



Town of Beaufort, NC

701 Front St. - P.O. Box 390 - Beaufort, N.C. 28516
252-728-2141 - 252-728-3982 fax - www.beaufortnc.org

Beaufort Waterfront Operations & Finance Committee Meeting 1:00 PM Thursday, May 29, 2025 Train Depot, 614 Broad Street

Call To Order

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

Roll Call

Committee Members Present: Commissioner Sarah Spiegler - Chair, Commissioner Paula Gillikin - Vice-Chair, Steve Bishop, Mike Bradley, Vic Fasolino, Dexter Matthews, Ted Morris, Becky Newton Bowler, Barry Slade, Miriam Sutton, Weymouth Tillett

It was noted that Town Manager Matt Zapp, Former Interim Town Manager Charlie Burgess, Craig Souza, and Mayor Sharon Harker were attending virtually.

Commissioners Bucky Oliver and Melvin Cooper were in attendance in the audience.

Staff Present: Rachel Johnson, PIO, and Elizabeth Lewis, Assistant Town Manager

Agenda Approval

Agenda approved as presented.

Agenda Approval

1. April 4, 2025 & April 17, 2025 Minutes

Minutes were approved with one addition to the April 17, 2025 minutes to include Barry Slade as in attendance.

Project Updates

1. **Duke Engage Internship - Third Spaces**

Sarah Spiegler provided an update on the Duke Engage internship project focusing on third spaces. She explained that the idea came from a presentation at the 2025 Main Street Conference about the importance of gathering spaces within the downtown context. The project aims to explore how parks and town amenities can support the community, with a focus on the west parking lot.

Two Duke Engage interns will be working with the town for about 6 weeks, conducting a scoping project. They have already begun collecting data, with initial findings showing that 400 people passed through the boardwalk section in a 2-hour period on a Sunday afternoon. The interns plan to present their findings to the Parks and Rec Board next week and to the committee at the next meeting.

Sarah also mentioned that the interns will analyze the Waterfront survey, which received 22 paper surveys and 97 digital surveys. She thanked everyone for sharing the survey with their networks.

2. Legislative Update

Dexter Matthews provided an update on the legislative appropriation. He reported that the House budget passed last week with the same level of spending as the Senate for the upcoming fiscal year starting July 1, totaling \$32.6 billion. The following fiscal year's budget is set at \$33.3 billion. Dexter noted that there are differences between the House and Senate budgets, particularly regarding teacher and state employee raises, as well as individual tax reductions. He emphasized the importance of reaching out to stress the importance of funding for the town's projects. Dexter also mentioned the possibility of grant money from the State Employees' Credit Union Foundation. However, the foundation requires 18 months of operation, so the Beaufort Community Foundation would need to wait about a year before applying. Paula Gilliken suggested this grant be added to the committee's grant list.

The committee discussed the ongoing effort of writing weekly letters to Representative Cairns and Senator Sanderson. Weymouth Tillet volunteered to write the next letter.

3. Marina Management

Barry Slade presented the Marina Management Review Committee's recommendations for selecting a marina management company. The committee included Barry Slade, Steve Bishop, Weymouth Tillet, Sarah Spiegler, Paula Gillikin, Mayor Harker, and Town Staff. The committee evaluated four applicants based on the criteria outlined in the Request for Proposal (RFP) and conducted interviews with two finalists. Slade said it was a very strong applicant pool and that the committee considered everyone, including the one local applicant. The criteria was assessed for each applicant and it was a very objective process.

The committee unanimously recommended F3, a division of Founders 3 Real Estate Company, to manage the Beaufort town docks. Slade highlighted F3's experience in municipal marina management, their understanding of the long-term view required for municipal marinas, and their commitment to community integration.

Key points about F3 included:

- 40% of their portfolio consists of municipal marinas
- Strong experience in transitions and plug-and-play services
- Commitment to hiring locally
- Track record of 100% contract renewals (with one exception where the lack of dredging prevented access to the harbor)
- Positive feedback from reference checks

The committee proposed seeking Board of Commissioners approval to begin contract negotiations with F3 for a 3-5 year term beginning January 1, 2026, with a transition period starting no later than October 1, 2025.

The committee recommended by unanimous consensus to recommend F3 as the marina management company for the Beaufort town docks and seek Board of Commissioners approval to begin contract negotiations.

4. Fuel Farm Installation

Sarah Spiegler provided an update on the fuel farm installation project. The town received a cost estimate from Oaks Grading, the second company that submitted an application for the project. The committee discussed the timeline for installation, considering either the first quarter of 2026 or 2027 to avoid disrupting the busy summer months.

Key points discussed included:

- Funding and permitting requirements
- Potential environmental remediation
- Design and final use of the west parking lot
- Data considerations for fuel sales
- Possible need for a backup plan, such as a one-year lease with Gear Brothers

Steve Bishop highlighted Oaks Grading's recent successful project in Morehead, completed in 75 days. The committee discussed the importance of moving forward with the project, given the 26-week lead time for tank delivery.

The committee reached a unanimous consensus to recommend moving forward with Oaks Grading and presenting this recommendation to the Board of Commissioners at the June 9 meeting. They also discussed the need to address funding sources and potential contingency plans.

5. **Army Corps Pier Line**

Dexter provided an update on the Army Corps of Engineers' pier line project, stating they had approved the submitted map. He explained the Town already had a letter from the Corps allowing them to rebuild to the existing footprint in the case of major storm damage.

Project Updates

The committee agreed to present the marina management recommendation and fuel farm installation proposal to the Board of Commissioners at the June 9th meeting. They acknowledged that the meeting would be lengthy due to the budget hearing as well.

1. Next Meetings

BOC Regular Meeting - 6 p.m. Monday, June 9

BWOF Meeting - 1 p.m. Thursday, June 12

The committee was encouraged to attend the Board of Commissioners meeting on June 9th at 6 pm to support the recommendations being presented.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Chair

Deputy Clerk