

Board of Aldermen Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 6, 2024
MINUTES

The Town of North Topsail Beach Board of Aldermen held its regular meeting on March 6, 2024. A quorum of the board was present. The Town Attorney was in attendance.

Board members present: Mayor Joann McDermon, Mayor Pro Tem Mike Benson, Aldermen: Richard Grant, Tom Leonard and Laura Olszewski.

Board members absent: Alderman Pletl

Staff present: Town Manager Alice Derian, IT Director Ricky Schwisow, Police Chief William Younginer, Fire Chief Chad Soward, Public Works Supervisor Al Cablay, Finance Officer Jessica Helms and Interim Town Clerk Nancy Avery.

Call to order

Mayor McDermon called the meeting to order at 11:00 am. Mayor Pro Tem Benson gave the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Motion – Mayor Pro Tem Benson motioned to adopt the agenda as presented; seconded by Alderman Leonard

Discussion

Alderman Grant - I want to delete item B under New Business on the agenda relating to Board of Adjustment because this is not generally how we have those types of things on there and I understand there are other people that might be involved and that is why I would like to strike that from the agenda.

Mayor McDermon - Alderman Grant, are you thinking there are other applicants that we have not seen yet that have submitted an application?

Alderman Grant - I know there is at least one that is currently on the Board of Adjustment.

Alderman Leonard – Has that person submitted an application?

Alderman Grant - I do not know if they have submitted an application yet but I did contact them and am waiting for them to come back.

Alderman Leonard – I do not know what to say, frankly. How long do we wait? A notice was put out I presume. Applications were submitted per the notice I presume, and now we are trying to take it off the agenda. I am at a loss for understanding what is different procedurally this time than historically in the past. We have an applicant that shows dedication and service and we are holding out for someone else.

Alderman Olszewski – Did we have a date of thirty (30) days for applications? Did we have an end date?

Manager Derian – It was posted after the last Board of Aldermen meeting when I was asked to advertise, so that was done on February 14th and we received one applicant.

Alderman Olszewski – Was there an end date where we were stopping accepting applications?

Manager Derian – No, there is never an end date. They can always apply.

Mayor Pro Tem Benson – I thought the applications had to be in seven days before the Board met.

Alderman Leonard – How many openings do we have?

Manager Derian – One opening.

Alderman Grant – But you also have two alternates right now and you have four members. At the last Board of Adjustment meeting, they had a quorum as well.

Alderman Leonard – So we have this on this on the agenda, we have an application from a citizen who has demonstrated considerable dedication in the past to this Town. Has served on several boards and was also an appointee to the Board of Aldermen and now we are holding out for somebody else. That is the optics here and I do not like the optics.

Alderman Olszewski – How many committees is this person on?

Alderman Grant – We just appointed her to the Planning Board and she is Vice Chairman of the Planning Board.

Mayor McDermon – At this point we are not vetting candidates; we are trying to see if we are leaving this on the agenda or removing it until next month.

Alderman Grant – That is what I am talking about, moving it for a month.

Manager Derian – So you are looking to amend the agenda to remove the item from the agenda.

Mayor McDermon – That is the discussion. So we have a motion and a second and we have a request to amend the agenda, so I am trying to find out now if the Board is okay amending it wants to leave it as it is.

Alderman Leonard – You stated we are not vetting candidates but by removing this we by default are vetting a candidate.

Mayor McDermon – I am saying that a conversation to vet a candidate is not appropriate for this particular time because we are just talking about the agenda. Clerk, can you call the roll to see if we are modifying the agenda or leaving the agenda?

Attorney Edes – The motion on the table is to approve the agenda as presented.

Alderman Grant – I just offered an amendment to remove that item.

Alderman Olszewski – I make a second to the motion.

Attorney Edes – Procedurally you need to deal with the first motion first.

Mayor McDermon – The first motion is to proceed with the agenda as presented.

Vote – Alderman Grant and Olszewski against
Mayor Pro Tem Benson and Alderman Leonard in favor

To break the tie, Mayor McDermon voted in favor of leaving the item on the agenda. The motion to approve the agenda as presented carried by a vote of 3 to 2.

Attorney Edes explained that if there is a motion on the floor with a second, it must be voted on first unless the person making the motion wishes to withdraw or amend it. He clarified, at the Board's request, that the motion to approve the agenda as presented passed.

Manager's Report

Beach Projects:

- Phase 5 work continues but with additional operational delays. The contractor has not hauled sand this week due to what they reported as ST Wooten being out of sand. I have spoken with Fran who has been in contact with the contractor and ST Wooten has been working to re-build their stockpile for the contractor to resume. During our discussion yesterday, I confirmed that we can still finish Phase 5 along with Phase 1 work with permit extensions.
- A schedule is still pending from the contractor to schedule the remainder of the Phase 1 project for this environmental window.

Fire Station No. 2:

- The contract has been executed and Notice to Proceed issued.
- Demolition Permit finalized. Demolition is expected in the first week of April.
- Pre-construction meeting was held February 28th.
- Zoning and Flood Plain permit meeting was held yesterday.
- I will be reaching out to everyone soon to schedule a groundbreaking ceremony.

Fire Truck:

- I am pleased to announce that we have received delivery of our new Spartan Fire Truck. We have it staged outside for our meeting today if anyone would like to see it after the meeting. Back in 2022, we started the process of replacing the 2007 truck by procuring and building a new truck. The total price was \$695,974.00, which was

procured using Sourcewell Purchasing Cooperation. Sourcewell ensures we as a local government save money from their ready-to-use, competitively solicited contracts. We also were successful in partnering with Jones Onslow Electric Membership Corporation for a percent interest loan through a USDA grant. A couple weeks ago, a few members of the Fire Dept, staff including Chief went to South Dakota for the final walk through on the truck and it was delivered this week.

- I would just like to say thank you to Jones Onslow Electric Membership Corporation for the grant opportunity and work continues with executing paperwork back to them regarding the grant, which is due by March 8th. Closing for the loan is scheduled for March 18th.

FY 2024-2025 Budget:

- The next budget meeting is scheduled for March 13th and March 14th from 8:30am to 4:30 pm. The complete Agenda for this meeting will be published this week.
- The Public Hearing will be held on April 3rd at the regularly scheduled BOA meeting.
- Budget /Ordinance adoption will be held on May 1st at the regularly scheduled BOA meeting

Grants:

- We prepared and submitted the Onslow County Tourism grant application on February 29th in the amount of \$500,000. If awarded this will be used as financial assistance to assist with debt payment on the 2015 Phase 5 beach renourishment project. A reminder that we restructured our original loan which shortened the life of the loan and now has all debt being paid off by 2027. The re-structuring provided lower financing costs and freed up the large cash reserve that was originally required to be maintained.

- We are on track to submit the grant application for beach vitex this week that we discussed at the February Board meeting. We will be submitting the request for 2 years of treatment which totals \$299,460.00 plus administrative costs to acquire property waivers/acknowledgements. Both Town attorneys agree with signed waivers in lieu of easements.

NCDOT Bike Lane Project:

- NCDOT is waiting for the Division of Coastal Management to review the plans provided and concur with some of NCDOT's calls. Once the Division of Coastal Management provides a date to meet in the field, they will be ready to submit their Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination. Once they have this, they will begin the permitting process. They estimate with approximately 450 adjacent riparian property owners it will take some time to get all the green cards back prior to submitting for approval/denial. The timeframe is hard for them to pinpoint but estimate a few months.

Announcements:

- The Booster Pump station project officially started last week with ONWASA. A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for Friday, March 15th at 3:00pm. I met with

them on Monday for project sign placement, which will be installed near the mailbox so you will see that get installed prior to the ceremony.

Welcome to Jessica Helms, our new Finance Officer, who was sworn in this week. Barry Burke has worked for the Town for seventeen (17) years and is retiring. He will be greatly missed.

Open Forum

1. Steve Smith said he is representing the Homeowners Association (HOA) for Permuda Landing. We used to hold meetings here at town Hall. Now we spend \$50 - \$100 for a place to meet. He asked the Board to look into allowing them to meet at Town Hall. We will be responsible and leave it clean. He was on the Board of Aldermen from 1997 – 2005.

2. Curtis Anders, 136 Sea Gull Lane, stated he is a new resident and lives at the very end of the road in front of the basketball courts where it is totally deteriorating coming out of the parking lot. There are two bridges; one at the pier and one just past the pier. When you go across, you almost feel your rims hit the bridge. It needs to be looked at. He is caught in between a builder and the post office and cannot get his mail delivered to his house. He would appreciate any help or connections anyone can give him.

3. Don Hibbert, 2264 New River Inlet, # 105. Thank you for all your service. At the last Board of Aldermen meeting, a gentleman was talking about 20,000 cubic yards of sand. When the Corps came in bringing sand they went to building # 2 of the Reef. They then pulled back up to the top closest to the river and spent most of the rest of the time there and the sand that was being delivered started at the south end of the Reef and came up to building # 4. Then they had to stop because there was a pump line that was being used for the sandbags. That left a gap between building # 4 and building # 2 that did not get filled in. He asked the Board to start back up with the remaining 20,000 to go up there and that would tie in with the beach up closest to the river with the beach down towards the St. Regis.

Public Presentations

A. Coastal engineer update

Mr. Fran Way said this is an overview of the shoreline from Phase 1 up near New River Inlet to Phase 5. There are five phases. We have some different projects for Phase 1, Phase 4, and Phase 5. We know there has been some erosion of the dunes in Phase 1 and Phase 2. There is a recommendation to redo those dunes to add some sand.

Phase 5, which is ongoing, and Phase 4 we hope to start in late April. And then Phase 1 is still planned for those 20,000 cubic yards of material that is still planned for this month. It is basically going to start where we stopped last time at the Topsail Reef condos. We would place material between building # 1 and building # 4 and then as the gentleman mentioned, the Corps of Engineers was placing material in this area towards the river.

This is permitted and is planned for later this month. This area is up north of the Topsail Reef condos. If there is some additional sand that needs to be placed, it would be tough in this area. The shorefront directly seaward of the Topsail Reefs between building # 4 and building # 8 is really difficult to put material and keep it there for this truck haul project. And you know, if it is

underwater at higher tides, when you place that material there, it almost immediately washes away. It will wash both ways and stay within the surf zone but we do think it does have some staying capacity. Right now with current conditions, it is difficult to put material in front of the Topsail Reef condos and have it stay. The Army Corps of Engineers is planning another project here for this, not this winter, but the following winter. It is pretty much every other year when they put material.

For the Phase 5 project the contractor is waiting for material so they are stockpiling material. The trucks could run right now but they would be running at half production. And instead of running at half production, they want to wait for the stockpiling to really build up so they can run at full production. And that will be here in a couple of weeks. They are still on schedule. But they are eating away at a buffer that was contracted to them.

There is an additional 15,000 cubic yards the Board can consider and obviously it is funding related and funding dependent.

The Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is still under development. Dial Cordy contacts me every now and then with a technical question or something, but it seems like they are working with the Corps to move that forward.

The state grant nourishment is for 3000 cubic yards. We are hoping to get a start on that in April.

Discussion

Mayor McDermon - With the big projects I do have a couple of questions as far as the extensions that we need to be approved. I do not believe that is complete yet. Do you know when you expect to hear back on the extension requests?

Mr. Way - No, usually the regulatory agencies prefer you do it when you are 80% finished with the project. Usually they want to see kind of some project progress prior to initially initiating that.

Mayor McDermon - Okay, that is fine. As long as it is not holding us up. That is what I wanted to make sure of. I am still struggling with the schedule still being pending for the Phase One project. I am not sure why we are having such a hard time nailing down a schedule for that. Even if the dates end up being adjusted, I feel like we should have a schedule by now for the 20,000. If we could push on that, I think that would be greatly appreciated, especially from the Board.

Alderman Grant - Is the Army Corps going to come back and do another dredging project in the next nine (9) months in Phase One? We are also looking at putting more sand there at the Town's cost. Is it the same area for both? It would not be 20,000, but anything additional up there.

Mr. Way – It is going to be 100% Town cost and is going to be in general in the area where the Army Corps is going to put sand when they dredge in nine months.

Alderman Grant – I am not asking for your recommendation. I am just a little bit surprised because this Board approved permitting to basically put all the permits in place to be able to do

an engineered beach town wide. And that hopefully will be done within the next twelve (12) months. I am trying to understand why it would be good for us to do something 100% of our cost, when we are going to have somebody else put the sand on their dime nine months from now.

Mayor Pro Tem Benson - My question at the last Board meeting based on your survey results was were there sections of the dune line in Phases 1–3 that need to be reinforced?

Mr. Way - There are definitely some sections of dunes in Phases 1-3 that would benefit from additional sands, especially the Marina Bay and just south of Jenkins Way is not in great shape.

Mayor Pro Tem Benson – I am really asking what your recommendation is.

Mayor McDermion - I think Fran (engineer) has provided us with that information but we have questions on cost.

Mr. Way – The entire dune in Phases 1 3 could use material, 40-60,000 cubic yards. The permitting work and getting it done will not happen in the next two months. If spots need emergency patching, we could work on that, but it would be very minor and will not hold because there is no vegetation to stabilize it.

Alderman Olszewski - I think Fran (engineer) has the plan and we have permits for the plan. We want to continue to execute the plan that is in place so that we do not go beyond those dates that were approved. We need to move forward with what we are doing for what we are permitted for and make that progress.

Consent Agenda.

Consent agenda items are Board of Aldermen minutes from February 7, 2024, and Resolution 2024-02 adopting NC Records Retention Policy

Motion – Alderman Leonard made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented; seconded by Alderman Olszewski; motion passed by unanimous vote.

Continuing Business

Beach, Inlet, Sound Advisory Committee (BISAC) update - Chair Strother presented the following report:

The contractor continues to work on the Phase 5 project Monday through Saturday to haul and place sand. We are on track to complete the project by the end of the current environmental window which ends on April 30th. We are awaiting information from the contractor for the start date to finish up the Phase 1 nourishment project with 20,000 cy. There may be additional work here depending on our coastal engineer. The Phase 4 project will start once the Phase 5 project is completed, could be April or not until November.

The Town has submitted a memorandum of support of the temporary Coastal Resource Commission rules. Comments on this matter were being accepted by the Division of Coastal Management through February 22nd.

A few of the most pressing issues are:

- The proposed temporary rules are necessary under the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act. The loss of these rules could trigger a re-view of NC's Coastal Area Management Act program and we could potentially lose federal benefits, such as those utilized for beach nourishment projects.
- The rules are necessary to protect valuable state resources. This includes unique geologic formations and significant coastal archeological resources that protect heritage sites such as Permuda Island.
- The rules are necessary for the evaluation and issuance of CAMA permit applications. Loss of these rules could impact local governments ability to collect permit fees and process permit applications in a legally defensive manner.
- The rules create and explain necessary policies. Without these rules in place, the state may not be able to engage in consistency determinations, impacting their ability to govern beneficial use of dredged materials.
- In short, the entire CAMA permitting and implementation system may fail.
- Our beach nourishment plans could be negatively impacted by potential loss of federal benefits which we have relied on extensively in the past few years. The 10.5 million dollar grant we received from the Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation fund is a prime example. Our near future plans call for a new project that would nourish an additional 5 miles of shoreline, but this project is dependent on coordination between the USACE and NCDPCM especially for both CAMA and federal permitting.

Mike Benson added that the Rules Review Commission negated these long-standing rules, thus the need by the CRC to re-establish the rules as 'temporary'. Chris Gibson added that rules are reviewed regularly, but they didn't get them done on time last year.

Board of Aldermen action following the BISAC 5-year report-

Chair Strother, Members Benson and Grant reported on the presentation to the BOA by Chris Gibson of TI Coastal Engineers at their February meeting. We reported that it was well received and of the approval of the initial funding for engineering, permitting, etc. We then commented on the success of BISAC bringing the plan to the BOA and getting the permit funding in place.

5/30 Year Beach Plan-Next steps –

Chris Gibson reviewed the next steps and went into the details of the testing, permitting and time frames he is estimating for getting to the point of being able to get started. The overall plan is to get Phases 1,2, and 3 as engineered beaches which along with Phases 4 and 5 will mean that all NTB shoreline will be an engineered beach and eligible for federal aid following storm damage. The borrow area for Phases 1, 2, and 3 will be DA143 at the southwest corner of Cedar Bush Cut and the ICW. There is enough sand in DA 143 to construct a 60 to 70 cubic yard/ft beach. He discussed the details of that process. We hope to put in a matching Shallow Draft Inlet grant in March or April 2025 to aid in the development of the disposal area. This will facilitate a 2026 start to the project. We want to have plans and grants in place so that we can have a 'One-Stop-Meeting' in June or July. We will need to explain to regulators, the Army Corps, and other state and federal agencies how we can harvest sand from this disposal site in a competent manner that protects the environment. We would also have our beach construction plan in place for the 'One-Stop-Meeting'. As part of the construction plan, we will be putting in a 'Temporary Retention Structure' to protect the inlet so there is no navigation impact. This component may need a

section 408 review to determine impact on navigation, a review that takes 6 months to a year to complete. Hopefully by March 2025 we will have permits in hand so construction can start in 2026. We also hope to have special state grant support.

New Business

A. Topsail Island Shoreline Protection Committee (TISPC) Charter

Mayor Pro Tem Benson said this is reminder that we are looking at the Topsail Shoreline Protection Commission Charter. It has been about eight (8) years since it was last reviewed. I sent some suggested revisions to this Board. The scope of the Shoreline Protection Commission has changed somewhat from strictly staying on top the state and federal rules and regulations for beach nourishment to measures that protect our inland water, our salt marshes, the public waters behind Topsail Island. So for example, we have been instrumental working with the North Carolina Coastal Federation in supporting a ban on non-encapsulated Styrofoam in dock floats and piers. We also worked through the North Carolina Coastal Federation to ban derelict vessels in coastal waters. We need to be thinking about protecting the ecosystem that makes up the land between the island and the mainland. This is just a reminder to the Board if you have comments, please give them to me by next Wednesday.

B. Board of Adjustment

Mayor McDermon said the next item is the Board of Adjustment with consideration of an application from Susan Meyer for the regular position vacancy for a three-year term.

Motion – Alderman Leonard made a motion to appoint Susan Meyer as a regular member of the Board of Adjustment to serve a three-year term; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Benson

Discussion

Alderman Grant - I do not know why certain members of the Board have chosen and choose to make this personal. It is not personal. I have never seen this put on the agenda the way that it is put on the agenda. I know that it is the mayor's type of thing. And I will remind the people on this Board, we had a long discussion about having multiple people and the people on the same boards. We went through this stuff three or four months ago. I think that the individual we are talking about here is an incredible asset to this Town. I think that she has shown that time and time again. But I will remind people that we made Stu (Harness) resign from one of these boards before we appointed him onto another board. It has nothing to do with the person/applicant on here. I do not like the fact that this was made a personal thing as to some kind of attack because that is not the case. I think that she has been an exceptional person working with this. But I will remind everybody here that we went through this before, okay, in terms of having somebody not on both boards. And we went ad nauseam on this back in October and November. And so my issue has nothing to do with this individual. I think that she would be great on either board. Again, we had this long discussion and all these discussions about who should be on what board and everything else. And we had other people that applied before. I have never seen it done this way. I think to the point that we just talked about, we noticed this for thirty (30) days and now we are taking action. Frankly, I do not understand why the mayor put this on there. I am the only person that went to the Board of Adjustment meeting and it was handled very well.

Manager Derian – I put it on the agenda.

Manager McDermon – I did not get the opinion that there was any type of personal attack happening. I think that what I needed to do was get a motion, and a second for who wants to have it on and who wanted to pull it off. I did not take it as a personal attack on anybody on this Board or even on any of the candidates.

Alderman Grant – I was not speaking to you Mayor. I am talking about the discussion we had about this being on the other agenda.

Mayor McDermon - I also understand that Miss Derian did reach out to folks who had applied previously going back quite a bit, and that there was not any additional interest right now.

Alderman Grant – We posted it for thirty (30) days, is my point.

Mayor McDermon – It is always open. You do not have to wait for us to announce that there is a vacancy. If you have an interest in any board that we have, you can apply at any point.

Alderman Grant - No offense, Mayor. But under that scenario, then what we would do is anytime we get an opening, we would randomly come in here, put it on there and say well, you could apply anytime you wanted. I thought the whole idea was trying to get other people to participate in this kind of thing. I am just telling you, I do not like this. I do not like the discussion that was had about the agenda item, because that is a personal attack. I have nothing against her at all. I would vote for her on either board. And if she is the only candidate, I would be happy with this, but I do not like this whole idea about we are vetting. I am not vetting her. I think that she is a wonderful candidate for whatever she wants to serve on. And she has proven that as a Board member up here, and every committee that she has been on.

When I went back and put down the attendance list, she was the only one that showed up for all the meetings, which I much, much appreciate. She is the alternate that fills the gap. My only issue is we went through this four or five months ago about being cautious about having somebody on both boards. My whole point was I did not see an urgency to have that filled, based upon my attendance at the last Board of Adjustment meeting. Because both of the alternates were there and the other members were there. That was my whole issue. I do not like the fact that this is something where I do not think that she is qualified. I do. I think that she is an exceptional contributor in her family, to this Town. I do not want that to be read anyway but that., but again, I just remember all this stuff. We went round and round and round and round this Board not very many long months ago, and everybody seems to have forgotten that. So I will get off my soapbox. But I really do not like the way this was handled in terms of the agenda.

Alderman Olszewski - My question is, how many boards is Ms. Meyer on now?

Mayor McDermon – She is on the Planning Board and an alternate on the Board of Adjustments. And to Rick's (Grant) point, we did have quite a bit of lengthy conversation about trying to have different members on each board. But unfortunately, if this position needs to be filled, we do not have a long list of candidates who are volunteering for the Town.

Alderman Grant - That goes back to the word need. And the answer is we had counsel advise us before that we do not have to have every position appointed. So it is not a need, it is a want. And like I said I would love to have that. But he (attorney) also went through ad nauseam, in a good way, about what quorums you need, what we are doing with appointing stuff. I think that we need to be careful that we do not screw up. We have to have four out of five votes.

Attorney Edes – For a variance you have to have four out of five votes.

Alderman Grant - This is not about her at all. I am fine if she gets appointed to this board. I just think this process stinks.

Alderman Olszewski - What I am hearing, though, is there is no sense of urgency right now to fill this position. That this committee is working with the alternates. So I am not hearing that she needs to be on both boards.

Alderman Grant – Just really quick, just so you understand it, if the consensus of this Board is to appoint her to that board, I am actually going to vote for it. It is the process that I do not like. I think she is very good. She attends, she prepares herself, she does all those type of things. So again, it is the process that I do not like and I do not like the discussion that went when we were talking about the agenda.

Alderman Leonard – I will tell you what I do not like. I do not like something that is this simple and straightforward got so spun out of control. That is what I do not like. This whole thing kind of turns my stomach, if you want to know the truth. No wonder we do not get anything done.

Alderman Olszewski - So currently, Mayor, she is an alternate.

Mayor McDermon - I just want to take a step back. The reason the current board is working the way it is is because she is an alternate and she comes to every meeting. In all fairness, she is operating as a board member, is the point I would like to make.

Alderman Olszewski – That is important for everyone to know.

Alderman Leonard – You know what else is important for everybody to know? We do not have a long line stretching all the way over the other side of the high-rise bridge for volunteers in this Town. We just do not and we never have. We need to take care of the people who are committed and dedicated, and who come to the meetings and who do their homework. I have been coming to these meetings since 2007 and we have always had problems getting qualified, interested volunteers. It is unfortunate that all of this bubbled up when it did, specifically with the individual it bubbled up with, because she is a real key asset to this Town.

Mayor McDermon - I have a first and a second to appoint Susan Meyer as a regular member of the Board of Adjustment to serve a three-year term. Clerk, please call the roll for the vote.

Clerk Avery called the roll as follows:

Alderman Leonard aye

Mayor Pro Tem Benson aye

Alderman Olszewski aye

Alderman Grant aye

Motion passed unanimously.

C. 2024 Washington DC federal meetings

Mayor McDermon stated these are in person meetings. She was able to go last year with Alderman Leonard and our Town Manager. The main goal for when we go up to the federal meetings is to speak about Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA). Aldermen Leonard has taken the main role as it relates to trying to get CBRA out of our town. She requested a motion to appoint Alderman Leonard and Ms. Derian, our Town Manager, to be our representatives for the attendance at the Washington, DC federal meetings.

Motion – Alderman Olszewski motioned to appoint Alderman Leonard and Alice Derian (manager) to represent us at these federal meetings; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Benson; unanimously approved.

Alderman Leonard said CBRA House Bill 2437 is still in the process of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scoring where they analyze what cost would result from passage of the bill. Passage of the bill would be advantageous to everybody because it would put more people into the pool to be available to get their insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Open Forum

1. Fred Fontana, 1866 New River Inlet Road, stated:

I want to thank Alice (manager) for continued pursuit of the bikeway project. Slowly, but surely, it may come to fruition.

The second thing is I am on the Homeowners Association (HOA) at the Topsail Dunes complex. I am a little disappointed to hear that Fran (engineer) said there is really nothing that can be done with the state of the dunes this year. I know some of you have probably gotten out there and walked the dunes. There is a big hole by building # 1 and the dunes are completely gone for probably a good 20–25-foot section. At high tide you could run right underneath building # 1. And also by building # 3, the dunes are down to maybe two feet at the most for a good 20-25-feet. I know a sand push does not make sense because it just rushes right away. This is the area that had all the sand put there two years ago. I know we are probably not the only place in that area, but I think if there was some way the Town could get some emergency sand it does not need to be that much sand. I really cannot wait for another year. But if anything can be done before the end of April, I would greatly appreciate it. I think I can clearly say our HOA board feels the same way. Thank you.

2. Don Hibbert, 2264 New River Inlet, # 105 stated:

This gentleman was talking about the bridges. We have ten (10) bridges going across New River, so I talked to Alderman Grant and confirmed that it is state property and not the Town's. So I

sent an email to the department in Raleigh, just thanking him for the condition of the roads and said there is no reason that he would know about this five-mile stretch of road. I would recommend that everybody in the room and anybody listening, send an email or a letter to the state saying these bridges need some help. Thank you.

Attorney's report - none

Mayor's report

I just have a few things. I certainly want to thank Barry (Burke) for all of his years of service. He will be missed around here when you walk in the front door. I also welcome Jessica, our new financial officer. If you have not seen the new fire truck it is outside. I also want to thank Jones Onslow for the assistance in the financial aspect of obtaining that truck. I did also hear and I echo Alderman Grant's frustration in our board appointee process. I suggest that we as a Board take another look at the process in general to see if there is any way we can make it better. Thank you for coming.

Aldermen reports

Alderman Leonard – I thank everybody for coming out today. A big thanks to Barry (Burke) for his service. It has been interesting watching him over the years doing everything from sitting here as a de facto receptionist to running around putting tickets on garbage cans that were left out late. He was kind of in the middle and has been a mainstay of the Town and I appreciate his service. He will be very much missed. Just because nothing is happening right this minute does not mean we are not pushing behind the scenes on CBRA. We spoke with Mike McIntyre as recently as eleven (11) days ago with regard to an update. I have been told that this process (budget) has to be allowed to happen and if anything, we could probably jeopardize the process by making phone calls and trying to kick the trash can over and things like that. It is frustrating because we have worked so hard on it and gotten so far and now it is letting the system work itself through. It has never been one of my strong suits. We will visit with Congressman Murphy and Congressman Rouzer and our senators when we go up in April. The North Carolina Beach Inlet Waterway Association (NCBIWA) spring conference will be in Emerald Isle on May 9 to the 10th. We need to think about who is going to go and how that will affect our sponsorship. Our sponsorship provides a certain number of attendees. I will be attending the groundbreaking on May 17th for the Carolina Museum of the Marine in Jacksonville. And lastly, I would like to remember today, eighteen (18) of our local marines who gave the full final measure twenty-one (21) years ago this month on March 23, 2003, in Iraq.

Mayor Pro Tem -I appreciate everyone who came out today and showed an interest in town matters. A heartfelt thanks to Barry (Burke). Any time you came into Town Hall, he always had a happy face and something cheerful to talk about. He will be missed. We do have a beautiful fire truck.

Alderman Olszewski - I wanted to thank everybody for coming out. And those who spoke today. It is so important as citizens to have your voices heard. I encourage all of you to reach out to Alice (manager) or the Mayor if you want to serve on a committee and you do not know what that committee does or want more explanation. I think the more of you that get involved on the committees, the better it will be for disseminating information around the town. And if we are

using acronyms during the meeting that you do not understand, please feel free to raise your hand so that we can explain those.

Alderman Grant - My memory of Barry (Burke) was we had just moved here and my trash did not get picked up. So I came down here. He was a guy that was around, so I walked up to him. He said he would take care of it and literally got in one of the trucks here, drove down to my house, took the garbage out of my trash cans, and took it to the dumpster that we had. Every time I would see him, I would talk about how that is customer service when he literally came down to my house and took the trash. We are going to miss him.

My second thing is what you (Olszewski) said about serving on committees and things like that. I think we have come a long way. The applause that Chair Strother talked about at the Beach, Inlet, Sound Advisory Committee (BISAC) meeting in terms of moving forward with this. And the Board of Adjustment meetings. One of the people who has since left, I think, was very effusive and very happy that we are going forward. Thanks to everybody working on that and thank you for coming.

Closed Session

Motion – Alderman Leonard motioned to go into Closed Session at 12:21 pm as per NCGS 143-318.11 (a): (3) Consultation with attorney and (5) Acquisition of property; seconded by Alderman Olszewski; unanimously approved.

Motion – Alderman Leonard motioned to return to open session at 1:13 pm; seconded by Alderman Olszewski; unanimously approved.

Mayor McDermon stated the Board has returned from Closed Session and under discussion was an opportunity to purchase conservation land that has been presented to the Board for consideration. No decision has been made.

Adjournment

Motion – Alderman Leonard motioned to adjourn at 1:14 pm; seconded by Alderman Olszewski; unanimously approved.