

BOARD OF ALDERMEN MINUTES

AUGUST 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 Caroline Jinkins, Pastor, Little Chapel on the Boardwalk Presbyterian 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
Jason Bishop, Police Chief
Bailey Hartsell, Communications Manager
Brian Murray, Finance Director
Bill Fay, Public Works Director
Katie Carus-Childers, Parks & Rec. Director

Upon motion by Mills, seconded by Miller and carried unanimously, the Board added to the agenda Item 10, a closed session, in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3), to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Greta Barnes, 29 Lookout Harbor, expressed concern regarding the lighting installed at the new pickle ball courts with regard to their impact on the night sky. Barnes stated that the lights were turned off at 10pm and asked if they could be turned off at 9pm or earlier if there was inclement weather. Barnes also suggested lowering the height of the lights and their illumination power.

Hans Pruijm, 834 S. Lumina, suggested that there be two left turn lanes from Waynick onto Causeway Dr. to ease congestion.

CONSENT AGENDA

Prior to consideration of the Consent Agenda, the Board removed Items e and h for further discussion.

Upon motion by Miller, seconded by DeGroot and carried unanimously, the Board approved the Consent Agenda. It consisted of 1) approval of the open and closed session minutes of the 7-10-25 Board of Aldermen Meeting; 2) approval of recurring special events as recommended by the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee; 3) approval of a new special event as recommended by the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee; 4) acknowledgement of previously approved special events for September; 5) adoption of Resolution (2025) 2357 declaring a Police Department vehicle surplus and authorizing its sale on GovDeals; 6) adoption of Budget Ordinance (2025) 668-B funding reimbursable expenses relating to the Holiday Flotilla.

Regarding Item e, acknowledge Departmental quarterly reports for the months of April, May, and June 2025, Police Chief Bishop responded to questions from Partin regarding specifics of the Police Department's report. Regarding Item h, Acknowledge Receipt of CFPUA Transition Assessment Update, Dull noted that the merger between the CFPUA and the Town's water and sewer operations

was still scheduled for the implementation date of September 30 and expressed appreciation to all who had worked on the project. Brigman noted that the merger agreement called for both entities to conduct a third-party assessment of progress toward implementation and the report contained in the agenda packet met that requirement. Miller expressed appreciation to the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners for appointing him as a representative to the CFPUA Board. Brigman stated that the Communications Manager and staff were working to keep residents abreast of progress toward the merger. Matthew Tribbitt, of CFPUA, noted that the CFPUA would be conducting workshops in the Town prior to implementation to assist residents with establishing their accounts and to answer questions.

Upon motion by Partin, seconded by Mills and carried unanimously, Items e and h were approved.

PRESENTATION

The Board heard a presentation from Brian Estes regarding a proposal to renovate Lee's Nature Park and to rename it "Rilo Park at Lee's Nature Preserve" in honor of his late son, Riley. Carus-Childers noted that the proposal had been presented to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee on March 6, receiving unanimous support from the Committee. Estes stated the project would be fully funded by the RILO (Reasons I Live On) Foundation. It was noted that the Town leases a portion of the property from the Lee family for \$1 per year and that the Town maintains the property, which would continue under the redevelopment proposal. Estes presented a design proposal, created by WithersRavenel, which would rehabilitate the property to create a quiet place for reflection adjacent to the Loop. Estes stated that \$100,000 had been raised with the project, one-third of which had been used to fund the design work. Estes stated that the Foundation would be applying for grants to develop the property.

Brigman noted that a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town, the Lee family and the RILO Foundation was being developed and would be presented to the Board for approval at a later date. It was the consensus of the Board for the project to proceed.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – *None.*

CONSIDER ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION (2025) 2358 AMENDING THE TOWN'S PERSONNEL POLICY

Brigman presented amendments to the Town's Personnel Policy, many of which he stated were technical in nature and updated to reflect current practices, however, the changes also reflected changes to employee benefits approved in the FY25-26 Budget including improvements to longevity pay and an implementation of a paid parental leave policy. In response to a question from Mills, Brigman stated that the Town's practice was to check references for new hires, but that he and Human Resources Officer Tosha Campbell would review this issue to determine if language needed to be added to the Policy. Brigman noted that he and Campbell were looking at the Town's requirements for drivers license checks and that if changes were needed to the Policy in that area, he would include any recommended changes regarding reference checks. Upon motion by Partin, seconded by Miller and carried unanimously, Resolution (2025) 2358 was adopted.

OTHER ITEMS AND REPORTS

- A. **Alderman Partin:** reported that she had attended the Marketing Advisory Committee meeting, that the Town's ROT collections had increased .5% during FY25, and that \$2.254 million had been collected.
- B. **Alderman Dull:** expressed appreciation to Miller for joining the CFPUA Board and noted the importance of having representation from the Town.
- C. **Alderman DeGroot:** noted the passing of William Baggett, longtime resident and former co-owner of the former Blockade Runner resort, noting that he would be dearly missed.

- D. Mayor Pro Tem Miller:** 1) in response to the issue raised by Hans Pruim, noted that there was insufficient radius to have 2 turning lanes, however, when the Causeway Bridge is replaced, there should be adequate room; 2) thanked Partin for agreeing to serve as an alternate representative to the MPO; and 3) stated that as part of the Regional Intelligent Transportation System, the MPO would be looking into dynamic message boarding, which could provide real time traffic information as soon as next summer for the Beach.
- E. Town Manager Brigman:** 1) in response to resident concerns, the staff has been working with the Police Department to address issues relating to bar closing hours in the area of Oceanic St. and other areas; 2) planning staff is looking at changes that have been made to the parking lot at the corner of Oceanic St. and N. Lumina to address concerns relating to the changes; 3) staff has utilized the Town’s traffic consultant with regard to traffic calming measures on Island Dr., with consideration to making the intersection of Island Dr. and Cypress Ave. a 4-way stop; 4) the Town has asked DOT to look at the signalization of Causeway Dr., Waynick and N. Lumina for improvements; 5) working with DOT, the Town has been looking at what improvements could be made to Waynick and N. Lumina to improve traffic flow; 6) provided an update on the bridge replacement projects, noting that DOT has allowed for alternate delivery methods for the projects, including design-build, which will expedite the projects; 7) he is working with the Town’s parking consultant with regard to recommendations for changes to the next parking season; 8) stated that Access 1 once had a bathhouse and parking spaces and asked for guidance from the Board as to whether to pursue planning to improve that access, to which the Board responded affirmatively; and 9) expressed appreciation to Hartsell for the increasing interactions on social media, noting that in July, there were 188,000 interactions.
- F. Town Attorney Richardson:** nothing to report.
- G. Town Clerk Heater:** nothing to report.
- H. Mayor Mills:** nothing to report.

CLOSED SESSION TO CONSULT WITH AN ATTORNEY EMPLOYED OR RETAINED BY THE PUBLIC BODY IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE BETWEEN THE ATTORNEY AND THE PUBLIC BODY AS AUTHORIZED BY NCGS 143-318.11(A)(3)

At 6:31pm Dull made a motion to enter into closed session for the purpose of consulting with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body as authorized by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3). The motion was seconded by Partin and carried unanimously.

Upon motion by Dull, seconded by Mills and carried unanimously, the Board returned to open session at 6:59pm, with no action being taken as a result of the closed session.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk