



**TOWN OF HOLDEN BEACH
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026 – 5:00 P.M.**

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Holden Beach, North Carolina met for a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, February 17, 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; Police Chief Jeremy Dixon; Public Works Director Chris Benton, Fiscal Operations Specialist Penny King; and Town Attorney Sydnee Moore.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Myers would like to add an item for discussion and possible action on a plan to fill the vacant commissioner seat. He also would like to change the order of items 7 and 8 so the Audit Committee's report can come before the discussion on making changes. The Board discussed how to move forward.

The consensus of the Board is to reverse items 7 and 8.

Town Manager Chadwick will bring the vacancy up during his report. The Board will discuss the process at that time.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer to add an executive session on the end for personnel; second by Commissioner Smith.

Mayor Holden said 18a would be the executive session and 18b adjournment.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Joseph Genovese spoke against changes to the current policy for paid parking dates. He suggested coming up with ways to enhance the program. He suggested solutions for the parking areas, bathrooms and trash.

Carlton Pittman thanked Chief Dixon for his service to the Town. He talked about staffing in the Police Department.

Jim Bauer suggested having Chad Hock fill the commissioner vacancy since he received the next highest number of votes in the recent election. He talked about utilizing emergency pumps for stormwater management. He suggested asking the Town to find out what they want for Block Q. He suggested utilizing property on private lots for paid parking.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 20, 2026, Police Report, Inspections Department Report, Finance Department Report and Public Works Department Report

Motion to approve the minutes by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer; second by Commissioner Pate.

Staff answered questions regarding the reports from the Board.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON AUDIT COMMITTEE TASKERS

Commissioner Myers explained the Audit Committee was tasked with two items. With regards to the tasker to advise the Board about potential improvements to the collection of occupancy tax revenues, the committee concluded that the property management organizations were almost certainly compliant and the concerns were primarily associated with individual property owners who might not be fully aware of their responsibility to pay occupancy taxes. The committee's recommendation is for the Town to implement a communications campaign focused on making sure rental property owners are aware of their responsibilities and aware of the materials available to them from the Town to make them comply. The committee recommends the Town implement a process that allows people to submit challenges for properties that they perceive to be noncompliant. In regards to the tasker about possible improvements to the BPART Fund Balance, he said at the end of the last fiscal year there was over \$8 million in the BPART Fund. The question was where the money come from. He explained why it was important to know based on restrictions to the fund. The intent was to develop a policy that clearly documented the composition of the balance relative to the restrictions. That could be used to determine where the money could be spent. The current reports cannot answer the question of where the money came from. He said the committee realized a policy could not be adopted until the Town solved that limitation. Commissioner Myers said the

committee's recommendation on that tasker is to consider addressing this during the 2026/2027 budget development process.

Motion by Commissioner Myers that we accept the committee's work, thank them for their service, declare the taskers to be complete and to agree to consider their recommendations during the 2026/2027 budget development process; second by Commissioner Pate.

Commissioner Smith said the committee did a lot of work and thanked them for their efforts. He agreed with the motion but isn't ready to implement the recommendations. Commissioner Pate said the way she took it is that they would be considered as part of the budget process. Town Clerk Finnell read the motion.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON AUDIT COMMITTEE TASKERS

Town Clerk Finnell explained at the January meeting the Board directed staff to prepare an ordinance removing the commissioner from the Audit Committee. Ordinance 26-01 makes the change and corrects a couple of typos. The proposed ordinance also incorporates a clarification to the meetings and attendance section as suggested by Commissioner Pate.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer to accept Ordinance 26-01; second by Commissioner Pate.

Commissioner Myers reviewed the history of the committee, why it was established and set up the way it is. He doesn't think there is any harm keeping this safeguard in place. Having a commissioner on the committee eliminates the problem of not knowing what the Board was looking for the committee to do in a tasker. He would like to leave the committee unchanged at this time. Commissioner Smith said the disadvantage to having one commissioner is that one commissioner doesn't speak for the Board. He thinks it will streamline it more if they stay consistent with all the boards. He would like to see the number of members revised and suggested the minimum be three. He would like to discuss Section B and discuss narrowing the powers and duties. How to move forward was discussed.

After discussion Commissioner Smith recommended making three changes. He would like to change the minimum membership from two to three; and delete the monitoring sections, (B4 and B5). Mayor Pro Tem Dyer and Commissioner Pate agreed with the proposed change. Commissioner Myers did not.

Motion by Commissioner Dyer to accept the amendments of three members instead of two and strike 4 and 5 under section B. Mayor Pro Tem Dyer agreed the motion is to accept the amendments and approve the ordinance. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion.

Commissioner Myers explained why he thinks the functions being removed are valuable functions for the committee to perform. Commissioner Smith suggested changing the word

monitor to review. The Board further discussed the motion. Town Clerk Finnell reviewed the motion.

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 TO DIRECT ADVERTISEMENT OF TAX LIENS ON REAL PROPERTY

Fiscal Operations Specialist King said pursuant to NCGS 105-369, the tax office is required to advertise unpaid property taxes for the 2025 year. In compliance with the statutory requirements, the Town must advertise unpaid property taxes in a local paper. She asked the Board to authorize the advertisement of the 2025 delinquent real property taxes.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer to allow the tax collector to advertise the tax liens; second by Commissioner Myers.

Commissioner Pate asked if it is about 10% not collected. Fiscal Operations Specialist King replied yes and it is usually around that amount this time of the year. She sent the second notices on February 13th. You can then advertise after 30 days. Our normal rate for uncollected fees is around 2%, this is just based on the timing.

The motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF CONTRACT BETWEEN MCGILL ASSOCIATES AND THE TOWN FOR STORMWATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said last month the Board selected McGill in response to the Request for Proposals for the stormwater projects. The contract is here for consideration. The last page of the contract shows a Notice to Proceed through June 30th. The Board would accept the whole contract if they award it, but this fiscal year we will encumber \$180,000 where we budgeted \$300,000. The remainder would fall into the next fiscal year. This is based on the timing of work that could be completed. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said originally when the engineer's estimate came in for the Town to apply, the \$300,000 was not predicated on construction oversight. This contract takes the Town through construction oversight. Commissioner Smith asked about the attorney reviewing the contract. Mayor Holden said the motion could be subject to attorney approval.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer to recommend approving the contract. Mayor Holden added subject to the attorney's approval. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion; motion approved by unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE SELECTION OF FIRM TO PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE DESIGN PLAN FOR JORDAN BOULEVARD/BLOCK Q AREA

Town Manager Chadwick stated three submissions were received, McGill, HDR and Pinnacle. He explained how the responses were ranked. McGill received the most points beating HDR by a score of 455 to 450. The Board should consider what they want in the master plan final product before a contract comes back before the Board. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson provided background on the process. This Board has not said what they want to see. She detailed the different paths the Board could choose to move forward. The Board discussed how to proceed.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer to accept the RFQ from McGill and then have the Planning Department work with the Board and staff to narrow the scope; second by Commissioner Pate.

Commissioner Myers said he favors HDR and detailed his reasons why. Commissioner Smith agreed they are a top-notch firm, but he thinks they went beyond the scope.

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 TO CHANGE PAID PARKING ENFORCEMENT DATES

Town Manager Chadwick said at the January meeting the Board asked staff to supply information on the paid parking program. He reviewed the numbers from the trends Otto provided. October, November and December are the three lowest months listed in 2025. You need to keep in mind that would be \$25,000 a month. Those revenues would have to be offset in the budget next year. Mayor Pro Tem Dyer explained she didn't want to go to year-round parking until the Town had more amenities. She suggested offering free parking from the weekend of the festival until January 2nd and explained why. Once we get more amenities that may need to change. Commissioner Smith likes the concept. He talked about the people who use the parking program. He said public relations is a factor in the situation. If the Town can offer two months, he thinks it would go a long way in the community as a goodwill gesture to show it is just not about money. He explained how that could result in increased occupancy tax collection. Commissioner Smith said the Board talked about the revenue decrease but hasn't talked about expenses. He said the Town needs to understand that before making a decision. Commissioner Pate had a lot of people contact her that have differing opinions. She is supportive of looking at it. It is difficult decision. You can't compare the Town to others. We need to look at it from the perspective of what is best for Holden Beach. Commissioner Myers is not clear who the Town is doing this for. There are costs associated with sharing and he thinks it is fair to share some of those costs with the people we are sharing the beach with. It will reduce revenue and the Town will need to make it up. He tried to get reduced rates for property owners and was not successful. He suggested reduced rates in the off season. He remembers what it was like before paid parking. The Board further discussed how to proceed.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON ESTABLISHING FEDERAL PRIORITIES

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson explained each year as part of our federal advocacy, the Board has to formally adopt what they want the priorities to be. Funding priorities in her memo (hereby incorporated into the minutes) look similar to last year. Under policy, they are suggesting that when they go to Washington, they are focusing on advocacy so that Cat G from FEMA does not go away. Also to better understand proposed changes from the legislators' perspectives. It is alarming that there are no representatives from North Carolina on the committee they put in charge of looking at this. Staff is also suggesting to still advocate for the beneficial use of dredge material placement. There is an additional policy opportunity available, but she suggested leaving it open in case something comes up later.

Commissioner Myers asked if the Town still has an issue of finding a place to put the spoils after dredging the canals. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson answered that as part of the Town's advocacy issues in the past, Congressman Rouzer put forth legislation. She provided details on the legislation.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer to accept Assistant Town Manager Ferguson's recommendations for the federal priorities; second by Commissioner Myers; approved by unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL ITEMS

Carlton Pittman asked that Chief Dixon be allowed to speak during the comments instead of during Town Manager Chadwick's report.

Chief Dixon addressed the crowd with a speech regarding his resignation and reflected on his time at Holden Beach.

Bob Babington is in favor of paid parking. He thinks the Town should open it in the offseason. He would like to see property owners get a break and provided feedback on the program.

Martie Arrowood inquired about the Audit Committee's responsibilities. She suggested looking at boat parking, pickleball courts and a dog park for Block Q. She would like more trash cans to be added during the budget season. She wished Chief Dixon well and suggested hiring from within to replace him.

Jim Bauer wished Chief Dixon well. He talked about the paid parking program and costs (sand, employees) that could be covered from the revenue of the months being discussed. He suggested the Board ask the town what they want to see for Block Q.

Shane Bell, a former employee spoke in appreciation of Chief Dixon's leadership.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- Block Q Stage Area - plans are complete. Staff will do code review and then we will distribute a Request for Proposals (RFP).
- NC Resilient Coastal Communities Program – the information has been sent to the organizations.
- Southeastern Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan – it is in process. The Board will be getting an action item within the next month.
- Halstead Park – the contractor will begin work within the next couple of weeks. The pier is closed due to safety until further notice as previously advertised.
- Auditor Selection – RFPs have been received for review by staff and the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee will be meeting. Board selection should be at the March meeting.
- Lockwood Folly Funding - Congress has approved an appropriation for maintenance of the Lockwood Folly Inlet for \$900,000.
- Canal Dredging – plans are being made to dredge the canals next winter.
- Ocean Isle Borrow Area – Ocean Isle has requested to expand the Shallotte borrow site. Fran Way is composing a response for the Town.
- Commissioner Vacancy –

The Board discussed the process for filling the vacancy. The Board would like interested people to submit a resume and the Application for Board Membership with a three-week deadline. The Board will see how many applications are received and then decide how to move forward.

- Employee Updates - Ryleigh Gleason has been promoted to utility billing specialist. Jessica Camara has been promoted to detective. Sergeant Adam Milligan has graduated from FBI LEEDA training. It has been an honor to work with Chief Dixon. He will do great.
- Easter Egg Hunt – will be held on Good Friday.
- His report from this point forward will be handed out at the meeting. The report will be posted when the meeting information is blasted.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

- Be sure to vote. There are a lot of hot issues. Brunswick County is now the number one county in America for growth. Talked about infrastructure (water and sewer, highways). We are growing faster than what we have in place can accommodate. Pay attention and vote accordingly.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Dyer

- Chief Dixon did an incredible job. He is a wealth of knowledge and a great leader. Explained why she is thankful for what he has done for the Town.

Commissioner Pate

- Appreciates everyone coming out. Hopes they will continue to do so and to send emails.
- Appreciates the Essentials of Municipal Government training.
- Expressed appreciation for Chief Dixon and wished him well.
- Had the birthday celebration. Thanked staff for organizing the event.

Commissioner Smith

- First interaction with the Police Department was with Shane Bell. Thinks it is a testament to Chief Dixon that Mr. Bell wanted his son, Austin Bell to work for him. Appreciates what Chief Dixon built.
- Thanked God for the staff, the Board members, the beach and our community.

Commissioner Myers

- Thanked Chief Dixon for his years of service. Wished him well.
- Thanks to everyone attending and who is engaged.

CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTE 143-318.11(A)(6)

Motion by Commissioner Smith to go into Closed Session at 7:22 p.m.; second by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer; approved by unanimous vote.

OPEN SESSION

The Board went back into Open Session at 8:27 p.m. No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Smith at 8:27 p.m.; second by Mayor Pro Tem Dyer; approved by unanimous vote.

J. Alan Holden, Mayor

ATTEST:

Heather Finnell, Town Clerk