



Town of Beaufort, NC

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Beaufort Waterfront Operations & Finance Committee

1:00 PM Thursday, June 12, 2025

Train Depot, 614 Broad Street

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 1 p.m. by Chair Sarah Spiegler.

Roll Call

Present: Chair Sarah Spiegler, Vice Chair Paula Gillikin, Miriam Sutton, Craig Souza, Mike Bradley, Steve Bishop, Weymouth Tillett & Barry Slade

Vic Fasolino listened via Zoom.

Members Absent: Dexter Matthews, Becky Newton Bowler, Ted Morris

Staff Present: Town Manager Matt Zapp & Public Information Officer Rachel Johnson

BOC Members Present (non-committee members): Bucky Oliver

Agenda Approval

Agenda approved by consensus with the addition of approval of the May minutes.

The May 2025 minutes were approved by consensus with the addition of Paula Gillikin, Sarah Spiegler and Mayor Sharon Harker to the list of committee members noted in the minutes.

Items for Discussion and Consideration

Project Updates

1. Marina Management

Barry Slade said the fact that the Board of Commissioners (BOC) vote was not unanimous was a little disheartening. Paula Gillikin gave clarification by stating that the Town is not walking away from moving forward and that everyone is very much working towards having a contract in place for the BOC to review at their July 14, 2025 Regular meeting. The Town is moving forward with negotiations with F3 for Marina Management.

2. Fuel Farm

The BOC agreed that diesel fuel is a critical component of the docks. The goal is to have diesel fuel tanks installed by April 1, 2026. There are some questions regarding funding and timing of this project. Town Manager Matt Zapp said that the expectation is that the fuel sales will offset the payment. Sarah Spiegler

updated that the Town is working with the LGC to make sure everything is in place and following proper procedures as the borrowing of money beyond certain thresholds triggers the need for their involvement. Zapp explained the Town is bound by different legal obligations than an individual and that the Town was pursuing traditional borrowing options with a 60 month payment. Initial cost estimates were just now in the works.

Sarah brought up the idea of ordering the tanks in advance and said that it is extremely risky to do so. Zapp said that is not a financially viable option for the Town. The issue to work through is that the tanks have an extended lead time from purchase to delivery date. Zapp stated that if someone else purchased the tank and donated the tank to the Town, then it takes pressure off of the Town. If the donor takes the risk, it takes the Town out of the equation. However, the Town will also need a place to store it until it is ready for installation.

Craig Souza asked for clarification as to why we need to buy a tank before we are ready to place it. It was explained that there is a 26 week lead time and other items still need to be completed to include: soil sampling, boring, design placement, CAMA and DEQ permitting all of which will take 90-120 days. The Town must follow the North Carolina procurement rules.

Steve Bishop said he had a donor who was willing to pay for the tank if it didn't work out - someone who will secure the payment on the tank. Zapp said we as a Town can not do that. It will take until at least September for us to get everything in order.

Mike Bradley asked if above ground tanks could initially be used. Barry Slade said this creates a larger foot print for the containment area. The committee was not in favor of utilizing above ground tanks for a variety of reasons from safety to impeding the view.

Zapp stated that our (Town's) goal is to get it accomplished. We have to meet established rules and regulations. The Town can not move forward without proper procurement.

Sarah Spiegler asked what Plan B would be.

Zapp said that if the Town isn't able to complete everything in the desired timeline, they could consider temporary above ground tanks and/or to potentially lease the current infrastructure if that is a possibility.

Barry Slade said if we can procure a tank, we can engage Oaks. (Oaks timeline for installation and the ordering of the tank to meet the April 1 install date is the biggest impediment at this time)

Sarah Spiegler said the BOC had all of the facts on the table and discussed it. They asked staff to move forward. Staff has been moving forward. Zapp mentioned the availability for the geo tech work was still unknown at this time.

3. Duke Engage Presentation: Third Spaces

Duke Engage students Connor Ennis and Gianna Rodriguez presented a report on their research to the committee. Ennis and Rodriguez have been working with the Town on a project to investigate Third Spaces in terms of usage and opportunity specific to the boardwalk area, John Newton Park and the parking lot where the fuel tanks are being discussed for placement.

At the conclusion of their presentation, they were asked if they were available to conduct even more in-depth research.

4. Legislative Update

Craig Souza said the legislative process is moving along. There wasn't an official update at this time.

New Business

The next meeting is scheduled for 1 p.m. July 9, 2025.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned by consensus at 2:25 p.m.

Chair

Board Secretary