

BOARD OF ALDERMEN MINUTES

JUNE 12, 2025, 5:30PM

TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 321 CAUSEWAY DRIVE, WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm by Mayor Mills. After the Pledge of Allegiance, the invocation was provided by John McIntyre, Lead Pastor, Wrightsville Beach Baptist Church. The following were present:

Board of Aldermen

F. Darryl Mills, Mayor
Hank Miller, Mayor Pro-tem
Jeff DeGroot, Alderman
Ken Dull, Alderman
Vivian (Zeke) Partin, Alderman

Staff

Haynes Brigman, Town Manager
Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk
Grady Richardson, Town Attorney
Tony Wilson, Director of Parks & Planning
Matt Holland, Fire Chief
Brian Murray, Finance Director
Jason Bishop, Chief of Police
Bill Fay, Public Works Director
Bailey Hartsell, Communications Mngr.

Upon motion by Mills, seconded by Partin and unanimous vote, the Board amended the agenda to add item 8b, consideration of NCDOT's proposed "grade separated quadrant interchange" project scheduled for the Military Cutoff/Eastwood intersection.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bill Baggett, 917 Water St., speaking on behalf of himself and neighboring residents, requested that "parking revenue neutral studies" be done to reduce traffic in order to improve safety for island residents.

Dave Jacobs, 16 Oceanic Street, speaking on behalf of himself and neighboring residents, detailed problems associated with behavior and traffic issues relating to patrons of nearby establishments who have over-consumed alcohol.

Neal Braggi, 4 W. Henderson St., thanked the Board for improved and increased communications efforts by the Town.

CONSENT AGENDA

Prior to consideration of the Consent Agenda, Brigman asked that the special event permit application by the Sarus Festival Dance Performance be removed from items considered for approval. DeGroot requested the removal of item f, consideration of approval of Budget Ordinance (2025) 665-B funding the purchase of a vehicle for parking enforcement.

Upon motion by Partin, seconded by DeGroot and carried unanimously, the Board agreed to remove those items from the Consent Agenda.

Upon motion by Partin, seconded by DeGroot and carried unanimously, the Board approved the remainder of the Consent Agenda. It consisted of 1) approval of the open session minutes of the 5-8-25 regular meeting; 2) approval of recurring special events, as recommended by the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee; 3) acknowledgment of previously-approved special events for July; 4) approval of Comprehensive Financial Policies for the Town; 5) adoption of Resolution (2025) 2355 adopting the Hurricane Operations Plan; and 6) authorize the Town Manager to execute a 3-year

lease agreement with the Wrightsville Beach Museum for the Myers Cottage, located at 303 W. Salisbury St.

Upon motion by Dull, seconded by Mills and carried unanimously, the Board moved item f on the proposed consent agenda to be considered as item 8c.

PRESENTATIONS

CFPUA

The Board heard a presentation from Matt Tribett, Asst. Operations Director, of the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority (CFPUA) on the progress toward the merger of the Town's water and sewer utilities with the CFPUA. Tribett expressed appreciation to Town staff for their assistance throughout the consolidation process. Tribett stated that the key drivers of the merger were to have a sustainable water supply and to improve system resilience. In recapping the consolidation agreement, Tribett stated that 1) CFPUA would assume full responsibility for the water and wastewater systems; 2) Town customers would pay the same rates as CFPUA customers; 3) the Town's monetary contributions are capped; and 4) there would be a transition period. Tribett reviewed the transition process, including customer and personnel transition, the activities of the Utility Advisory Committee, regulatory coordination, property transfers and system integration.

Tribett provided a financial overview of the merger, noting that the Town had made a partial transfer of its reserves and that the State appropriation had been requested. Tribett updated the Board on the CFPUA rate adjustments, noting that all CFPUA customers would see an increase in usage rates beginning in July, with the Town implementing reciprocal increases. The cost drivers of the increase were aging infrastructure and overall cost inflation. Tribett outlined efforts made to reduce impacts on rates.

Upcoming actions included 1) completion of the transition period assessment; 2) customer outreach; and 3) completion of system integration projects.

Members of the Board expressed appreciation to Tribett and the CFPUA for their efforts to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Marketing Advisory Committee

The Board heard a presentation from Megan Buchbinder, VP of Marketing for Wilmington Convention and Beaches, who presented the FY25-26 marketing budget, as recommended by the Marketing Advisory Committee. Also present was Ryan Smith, Committee Chair. Buchbinder outlined the proposed \$1,046,512 budget and marketing plan and responded to questions from the Board. Upon motion by DeGroot, seconded by Partin and carried unanimously, the Board approved the FY25-26 Marketing budget.

PUBLIC HEARING

Brigman presented a review of the proposed FY25-26 Budget as presented at the 5/8/25 Board of Aldermen meeting. Prior to the presentation, Brigman expressed appreciation to the Board and staff for their work. Brigman noted that nothing had changed since his presentation at the 5/8/25 meeting. Topics briefly covered were fund accounting, quality of life concerns, the revenue neutral nature of the budget, the property tax rate decrease, the loss of sales tax revenues and revenues from the enterprise fund, capital funding, compensation & benefit improvements, new personnel requests, and changes to the fee schedule.

The Mayor declared the public hearing open at 6:15pm. Neal Braggi, 4 W. Henderson St., praised the budget process and stated that its execution was crucial. Braggi encouraged the establishment of departmental monthly dashboards to document the progress of budgeted items. There being no

other persons present who wished to speak, upon motion by Mills, seconded by Dull and carried unanimously, the Mayor declared the public hearing closed at 6:20pm. Members of the Board expressed appreciation to Brigman and the staff for the proposed budget and the budget process. Upon motion by Miller, seconded by Partin, and carried unanimously, the Board adopted Ordinance (2025) 664-B which consisted of the budget document in its entirety.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF AN ENTRY OF LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH ATLANTIC MARINE

Brigman presented a revocable license agreement covering the riparian buffer that extends beyond the end of Keel St., which would allow the licensee, Atlantic Marine, to utilize the buffer for mooring purposes. Richardson stated that the agreement did not constitute an easement, was revocable, and only covered boats being moored to the west of Atlantic Marine’s dock. Richardson recommended approval of the agreement. Mills expressed appreciation to the applicant for approaching the Town in the right manner prior to construction. Upon motion by Partin, seconded by DeGroot and carried unanimously, the Board approved the agreement, subject to the Attorney adding language regarding insurance limits contained in the draft.

CONSIDER ACTION REGARDING PROPOSED NCDOT MILITARY CUTOFF/EASTWOOD PROJECT

Prior to discussion of this item by the Board, Miller recused himself from the discussion, exiting the dais and taking a seat in the audience due to a conflict of interest regarding ownership of property located in the right of way for the project. Mills stated that, due to misinformation being circulated, he felt it would be advisable for the Board to request that DOT conduct a meeting for the citizens to provide information regarding the project and its impact on the Town. Upon motion by Dull, seconded by DeGroot and carried 4-0 (Miller having recused himself), the Board approved asking DOT to conduct such a meeting.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BUDGET ORDINANCE (2025) 665-B FUNDING THE PURCHASE OF A VEHICLE FOR PARKING ENFORCEMENT

Miller rejoined participation in the meeting at this point and took his seat at the dais. Brigman stated that Pivot Parking was requesting the Town purchase a 2021 Kia Soul for deployment of license plate reader cameras and software. Pivot Parking has acquired the vehicle and was requesting that the Town purchase the vehicle from them to become a Town-owned asset. Brigman stated that the Town currently owns all vehicles and equipment utilized by Pivot Parking, so this will allow the Town to maintain ownership of all parking assets. The existing license plate reader cameras, software, and equipment will be removed from the current electric vehicle and placed in the Kia Soul for more efficient utilization of the equipment. Brigman stated that the existing electric vehicle will remain in the fleet for parking ambassadors to utilize. Brigman stated that a budget amendment was being requested for \$18,000 to cover the costs of the vehicle purchase.

In response to a question from Mills, Brigman stated that the cost of the vehicle was \$14,000 plus taxes for a total cost of \$15,300. The request for reimbursement from Pivot was \$17,705 due to the costs of installing decals, lights and other items needed to place the vehicle in service. In response to a question from Mills, Brigman stated that, after researching the market price for a vehicle of that make, model and mileage, the price paid by Pivot was below market value.

In response to a question from DeGroot, Brigman stated that the Town had purchased an electric vehicle in 2024, at the request of Pivot, to serve the purpose which is proposed for the Kia Soul. However, once the cameras, hardware and software were installed in the electric vehicle, it was found that the electric vehicle battery had insufficient power to operate it for the purpose for which it was intended. Brigman stated that Pivot would bear the costs of transferring the equipment from the electric vehicle to the Kia Soul.

Also in response to a question from DeGroote, Brigman stated that it was not customary for a vendor to purchase a vehicle without prior approval and that Pivot had apologized for taking this action. DeGroote stated that he had requested a bill of sale for the vehicle, however he had not received it. DeGroote expressed his vehement disapproval of the process which had been followed by Pivot and questioned whether the proposed vehicle was appropriate for use in parking enforcement due to its potential for blocking traffic. DeGroote made a motion to not approve the request. After discussion regarding the possibility of researching the issue of whether this was the best solution for placing the equipment in use, Dull seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously. Brigman stated he would conduct further research and report back to the Board at the July meeting.

OTHER ITEMS AND REPORTS

- A. **Town Clerk Heater:** nothing to report.
- B. **Town Attorney Richardson:** nothing to report.
- C. **Town Manager Brigman:** nothing to report.
- D. **Alderman DeGroote:** nothing to report.
- E. **Mayor Pro Tem Miller:** recognize members of Scout Troop 213 who were present in the audience and stated that he would be issuing a response to an email circulated by Sue Bulluck regarding the Eastwood/Military Cutoff project.
- F. **Alderman Partin:** recognized Hartsell and the first edition of the Town Newsletter, “The Loop” and also recognized the item in the Wrightsville Beach Magazine regarding the Police and Fire Departments.
- G. **Alderman Dull:** supported Partin’s comments.
- H. **Mayor Mills:** commended the staff and Board for the budget process and thanked CFPUA for sharing information at the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk