

# CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 13, 2026 - 6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 1121 N. Lake Park Boulevard, Carolina Beach, NC



## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barbee called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, followed by the invocation by Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte and Pledge of Allegiance.

### PRESENT

Mayor Lynn Barbee

Mayor Pro Tem Deb LeCompte

Council Member Jay Healy

Council Member Wayne Rouse

Council Member Vince Losito

### ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Deputy Town Manager Ed Parvin

Finance Director Debbie Hall

Town Clerk Kim Ward

Town Attorney Noel Fox

### ADOPT THE AGENDA

**ACTION:** Motion to adopt the agenda

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito

*Motion passed unanimously*

### CONSENT AGENDA

1. Adoption of the 2026 Meeting Schedule
2. Adopt Resolution Number 25-2343 Authorizing EFT Payments
3. Town Hall Usage Policy
4. Adopt Bond Order Resolution Number 26-2344
5. Budget Amendments/Transfers
6. Amend Capital Project Fund for 16" DD Pump House to Henniker's Ditch
7. Amend Budget Ordinances for 2nd Street Improvement
8. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes
9. Adopt Policies on Cybersecurity

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the consent agenda

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito

*Motion passed unanimously*

**SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

10. Employee Recognition

Mr. Parvin recognized Harbor Master Larry Denning for five years of service with the Town, noting that he worked for several years as a contract employee before being hired full-time. Mr. Parvin praised Mr. Denning's work at the marina, mooring field, anchorage, and street ends and highlighted the excellent reviews he receives from visitors.

Mr. Oakley recognized Police Chief Vic Ward for five years of service with the Town, highlighting Chief Ward's leadership by example and focus on officer safety, community safety, and community well-being. Police Chief Ward emphasized that the department's success was due to the collaborative efforts of everyone involved.

11. Events Update by Tim Murphy

Mr. Parvin presented in Community Service Manager Tim Murphy's absence regarding the Steve Haydu St. Patrick's Lo Tide Run on March 14. He explained that there would be a route change this year, with Lake Park Boulevard being closed at Cape Fear Boulevard 7:55-9:30 AM on race day. Mr. Parvin said this change, which was unanimously recommended by the Events Committee, would create a safer, more efficient event by implementing a hard closure with detours along Dow Road.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the route change for the Lo Tide Run as presented

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito

*Motion passed unanimously*

12. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley reviewed the budget FY 2026-27 schedule:

- Council strategic planning/budget retreat – January 29-30
- Budget open house – February 11
- Public hearing for non-profit requests – March 10
- Public hearing for community input – April 14
- Budget workshop – April 28
- Budget open house – May 5
- Review revenue and expense projections and public hearing for community input – May 12
- Budget message presented to Council – May 26
- Budget public hearing and adoption – June 9

Mr. Oakley gave an update on various projects:

- Beach nourishment: The project is currently paused. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will hold a public meeting on February 3 to discuss the project and answer questions.
- Tree City USA: The Town has been awarded Tree City USA status by the Arbor Day Foundation for the third consecutive year, thanks to the work of staff and the Beautification Committee.
- Infrastructure revenue bonds: The Town will present to the Local Government Commission on February 3, with bonds for sale on February 11 and closing in March. Projects will commence after closing.
- Project updates: Several major projects – including the Boardwalk bathroom, Lake Park pump house, Lake Park bathroom, and the 1810 Canal Drive beach access – will be substantially complete by the end of March. Mr. Parvin clarified that the 1810 Canal Drive beach access project includes paving the lot with handicap access, which is targeted to be completed before March 1, pending coordination with beach nourishment equipment staging.
- Freeman Park Committee: Mr. Parvin reported that staff has been developing the framework for the land management plan. The committee kickoff meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 16 or 18, likely 3:00-5:00 PM. This will be approximately a year-long process with both committee meetings and public input sessions.

Mayor Barbee noted that there is a separate project involving dredging of the Intracoastal Waterway crossing at the inlet, which will place sand on Freeman Park.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte inquired about an update from the N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding striping on Lake Park Boulevard. Mr. Oakley said there was no update yet, noting that subcontractors were behind and that weather conditions were affecting the timeline.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Christy Lee of Ivy Lane spoke regarding a desire for an ordinance for pet shops that would create zoning and separation requirements for establishments selling dogs or cats not obtained from the New Hanover County Animal Shelter or non-profit animal organizations. She cited statistics on euthanasia rates in North Carolina, described poor conditions in puppy mills, and referenced public health concerns. Ms. Lee contended that such an ordinance would be beneficial to keep a pet shop from being established on the island and that it would prevent adverse impacts on property values and tourism.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

13. Zoning Map Amendment and 2020 CAMA Land Use Plan Amendment to Consider a Request to Rezone 205 Raleigh Avenue from Mixed Use (MX) to Central Business District (CBD)  
Applicant: Jonathan Lee “Zeke” Hutchins

Applicant Zeke Hutchins has submitted a petition to consider rezoning 205 Raleigh Avenue from Mixed Use (MX) to Central Business District (CBD) zoning. There is an existing single-family home on the property that was built in 1933. The surrounding uses include a bank, two restaurants, a single-family home, a duplex, and two vacant lots.

The 1984 Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map show the property in B-1: Central District. In 2000, 205 Raleigh Avenue was rezoned to MX.

**ACTION:** Motion to open the public hearing

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito

*Motion passed unanimously*

Senior Planner Gloria Abbotts presented the details, including dimensional standards and permitted uses in both districts. She said the proposed rezoning would be inconsistent with the Land Use Plan, but State statute does allow for it if the amendment also amends the Future Land Use Map. Ms. Abbotts noted that the Planning & Zoning Commission recommended approval 4-1.

Mr. Hutchins said he and his wife Sharon, who live at 211 Virginia Avenue, bought that property in 2017 to use as a beach house but decided to make it their primary residence several years ago. He said they have been looking for a way to give back to the community with a business venture and like quirky historic beach cottages, so they bought 205 Raleigh Avenue with plans to open a bookstore that would focus on community programming and enrichment. Mr. Hutchins said the CBD zoning would allow them to utilize the backyard space and add an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramp on the side of the building without affecting the front porch.

No one else requested to speak.

**ACTION:** Motion to close the public hearing

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito

*Motion passed unanimously*

Council Member Healy noted this was the third "quirky" property Council had considered in recent months and that when he was on the Land Use Plan Committee, they had not specifically looked at these small properties. He said he is in favor of the plans and expressed support for keeping a 1933 cottage alive.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte agreed with preserving old cottages and said she thinks the bookstore would bring something special to the Town. She acknowledged concerns about "CBD creep" but pointed out that old maps had this property as part of the Central Business District.

Mayor Barbee noted that the property is surrounded by commercial uses.

**ACTION:** Motion that whereas in accordance with provisions of the NCGS, Council does hereby find and determine that the adoption of the Zoning Map Amendment for 205 Raleigh Avenue is consistent with the goals and objectives of the adopted Land Use Plan and other long-range plans; the adoption of this Zoning Map Amendment also amends the Future Land Use Map and meets the vision of the Town

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito

*Motion passed unanimously*

## **ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

### 14. Employee Recruitment and Retention

Recruiting and retaining quality employees is a challenge, especially while larger organizations in the area are competing for the same talent. Some of these larger organizations can offer sign-on bonuses and other perks that are not practical for the Town due to its small size. Several good employees have left the Town for these types of opportunities, and there are numerous applicants choosing other places for the same reasons.

The Town is planning to review how benefits compare with other local organizations and make recommendations in the proposed FY 2026-27 budget. However, Mr. Oakley is now proposing to add another percentage point or two to the previously approved 2% merit increase for employees, noting that the Town's strong financial position would allow for this additional compensation.

Council Member Healy emphasized that retention is crucial and costs less than replacing employees. He said any additional compensation should be merit-based.

Council Member Rouse noted that some employees receive recruitment letters from other places every two months.

Council Member Losito said it costs ten times more to bring in and train a new person than to retain current staff.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte added said retention and longevity should be the Town's goal.

Mr. Oakley said specifically, he is proposing that each employee be eligible for up to 4% based on performance.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve an additional 2% merit increase for the potential of 4% to Town staff employees

Motion made by Council Member Rouse

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito

*Motion passed unanimously*

## **CLOSED SESSION**

### 15. Closed Session – Attorney/Client Matters

**ACTION:** Motion to go into closed session to discuss an attorney/client matter in accordance with NCGS 143.318.11(a)(3); the matter being discussed is 23 CVS 3744 Carolina Beach Land Holdings, LLC,

vs. Town of Carolina Beach as well as general attorney/client purposes

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito

*Motion passed unanimously*

Mayor Barbee called the meeting back to order and said Council took no action during closed session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 7:05 PM.