MAYOR
Brian West

MAYOR PRO TEM
Spec Hosti

CITY COUNCIL
Nick Hale
Cam Jackson
Tony Ploughe
Nick Sears
Kathryn Williams

CITY MANAGER
Bret Bell

CITY CLERK
Fabian Mann

ASST CITY MANAGER
Michelle Owens

CITY ATTORNEYS
Edward M. Hughes
Tracy O'Connell

CITY OF TYBEE ISLAND

City Council Regular Meeting
April 23, 2026 — 6:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order — The City of Tybee Island City Council held a regular city council meeting on Thursday, April 23, 2026, at 78 Van Horne Avenue, Tybee Island, GA 31328. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Brian West at approximately 6:30 PM. Mayor Pro Tem Michael "Spec" Hosti, Councilmember Nick Hale, Councilmember Cam Jackson, Councilmember Tony Ploughe, Councilmember Nick Sears, and Councilmember Kathryn Williams were also present.
Administrative Staff Attendance — City Manager Bret Bell, Assistant City Manager Michelle Owens, City Clerk Fabian Mann, City Attorney Edward Hughes, and City Attorney Tracy O'Connell were present.

Invocation — The invocation was led by **Reverend Mike Miller.**

Pledge of Allegiance — The pledge of allegiance was led by **Mayor West**.

Consideration of Approval of Agenda

Councilmember Sears made a motion to approve the agenda apart from tabling Item 7 ("Approval of Resolution 2026-06, Amending the Rules of Council") until a future meeting. **Councilmember Hosti** seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously**.

Consideration of Items for Consent Agenda

- City Council Regular Meeting Minutes — April 9, 2026
- Approval of One-Year Contract with Watchtower Solutions, Inc. for Ocean Rescue Software in the Amount of $4,500.00
- Approval of One-Year Contract with Vector Solutions for Fire Department Training Software in the Amount of $3,609.00
- Adoption of Memorandum of Understanding with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Regarding North Beach Dune Appropriation

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City Manager Discussion

- Action Item List update

  City Manager Bret Bell provided the Mayor and City Council with high-level updates of the following items: beach and dune nourishment projects, ongoing wildfires, infrastructure improvements, Black Box Theater interior improvements, short-term rental application processing, Solomon Avenue road improvements, Memorial Park master plan project, designated driver campaign, Live Oak fiber installation, new fire station development, South End sandbar beach safety, lifeguard hiring and training plan, citywide fleet management program, and parking system improvements.

Citizens to be Heard

- Tybee Island Maritime Academy First Graders — "Horseshoe Crab Day"

  Students and faculty from Tybee Island Maritime Academy advocated for "Horseshoe Crab Day" on May 1, 2026. **Councilmember Jackson** made a motion to designate May 1, 2026, as "Horseshoe Crab Day" on the City of Tybee Island. **Councilmember Hosti** seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Public Comment

- No public comments were received.

Consideration of Approval of Consent Agenda

Councilmember Hosti made a motion to approve the consent agenda. **Councilmember Williams** seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Public Hearings

- Variance: Encroachments Into Required Front Setback - 18 Pulaski Street -40001 09003 -R-1 – The Tybee Trust (Jennifer Rutherford)

  *Councilmember Jackson recused himself from the discussion and consideration of the variance request due to his personal and professional relationship with the applicant. Councilmember Jackson exited the dais.

  Community Development Director Patricia Sinel provided an overview of the variance request. The applicant seeks a variance for additional encroachments into the front yard setback to expand the first and second floor decks towards the street, extending the roof line over the second-floor deck to match the expanded porches, and to screen enclose those expanded porches.

During the Planning Commission meeting on March 23, 2026, the Commission voted 5-1 to recommend approval with a condition; the applicant is only allowed to screen in the porches in their configuration that was approved in 2006. No other encroachments were recommended for approval.
The variance request does not meet the hardship definition or constitute unique physical circumstances, conditions, and/or considerations beyond that of surrounding properties, as known to staff.

Public Comments

The applicant's representative, **Jenny Rutherford**, presented a slide show detailing the variance request and the project's timeline. The core of her request entails classifying a 3.5-foot-wide strip on the second and third floors of her home as a "porch" rather than a "flat roof," allowing the construction of a roof over these sections, a continuous floor finish (tile), and full screen enclosure of the complete porch area on each floor. Ms. Rutherford emphasized that the variance includes no expansion and the matter is purely a classification consideration.

Dee Matkowski, an adjacent property owner, expressed disapproval of the request, stating that the applicant ignored the city code and extended her porches further into the setback without a permit. Mrs. Matkowski also read a statement from **Joan Garrett**, who lives across the street, describing the property as an eyesore.

Carmela Aliffi asked the Mayor and Council to disapprove the variance request. She further requested the Council to ensure standards are upheld and the project is brought into compliance with the city code.

Bryan Rish expressed his opinion that the project does not require a variance, just a permit.

Mayor and Council Considerations

Councilmember Williams made a motion to deny the variance request. **Councilmember Sears** seconded the motion. **Councilmember Williams** and **Sears** voted in favor of the motion. **Councilmember Hosti**, **Ploughe**, and **Hale** voted against the motion. **Motion failed 3-2.**

Councilmember Hosti made a motion to approve the variance request. **Councilmember Hale** seconded the motion. **Councilmember Hosti**, **Hale**, and **Ploughe** voted in favor of the motion. **Councilmember Sears** and **Williams** voted against the motion. **Motion passed 3-2.**

*Councilmember Jackson returned to the dais.

Executive Session

Councilmember Hosti made a motion to move into executive session regarding litigation and personnel. **Councilmember Williams** seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Councilmember Hosti made a motion to return to the regular meeting from an executive session. **Councilmember Ploughe** seconded the motion**. Motion passed unanimously.**

Adjournment

Councilmember Hosti made a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Councilmember Ploughe** seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

City of Tybee Island

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Brian West, Mayor

Attest:

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Fabian Mann, Jr., City Clerk