Town of Swansboro
Board of Commissioners
July 28, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Mayor William Justice, Mayor Pro Tem Jeffrey Conaway, Commissioner Douglas Eckendorf, Commissioner Tamara Pieratti, Commissioner Tim Vannoy, and Commissioner Wayne Herbert.

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Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm and 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 given.

Adoption of Agenda and Consent Items
Prior to consideration of the agenda, a question was raised regarding carryover funding for playground swings included within the consent agenda. Staff provided clarification regarding the funding and anticipated the purchase of two swings.

On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Eckendorf, the agenda as prepared and the consent items below were approved unanimously.

- May 12, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes
- Tax Refund Request

  The Onslow County Tax Collector recommends refunds of the below listed taxes totaling $195.84.

  Vehicle Tax

Walters, Christine Carol	$126.65	Tag Surrender
Gaskell, Deborah Elaine	$48.35	Tag Surrender
Santariga, Justin Gregory	$20.84	Tag Surrender

- Budget Ordinance Amendment #2027-1

Public Hearing
UDO Text Amendment to § 152.130-135 Enforcement and Review
Town Planner Rebecca Brehmer presented a proposed amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance related to enforcement procedures and civil penalties. The amendment was developed following identification of inconsistencies between the Town's code provisions and current State statutes governing enforcement procedures. The proposed changes would remove the existing requirement that violations be corrected within forty-eight hours and instead allow a correction period to be established within a Notice of Violation based on the circumstances of each case. Civil penalties

would be assessed at $50 per day following issuance of a formal Notice of Violation, with authority for the administrator to increase penalties to $100 per day when corrective actions are not completed as directed.

Planner Brehmer reviewed concerns expressed by the Planning Board during its consideration of the amendment and clarified that the administrator's authority to settle up to $1,500 in accrued penalties did not establish a cap on penalties. The Planning Board recommended approval of the amendment at its July 7, 2026, meeting.

Board discussion focused on penalty amounts, equitable treatment of violators, enforcement timelines, appeal procedures, and administrative authority. Attorney Francis Rasberry advised that State law now relies primarily on civil penalties for zoning enforcement and noted that the proposed amendment established a progressive enforcement process beginning with informal notification and escalating as necessary. Additional discussion addressed proportionality of penalties, settlement authority, and the importance of maintaining consistency in enforcement actions.

The public hearing was opened at 6:34 pm then closed as no comments were offered.

Following discussion, Commissioner Eckendorf stated that the amendment provided a clearer and more transparent enforcement process and suggested implementation be monitored and revisited in the future if necessary.

On a motion by Commissioner Eckendorf, seconded by Commissioner Herbert, Ordinance 2026-O6 amending §152.130-135 Enforcement and Review was unanimously approved.

Business Non-Consent

Review of Sidewalk Priority List

Town Manager Jon Barlow reviewed the history of the Town's sidewalk improvement initiative. Following reprioritization by the Board in 2024, engineering plans were completed for the five remaining priority sidewalk projects. The proposed improvements total approximately 7,000 linear feet of sidewalk with an estimated construction cost of $1,108,835. Mr. Barlow reported available funding sources totaling approximately $297,645 and noted that implementation of the remaining projects would require pursuit of additional grant funding, legislative appropriations, or other funding sources.

Board discussion focused on school connectivity, public safety, easement acquisition, project readiness, and future funding opportunities. Commissioners emphasized the importance of pursuing easements in all project areas to position the Town for future grant and funding opportunities. Discussion also included potential Safe Routes to School funding, conversations with property owners, and the benefits of having all projects ready for construction when funding becomes available.

Following discussion, the Board agreed with staff's recommendation to begin the easement acquisition process for all five sidewalk priority areas and receive periodic progress updates. No formal action was taken.

Monthly Financial Report as of June 30, 2026

Finance Director Sonia Johnson presented the April 2026 financial report. She highlighted the following points:

- The FY 2025-2026 budget anticipated a deficit of approximately $255,555; however, year-end revenues exceeded expenditures by approximately $275,836. This favorable position was attributed primarily to personnel savings resulting from vacancies in multiple departments.
- The General Fund reflected a positive variance of approximately $361,703 when compared to budget projections, with additional savings potentially available pending closure of outstanding encumbrances.
- The Stormwater Enterprise Fund concluded the fiscal year with revenues exceeding expenditures by approximately $47,949.
- The Solid Waste Enterprise Fund ended the fiscal year with a positive balance of approximately $24,087 and remained financially stable.
- An update was provided regarding the Town's outstanding debt obligations and available cash balances.
- Staff reviewed the status of active grants and identified potential grant opportunities that may be pursued during the upcoming fiscal year.
- Fire Chief Jacob Randall provided an update on several pending grant applications, including requests for funding related to wildfire response equipment, the Emergency Operations Center project, fire prevention education equipment, search and recovery technology, and replacement of a brush truck.

In response to inquiries from the Board, staff clarified the following:

- The Town's positive year-end financial position was largely the result of personnel cost savings generated by vacancies across several departments during the fiscal year.
- Additional positive budget variances may be realized once all year-end encumbrances are reviewed and finalized.
- Several grant applications remain pending review by funding agencies, and staff continues to actively pursue available grant opportunities to support Town projects and equipment needs.
- Current and future grant funding opportunities could assist with a variety of capital and infrastructure projects, reducing the potential need for local funding sources.

- Coordination of legislative priorities would allow the Town to more effectively communicate funding needs and maintain consistency when meeting with state and federal representatives.
- Infrastructure improvements, stormwater projects, sidewalk construction, and public safety equipment needs were identified as areas that may benefit from future grant or legislative funding assistance.

The Board discussed the value of developing a coordinated approach to legislative advocacy and grant funding efforts. Staff recommended bringing a discussion of legislative priorities and strategic funding requests back to the Board at a future meeting, and the Board concurred.

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:

- Discussion about the hiring of a Town Manager
- Sidewalk easement updates
- Possible ordinance revision for lights and signs

Public Comment
Citizens were offered an opportunity to address the Board for no more than five minutes regarding items not listed on the agenda. No comments were made.

Manager's Comments
In response to an inquiry from the board on the Main Street dock replacement project, Manager Barlow reported that the project was currently awaiting receipt of outstanding riparian rights waivers from adjacent property owners. One waiver had been received, while the remaining property owner had not yet responded. As a result, the project remained temporarily delayed.

Board Comments
The Board collectively expressed appreciation to Town staff for their continued service to the community and thanked residents for their attendance and engagement in local government.

Commissioner Herbert emphasized the importance of maintaining unified priorities and continuing efforts that strengthen community resilience, public safety, and quality of life for Swansboro residents.

Commissioner Eckendorf commented on the value of collaboration between the Board, staff, and community members in advancing Town initiatives and achieving long-term goals.

Commissioner Vannoy expressed appreciation for the support extended to him and his family by Town staff and community members during recent personal challenges.

Mayor Justice provided updates regarding transportation initiatives and upcoming meetings with state and federal representatives. He also discussed ongoing historic preservation efforts, progress related to the Veterans Memorial Gardens project, opportunities for regional collaboration on issues affecting the commercial fishing industry and highlighted the positive impact of a local summer literacy program sponsored by Swansboro United Methodist Church.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Eckendorf the meeting adjourned at 7:44 pm.