

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
RECESS MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 16, 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 September 16, 2025. Mayor Cox presided, and Aldermen Tillis, Stennis, Wade, Hinton, Pfeiffer, Blackman, and Messenger were present. 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, Grants Administrator Carolyn Martin, Planning Director Amanda Crose, Parks & Recreation Director Stephen Glorioso, Project Manager Sarah Harris, and Executive Administrator & Public Affairs Officer Laurri Garcia were also present.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

PROCLAMATION/PRESENTATION

- a. Proclamation: Honoring Daniel Spicer for his 27 years of service to the City of Ocean Springs Public Works Department upon his retirement

Daniel Spicer was present to accept the proclamation from the Mayor.

- b. Presentation: Covington Civil Environmental — Risk analysis surrounding area of Leica Site

Rimmer Covington, Sr. presented a proposal to conduct an independent evaluation of the environmental risks at the Leica site. The scope includes reviewing prior documentation, submitting a Freedom of Information request to MDEQ, and providing an opinion letter summarizing the status of investigations, potential risks, constraints, and additional remediation measures that may be required. The proposed cost for the review is \$6,750. Elaine Young, geologist with Covington, explained that additional well drilling could be costly, as twelve wells (six pairs) may be needed. She noted the importance of strategic placement to address data gaps from prior testing and stated that TCE contamination tends to sink, which must be considered in further investigations.

A motion was made by Alderman Stennis, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to approve the Covington Civil and Environmental consultation

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services proposal for the risk analysis of the Leica site.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Adopt Resolution adopting the 2025 - 2026 Uniform Assessment Schedule

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

No public input was received before or during the meeting.

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

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Wade to adopt Resolution (RES 2025-023) adopting the 2025-2026 Uniform Assessment Schedule.

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. Rescinding and/or Termination of the Urban Renewal Plan

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

Alderman Stennis said that the Public Hearing is a necessary step to terminate the Urban Renewal Plan. She said the Redevelopment Authority has already been terminated.

Public Comment:

Joe Jewell, Greg Gipson, Ellen Hall and William Betterton spoke in favor of the termination of the Urban Renewal Plan.

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

Alderman Pfeiffer offered a public apology to anyone the Urban Renewal Plan affected personally.

A motion was made by Alderman Stennis and seconded by Alderman Hinton to authorize the City Attorney to draft a Resolution to terminate the Urban Renewal Plan including necessary findings and administrative details. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

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Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Stennis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Pfeiffer,
Alderman Blackman, Alderman Messenger, Alderman Hinton
Nay: None

AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Jewell spoke on two agenda items:

- Agenda Item 3-b - Noted that the proposal refers to "FOIA" but stated that "Public Records Request" would be more accurate terminology. He also requested that a not-to-exceed clause be added.
- Agenda Item 6-a - Asked what happened to the plans to reinstate the Tree Committee.

William Betterton spoke on two agenda items:

- Agenda Item 6-a - Requested that an Alderman attend the committee meetings and asked why the committees are reporting to the Planning Commission/Department instead of directly to the Board.
- Agenda Item 7-a - Asked if the lobbyist will focus on the entire city.

Mike Illanne spoke on Agenda Item 3-b and suggested hiring a toxicologist to study the Leica Site.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. Formation of Temporary Committees for UDC and Ordinance Review (Memo added)

Alderman Hinton explained that on August 5th he made a motion to form two temporary committees to review the Unified Development Code (UDC) and the City's ordinances. After further consideration, he stated it would be more effective to have one committee that would first address the UDC and, upon completion, move on to review the ordinances. He noted that the committee will consist of seven members, one appointed by each Alderman, and that all actions and recommendations of the committee will be forwarded to the Board of Aldermen for final approval.

Alderman Pfeiffer inquired about the Comprehensive Plan and how the committee's work would align with the development of the Comp Plan.

The Mayor suggested that, given the new and short-staffed status of the Planning Department, a third-party planner should oversee the committee's work. The Planning Director concurred with the Mayor's recommendation.

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

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unanimously carried to approve the formation of the UDC Committee, with the Board of Aldermen to nominate and appoint members at the October Regular Meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Mayor/BOA:

- a. Authorize to Advertise Request for Proposals (RFP) for City Lobbying Services
- b. Adopt Resolution appointing Ashley Gunn as City Judge Pro Tempore
- c. **EDITED:** Approve the Special Event Permit Application for OSSD Homecoming Parade on September 24, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Parade beginning on Jackson Avenue to Porter Avenue to Washington Avenue to Government Street ending at Ocean Springs Upper Elementary, at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost
- d. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the Horne Family Picnic on October 11, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:45 p.m., at MLK Park, at no cost to the City with the applicant paying all associated event costs, subject to the condition that no beer or wine, or any alcoholic beverage on City property during the event
- e. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for Relative Race Season 17 Filming on October 13, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at Inner Harbor Park, at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to approve the Special Event Permit Application for Relative Race Season 17 Filming on October 13, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at Inner Harbor Park or Fort Maurepas, at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost.

Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center:

- f. Approve the Special Event for the 2025 Ocean Springs Cemetery Tour (October 15–16, 2025, 5:30–7:30 p.m.; tours from the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center lawn to Bellande Cemetery; City overtime costs will be incurred) and authorize the closure of Dewey Ave. from Calhoun Ave. to LaFontaine Ave. from 4:30– 8:30 p.m. each day

City Clerk:

- g. Approve Minutes: Recess Meeting August 19, 2025
- h. Approve Minutes: Special Call Meeting August 26, 2025

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Police Department:

- i. Accept OSPD Monthly Report for August 2025

Fire Department:

- j. Accept OSFD Monthly Report for August 2025
- k. Authorize the transfer of Asset #6431, a zero-turn lawn mower from Fire Department inventory to Park & Recreation inventory
- l. Authorize out-of-state travel for Employees #2235, #2450, and #2306 to attend the Industrial Firefighting Course at Texas A&M in College Station, TX, October 5–10, 2025; all associated costs to be paid by Chevron Pascagoula

Human Resources/Risk Management:

- m. Accept resignation of Police Sergeant Steve McMellon, effective September 5, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- n. Authorize promotion of Patrolman James Parker to Sergeant, effective September 27, 2025; Step 1, \$25.25 hourly rate; six months probationary status
- o. Authorize employment of Nathaniel Atwood, Patrolman, effective September 17, 2025; Step 1, \$21.00 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- p. **WITHDRAWN:** Accept resignation of Drainage Laborer John Rodenkirch, effective September 19, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- q. **WITHDRAWN:** Authorize interim pay for Sewer Assistant Supervisor Eric Kordek to manage the Sewer Department during an interim assignment, effective September 17, 2025; \$23.49 hourly rate, until the conclusion of the assignment
- r. Authorize employment of Robert Kelly, Mechanic, effective October 6, 2025; Step 1, \$19.70 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements

Planning Commission (PC):

- s. Accept PC Minutes for August 12, 2025 Meeting
- t. Accept New PC Officers

Zoning Adjustment Board (ZAB):

- u. Accept ZAB Minutes for August 12, 2025 Meeting
- v. Accept New ZAB Officers
- w. Approve a variance request at 308 Porter Ave - PIDN: 61370005.000 - to allow

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a 2-car enclosed garage to face Porter Ave in lieu of a front porch and the minimum, building elevation of 18"; ZAB recommends approval

Building Department:

- x. Accept Code Enforcement Report through September 11, 2025
- y. Authorize Neel-Schafer, Inc. to Manage the Stormwater Management Plan Contract, yearly cost \$16,500
- z. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through September 10, 2025
- aa. Accept the Building Department Permit Report for August 2025

Public Works:

- bb. Award the Grounds Maintenance Services Contract to Rotolo Consultants Inc. (RCI) as the lowest and best responsive bidder and authorize the Mayor to execute the agreement, subject to City Attorney review
- cc. **ADDED:** Adopt Resolution to Request Surplus Equipment from Jackson County Board of Supervisors

Adopted Resolution **RES 2025-025**

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 Wade, 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: 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 Hinton, seconded by Alderman Messenger, 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

Bill Moore, William Betterton, Joe Jewell, Will Thompson, Ellen Hall, Hailey Hill, and Mike Illanne addressed the Mayor and Board.

MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM

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Alderman Tillis asked the Public Works Director about the speed display sign on Ocean Springs Road. The Director responded that a chip is needed and has been ordered. The Mayor suggested adding another sign between Riley Road and Deana Road.

Alderman Stennis requested the installation of "No Parking" signs across from driveways on Bowen Avenue to assist residents with backing out of their driveways, especially during festivals.

Alderman Wade requested that the sidewalk at the Upper Elementary be repaired while schools are out for Cruisin' the Coast/Fall Break.

Alderman Pfeiffer asked the Grants Administrator about MDOT funding for sidewalks on Holcomb Blvd., Halstead Road, and Hanley Road. The Grants Administrator responded that MDOT programs are better suited for large projects and take a very long time to complete, and she will review the criteria. Alderman Pfeiffer also stated that statutes were misrepresented during the previous meeting when the legal services contract was voted on and asked that the RFP address conflicts of interest, litigation loopholes, and close liability concerns for the City. The Mayor stated that staff reviewed the RFP and incorporated Alderman Pfeiffer's recommendations that were applicable to the RFP rather than the contract. The Mayor stated the conflict of interest and outside litigation matters would be addressed in the legal services contract. He added that the RFP for legal services will be published on Wednesday.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried for the City Clerk to publish notice for a Public Hearing regarding the re-adoption of the 2024 Resolution dated June 4, 2024, placing a one-year temporary moratorium on the submission and acceptance of applications for building permits for multifamily dwellings pursuant to Miss. Code Section 17-1-15. Alderman Pfeiffer asked that "multifamily" be clearly defined.

Alderman Blackman requested contacting Singing River Electric Power Association to add lighting in Wards 5 and 6, noting that the area between Canebrake Subdivision and Davis Bayou is extremely dark and the bridge has already been hit. He also stated he would send a wish list for Lemoyne Park to the Parks Director.

Alderman Messenger asked the Fire Chief about flow rates and distance between hydrants in the annexed area of Ward 6. She stated she would like to see a new fire station in the annexed area to reduce response times. The Fire Chief reported that he has spoken with the Mississippi Rating Bureau, which confirmed that response times have already improved compared to when the area was covered by county fire service. He noted several options for consideration, including acquiring the Fountainbleau Fire Station from Jackson County, partnering with Gautier as a short-term solution, or obtaining land to build a new station near Sunplex on Hwy 57. He added that the next Rating Bureau audit will occur in 2027 and that population growth will affect the rating, so planning should begin now to be ready.

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Alderman Hinton asked about the status of the \$3 million allocated for sidewalks. The Project Manager replied that the funds are nearly exhausted. Alderman Hinton then asked about the possibility of using another paving company. The Project Manager responded that the paving term bid does allow for a secondary company; however, they are just as difficult to get on schedule. Alderman Hinton also requested that the vines be cut and removed from the Live Oaks downtown. He added a follow-up regarding the City Attorney contract, noting that the Mayor has reached out to the Attorney General for an opinion. The Mayor confirmed that an AG opinion has been requested.

The Mayor thanked Krewe Unique for providing lunch to City employees last week. He also thanked the City Attorney for his professionalism and noted that the RFP for legal services will be published on Wednesday.

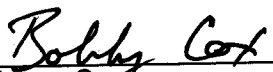
EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

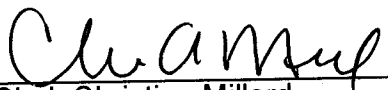
ADJOURN UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on OCTOBER 7, 2025

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

The meeting ended at 7:40 p.m.



Mayor Cox



City Clerk Christine Millard

