



**TOWN OF HOLDEN BEACH
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC HEARING/REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026 – 5:00 P.M.**

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Holden Beach North Carolina met for a Public Hearing/Regular Meeting on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Public Assembly. Present were Mayor J. Alan Holden; Mayor Pro Tem Page Dyer; Commissioners Sylvia Pate; Keith Smith and Tom Myers; Town Manager Bryan Chadwick; Town Clerk Heather Finnell; Assistant Town Manager Christy Ferguson; Inspections Director Tim Evans; Finance Director Daniel McRainey; Police Chief Steve Barger; Lieutenant Frank Dilworth; and Town Attorney Sydnee Moore.

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE 26-02, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE HOLDEN BEACH CODE OF ORDINANCES, SECTION 30.15 VOTING AND QUORUMS

Mayor Holden called the public hearing to order. Town Clerk Finnell explained this is the last step in the process if the Board would like to adopt the ordinance to make the quorum consistent with the Rules of Procedure the Board currently has in place and the general statute.

John Hunter said he hopes the change in voting has nothing to do with the AI data centers being proposed for the area.

Mayor Holden closed the public hearing at 5:05 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Holden called the regular meeting to order and asked for a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Commissioner Smith to approve (the agenda); second by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer; approved by unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

No comments were made.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of the Special Meeting of April 10, 2026, Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 21, 2026, Minutes of the Special Meeting of May 1, 2026, Police Report, Inspections Department Report, Finance Department Report and Public Works Department Report

Motion by Commissioner Pate to approve (consent agenda items); second by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer; approved by unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON WARD AND SMITH CONTRACT FOR FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2026

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson explained each year the Ward and Smith contract comes before the Board and is effective July 1st. They did not increase their prices. The engagement letter outlines what they are working on. They are currently working on a dredge spoil issue as related to canal dredging and the upcoming dredging planned for the fall. A part of the contract will be paid from the canal dredging fund and the majority will be paid from BPART.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer to approve the contract with Ward and Smith; second by Commissioner Pate.

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson reviewed the items listed in the engagement letter and answered questions on grant funding in response to Commissioner Smith's questions. The contract also includes work performed by the Ferguson Group.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 26-02, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE HOLDEN BEACH CODE OF ORDINANCES, SECTION 30.15 VOTING AND QUORUMS

Town Clerk Finnell stated the Board held the public hearing at the start of the meeting. This is the final step to make the Town's quorum definition consistent with the general statute.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer to accept Resolution 26-05 and Ordinance 26-02; second by Commissioner Pate.

Commissioner Myers said he is still opposed to this. He doesn't think there is a problem that needs to be solved and it will make it more difficult to get a quorum if one is needed. Commissioner Smith stated we are always constantly improving our processes and procedures in what we do in life. He provided examples and said he sees this as refining what we have and making progress. Commissioner Pate explained they are trying to make the quorum consistent with the general statute.

The motion passed by a 3 – 1 vote with Mayor Pro Tem Dyer and Commissioners Pate and Smith voting for the motion and Commissioner Myers voting in the negative.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' VACANCY

The Board voted by ballot and selected Robert Brown. Votes were as follows: Robert Brown – Mayor Pro Tem Dyer and Commissioners Pate and Smith; Maria Surprise – Commissioner Myers.

Town Clerk Finnell presented the oath of office to Robert Brown.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWN AND MCGILL ASSOCIATES FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (COMPREHENSIVE DESIGN PLAN FOR BLOCK Q, JORDAN BOULEVARD AND BRIDGE AREA)

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson stated last month the Board had a draft contract in their packets. The cost has been added for the Board's review tonight. Based on budget discussions, they are estimating that about \$8,000 worth of work will be completed this fiscal year and the rest will fall in next fiscal year.

Commissioner Smith asked about the Board's involvement in the process. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson detailed the process.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer to approve McGill Associates' contract; second by Commissioner Smith; approved by unanimous vote.

PROPOSAL AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO INITIATE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)/REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) PROCESS FOR ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS PLANNING SERVICES RELATED TO THE PIER PROPERTIES

Commissioner Smith said there are a lot of questions surrounding the pier and the financial portion. He said the Town needs to have something if we are going to try to obtain federal or state funding. He said this would be an opportunity to create an economic impact study that can be used to ask for assistance.

Motion by Commissioner Smith to initiate the RFP/RFQ process for the economic and business planning services. The Town could do one of three things or all three – an economic impact study, a long-term economic plan and/or a business and operations plan for the entire pier property.

The Board discussed if they are able to take action based on the wording of the agenda item.

Commissioner Smith removed his motion.

Motion by Commissioner Myers to change item 11 agenda topic to say proposal and possible action to initiate request for qualifications/request for proposals process for economic and

business planning services related to the pier property located at 441 Ocean Boulevard West; second by Commissioner Smith; approved by unanimous vote.

Motion by Commissioner Smith for the Board to initiate a RFQ/RFP process for economic and business planning services related to the pier property located at 441 Ocean Boulevard West, Holden Beach, otherwise known as the Holden Beach Fishing Pier; second by Commissioner Brown.

The Board discussed if it would be a RFQ or RFP. Town Manager Chadwick said it would be a RFQ. The Board discussed how to proceed. Commissioner Pate said they need clarification on exactly what they would want someone to do. She thinks the Town needs a plan. Mayor Pro Tem Dyer isn't opposed to the idea, she thinks it is premature at this time. She thinks there is too much up in the air until the Town receives the results of the underwater inspection. Commissioner Smith said this could be working in the background while the Board determines what the pier would look like. He provided details on how his proposal could assist the process of moving forward with the pier. The budget process was discussed. Commissioner Pate agreed there needs to be an economic impact study; she is just questioning the timing. Commissioner Smith said he spoke with Representative Miller and he indicated something like this would help the Town. He doesn't want to lose the opportunity for state funding by waiting to start the process. Commissioner Myers said the Town did have specifications for a pier. He said we had an engineering preliminary design for a pier, a not to exceed cost estimate and a funding plan. He said there seems to be a pivot and the Town is going down the path of repairing the pier. He said they have been told by the engineer that is a more expensive path. Commissioner Smith said this would be needed if it is repaired or replaced. Commissioner Pate said you need a business plan to know what you going to do. Commissioner Smith stated they can push back the economic impact study and work on the other two items. Town Manager Chadwick explained in order to create a plan you would need to know what kind of business the Board is looking at. How to move forward and the need to turn the Board's discussion into clear directions before moving forward was discussed. Waiting on the underwater survey results before moving forward was also discussed.

Commissioner Smith with Commissioner Brown in agreement withdrew his motion.

UPDATES AND DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED BUDGET FOR NEXT FISCAL YEAR

Town Manager Chadwick said he has a few updates since the last budget workshop. The Board tasked staff to research what increase would be needed for water fees for capital improvement needs. Staff is proposing an increase of \$3.50 on the base rate. Finance Director McRainey said the sewer capital fee will go down \$204 from last year. \$3.50 over 12 months is \$42 so it is still a net cost decrease, but it will do what we need operationally.

Town Manager Chadwick explained the Police Department would like to add four part time police officer positions. There won't be any extra costs from what is proposed in the current budget. He provided the reasons for this recommendation. Chief Barger provided additional information on how the part time positions would assist his department. He explained how vehicles would be accommodated within existing resources. Town Manager Chadwick said he

would like to discuss this at the June 4th meeting so we could move forward before the budget is approved. The Board was 100% in agreement to move forward with starting the process.

Town Manager Chadwick said we have discussed that next fiscal year will be the last payment for the Central Reach Project. Once the project is completed, we would be due back \$1.21 million. Assistant Town Manager Feguson explained that was for the county to hold in case the Town defaulted on our payments. Town Manager Chadwick stated we received word that we may receive the funds back sooner than anticipated. The Board needs to discuss what they would want to do. He reviewed options to move forward. The Board would prefer to wait until the check is in the hand before making a decision. Commissioner Myers wants to make sure we comply with the occupancy tax law when we receive the money back. Commissioner Smith would like to know if the \$1.2 million is restricted to the 2% or if those obligations have already been met. Town Manager Chadwick answered that we will need to investigate.

Commissioner Myers asked about the \$2.8 million that is proposed to be paid to the county for the biosolids project. Finance Director McRainey explained the amount is coming from the capital fund balance.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT – TOWN MANAGER CHADWICK

- Ocean Boulevard Stormwater – meeting is being coordinated between the Town, McGill and the Corps.
- Block Q Restrooms – restrooms are open.
- Block Q Stage Area – work is continuing, with the flooring being installed this week and hopefully the roofing next week.
- Halstead – work is completed and open to the public.
- Lockwood Folly Bend Widener Project- dredging is completed.
- Resilient Coastal Communities Program – the survey is on the Town's website to help identify potential projects. A blast was sent out yesterday.
- Canal Dredging – plans are being made to dredge canals next winter. Staff is continuing to work with the Corps on the cost of dredge spoil disposal.
- Pier Property – RFQ will be sent out in the next couple of days.
- Inlet Hazard Area – staff attended the recent CRC meeting and are actively involved in discussing possible changes. More information will be coming out.
- Paving – work is completed.
- DA 293 – Corps is conducting maintenance.
- Restroom Maintenance and Cleaning – staff is analyzing and making changes. Had more damage to property over the weekend.
- Beach Access Trash Receptacles – staff continues to monitor the receptacles since the change and continues to monitor the beach strand for excess garbage.
- Tax Laws – staff continues to monitor proposed changes on the state level. Staff has composed letters to Senator Rabon and Representative Miller concerning this issue.
- Attorney Request for Proposals – had one response on the first round. We solicited responses twice. Board will discuss in the future.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL ITEMS

Will Carter provided feedback on moving forward with the pier.

Rick McInturf explained the HB Alliance is going to set up a free event July 4th weekend.

Rich Massey invited the Board and staff to get a free hotdog.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

- This Sunday is the first concert of the year, Special Occasion Band.
- May 20th begins the day you can't have dogs on the beach between 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Dogs always have to be on a leash.
- Chapel Services will be at 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. starting this Sunday.
- Public Safety Center ribbon cutting is June 11th at 1:00 p.m. Everyone is invited.
- Reminded property owners to make sure to have house numbers as required.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Dyer

- Thanked everyone who interviewed for the open commissioner seat. It was pleasant to see that much interest and hard to pick. All candidates were well qualified. Please stay involved if you did not get picked. Wished Commissioner Brown good luck.
- Have a safe Memorial Day. Watch out for everyone.

Commissioner Pate

- The pier property is a concern and priority of hers. Said wouldn't do it at the expense of the Town's budget. Need to all get on the same page moving forward.
- Pleased to see the completion of the fire department on Sabbath Home Road. Looking forward to the day we have our own station on the island. It is a priority.
- Excited about the summer concert this Sunday and the progress of the new stage. Hoping this is the beginning of a lot of many projects we need to come to fruition.
- If in the inlet this weekend, be extra cautious. That is another issue we need to deal with. We are spending a lot of money for dredging. There has been a bill introduced for opening it up for hardened structures. If you have an interest in that, reach out to Senator Rabon or Representative Miller and tell them how you feel about that.
- Hopes you and your family have a safe and enjoyable Memorial Day. Keep in mind the real reason for celebrating it.

Commissioner Smith

- Thanked God for where he lives. Can't believe he lives at this beach every day.
- Is pleasantly surprised with the amount of citizens that live here and the ones who own houses here and live in other parts of North Carolina that are becoming engaged. People are lending their ears and providing opinions. Most of it is positive. Would love to hear from property owners.

- Explained that people can utilize 911 for emergencies and non-emergencies.
- Welcomed Commissioner Brown.

Commissioner Myers

- Welcomed Commissioner Brown.
- Thanked everyone for participating and getting involved.
- Hopes you have a wonderful Memorial Day weekend.

Commissioner Brown

- Thanked the Board for their support. Will need their guidance in the upcoming months and hopefully years. It is a wonderful opportunity to be able to serve.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:46 p.m. by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer; second by Commissioner Myers; approved by unanimous vote.

J. Alan Holden, Mayor

ATTEST:

Heather Finnell, Town Clerk