CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
REGULAR MEETING OF AUGUST 5, 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 August 5, 2025. Mayor Cox presided, and Aldermen Tillis, Stennis, Wade, Hinton, Pfeiffer, Blackman, and Messenger were present. City Attorney David Harris Jr., City Clerk 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, Planning Director Amanda Crose, 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

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

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

PRESENTATION

a. Medical insurance renewal - John Lockard

John Lockard, with 90 Degree Benefits, reviewed the City's medical insurance renewal options. He recommended remaining with United Healthcare at an annual premium of $1,465,843, with a premium "holiday" credit of $122,000, resulting in a total annual cost of $1,343,843 for the same coverage and deductibles. A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to accept the recommendation and renew the medical insurance for FY 2025–2026.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Lima Properties, LLC – Martin Luther King Jr. Drive – PIDN: 60119334.000, 60119332.000, 60119330.000, 60119340.000, 60119328.000, and 60119328.050 – Requesting a zoning change from R-D Two Family Residential to CMX-1 Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed Use; PC recommends denial

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

The Interim Community Development Director explained that the rezoning request was returned to the Board after having been sent back to the Planning Commission. He stated that the Planning Commission again recommended denial, finding there had not been a significant change to the character of the neighborhood on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

Donovan Scruggs, representing Lima Properties, argued that there have been significant changes to the neighborhood's character and noted that the properties are designated as low commercial in both the current and proposed comprehensive plans. He further stated that the existing properties are nonconforming and do not meet current code requirements.

Public Input:

Against the rezoning to CMX-1: Joe Jewell, Sam Washington, James Lewis, Greg Gipson, Dee Frances Wichman, Ester Payton, Julia Illanne, and Asher Waller.
In favor of the rezoning: Joshua Ward.
Neutral: Brantley Broome.

Mr. Scruggs provided a rebuttal to public comments, stating that the previous drawing circulated is not representative of what the developers intend to pursue. He emphasized that any future plans would still require review and approval by both the Planning Commission and the Board of Aldermen.

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

A motion was made by Alderman Stennis and seconded by Alderman Tillis to uphold the Planning Commission's recommendation and deny the request to rezone PIDNS: 60119334.000, 60119332.000, 60119330.000, 60119340.000, 60119328.000, and 60119328.050, located on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, submitted by Lima Properties. The motion carried with a vote as follows:

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

AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Agenda Item 6-a:

Joe Jewell spoke against approval of the 2045 Comprehensive Plan.

Agenda Item 6-b:

Joe Jewell stated that Ocean Springs Road is poorly designed and requested that the left lane approaching the roundabout from the highway be closed and striped off.

William Betterton spoke against raising the speed limit, stating that safety data supports maintaining 25 mph from Deana Road to Highway 90.

Mike Messenger spoke in favor of increasing the speed limit to 30 mph.

Rick Cannon spoke in favor of increasing the speed limit, suggesting a progression from 45 mph to 35 mph to 30 mph at King Henry Road.

Randi Page spoke in favor of increasing the speed limit to at least 35 mph.

Agenda Item 6-c:

Joe Jewell spoke in favor of a resolution dissolving the Redevelopment Authority.

Agenda Item 6-d:

Joe Jewell spoke against increasing the number of Short-Term Rentals (STRs). Mike Messenger also spoke against increasing the number of STRs.

Agenda Item 7-c:

Joe Jewell spoke in favor of implementing a resolution numbering system.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Discuss approval of the Ocean Springs 2045 Comprehensive Plan Draft update-Slaughter and Associates/Mike Slaughter: PC Recommends denial

The Interim Community Development & Planning Director said the Planning Commission recommended denial of the plan as presented.

No action was taken.

b. Discuss adjusting the speed on Ocean Springs Road - Alderman Messenger

Alderman Messenger stated that residents of Ward 6 have requested an increase in the speed limit on Ocean Springs Road. Alderman Tillis noted that speeding is a safety concern after discussions with the Police Chief and the engineering design group. He suggested that a new traffic study be conducted in approximately six months and then reviewed. Alderman Hinton expressed his opinion that, regardless of the speed limit, golf carts should not be allowed on Ocean Springs Road. Alderman Messenger added that the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) originally approved a 35 mph speed limit for the roadway.

No action was taken.

c. Consideration and vote to adopt a Resolution to dissolve the Ocean Springs Redevelopment Authority - Alderman Pfeiffer

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer and seconded by Alderman Hinton to adopt a Resolution to dissolve the Ocean Springs Redevelopment Authority presented by Alderman Pfeiffer. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

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

d. Discuss Short-Term Rentals - Alderman Tillis

Alderman Tillis introduced a discussion about reducing the number of allowed short-term rentals (STRs). Alderman Hinton, who previously served on the Planning Commission, stated that the proper way to reduce the cap would be to place a moratorium on the waiting list for residential STRs (RSTRs). Once there are no applicants on the waiting list, the number of STRs would naturally decrease as licenses are not renewed or privileges are removed, thereby lowering the cap. Alderman Tillis agreed to add a moratorium and to refer the matter to the Planning Commission to present ideas for reducing the cap of RSTRs citywide and within the overlay district.

Alderman Pfeiffer added that she would like a "buffer zone" between STRs included in any new policy.

A motion was made by Alderman Tillis and seconded by Alderman Hinton to place a moratorium on applications for residential short-term rentals. The motion carried with a vote as follows:

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

NEW BUSINESS

a. Oath of Office for City Clerk/Finance Director Christine Millard

Mayor Cox administered the oath of office to Christine Millard for the position of City Clerk for the City of Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

b. Authorize the City Attorney to amend the Urban Renewal Plan Resolution - Alderman Stennis

Alderman Stennis introduced a discussion regarding the amendment of the Urban Renewal Plan (URP). She asked whether four parcels should be removed from the plan and if such removal would impact funding for the cleanup of the Public Works site, which is included among the parcels. The Grants Administrator stated that the current in-place funding would not be affected by removing the Public Works parcel from the URP. The

Mayor confirmed that funding would not be impacted. A motion was made by Alderman Stennis, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to table the removal of the parcels from the URP to allow the Grants Administrator to further research the impact of removing the parcels.

A motion was then made by Alderman Hinton and seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer to authorize the City Attorney to draft a resolution to designate the Board of Aldermen on the Urban Renewal Plan. 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

c. Consider and vote to Adopt a Resolution establishing a formal Resolution numbering system - Alderman Pfeiffer

Alderman Pfeiffer proposed a resolution to establish a resolution numbering system, beginning with this resolution as 2025-01, and applying the numbering retroactively to resolutions adopted since the July 1st meeting when the new Board took office. The Mayor suggested that, instead of applying the system retroactively, it should take effect from the date of adoption going forward. A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to authorize the City Attorney to revise the proposed resolution to implement the numbering system on a forward-going basis.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda, with the exception of item 8-j pulled by Alderman Hinton and items 8-k and 8-dd pulled by Alderman Pfeiffer.

Mayor/BOA:

a. Authorize and waive all associated fees for the Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce to use the Senior Center during Cruisin the Coast on October 8-12, 2025
b. Authorize and waive all associated fees for the Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce to use the Senior Center during the Peter Anderson Festival on November 7-9, 2025
c. Authorize and waive all associated costs for the Distinguished Gentlemen of Ocean Springs to use the Civic Center on Saturday, April 18, 2026, to host their largest annual fundraiser; to advertise the resources of the City
d. Authorize and waive all associated costs for the American Red Cross to use the

Civic Center on Tuesday, September 30, 2025, to host a blood drive; to advertise the resources of the City

e. Appoint Fire Chief Archie Fitch as the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Director as of August 5, 2025

f. Accept Ocean Springs School District (OSSD) letter of request regarding shortfall loan

City Clerk:

g. Adopt a Resolution to open the Uniform Assessment Schedule and Authorize to schedule a public hearing for August 19, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. to adopt the 2025-2026 Uniform Assessment Schedule

h. Accept the July 2025 Aged Receivables Report for Utility Billing

i. Authorize to advertise for Request for Proposals (RFPs) for Grounds Maintenance Services

j. Approve Minutes: Regular Meeting July 1, 2025

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to amend the July 1, 2025, minutes by removing an executive session entry regarding retaining attorney Robert Wilkinson for ongoing lawsuits, as the motion did not occur.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to approve the amended minutes for the July 1, 2025, Regular Meeting.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to further amend the July 1, 2025, minutes to correct the address in the motion for item 3-a to 4005 Government Street and to approve the minutes with both amendments.

k. Approve Minutes: Special Call Meeting July 2, 2025

Alderman Stennis noted that the agenda was missing the approval of the July 7th Special Call Meeting minutes referenced in the July 2nd minutes. A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the Special Call Meeting held on July 2, 2025, as presented.

l. Approve Minutes: Special Call Meeting July 14, 2025

m. Approve Minutes: Recess Meeting July 15, 2025

n. Authorize to declare surplus 52 Dell Computers (list attached), no use to the City, remove from inventory, and authorize disposal by AGJ Systems &

Networks, Inc., who will ensure secure and proper destruction

o. Authorize the Mayor to execute a 60-month-term contract with Uniti Fiber for City-wide internet services with a total of a monthly cost of $2,005.00

p. Ratify check to CSAT Law Enforcement Training due to payment required at time of class

Police Department:

q. Authorize Employee #2697 for Out-of-State travel to Moody, AL for Roadside Interview Techniques training on August 06-07, 2025

Human Resources/Risk Management:

r. Authorize ratification of the employment of Amanda Crose, Planning Director, effective July 30, 2025; $36.06 hourly rate

s. Authorize employment of Derick McGill, Patrolman, effective August 6, 2025; Step 3, $24.00 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements

t. Authorize employment of Landon Riley, Dispatcher, effective August 6, 2025; $14.50 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements

u. Authorize transfer of Full-time Dispatcher Jasmine Williams to Part-time Dispatcher, effective August 16, 2025

v. Accept resignation of Animal Control Officer Ronnie Ryan effective July 21, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position

w. Authorize employment of Brandon Gonzales, Parks Grounds Maintenance, effective August 6, 2025; Step 1, $14.00 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements

x. Authorize transfer of Street Laborer Wylie Miller to Maintenance/Sign Laborer, Step 1, $14.50 hourly rate; Beautification Laborer Kince Saucier to Street Laborer, same hourly rate, and Water Laborer Jessie Galloway to Street Laborer, Step 1, $14.00 hourly rate - all effective August 16, 2025

y. Authorize employment of Wendell Lancaster, Water Laborer, effective August 6, 2025; Step 1, $15.35 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements

z. Authorize employment of Timothy Stover, Water Laborer, effective August 6, 2025; Step 1, $15.35 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements

aa. Authorize employment of Erin Brown, Sewer Laborer, effective August 18, 2025; Step 3, $16.28 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements bb. Accept resignation of Maintenance/Sign Laborer Todd Callegari, effective July 15, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position

cc. Accept resignation of Sewer Laborer Mark Hawkins, effective August 22, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position

Grants Administration:

dd. Authorize Agreement – KCDBG: Fort Bayou Wastewater Improvements – Neel-Schaffer, Inc. – Amendment to Provide final construction phase oversight

Alderman Pfeiffer requested that an hourly rate for overtime be added to the agreement. The Grants Administrator explained that the agreement includes a not-to-exceed amount, so adding the rate would not change the agreement, and confirmed that the information will be provided. A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to authorize the Agreement – KCDBG: Fort Bayou Wastewater Improvements with Neel-Schaffer, Inc. – amendment to provide final construction phase oversight.

ee. Authorize Advertisement – KCDBG: Fort Bayou Wastewater Improvements – Manhole Replacement

ff. Authorize Extension for Grant Agreement – Gulf Coast Restoration Fund (GCRF) Applications – FY22 – MS Development Authority (MDA): Public Works Relocation

gg. Authorize Extension for Grant Agreement – Gulf Coast Restoration Fund (GCRF) Applications – FY23 – MS Development Authority (MDA): City of Ocean Springs – Public Works Relocation

hh. Authorize Extension for Grant Agreement – Gulf Coast Restoration Fund (GCRF) Local Match – FY23 for Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center Rehabilitation and Signage – MDA

ii. Authorize Execution of the Amended Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Funds Support Development of 400 Front Beach Drive for Public Access to Provide a Time Extension

jj. Authorization to Advertise for Special Project Engineering Consulting Services Pool

kk. Authorize Execution of Change Order #1 – Front Beach Sidewalk Improvements Phase III – Jackson County / GOMESA Funding – Busby Construction – No Cost Time Extension

Project Manager:

ll. Authorize Award – Taconi Gym Window Replacement – Jackson Brothers Construction Services, LLC in the amount of $89,958.75 – Funded with State

Appropriations in HB1353

Building Department:

mm. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through July 29, 2025

nn. Accept Code Enforcement Report through July 31, 2025

Parks & Recreation Department:

oo. Parks & Recreation: Authorize Facility Use Agreement with Shine Theater for use of the Ocean Springs Civic Center at a discounted rate due to City partnership

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 Stennis, and unanimously carried to approve the Docket of Claims, finding that all expenditures are appropriate and authorized by law, and to spread the summary on the minutes.

b. City Clerk: Accept the Monthly Budget Report

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

c. City Clerk: Authorize Budget Amendments

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to authorize the budget amendments as presented.

d. Board of Aldermen: Discuss appointments to Zoning & Adjustments Board and Parks Advisory Board

A motion was made by Alderman Stennis, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to appoint Eleanor “Liz” Elmore to the Parks Advisory Board to serve the remainder of Scott Elmore’s term, expiring July 31, 2026.
A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to appoint Will Thompson to the Zoning Adjustment Board to fill the unexpired term of Michael Smith, ending July 31, 2027.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Jewell, Eric Perez, Cynthia Sutton, Brian and Leah Rogers, Megan Swanson, Sam Washington, James Lewis, and Brian Whitmore addressed the Mayor and Board.

MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM

Alderman Tillis commented on the flooding issues mentioned during public comment. The Public Works Director explained that the project in question was originally built under county guidelines, and the related issues were inherited by the City following annexation.

Alderman Stennis asked downtown businesses and residents to remain patient during the ongoing Government Street roadwork.

Alderman Wade requested that sidewalks in Ward 3 be cleaned and that the sidewalk on Holcomb Boulevard near the upper elementary school be repaired.

Alderman Pfeiffer reported that the Witches Ride organization would like to donate witches' hats to decorate Cash Alley during the Halloween season. The Mayor advised contacting his office to coordinate the donation. She also requested updates on homes in Ward 4 listed in the Code Enforcement Report. Additionally, she asked the Board to consider adopting a policy to live stream special call meetings. The Mayor noted that special call meetings typically address personnel matters or emergencies, making it difficult for staff to set up live streaming for every instance. Alderman Pfeiffer also requested that agendas be posted to the City's Facebook page and expressed her appreciation for seeing Aldermen take ownership of agenda items.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to accept the resignation of Permit Clerk Karen Savoie, effective August 22, 2025, and to authorize beginning the process to fill the vacant position.

Alderman Messenger thanked the Police Chief for assistance with the removal of an alligator from the Lakeview Subdivision Pond and for discussions regarding Ocean Springs Road. She also thanked the Public Works Director and crew for their work in Ward 6.

Alderman Hinton stated that he would like to establish formal procedures for resolutions, including introduction, authorization, drafting, and agenda placement. A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to establish procedures and presentation guidelines for resolutions to the Board.

Alderman Hinton also proposed creating two review committees, one for the Unified Development Code (UDC) and one for ordinances. Each committee would consist of seven citizens nominated by the Aldermen (one from each ward and one at-large). The committees' findings would be submitted to the Planning Commission or to the department responsible for the related ordinance. The Planning Department would oversee both committees. He distributed review committee talking points for consideration. A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to submit the talking points to the City Clerk and City Attorney for review and to bring them back to the next Board meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and 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 Stennis, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to remain in executive session to discuss potential litigation, Fisher litigation, and Rosenburg litigation as open discussion would be detrimental to the city's litigation.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Hinton, 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 authorize Wilkinson, Williams, Bosio & Sessoms, PLLC to continue representing the City of Ocean Springs in the following cases until their conclusion: *Fisher et al vs. OS*; *Garriga vs. OS*; *Nguyen vs. OS*; *Clark vs. Romero*; *Dedeaux vs. Dedeaux*; and in matters regarding the Estate of Clement B. Saucier III, deceased. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:
>
> Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Blackman, Alderman Messenger, Alderman Hinton
>
> Nay: Alderman Stennis, Alderman Pfeiffer

RECESS UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on AUGUST 19, 2025

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to recess.

The meeting ended at 9:43 p.m.

Bobby Cox	9/2/25		9/2/25
Mayor	Date	Clerk	Date

City of Discovery
OCEAN SPRINGS
MISSISSIPPI
JACKSON COUNTY