



TOWN OF SOUTHERN SHORES
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR
MEETING

5375 N. Virginia Dare Trail, Southern Shores, NC
27949

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www.southernshores-nc.gov

PITTS CENTER

Tuesday, September 3, 2024 at 5:30 PM

MINUTES

Present

Mayor Morey
Mayor pro tem Neal
Council Member Sherlock
Council Member Batenic
Council Member Neilson

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order.

Pledge of Allegiance

The council and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed following the Pledge of Allegiance.

Amendments to / Approval of Agenda

The agenda was presented to the council. A **motion** was made by Council Member Batenic to approve the agenda as presented, Seconded by Council Member Sherlock. The motion was carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Several items were included in the consent agenda, including surplus resolutions for the Police Department and Public Works, a fee schedule amendment, a budget amendment for Everyone's Playground, and approvals for Planning Board Chairperson & Vice Chairperson as well as minutes.

A **motion** was made by Council Member Sherlock to approve the consent agenda items, Seconded by Council Member Neilson. No discussion ensued, and the motion was carried with unanimous approval.

Surplus Resolution #2024.09.01 (Police Dept.)-Resolution Approving Conveyance of Personal Property to A Nonprofit Organization N.C.G.S. §160A-280

2. Surplus Resolution #2024.09.02 (Public Works)
3. Fee Schedule Amendment
4. Budget Amendment - Everyone's Playground
5. Approval of Planning Board Chairperson & Vice Chairperson
6. Minutes Approval

Presentations

Years of Service Acknowledgement - Jennifer Couture 25 years

Police Chief Kole recognized Jennifer Couture's 25 years of dedicated service to the Town of Southern Shores, highlighting her outstanding contributions and background in law enforcement.

Staff Reports

Planning/Deputy Town Manager

Planning Director Haskett shared updates regarding permits issued in August, including zoning, building, trade permits, and a stormwater management permit. Updates were provided on code enforcement, the comprehensive land use plan certification progress, and details regarding the next Planning Board meeting set for September 16th.

Police Chief

Police Chief Kole reported on calls for service, crimes reported, ~~arrests made~~, and arrests made throughout July and August. Noting specific figures in motor vehicle accidents, citations, and ordinance violations. The community resources and officers' proactive engagement were highlighted.

Fire Chief

Fire Chief Limbacher reported the monthly statistics of incidents such as structure fires, EMS calls, motor vehicle accidents, rescue operations, hazardous conditions, and more. These numbers reflected a slightly busier month compared to last year's numbers.

Town Manager

Town Manager Ogburn reported on several town-related matters, including:

1. Sidewalk Maintenance and CPOA Negotiations

- The CPOA (Chicahauk Property Owners Association) previously managed the maintenance of sidewalks within certain areas of Southern Shores. Following discussions with CPOA's former and current leadership, the Town is exploring taking over these responsibilities. The existing 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

between the town and CPOA currently assigns sidewalk maintenance to CPOA, including tree trimming and vegetation management. In exchange for assuming these duties, the Town is negotiating an expansion of the existing easement area by approximately 15,000 square feet (added to the current 60,000-square-foot area). This additional space could be used for public parking or for facilities supporting the town's ocean rescue services. Final survey work and MOU amendments are expected by November, after which sidewalk improvements will be implemented under a previously obtained bid.

2. Channel Marker Maintenance Agreement with SSCA

- Channel markers in the Jean Guite channel were initially installed and maintained by the Southern Shores Civic Association (SSCA). To formalize responsibilities, the Town is working with SSCA on a new maintenance agreement. The proposed MOU will keep SSCA as the legal owner of the channel markers and primarily responsible for maintenance. The Town will assist with necessary permitting for major repairs, such as when markers need relocation due to changing water depths. Funding for maintenance costs will be split equally between the Town, SSCA, and the Martins Point HOA. The finalized MOU will be presented at an upcoming council meeting.

3. Town Hall Renovations

- The planned renovations to the town hall include security upgrades and structural improvements. Updates will incorporate new security doors, an access control system, and modern security cameras. These upgrades address longstanding security limitations, as current systems are outdated and difficult to maintain. Bidding for construction is set to open soon, with a four-week window for submissions. Expected to present bids for council approval by November.

4. Document Scanning and Digitization Project

- The town has partnered with Multifamily Media Management LLC to digitize over 3,000 physical files from the Planning Department. The project includes indexing more than 2,100 blueprints, each taking approximately five minutes to upload, resulting in nearly 300 hours of work. Staff have been able to access the required files through direct requests to the company, ensuring minimal disruption to town services. Completion is anticipated by October 31. The files may be stored offsite until new storage areas are available after town hall renovations.

5. Cemetery Improvements

- Enhancements to the Southern Shores Cemetery include landscaping, seating, and access improvements. Diseased trees have been removed, two dogwoods were pruned, and six new benches from a local vendor have been ordered. The town is assessing costs for either pea gravel or aggregate for new walkways to improve accessibility and reduce maintenance. Additionally, software that uses QR codes to help visitors locate gravesites and identify available plots is under consideration, streamlining the process for the public. Landscaping bids are being gathered, and walkway options are being priced.

6. Juniper Bridge Project

- The Juniper Bridge replacement has been delayed due to the complexity of bid documents. The project is approaching final design stages, with a target to complete in-water work by February 15 to avoid delays due to fish habitat protection restrictions. Meeting this deadline is crucial, as any delay would push in-water work until September of next year. If necessary, a special council meeting may be convened to expedite contract approval.

7. Street Improvement Schedule

- Street paving and maintenance are scheduled for multiple areas around Southern Shores. Repaving work will begin on September 16 and is expected to conclude by late October. Specific locations and a schedule will be communicated to the public closer to the start date.

Town Attorney

Town Attorney Hornthal stated he had nothing additional to report.

General Public Comment

No members of the public signed up or expressed interest in commenting.

Old Business

No old business was addressed.

New Business

Southern Shores Entry Corridor Enhancement Committee

The agenda summary read as, at its August regular Council meeting, the Council discussed forming a committee that would make recommendations to the Town Council regarding a vision for the commercial area. The consensus was for staff to recommend a proposal for a committee charged with developing a comprehensive vision/plan for the 38 acres of commercial district.

Among other things, the committee should consider:

- Current Ordinances,
- Enhancements for pedestrians and bicyclists,
- Connectivity,
- Architectural standards,
- Economic vitality,
- Potential stressors,
- A process for continual review for compliance and success, and
- Maintaining the Town's identity.

Staff recommends the following positions to form a Working Group:

- Mayor or another Councilmember
- Mayor Pro Tem or another Councilmember
- 2 Commercial Property Owners
- 3 At Large members
- Deputy Town Manager/Planning Director

The council engaged in a detailed discussion on the formation of the Southern Shores Entry Corridor Enhancement Committee. This initiative's purpose is to formulate a small area plan addressing the town's commercial district. The plan aims to evaluate the current ordinances, consider enhancements related to beautification, sustainability, safety, community impact, and alignment with the town's long-term vision for the entry corridor.

Mayor Pro tem Neal proposed establishing a committee dedicated to exploring the commercial district's future in detail. The discussion included how this committee should potentially operate, assessing whether to commence independently or under consultancy guidance at initial stages.

There was an acknowledgment of the complexity involved in transforming the town's entrance not just aesthetically but incorporating a wider vision that involves stakeholder engagement and community feedback. The town council recognized that a refined and detailed vision was necessary, suggesting that citizen participation could introduce fresh perspectives aligned with community desires.

The council expressed support for the initiative, consenting to proceed. A plan was set to compile a potential committee members list to nominate and select at the next meeting.

Policy Amendments

Staff proposed two policy amendments; Benefits Program-Group Health Insurance and Leave without Pay.

In response to insurance and policy review requirements, updates were proposed to the personnel policy to clarify health insurance eligibility and leave accrual.

The policy now explicitly states that employees must work a minimum of 30 hours per week to qualify for health insurance, aligning the town's policy with requirements from their insurance provider. Additionally, it was clarified that employees on unpaid leave will not accrue benefits like holiday pay, annual leave, or sick leave during that period.

The council approved the updates to the personnel policy without further discussion.

Motion made by Council Member Batenic to approve the personnel policies as presented, Seconded by Council Member Sherlock. Voting Yea: Mayor Morey, Mayor pro tem Neal, Council Member Sherlock, Council Member Batenic, Council Member Neilson

Sand Fence & Beach Grass

Town Manager Ogburn presented a proposal to continue with the successful sand fence and beach grass installation along the shoreline. Acknowledging the previous success of such undertakings, it was noted that the current sand fences were densely packed, and the beach grass was thriving, enhancing the overall safety and aesthetics of the beach area.

A request was made for an additional \$13,000 from the Beach Nourishment Capital Reserve Fund to supplement the existing \$24,000 annual budget for further sand fence installation and beach grass planting. The plan is to install a second row of sand fences by a contractor, spanning from just south of Trout Run to just south of Hickory Trail, enhancing the effectiveness of the current setup. Additionally, beach grass will be planted from the endpoint at Pelican's Watch going north for approximately one mile, ensuring extended protection and regrowth.

Council Member Sherlock and other council members praised the volunteers for their commitment, often working through the colder months to ensure optimal results, with efforts set to continue before the year's end.

Motion made by Council Member Sherlock to authorize the town manager to proceed with the outlined beach project, Seconded by Mayor pro tem Neal. The motion carried unanimously. Voting Yea: Mayor Morey, Mayor pro tem Neal, Council Member Sherlock, Council Member Batenic, Council Member Neilson

Tourism Impact Grant

Town Manager Cliff Ogburn presented a proposal to apply for a \$200,000 Tourism Impact Grant to fund necessary repairs and upgrades to the Southern Shores multiuse path. This path is a key infrastructure asset, heavily used by both residents and visitors for recreational and transportation purposes. The project aligns with feedback from the community, emphasizing the importance of maintaining existing infrastructure. The grant application will target repairs for older sections of the path, specifically from Third Avenue to Fifth Avenue, where the asphalt surface has significantly deteriorated. The proposed repairs will include replacing the aging asphalt with concrete, a more durable material that will reduce the need for future maintenance.

The funds will be exclusively used for high-priority areas needing resurfacing and structural upgrades. The improved concrete surface will enhance safety, reduce tripping hazards, and provide a smoother experience for cyclists, pedestrians, and others using the path.

Town Manager Ogburn noted that recent public input has emphasized the need to prioritize maintenance of current paths. This maintenance-first approach is viewed favorably by residents and reinforces Southern Shores' commitment to preserving and improving essential amenities.

Mayor pro tem Neal **moved** to authorize the town manager to apply for a tourism impact grant for existing multiuse path improvements, Seconded by Council member Batenic. The motion carried unanimously. Voting Yea: Mayor Morey, Mayor pro tem Neal, Council Member Sherlock, Council Member Batenic, Council Member Neilson

Council Business

Council Member Neilson began the council business discussion by commending the town for its featured video on Current TV, highlighting the excellent work of those involved, and emphasizing the importance of exploring local community services such as video production initiatives. He invited everyone to visit the town's website and access the video content presented through Current TV. Further discussion centered on the potential of conducting a film festival to showcase the best local video productions, suggesting it would be a way to celebrate and promote the local talent across different communities, institutions, and educational sectors.

Council Member Batenic provided insights from the recent tourism board meeting. He shared that tourism revenues were experiencing fluctuations but appeared to be leveling out. He attributed some variations to calendar quirks affecting revenue reporting across the periods.. He highlighted how such revenues directly support local community projects, such as sidewalk development and improvement grants. Council Member Batenic hinted at exciting ongoing initiatives involving partnerships with the county, though specifics were held until formal announcements could be made.

Council Member Sherlock discussed her involvement in the August meeting of the Albemarle Rural Planning Organization, which focuses on establishing regional legislative priorities. She brought attention to the notable progress shared about the Mid-Currituck Bridge, encouraging residents to check the town's website for the latest updates. She also recognized the ongoing work by community members towards enhancing the town cemetery, highlighting input and assistance from community volunteers

Mayor Morey, in concluding the council business section, simply confirmed the next meeting date of October 1st.

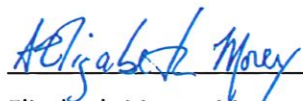
Closed Session

Council Member Sherlock moved to enter a closed session according to N.C.G.S § 143-318.11(a)(3), Seconded by Council Member Batenic. The motion carried unanimously. Voting Yea: Mayor Morey, Mayor pro tem Neal, Council Member Sherlock, Council Member Batenic, Council Member Neilson.

Adjourn

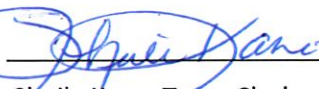
Upon returning to open session and taking no action, Council Member Batenic moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 PM, Seconded by Council Member Neilson. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:


Elizabeth Morey, Mayor



Respectfully submitted,


Sheila Kane, Town Clerk

The attached documents are incorporated herewith and are hereby made a part of these minutes.