

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Regular Meeting

Tuesday, May 12, 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

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. Proclamation Recognizing May as National Bike Month
2. Budget Amendments/Transfers
3. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

ACTION: Motion to adopt 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

4. Events Update by Tim Murphy

Community Services Manager Tim Murphy reviewed upcoming events:

- MuralFest – May 16-17 at Lake Park
- Carolina Beach Market – Saturdays May 23 through October 3 at Lake Park

- Boardwalk Blast Fireworks/Music – begins Friday, May 22 and continues weekly on Thursdays (exceptions are Friday, July 3, and Friday, September 4, the final date) at the Gazebo
- Movies at the Lake – begins May 24 and continues every Sunday through September 6 at Lake Park
- Beach Music Festival 80s Boardwalk Bash Kickoff – June 5 at the Gazebo
- Beach Music Festival – June 6 on the beach strand in front of the Boardwalk
- Family Night – begins June 16 and continues every Tuesday through July 28 at Lake Park

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said there will be a Blood Drive on June 10 at the Rec Center.

Mr. Murphy provided an update on an active filming permit. Originally scheduled for Wednesday, the filming has been moved to Thursday and will be done primarily at the Police Department, he said. Mr. Murphy added that trucks and other support vehicles will be using the Rec Center parking lot, which will be closed while the Rec Center remains open with parking available at the church next door.

Council Member Healy asked which production will be filming. Mr. Murphy said it has a working title of “Blue Christmas,” adding that there are non-disclosure agreements in place that limit available information.

5. Manager’s Update

Mr. Oakley said in addition to tonight’s budget public hearing, there will be another in June. He gave an update on various projects:

- Harbor informational meeting: Moved to May 26 4:00-6:00 PM in Council Chambers, this will educate the public about what goes in on the harbor and what the Harbor Masters do.
- Lake Park pump house: All pumps are online, and the Certificate of Occupancy is expected by the end of the month; the sidewalk should be reinstalled before then, so the public walkway may be able to open before the end of the month.
- 2nd Street Extension: This was approved several years ago and is almost complete, with final inspection expected soon. Construction of new homes there should begin shortly.
- Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSMR) after action meeting: This is planned for May 19 1:00-3:00 PM at Kure Beach Town Hall, and staff is requesting that a couple of Council Members join them to review what happened.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte asked if there is any update on the stoplight at Winner Avenue. Mr. Oakley said he hasn’t received anything official and last heard there were some technical issues they are trying to work through.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said she had seen an extra door behind the new bathroom facility at Lake Park and asked if there had been an issue. Mr. Parvin said the flood-proof doors that were required for the project had arrived.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carol Fackrell Stewart of 1607 Snapper Lane voiced opposition to the application for a pickleball court

at Atlantic Towers, noting that her screened porch faces directly toward the proposed site. She contended that the court would not actually be temporary and cited concerns about noise and property values, and she also questioned why this location was necessary, pointing out that Atlantic Towers has its own oceanfront lawn hundreds of feet from any homes. Ms. Stewart also cited existing pickleball facilities at the Rec Center and Mike Chappell Park and said no property owner she spoke to had received the mailed public notice for the January input meeting because property addresses instead of mailing addresses were used.

June Martin, President of the Casa del Playa homeowners association, presented Council with a sheet bearing 26 signatures from unit owners in support of a letter opposing the pickleball court. She said the balconies of Casa del Playa face directly toward the Atlantic Towers parking lot, meaning noise from a court would disproportionately impact their residents compared to Atlantic Towers' own ocean-facing balconies. She noted that 12 of their units are owned by permanent residents of the Town, and the remainder are permanent vacation homes – not short-term rentals – meaning the property is regularly occupied, including during the proposed off-season operating window.

Morris Boswell, who lives off the island, described Carolina Beach as his lifelong second home. He noted that the Freeman Park entrance has a roughly one-foot transition at the entry that is hard on vehicles and equipment. Mr. Boswell suggested staff could likely address the issue with minimal effort and asked that someone take a look before the busy season intensifies. Mr. Oakley confirmed this is a known issue stemming from contractor work and said it is already being addressed.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

6. Public Hearing to Receive Input on the FY26/27 Budget

This is an opportunity for Council to gather input for the upcoming FY26/27 budget. The community may share views on budget priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

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

Mr. Oakley noted that some revenue figures in the budget were found to be slightly inflated or understated following a recent review, leading to adjustments and minor cuts to maintain balance. He said the proposed tax increase remains at 2.95 cents, and the overall budget is up approximately 10%, driven primarily by inflation, increased healthcare costs, and efforts toward employee recruitment and retention. Mr. Oakley highlighted a tiered cost-of-living adjustment designed to bring the Town's lowest-paid employees to a living wage standard for New Hanover County. He said there are no new positions proposed, and a capital project reserve fund is included to address current and future projects.

For the Enterprise Fund, Mr. Oakley explained there is a required 9% rate increase tied to bond covenants from the Town's recently issued bonds. He noted healthy fund balances are being

maintained in both the General Fund and Enterprise Fund and said bond-funded capital projects are expected to begin this year. Mr. Oakley added that the Enterprise Fund also includes no new positions.

Mayor Barbee asked Mr. Oakley to explain bond covenants for the public's benefit. Mr. Oakley said the bond financing agreement requires the Town to increase utility rates at prescribed percentages over several years, a structure developed in consultation with financial planners and bond counsel to ensure sufficient debt service coverage. Mayor Barbee drew a parallel to similar covenants that accompanied the town's 2016 bond issuance.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte emphasized that these rate increases are tied entirely to capital improvements – upgrades and maintenance to the Town's water and sewer infrastructure. Mr. Oakley said this includes improvements to water quality, storage capacity and future treatment capacity.

Mr. Oakley pointed out that there is no addition in spending in the most recent budget since the last version and said it instead made further cuts due to some revenue figures being lower than originally expected. He emphasized that there are no major cuts to projects or infrastructure and confirmed that the updated budget is currently available on the Town's website.

Cindy Dunn of 915 Tidewater Lane expressed concern about the cumulative impact of rising costs on property owners. She noted that between the proposed Town tax increase, anticipated County tax increases, and utility rate increases tied to the bond covenants, property owners could be looking at a minimum 5% combined increase in their tax obligations. Ms. Dunn acknowledged the wants-versus-needs challenge Council faces and commended their work to date. She suggested possibly exploring combining services between Carolina Beach and Kure Beach in certain areas, noting what she described as duplication of services between the two municipalities. Ms. Dunn also suggested that the proposed new entry sign could be deferred as a non-essential expenditure. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte noted that the two municipalities already share a sewer authority as a point of existing collaboration.

Steve Jaeb of 204 Tennessee Avenue suggested that Town surplus properties be sold to generate revenue. He pointed out that the Town has seen expanding shoulder-season activity and increasing visitor traffic, and he questioned whether existing and growing revenue streams combined with rising property tax revenues from increased valuations and new construction might partially offset the need for a tax rate increase.

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 acknowledged speakers' concerns but defended the increase as responsible stewardship, referencing the long-term compounding costs of deferring tax increases. He also cited the Town's competitive position relative to its peer group, noting that Carolina Beach currently has the sixth lowest tax rate among 30 towns from Nags Head to the South Carolina border

Council Member Losito referenced a comparison chart shown at the recent budget open house that scored towns by services delivered per employee and said when you look at how efficient the Town is compared to others with the services we offer, we jump from number six to number two on the list, soon to be number one. He cautioned against viewing headcount reductions as an easy solution, saying the Town is on a growth trajectory with significant momentum and that cutting staff would result in a step backward.

Mayor Barbee thanked the speakers and added that he wished more residents would bring their concerns directly to Council rather than posting on social media.

7. Conditional Zoning to Consider a Pickleball Court in the Mixed Use District (MX) at 1608 Bowfin Lane
Applicant: Atlantic Towers Assn, Inc.

Applicant Atlantic Towers Assn, Inc., applied for a Conditional Zoning (CZ) application for a temporary pickleball court in the Mixed Use District (MX). The existing use of the property is a parking lot for the Atlantic Towers condo building. The applicant proposes a temporary pickleball court utilizing 12 existing parking spaces. Private tennis courts are permitted in MX through CZ. Section 3.4.B.2. states that for uses not listed, the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Administrator shall consider which use closely matches the proposed use and apply the relevant regulations.

The existing parking lot has 169 spaces. There are 12 two-bedroom units, and the remaining 125 units are one bedroom under 650 square feet. The parking required for the existing 137 units is 149 spaces; 157 spaces will be provided after the pickleball court is installed.

The development standards for tennis courts require that provisions be made to compensate for impervious surfaces and drainage runoff containment, and lighting, if used, shall be shielded so as not to shine on adjoining properties. The existing parking lot will simply be repainted; no additional impervious surfaces will be added, and no additional lighting is proposed.

Landscaping is not required, as the use is temporary in nature. The 12 parking spaces will be reverted to parking when the pickleball court is not in use. The applicant proposes installing a temporary six-foot fence to surround the court when it is in use.

Proposed conditions

1. The court will be closed beginning the Friday before Memorial Day through Labor Day.
2. Use of the court will be for owners and guests of Atlantic Towers only.
3. The court will be approved for a one-year trial period. After the one-year period, the project will go through the CZ process again.
4. No additional lighting.
5. The court shall operate from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, and the gate shall remain locked when the court is not in use.
6. No amplified music.

7. Six-foot temporary fencing shall be anchored and installed with windscreen and/or sound-blocking material.

As part of the application process, a community meeting is required. The applicant held the required meeting on January 29, 2026. Based on comments from the meeting, the applicant can place conditions on the project to help mitigate the impacts and concerns from the neighboring properties. As a result of the concerns that were raised at the meeting, the applicant revised the proposed location of the court to be further from the Casa del Playa condominiums.

The project is in general conformity with the 2020 Land Use Plan and the Low Intensity Commercial Area. Staff recommends approval of the project as proposed.

The court was moved after the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting based on comments during that time; an updated site plan was submitted. The Commission recommended approval 4-2.

Senior Planner Gloria Abbotts presented the details, including the background and history of Atlantic Towers as well as information about the surrounding area.

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

Mike Alford, President of the Atlantic Towers homeowners association, asked if there were questions for him.

Council Member Healy asked whether the windscreen's noise reduction capability had been quantified. Mr. Alford said the closed-mesh windscreen is a heavier grade than the standard open-mesh tennis windscreen and is specifically used in both tennis and pickleball applications for sound suppression, though he acknowledged he did not have precise decibel reduction figures on hand.

June Martin, who also spoke earlier during general public comment, emphasized that the applicant had been unable to confirm the noise reduction effectiveness of the proposed windscreen and asked Council to consider requiring an official acoustic study before approving the application.

Magen McRoberts, daughter of Jeb and Marsha Howell, whose family has owned the property at 1606 Bowfin Lane for 70 years, prefaced her comments by establishing her family's genuine appreciation for pickleball. She said there are appropriate venues for pickleball courts, emphasizing that neighbors opposing the court did purchase their property knowing they would be near one. Ms. McRoberts said no placement within the parking lot would mitigate the noise sufficiently and brought up quality-of-life concerns. She urged Council to reconsider allowing the pickleball court and urged, at minimum, a requirement for quiet paddles and quiet balls as a condition of any approval, alongside all other noise mitigation measures.

Linda Lashley of 1518 South Lake Park Boulevard Unit 5A said her balcony is directly overlooking the proposed court. She acknowledged that she understands Atlantic Towers has property rights but said this is a question of balance. Ms. Lashley mentioned that Atlantic Towers often has food trucks on-site operating loud diesel generators and argued that approving the pickleball court would further sacrifice “air peace” for much of the neighborhood. She said all residents deserve equal consideration.

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

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said she believes in property rights but not if they infringe on neighbors. She noted that the parking lot was not zoned as a recreational area and expressed sympathy for the surrounding residents, adding that she wouldn’t want to have a pickleball court next door to her house.

Council Member Rouse said he places significant weight on staff and Planning and Zoning Commission recommendations and noted that MX is already characterized by some level of commercial activity, including food trucks and proximity to Lake Park Boulevard. He said he was persuaded by the one-year trial, adding that he doesn’t think the courts will be louder than diesel generators and noting that they would not operate after dark.

Council Member Losito said the applicant had moved the court to the most accommodating location possible. He acknowledged that he wouldn’t be happy about the situation if he lived nearby but said he couldn’t come up with a reason to vote against it.

Council Member Healy said the applicant has been accommodating and mentioned that the one-year trial was the decisive factor for him.

Mayor Barbee reflected on the difficulty of the decision, acknowledging the weight of both sides. He noted that in a CZ proceeding, the formal question is conformity with the Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance, although Ms. Fox clarified that this is a legislative and not quasi-judicial matter, meaning Council Members may consider their own opinions and judgment. Mayor Barbee pointed out that staff has confirmed the project is in conformity and said the one-year trial is also a determining factor for him.

ACTION: Motion that whereas in accordance with the provisions of the North Carolina General Statutes, the Council does hereby find and determine that the adoption of the Conditional Zoning district to allow for a pickleball court located at 1608 Bowfin Lane is consistent with the goals and objectives of the adopted Land Use Plan and other long-range plans and the potential impacts on the surrounding area mitigated by the approved conditions

Motion made by Council Member Rouse

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito

Voting Nay: Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte
Motion passed 4-1

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

8. Discussion on Sidewalk from Lake Park to Spartanburg Avenue

In May 2023, the Town Manager was in discussions with N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) about how to get sidewalks added from Carolina Sands to Lake Park. Later that summer, funding from DOT was earmarked for this project. Several on-site meetings occurred with Town staff and DOT. In November 2023, a plan was given to the Town. The plan showed the sidewalk meandering from DOT right-of-way to private property. There were multiple conflicts with power poles, mailboxes, utilities, trash bins, signage, etc. Costs of purchasing the additional needed right-of-way was also a significant concern.

Staff worked with DOT on an alternative that would bump out curb and gutter and avoid all the conflicts. DOT met with staff on-site again and determined there was adequate drive aisle width to accomplish this task. However, when the estimate came back to the Town, it was going to cost \$1,691,153.08.

Staff talked to Council about this issue, and directions were given to see if the Town could get any aspect of the project completed (i.e. one or two blocks). Staff went back to DOT, and DOT agreed to look at the costs again on a block-by-block basis.

Costs submitted back to the Town over the past few years continue to fluctuate, and in April 2026 Council reviewed numbers of close to \$800,000 to reach Sumter Avenue and just under \$1 million to take the sidewalk to Spartanburg Avenue.

Throughout April and early May, staff has worked with the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO) and DOT to identify the most strategic way to get this project completed that will efficiently get the sidewalk put in place and limit impacts on taxpayer contributions.

Cost breakdown as of May 4, 2026

DOT contribution: \$183,118.84

Town contribution: \$666,880.16

Expenditures: \$63,776.66

REMAINING: \$787,222.34

Lake Park to Sumter Avenue: \$762,295

Sumter Avenue to Spartanburg Avenue: \$210,000

TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$972,295

Additional need for Spartanburg Avenue: $\$972,295 - \$787,222.34 = \$185,072.66$

Mr. Parvin presented the details. He said options were either to construct the sidewalk from Lake Park to the intersection of Sumter Avenue or extend the project an additional distance to the intersection of Spartanburg Avenue and Lake Park Boulevard at an additional cost of \$185,072.

Mayor Barbee expressed frustration with the overall cost of the project but said he feels it's necessary. He stressed the public safety aspect, citing the regular sight of pedestrians walking in the street along Lake Park Boulevard, especially during the busy season. Mayor Barbee noted that if Council chose not to add the \$185,072 to extend to Spartanburg Avenue, the Town would effectively lose the approximately \$183,118 in DOT contribution that was contingent on completing that segment.

Council Member Healy said it's not a great time for this request with current budget discussions about saving money, but he added that you can't put a price tag on public safety and agreed that the road is treacherous.

Council Member Rouse reinforced the necessity of reaching Spartanburg Avenue rather than stopping at Sumter Avenue. He drew a cautionary parallel to the Hamlet bathrooms, noting that a decision years ago to defer a \$250,000 project ultimately cost the Town \$600,000-\$700,000 when it was eventually completed.

Council Member Losito agreed, noting that the volume of families walking down Lake Park Boulevard from Lake Park, particularly on market Saturdays, represented a clear public safety hazard. He said this would be money well spent.

Mayor Barbee also provided context from the recent DOT meeting, noting that a general consensus emerged around phasing the project in logical segments: Lake Park to Spartanburg Avenue first (tonight's action), then a future grant application for Spartanburg Avenue to Ocean Boulevard, and ultimately Ocean Boulevard to Alabama Avenue. Mr. Parvin confirmed that the WMPO meeting the following day would be oriented around building that next grant application based on Council's action.

ACTION: Motion to approve entering into a contract with DOT to build a sidewalk that runs on the west side of Lake Park Boulevard from where the sidewalk terminates at the southern end of CB Lake to the intersection of Spartanburg and Lake Park Boulevard; funding the project shall include the \$666,880 given to the DOT from the Town (that's money they're already holding for us) and the \$183,118 contribution from the DOT; I further motion that an additional \$185,072 be allocated from the Town's fund balance to accommodate the total requested funds from the DOT

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 acknowledged the cost sting but drew a relatable analogy, stating that he's angry at the price of gas but still needs gas.

9. Recognize June 14-20, 2026, as Pleasure Island Pride Week

Council Member Healy read Proclamation No. 26-2353, which proclaims June 14-20 as Pleasure Island Pride Week in the Town of Carolina Beach.

Mayor Barbee said the Town is a place of inclusion, and that's why he supports this.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.