



# Board of Commissioners Meeting Agenda Item Submittal

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Item To Be Considered: **Funding Request – PirateFest**

Board Meeting Date: **February 25, 2025**

Prepared By: **Anna Stanley – Parks & Recreation Director**

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**Overview:** Funding to support the PriageFest event to be held in May is requested.

**Expanded Overview:** Since 2017, PirateFest has been a cornerstone of our community's cultural and economic landscape, evolving into a highly anticipated annual tradition. Initially organized by Onslow County Parks and Recreation in the Swansboro area, our collaboration to bring the event to the downtown area has proven to be a strategic and beneficial decision for the town. Support to maintain this valuable event is requested for the following reasons:

1. **Significant Growth in Attendance:** Since its inception, the event has seen a remarkable 77% increase in attendance, culminating in a record-breaking 7,000 participants in 2023 within a six-hour window. This growth reflects the community's enthusiasm and the event's appeal, drawing residents and visitors alike to our downtown.
2. **Economic Impact:** The influx of attendees positively impacts local businesses, particularly restaurants, shops, and vendors, fostering economic activity in the downtown area. The event supports small businesses and reinforces our town's reputation as a vibrant and welcoming destination.
3. **Collaborative Effort and Shared Resources:** Onslow Parks and Recreation has been instrumental in funding over 50% of the event's total budget, demonstrating inter-departmental collaboration and shared investment in the event's success. This partnership minimizes the financial burden on the town while maximizing community benefits.
4. **Strengthening Community Identity and Engagement:** The event provides an inclusive platform for residents of all ages to gather, celebrate, and connect. It enhances the quality of life and strengthens our town's identity as a hub of community activity and culture.
5. **Alignment with Strategic Goals:** PirateFest aligns with our broader goals of fostering community engagement, supporting economic development, and utilizing downtown as a dynamic space for public gatherings. It also showcases the town's commitment to offering diverse recreational and cultural opportunities.

Given these factors, PirateFest has become an integral part of our town's annual calendar. Its sustained growth and the collaborative model of its funding underscore its value and feasibility.

**Background Attachment(s):** Data Analysis Report by Placer.ai

**Recommended Action:** Motion to approve or deny allocation of \$3,000 for the annual PirateFest event held each May. If approved a Budget Amendment will be provided for approval at the next regular meeting.

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**Action:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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