

**Board of Aldermen
August 6, 2025
Draft Minutes**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McDermon called the meeting to order at 11:06AM.

II. INVOCATION

Mayor Pro Tem Leonard gave the invocation.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Alderman Olszewski led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor McDermon stated the LGC Contract needed to be added to the consent agenda. Mayor McDermon surveyed the Board's thoughts on keeping the items under section X. New Business since the members did not have an opportunity to review the materials prior to the meeting. The Board decided to keep the items on the agenda.

Alderman Olszewski requested the Police and Fire Reports from the consent agenda be pulled and presented under IX. Continuing Business.

Motion— Alderman Olszewski made a motion to approve the agenda with the removal of the Police Report and Fire Report under item B. Department Head Reports, and the addition of item M. LGC Contract under VIII. Consent Agenda. Alderman Grant seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

V. MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Derian introduced Alexis Stanfield and Christopher Huckaby, Clerk to the Board and Public Works Superintendent respectively, as the newest employees to join North Topsail Beach. She announced North Topsail Beach Planner I position was advertised and should be filled soon.

Beach Projects and Operations

Potential Tropical Cyclone #8:

Work continues to be on pause for the season effective May 2nd. The project remains at the CRC level with FEMA.

Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center:

A Sea Turtle Release is scheduled for August 8, 2025, at 10:00AM. The release will be on the beach at Jeffries Parking Lot. Manager Derian urged citizens to carpool to the event.

Topsail Island Vitex Eradication Project :

Manager Derian has been coordinating with the other Towns to kick-off the Topsail Island Vitex Eradication Project. Included on the consent agenda is the authorization of funds for

up to \$285,200, which is the amount included in FY 2026. Per the Interlocal Agreement, the Town of Topsail Beach serves as the fiscal agent for the project. The commitment to completing the project is expected to be 4 years in duration. The Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation grant will help fund the first two years and the Agreement that was approved and does not obligate any town to participate in the project beyond the initial grant. The total grant amount is \$690,060.50, which has a 50% match.

Manager Derian has worked this week with ONWASA to coordinate for water and is coordinating a temporary parking pass they will use while performing treatments. Derian also ordered temporary signs that will be displayed around some treatment areas that have a QR code as well.

North Topsail Beach is looking to have crews on site beginning treatments either August 13th – August 16th or August 18th through the 21st. Crews will be traveling in vehicles clearly marked with Michael Baker International. The properties that will be treated will be properties that have signed and returned the property permission forms. Manager Derian encouraged any property owner that has vitex, to please go to the North Topsail Beach website on the project page and fill out the permission form so the Town has that on file and can proceed accordingly.

Beach Access Matting

Beach Access matting will be installed at the Jeffries beach access location by the end of August.

Beach, Inlet, Sound Advisory Committee

The August 19th meeting for the Beach Inlet Sound Advisory Committee has been cancelled. In the meantime, Chris Gibson, Engineer has reported on permit status. They are currently working through an easement agreement with NC Wildlife Resources Commission. His initial research from Onslow County Register of Deeds indicated that DA143 was owned directly by the State of NC Property Control Section. Typically, the use of state lands within the Corps easement is granted directly through the permit process. After the One-Stop meeting, NC Wildlife Resources Commission is claiming title to the land, so they are working through them to get an easement to use the site before moving ahead with the permit application.

VI. OPEN FORUM

Kip Malcolm, 3102 Green Street: Thanked the Town for its support of the Ocean City Jazz Fest. He urged other citizens to get involved with the town and asked for support in facilitating engagement opportunities for the upcoming election. He also announced his candidacy for Alderman in the upcoming election.

Jeff Meyers, 2224 New River Inlet Rd #138: Spoke about the crossovers in Topsail Reef and asked for clarification on the town's involvement.

Jeff Zehner, 1243 New River Inlet Rd: Introduced himself and announced he would be running for the Board of Aldermen in the upcoming election.

Larry Strother, 308 Lanterna Lane: He announced he would be running for the Board of Aldermen in the upcoming election.

VII. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS AND HEARINGS

There were no public presentations or hearings.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes
- B. Department Head Reports
- C. Committee Reports
- D. Interlocal Agreement with Onslow County for Building Inspections
- E. Purchase Authorization PA 2026-26.03 Police Ford F150 to Capital Ford Inc and authorization for Upfit costs after (3) quotes are provided to the Town Manager
- F. Purchase Authorization PA 2026-26.04 JCB Backhoe to Company Wrench, LTD
- G. Budget Amendments 2026-26.05 2026-26.06 Becker Morgan CO1 for Fire Station #2
- H. Budget Amendments 2026-26.07 Fund 50 and 2026-26.08 Fund 12 Fire Station #2 WB Brawley CO7
- I. Budget Amendments 2026-26.09 Fund 50 and 2026-26.10 Fund 12 Fire Station #2 WB Brawley CCD1
- J. NCTVS Tax Refund
- K. Monthly Coastal Engineer Report
- L. Contract Authorization CA 2026-26.11 Interlocal Agreement Eradication of Vitex – Authorizes the Town Manager to Approve Payments
- M. LGC Contract

Motion— Alderman Olszewski made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the removal of the Police Report and Fire Report under item B. Department Head Reports, and the addition of item M. LGC Contract. Alderman Grant seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IX. CONTINUING BUSINESS

- A. Certificates of Appreciation

Deborah Hill, Planning Director, received Certificates of Appreciation on behalf of the Board of Adjustments members Hannah McCloud and Scott Morse.

- B. Police Report

Chief Younginer reported the summer is the busier time of the year for the Police Department, with breaking and entering rates increasing. He encouraged citizens to reach out to the non-emergency line (910) 455-9119 if they require assistance. The chief reported that calls for assistance have been lower compared to years previous. Chief Younginer answered questions from the Board members regarding false alarm calls and monthly reports.

- C. Fire Report

Chief Soward reported data for offshore calls was not available at the time of the meeting. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of calls to the fire department are for EMS services. The chief reported that grilling on decks for single family homes does not have regulations, but duplexes have a ten-foot (10') regulation. Chief Soward and Manager Derian answered questions from the board regarding drone dropped life preservers, bacteria outbreaks, and rescue statistics.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Hosting of Debates

Alderman Grant requested the Town sponsor candidate debates for the upcoming election season. He requested the Board consider the Town hosting a minimum of two debates, one in September and one in October. Alderman Grant asked Attorney Ferguson to weigh in on any regulations regarding the town hosting elections. Alderman Grant suggested citizens could volunteer to assist the debate. Alderman Olszewski stated she would be happy to moderate the debate if allowed. Attorney Ferguson reported the town would be allowed to sponsor the debate but there could be concerns about logistical issues and expending town services. Attorney Ferguson stated he would look more into it and report back to the Board. Mayor Pro Tem Leonard reminded the Board that the Topsail Island Chamber of Commerce typically hosts the debates, and the town only provides a location. Mayor McDermon encouraged current board members and others running to utilize other opportunities to campaign.

B. Approval Levels and Finance Controls

Alderman Grant vocalized that he felt the amount paid to GWI was inconsistent with the contracted services. Alderman Grant pointed out examples where he felt the amounts paid did not align and stated that he felt this was a poor use of town funds. Alderman Benson read aloud the minutes from the July 2, 2025, Board of Alderman meeting and stated the contract was approved as a Board. Alderman Grant referred to his slides and referenced the contract language from April and billings done in March. Alderman Olszewski stated for the record that board members are fiduciaries for the Town, and she voted in opposition of approving the contract. Manager Derian reported that interviews for the finance director position were ongoing. Mayor Pro Tem Leonard reminded the Board that the contract with GWI was to assist the town with finances while the town searched for a finance director. He vocalized concern with the Board members not having prior review of the PowerPoints for items A, B, and C under Continuing Business. Attorney Ferguson clarified that no vote was taken in closed session to approve the contract with GWI. Legal advice was given in closed session, as allowed under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3), and a vote was taken in open session.

Alderman Grant reported that he felt documentation was lacking based on the audit results. He stated the Town expended more for the American Rescue Plan Fund than there was appropriated in the budget. He reminded the Board that the board discussed the manager's approval levels at the July meeting. Manager Derian stated the ARP funds were set up for a single fiscal year rather than a multi-year like it should have been, which is why this was flagged in the audit. Manager Derian reported there was an improvement to the purchasing policy to rectify any issue. Alderman Olszewski asked for clarification that the previous auditor will not be auditing the Town this year. Manager Derian confirmed this.

C. Goals and Reporting for the Year

Alderman Grant reported that neighboring municipalities have a strategic plan with five-year goals. He vocalized that he felt the Town lacked long-term goals and a strategic plan. Alderman Grant posed the question of how does North Topsail Beach's goals align with Onslow County and what are the benefits? He reviewed perceived needs of the town, and what he feels the strategic plan should include. Alderman Olszewski stated the budget for FY 2025-26 is excellent, but that smart, measurable, strategic goals should be made. Mayor Pro Tem Leonard reminded the Board that there used to be a Board Workshop, where discussions like this should take place. Mayor McDermon stated some of the items mentioned by Alderman Grant are tied to funding but are not planned. Alderman Grant stated the strategic plan would be a living document that supersedes the current board members. He suggested having the County and/or other towns to present their strategic process. Manager Derian reminded the Board that the strategic plan is typically done at the Board retreats without outside municipalities. Mayor McDermon stated that North Topsail Beach does not need outside municipalities plans presented.

XI. OPEN FORUM

Sam Fury, 38 Seagull Lane: He announced he was not running for any elected seat but supported the Town created a strategic plan.

Jeff Meyers, 2224 New River Inlet Rd: He stated that several debates were held in the past for local elections and he encourages the town to hold debates and Meet and Greets.

XII. ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Ferguson had no report to share.

XIII. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor McDermon welcomed the new hires. She encouraged citizens to keep an eye on the weather and to practice caution. She offered prayers for Alderman Pletl.

XIV. ALDERMEN'S REPORT

Alderman Benson offered prayers for Alderman Pletl and her family.

Mayor Pro Tem Leonard welcomed the new hires and thanked the Jazz Fest workers. He provided a CBRA update and urged citizens to write their representatives to move items up in committees.

Alderman Olszewski thanked citizens for attending the meeting. She spoke about Health and Human Services issue, reminded citizens to fill holes in the beach, and urged voters to register.

Alderman Grant thanked the police department for their work. He briefly spoke about employee retention and rezoning concerns for Onslow County. He reported that Onslow County has allocated \$1.5 million to rework the beaches in the County. Alderman Grant reported there was a sewer and leak issue with ONWASA in the past two weeks. He thanked citizens for attending the meeting and vocalized his support for people running for the board.

XV. CLSOED SESSION

Attorney Ferguson stated closed session would include the lawsuits with parties including CM Mitchell Construction Company, Inc., Pacific Southwest Ventures, LLC, Wellman's Construction, Inc., Cangelosi Investments, LLC, Daniel C. Ruperd III, Jacob D. Ruperd, Phyllis J, Umbarger, Christopher Brannen, Hanna Brannen, Michael Landis, Bhikhabhai, Khodabhai Patel, Prajaykumar Patel, Ashishkumar Patel, Thomas Douglas, Loretta Douglas, Elmon Curtis Anders, Topsail Reef Homeowners Association, Inc., and Carrigan Family Foundation, Ltd.

Motion— Alderman Olszewski made a motion to go into closed session for item three (3) attorney client privilege. Alderman Grant seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board returned to open session and reported that no action was taken.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion— Mayor Pro Tem Leonard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alderman Olszewski seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:52PM.