

BOARD OF ALDERMEN MINUTES

JANUARY 20, 2026 9:00AM

TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM, 321 CAUSEWAY DRIVE, WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH

A duly-noticed special called meeting of the Board of Aldermen was called to order at 9:00am by Mayor Dull. The following were present:

Board of Aldermen

Ken Dull, Mayor
Jeff DeGroot, Mayor Pro-tem
Margaret Baggett, Alderman
Todd Schoen, Alderman
Vivian (Zeke) Partin, Alderman

Staff

Haynes Brigman, Town Manager
Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk
Matt Holland, Fire Chief
Jason Bishop, Police Chief
Bill Fay, Public Works Director
Evan Morigerato, Asst. Public Works Director
Bailey Hartsell, Communications Manager

BUDGET PLANNING SESSION

Brigman reviewed the agenda for the meeting which included follow-up discussion to current year issues, the 2026 parking season, capital improvement plan review, and budget priorities for FY26-27.

TENNIS/PICKLEBALL COURT LIGHTING

Brigman stated that in April 2025 the Town had completed the Tennis/Pickleball courts lighting project. Since then, the Town has received several complaints regarding the lighting from residents, particularly on Coral Drive. The Town has explored options, including lowering the lights, which is estimated to cost over \$250,000. After discussion, the consensus of the Board was to begin shutting off the lights at 7:00pm with the understanding that this could be changed in response to feedback from residents.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Brigman reported that the Town was exploring grant opportunities for funding of the multi-use path and a pedestrian crosswalk on Causeway Dr.

FLOTILLA DISCUSSION

Brigman reported that it was becoming increasingly difficult for non-profits to obtain liability insurance for events. Brigman stated that the Flotilla Committee had approached the Town last year and asked it to take over the Day in the Park and the fireworks display. The Board decided that it would not assume those tasks unless it was asked to take over the event entirely. The Committee decided to continue running the event, however, the Town is a major sponsor, contributing \$50,000 from its TDA allocation for the fireworks display. After discussion, the consensus of the Board was to remain with its current position.

SPECIAL EVENT DISCUSSION - BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

Brigman reported that the Bridge Replacement Committee would be bringing a recommendation to the Board regarding special events during the replacement process. It was the consensus of the Board to await the recommendation and the actual plan for construction prior to making any decision regarding future events.

BOARD OF ALDERMEN REGULAR MEETING DATES

There was a discussion regarding changing the day of the regular Board of Aldermen meetings from the second Thursday of each month to the second Tuesday. The Board decided to continue discussion of the possible change until its February meeting.

BRIDGE REPLACEMENT COMMITTEE

Due to the resignation of Brian Eckel, there existed a need for an appointment of a citizen representative to the Committee. Upon motion by Dull, seconded by Partin and carried 4-1 (Schoen opposed), the Board appointed Hank Miller to the Committee.

BRIDGE DESIGN

Brigman asked the Board if it desired to have aesthetic input into the design for the bridges to be replaced, stating that DOT would only fund its basic design and that the Town would need to fund any costs associated with design enhancements. It was the consensus of the Board that they were interested in such enhancements and that Brigman would further pursue the issue.

2026 PARKING DISCUSSION

The next set of issues discussed was the 2026 parking season and possible changes from the previous season.

PARKING SPACE REMOVAL

It was the consensus of the Board that Brigman's recommendation to remove 11 parking spaces on the east side of N Lumina between E. Salisbury St. and Mallard St. for public safety access and to remove 3 parking spaces on Waynick Blvd located at the three crosswalks for pedestrian safety be approved.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

Brigman reported that Pivot would be providing a new user interface as early as May that will provide real time parking data to users.

SIGNAGE UPDATES

Brigman noted that, should the Board make changes to parking rates or times, new signage would need to be provided and that there would need to be a lead time to make the changes. The estimated cost for decals and stickers to cover existing signage would be \$20,000 and would be \$30,000 for replacing existing signs with new signs.

PARKING METER REMOVAL

The Board concurred with Brigman's recommendation that obsolete parking meters be removed and that, where such meters were being used as signage, the signage would be replaced as needed. The estimated cost for this was \$20,000.

ENFORCEMENT DIRECTION

Brigman asked the Board to reaffirm its approach to parking enforcement, noting that the Town's approach has been complaint-driven rather than proactive. It was the consensus of the Board that the complaint-driven approach be maintained.

PARKING RATES

Brigman presented the following option for establishing variable parking rates:

Parking Classification	Current	Proposed Weekday	Proposed Weekend/Holiday
Non-premium hourly	\$5.00/hr.	\$3.00/hr.	\$6.00/hr.
Premium hourly	\$6.00/hr.	\$4.00/hr.	\$7.00/hr.
Non-premium daily	\$30.00/day	\$20.00/day	\$30.00/day
Premium daily	\$35.00/day	\$25.00/day	\$35.00/day

It was noted that weekends would include Friday-Sunday and that holidays would include the day before and the day after the holiday.

A second option presented, only in the event that the first option was not selected, would be to reduce the current daily rates from \$30.00 to \$25.00 for non-premium lots and from \$35.00 to \$30.00 for premium lots. Brigman stated that when the Town increased the daily rates it had seen a reduction of 15,000 transactions for the daily rate.

Other options presented were to have year-round paid parking and/or to change the hours at which parking was enforced.

The Board had a lengthy discussion regarding parking, including changes to the 2-hour free parking in the lots around Wrightsville Beach Park and Town Hall. The consensus was that any changes should be revenue neutral. Murray offered to do projections based on multiple scenarios and the Board agreed to continue the discussion at its February Board meeting.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Brigman reviewed the FY25-26 Capital Improvement Plan, noting whether items were completed, in progress, or on hold. One of the significant items was the renovation of Town Hall. Brigman reminded the Board that this project, as budgeted, was to be completed over a 3 year period due to restrictions regarding the value of improvements to the existing building that could be accomplished in any 365-day period for being a non-conforming structure located in a flood zone. Brigman recommended that the Board consider directing staff to have a master plan done for the entire municipal complex prior to embarking on the renovation of Town Hall. It was the consensus of the Board that Brigman proceed with the development of such a plan.

DISASTER RECOVERY FUND

Brigman reviewed the establishment of a Disaster Recovery Fund, which the Board had created in FY25-26, noting that \$10 million had been transferred from the General Fund to the Disaster Recovery Fund in order to 1) provide funds to cover immediate disaster recovery costs before FEMA/NCEM reimbursements arrive (which can take up to a year); 2) provide financial stability and flexibility to manage recovery efforts without disrupting the Town’s budget; and 3) ensure faster recovery for residents, businesses, and infrastructure following a storm. It is the intention of the Town to grow this fund to \$15 million over time, and then stabilize.

BRIDGE REVENUE STABILIZATION FUND

Brigman reviewed the establishment of a Bridge Revenue Stabilization Fund which the Board had created in FY25-26, allocating \$12 million transferred from the General Fund to this fund. The purpose of this is to: 1) offset anticipated revenue losses during bridge construction; 2) ensure budget stability by preparing for reduced income from parking, sales tax, and tourism-related activities; and 3) avoid service reductions or tax increases by proactively setting aside funds.

BEACH NOURISHMENT FUND

Brigman reviewed the establishment of a Beach Nourishment Fund which the Board had created in FY25-26, allocating \$1 million annually to provide funding in the event that Federal funds be unavailable for beach nourishment.

BUDGET PRIORITIES AND GUIDANCE

Brigman reviewed quality of life improvements contained in the FY25-26 budget including: 1) public safety personnel and service enhancements; 2) CFPUA water/sewer merger for improved service quality; 3) aesthetic improvements; and 4) multiple Parks & Recreation projects. In reviewing the Board's priorities for the upcoming year, Baggett expressed a desire to see further business district improvements and Schoen expressed support for a skate park. Brigman recommended that the Town begin the process of creating a strategic plan for the Town, which would involve a consultant and a public input process, which would help in guiding the future use of resources. The goal would be for the Town to have an updated Parks & Recreation Master Plan, a small area plan for the municipal complex, and an overall strategic plan.

BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

Brigman stated that NCDOT would be signing a contract with the selected contractor soon for the bridge replacement projects. After that time, Brigman and the Town's consultant, Chad Kimes, would meet with NCDOT to review the project schedule. It is believed that the project should have no impact on FY26-27, with the project beginning in Spring 2028, but that schedule could change.

BUDGET CALENDAR

Brigman stated that the goal would be to present a draft budget at the April Board of Aldermen meeting, with a public hearing on the budget to be held at the May meeting. The Board set budget work sessions on February 17, March 2 and March 24, all beginning at 9:00am in the Town Hall Conference Room. The Board agreed to move its April Board of Aldermen meeting from April 9 to April 14, beginning at 5:30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:33pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk