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
1:00 PM Thursday, September 17, 2026
Train Depot, 614 Broad Street

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Agenda Approval

Minute Approval

1. Meeting Minutes- August 6, 2026

Items for Discussion and Consideration by BWOF

1. Budget Update
2. Marina Updates
    a. Commercial Operators Dock Improvements- BOC Feedback
        i. Additional entrance at east end of boardwalk
        ii. Sunshades and dock boxes
        iii. Signs and standardized designs
        iv. Crystal Coast Lady dock repairs
3. Fuel Pricing
4. Grant Applications: BIG Grant Update
5. Short and Long-term Improvements
    a. Short-term bathhouse Improvements
    b. Long-term vision (i.e. desired location of bathhouse and possible welcome center)
6. Member Roundtable

Next Steps/Wrap Up

1. BWOF Meeting, Thursday, December 3, 1:00 pm

DRAFT

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DRAFT

Call To Order

Chair Sarah Spiegler called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Sarah Spiegler, Vice Chair Paula Gillikin, Becky Bowler, Vic Fasolino, Barry Slade, Weymouth Tillett

Members Absent: Mike Bradley (present virtually), Steve Bishop, Ted Morris, Craig Souza, and Miriam Sutton

Staff Present: Town Manager, Matt Zapp; Deputy Town Clerk, Jennifer Welborn; Planning Director, Kyle Garner; Public Works Director, Mark Eakes; Interim Finance Director, Julie Anderson; F3 Administrative Manager, Sara Bell; and F3 Dockmaster, Jacob Naegelen.

F3 Marina Regional Managers, Lori Meehan and Alex Tiltman, were present virtually. Commissioner Melvin Cooper was also present at the meeting.

Agenda Approval

Chair Sarah Spiegler added roundtable introductions to the agenda since many new faces were present. The agenda was approved as amended by unanimous consent from the committee members present.

Minutes Approval

The minutes from June 4, 2026, were approved by unanimous consent from the committee members present.

Items for Discussion and Consideration by BWOF

1. **Budget Update**

   Lori Meehan provided a budget and operations update similar to the presentation made to the Board of Commissioners on July 27, 2026. The presentation included photographs highlighting recent activity and notable events at the Beaufort Town Docks.

   Barry Slade asked about the factors contributing to lower operating expenses. Meehan attributed the decrease largely to reduced payroll expenses and lean staffing from January through March.

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Slade also inquired about credit card surcharge fees, and Meehan confirmed that applicable processing fees are passed through to customers depending on the type of transaction.

Becky Bowler relayed concerns from absent member Steve Bishop regarding fuel pricing and data he had been tracking, including whether lower fuel prices were generating sufficient additional sales volume and the optics of a municipal marina potentially undercutting local private operators. The committee agreed to revisit fuel pricing in greater detail during their Marina Updates agenda item.

Vic Fasolino asked about expenses associated with the fuel carts and dock repairs.

2. Marina Updates

Chair Spiegler opened the discussion by identifying two areas for discussion: potential improvements to the commercial operators' docks area and repairs to the dock used by the Crystal Coast Lady.

Members discussed the usability and safety of the newly installed commercial floating docks and other recent commercial dock upgrades, including dock width, pedestrian flow, height differences and access at low tide, and the tradeoff between wider docks and preserving adequate slip space. Meehan noted that approximately $81,000 had been invested in dock upfits, excluding Public Works department costs, and emphasized that the current configuration was a significant improvement while preserving maneuvering room and all ten slips. She indicated that any remaining safety concerns could be evaluated and addressed.

Discussion then focused on other potential commercial docks improvements, including whether an additional dock opening should be installed to improve pedestrian access, standardized signage, kiosks, and dock boxes with integrated seating, and the installation of a sunshade or shade canopy system. Meehan requested guidance on appropriate standards to establish a consistent approval process for commercial operators. Members generally supported establishing basic uniform standards without overprescribing appearance, while ensuring that any improvements are ADA compliant and meet applicable building, safety, and Historic District requirements.

The board discussed code and safety considerations related to shade structures, including the advantages and disadvantages of having shade structures versus leaving the area uncovered, as well as permanent versus temporary installation options. Discussion also included standardized appearance, applicable wind-load requirements, and responsibility for installation and maintenance. The committee determined that additional research and more specific recommendations were needed before implementation. Becky Bowler, Vic Fasolino, and Barry Slade volunteered to work with the Town's Planning and Public Works staff, along with F3 staff, to research the proposed improvements and bring recommendations back to the BWOF at its September meeting.

3. Legislative Update

Planning Director Kyle Garner provided an update regarding the State appropriations process and legislative relationships relevant to Beaufort. Discussion included existing relationships with State officials and support for Beaufort from Senator Sanderson, who had previously attended a BWOF meeting.

4. B.I.G. Grant Application

Kyle Garner and Alex Tiltman reviewed the Boating Infrastructure Grant (B.I.G.) program which aims to benefit transient boaters, including the two funding tiers, the State and national review processes, scoring considerations, and the August 28, 2026, application deadline. The committee discussed the limited three-week application timeline and the anticipated funding schedule, which would not make funding available until approximately October 2027. Scoring considerations discussed included Clean Marina status, possible Town matching, ADA compliance, and implementing new technological improvements.

Members discussed potential projects, matching funds, and grant application procedures. Questions were raised about whether nonprofit contributions could be used toward the Town match. The committee also discussed the need for realistic project scopes given the approaching application deadline.

Several future concepts were discussed, including bathhouse improvements, a possible welcome or harbor center, and other transient-boater amenities. The committee agreed that the bathhouse was not the best fit for the current grant cycle because additional planning was needed. Chair Spiegler sought consensus on a more achievable project.

The committee reached consensus for Town staff to pursue the current B.I.G. grant cycle for seawall and boardwalk engineering and design plans together.

Staff discussed adapting applicable language from prior Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant work and obtaining an engineering cost estimate as needed to complete the application. The Town will target January or February 2027 to begin discussions for the next BIG grant cycle, with applications anticipated to be due in August 2027.

5. Member Roundtable

Chair Spiegler opened the floor to the member roundtable discussion. Barry Slade proposed memorializing the completion of the fuel tank project with a commemorative Jerry can display and possibly a quote or signature from Mayor Harker. Possible locations discussed included the dock office, Town Hall, and the Train Depot. Safety concerns and other memorabilia were also discussed.

The committee reached consensus in support of the concept, with the final design and location to be determined in coordination with the Town.

Slade also summarized fuel-pricing concerns previously raised by committee members, Steve Bishop and Becky Bowler. Bishop's analysis suggested that additional revenue may be available under a different pricing approach and expressed concern about the optics of the municipal marina “undercutting” private operators. Meehan noted that the current budget was built around the existing pricing strategy and emphasized F3's experience in analyzing fuel pricing and sales volume.

The committee agreed to review daily fuel prices in greater detail at the September meeting and to circulate Bishop's analysis for consideration.

Meehan left the meeting (virtually) due to prior obligations at approximately 3:02 PM.

Weymouth Tillett raised the condition of the main boardwalk railing and asked whether short-term improvements should be considered before a future full reconstruction. He suggested power washing the existing railing. Staff and F3 discussed the limited longevity of prior power-washing efforts, and no formal action was taken.

The committee received an update regarding two additional commercial operators and discussed the application process, available spaces, and prorating considerations. The committee also asked about future commercial activity at Gallants Channel and how those operations may impact the Beaufort Town Docks commercial vendor rentals. The estimated timeline of future slip availability was also discussed.

Jacob Naegelen inquired about the process of obtaining approval for various smaller dock projects. Slade asked about the distinction between capital expenditures and repairs and maintenance for waterfront projects. Gillikin suggested deferring those operational questions to Town Manager Zapp and F3 Marina's Lori Meehan.

Chair Spiegler indicated that she would coordinate with F3 staff in advance of future BWOF meetings regarding proposed agenda items.

Next Steps/Wrap Up

The next BWOF meeting was scheduled for Thursday, September 17, 2026, at 1:00 PM, at the Beaufort Train Depot, 614 Broad Street, Beaufort, NC.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:12 PM.