



Town of Beaufort, NC
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Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
6:00 PM Monday, April 13, 2026
Train Depot, 614 Broad Street

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Harker called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

PRESENT:

Mayor Sharon Harker
Mayor Pro Tem Gillikin
Commissioner Matthews
Commissioner Cooper
Commissioner LoPiccolo

Absent: Commissioner Spiegler

Commissioner Gillikin made a motion to excuse Commissioner Spiegler from the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously with a (4-0) vote.

Agenda Approval

Commissioner Gillikin made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

The motion carried unanimously with a (4-0) vote.

Items of Consent

1. Meeting Minutes: March 9 & 23, 2026
2. FY 2026 Audit Contract
3. SUP Order for Case #26-03: 201 Ann St Accessory Dwelling Unit
4. Mutual Aid Agreement: Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point and Beaufort Fire Department

Commissioner Matthews made a motion to approve the Items of Consent as presented.

The motion carried unanimously with a (4-0) vote.

Proclamation

1. Line Worker Appreciation Day: April 18, 2026

Mayor Harker read the Line Worker Appreciation Day Proclamation, as included in the agenda packet, recognizing the men and women of the electrical line worker profession for their role in maintaining energy infrastructure and serving as first responders during storms and other catastrophic events. She proclaimed April 18, 2026, as Line Worker Appreciation Day in Beaufort and noted that the executed proclamation would be shared with the Town's energy partners to convey the community's appreciation.

Public Comment

Katie Statler, 233 Legacy Lane, Newport, NC, identified herself as Chair of the Carteret County Board of Education and addressed the Board as a parent of three students in the school system. She discussed the impact of School Resource Officers (SROs) at Beaufort Elementary and Beaufort Middle School—Officer Cunningham and Officer Latorella, respectively—whose positions are funded within the Town's budget. She referenced research indicating that schools with SROs experience lower rates of violence and crime and noted that officers spend a significant portion of their time on mentoring and conflict resolution. Ms. Statler shared feedback from students, teachers, and staff, noting that both officers contribute to a safe, supportive school environment, build strong relationships with students, and serve as positive representatives of law enforcement. She emphasized that a sense of safety is essential for student learning and thanked the Board for its continued investment in student and staff safety, acknowledging increasing budget demands.

Steve Norton, 115 Colony Point St, Beaufort Club, addressed the Board regarding the upcoming agenda item on a second access road for the Beaufort Club via Kevin Court and Highway 101, expressing appreciation that the matter was receiving attention. Mr. Norton recounted that in September 2024, the main entrance to the Beaufort Club was flooded, preventing residents from entering or exiting in standard vehicles, which prompted his initial outreach to the Board. He stated that he has continued to advocate for a second access point since that time. Mr. Norton requested that, if all parties agree the Kevin Court connection is a viable solution, the developer and Town consider designating it as a construction and service entrance for future building activity. He noted that the remaining homes to be constructed are located deeper within the community, farther from the primary Highway 70 entrance. He referenced a Beaufort Police Department traffic study from February that recorded more than 10,000 one-way vehicle trips exiting the community during that month, estimating approximately 20,000 total vehicle trips in and out. He suggested that a gravel road initially designated for service and emergency access would be an appropriate interim step, with paving to occur at a later time. Mr. Norton stated that the Beaufort Club now includes more than 100 homes and asserted that the community is not in compliance with the North Carolina Fire Code requirement for a second access point for developments exceeding 100 rooftops. He urged all parties to work toward a reasonable timeline for implementation and thanked the Board for its consideration.

Old Business

1. Beaufort Club Proposed Access: Kevin Court & NC-101

Planning and Inspections Director, Kyle Garner, introduced the item and provided background on the Beaufort Club development, including prior Board direction from the September work session to convert the Cedar Avenue access to emergency use only. He noted that the principal owner, Todd Saieed, was present to provide an update and present an alternative secondary access proposal.

Mr. Saieed provided an overview of the current status of the development, noting continued strong demand and recent approvals for additional residential lots within the Enclave phase. He also highlighted ongoing investment in amenities, including expansion of the Blue Heron restaurant and completion of new recreational facilities.

Mr. Saieed presented a proposal to establish a permanent, paved secondary access from Highway 101 through Kevin Court into the development, in lieu of constructing the previously required gravel emergency access road at Cedar Avenue. He explained that

the gravel road, estimated at approximately \$205,000, was intended to meet fire code requirements but would be limited to emergency use. As an alternative, he proposed contributing those funds toward roadway improvements within Beaufort Club if the Kevin Court connection were supported, and indicated a willingness to share in additional project costs if necessary.

Commissioner Matthews requested clarification on the financial commitment, specifically whether the \$205,000 represented a minimum contribution with a willingness to increase participation if project costs exceeded that amount.

Mr. Saieed confirmed this understanding and noted that final costs were still being refined.

Commissioner Matthews also referenced prior communication from residents regarding access concerns and asked about the anticipated timeline for implementation.

Mr. Saieed indicated that, with coordination and timely approvals, the project could potentially be completed within approximately 12 months.

Commissioner LoPiccolo acknowledged the Kevin Court option as a viable alternative but raised concerns regarding the delay in constructing the previously approved Cedar Avenue emergency access. He questioned why several months had passed without progress and emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum on required infrastructure.

Mr. Saieed explained that the timing was influenced by development sequencing, financing considerations, and finalization of the Enclave approvals.

Commissioner LoPiccolo stated that public safety remained the primary concern and expressed the need for clear requirements tied to the Enclave final plat, including a defined timeline, financial guarantees such as a letter of credit, and potential enforcement mechanisms if the road was not completed.

Town Manager, Matt Zapp, provided additional context, noting that staff had been actively working with the developer to address the secondary access issue. He shared that the Town's primary priorities were ensuring adequate police, fire, and EMS access and addressing roadway conditions within Beaufort Club, which had generated a number of resident concerns. Mr. Zapp discussed available funding for roadway improvements and ongoing efforts related to larger paving initiatives, and noted that staff would coordinate with legal counsel and the developer to evaluate options, including the use of escrow or a letter of credit.

Commissioner Gillikin asked whether any physical improvements had been made to the Cedar Avenue access since the September Board direction.

Mr. Saieed confirmed that no work had been completed to date but indicated that the gravel road could be installed if the Kevin Court option did not move forward.

Commissioner Cooper asked whether consideration had been given to utilizing both Cedar Avenue and Kevin Court, particularly in relation to construction traffic within the development.

Mr. Saieed acknowledged the concern.

Mr. Zapp clarified that the Cedar Avenue access was designed and approved as a gated emergency access and would not support regular or construction traffic without significant redesign.

Town Attorney, Arey Grady, outlined procedural considerations, advising that the most appropriate approach would be to incorporate the secondary access requirements into the Enclave final plat approval, supported by a performance guarantee, preferably in the form of a letter of credit. He also noted the need to address the timing gap between final plat approval and completion of the road.

Additional discussion occurred regarding the appropriate level of Board action at this stage. It was determined that formal action was not required, and that conceptual direction would allow staff, legal counsel, and the developer to proceed with refining the proposal.

Mr. Saieed noted the timing considerations associated with development activity and indicated that construction plans were progressing. He reiterated that the Cedar Avenue emergency access could be installed if necessary to meet requirements but expressed a preference for the Kevin Court option.

Mr. Zapp indicated that, based on initial discussions, a realistic timeline for completion of the Kevin Court connection would be approximately May 2027. He recommended that staff, legal counsel, and the developer continue working through the details and return to the Board with a formal proposal.

Following discussion, the Board reached consensus in support of pursuing the Kevin Court and Highway 101 connection as the preferred secondary access point. Staff was directed to proceed with due diligence and coordination with the developer and legal counsel to develop a formal proposal, including details related to project timing, financial guarantees, and conditions tied to final plat approval.

New Business

1. Resolution: Petition for Annexation of Pearl West Property (15.67 acres)

Town Clerk, Elizabeth Lewis, presented the item, explaining that The Cullipher Group had submitted a voluntary petition for annexation on behalf of property owner Roberta D. West and client Britt Development Company for portions of property located on Pinner's Point Road, totaling approximately 15.67 acres. She noted that the application materials were included in the agenda packet and clarified that this step in the process was limited to directing the Clerk to investigate the sufficiency of the petition, not a final decision on annexation.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to not proceed with the petition. He explained that the property is located along Gibbs Creek and expressed concern about protecting that area, as well as North River. He indicated that, without additional information regarding potential development plans, he was not comfortable moving the annexation request forward.

Commissioner Matthews asked Commissioner Cooper to elaborate on his concerns and sought clarification from the Town Attorney regarding the process. Specifically, he asked whether environmental considerations and development details would typically be addressed later in the annexation process and whether the Board would have additional opportunities to deny the request.

Mr. Grady explained that development details are not presented at this stage and that the annexation process is legislative in nature. He noted that, if annexed, the property would be subject to the Town's standard development review processes. He further advised that a rezoning application for the same property was scheduled to be heard by the Planning Board, which is not uncommon. He acknowledged that a development agreement could potentially address concerns related to development and environmental impacts, but those details would not be available at this stage. He confirmed that the Board retains full discretion at each step of the process and may vote to approve or deny the request.

Commissioner Gillikin spoke in support of the motion, noting the Board had previously stated its priority to focus development within existing Town limits. She also referenced ongoing concerns regarding sewer capacity and indicated that proceeding with the sufficiency review would require staff time without a clear path forward.

Commissioner Cooper reiterated his position, stating that he did not believe it was an appropriate use of Town resources to proceed with the annexation process if there was a

strong likelihood that the associated development would not ultimately be supported due to environmental concerns.

Mayor Harker called for the question and reminded the Board there was a motion on the floor by Commissioner Cooper to deny the resolution instructing the Clerk to investigate the petition for annexation.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Cooper, Commissioner Gillikin

Voting: Nay: Commissioner LoPiccolo, Commissioner Matthews

With the vote tied, Mayor Harker cast the deciding vote in favor of denial. She indicated that Town resources should be directed toward those in-town economic development priorities. She made clear her vote was not a reflection on the developer, whom she credited with developing smartly and wisely, but that the timing was not right given the town's existing priorities.

The motion carried with a (3-2) vote.

Manager Report

Mr. Zapp provided an update on several items.

He announced the hiring of Griff Barlow as Public Information Specialist and Matthew Pendergraph as Fire Chief, both expected to begin in early May.

Mr. Zapp provided an update on Beaufort Town Docks, including upcoming commercial dock improvements and recent operational adjustments to day dockage during the Easter weekend. He noted that staff and F3 Marina are working to clarify policies and improve communication moving forward.

He reported that the 100 block of Turner Street has reopened to traffic, with final work at the Turner/Ann Street intersection ongoing pending completion of utility work.

Mr. Zapp also provided an update on the Town's USDA water and sewer project, noting continued progress on underground infrastructure and upcoming roadway resurfacing efforts. He advised that some paving will be delayed until utility work is complete.

He further reported on the stormwater camera and cleaning project, noting that the work is nearing completion and has identified areas requiring repair.

Mr. Zapp concluded by encouraging residents to utilize the Town's communication platforms for updates and information.

Mayor/Commissioner Comments

Commissioner LoPiccolo thanked Town staff for their work and recognized the Tiller School Resource Officer. He noted the opening of the Farmers Market, the launch of fuel sales at the Town Docks, and encouraged patience with ongoing roadway construction, expressing optimism about the long-term improvements.

Commissioner Matthews reflected on his first months on the Board and shared appreciation for the opportunity to engage with the community, including a recent visit reading to a local elementary school class.

Commissioner Gillikin praised the Beaufort Minute video series, particularly an episode highlighting Public Works operations, and encouraged residents to follow the Beaufort Town Docks social media page for updates.

Commissioner Cooper thanked those in attendance and watching remotely. He noted constituent concerns regarding potholes, which have been communicated to staff, and encouraged residents to report issues to the Town Manager. He also expressed appreciation for the Town Manager's handling of the Easter weekend marina operations.

Mayor Harker thanked attendees and viewers, recognized recent community activity including the Farmers Market and holiday weekend, and welcomed incoming staff. She expressed appreciation for Town staff and the Board, and noted the completion of Turner Street paving as a significant milestone.

Closed Session

1. Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3) and 143-318.11 (a) (6)

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to go into closed session at 7:26 PM, pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3) and 143-318.11 (a) (6).

The motion carried unanimously with a (4-0) vote.

Adjourn

Commissioner Gillikin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 PM.

The motion carried unanimously with a (4-0) vote.

Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk