

Board of Aldermen Regular Meeting
Wednesday, April 2, 2025
MINUTES

The Town of North Topsail Beach Board of Aldermen held its regular meeting on April 2, 2025. A quorum of the board was present. Town Manager Derian and Attorney Ferguson were in attendance.

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

Board members absent: None

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McDermon called the meeting to order at 11:00 am. Alderman Pletl gave the invocation. Mayor McDermon led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor McDermon asked if there were any changes to the agenda.

Motion – Alderman Grant motioned to approve the agenda with the removal of item B (1) Finance Report) from the Consent Agenda to Continuing Business; seconded by Alderman Pletl; unanimously approved.

MANAGER’S REPORT

Manager Derian provided the following report to the Board.

Beach Projects and Operations

The Army Corps of Engineers Branch completed the navigation related dredging of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway and Channels to Jacksonville which placed beach compatible material on Phase 1 of the shoreline. They started work on January 5th and they officially completed it on March 20th. They placed approximately 78,000 cubic yards of sand along the Phase 1 area.

The Phase 4 project

The Phase 4 project beach nourishment is currently ongoing and is expected to pause once a work plan is presented by the engineer. To date we have placed approximately 170,000 cubic yards of sand.

Potential Cyclone # 8 dune project – the unnamed storm

Potential Tropical Cyclone # 8 (PTC) weekly meetings have continued with FEMA representatives and an on-site meeting was completed along the beach with FEMA’s beach representative on Friday, March 21st. We visited various locations to document. During the visit it was relayed that any information we could obtain to show a threat to infrastructure would be helpful to to plead our case. I provided a video of the roadway flooding at Marina Way breach at

the manhole and also requested grade and below grade water and sewer information from ONWASA. That information has been shared with FEMA. The next step is to get cost estimates on that for FEMA as well. FEMA also requested an additional analysis and our engineer updated the volume due to the fact that they redid the analysis based on the updated recommended FEMA methodology on wave run up analysis during a 5 year storm. The 61,000 cubic yard estimate may be increased to 82,846 cubic yards should we be obligated funds by FEMA, these additional cubic yards could be a future consideration to be placed potentially next season. The additional cubic yards and estimate were written into the project scope that is pending my sign off this week. We executed the contract with ST Wooten as approved by the Board of Aldermen at a special meeting held on March 19th. A project page has been created. Work is anticipated to start in April and the contractor will be accessing the beach at the Jenkins Way beach access. The proposed dune project continues to move through the FEMA process for potential obligation of funds.

Cost share project for beach plantings

I have coordinated another cost share project with Coastal Transplants for sea oats and Bitter Panicum for property owners to purchase these at a discounted price up to a limited quantity. The Town splits the costs with residents 50/50. Coastal Transplants will administer the project. Delivery dates will be May 2nd, 9th 16th, 30th and June 13th. Plants will be delivered to Town Hall for pickup. Anyone purchasing these must plant them on a North Topsail Beach property. There will be an inspection 2 weeks after pickup to ensure plants have been installed at the address indicated on the form they fill out. The project will be live on Coastal Transplants website by end of day Monday.

Topsail Island Vitex Eradication project

Request for Proposals for this project were issued March 24th with bids due on April 11th. Treatment may begin in May and continue until September 2025. We have developed an interactive map showing properties identified with beach vitex and there is an online form for property owners to fill out for treatment. Forms and waivers must be completed before work can be done.

2025-2026 budget

Meetings with department heads were completed on March 6th and 7th. The schedule of meetings are April 10th, 14th, 15th and 16th. The second dates are on an as needed basis. There will be a Public Hearing on the proposed budget at the regular meeting on May 7th and the budget will be considered for adoption at the regular June 4th meeting.

OPEN FORUM – No one signed up to speak

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS AND HEARINGS

A. Coastal Engineer Monthly Report

Engineer Way presented the monthly report with the following highlights:

- The Phase 1 Corps Intracoastal Waterway project was completed and placed 77,000 cubic yards north of Topsail Reef condos.
- The final sections of the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the New River Inlet Management Plan are under review by the Army Corps of Engineers.
- The State grant nourishment project to place 230,000 cubic yards of material in Phase 4 is in progress.
- Post tropical cyclone survey was submitted to FEMA/NCEM for approximately 61,000 cubic yards in Phases 1-3 is expected to being in April.
- Investigations are on-going for the on the disposal area 143 beneficial reuse for nourishment of Phases 1, 2 and 3.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent agenda items include:

- Board of Aldermen March 5, 2025, regular meeting minutes
- Board of Aldermen March 19, 2025, special meeting minutes

Motion – Alderman Benson motioned to adopt the Consent Agenda as modified during the adoption of the agenda; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Leonard; unanimously approved.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

A. Onslow Shellfish Public Hearing

Alderman Benson stated Marine Fisheries is holding a Public Hearing on April 2nd at the Holly Ridge Community Center on 6 new shellfish leases in Onslow County. Our Board is opposing new leases. He suggested submitting a public comment at the hearing to show concern about new leases and location.

Motion - Mayor Pro Tem Leonard motioned to submit the letter as provided in the Board packet as a public comment at the Marine Fisheries hearing on shellfish leases amended to include two additional paragraphs on the Joint Grant proposal for Coastal Federation and Sea Grant and the fact that all three beach towns and two counties have requested a moratorium on new leases; seconded by Alderman Pletl; unanimously approved.

B. Finance report (moved from Consent Agenda)

Alderman Grant stated he has a hard time reconciling the financial report to the budget. He suggested all Board members submit requests for information they want to see in the budget information for the budget workshop. He questioned why there are so many funds for the beach, and he would like to understand that.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Registration and Sponsorship for N.C. Beach, Inlet and Waterway Association (NCBIWA)

Manager Derian explained the 2025 local governments meeting will be held May 8th and 9th in Emerald Isle at the Islander Hotel and requested Board approval of a Silver Level sponsorship in the amount of \$1200 and attendance at the NCBIWA conference.

Manager Derian explained the N.C. Beach, Inlet and Waterway Association (NCBIWA)
Manager Derian explained the 2025 local governments meeting will be held May 8th and 9th in Emerald Isle at the Islander Hotel and requested the Board approve a Silver Level sponsorship as done historically in the amount of \$1200 and attendance of 4 members at the meeting.

Motion – Mayor Pro Tem Leonard motioned to approve a Silver Level sponsorship in the amount of \$1200 and attendance at the NCBIWA conference; seconded by Alderman Benson; unanimously approved.

B. Requests for proposals – Audit Services

Manager Derian explained the Local Government Commission recommends soliciting for audit firms every 3 years. The audit for fiscal year 2025 will require a single audit as federal expenditures will be \$750,000 or more. Should the Board approve this, we have scheduled a release of the Request for Proposals for April 4th with date to receive proposals as May 6th.

Motion - Alderman Grant motioned to approve the solicitation of proposals for audit services; seconded by Alderman Pletl; unanimously approved.

C. Finance Officer position pay grade

Manager Derian stated the Board approved at the last meeting moving forward with MGT associates which is a recruiting firm to assist with vacancies. It was also requested that salary bands and pay grades be reviewed during this process. There has been a recommendation to increase the Finance Officer's position which is at a Grade 19 with a range of \$61,589 to \$95,432 to a minimal amount of \$105,000. She proposes Grade 24 with a range of \$78,579 to \$121,797.

Motion – Mayor Pro Tem Leonard motioned to increase the Finance Officer position pay grade from 19 to 24 as proposed; seconded by Alderman Benson.

Board members discussed higher pay grades and ranges and salary necessary to attract candidates.

Amended motion – Mayor Pro Tem Leonard amended his motion on the table to increase the Finance Officer position from pay grade 19 to pay grade 26 with a range of \$86,000 to \$134,000; seconded by Alderman Benson; unanimously approved.

D. Solid Waste, Recycle and Collection Agreement – GFL Environmental

Manager Derian notified the Board the review team of representatives from the 4 towns completed an evaluation of proposals received and unanimously recommended GFL Environmental as the preferred vendor for shared Solid Waste services. Each town will enter into a contract with GFL specific to each town's needs and requirements. Fees for off season will remain at \$17.85 and will increase to \$29.77 during peak season with more pickups. An average

monthly bill would be \$23.81. Service days remain the same. A bulk pickup has also been added to the contract.

Motion - Alderman Pletl motioned to approve the agreement with GFL Environmental to provide Solid Waste Services; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Leonard; unanimously approved.

E. Onslow County Water and Sewer Authority (ONWASA) update

Alderman Grant explained ONWASA just approved fifty million dollars for a sewer upgrade and has plans to eventually double the capacity. They are moving forward with an engineering study to put in another water tank in the north end.

OPEN FORUM –

- Bob Gherkins, 142 Oceanview, said on behalf of Ocean Sound Village they are the people that will be impacted if the Phase 4 project does not get finished. He said lack of planning and organization and not including Phase 4 in the need for critical dune work after the un-named storm is concerning.
- Teri Ward, 154 Oceanview Lane, asked for clarification on the sea oat plantings and whether having them install the plantings would be included with the 50/50 cost share, whether the new GFL fee is per cart or monthly for all carts and whether there is a plan if the Phase 4 project is not finished.

ATTORNEY REPORT – no report.

ALDERMEN REPORTS:

Alderman Pletl said the first of May begins turtle season. Those with an ocean front home might want to consider putting in ocean front turtle friendly lighting. Light bulbs are sold at Town Hall and at the turtle hospital.

Alderman Benson thanked Town Manager Derian for doing a wonderful job with all the things on her agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Leonard echoed Alderman Benson's comments about Manager Derian. The CBRA bill was filed March 5th, House Resolution # 1885. The Town website has a link to the bill to keep tabs on the progress of the bill. It was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources the same day. We will meet with individuals from this committee when we are in DC at the end of this month.

Alderman Olszewski mentioned fire safety concerns about using a fire pit on a deck with open flames under a roof. She encouraged those with rental properties to remind renters of Town rules and regulation regarding this.

Alderman Grant thanked everyone for coming.

MAYOR REPORT – Mayor McDermon echoed the comments of the Board members.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion – Alderman Olszewski motioned to go into Closed Session at 12:16 pm as per N.C.G.S. 143.318.11(a)(3) to consult with the attorney; seconded by Alderman Benson; unanimously approved.

Motion – Alderman Olszewski motioned to return to open session at 12:56 pm; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Leonard; unanimously approved.

A. New Business continued - Amendment to contract for legal services

Attorney Ferguson stated the amendment is to bring the agreement consistent with the amount of legal services that are being rendered as opposed to what was first estimated.

Motion – Alderman Grant motioned to approve the proposed amendment to the legal services agreement to amend the ‘not to exceed fee’ from \$36,000 to \$84,000 per year for every year this Agreement is in effect; seconded by Alderman Olszewski; unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion – Mayor Pro Tem Leonard motioned to adjourn at 12:57 pm; seconded by Alderman Grant; unanimously approved.

I certify that these are the official minutes of the Board of Aldermen adopted at its May 7, 2025, meeting.

*Nancy Avery
Interim Town Clerk*