



**TOWN OF HOLDEN BEACH  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026 – 5:00 P.M.**

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Holden Beach, North Carolina met for a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Public Assembly. Present were Mayor J. Alan Holden; 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 McRaney; Public Works Director Chris Benton; Lieutenant Frank Dilworth; and Town Attorney Sydnee Moore. Mayor Pro Tem Page Dyer participated via conference call.

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

*Motion by Commissioner Smith to approve (the agenda); second by Commissioner Pate; approved by unanimous vote.*

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Irvin Woods expressed his concern over the swales in the stormwater plan and provided his input on how to move forward. He said he is representing a half dozen people (he submitted the names of Dan Turcotte, Pamela Whitfield, Mladen Mastnack, Jim and Karen Toombs and Meredith and Dan Altieri).

Maria Surprise submitted written comments on items 9 and 12 that could be read online. She said she had great subsequent conversations with Commissioners Pate and Smith and provided details.

Shaun Stripling details her concerns with the swales in the stormwater plan.

## **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 16, 2025, Police Report, Inspections Department Report, Finance Department Report and Public Works Department Report

*Motion by Commissioner Pate to approve the consent agenda items as presented; second by Commissioner Myers; approved by unanimous vote.*

## **DISCUSSION AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Town Clerk Finnell explained the Code of Ordinances requires the Board to select a Board member to serve on the Audit Committee. Commissioner Pate said there has been some concerns relating to if a commissioner should be a part of the committee and the scope of work for the committee. She suggested deferring the selection to February to get feedback before making the selection.

*Motion by Commissioner Pate that we delay the appointment of the commissioner to the Audit Committee until the February meeting at which time we can come back with some recommended changes to the scope of work and the composition of the Audit Committee; second by Commissioner Smith.*

Commissioner Pate explained why she felt a commissioner shouldn't be on the committee. Mayor Pro Tem Dyer agreed. The Board discussed if a commissioner needed to be appointed while the ordinance is being reviewed based on the current ordinance and if other changes should be included in the ordinance. Commissioner Myers said he would be happy to continue to serve for another month. He explained the committee completed their assigned tasks and they will present them in February.

The consensus of the Board is to have the current member continue to serve until February and to have the town clerk bring a draft ordinance to remove the commissioner from the committee to the next meeting.

## **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON SELECTING AN ENGINEERING FIRM FOR THE TOWN'S STORMWATER PROJECT**

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson explained staff sent out a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for engineering services for stormwater projects. She said staff recommends using McGill. The next step would be for McGill to prepare a contract for the Board's review. Based on the timeline, staff is suggesting the Board schedule a special meeting to review the contract.

*Motion by Commissioner Smith that the staff directs McGill to bring back the contract for consideration as soon as possible; second by Commissioner Pate.*

Commissioner Smith asked about the concerns from residents from earlier. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said her understanding is if we deviate from the plan, the Town can lose their

funding. Public Works Director Benton provided information on the proposed swale. Commissioner Pate understands the concerns of the citizens but doesn't feel comfortable questioning the expertise of the engineers especially if the Town is subject to losing the funding. Commissioner Myers said he really wishes there had been more opportunity to provide input on the designs. He said he does have concerns. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said the total project is \$2.9 million. The Corps would reimburse the Town 75% of the cost. Mayor Pro Tem Dyer said stormwater is something that the Town has been working on for several years and thinks the Town needs to move forward at this point. Commissioner Smith asked if there is a moratorium following the completion of the work to prohibit the Town from making changes. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson responded that would be a question between our attorney and the Corps' attorney. Commissioner Smith detailed a potential way to move forward in the future. Mayor Holden provided information on grates on Ocean Boulevard. He explained that is a project from a while ago, but environmental rules now prevent that.

*The motion passed unanimously.*

### **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO CHOOSE A STAGE DESIGN FOR BLOCK**

Town Manager Chadwick explained the Inspections Department has worked hard and will present two options. Inspections Director Evans reviewed the site plan. He explained there are two options to consider. Staff is in favor of the one with the cupola. The structure and dance floor are both 40' x 40'. Stormwater issues need to be taken into consideration. We have a state stormwater permit. Once we reach 10,000 square feet of impervious area, we would have to activate the major state stormwater permit. He reviewed components of the design. David Wood worked on the design. The Board needs to decide if they want to move forward. The Town is in a position to get engineering design work and then put it out for a proposal. The stage is two feet off the ground. It is designed to be least obstructive during a storm. The Board discussed the construction, dimensions, placement, stormwater and the stormwater permit. Stormwater will be retained onsite.

*Motion by Commissioner Pate that we approve the Elevation A design and direct the staff to move forward with the project; second by Commissioner Myers; approved by unanimous vote.*

### **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 26-01, RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN SHORE AND BEACH PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION**

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson provided background on the proposed resolution.

*Motion by Commissioner Pate that we adopt the resolution commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association; second by Commissioner Myers; approved by unanimous vote.*

## **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 26-02, RESOLUTION AMENDING THE HOLDEN BEACH FEE SCHEDULE (2026 RECYCLING FEE)**

Town Clerk Finnell explained the Town received the updated fees assessed by GFL for people who utilize curbside recycling. The annual cost for people participating in the program will be \$122.93 per bin. The fee schedule needs to be updated to reflect the new amount.

*Motion by Commissioner Smith that we approve Resolution 26-02; second by Commissioner Pate; approved by unanimous vote.*

## **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO CHANGE PAID PARKING ENFORCEMENT DATES**

Mayor Holden suggested studying parking data. He would like to review the monthly and yearly income and have future discussion about giving consideration to the program. He will probably ask to have it on the next meeting's agenda for further discussion. He asked the public to share their thoughts on the program.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL ITEMS**

Jim Bauer said the Town should have more emergency pumping ability. He provided feedback on how he thinks the Town should move forward with emergency pumping. He inquired why the proposed stage needs a roof.

Will Carter said he voted against the pier bond referendum but does want a pier. He asked the Board to move forward with the pier.

John Woods talked about how the stormwater project will help the Town. He suggested putting 10/10/10 on your dunes.

Regina Martin asked the Board to move the meeting time to later to accommodate people who work.

## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

- We changed a little around on the agenda. There are consent agenda items. If you have questions on anything for the staff, just give us a call.
- Block Q restrooms are still in process. The Master Plan RFQ will be back January 30<sup>th</sup>. Recommendations for a firm is planned for February.
- NC Resilient Coastal Communities Program – information has been sent to organizations for dissemination of possible projects for community engagement.
- Southeastern Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan – Planning & Inspections has been working with Brunswick and other counties in the area to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Commissioners will be presented a resolution to adopt the updated plan in the coming months.

- Halstead Park – scope of work that was previously advertised has been changed to include new piles and is on the website now. The pier is closed due to safety until further notice as previously advertised.
- Employee Updates – Chief Dixon will be leaving at the end of February to take the place of the retiring chief in Shallotte. We will miss him. He is an amazing employee and a true leader. We have the position posted and will begin the process in the coming weeks. Megan Hegadore will be leaving to pursue flight school.
- Upcoming Events – the Town will celebrate its birthday on February 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Strategic Planning – members have expressed interest in the meeting in New Bern. The February meeting date would need to be changed. We prefer to do the process here to involve the whole Board and staff. Staff is looking into organizations to do it inhouse. We didn't budget for this, so we may need to plan for it in the late summer/early fall. The Board discussed how to move forward. Mayor Holden said the consensus is to hold one inhouse.
- Upcoming Budget – need the Board to decide on individual goals. Please keep your submissions to five items. Went over plans for budget process. Send availability and goals to Town Clerk Finnell by February 16<sup>th</sup>.

The Block Q RFQ process was discussed.

## **MAYOR'S COMMENTS**

- The Board agreed by consensus to accept Tracey Thomas' resignation from her commissioner position.
- Reminded people to make sure they have house numbers posted on the water side and street sides of their houses.
- Cold weather is coming. Good time to look at exposed pipes.
- Had the blessing of having a lot of good employees through the years, Chief Dixon being one of them. Have a lot of people who have been with us a good number of years, as well as the newly hired. Looks forward to the continuation of a good management team.
- Has sad news. John Quinton Holden passed away. Provided history on his background and of his connection with the island.

## **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Mayor Pro Tem Dyer

- Apologized for not being able to attend in person. Had a conflict. Appreciates everyone's patience.
- Thanked staff for their hard work.

Commissioner Pate

- Thanked everyone for attending and their interest in the Town.
- Appreciated her conversation with Maria Surprise about her public comments. She didn't say what she had said she did. She explained her comments on election day. Feels strongly about working together. Wants to do what's best for Holden Beach. Is tired of the negativity.

This is only the second meeting. Have a lot of challenges and issues they all want to work on. Give them a little time so they can move forward in a strategic fashion.

- Regrets that Ms. Thomas resigned from the Board. Wishes she would have represented the folks who elected her to the Board. Ms. Thomas made a lot of statements in her email that she thought were inaccurate; she talked about the last meeting being a hostile environment. She didn't perceive that. As they move forward with decisions on the pier, because the bond referendum didn't pass doesn't mean that the Board doesn't have the freedom to look at other ways to fund the project. Advocated for that the whole time she was running for office. Doesn't think they are being unethical or not representing the people if they do that. Wants to put the past in the past and to move forward in a positive and cooperative manner. Welcomes comments, suggestions and concerns.

#### Commissioner Smith

- Great crowd tonight.
- Staff does an amazing job.
- Would like to figure out a way to have volunteers be more hands on. Have a lot of educated and experienced people in our community. We have volunteers with boards. Provided information on how he would like to move forward with volunteers.
- Coming up on the Town's birthday. It is also his daughters' adoption day.
- Paid parking is a hot issue on social media. He explained there are four segments of people. He provided details on what the revenue from the program has been used for. Doesn't know what direction the program will go in, but glad the Board will be looking at it. When we started the program, there was only a couple of games in businesses. Since then, there are other vendors. Would like to look at that too.
- Found out today he has cronies. Found out that is a supporter you met during the campaign.

#### Commissioner Myers

- Thank you for coming and for being engaged.

### **CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTE 143-318.11(A)(3), CONSULT WITH THE ATTORNEY AND NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTE 143-318.11(A)(6), PERSONNEL**

Town Clerk Finnell read the reason to enter Closed Session.

*Motion by Commissioner Pate that we go into closed session at 6:35 p.m.; second by Commissioner Smith; approved by unanimous vote.*

### **OPEN SESSION**

The Board went back into Open Session at 8:54 p.m. No action was taken.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion to adjourn at 8:54 p.m. by Commissioner Smith; second by Commissioner Myers; approved by unanimous vote.*

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J. Alan Holden, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Heather Finnell, Town Clerk