought it would be helpful for the Town Council to know which cases would be heard by the Special Magistrate. Town Manager Blouin stated that all cases are public records and would be noticed online.

Town Attorney O'Connor introduced Paul Nicoletti to the Town Council and stated she was pleased that Mr. Nicoletti was willing to consider the appointment.

Attorney Paul Nicoletti provided an overview of his qualifications, noting extensive experience in municipal government and as a special magistrate, including work in waterfront communities with similar regulatory challenges. He explained the magistrate process, stating that cases are heard based on a scheduled docket, evidence is presented during the hearing to avoid ex parte communication, and rulings are issued promptly and later reduced to writing. He added that decisions of the magistrate, like those of the Code Enforcement Board, may be appealed through the court system.

Council Member Moran thanked Mr. Nicoletti for accepting the position and welcomed him to Palm Beach.

Council President Pro Tem Crampton welcomed Mr. Nicoletti and stated he looked forward to working with him.

Council Member Araskog thanked Mr. Nicoletti and asked if he dealt with the mooring issues in Stuart. Mr. Nicoletti noted that in his prior municipal experience, regulating waterways involved coordination with state and federal agencies and often required negotiated solutions, including the establishment of mooring fields and addressing issues related to derelict vessels. Council Member Araskog asked whether recent changes in state law provide greater enforcement authority than was previously available in similar jurisdictions. Mr. Nicoletti confirmed it did.

Council Member Araskog asked whether the new state law provides the Town with greater flexibility when addressing matters involving federal and Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction. Mr. Nicoletti stated that the new state law serves as an independent enforcement tool and does not necessarily expand authority over federal jurisdiction, noting that such questions are better addressed by the Town Attorney. Town Attorney O'Connor stated that the town was not regulating moorings in the Intracoastal Waterway.

Council President Lindsay called for public comment. No one indicated a desire to speak.

Town Attorney O'Connor read Ordinance 11-2026 by title only.

A motion was made by Council Member Cooney and seconded by Council President Pro Tem Crampton to adopt Ordinance 11-2026. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

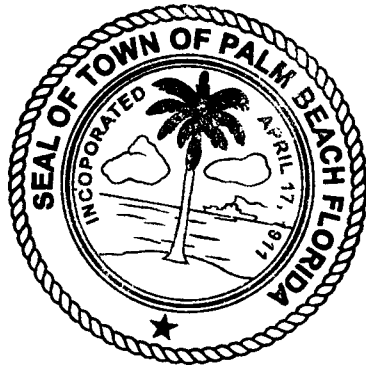
4. **49-2026** A Resolution Of The Town Council Of The Town Of Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida, Appointing Paul J. Nicoletti, Esq. As A Code Enforcement Special Magistrate; And Providing For An Effective Date.

Council Member Araskog asked whether Mr. Nicoletti's experience in Stuart included familiarity with maritime and coastal law. Town Attorney O'Connor clarified that the special magistrate would enforce the Town's Code of Ordinances only and would not enforce federal maritime law.

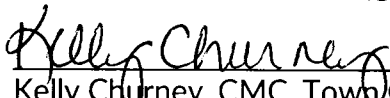
A motion was made by Council Member Araskog and seconded by Council President Pro Tem Crampton to approve Resolution 49-2026. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Council Member Araskog and seconded by Council Member Moran to adjourn the meeting at 10:04 AM. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0.



APPROVED:


Kelly Churney, CMC, Town Clerk
Date: 4/14/26

APPROVED:


Bobbie D. Lindsay, Town Council President