

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
RECESS MEETING OF OCTOBER 21, 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 October 21, 2025. Mayor Cox presided, and Aldermen Tillis, Stennis, Wade, Hinton, Pfeiffer, and Messenger were present. Alderman Blackman was absent.

City Attorney David Harris, Jr., 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, Planning Director Amanda Crose, Parks & Recreation Director Stephen Glorioso, Project Manager Sarah Harris, Mary C. O'Keefe Center Director Sarah Qarqish, and Executive Administrator & Public Affairs Officer Laurri Garcia were also present.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to approve the amended agenda with the executive session item removed.

PROCLAMATIONS

a. 250 Years of Faithful Service by the United States Postal Service
George Collins and Dana D. Amos were present to accept the Proclamation on behalf of the United States Postal Service (USPS) and encouraged people to buy newly released stamps.

b. Lady Greyhounds Volleyball State Champions Day
The entire Ocean Springs Lady Greyhounds Volleyball Team and their coach, Christina Daigle, were present to accept the Proclamation declaring October 21, 2025, as Lady Greyhounds Volleyball State Champions Day, in recognition of their outstanding achievement in winning the State Championship.

Team members included Taylor Douglas, Layla Daley, Claire LeBatard, River Schmidt,

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Maggie Noblitt, Alden St. Amant, Isabel Brown, Ryleigh Register, Baylor Edmiston, Ashlynn Bonta, Jazzlyn Johnson, Lucy Longo, Lucy Pepper, Lilly Rutland, Rozlyn Vick, and Anna Hoffmayer.

AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

James Lewis (Agenda Item 5-a) asked for clarification regarding the authorization to execute the contracts. It was explained that the Board of Aldermen grants the Mayor the authority to sign the contracts on behalf of the City.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. Authorization to Award and Execute contracts and related documents for City Lobbying Services

A motion was made by Alderman Tillis, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to award the City's Lobbying Services Contract to The Capitol Group.

- b. 1515 Government Street Parking Garage Lease

The City Attorney explained that the appraisal for the parking garage utilized the cost approach and determined the fair market value for annual rent to be approximately \$600,000. Under the proposed lease agreement, the City would pay \$1.00 in rent, in addition to covering costs for casualty and liability insurance, cleaning, maintenance, elevator service, and the video security system for approximately 85% of the building.

Alderman Pfeiffer distributed a memo requesting legal and financial review of the proposed lease agreement. Alderman Hinton asked whether 2% tourism funds could be used to offset the associated costs.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to table consideration of the lease approval.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Tax Abatement Request from Lighthouse Assisted Living and Memory Care

Robert Wigle, representing Lighthouse Assisted Living and Memory Care, stated that Lighthouse employs approximately 100 full-time workers. He explained that assisted living and memory care facilities are eligible for ad valorem tax exemptions and noted that while up to ten years may be requested, Jackson County has already granted

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abatements; Lighthouse is requesting that the City's abatement run concurrently with the County's approvals (Phase I: five years; Phase II: seven years).

Alderman Messenger expressed concern regarding other newly annexed residents not receiving tax abatements.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton and seconded by Alderman Wade, to authorize the City Attorney to draft a resolution approving the request from Lighthouse Assisted Living and Memory Care for a five-year (100%) abatement of City ad valorem taxes on improvements for Phase I and a seven-year (100%) abatement of City ad valorem taxes on improvements for Phase II, to run concurrently with Jackson County's previously granted abatements. The motion carried, with Aldermen Tillis, Stennis, Wade, Hinton, and Pfeiffer voting aye, and Alderman Messenger voting nay.

- b. Authorize the Mayor to execute the Alexander | Van Loon | Sloan | Levens | Favre, PLLC (AVL) City Audit Engagement Letter Contract for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, in an amount not to exceed \$58,000

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to authorize the Mayor to execute the Alexander, Van Loon, Sloan, Levens & Favre, PLLC (AVL) City Audit Engagement Letter Contract for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, in an amount not to exceed \$58,000.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda, except item 7-f pulled by Alderman Pfeiffer.

Mayor:

- a. Authorize and waive all associated fees for the Ocean Springs High School Tennis Team to use the Halstead Tennis Courts from January 6, 2026, to May 22, 2026, to hold practices and tennis matches; to advertise the resources of the city
- b. Approve the Run, Walk, Permit Application for the Sean Cooley Memorial 5K Run on November 8, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. beginning at Fort Maurepas to Ocean Springs/Front Beach; the applicant pays the associated event cost
- c. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the 47th Annual Peter Anderson Arts & Crafts Festival on November 8-9, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Downtown Ocean Springs; authorize to waive special event permit fee; Authorize Street Closures; Washington Avenue (Railroad to Josephine Street),

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Government Street (Washington Avenue to Magnolia Avenue), Porter Avenue (Jackson Avenue to City Hall); city sponsorship; to advertise the resources of the City, there will be overtime costs to the City

- d. Approve the Run, Walk, Permit Application for the Run, Santa Run 5K on December 6, 2025, from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., starting at Fort Maurepas along OS Bridge/ Front Beach the applicant pays the associated event cost
- e. **ADDED:** Authorize the waiver of rental fees for the Krewe of Unique for use of the Ocean Springs Civic Center on Saturday, October 25, 2025, from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., as a means to advertise and promote the resources and facilities of the City

Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center:

- f. **AMENDED:** Approve the loan of City sound equipment to the Mississippi Songwriters Alliance for use at the Battle of the Bands (October 24, 2025) and Jeff Bates Concert (October 25, 2025) events at the Pascagoula Fairgrounds for Jackson County

Alderman Pfeiffer distributed a memo outlining findings and concerns regarding the loan of City-owned sound equipment. Following discussion, a motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to approve the loan of City sound equipment to the Mississippi Songwriters Alliance for use at the Battle of the Bands (October 24, 2025) and Jeff Bates Concert (October 25, 2025) events at the Pascagoula Fairgrounds for Jackson County, subject to review of the memo and contract by the City Attorney.

City Clerk:

- g. **EDITED:** Authorize to execute the addendum to AGJ's LeapVault Backup and Disaster Recovery Agreement Addendum to add back-up servers for the new PTS and Flex systems at the Police Department
- h. Approve Minutes: Special Call Meeting September 29, 2025
- i. Approve Minutes: Special Call Meeting September 30, 2025
- j. Ratify check 134287 for \$800 to Triad Martial Arts for officer training
- k. Approve AT&T Mobility's request to replace existing generator equipment with a new Generac SD030 diesel 30KW generator at the telecommunications site located at 503 Dewey Avenue, consistent with the terms of the existing Land Lease Agreement dated February 12, 2019, and authorize the Mayor to execute the consent letter on behalf of the City
- l. **ADDED:** Approve Minutes: Special Call Meeting October 6, 2025

Police Department:

- m. Accept OSPD Monthly Report for September 2025

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Fire Department:

- n. Accept OSFD Monthly Report for September 2025

Human Resources/Risk Management:

- o. Authorize employment of Katrina Kersch, Art & Culture Assistant, effective October 22, 2025; \$16.50 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- p. Accept resignation of Patrolman Dalton Hill, effective October 9, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- q. Authorize employment of Brian Duke, Firefighter I, effective October 27, 2025; Step 4, \$14.90 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements

Zoning Adjustment Board (ZAB):

- r. Accept ZAB Minutes for September 9, 2025
- s. Approve a variance for an accessory structure side setback on the south side from 5 ft to 4 ft on the rear and 3 ft on the front to use the existing footings from the original accessory structure at 411 Ward Ave - PIDN: 60130400.000; ZAB recommends approval
- t. Approve a variance for an accessory structure side setback on the northwest side of the property from 5 ft to 4.7ft at 1405 Cornwall Drive - PIDN: 61099403.000; ZAB recommends approval

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC):

- u. Accept HPC Minutes for September 9, 2025 Meeting
- v. Approve a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for modifications to a previously approved COA to extend the West and South side additions approximately 18" at 605 Porter Ave - PIDN: 60137628.000; HPC recommends approval
- w. Approve a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to build a 1,035sq ft addition of a master bedroom, patio, and garage on the rear of the house and repaint the exterior at 208 Washington Ave - PIDN: 60137516.000; HPC recommends approval

Building Department:

- x. Accept the Building Department Permit Report for September 2025
- y. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through October 14, 2025
- z. Accept Code Enforcement Report through October 15, 2025

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Parks & Recreation Department:

- aa. Approve the Facility Use Agreement for Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA use of Freedom Field from October 13 – December 13, 2025

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- a. City Clerk: **AMENDED:** 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 Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to add Starks Payout to the Docket of Claims.

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

- c. Finance: Adopt Municipal Compliance Questionnaire for Fiscal Year 2025 and spread upon the minutes

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to adopt the Municipal Compliance Questionnaire for Fiscal Year 2025 and spread upon the minutes.

- d. Police: Addendum to AGJ's Complete Care Agreement to add on-site technician at the Police Department

The Police Chief explained that additional IT services are needed at the Police Department due to the number of devices in use, including approximately 80 PCs and mobile data units. He stated that the lack of an on-site technician has resulted in increased costs and delayed response times when technical issues arise. The proposed addendum to the existing AGJ Complete Care Agreement would add an on-site IT technician at the Police Department, increasing the contract by \$2,500 per month.

Nikki Johns with AGJ confirmed that the on-site technician would be available Monday through Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and every other Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with alternating Fridays off. The City would continue to have access to AGJ's

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off-site technical support team during regular business hours.

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Messenger, and unanimously carried to approve the addendum to AGJ's Complete Care Agreement to provide an on-site technician at the Police Department as presented.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Haley Martin addressed the Mayor and the Board.

MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM

Alderwoman Stennis requested that clearer and more consistent procedures be developed for adding items to the agenda, hiring, and other administrative processes. She also noted that a downtown safety meeting with bar owners, Police Department representatives, and City officials will be held later this week, emphasizing that the issue of downtown safety has not been forgotten.

Alderman Wade requested that the Building Official and Public Works Director meet with the property owner at 286 McCool Avenue regarding a needed fence repair.

Alderman Pfeiffer requested that the public work session for the Tree Canopy Commission be scheduled between the Regular and Recess Meetings in November. The Mayor responded that Executive Administrator and Public Affairs Officer Laurri Garcia would send an email to identify a suitable date.

Alderman Messenger requested that the City Attorney obtain income revenue information from Lighthouse Assisted Living.

Alderman Hinton inquired about the status of paving on Government Street and asked when Warren Paving would address the needed cutbacks. The Project Manager requested clarification on the specific locations, and Alderman Hinton identified the areas in front of Government Street Grocery, Ocean Springs Lumber, and between Ward Avenue and Denny Street. He further asked whether any funds remained available for sidewalk improvements, to which the Project Manager replied that none remained. He also agreed that scheduling a work session for the Tree Canopy Commission should be prioritized.

The Mayor reiterated the positive remarks from Aldermen Stennis, Wade, Messenger, and Hinton regarding the success of Cruisin' the Coast 2025 in Ocean Springs and commended the teamwork among City departments for ensuring the City both functioned smoothly and looked its best. He noted that a record-breaking 10,334 cars were registered this year, generating an estimated \$6 million economic impact in Ocean

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Springs alone. The Mayor also highlighted the success of the first Trick or Treat on the Track event hosted by the Parks & Recreation Department and announced upcoming community events, including the Witches Ride and Pet Parade on October 25th in Downtown Ocean Springs and the Peter Anderson Festival on November 8–9, which continues to rank among the Top 50 festivals in the United States.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

- a. Personnel in the Police Department Removed from the agenda.

ADJOURN UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on NOVEMBER 4, 2025

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

The meeting ended at 7:07 p.m.

<u><i>Bobby Cox</i></u> Mayor	<u>11/4/25</u> Date	<u><i>Clara M. Smith</i></u> Clerk	<u>11/4/25</u> Date
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