

Town of Swansboro
Board of Commissioners
December 11, 2023, Organizational Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Mayor John Davis, Mayor Pro Tem Frank Tursi, Commissioner PJ Pugliese, Commissioner Larry Philpott, Commissioner Pat Turner, and Commissioner Jeffrey Conaway.

Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Pledge

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm. Deacon Jerry Fatica from St. Mildreds Catholic Church led a prayer and Mayor Davis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

Citizens were offered an opportunity to address the Board regarding items listed on the agenda. No comments were given.

Adoption of Agenda and Consent Items

On a motion by Commissioner Phillipott, seconded by Commissioner Turner, the agenda was amended to remove closed session. The motion was unanimously approved.

- June 12, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes
- June 26, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes
- Amendment to the Audit Contract-Gregory T. Redman, CPA for Period 7/1/2022-6/30/2023

Appointments/Recognitions/Presentations

2023 Samuel Swann Bland Community Service Award

The Samuel Swann Bland Community Service Award was created to honor the diligence, hard work, leadership, and dedication that characterized the contributions of Sam Bland to the public and the Swansboro Community. The award is made annually to a public employee, civic leader, or community volunteer that has demonstrated the qualities of outstanding dedication to the improvement of community services that were exhibited in the career and contributions of Samuel Swann Bland.

Mayor Davis announced that the 2024 Samuel Swann Bland Community Service Award was given to Mary Pat Smey for her focus on first responders and veterans. It was further shared that she was kind, sweet, had a big heart, and that her motto is "Do Good".

Ms. Smey thanked the town for welcoming her and family and for being great supporters to her causes that she is so passionate about.

The Board took a recess from 5:41pm to 5:44pm.

Oaths of Office Ceremony

Newly elected officials were required to qualify by taking the oath of office prescribed in Article VI, of the North Carolina Constitution. Honorable Judge Jefferson Griffin of the North Carolina Court of Appeals administered the Oaths of Office to the newly elected Board members William Justice, Douglas Eckendorf, and Joseph Brown.

Mayor Pro Tem Appointment

North Carolina General Statute 160A-70 provided that at the organizational meeting, the Governing Board shall elect from among its members a Mayor Pro Tempore.

On a motion by Commissioner Phillipott, he nominated Commissioner Conway. Commissioner Conway seconded the motion, but the motion failed 2:3.
Ayes: Conway, Phillipott.

No: Justice, Brown, Eckendorf

On a motion by Commissioner Eckendorf, he nominated Commissioner Justice. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion and the motion passed 4:1.

Ayes: Eckendorf, Justice, Brown, Phillipott

No: Conway

Judge Griffin administered the Oath of Mayor Pro Tem to Mr. Justice.

Appointment of Representative to ONWASA

ONWASA's Board of Directors were appointed to three-year terms by the local governments in the service area. The Board was composed of eight members whose regular meetings are held bimonthly at Jacksonville City Hall, 815 New Bridge Street, Jacksonville, NC.

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, he nominated Mayor Davis. Mayor Pro Tem Justice seconded the motion, and it passed 3:2.

Ayes: Brown, Justice, Eckendorf

No: Conway, Phillipott

2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule

Mayor Pro Tem Justice motioned to change the meeting day to the first and third Thursday of the month along with changing the start time to 6:00 pm. Commissioner Eckendorf seconded the motion and was approved unanimously.

Town Clerk Fender shared that a revised meeting schedule to account for any date conflicts would be drafted and provided for the board's approval in consent at the next meeting.

Mayor Davis shared that the board desired to amend the remainder of the agenda for the evening. On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Justice, seconded by Commissioner Eckendorf, Board Appointments were removed, discussion for provide a Christmas bonus to staff was added, and to schedule a special meeting to handle board appointments for the TDA and Historic Preservation Commission and other business. The motion passed 3:2.

Ayes: Justice, Eckendorf, Brown

No: Conaway, Philpott

Commissioner Phillpott stated his opposition, sharing that board appointments are traditionally held at this meeting.

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Eckendorf, with unanimous approval, a special meeting was scheduled for Friday, December 15, 2023, with a start time of 9:00 am to handle board appointments to TDA and Historic Preservation Commission, discussion of Christmas bonuses for staff, and to handle interviews for an Interim Town Manager and Town Attorney.

Future Agenda Topics

Future agenda items were shared for visibility and comment. In addition, an opportunity was provided for the Board to introduce items of interest and subsequent direction for placement on future agendas.

The following items were addressed:

- A list of matters with the suggestion to handle at special meetings was provided by Mayor Davis
- Recognition of Swansboro High School JV Cheerleading team for State Championship
- Recognition of One Harbor Church
- Future review of town projects and discussion

Public Comment

Keith Walsh of 503 Shipyard Ct Swansboro offered his congratulations to the new Commissioners. Having been a resident of Swansboro for over 40 years he was ready to see change and urge the board to cooperate, and to be open & transparent. Regarding the funds for an EOC that the mayor worked to get for the town, he wanted to know how much money had been made from it.

Board Comments

Commissioner Phillpott welcomed the new commissioners and shared he was excited to work with them and hear their new ideas.

Commissioner Conaway congratulated the new commissioners as well and reminded the public to ask about what they hear from others to ensure they are receiving the correct details.

Commissioner Eckendorf stated he was here to serve the people of Swansboro and was grateful he was entrusted and looked forward to the next four years.

Commissioner Brown shared that it was an honor to represent the town and thanked the voters that supported him.

Mayor Pro Tem Justice was appreciative of the welcome provided by Commissioners Conaway & Philpott. Additionally, he read a statement and pledge, and asked the board and Mayor to sign.

Mayor Davis thanked Town Clerk Fender, her team, and the IT specialist for their hard work with getting the ability to live stream the meetings accomplished. He also shared with the Board that it was their responsibility to serve the citizens and the integrity of their office was important.

Mayor Davis recognized guests that were present: County Commissioners Walter Scott, Lisa Carpenter, Linda Howard and former Swansboro Commissioners Roy Herrick and Junior Freeman

Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Phillipott, seconded by Commissioner Conway, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.