



**Town of Beaufort, NC**  
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**Board of Commissioners**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**6:00 PM Monday, December 08, 2025**  
**Train Depot, 614 Broad Street**

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**Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Harker called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, inviting all to join her in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call**

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk, called the roll:

**PRESENT:**

Mayor Harker  
Mayor Pro Tem Cooper  
Commissioner Gillikin  
Commissioner LoPiccolo  
Commissioner Oliver  
Commissioner Spiegler

**ABSENT:** None

**Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

**Items of Consent**

1. Meeting Minutes: November 10, 2025
2. FY 2025 Audit Contract Amendment
3. Personnel Policy Amendment- Article V. Section 12: Drug and Alcohol Policy
4. Resolution: Issuance of Stormwater System Revenue Bond

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

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

**Public Comment**

There was none.

## Old Business

1. Adoption of Proposed F3 Marina Budget Ordinance, FY 2026 Fee Schedule and Budget Amendment #3

Town Manager, Matt Zapp, began the presentation by announcing that the Town anticipates assuming management control of the Beaufort Town Docks effective at midnight on December 31, 2025. He publicly thanked Lori Meehan of F3 Marina, Hunter Spittler, and the entire F3 team for their assistance over the past 60 days in preparing for the transition.

Mr. Zapp explained that a new enterprise fund had been established to ensure full transparency in the financial management of the docks. He noted that the proposed budget reflected the first six months of operational activity. He reminded the Board that, as a North Carolina municipal government operating on a fiscal year from July 1 through June 30, the Town would be midway through the fiscal year as of January 1. As such, the budget figures presented represented approximately 50 percent of an annualized operating budget.

Lori Meehan reviewed the proposed F3 Marina operating budget in detail, as included in the meeting packet. She explained that the pricing structure reflected extensive discussions held over several meetings regarding new annual customers, new commercial customers, existing commercial customers, and transient slip projections. Ms. Meehan stated that the proposed commercial operator rate was \$13.50 per foot annually, billed monthly, while new commercial or annual customers would be charged the market rate of \$16.00 per foot. She further explained that winter dockage would be set at \$10.50 per foot, replacing the traditional flat fee with additional charges. Electric fees would remain consistent with current rates and would include a 10–15 percent cushion to account for maintenance, water, and other utility costs.

Commissioner Cooper asked for clarification regarding the rental rate per foot, noting that the Board had previously discussed a \$10.50 rate.

Ms. Meehan confirmed that the \$13.50 rate reflected the recommendation of the Beaufort Waterfront Operations and Finance (BWOFF) Committee, explaining that earlier discussions had begun at \$10.50 per foot. She noted that existing commercial customers had expressed a willingness to pay the proposed rate and potentially more, but that staff and F3 were awaiting final direction from the Board. Ms. Meehan also reviewed the proposed fee schedule in detail.

Commissioner LoPiccolo requested clarification regarding day dock fees, specifically asking how a vessel arriving at 10:00 a.m. and remaining throughout the day would be charged.

Ms. Meehan responded that such a vessel would be charged the transient rate.

Commissioner LoPiccolo also observed that the proposed fee schedule did not distinguish between existing and new commercial operators.

Ms. Meehan clarified that the \$13.50 per foot rate applied exclusively to existing commercial operators, while any new commercial operators would fall under the annual market rate of \$16.00 per foot.

Commissioner Cooper inquired about the status of moorings located outside of the docks.

Ms. Meehan responded that F3 Marina did not have jurisdiction over the mooring field.

Commissioner Gillikin acknowledged that the need for moorings existed and remained an area of interest; however, he noted that the Town was not prepared to address the mooring field during the first year of dock operations.

Following discussion, the Board reached consensus to move forward with the commercial operator rate of \$13.50 per foot, consistent with the recommendation of the BWOFC Committee and as proposed in the meeting packet.

Commissioner LoPiccolo specifically thanked Robert Morris of Lookout Cruises and John Dickinson of Waterbug Tours, noting that both had reached out independently to express a willingness to pay the \$16.00 market rate. He stated that they understood the need for repairs and the associated operational costs. Commissioner LoPiccolo further emphasized the high demand for downtown slips, noting that inquiries had already been received without any formal advertising, with prospective customers expressing interest at market rates.

Commissioner Spiegler thanked Ms. Meehan and the F3 Marina team for their work in preparing the budget documentation.

Commissioner Oliver made a motion to approve the proposed F3 Marina operating budget and the corresponding budget ordinance for the Dock Enterprise Fund.

The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 5–0.

Commissioner Oliver then made a motion to approve the proposed fee schedule as presented, amending the FY 2026 Town of Beaufort Fee Schedule to include the updated Beaufort Town Docks fees for the period of January 1, 2026, through June 30, 2026.

The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 5–0.

Commissioner Oliver made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #3, transferring \$472,000 from the Waterfront Improvement Project Fund to the Town Docks Enterprise Fund for working capital.

The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 5–0.

### **Recognition of Outgoing Commissioner, Bucky Oliver**

Mayor Harper recognized Commissioner Charles “Bucky” Oliver for his four years of service to the Town of Beaufort, commending his dedication, preparedness, and thoughtful leadership. She highlighted his commitment to the community since moving to Beaufort and noted his consistent focus on advancing the Town’s priorities with care and diligence. Mayor Harper expressed confidence that, although his term was ending, Commissioner Oliver would continue to remain actively engaged in serving the community. She presented him with a token of appreciation in gratitude for his service and leadership.

Commissioner Cooper expressed his appreciation for Commissioner Oliver’s mentorship, particularly in financial and budgetary matters, noting the strong working partnership they developed during their shared tenure. He emphasized Oliver’s willingness to teach, collaborate, and ensure that Beaufort’s best interests remained the priority, and shared that his presence on the Board would be greatly missed.

Commissioner Gillikin thanked Commissioner Oliver for his analytical skills, attention to detail, and accessibility, noting his consistent willingness to provide guidance and mentorship regardless of differing viewpoints.

Commissioner LoPiccolo recognized Commissioner Oliver’s extensive community involvement, leadership, and commitment to Beaufort’s residents, highlighting the depth of institutional knowledge and relationships he brought to the Board.

Commissioner Spiegler expressed gratitude for Commissioner Oliver’s mentorship during her early tenure, noting the value of his experience, perspective, and leadership, and encouraged him to remain engaged with the Board and community.

## Administration of Oaths

1. Melvin Cooper, Commissioner Elect

Attorney and Public Notary, Jeffery Newton, administered the oath of office to Commissioner Melvin Cooper, who was returning for another four-year term. Commissioner Cooper repeated the oath, swearing to support and maintain the Constitution and laws of the United States and North Carolina, and to faithfully discharge the duties of his office as Commissioner for the Town of Beaufort.

2. Dexter Matthews, Commissioner Elect

Commissioner-Elect Dexter Matthews was unable to attend the meeting to be sworn in. Mayor Harker explained that he would take his Oath of Office at a later date.

## New Business

1. Budget Amendments for Pump Station #7

Finance Director, Christi Wood, presented two related budget amendments. She explained that Project Fund No. 67 for Pump Station #7 had been established using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The Town received a low bid of approximately \$1.5 million from Thomas Simpson Construction, which resulted in a funding shortfall of \$511,000.

Ms. Wood detailed the proposed funding source, noting that the Town currently has approximately \$5 million in unassigned fund balance. She explained that \$2.6 million of this amount is restricted under the Board's financial policy, representing approximately 50 percent of the Town's annual operating expenditures. As a result, the Town has approximately \$2.3 million available for appropriation. Ms. Wood stated that the requested \$511,000 would be appropriated from this available fund balance.

Commissioner Gillikin asked whether there were any other imminent needs for the remaining \$2.3 million in available fund balance.

Ms. Wood responded that Pump Station #7 represented the most pressing project at this time.

Commissioner LoPiccolo made a motion to approve the proposed budget amendments associated with Pump Station #7.

The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 4–0.

2. Award of Construction Contract - Pump Station No.7 Replacement Project

Town Engineer, Sam Bell, presented the construction contract award for the Pump Station #7 replacement project. He reported that four bids were received from responsible and responsive contractors, with Thomas Simpson Construction Company of Beaufort submitting the lowest bid in the amount of \$1,448,618. Mr. Bell noted that the firm has successfully completed numerous projects for the Town in the past and is a trusted local contractor.

Mr. Bell provided an overview of the project, including the location and condition of the existing pump station, which was originally constructed in 1969 and is located on the Carteret County school bus garage property. He explained that the station is currently operating above its design capacity and is vulnerable to inundation from high tides, storm events, and elevated groundwater levels.

The proposed replacement project will relocate the pump station away from the bus garage and include increased pump and wet well capacity, along with watertight compartments designed to reduce inflow and infiltration. Mr. Bell also described the service area supported by Pump Station #7, which includes areas north of Cedar Street and flows from Lift Station #10, serving the Maritime Education Center, Gallants Point, and West Beaufort Road.

Mr. Bell outlined the anticipated project schedule, noting that the Notice of Award is expected in December 2025, with a Notice to Proceed in January 2026. The contract includes 180 days for construction, with final completion anticipated within 210 days, targeting completion by summer 2026.

Commissioner LoPiccolo asked whether property-related matters with Carteret County had been resolved.

Mr. Bell confirmed they had.

Commissioner LoPiccolo expressed appreciation for the long-term collaboration and effort that led to the project's advancement, noting satisfaction with the use of experienced local contractors, including Thomas Simpson Construction and Hibbs Electrical.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to award the construction contract to Thomas Simpson Construction Company.

The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 4–0.

### 3. Mardi Gras 2026 Event Application

Jen Welborn, Community Engagement Director, presented a special event permit application submitted by the Beaufort Business Association (BBA) for the 2026 Mardi Gras Parade and Festival, scheduled for Saturday, February 21, 2026. She noted that the event date follows the Valentine's Day weekend, which is anticipated to support local businesses and downtown activity.

Ms. Welborn outlined the planning and coordination process, explaining that Town staff met with BBA representatives Kristen Prescott and Town public safety officials, including the Police Department, on November 17 to review logistics, safety measures, and proposed road closures. The Fire Department and Public Works Department also reviewed the application electronically and provided input.

She summarized the event schedule, noting that the festival would take place from late morning through the afternoon, with the parade occurring later in the day and a designated lineup period prior to the parade. Ms. Welborn reviewed the requested road closures, which include portions of Turner Street, Middle Lane, and the Craven Street parking lot for food truck use. She also described the parade route, which would travel along Front Street between Gordon and Orange Streets before continuing to Broad Street.

Ms. Welborn explained that parade-related road closures would be in effect during the parade lineup and procession, while other event-related closures would occur earlier in the day. She stated that food trucks would conclude operations in the early evening, with streets reopening later that evening as crowds disperse and public safety conditions allow.

Regarding alcohol service, Ms. Welborn clarified that the BBA would not sell alcohol directly for the event. Instead, permitted local vendors would be allowed to sell alcohol within designated areas, specifically the 100 block of Turner Street and Middle Lane, with restrictions in place to prevent alcohol from crossing Front Street.

Commissioner Cooper requested clarification regarding alcohol sales and the event date. Ms. Welborn confirmed the event would take place on February 21, 2026, and reiterated that alcohol sales would be managed by permitted local vendors, as opposed to the BBA, consistent with supporting local businesses.

Commissioner Cooper also raised concerns regarding the proximity of the event date to recent construction on Turner Street and expressed hope that the roadway would be fully suitable for the event.

Commissioner Gillikin asked for clarification regarding the location of food trucks and whether the area constituted public or private property. Ms. Welborn confirmed that food trucks would be located exclusively within the Craven Street parking lot, which is Town-owned property.

Ms. Welborn concluded by highlighting several safety and crowd control enhancements planned for the event. These include limiting parade participation to pedestrians and golf carts, with no full-size vehicles permitted, and the use of designated BBA representatives to assist with crowd management during the parade.

Commissioner LoPiccolo acknowledged the proactive crowd control measures and expressed appreciation for the planning efforts undertaken to address safety considerations given the anticipated attendance.

Commissioner Gillikin made a motion to approve the Special Event Application for Mardi Gras from the BBA as presented, including street closures and alcohol waivers.

The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 4–0.

### **Appointment of Mayor Pro Tempore**

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to open the floor for nominations of Mayor Pro Tempore.

The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 4–0.

Commissioner Cooper nominated Paula Gillikin.

With no other nominations forthcoming, Commissioner Cooper made a motion to close the floor for nominations.

The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 4–0.

By acclamation, Commissioner Paula Gillikin was appointed to serve as Mayor Pro Tem for the next two years.

### **Mayor/Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Spiegler thanked Commissioner Cooper for his service as Mayor Pro Tem and congratulated Commissioner Gillikin on the appointment.

Commissioner Cooper reflected on his two-year term as Mayor Pro Tem, noting that the role had been active and rewarding. He expressed appreciation to Jeff Newton for administering his oath of office and to Commissioner Oliver for assisting during the ceremony.

Commissioner Cooper also encouraged community support for local food pantries, noting increased demand during the holiday season and the ongoing impacts of recent economic challenges. He emphasized the importance of donating complete meal items to ensure families are able to fully utilize the food provided. He reflected on his service on the Board, acknowledging the opportunity to work closely with fellow commissioners over the past four years and expressing appreciation for the leadership and collaboration experienced during that time.

Commissioner Cooper thanked the citizens of Beaufort for their continued trust and support through his reelection and reaffirmed his commitment to serving the community with fairness, integrity, and accountability. He concluded by extending holiday well wishes and encouraging safe travels for all.

Commissioner Gillikin congratulated Commissioner Cooper on his reelection and recognized the long-standing contributions of Haywood Weeks to the Town of Beaufort, particularly his role in the development and stewardship of the Town Docks. She noted that the docks have been a longstanding and well-known asset within the community and credited Mr. Weeks with establishing a strong foundation that has positioned the Town for the upcoming transition in operations.

Commissioner Gillikin expressed her support and enthusiasm for the Town and F3 Marina assuming management of the docks beginning January 1, 2026, and acknowledged that this transition builds upon the careful stewardship and planning undertaken over many years. She also recognized Jeb for his leadership and reputation within the maritime community, noting his professional standing and the recognition he has brought to Beaufort beyond the local region. Commissioner Gillikin extended appreciation to Mike and other long-serving dock employees for their dedication and service. She concluded by extending holiday and New Year well wishes to Town staff, Board members, and the community.

Commissioner LoPiccolo expressed appreciation to the Beaufort Business Association for organizing the Mardi Gras event, noting both its positive economic impact and its contribution to community enjoyment. He also commended the Public Works Department for the Town's holiday decorations, recognizing the traditional and tasteful appearance they bring to downtown Beaufort.

Commissioner LoPiccolo welcomed newly elected Commissioner Dexter Matthews in his absence, acknowledging his commitment to family and expressing enthusiasm for his service on the Board. He also congratulated Commissioner Gillikin and recognized Commissioner Oliver as he concluded his term, thanking him for his service and emphasizing that his contributions to the Town would be long remembered.

Mayor Harker commented on the Town's holiday decorations, expressing appreciation for their visual impact and the festive atmosphere they create throughout Beaufort. She reflected on her December newsletter recognition of Haywood Weeks, acknowledging his long-standing vision and stewardship of the Beaufort Town Docks over more than four decades. Mayor Harker emphasized that his dedication and love for the Town helped establish the docks as a destination that has brought visitors from around the world and contributed significantly to Beaufort's identity and economy.

Mayor Harker welcomed F3 Marina and expressed the Board's collective support for a successful transition as the Town assumes dock operations beginning January 1, 2026. She noted the importance of the transition to the Town and conveyed confidence in the partnership moving forward.

Mayor Harker congratulated Commissioner Cooper on his reelection, welcomed Commissioner Dexter Matthews to the Board, and recognized the Beaufort Business Association and its leadership for assuming new responsibilities. She also congratulated Commissioner Gillikin on her appointment as Mayor Pro Tem. She expressed extensive gratitude to Town staff, recognizing their professionalism, responsiveness, and commitment to public service. She specifically acknowledged Town Manager, Matt Zapp, for his leadership and vision, as well as the Town's legal counsel for their consistent availability and support.

Mayor Harker also commended the Board of Commissioners for their preparedness, accessibility, and dedication to serving the community, and thanked Beaufort residents for their resilience and adaptability during periods of disruption. She announced that there would be no December 22 Work Session. Mayor Harker also noted that the annual Board of Commissioners Retreat would be held at the Beaufort Hotel on Thursday, January 29, and Friday, January 30, with both sessions open to the public.

## **Adjourn**

Commissioner LoPiccolo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 PM.

The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 4–0.

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Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

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Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk