



Town of Beaufort, NC

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Beaufort Waterfront Operations & Finance Committee Meeting 1:00 PM Thursday, April 17, 2025 Train Depot, 614 Broad Street Minutes

Call To Order

Chair Sarah Spiegler called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Sarah Spiegler, Vice-Chair Paula Gillikin, Vic Fasolino, Ted Morris, Miriam Sutton, Steve Bishop, Craig Souza, Barry Slade, and Weymouth Tillett

Members Absent: Barry Slade, Dexter Matthews

Staff Present: Interim Town Manager Charlie Burgess, Public Information Officer/Deputy Clerk Rachel Johnson, Planning Director Kyle Garner and Assistant Town Manager Elizabeth Lewis

Agenda Approval

Agenda was approved by consensus.

Project Updates:

Beaufort Waterfront Plan Implementation Updates

Fuel Farm Update:

Charlie Burgess said that the Town will be moving on to the next company as the estimate provided by the committee's first choice for the Fuel Farm project was rejected by the Board of Commissioners. Burgess stated that there were no negotiations. He said not to panic as there were 4 submissions to the Fuel Farm RFQ and that there are options on how best to move forward and that he is currently in the process of seeking an initial conversation with another company. The goal is to put an estimate in front of the Board of Commissioners as soon as possible.

Committee members questioned Burgess on the willingness of the company to continue negotiations. Burgess said this was not an option and that everything ended on cordial terms. The subcommittee has been conducting research on the other options and is moving forward with interviews next month.

Finance Update:

Craig Souza provided a legislative and foundation update. He said everything was going well with the appropriation request. He said the process is complicated but that things are moving along. A budget is required by June 30, so there is still no certainty in what will happen.

Souza said what we can do is to say thank you for your support of Beaufort with a handwritten note. There was discussion of a weekly strategy.

Souza said the Beaufort Community Foundation's website is up and running along with a QR code and a

Facebook page. The first event is a kick-off party May 4 at Backstreet. Bowler added that this is a family-friendly event with games and food. The kick-off is the same weekend as the Wooden Boat Show.

Community Conversation Review: 4:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Discussion about the Community Conversation began with the general questions of what did we hear? What did we learn? Representatives from each of the tables was asked to speak about their experience.

1. Financing Options/Timelines
2. Beaufort Community Foundation
3. Marina Management
4. Current Project Status/Construction Options/Timeline
5. Future/Master Plan
6. Current Project Status
7. General Information

Vic Fasolino of the Construction Table said they were overwhelmed with people. He shared he found it hard to get a definitive answer from anyone on gasoline – no conclusive response. Mostly, the questions centered around what is the bigger picture? He found the timeline was helpful.

Weymouth Tillet of the Marina Management table said most people wanted to know where we are in the process. They expressed relief that we are looking for a concessionaire

Steve Bishop said the biggest question he received was, what are we going to do with the parking lot? He said people seemed to be split on whether to prioritize parking or a green space. The merchants want parking, and those who want greenspace have no connection to downtown.

Ted Morris said most people seemed to embrace the hybrid concept with pop-up pocket parks. Sarah Spiegler said the Duke Engage Intern students would be exploring this concept of a third space this summer.

Sarah Spiegler stated that people seemed pleased with the direction of the waterfront project and the biggest question she heard was about funding. How is the Town going to pay for it?

Becky Bowler and Dexter Matthews of the Finance Table said the atmosphere was positive and that people were excited about the possibility of an appropriation. They stated that they tried to manage expectations. People were excited to hear that the Town is pursuing grants for the project but also acknowledged that grants don't pay for everything.

Bowler said the timeline was useful in helping keep the conversations on track. Tillet added that it was mostly positive feedback and a lot of thankfulness.

Miriam Sutton of the Future Table said she could feel the anxiety. People wanted to make sure that Safe Harbor was not back and that it would be funded by revenues. She reiterated to people that it would not happen overnight.

Staff reported that there were several boaters currently docked at the Town Docks seeking information on the future of the Town Docks.

There were some questions about what the Town planned to do with 611 Front Street, about the potential for a Mooring Field, and about how the Town will handle pump-outs. There were suggestions of putting in a parking deck behind Truist Bank, adding more one-lane roads to increase the number of parking spaces, and concerns about the environmental impacts of having fuel tanks near the water.

Bowler shared the Community Foundation table found it a great opportunity to introduce people to their work,

sign them up and share the foundation's mission.

It was suggested that in the future there be more floaters to help between tables, to make sure people realize it is a drop-in meeting and not a full 2-hour meeting. Windy weather made it difficult to capture comment cards during the meeting.

Takeaways from the meeting include: We heard we are on the right track.

The committee asked staff to create an online survey for folks who didn't get to share their input. The survey will be open for 30 days.

There was discussion about creating QR codes to post around town for people to get more information on the project.

Next Steps/Wrap Up:

Sarah Spiegler discussed that after May, the BWOFF meeting schedule will change to once a month. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 16 at 1 p.m.

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 2:06 p.m.

Minutes by PIO/Deputy Clerk Rachel Johnson