

Town of Swansboro
Board of Commissioners
July 09, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Mayor John Davis, Mayor Pro Tem William Justice, Commissioner Jeffrey Conaway, Commissioner Pat Turner, Commissioner Joseph Brown, and Commissioner Douglas Eckendorf.

Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Pledge

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. 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 Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Turner, the agenda was adopted unanimously.

Appointments/Recognitions/Presentations

Parks & Recreation Month

Mayor John Davis presented Parks and Recreation Director Stanley and her department with a proclamation designating July as the Parks and Recreation Month. Director Stanley shared that the success of parks & recreation was successful due to the collaboration and partnership with many local businesses, volunteers and support from employees and the other Town departments.

Onslow Memorial Hospital

Penny Burlingame-Deal, President and CEO of Onslow Memorial Hospital, presented on the hospital's achievements, challenges, and strategic plans. She highlighted the hospital's recognition for maternity care, cost-efficiency, and equity, as well as its recent financial turnaround with \$16 million in excess revenue. Despite improved finances, quality scores (Leapfrog C, CMS 2-star rating) lagged due to outdated data and hospice-related mortality reporting. The hospital faced emergency department capacity issues, exacerbated by behavioral health and social hold cases. Mrs. Burlingame-Deal also discussed workforce shortages and residency programs initiated to address them.

In response to inquiries from the board Mrs. Burlingame-Deal clarified the following:

- Plans for expanding services to outlying areas for satellite facilities had been considered but are still in the early stages of development.

- She encouraged feedback on loyalty and community perception, acknowledging the importance of these factors in improving hospital reputation and patient care experience.

Business Non-Consent

Advanced Life Support Enhancement – Update

Fire Chief Jacob Randall reviewed his slides, attached herein with the power point presentation of the meeting, for the proposal to transition the Swansboro Fire Department to an advanced life support (ALS) system to improve emergency medical services (EMS) and patient outcomes. The plan aimed to enhance response capabilities and address long response times, particularly in rural areas, where the average time reached 13 minutes. Swansboro's remote location and growing call volume were also contributing to delays in accessing critical care.

The phased proposal would implement paramedic-level services over three years, introduce a transport service, and acquire necessary equipment. Key challenges included recruiting and retaining personnel, and managing financial impacts, which were still under review. The next steps involved seeking approval for an interlocal agreement with Onslow County EMS, with a July 15th deadline to submit the proposal.

The following plan options were reviewed.

Plan A – Paramedic (Recommended)

- Provides Dedicated Provider per Shift on a Quick Response Vehicle - Consistency
- Alleviates Fire Apparatus from Scene Dedication
- Provides Personnel to Respond with Secondary Apparatus Type for Fire Incidents (ISO)
- Maximizes Operational Efficiency – Creating the Ability for Answering Overlapping Incidents
- Builds Foundation for Future EMS Division Growth (Transport – If needed)

Plan B – Firefighter/Paramedic

- Provides ALS Provider per Shift and Trained Fire Personnel
- Commits Fire Apparatus to the Scene of an EMS Incident – Awaiting Transport
- Increases Certified Fire Personnel - Eliminates Paramedic Abilities when Performing Fire Suppression Activities

Plan C – Part-Time Providers

- Staff Apparatus with Part-Time Personnel
- Requires a Significant Increase in Part-Time Personnel
- Inconsistent Personnel Daily Impacting Daily Operational Efficiency

- Impacts Program Quality & Management (Training, Report) Overall Consistency

After discussion on the various options presented, the board requested a cost comparison between the plans, with an emphasis on utilizing current staff and identifying potential funding sources, such as grants. Due to the deadline of July 15, 2024, the board agreed to hold a special meeting on Saturday, July 13, 2024, at 8:00 am for Chief Randall to provide cost comparison details and to provide a decision on proceeding with the process to establish an Advanced Life Support Enhancement System in the Town of Swansboro.

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 on tax reduction at a future meeting

Public Comment

Citizens were offered an opportunity to address the Board regarding items not listed on the agenda. No comments were given.

Manager's Comments

Manager Barlow shared in addition to his project brief, the 25 new Christmas decorations had been purchased along with 9 wreathes with bows. The poles which would be utilized to accommodate these decorations still needed power. Additionally, he shared that the resurfacing of Shore Drive had been completed.

Board Comments

Board members shared their appreciation to staff and the success of the July 3rd/4th event, and the Flag displayed over the bridge was complimented by many citizens.

Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Eckendorf, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.