



Town of Beaufort, NC

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Beaufort Waterfront Operations & Finance Committee Meeting 1:00 PM Thursday, April 4, 2025 Train Depot, 614 Broad Street Minutes

Call To Order

Chair Sarah Spiegler called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Sarah Spiegler, Vice-Chair Paula Gillikin, Vic Fasolino, Dexter Matthews, Miriam Sutton, Steve Bishop, Craig Souza, and Weymouth Tillet

Members Absent: Ted Morris

Staff Present: Interim Town Manager Charlie Burgess and Public Information Officer/Deputy Clerk Rachel Johnson, Town Manager Matt Zapp

Agenda Approval

Agenda was approved by consensus.

Minutes Approval

1. March 20, 2025 Minutes were approved by consensus without any changes.

Project Updates:

Beaufort Waterfront Plan Implementation Updates

Marina Management RFPs Update:

Sarah Spiegler stated that 4 applications had been submitted by the Feb. 28, 2025 deadline for Marina Operator RFQ. The review committee is scheduled to meet on April 2.

Barry Slade shared his optimism about the 4 applicants stating that all 4 are very capable entities. The selection committee is currently researching the applicants and scheduling meetings.

The Marina Management review group consists of Weymouth Tillet, Barry Slade, Steve Bishop, Sarah Spiegler, Paula Gillikin, Charlie Burgess, Christi Wood, and Elizabeth Lewis.

Finance Update:

Dexter Matthews stated that he had met with Senator Sanderson last week about the Senate Bill. He said the House Bill is still to come and that it may come in the form of a direct request to leadership as it is an economic

development type request. Matthews said the Beaufort Business Association provided a letter of support. At this time, we are not encouraging citizens to submit letters of support, but rather to thank them for what they are doing for Beaufort and to express how important this project is to the community.

Harbor Line:

Matthews shared that he participated in a meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers about the possibility of extending the harbor lines to the dock lines. He said the Corps is in the process of a potential change and that this does not impact a potential mooring field.

Ferry Service Contract & Other Commercial Dock Leases:

Paula Gillikin stated that a contract had been signed with Island Ferry Express to continue ferry service operations from Beaufort to the National Park Service areas of Shackleford Banks and Cape Lookout. The lease is 10 years. The contract included allocations for reporting data to the Town and potential renovations of the dock. Gillikin explained the Town will have data on the numbers of passengers per day, how many are walk-ups and how many booked online and more.

She explained provisions were built into the lease for renovations and that if both the Town and George Aswad of Island Ferry Express mutually agree, the operation can move to Gallants Channel during the 10 year lease. The lease is flexible on this point and if the Town renovates the current dock, they will assist in finding somewhere for the ferry operations to be while the work is undertaken and then move them back when complete. This only applies to the National Park Service Concessionaire boats and not other boats operated by the business. The commercial operators will need to work with the new marina management company. This contract is unique between the Town and Island Ferry Express, the concessionaire for the National Park Service.

There were questions about existing dock leases with commercial operators. All of the leases are held by the current dock operator. Interim-Town Manager Charlie Burgess explained that some of them are month-to-month. Vic Fasolino asked if they end when the current operator leaves or if the Town has to honor them. Fasolino said the committee should be a part of the conversations. Sarah Speigler said that will be a part of the contract negotiations.

Becky Bowler said she would like to see the Town have uniformity with all contracts. Discontent was expressed over the length of the 10-year lease. It was explained that the 10 year lease is required by the NPS.

Community Conversation: 4:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Miriam Sutton presented a timeline that had been prepared for the upcoming Community Meeting. The committee reviewed it and approved moving forward with it.

Rachel Johnson presented suggested materials for input and review for conversation starters at each table. The review took approximately 30 minutes, and staff was given the go-ahead to prepare the materials for the meeting with the below tables/topics:

1. Financing Options/Timelines
2. Beaufort Community Foundation
3. Marina Management
4. Current Project Status/Construction Options/Timeline
5. Future/Master Plan
6. Current Project Status
7. General Information

Each station will have a timeline, comment cards, and additional information available.

Next Steps/Wrap Up:

Sarah Spiegler discussed that after May, the BWOFF meeting schedule will change to once a month. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 17 at 1 p.m.

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 2:48 p.m.

Minutes by PIO/Deputy Clerk Rachel Johnson