

**Town of Swansboro
Board of Commissioners
February 11, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes**

In attendance: Mayor William Justice, Mayor Pro Tem Jeffrey Conaway, Commissioner Pat Turner, Commissioner Joseph Brown, and Commissioner Douglas Eckendorf. The board had one vacancy.

Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Pledge

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Mayor Justice 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 made.

Adoption of Agenda and Consent Items

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Turner, the agenda and the below consent items were adopted unanimously.

- November 12, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes
- November 12, 2024, Closed Session Minutes
- November 26, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes
- November 26, 2024, Closed Session Minutes
- December 9, 2024, Special Joint Meeting with TDA
- Budget Ordinance Amendment #2025-6
- Tax Refunds totaling \$220.23.

Vehicle Tax

| | | |
|------------------------|----------|---------------|
| Gordon, Carole Ann | \$16.76 | Tag Surrender |
| Isenhardt, Emily Marie | \$17.97 | Tag Surrender |
| Byrd, Fred Raymond Jr. | \$185.50 | Duplication |

Appointments/Recognitions/Presentations

Oath of Office for Mayor William Justice

Town Clerk Fender administered the oath of office of Mayor to William Justice to fill the vacant mayor seat which would expire November 2025.

Oath of Office for Mayor Pro Tem Jeffrey Conaway

Mayor Justice administered the oath of office for Mayor Pro Tem to Commissioner Jeffrey Conaway.

Police Department Employee Introduction & Oaths

Police Chief Taylor introduced Officer Eric Mason. Mayor Justice administered the oath of office.

Public Hearing

UDO Text Amendment to § 152.016 Definition of Basic Terms and § 152.267 Computation of Sign Area

Town Planner Brehmer reviewed that after a discovery of a discrepancy in UDO Sections 152.016 Definitions of Basic Terms for the definition “Sign, Area Of” and 152.267 Computation of Sign Area (C) pertaining to calculating the square footage allowed on a sign, a text amendment to these sections was proposed for consistency.

Planner Brehmer further explained that the previous language in the last two sentences of Section 152.016, under the definition of “Sign, Area Of,” conflicted with Section 152.267(C) regarding how sign area was calculated. Section 152.016 had stated that only one side of a double-faced sign would be counted—unless the copy differed—while Section 152.267 required all visible sign copy to be included. To eliminate the contradiction and align with past enforcement and interpretation, the proposed text amendment revised Section 152.016 to state that both sides of a double-faced sign were included in the area calculation and removed the conflicting sentence. Section 152.267(C) was also amended to read, “The sign area computation shall include all sides of the sign.” This clarified that all sides—regardless of whether the copy was the same—must be counted toward the total square footage allowed. The Planning Board recommended approval of the amendment at their January 7, 2025, regular meeting.

The public hearing was opened at 6:17 pm then closed, no comments were offered.

On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Brown, Ordinance 2025-O3 amending § 152.016 Definition of Basic Terms and § 152.267 Computation of Sign Area was approved unanimously.

Business Non-Consent

Street Acceptance Procedures and Update

Planner Brehmer reviewed that after directions from the Board to give an update on upcoming street acceptance requests as well as procedures currently in place by ordinance and policies for this process, and she clarified the following details.

Steps include submission of a written request by the developer, verification that streets and sidewalks meet construction standards, and submission of stormwater inspection reports confirming that the system was functioning properly and ready for transfer from the developer to the homeowners’ association.

Temporary acceptance procedures and administrative policies were also reviewed and found to be efficient.

Additionally, Planner Brehmer shared that the streets and sidewalks in the Shadow Creek subdivision were officially accepted by the Board in November 2024 after all

requirements were met. She also noted that a request for street and sidewalk acceptance from Swansgate was expected soon. Repairs to the streets outlined in the engineer's report had been completed. The developer was currently waiting on the Army Corps of Engineers to approve moving a wetland line based on a delineation completed by ECS. Once approved, the sidewalk required along Main Street Extension could be installed, allowing the acceptance request to move forward.

There were no questions and no further action taken by the Board.

Discussion of Filling a Vacancy on the Board of Commissioners

Town Manager Barlow reviewed the conflicting guidelines between the Town Charter and the state general statute regarding how to fill a vacant commissioner seat. According to the Charter, the Board could appoint someone to serve for the remainder of the three-year term. However, the General Statute required an appointment only until the next municipal election, at which point a special election would be held for the remaining two years of the term. Under G.S. 160A-3, the Board had the authority to choose which path to follow, and a majority vote was sufficient to make that determination.

During the discussion, several board members expressed support for an appointment lasting only until the next election, allowing voters to select a long-term representative. Others referenced previous use of the Town Charter and suggested the need to further review how past vacancies were handled. The Board agreed to table the item until the April 25th meeting and requested that staff research and present information on how similar vacancies were handled in the past.

Future Agenda Topics

Future agenda items were shared for visibility and comments. 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:

- Recognition of Trevor Hucal for State Title achievement
- Schedule discussion on paid parking downtown for an upcoming meeting

Public Comment

Junior Freeman of 714 W. Corbett Avenue offered his congratulations Mayor Justice and Mayor Pro Tem Conaway. Additionally, he encouraged the Board to consider upgrading the meeting room by installing a formal dais, improving the audio-visual system, and reviewing the budget to support those changes. He also suggested they consider increasing their monthly stipend, as a taxpayer he doesn't expect them to serve for nothing.

Board Comments

Board members expressed appreciation to staff and citizens for their ongoing support and participation, congratulated newly appointed officials, and emphasized the value of public input during meetings. Several members noted their commitment to being accessible to residents, encouraged attendance at future meetings, and highlighted the importance of fiscal responsibility and public service.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Turner, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.