



**Town of Beaufort, NC**

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**Beaufort Waterfront Operations & Finance Committee**

**1:00 PM Thursday, December 4, 2025**

**Train Depot, 614 Broad Street**

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**Call To Order**

The meeting of the Beaufort Waterfront Operations and Finance (BWOFF) Committee was called to order by Paula Gillikin, Vice Chair.

**Roll Call**

**Members Present:** Vice Chair Paula Gillikin, Miriam Sutton, Craig Souza, Mike Bradley, Weymouth Tillett, Barry Slade, Vic Fasolino, and Dexter Matthews

**Members Absent:** Chair Sarah Spiegler, Becky Newton Bowler, and Ted Morris

**Staff Present:** Assistant Town Manager, Elizabeth Lewis and Finance Director, Christi Wood. Lori Meehan with F3 Marina attended virtually.

**Agenda Approval**

There was a consensus to approve the agenda as presented.

**Minutes Approval**

Mr. Souza made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. All voted in favor of the motion.

**Duke Students Presentation: Third Spaces**

Duke University students presented findings from their "Third Spaces" study focused on John Newton Park in Beaufort. The study included approximately 58 hours of observational data collected between October and November and three in-person surveys with 190 respondents. Key findings included:

- The most common park activities were passing through the park (approximately 60%) and sitting (approximately 20%).
- Parking lot usage peaked during Friday and Saturday afternoons.
- Survey respondents expressed strong interest in increased shade, seating, and preservation of waterfront views.
- Additional interests included expanded green space, children's amenities, and the return of "Rock the Dock" events.

The students agreed to provide a PDF of their presentation and summary data for distribution.

## **Items for Discussion and Consideration**

The Committee reviewed the proposed budget recommendations from the last meeting, November 20, 2025. Ms. Meehan discussed the commercial operator rate recommendations, which included a fee of \$13.50 per foot beginning January 1, 2026, increasing to \$16.50 per foot in January 2027. It was confirmed under this model, new commercial operators would be required to pay \$16.00 per foot upon entry starting January 1, 2026. In regard to winter dockage, a rate of \$10.50 per foot per month, with a 50-foot minimum and electric service included, was discussed. The group did not recommend any changes to the proposed budget and noted that staff and F3 Marina had done a great job composing it.

## **Project Updates**

The Committee discussed dock and pier insurance coverage, several members noted that the current operator had not carried dock insurance for approximately 48 years. Vice Chair Gillikin reminded the group that coverage is being pursued in response to concerns raised by the Board of Commissioners regarding liability exposure.

Staff indicated that detailed insurance information, including premium allocations between liability and docks/piers coverage and deductible amounts, would be provided at a later date. Hurricane preparedness measures were also discussed, including dock clearance requirements during named storms and procedures for removing vessels if necessary.

Updates were provided on the MarinaGo and Dockwa platforms. Ms. Meehan shared that approximately 800 customers are currently registered, allowing for targeted communications beginning January 1, 2026. She also noted that a preview of the new website will be shared with Town staff and the Committee for feedback on formatting, graphics, and descriptive content. Town staff emphasized the importance of clear communication regarding transient dockage rates and the criteria supporting any rate changes to avoid confusion for visiting boat captains.

The Committee reviewed operational updates related to the transition to new marina management. Ms. Meehan confirmed she will remain on-site through January to support onboarding and training of the new General Manager.

Ms. Lewis indicated the fuel farm installation was on schedule and set to begin in during the first part of January 2026.

## **Next Steps/Wrap Up**

Vice Chair Gillikin asked that staff provide the Committee with detailed insurance policy information, including a breakdown of liability coverage versus docks and piers coverage, as well as applicable deductible amounts. Ms. Meehan also shared F3 planned to distribute a Constant Contact newsletter to approximately 800 existing customers on January 1, 2026, announcing Beaufort Town Docks operations and outlining the reservation process.

Vice Chair Gillikin shared she and Chair Spiegler will work together to develop and finalize the BWOF meeting schedule for the coming year and will notify Committee members once dates are confirmed.

## **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 PM.