

CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN RECESS MEETING OF JULY 15, 2025 MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Be it remembered that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Ocean Springs met in a Recess Meeting at City Hall at 6:00 p.m. on July 15, 2025. Mayor Cox presided, and Aldermen Tillis, Stennis, Wade, Hinton, Pfeiffer, Blackman, and Messenger were present. City Attorney David Harris Jr., City Clerk Patty Gaston, City Clerk/Finance Director Christine Millard, Deputy City Clerk Vicky Hupe, Police Chief Steven Dye, Fire Chief A.J. Fitch, Building Official Darrell Stringfellow, 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 Assistant Director Duval Brown, and Project Manager Sarah Harris were also present.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Mike Barnett from First Baptist Church gave the invocation and Alderman Tillis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to accept the amended agenda.

PRESENTATION

- a. Julia Weaver & Melanie Allen - HOSA and the Ocean Springs Tree Canopy Renewal Project

Julia Weaver and Melanie Allen presented on behalf of the Historic Ocean Springs Association (HOSA) and the Ocean Springs Environmental Alliance, outlining a collaborative plan to protect and expand the city's tree canopy. The proposal aims to achieve 50% citywide canopy coverage within 10 years through proactive planting, comprehensive planning, policy development, and community engagement, with potential support from local and state funding sources.

- b. Recognition of employment years of service: 30 years - Tractor Operator Gerald Wescovich, 15 years - Police Lieutenant Josh Fox, 10 years - Beautification Supervisor Mike Hale, 5 years - Firefighter Joshua Brown and Police Sergeant Trey Smith

Firefighter Joshua Brown and Police Sergeant Trey Smith were present to accept their five-year certificates of recognition from the Mayor. Beautification Supervisor Mike Hale was also in attendance and accepted his ten-year certificate.

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF
ALDERMEN RECESS MEETING OF JULY 15, 2025 MINUTES**

- c. Proclamation honoring City Clerk Patty Gaston upon her retirement with 22 years of dedicated service

A proclamation was presented honoring City Clerk Patty Gaston upon her retirement, recognizing her 22 years of dedicated service. City Clerk Patty Gaston accepted the proclamation from the Mayor.

AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Agenda item 7-x Code Enforcement Report - William Betterton and Ellen Hall spoke about updating and enforcing City Ordinances.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. Authorization for Parking Garage Valuation – 1515 Government Street

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to authorize Global Valuation Services, Inc. to proceed with the fair market valuation of the parking garage at 1515 Government Street at a cost not to exceed \$2,000.

- b. Appoint CTA Representative

A motion was made by Alderman Wade and seconded by Alderman Tillis to appoint Joseph Bellman as the Coast Transit Authority Representative for the remainder of the term expiring July 31, 2026. The motion carried with a vote as follows:

Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Stennis, Alderman Wade, Alderman

Messenger, Alderman Hinton

Nay: Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Blackman

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to appoint David Hayden and Lethel Bowden to the Zoning and Adjustment Board for 3-year terms expiring July 31, 2028.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to appoint Robert Brown, Charles Fowler, and Susan Wooten to the Historic Preservation Commission for 4-year terms expiring July 31, 2029.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to appoint Dylan Lipe, Shannon Senseney, and Tara Thompson to the Parks Advisory Board for 5-year terms expiring July 31, 2030.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF
ALDERMEN RECESS MEETING OF JULY 15, 2025 MINUTES**

unanimously carried to appoint Alyson Creel, Evette Clark, and Stephanie Ferrell to the Library Board for 5-year terms expiring July 31, 2030.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Adopt Resolution Authorizing Bank Signatories

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Stennis to adopt the Resolution authorizing the Mayor Pro Tempore and Deputy City Clerk as Bank Signatories. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Stennis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Blackman, Alderman Messenger, Alderman Hinton

Nay: None

**b. Adopt Order ratifying a motion that was missed at the Special Call Meeting
July 7, 2025**

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Hinton to adopt an Order ratifying a motion that was missed at the Special Call Meeting on July 7, 2025. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Stennis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Blackman, Alderman Messenger, Alderman Hinton

Nay: None

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda.

Mayor/BOA:

- a. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for eAgent Picnic on August 9, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., at Fort Maurepas; at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost
- b. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for Addicted to Jesus Music Fest on September 20, 2025, from noon to 9:00 p.m., at Fort Maurepas Stage and Green; at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost
- c. ADDED: Authorize and waive all associated costs for Ocean Springs High School to use the Community Center on July 28, 2025, for teacher orientation
- d. ADDED: Authorize the Mayor to execute the Professional Services Contract with Chic Cody for Special Event Consulting services
- e. ADDED: Adopt Resolution Authorizing Request of Payment from Jackson

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF
ALDERMEN RECESS MEETING OF JULY 15, 2025 MINUTES**

County for Recreational Services

City Clerk:

- f. Ratify electronic payment to Amazon Capital for missed invoice to avoid late penalties

Police Department:

- g. Accept OSPD Monthly Report for June 2025

Fire Department:

- h. Accept OSFD Monthly Report for June 2025

Human Resources/Risk Management:

- i. Authorize removing Firefighter Seth Tillman from probationary status to full time status, effective July 10, 2025
- j. Authorize ratification of the employment of Christine Millard, City Clerk/Finance Director, effective July 10, 2025; \$39.91 hourly rate
- k. Accept resignation of Parks Grounds Maintenance Myikel Marks effective July 7, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- l. ~~REMOVED: Authorize employment of Ronnie Owens, Sewer Laborer, effective July 16, 2025; Step 1, \$15.35 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements~~
- m. Authorize employment of James Eckert, Sewer Laborer, effective July 16, 2025; Step 1, \$15.35 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements (Attachment Amended)
- n. Authorize employment of Jessie Galloway, Water Laborer, effective July 16, 2025; Step 1, \$15.35 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements (Attachment Amended)
- o. Authorize employment of Bobby Oxner, Firefighter I, effective July 21, 2025; Step 2, \$14.05 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- p. Authorize employment of Randall Retherford, Firefighter I, effective August 4, 2025; Step 9, \$17.27 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- q. Authorize employment of Tyler Ball, Firefighter II, effective July 24, 2025; Step 4, \$16.58 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC):

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF
ALDERMEN RECESS MEETING OF JULY 15, 2025 MINUTES**

- r. Authorize the change of Historic Preservation Committee meetings to the Thursday after the Planning Commission meeting at 6:00 pm
- s. Approve a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for partial demolition and exterior modifications at 208 Washington Ave - PIDN: 60137516.000; HPC recommends approval

Grants Administration:

- t. Authorize the Execution of Contract with Dale Partners for Stabilization of the Community Center Foundation in the Amount of \$24,500 – Funded by HB1353(hh)
- u. Ratify Submission of Two (2) Funding Applications to MS Department of Marine Resource (MDMR) FY27 Tidelands Program: 1) Front Beach Retaining Wall Improvements, and 2) Marble Springs Boardwalk
- v. Authorization to Execute Change Order #2 – Construction to Century Construction Group, Inc. in the amount of \$17,864.28 – Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center Exterior Renovations – Funding: SB2948(dddd), HB603(jv), GCRF

Building Department:

- w. Accept the Building Department Permit Report for June 2025
- x. Accept Code Enforcement Report through July 10, 2025
- y. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through July 7, 2025

Parks & Recreation Department:

- z. Authorize the execution of the Facility Use Agreement with Ocean Springs High School for the use of 57 Sports Complex on September 12th and October 22nd and authorize waiving all associated fees for the events

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
*ADDED: Pay App 4 for Lane Construction (Fort Bayou Storm Drain Improvements)

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

CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN RECESS MEETING OF JULY 15, 2025 MINUTES

- b. City Clerk: Authorize the adjustment of water/sewer accounts due to a finding that the customers did not receive the benefit of the utility and the excess usage was due to unforeseen circumstances

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to adjust the water/sewer accounts listed, with the finding that the customers did not receive the benefit of the utility and excess usage was due to unforeseen circumstances.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

William Betterton and James Lewis addressed the Mayor and the Board.

MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM

Alderman Tillis thanked the citizens who applied and volunteered to serve on various Boards and Commissions. He requested that the speed limit on Ocean Springs Road be reviewed, suggesting an increase from 25 mph to 30 mph. He also asked that the Short-Term Rental (STR) ordinance be reviewed with the goal of reducing the total number of STRs over time, and requested that public input be included in the process.

Alderman Stennis encouraged citizens to be patient as the new Board begins its work.

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to request assistance from Jackson County for funding to refurbish the old Police Station, including the installation of a new roof, a new HVAC system, and other necessary repairs.

Alderman Wade reminded everyone that the first "Breakfast with the Mayor" will be held tomorrow at 8:00 a.m. at 4 Bulls.

Alderman Blackman announced that the grand opening of the Singing River Health Care Academy will be held on August 14th at 11:00 a.m..

The Mayor acknowledged the recent transitions within the City, noting the presence of a new Board, new Mayor, new Police and Fire Chiefs, and a new City Clerk. He asked the public to be patient as the new administration settles in. He also expressed interest in forming an Ordinance Review Group and a Unified Development Code (UDC) Review Group in the future.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Wade, and

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF
ALDERMEN RECESS MEETING OF JULY 15, 2025 MINUTES**

unanimously carried to go into a closed session to determine the necessity of going into an executive session.

The City Clerk returned to the meeting and announced that a motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to remain in executive session to discuss personnel in the Planning Department and City Clerk's Office, potential litigation, Rosenberg litigation, and contractual negotiation.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to come out of the executive session where the following action was taken:

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Wade to offer Amanda Crose the Planning Director position. The motion carried with a vote as follows:

Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Blackman, Alderman Messenger, Alderman Hinton

Nay: Alderman Stennis, Alderman Pfeiffer

ADJOURN UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on AUGUST 5, 2025

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to adjourn.

The meeting ended at 8:27 p.m.

Bobby Cox 8/5/2025
Mayor Date

Chawna 8/5/2025
City Clerk Date

