

# BOARD OF ALDERMEN MINUTES

MARCH 12, 2026, 5:30PM

TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 321 CAUSEWAY DRIVE, WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm by Mayor Dull. After the Pledge of Allegiance, the invocation was provided by Rev. James Connolly, Wrightsville Beach Baptist Church. The following were present:

## Board of Aldermen

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

## Staff

Haynes Brigman, Town Manager  
Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk  
Grady Richardson, Town Attorney  
Jason Bishop, Police Chief  
Matt Holland, Fire Chief  
Bailey Hartsell, Communications Manager  
Katie Carus-Childers, Parks & Rec. Director  
Tony Wilson, Director of Planning

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jim Chaffins, 10 W. Salisbury St., stated that under the current policy whereby the tennis and pickleball court lights are shut off at 7pm, those lights would only be used 6 months out of the year. Chaffins asked the Board to direct Town staff to explore options with other contractors to determine a long-term solution and asked that an ad hoc committee be appointed to attempt to come up with a compromise short-term solution to the problem.

Greta Barnes, 29 Lookout Harbor, stated that the tennis/pickleball court lights had adversely affected the views from her home and also cited detriments to migrating birds and on the night sky.

Watson Barnes, 29 Lookout Harbor, distributed photos to the Board and asked that the Board not consider extending the current 7pm shutoff time for the tennis/pickleball court lights. Barnes stated that property values could be negatively impacted due to the lighting.

Henry Hawthorne, 21 Lookout Harbor, stated the current lighting system was not in conformance with Town ordinances and stated that this could jeopardize the Town's ability to enforce those ordinances on other parties. Hawthorne asked that the hours not be extended and that the Board also consider the noise generated by court activity.

Warren Phillips, 24 Pelican Dr., asked the Board to reconsider its decision to turn off the tennis/pickleball court lights at 7pm and asked that the new court lights, which are lower than the rest, be allowed to remain on until 9pm. Phillips stated that pickleball was a healthy activity that benefits anyone participating.

Doug Wilson, 12 W. Salisbury St., spoke in favor of allowing dogs on the beach during the summer months, stating that it would improve the quality of life for residents, that every other beach community in North and South Carolina allows for some dog activity in the summer months, and that there were many solutions and remedies for the issue of dog waste.

Landis Holman, 16 E. Fayetteville St., spoke in favor of allowing dogs on the beach during the summer months.

Bobby Brandon, 12 Bermuda Dr., stated that the current dogs on the beach ordinance was old and outdated and that every beach community from N. Topsail Beach to the South Carolina line allows dogs on the beach year-round.

Wayne Bland, 4 Bahama Dr., spoke in favor of dogs on the beach in the summer, noting that enforcement is an issue. Bland suggested that the allowable time period for dogs on the beach be extended from September 10 through April 30.

Joanna Smothers, 6 Sand Dollar Ln., expressed concern regarding the impact of dogs on bird nesting areas at each end of the beach strand.

John McCloud, a Wilmington resident, noting the Planning Board recommendation and the Town Manager's agenda memo, expressed support for no change in the current dogs on the beach ordinance.

Lisa Prume, 834 S. Lumina, expressed concern regarding the difficulty of enforcing the existing dog ordinances, stating that she sees dog waste and unleashed dogs frequently. Prume stated she would support a change to allow dogs on the beach in summer from 6-9am if the ordinances could be enforced.

Neal Braggi, 4 W. Henderson St., expressed opposition to changing the dogs on the beach ordinance, citing the current problem with dog waste and concerns regarding sea turtle nesting season, which is May – November.

Anne Marie Campbell, 15 E. Oxford St., spoke in support of placing sand mats at selected beach access points.

Sue Bulluck, representing the Chamber of Commerce, 1) reviewed Chamber activities; 2) reviewed issues surrounding the Military Cutoff/Eastwood project and asked that the Town contract with Chad Kimes for consulting work on the project; 3) asked that the Town partner with the Chamber to petition the Governor and Secretary of Transportation to ask for a delay of the project until 2030; and 4) asked that the Town investigate the rumored formation of a Regional Inlet Management Commission.

Brice and Kelsey Barnett, 10 Marina St., spoke in favor of the Town putting forth an RFP for solid waste services rather than agreeing to an extension with the current vendor.

*Partin left the meeting at this point to attend to a competing obligation.*

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Upon motion by Baggett, seconded by Schoen and carried unanimously, the Consent Agenda was approved. It consisted of: 1) approval of the open session minutes of the 2-12-26 regular meeting, the 2-17-26 budget work session and the 3-2-26 budget work session; 2) approval of recurring special events; 3) acknowledgement of previously approved special events for April; 4) adoption of resolution (2026) 2367 approving the Southeastern North Carolina Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan; 5) acceptance of the annual report of the Planning Board, in accordance with Section 155.3.9 (F) of the Town Code.

### **CONSIDER EXTENSION OF SOLID WASTE COLLECTIONS CONTRACT**

Brigman stated that the Town currently utilizes Liberty Waste Solutions (formerly Wall Recycling) for curb-side solid waste collection for residential and commercial waste. The contract was awarded to Liberty Waste Solutions/Wall Recycling in 2022 after a competitive bid process was completed. The original contract is set to expire on March 31, 2027, with the opportunity for two (2) additional two (2) year extensions. The contract also allows the contractor to increase the contract costs annually based on national consumer price index changes, with a maximum of 3% annually. For the

years 2022, 2023, and 2024 the contractor made no CPI changes; however, a 3% CPI increase was implemented for the contract year 2025.

Brigman stated that the Town has received quality services from the contractor during the initial contract period and would like to continue the relationship with the contractor. The contractor has offered to forego any CPI increase for contract year 2026 if the Town were to extend the contract for two (2) years. Brigman stated that based on the current contract costs relative to market costs, the level of service provided by the contractor, and the ability to forego any CPI increase for contract year 2026, he recommended that the Board approve the available two (2) year extension, which would extend the contract to March 31, 2029. Upon motion by Dull, seconded by Schoen and carried unanimously, the Board authorized Brigman to execute the 2 year extension agreement.

**CONSIDER POSSIBLE CHANGES TO SECTION 91.12, “DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS PROHIBITED ON BEACH AND OTHER PUBLIC PROPERTY AT CERTAIN TIMES, PLACES” OF THE TOWN CODE**

Brigman stated that the Board of Alderman directed the establishment of a Working Group to discuss options related to allowances for dogs on the beach. The Working Group began meeting in November 2025 and consisted of six residents, two staff members (Town Manager and Park Ranger), one representative from the Audubon North Carolina Society, and one representative from the Sea Turtle Project.

Brigman reviewed the Working Group’s process as: 1) evaluating multiple options for expanding allowances for dogs on the beach; 2) comparing other beach community rules to determine what might work in Wrightsville Beach; 3) identifying the challenges and impacts of the current rules, and any expansion of those rules, has on the quality of life, environmental and wildlife habitats, cleanliness, and overall upkeep of the beach; and 4) discussion about pros and cons, enforcement challenges, and other solutions to improve rule compliance.

Brigman identified the following challenges that were considered: 1) current violations occur regularly, with 110 citations issued in 2025; 2) frustration from residents when violators are not caught; 3) any increased allowance for dogs on the beach will generate additional complaints and/or violations; 4) limited personnel to catch violators, who must be caught in the act; 5) large beach strand to cover; 6) Public Works staff remove dog waste daily (5-10 waste piles a day); 7) public health concerns with dog waste on the beach and in the water; 8) Federal laws impact enforcement; and 9) expectations versus reality.

Brigman reviewed the main options considered by the Working Group as: 1) make no changes to the current ordinance, which allows on-leash dogs anytime, except between April 1 – September 30; 2) expand the current season when dogs are allowed on the beach, for example, allowing dogs anytime from the Tuesday after Labor Day to May 1; 3) allowing dogs on the beach between the hours of 6am-9am during the current period of time when dogs are restricted (April 1 – Sept 30); and 4) allowing dogs on the beach year-round, outside the hours of 9am-6pm. Brigman reported that Option 3 was the preferred change of the Working Group, though it was not unanimous.

Brigman reported that the Planning Board reviewed Option 3 and voted 5-2 against the change. The Planning Board did not formally vote for or against any other changes or expansions to the ordinance.

The Working Group listed the following recommendations regarding administrative and enforcement for the Board’s consideration: 1) any change implemented would be implemented on a one-year trial basis; future action of the Board would be required to make the change permanent; 2) limit/restrict dogs from accessing vulnerable areas of the island to protect nesting and migrating birds (North of Access 2, South of Access 42); 3) increase the penalty from \$250 to \$500 for dog owners who violate the ordinance; 4) add dog waste stations and baggies at more beach accesses to

promote proper waste disposal; and 5) increase marketing efforts to educate the public on the rules and encourage residents to register their dogs with the Town.

Brigman stated that the staff was seeking direction from the Board of Aldermen on how to proceed and that a text amendment will be necessary before changes are implemented. Draft text amendments have been prepared by Planning staff, but edits and adjustments may be necessary to meet the desires of the Board.

The Board thanked Brigman, the Working Group and the Planning Board for their work on this matter. Baggett and Schoen noted that enforcement seemed to be the main problem with both the existing ordinance and any consideration of expanding the time in which dogs were allowed on the beach. Dull stated that he had received feedback from the Planning Board that they had only considered one option (the expansion to allow dogs from 6-9am in the summer months) but had not considered or discussed other options. After further discussion, it was the consensus of the Board that the issue be sent back to the Planning Board for further review.

**OTHER ITEMS & REPORTS:**

- A. **Alderman Schoen:** reported on attendance at the Ports, Waterways and Beach Commission meeting, noting that work would need to begin within the next year on renewing the permit for Mason's Inlet.
- B. **Alderman Baggett:** reported on attendance at the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee meeting, stating that the committee had met with a consultant who would be conducting a survey for the master plan update and that the committee recommended that previously approved projects be completed prior to starting new projects.
- C. **Mayor Dull:** reported on attendance at the WMPO meeting and noted that the Bridge Replacement Committee was scheduled to meet on 3/16 at 10:00am.
- D. **Town Manager Brigman:** reminded the Board of the Budget Workshop scheduled for 3/24 at 9:00am.
- E. **Town Attorney Richardson:** nothing to report.
- F. **Town Clerk Heater:** nothing to report.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lance G. Heater, Town Clerk