

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, September 24, 2024 - 9:00 AM

Council Chambers, 1121 N. Lake Park Boulevard, Carolina Beach, NC



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barbee called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

PRESENT

Mayor Lynn Barbee

Mayor Pro Tem Deb LeCompte

Council Member Jay Healy

Council Member Joe Benson

Council Member Mike Hoffer

ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Finance Director Debbie Hall

Town Clerk Kim Ward

Town Attorney Noel Fox

Mayor Barbee said item 8 was added to the agenda so Mr. Oakley can give an update about the Ocean Boulevard sidewalk project.

CLOSED SESSION

1. Closed Session – Attorney/Client

ACTION: Motion to go into closed session to discuss an attorney/client matter in accordance with NCGS 143.318.11(a)(3)

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed unanimously

Ms. Fox left the meeting at the end of the closed session.

Mayor Barbee called the meeting back to order and said Council took no action during closed session.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. Employee Recognition

Public Utilities Director Mark Meyer presented Roy Gardner, an equipment operator, with his 20-year certificate. Council thanked Mr. Gardner for his dedication to the Town and always having a great sense of humor.

3. Presentation on Homeless Services by Cape Fear Council of Governments

Andrea Stough, Homeless Services Director with Cape Fear Council of Governments, gave a presentation on available services and the Cape Fear Homeless Continuum of Care, a community-wide alliance of service providers, local governments, health-care agencies, and other community stakeholders in New Hanover, Brunswick, and Pender counties. She reviewed the group's mission and vision, goals, governance, funding, and responsibilities, and she shared data collected by the organization. People in need of services may call 910-444-0621.

4. Resolution of Support – City of Wilmington Bridge Investment Program

The City of Wilmington has requested support from the Town for the City's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration's Bridge Investment Program (BIP) grant to replace the 4th Street Bridge and Pine Grove Drive Bridge.

Mayor Barbee gave a brief overview.

ACTION: Motion of support for Resolution No. 24-2315 supporting the City of Wilmington's grant application

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed unanimously

Mayor Barbee said as a bonus, there are some environmental positives to getting rid of old bridges.

5. Update from the Police Chief

Police Chief Vic Ward gave an update, but before he began his presentation he shared an anecdote about homelessness in our area. He said the owner of a large establishment in the Town reached out to him about one of his employees living in a car with her family, including two young children. Chief Ward said he met with the family to try to find a place for them to stay, but everything was full. He said another business owner stepped up and was able to house the family for a week.

Chief Ward gave an update on summer 2024 statistics. The total number of calls for Police service from May to August was close to 6,800 (May 1,600, June 1,635, July 1,798, and August 1,758). There were 534 citations issued, 132 arrests, and 553 forensic examinations. Chief Ward and Lt. Sonny Russell are working with the District Attorney's Office in hopes of being able to start meeting virtually with a magistrate to reduce the amount of time officers are off the island.

Mayor Barbee said Chief Ward's presentation highlights his department's workload, and he expressed appreciation for everything they do for the Town.

6. Storm Recovery Update

Mr. Oakley gave an update on storm damage recovery. He thanked all the Town employees who worked through the storm last week and also praised their families for the support they provided. Mr. Oakley said the Town is hoping for State and Federal assistance, and plans are already underway for the N.C. Department of Insurance to come down to help with claims. He also said debris pickup will be starting soon.

Mr. Oakley said the main damage to Town property was the Texas Avenue pump, and there are two 8-inch pumps coming in today.

Public Works Director Brian Stanberry gave additional details about the pump, which faulted out due to overload. He said while an immediate solution is forthcoming, there is work going on in the background to upgrade the system.

Mayor Barbee stressed that this is a high-priority item due to another storm on the horizon, and he expressed appreciation for the department's quick action.

Council Member Hoffer asked if saltwater and freshwater from the Lake intermingled. Mr. Stanberry said yes, drone footage indicated that happened. Council Member Hoffer asked if that's something to worry about, and Mr. Stanberry said he thinks the large volume of freshwater from above likely fixed the issue.

Mr. Stanberry said he is looking forward to upgrading the entire system to have connectivity and video surveillance.

Mr. Oakley said due to the response from staff and volunteers, the Lake looks good. He said remaining issues for the Town include loss of the Dolphin Lane bulkhead, Sandpiper Lane parking lot issues, stormwater issues, roof leaks, problems with the Alabama Avenue restrooms, flooding in the Fire Department, and damage to vehicles. Mr. Oakley said the next item on the agenda will propose a budget amendment to start to pay for recovery, and the hope is that a disaster declaration will be made to get Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement. He said he thinks State help is coming, as legislators have asked the Town to put together a list of emergency needs. Mr. Oakley stressed that issues could continue to arise with roads and other infrastructure, so the Town must continue to monitor the situation.

Council Member Hoffer said three buildings at Ocean Dunes condos were condemned. He thanked Mayor Barbee for his leadership during the storm.

7. Establish Budget for Potential Tropical Cyclone 8

Council considered creating a budget appropriation of \$800,000 for Potential Tropical Cyclone 8 (PTC8) that occurred on September 16.

Mr. Oakley explained that the money would come out of the General Fund with anticipation that the Town may be reimbursed with Federal and State funds eventually, although sometimes it can take a while.

Mayor Barbee thanked the current Council as well as prior Councils for making recovery of the reserve fund a priority so the Town is able to respond to these types of emergencies.

Mr. Oakley said he may have to come back for additional funding as costs come in, but this is the initial request to respond to damages, and this amount includes debris pickup.

ACTION: Motion to allocate \$800,000 from the General Fund for disaster cleanup and repair as presented by the Town Manager

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed unanimously

Mayor Barbee was directed to reword the motion to be more specific.

ACTION: Motion to rescind the motion

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed unanimously

ACTION: Motion to allocate \$800,000 for disaster recovery as presented by the Town Manager and noted in Ordinance No. 24-1238

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed unanimously

Council Member Hoffer asked what the anticipated reimbursement from FEMA is. Mr. Oakley said the Town expects get back 100% for most submitted items, which will include everything from damages to staff hours, gas, and supplies used during the storm. He said FEMA usually gives 75%, and the State is likely to pitch in for the remainder.

Mayor Barbee said this situation is a good example of why the Town has emergency plans and procedures.

8. Ocean Boulevard Sidewalk Update

Mr. Oakley gave an update on the Ocean Boulevard sidewalk project. He said some additional costs have arisen based on stormwater changes required by the State. Mr. Oakley said the amount is \$126,297.27, which is about \$10,000 less than what was initially anticipated. He said once this cost is approved, the Town can issue a notice to proceed.

Council Member Hoffer said when Council looks at the budget amendment at the next meeting, he wants to consider recouping that money from elsewhere in the budget.

Mayor Barbee said the additional cost came about due to moving the sidewalk closer to the road, which created some stormwater concerns.

ACTION: Motion to approve the change order for \$126,297.27 to proceed with the Ocean Boulevard sidewalk

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed unanimously

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte asked staff to send out notice to residents affected by this work. Mr. Oakley said the first part of the notice to proceed will include door hangers and emails.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte asked when the County will start spraying for mosquitoes. According to the map on the County's website, Carolina Beach and Kure Beach are scheduled to be sprayed on September 24. She also reminded everyone of the Police Department Bike Rodeo on Sunday and said volunteer opportunities are still available.

Council Member Healy praised the community for coming together during the weather event last week.

Council Member Benson asked about the debris pickup schedule. Mr. Oakley said a meeting is scheduled for Tuesday afternoon to discuss this. Council Member Benson reminded everyone of the Stormwater Open House scheduled for Wednesday, October 23, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM in Council Chambers. This will be similar to the one held last year.

Council Member Hoffer said there will be a Bike/Ped Master Plan Open House on Thursday noon-2:00 PM and 5:00-7:00 PM in Council Chambers. He also said he – along with Bike/Ped Committee Chair Rodney Kidd, Sgt. Derrick McNeil, and two representatives from Kure Beach – attended the BikeWalk NC Summit in Chapel Hill this week. Council Member Hoffer spoke to representatives about hosting this event in Carolina Beach in 2026.

Mayor Barbee commended staff and residents for an outstanding job last week.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 11:00 AM.