

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 6, 2025 MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

Be it remembered that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Ocean Springs met in a Regular Meeting at City Hall at 6:00 p.m. on May 6, 2025. Mayor Holloway presided, and Aldermen Authement, Wade, Cox, Papania, Blackman, and Impey were present. Alderman Burgess was absent. City Attorney Will Norman, City Clerk Patty Gaston, Deputy City Clerk Vicky Hupe, Police Chief Steven Dye, Interim Fire Chief Chris Hupe, Code Enforcement Officer Joe Taber, Public Works Director Allan Ladnier, Human Resources & Risk Management Director Mindy McDowell, Grants Administrator Carolyn Martin, Interim Community Development & Planning Director Wade Morgan, Parks & Recreation Director Stephen Glorioso, and Project Manager Sarah Harris were also present.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Parks & Recreation Director gave the invocation and Alderman Blackman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Alderman Authement, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to accept the agenda.

PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATION

- a. Recognition of employment years of service:
 - 20 years: Human Resources Director Mindy McDowell
 - 15 years: Drainage Supervisor Stephen Farnsworth
 - 5 years: Street Laborer Cody Hickman and Fire Captain Samantha Guthrie

Human Resources Director Mindy McDowell, Street Laborer Cody Hickman and Fire Captain Samantha Guthrie accepted their certificates from the Mayor.

- b. Proclamation: 2025 Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week
Police Chief Steven Dye accepted the proclamation from the Mayor declaring May 11- 17, 2025 as Police Week and May 15, 2025 as Peace Officers Memorial Day.

- c. Proclamation: Ray Skillestad
The Mayor recognized Ray Skillestad for his twenty-three years of dedicated service to the students of the Ocean Springs School District.

- d. Presentation: Mississippi Songwriters Alliance

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Representatives from the Mississippi Songwriters Alliance, a non-profit organization, addressed the Board to promote the 16th Annual Mississippi Songwriters Festival, scheduled for September 18–21, 2025. Since 2010, the festival has grown to include professional songwriters who lead seminars, workshops, and mentoring for local artists. The group presented the Mayor with a plaque and a framed, signed print from the 15th Annual Festival.

PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Appeal of Planning Commission decision regarding a request to vacate the Right of Way at the northwest corner of Bienville Blvd and Washington Ave running north from Bienville Blvd. – PIDN: 60119048.000, 60119050.000, 60119054.000, 60119056.000, and 60119058.000; Planning Commission deferred action

A motion was made by Alderman Authement, seconded by Alderman Papania, and unanimously carried to open the Public Hearing.

The Interim Community Development Director explained that the Planning Commission deferred action on the request to vacate a city-owned right-of-way, as there is currently an active sanitary sewer easement on the property. The proposed project involves constructing a convenience store with gas pumps. An abutting property owner objected to the request during the Planning Commission meeting, prompting the Commission to table the item pending additional information regarding the sewer easement. Although the Project Manager later provided the requested information, it was not received by the Board prior to this meeting.

The City Attorney noted that legal concerns exist, including a state statute which prohibits the city from vacating platted land without written agreement from all abutting property owners. He recommended that a title search and plat review be conducted. He also cited another statute requiring that if the city vacates the land, it must compensate the adjoining property owners accordingly. The abutting property owners submitted a packet of documents, which a motion by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Authement, and unanimously carried, approved to be accepted into the minutes.

Alderman Cox stated that since the Planning Commission tabled the item, it should return to the Commission for further review once all necessary information is available.

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Cox, and unanimously carried to close the Public Hearing.

A motion was then made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to have a title opinion completed and the matter referred back

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to the Planning Commission.

AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Property insurance renewal update - Scott Lemon

Scott Lemon with Lemon Mohler Insurance Agency provided the Board with an update on the property insurance renewal. He reported that the property valuation has increased by approximately \$4 million. He also noted that the City has performed well, with no vehicle losses in the past two years. Mr. Lemon stated that he will have renewal options prepared for the Board to consider and take action on at the next meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Alderman Cox, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda except item 7-z pulled by Alderman Authement.

Mayor/BOA:

- a. Authorize and waive associated fees for Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA's use of the Civic Center on May 23, 2025, for their preschool graduation ceremony; to advertise the resources of the City
- b. Authorize the use of Martin Luther King, Jr. Park and waive all associated fees for Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church on Saturday, May 17, 2025; to hold a fundraiser with the sale of fish plates to raise money for mission work
- c. Authorize and waive associated fees for the American Red Cross' use of the Civic Center for a blood drive on June 24, 2025; to advertise the resources of the City
- d. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the Ocean Springs Library - Summer Library Program from 9:00 a.m. - noon on Tuesdays, June 10, 17, 24, and July 1, 2025, at the Ocean Springs Community Center; authorize to waive special event permit fee and rental fee; to advertise the resources of the City
- e. Approve the Run, Walk, Bike Permit Application for the 2024 MMSC 14th Annual 5k Fun Run/Walk on July 23, 2025, from 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., using

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the OS Bridge/Front Beach Route, at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost

- f. Approve the Run, Walk, Bike Permit Application for the Harley Half Marathon on Sunday, October 19, 2025, from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., at Front Beach - Ocean Springs/Biloxi Bridge, at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost
- g. Approve the Run, Walk, Bike Permit Application for the Casino Bridge Run on Saturday, January 3, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., at Front Beach - Ocean Springs/Biloxi Bridge, at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost
- h. Authorize a \$500.00 payment from Ward 5 funds to Heron Bayou Neighborhood Association to enhance the neighborhood entrance
- i. Authorize the reappointment of Doug Roll to the Ocean Springs Redevelopment Authority for a five-year term
- j. Adopt Resolution to request funds for the Mississippi Songwriter's Alliance through the Mary C and authorize the Mayor to send a letter of request to the Jackson County Board of Supervisors

Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center:

- k. Authorize the Mayor to sign the settlement and release agreement with Agence France-Presse and approve the \$500.00 payment

City Clerk:

- l. Authorize the City Clerk to execute the Municipal Election Contract with the Jackson County Election Commission for the June 3rd General Election
- m. Approve Minutes: Recess Meeting April 15, 2025
- n. Approve Minutes: Special Call April 24, 2025
- o. Accept the April 2025 Aged Receivables Report for Utility Billing
- p. Ratify check 132643 for payment to Crocker Heating & Air for Community Center A/C replacement

Police Department:

- q. Authorize Out-of-State Travel for Professional Training - Employee #2618, June 22-26, 2025, Jacksonville, FL - Managing the Patrol FTO Program

Human Resources/Risk Management:

- r. Authorize promotion of Sgt. John Kirkland to Lieutenant, effective May 10, 2025; Step 1, \$27.48 hourly rate; six months probationary status

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- s. Authorize promotion of Patrolmen Steve McMellon and Charles Smith to Sergeant, effective May 10, 2025; Step 1, \$25.25 hourly rate; six months probationary status
- t. Authorize removal of Firefighter Chad Jay from probationary status to full time status effective immediately
- u. Accept resignation of Parks Maintenance Technician Timothy Zaldana effective May 9, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- v. Authorize removing Sewer Laborer Mark Hawkins from probationary status to full time status, effective immediately
- w. Authorize removing Drainage Laborer John Rodenkirch from probationary status to full time status, effective immediately
- x. Authorize removing Water Laborer Mark Seay from probationary status to full- time status, effective May 14, 2025
- y. Accept resignation of Street Laborer Korbin Arevelo, effective April 30, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position

Planning Commission (PC):

- z. Approve a request for a Short-Term Rental permit at 241 Lovers Lane – PIDN: 61465013.100 - The property is zoned R 1.; PC recommends approval

Stephen Boskovich spoke in opposition to the approval of the STR permit, stating that the applicant had previously advertised and rented the property. A motion was made by Alderman Authement, seconded by Alderman Papania, and unanimously carried to table item 7-z pending review by the City Attorney.

Planning Department :

- aa. Accept Palm Pointe Performance Bond and Maintenance Bond

Grants Administration:

- bb. Authorize Award of the Gateway Sculpture to Phil Proctor / Nucleus Sculpture Studio, LLC – Funded through the Gulf Coast Restoration Fund (GCRF) – FY23 for Mary C. O’Keefe Cultural Center Rehabilitation and Signage – MDA

Building Department:

- cc. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through April 29, 2025
- dd. Accept Code Enforcement Report through April 30, 2025

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DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- a. City Clerk: Approve payment: Docket of Claims, all expenditures are appropriate and authorized by law, and spread the summary on the Minutes

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Impey, and unanimously carried to approve the Docket of Claims finding that all expenditures are appropriate and authorized by law, and spread the summary on the minutes.

- b. City Clerk: Accept the Monthly Budget Report

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to accept the monthly budget report.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Bill Moore addressed the Mayor and the Board.

MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM

Alderman Blackman provided an update on the Hanshaw Bridge project, stating that it remains on schedule.

A motion was made by Alderman Impey, seconded by Alderman Authement, and unanimously carried to hire Attorney Robert Schwartz to finalize the lease agreement for the 1515 Government Street Parking Garage.

A motion was made by Alderman Impey and seconded by Alderman Papania to authorize the City Attorney to amend ordinances in order to restore Civil Service protection to Department Heads, Assistant Department Heads, and Lead Positions.

The motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Aye: Alderman Authement, Alderman Papania, Alderman

Impey Nay: Alderman Cox, Alderman Wade

Abstain: Alderman Blackman

Alderman Cox stated there is an issue with the RFP for City Attorney. There are two separate postings: one for an in-house City Attorney position and another RFP for a firm to provide contracted City Attorney services. He noted a discrepancy between the qualifications listed in the employee job description and those outlined in the RFP. The Human Resources Director clarified that the RFP will be amended to match the employee job description, requiring a minimum of five years of experience as a practicing attorney and a valid license to practice law in the State of Mississippi. No motion was required, and the RFP will be amended accordingly.

