Town of Beaufort, NC
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Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
6:00 PM Monday, August 10, 2026
Train Depot, 614 Broad Street

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Harker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk, called the roll.

PRESENT:
Mayor Sharon Harker
Commissioner Spiegler
Commissioner Matthews
Commissioner Cooper
Commissioner LoPiccolo

ABSENT: Mayor Pro Tem Gillikin

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to excuse Commissioner Gillikin from the meeting. The motion carried unanimously with a (4-0) vote.

Agenda Approval

Commissioner Matthews made a motion to amend the agenda by removing Case #26-15, 309 Pollock Street Rezoning from R-8 to TCA, and tabling the item to the September 14, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Items of Consent

1. Meeting Minutes: July 13 & 27, 2026
2. Ann Street Closure Request: Halloween 2026
3. SUP Order: Case #26-12 Special Use Permit (1507 Live Oak Street)
4. SUP Order: Case #26-18 Special Use Permit (1527 Front Street)
5. Arts in Beaufort “Menhaden Tales” Statue MOU

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

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

Public Hearing

1. Case #26-15: 309 Pollock Street Rezoning R-8 to TCA

   The item was tabled to the September 14, 2026, Regular Meeting.

Public Comment

There was none.

Old Business

1. Voluntary Annexation Applications/Resolution: Beaufort Crossing

   Commissioner Matthews made a motion to approve the proposed resolution instructing the Town Clerk to investigate the voluntary annexation applications for properties located at 401 Highway 101, 550 Highway 101, 374 Highway 101, and 388 Highway 101.

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

New Business

1. USDA Related Asphalt Paving Award

   Town Manager Matt Zapp presented a recommendation for the Board to award an asphalt paving contract associated with the Town's USDA construction project. He noted the significance of the project and the extent of construction activity that had occurred throughout Town over the previous 12 to 24 months. Mr. Zapp was joined by Stephen Reece of Rivers and Associates and Aldridge Forrester, representing the recommended contractor, Allen Grading Company.

   Mr. Zapp reported that the Town received five sealed bids for the project. Allen Grading Company submitted the lowest responsive bid in the amount of $2,558,000, while the remaining four bids ranged from approximately $3.1 million to $3.5 million. Due to the difference between the bids, staff met with the contractor to review and validate the assumptions included in its proposal. Rivers and Associates also conducted a comprehensive review of the bid documents and contractor references.

   Regarding project funding, Mr. Zapp explained that a portion of the contract would be funded through USDA project funds reserved for asphalt patching. The remaining amount would come from local reserve funds previously authorized by the Board in anticipation of the need for a local match.

   Commissioner Matthews asked about the significant difference between Allen Grading Company's bid and the next lowest bid, as well as the findings of the vetting process. Mr. Reece explained that the five bidders were generally comparable across most line items. The primary difference involved the costs associated with saw cutting and removing asphalt and concrete. Allen Grading Company has the equipment and capability to perform this work in-house, while the other four bidders anticipated subcontracting the work to other asphalt contractors, resulting in additional costs and contractor markups. Mr. Forrester was present to provide additional information regarding the company's bid and proposed work, if needed.

   Commissioner LoPiccolo commended the Town Manager, engineers, and contractor for their diligence in reviewing the proposal and ensuring the bid had been thoroughly vetted.

   Commissioner Matthews made a motion to award the asphalt paving contract to Allen Grading Company in the amount of $2,558,000.

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

   Following the vote, Mr. Zapp asked Mr. Forrester to provide an anticipated timeline for mobilization and completion of the project. Mr. Forrester advised that work was anticipated to begin in September following the Labor Day holiday and that the contract included a 90-day construction period, with the goal of completing the work by approximately Christmas.

Mr. Zapp further explained that the project schedule was intended to avoid disruption during the Labor Day tourism weekend. He noted that certain underground materials have an anticipated lead time of approximately four to six weeks, which could place full mobilization around mid-September. The goal is to achieve substantial completion before the Christmas holiday and before asphalt plants begin their seasonal maintenance shutdowns. He noted that the schedule would remain dependent upon weather conditions and any unforeseen circumstances that could affect construction.

2. Queen Street Stormwater Repairs & Resurfacing Recommendation

   Mr. Zapp presented a recommendation for stormwater and roadway repairs along the 100 block of Queen Street, between Ann Street and Front Street. He explained that the roadway in this area has experienced significant depressions and failures requiring repair. The proposed scope of work includes repairing the damaged underground stormwater line, slip-lining sections of aging pipe that will remain in place, and completing edge-to-edge milling and asphalt resurfacing to restore the roadway to an acceptable condition.

   Two contractor estimates were received for the project. Thomas Simpson Construction Company, a local Beaufort contractor, submitted the lowest estimate in the amount of $235,000.

   Mr. Zapp noted that during the Board's previous discussion of the project, staff was asked to evaluate other underground utilities within the same section of Queen Street to determine whether additional work should be completed while the roadway was under construction. Following that review, the Water Department identified valve work and other improvements needed within the project area. Thomas Simpson Construction Company provided an additional estimate of $40,800 to complete the water utility work.

   Mr. Zapp explained that the $235,000 contract would be funded through a combination of the Stormwater Fund and the asphalt replacement fund, with costs allocated based on the type of work performed and the next item on the agenda was the associated budget amendment.

   The additional $40,800 in water utility improvements would be funded through the Water and Sewer Department's current fiscal year maintenance and repairs budget.

   Mr. Zapp clarified that the $235,000 contract and corresponding budget amendment was the item requiring formal Board approval. The additional $40,800 in water utility work would be handled administratively through a supplemental change order or purchase order.

   Commissioner Matthews asked when construction was anticipated to begin if the contract was approved.

   Mr. Zapp explained that staff would need to coordinate a specific start date with Thomas Simpson Construction Company. He noted that staff would work to appropriately phase the construction and minimize impacts to businesses, residents, and visitors in the area, including Beaufort Grocery, the Inlet Inn, and nearby short-term rentals. Staff would identify a timeframe that would minimize disruption as much as reasonably possible and communicate the construction schedule to the public in advance.

   Commissioner LoPicollo made a motion to approve the Queen Street stormwater repair and resurfacing work as presented.

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

3. FY 2027 Budget Amendment #2

   Commissioner LoPiccolo made a motion to approve FY 2027 Budget Amendment #2.

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

For clarity and as presented in the meeting packet, Budget Amendment #2 provides appropriations for the Queen Street Stormwater Repairs and Resurfacing Project and the carryover of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG).

The Queen Street Stormwater Repairs and Resurfacing Project has a total cost of $235,000. Funding for the project will be allocated between the Capital Reserve Fund – Streets in the amount of $55,000 and the Stormwater Fund in the amount of $180,000.

The budget amendment also provides for the carryover of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant associated with the installation of Plymovent systems at both fire stations. The grant project was not completed in FY 2026; therefore, the remaining grant revenues and expenditures must be budgeted in FY 2027. Although the full project amount is not anticipated to be expended, the budget will remain consistent with the original grant award. The amendment includes a General Fund expenditure of $51,000, AFG grant revenue of $141,000, and a $90,000 reduction in appropriated fund balance to account for the difference between the remaining expenditure and grant revenue.

4. Case # 26-19 Final Plat - Enclave at Beaufort Club

Planning Director Kyle Garner presented the final plat for the Enclave at Beaufort Club, a proposed subdivision of a 25.93-acre tract into 84 lots, consisting of 79 single-family residential lots and five open space lots, located off Taylor Wood Drive. The applicant is Beaufort Investment Holdings, LLC.

Mr. Garner explained that the property is part of the original Planned Unit Development (PUD) approved in the early 2000s and was originally identified as Parcel B. In November 2024, the Board of Commissioners allocated 12,600 gallons per day of water and sewer capacity to the development. As part of that approval, the Board required a second point of emergency access through Cedar Avenue via Windswept and adequate open space prior to approval of the final plat. The final plat provides 2.02 acres of open space, exceeding the required 1.69 acres.

Mr. Garner advised the Board of an error in the staff report included in the meeting packet. The report included only the $143,000 bond amount associated with the water infrastructure and inadvertently omitted approximately $800,000 associated with the street improvements. The developer also included a contingency of approximately 7.97%, resulting in a total bond amount of slightly more than $2.1 million. Mr. Garner provided the correction for inclusion in the official record.

Regarding the required emergency access, Mr. Garner reported that the roadbed between Cedar Avenue and Windswept had been installed and tested by the Fire Department, including access by a fire apparatus. The gate arms and gates had also been installed; however, the electrical connection necessary for operation of the gate system remained incomplete. The developer anticipated approximately two to two and one-half weeks to complete the electrical work.

Due to the outstanding gate work, staff recommended conditional approval of the final plat, with the condition that the plat not be signed and the financial bond not be accepted until both the Police and Fire Departments had successfully tested and approved the electrical operation of the emergency access gate.

Mr. Garner noted that the subdivision ordinance provides 60 days following Board approval to obtain all required signatures, which would allow sufficient time to complete and test the gate system.

Mr. Garner also advised that the developer proposed providing the required financial security through an insurance company rather than a standard letter of credit. He noted that the Town generally does not utilize this form of financial security and that the 60-day period would provide an opportunity for legal counsel to review the bond language prior to acceptance.

Commissioner Cooper asked about the status of a second public vehicular access point into the broader Beaufort Club development, separate from the emergency-only access at Cedar Avenue. The applicant's representative, Mr. Hutchinson, explained that a second public access road was not a condition of approval for the Enclave final plat. The required improvement associated with the Enclave was the Cedar Avenue emergency access, which had been installed. He indicated that an additional public access point would be associated with future phases of the Beaufort Club development.

Commissioner Cooper recalled previous discussions regarding the need for a second entrance and exit for general vehicular traffic due to traffic flow concerns and questioned whether the additional access had previously been contemplated as an existing need rather than solely a requirement associated with future development.

Mr. Garner reported that staff had been in communication with attorneys representing a potential property seller regarding an additional access point. He advised that the developer's team, represented at the meeting by Steve Saieed, was actively pursuing a second access through a southern connection to Highway 101. Mr. Garner confirmed that Mr. Saieed had contacted the appropriate legal representatives in an effort to advance that process.

Commissioner Cooper expressed appreciation for the update and noted that Beaufort Club residents had expressed interest in the additional access point for some time.

Commissioner LoPiccolo asked about the procedures for operating the emergency access gate during a declared state of emergency, including who would be responsible for opening the gate and how long it would remain open.

Mr. Garner explained that this was the first emergency access gate installation of its kind for the Town and that a formal standard operating procedure had not yet been established. He advised that staff would work with public safety leadership, the Town Manager, and legal counsel to develop appropriate procedures.

Mr. Zapp explained that under normal operations, the gate would be activated by emergency vehicle sirens. In the event of a power outage or failure of the automatic system, Fire and Police personnel would have access to a keyed manual override. He agreed that procedures specific to declared emergencies or disasters would need to be developed.

Mayor Harker asked for clarification regarding operation of the gate during a loss of electrical power.

Mr. Zapp confirmed that emergency personnel would be able to manually open the gate using the keyed override system.

Commissioner Spiegler asked whether the financial security included all required infrastructure and improvements associated with the development, including sidewalks, streetlights, utilities, streets, and related improvements.

Mr. Garner confirmed that all required improvements were included in the bonded amount.

Commissioner Spiegler expressed support for staff's recommendation that no final signatures be placed on the plat until the emergency access gate was fully operational and had received the required approval from public safety personnel.

Commissioner LoPiccolo made a motion to approve Case #26-19, Final Plat for the Enclave at Beaufort Club, contingent upon final installation and successful operation of the emergency access gates at the Cedar Avenue emergency access, confirmation of successful testing by the Fire and Police Departments, and completion of legal counsel's review and approval of the bond instrument.

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

5. Rock the Docks First Fridays - Fall and Spring Events

Community Engagement Director Jen Welborn presented a proposal to expand the Town's Rock the Docks live music series into the spring and fall shoulder seasons through a new Rock the Docks First Fridays concert series.

Ms. Welborn provided an overview of the recently completed Summer Rock the Docks series, which included 12 scheduled events between May 21 and August 6 at John Newton Park. Eleven events were successfully held, with one canceled due to weather. The free, family-friendly series featured a variety of musical genres and attracted residents and visitors of all ages. More than $26,000 was raised through sponsorships, allowing the series to be fully self-sustaining and cover associated costs, including entertainment, giveaways, and the Town's new mobile stage.

Ms. Welborn also reviewed the results of a survey distributed to downtown businesses following the summer series. Thirteen businesses responded, with 10 indicating support for continuing Rock the Docks and three remaining neutral. No respondents opposed continuation of the series. Similar support was expressed for spring and fall events. While survey responses reflected interest in varying event frequencies, Ms. Welborn explained that staff believed a monthly schedule would be the most practical approach for the shoulder seasons.

The proposed Rock the Docks First Fridays concert series would consist of five events held on the first Friday of September, October, November, April, and May. The May event would transition into the regular summer Rock the Docks series. Events would generally follow the existing format from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at John Newton Park, including use of the western parking lot and mobile stage. Staff anticipated that sponsorships would allow the additional events to remain financially self-sustaining.

Commissioner Cooper expressed support for expanding the series and commended Town staff and the Fire and Police Departments for their work throughout the summer. He asked whether improvements could be made to sound coverage, particularly for attendees located farther from the stage.

Ms. Welborn explained that performers had provided their own sound equipment during the summer, resulting in some variation in sound quality. She shared that staff was exploring the possibility of acquiring an in-house sound system with additional speakers.

Commissioner Matthews expressed support for the proposal and noted the positive economic activity generated by the events for the downtown area.

Commissioner LoPiccolo expressed support for the community atmosphere created by the series and asked whether the business survey indicated differences in the impact on restaurants and retail establishments.

Ms. Welborn explained that the survey identified businesses by general location rather than business type. Feedback suggested that proximity to the event had some impact on the level of increased activity, although no responding business reported a decrease in activity. She noted that staff was considering ways to better engage businesses throughout the downtown area in future events.

Commissioner LoPiccolo also asked about feedback received from event attendees. Ms. Welborn reported that overall feedback had been very positive, including from visitors who discovered the events while already visiting Beaufort.

Commissioner Spiegler asked staff to consider the workload associated with expanding the series following the demanding summer schedule.

Ms. Welborn acknowledged the staff commitment required for the weekly summer events but indicated that a monthly spring and fall schedule would be more manageable.

Mayor Harker asked about lighting and pedestrian safety during the fall and spring events, particularly as daylight hours become shorter.

Ms. Welborn advised that the mobile stage is equipped with lighting and that parking lot lighting would also be available. Staff agreed to ensure adequate lighting was provided to support pedestrian safety during the events.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the Rock the Docks First Fridays events as presented, including the alcohol waiver for John Newton Park, closure of the western parking lot, and the five proposed event dates for fall 2026 and spring 2027.

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

6. Proposed Fence/Wall at Randolph Johnson Park

Community Engagement Director Jen Welborn presented a recommendation for installation of a low masonry wall at Randolph Johnson Park. The proposal resulted from previous Board direction for staff and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) to evaluate safety improvements for the playground area due to its proximity to Carteret Avenue. PRAB reviewed the proposed wall and voted unanimously to recommend the option to the Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Welborn presented a rendering of the proposed wall, which would be designed to complement the existing masonry wall surrounding the splash pad area. The wall would follow a curved alignment along the sidewalk between the playground and Carteret Avenue, with openings maintained at sidewalk access points. The design would preserve the open character of the playground while creating a physical barrier between the play area and the roadway. The wall would also provide additional seating for parents and caregivers near the playground. The existing Beaufort statue would remain on the street-facing side of the wall and continue to be visible from Carteret Avenue.

The preliminary estimated cost of the project was approximately $15,000.

Commissioner Spiegler expressed strong support for the proposal and discussed the safety concerns associated with the proximity of the playground to Carteret Avenue, particularly because equipment intended for younger children is located closest to the roadway. She noted that the proposed wall would provide both a physical safety barrier and convenient seating for parents and caregivers adjacent to the toddler play area.

Mayor Harker expressed support for the proposal and noted that the physical barrier would provide an additional safety measure for young children using the playground.

Commissioner Cooper asked whether the project could be completed by Town staff or would require a contractor. Ms. Welborn advised that the work would need to be contracted.

In response to a question regarding the anticipated construction schedule, Public Works Director Mark Eakes advised that installation could be completed within approximately three weeks.

Commissioner Spiegler made a motion to authorize Town staff to move forward with the proposed wall installation at Randolph Johnson Park.

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

7. Carteret County- Beaufort Airport Authority Appointment

Mayor Harker explained that the Town of Beaufort is responsible for appointing one representative to the Carteret County-Beaufort Airport Authority for a two-year term. The current Town-appointed representative, Charles “Bucky” Oliver II, had a term set to expire on August 31, 2026. Four individuals submitted applications for consideration: Charles “Bucky” Oliver II, John Provenzano, Barry Slade, and Susan Stalling.

Mayor Harker opened the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Cooper nominated Charles “Bucky” Oliver for reappointment.

No additional nominations were made.

Charles “Bucky” Oliver II was reappointed by acclamation to the Carteret County-Beaufort Airport Authority for a two-year term.

Mayor Harker thanked Mr. Oliver for his continued service.

Manager Report

Town Manager Matt Zapp provided an update on the Campen Road widening project. He reported that work had begun to widen the roadway from approximately 20 feet to 23 feet between CVS and Carraway Drive, bringing that section into alignment with the width of the remainder of Campen Road.

Mr. Zapp noted that the widening was generally intended to occur along the even-numbered side of the street. However, an approximately 18-inch deviation would be necessary near the Campen Road and Carraway Drive intersection to address safety considerations.

Mr. Zapp thanked the Board for its continued support and advised that staff would continue moving the project forward as directed.

Mayor/Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Cooper recognized former Finance Director Christi Wood for her service to the Town and wished her well in her new position with Carteret County.

Commissioner LoPiccolo had no additional comments.

Commissioner Matthews thanked the Board and community for their congratulations on his appointment to the North Carolina League of Municipalities Legislative Policy Committee. He noted the importance of state and local government relations and expressed his commitment to representing local government interests through the committee’s legislative policy work.

Commissioner Spiegler thanked those attending the meeting in person and online and reminded the public of the upcoming joint Board of Commissioners and Planning Board Work Session on August 24, which would include an opportunity for community input. She also recognized the recent passing of Carteret County EMS Director Dale Griffin, extended condolences to his family, and thanked Town staff involved in the rescue response.

Mayor Harker thanked Town staff for their continued work and shared positive feedback received from attendees of the North Carolina Association of Zoning Officials conference regarding the appearance and cleanliness of Beaufort. She welcomed Interim Finance Director Julie Anderson and thanked her for assisting the Town during the transition. Mayor Harker also congratulated Commissioner Matthews on his appointment to the League’s Legislative Policy Committee and expressed support for the continuation of Rock the Docks. She concluded by encouraging the community to support back-to-school supply needs and reminded motorists to use additional caution as students and school buses return to the roadways.

Closed Session

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

   Commissioner Cooper made a motion to enter into Closed Session pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes § 143-318.11(a)(3).

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

   Following the Closed Session, the Board returned to Open Session. No formal action was taken by the Board.

Adjourn

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

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

Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk