



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

**Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
6:00 PM Monday, May 12, 2025
Train Depot, 614 Broad Street**

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

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

Roll Call

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk, called the roll.

PRESENT:

Mayor Harker
Mayor Pro Tem Cooper
Commissioner Gillikin
Commissioner LoPiccolo
Commissioner Oliver
Commissioner Spiegler

ABSENT: None

Agenda Approval

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

Items of Consent

1. Meeting Minutes: April 14 & 28, 2025

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

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

Old Business

1. Petition for Annexation- 2303 Highway 70; Certificate of Sufficiency

Ms. Lewis presented the initial findings regarding the petition for voluntary annexation of 2303 Highway 70 Beaufort. She provided background on the petition submitted by Current County Government on February 20, 2025. She noted the property in question is a 41.08-acre vacant tract currently in the ETJ, zoned R20, and within an X flood zone. She highlighted potential impacts, including an increase in emergency service call volume and

potential future staffing needs. She noted if annexed, the property would not generate tax revenue as it is owned by a government entity. The sewer allocation request associated with the proposed usage would require 24,000 gallon per day usage, representing about 2% of the total capacity.

Ms. Lewis confirmed that she completed the investigation of the petition and found it met the necessary requirements, therefore presenting the Certificate of Sufficiency. She recommended the Board set a public hearing date for June 9, 2025, on the question of annexation.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to set the 2303 Highway 70 Annexation Public Hearing for June 9, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

2. Draft UDO Vision Statement Revisions

Ms. Eitner, Town Planner, presented the revised draft of the UDO vision principles and goals statement. She explained that the purpose of the document was to establish general directives for the drafting process, not to pin down specific policy decisions. She noted that full adoption of the UDO is not expected until late 2027.

The Board of Commissioners discussed three proposed revisions to the document as presented by Ms. Eitner.

- For item #1 in the goals section, the board unanimously agreed to use the revised language as presented: "Align future growth and public services with the capacity of existing and planned infrastructure, both built and natural, to support a thriving and resilient community".
- For item #2, in the goals section the board unanimously agreed to use the revised language as presented: "Expand the availability and diversity of housing options that are attainable for those who live and work in Beaufort, with a focus on supporting year-round residents and the local workforce".
- For item #3, alternatives for UDO Goal #6, there was extensive discussion about the Non-Intensification Zone (NIZ) and how to word the goal. The Board of Commissioners expressed various concerns about the extent of the NIZ, potential future changes to its boundaries, and the need for flexibility in development. After discussion, the board reached a consensus to use "Option D" of the proposed revisions to be able to move forward, with the understanding that this language may be revisited during the detailed drafting process to ensure the Board is satisfied with the final product. Option D was a proposed revision developed by the UDO Steering Committee at their April 16th meeting. It was presented as follows, "Focus growth, new infrastructure, and expansion of existing infrastructure outside of the Non-Intensification Zone".

Mayor Harker noted the need for additional education on the NIZ, such as reviewing maps and specific locations that fall within the classification. The board also briefly discussed other sections of the vision statement, with Commissioner Oliver raising questions about public engagement, equal consideration of all communities, developers and demographic representation in the process. Ms. Eitner acknowledged that much of the outreach and engagement work was yet to occur as part of the UDO development process and they were focused on the guiding principles and goals at this time. Commissioner Oliver recommended that goal number four be revised to add, "to the neighborhood or area", as the term context-appropriate needs more clarity.

3. FY 25 Budget Amendment #4

Christi Wood, Finance Director, presented FY 25 Budget Amendment #4, explaining that it involved changes to the general fund and stormwater fund. For the general fund, there was an overall decrease of \$413,176, including a decrease in grant revenue, an increase in sales and service revenue from the sale of fire apparatus, and an increase in other

revenue from a donation. For the stormwater fund, there was a decrease of \$294,815 for a grant that was budgeted in the project fund.

Commissioner Gillikin made a motion to approve FY 25 Budget Amendment #4 as presented.

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

4. Beaufort Waterfront Operations and Finance Committee Update

Commissioners Spiegler and Commissioner Gillikin provided updates on the Beaufort Waterfront Operations and Finance Committee (BWOFF). They reported on a successful public engagement event held on April 15th, which was well-attended with over 100 participants. They mentioned an ongoing online survey open until May 23rd for additional public input. The Commissioners also provided updates on a \$12 million legislative appropriation request for the waterfront project, plans for installing Town owned fuel tanks in the west parking lot, and reported interviews were being conducted for potential marina management companies. They emphasized the BWOFF's focus on making the waterfront Beaufort-centric and incorporating community feedback. The next BWOFF meeting was announced for May 16, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. in the Train Depot.

Public Comment

Ethan Lewis: 604 Beaufort Manor Drive, Beaufort, NC 28516

Mr. Lewis spoke about Municipal Code section 90.12, which he believed negatively affects the homeless population in Beaufort. He asked for the code to be considered for repeal, arguing that it was unjust and cruel. Mr. Lewis expressed concerns about criminalizing homelessness and the potential consequences of fines for those unable to pay.

Ally Kristen: 444 Meeting Street, Beaufort, NC 28516

Ms. Kristen, representing a group of concerned citizens, requested help in preserving an old growth live oak tree at 406 Live Oak Street. She presented arguments for keeping the tree, including its historical and environmental value, and suggested alternatives for the proposed development that would allow the tree to remain.

Rusty Quate: 119 Gallants Point Rd, Beaufort, NC 28516

Mr. Quate asked what 2% of capacity represents in relation to the sewer allocation request coming forth for 2303 Highway 70. He also inquired if the Town's sewer pipes were adequately sized to handle the additional flow.

New Business

1. Proposed FY 2026 Budget

Matt Zapp, Town Manager, presented a high-level review of the current budget data ahead of a work session scheduled for Thursday, May 15, 2025. He shared the revenue neutral tax rate was \$0.29. He noted that while the rate is set based on current best data (as of May 5), actual collections may vary due to appeal outcomes and lagging adjustments. The number will evolve, but \$0.29 is the most accurate pre-June 30 estimate. To meet the proposed needs identified by staff, a tax rate of \$0.33 was recommended for FY26. Mr. Zapp provided a red line list showing prioritized items and potential cuts to reach different tax rate scenarios. It was noted that all calculations were made under the assumed collection rate of 98.55%.

The Board expressed appreciation for the detailed information provided and shared they were looking forward to the upcoming work session to dive deeper into the budget specifics.

2. Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan Adoption

Ms. Eitner presented the Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan for adoption. She explained that this cooperative regional plan is updated every 5 years in accordance with FEMA requirements. The plan establishes a vision and guiding principles for reducing hazard risk and proposes specific mitigation actions.

Commissioner Spiegler, who served on the committee creating the plan, praised the document and noted its relevance to the ongoing UDO update process.

Commissioner Spiegler made a motion to adopt the Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan and associated resolution as presented.

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

3. Case #25-02; 406 Live Oak Street Mixed-Use Site Plan

Ms. Eitner presented the site plan review for a mixed-use development at 406 Live Oak Street. The plan included one mixed-use building with ground floor commercial units and three rental apartments on the top floor. The site plan included parking, landscaping, and other required elements. A significant point of discussion was the removal of a large live oak tree on the property.

The applicant, Vic Fasolino, explained the challenges of preserving the tree given the site constraints and development plans. In his presentation, he detailed the landscaping plans, which included planting numerous new trees and plants.

After extensive discussion and questioning of the applicant, the Board expressed their desire to preserve trees in the Town but also shared understanding of the applicant's position and reason to remove the existing trees.

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the site plan for Case #25-02 with the condition of planting one live oak and one native tree on Live Oak Street. The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

4. Case #25-08 - Front Street Village Phase III Site Plan

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to excuse Commissioner Oliver from the consideration of Case #25-08.

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

Mr. Garner, Planning Director, presented the Front Street Village Phase III site plan, which included 14 townhome units and two commercial structures. He noted that the plan was consistent with the original PUD approved in 2008.

The applicant, Mr. Oliver, clarified that the townhomes would not be used for short-term rentals and expressed hope that they could be offered to hotel employees at an attractive rate.

Commissioner Gillikin made a motion to approve the site plan for Case #25-08 as presented.

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

Manager Report

Mr. Zapp provided an update covering various topics such as: USDA project updates and deadlines, salary study recommendations, potential grant funding for stormwater management, the budget process, timeline and next steps. He emphasized his commitment to maintaining high-quality service in the Town of Beaufort.

Mayor/Commissioner Comments

Commissioner LoPiccolo congratulated Mayor Harker on her recent election to represent District 2 on the North Carolina League of Municipalities Executive Board.

Commissioner Gillikin thanked those in attendance as well as staff, specifically Manager Zapp and Christi Wood, for their excellent work composing budget related documents in a short amount of time.

Commissioner Spiegler and Commissioner Oliver echoed the positive comments already made about staff and public engagement.

Commissioner Cooper spoke about the upcoming budget work sessions.

Mayor Harker also thanked the Town Staff and Commissioners for their dedication and hard work.

Adjourn

Commissioner Oliver made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk