



Town of Beaufort, NC

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**Board of Commissioners Work Session
4:00 PM Monday, February 23, 2026
Train Depot, 614 Broad Street**

Call To Order

Mayor Pro Tem Gillikin called the meeting to order at 4:06 PM.

Roll Call

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk, called the roll:

PRESENT:

Mayor Pro Tem Gillikin
Commissioner Cooper
Commissioner LoPiccolo
Commissioner Matthews
Commissioner Spiegler

Mayor Harker joined the meeting a few minutes late.

ABSENT: None

Agenda Approval

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

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

Mayor Harker arrived to the meeting at 4:07 PM.

Items for Discussion and Consideration

1. Rejection of Bid: Stormwater Collection System Cleaning, Inspection, and Rehabilitation

Town Engineer Sam Bell explained that both the first and second agenda items related to the same stormwater project funded through a North Carolina Department of Public Safety Disaster Relief and Recovery Mitigation/Resiliency Directed Grant that the town received as a sub-recipient through Carteret County. Bell stated that

the town had explored various project options, with some not panning out, but was able to develop a bid package for inspecting and cleaning stormwater lines in the downtown area with repairs where feasible.

Bell recommended rejecting the sole bid because it exceeded the \$500,000 formal bidding threshold, making this a time-sensitive issue requiring board action. Mayor Harker confirmed the urgency and opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Cooper inquired about what had been removed from the original scope to address the cost overrun. Bell explained that all invasive repairs were eliminated from the second round of bids, including point repairs, line pipe replacement, and expensive excavation work. The revised scope retained inspection work, cleaning, and some non-invasive lining repairs.

Town Manager Matt Zapp provided additional context, explaining that the town received nearly \$530,000 in grant funds and was seeking the best utilization of these resources for stormwater repair. He described how the original bid language could have been interpreted to require contractors to fix every point repair encountered, leading to bids well over \$1 million against a \$500,000 budget. The contract was reworded to specify cost per lineal foot for camera work and cleaning, with any remaining funds available for identified point repairs up to the grant limit.

Commissioner Cooper sought clarification about the inspection zones, with Zapp confirming that the work would focus on areas with existing underground stormwater infrastructure, predominantly in the older parts of town near the historic downtown area, as opposed to areas with open ditches that can be visually inspected.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to reject the bid for the Stormwater Collection System Cleaning, Inspection, and Rehabilitation from Trader Construction Company received on January 20, 2026.

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

2. Award of Construction Contract: Stormwater Collection System Cleaning, Inspection, and Rehabilitation

Bell presented the results of the second bidding round, which reduced the project scope to ensure bids would come in below the formal threshold. The town received one successful bid under the threshold and staff recommended awarding the contract in the amount of \$463,229.40 to Trader Construction Company of New Bern for cleaning, inspection, and lining of stormwater infrastructure in the downtown area.

Commissioner Matthews asked what specific items were removed from the original bidding package. Bell reiterated that all invasive repairs including point repairs, line pipe replacement, and expensive excavation were eliminated, while keeping inspection work, cleaning, and non-invasive lining to provide a good assessment of the system condition and enable some repairs.

Matthews inquired whether the dropped work would be incorporated into future capital improvement plans. Zapp explained the grant's 100% funding and the town's efforts to maximize the \$530,000 allocation. He described how the revised contract

structure would allow completion of inspection and cleaning work, with any remaining funds applied to identified point repairs on a cost-per-location basis until the grant is fully utilized. Any additional repairs needed would be evaluated for inclusion in the capital improvement plan.

Zapp emphasized how time sensitive this project was, noting that contractor work needed to be completed by the County's deadline of June 30th and making the workshop session timing crucial for project success.

Commissioner Gillikin made a motion to approve the construction contract to hire Trader Construction Company for Stormwater Collection System Cleaning, Inspection, and Rehabilitation received on February 10, 2026.

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

3. UDO Project: Staff and Consultant Update

Town Planner Michelle Eitner introduced the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) project update and yielded her time to consultant Tyson Smith from White Smith Cousino planning firm. Smith provided a comprehensive overview of the Unified Development Ordinance project timeline and current status.

Smith explained the project background, noting the process began after adoption of the CAMA Plan with an RFP issued in 2020 for the Land Use Plan (LUP) and UDO. The town adopted the plan in 2023-2024, and White Smith Cousino was brought on to assess current Land Development Ordinances (LDO) through November 2024. The actual UDO drafting project kicked off at the beginning of 2025, coinciding with receipt of the state grant for the Resilient Coastal Community Program (RCCP).

The project follows a five-module structure, with Module 1 largely completed in 2025. Module 2 started in limited fashion, with Modules 2 and 3 expected to finish in 2026, and Modules 4 and 5 completing by the end of the following year.

Smith detailed key deliverables completed, including the coastal resilience overlay district ordinance funded by the state grant. This complex work included an impervious surface coverage evaluation of the community using sample sites to help decision-makers understand potential percentage requirements compared to existing development patterns. The landscape and tree ordinance was also addressed as part of Module 1's resilience focus.

Smith described the extensive community outreach conducted, including kickoff sessions, Beaufort Farmers Market presence, listening sessions at the Train Depot, and one-on-one stakeholder meetings with the development community. Tools used included informational boards and a dedicated website with community and UDO subcommittee sections containing all project documents, meeting records, and schedules. The project also included six board meetings, three planning board meetings, and eight UDO steering committee meetings to date.

Regarding current status, Smith explained that Module 2 work was limited to topics unaffected by Senate Bill 382 (the "down zoning bill") passed in December 2024. Staff identified elements that wouldn't implicate property use reductions to continue work without making legal judgments about the new legislation.

Commissioner Matthews sought clarification about the work stoppage, confirming that nothing tied to Senate Bill 382 compliance had been done since November 2025. Town Attorney Arey Grady confirmed that staff and consultants stopped work on anything potentially impacted by the down-zoning legislation pending further board guidance and direction.

Commissioner Spiegler asked for clarification about which UDO parts could proceed. Grady explained that consultants continue working on non-down-zoning impacted portions, with the need for board discussion about future module direction to be addressed in closed session.

No formal action was taken on this matter.

4. Cedar Street Speed Limit Review (Turner Street to Western Terminus)

Town Manager Matt Zapp presented a commissioner-requested review of Cedar Street speed limits. He explained that the section from Turner Street west to the terminus remains under NCDOT control, while sections from Turner Street toward Live Oak are under town control. The request involves asking NCDOT Division 2 to review the western section's current 35 mph speed limit for potential reduction to 25 mph.

Commissioner LoPiccolo requested supporting data including speed studies, accident reports, speeding citations, or injury records for the area.

Commissioner Gillikin explained that several complaints arose from marina users crossing the road to parking areas expressing safety concerns about vehicle speeds, particularly with the new Compass Margaritaville Hotel development and some GPS units directing traffic to the dead-end location of the old bridge. Gillikin stated that the marina and Compass Hotel were both in favor of a speed limit reduction.

Commissioner Cooper, a Cedar Street resident, supported the reduction while noting occasional speeding vehicles and increased safety concerns with the hotel opening and adjacent parking requiring pedestrians to cross Cedar Street.

Commissioner LoPiccolo raised enforcement consistency concerns, questioning whether spot speed limit changes create complications for Police Department enforcement and whether current speed limit enforcement might address the problem.

Commissioner Spiegler emphasized the educational value of posted speed limit signs, particularly for the short dead-end stretch where signage might effectively reduce speeds from visitors unfamiliar with the area.

Commissioner Matthews asked about NCDOT's review criteria for speed limit change requests. Mayor Harker referenced the resolution language addressing pedestrian safety enhancement, neighborhood livability improvement, and overall

traffic safety promotion. Town Manager Zapp shared experience from a similar NC-58 speed reduction request in Emerald Isle, explaining NCDOT's process requiring local government resolution support combined with their internal evaluation criteria. He emphasized that "speed limits do not reduce accidents; speed limits reduce the severity of accidents." Zapp noted the lack of existing crash data but characterized this as a proactive approach given the anticipated traffic changes from the hotel and the dead-end turnaround situation that may cause unsafe driving behaviors and expected NCDOT to be supportive of a reduced speed limit.

Commissioner Cooper suggested conducting a traffic study for additional data support. Police Chief Paul Burdette confirmed the department's capability to conduct speed studies using traffic monitoring equipment but cautioned that results typically show general speed limit compliance. He noted the road structure and proximity factors often create perceptions of higher speeds than actual measurements. However, he supported the reduction request given the terminus location and increased activity.

Mayor Harker emphasized the proactive approach benefits given impending hotel operations and ribbon cutting, preferring prevention over reaction to future incidents.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to pass the Resolution Requesting Review and Reduction of the Speed Limit on Cedar Street.

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

Before moving into a closed session, Mayor Harker provided time for Commissioner Cooper to share remarks about Black History Month. Cooper discussed the historical significance of Beaufort's Godette Hotel, which served Black travelers similarly to businesses listed in the Green Book travel guide, students, and Menhaden fishermen. He shared personal family history including his uncle's use of the Green Book for safe travel from New York through Virginia due to his interracial marriage, and his grandfather's experiences he had to endure being born into slavery. Cooper also acknowledged the recent passing of civil rights activist Reverend Jesse Jackson, who had visited New Bern.

Closed Session

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

Commissioner Gillikin made a motion to enter into a closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3) at 4:46 PM.

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

Adjourn

Commissioner Gillikin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 PM. The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

Jennifer L. Welborn, Deputy Town Clerk