

CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 4, 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 November 4, 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 Wade, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to accept the agenda.

PRESENTATIONS

a. Historic Ocean Springs Association (HOSA) — Tree Canopy Renewal Project
Melanie Allan and Julia Weaver presented an overview of the Tree Canopy Renewal Project and announced that the Historic Ocean Springs Association has been awarded a \$50,000 Clean & Safe Water Community Grant. The grant will support efforts to restore and protect the City's native tree canopy across all six wards. The approximately 24-month project will include a tree canopy inventory, development of a tree planting plan, creation of an action plan integrating volunteers and professionals, and implementation of a public outreach and educational campaign.

b. The Mary C. O'Keefe 2025 Report
Mary C. O'Keefe Center Director Sarah Qarqish presented the 2025 Annual Report for the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center. The report highlighted recent facility improvements, expanded programming, and continued growth in community engagement and educational initiatives. She discussed ongoing museum expansion efforts, including additional second-floor exhibit space, updates to the recording and podcast studio with the addition of a small performance stage including two-tier

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seating. The presentation also noted partnerships with local artists and schools, upcoming cultural events, and the Center's positive impact on arts accessibility within the community.

AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. Resolution of Intent to Grant Ad Valorem Abatement to Ocean Springs Senior Development, LLC

The City Attorney stated that the Board had previously authorized him to draft a resolution granting an ad valorem tax abatement for Ocean Springs Senior Development, LLC (Lighthouse Assisted Living and Memory Care). He clarified that Phase I of the abatement will conclude on February 4, 2029, and Phase II will conclude on January 1, 2031.

A motion was made by Alderman Stennis and seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer to adopt **Resolution No. 2025-029**, A Resolution of Intent to Grant Ad Valorem Abatement to Ocean Springs Senior Development, LLC. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

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

Nay: Alderman Messenger

Absent: Alderman Blackman

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda, except item 6-h.

Mayor:

- a. Authorize and waive all associated fees for the non-profit Embrace Abilities to host their Mardi Gras Ball for children and young adults with different abilities at the Civic Center on February 7, 2026; to advertise the resources of the city
- b. Approve the Run, Walk, Bike Permit Application for the 2026 Zebra Run for Rare Disease Event on March 7, 2026, from 5:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., Fort Maurepas Park and Front Beach/Bridge Route, at no cost to the City, the applicant pays associated event cost
- c. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the WAMA Patron Party for

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Odyssey Illuminated on December 5, 2025, from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., at The Traveler and parking lot at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost

- d. Approve for the Special Event Permit Application for the Silent Light Odyssey Illumination Application on December 6, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., at the Walter Anderson Museum, Community Center, The Traveler and Washington Ave. (Street closure from WAMA to Joseph Street) at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost
- e. Adopt Resolution Requesting Assistance from Jackson County to Use the Portable Stage for the New Year's Eve Ball Drop Event (**RES 2025-030**)

Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center:

- f. Accept a \$2,500.00 donation from Gail Harper to the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center

City Clerk:

- g. Accept the October 2025 Aged Receivables Report
- h. Approve Minutes: Regular Meeting October 7, 2025 (minor edits to attached transcript on 11/4)

Alderman Pfeiffer stated that she appreciated the inclusion of the transcript reference in the minutes and noted she had identified a clarification; however, the error had already been corrected, updated, and posted prior to the meeting. A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held October 7, 2025.

- i. Approve Minutes: Recess Meeting October 21, 2025

Human Resources/Risk Management:

- j. Authorize the closure of City offices on Friday, January 2, 2026, in addition to Thursday, January 1st, in observance of the New Year's Day holiday, per the proclamation issued by Governor Tate Reeves authorizing the closure of state and local offices
- k. Authorize employment of Jose Godinez, Patrolman, effective November 5, 2025; Step 1, \$21.00 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- l. Accept resignation of Street Laborer Cody Franklin effective October 31, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position

Grants Administration:

- m. Authorize Advertisement for Construction – Washington Avenue Roadway and Drainage Improvements / Front Beach Drive to Lafontaine Avenue – GOMESA Funding

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Building Department:

- n. Accept Code Enforcement Report through October 30, 2025
- o. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through October 28, 2025
- p. Approve demolition of 126 & 128 Earl Taylor Lane by Lane Construction of MS, LLC.

Parks & Recreation Department:

- q. Authorize and waive all associated fees for the non-profit Les Belle Fleurs to host the Mardi Gras Make A Wish softball tournament at Gay Lemon on Saturday, November 15th, 2025; to advertise the resources of the city

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 Hinton, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, 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 Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to accept the monthly budget report.

- c. City Clerk: Budget Amendments – First Quarter FY2026

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to authorize the First Quarter Budget Amendments as presented.

- d. City Clerk: Budget Amendment – Purchase of Vehicles and Equipment

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to authorize a budget amendment to fund the purchase of vehicles and equipment from the General Fund, 2% Tourism Fund, and Enterprise Fund as presented in the attached proposal.

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GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

James Lewis spoke about the need for the City to employ a dedicated procurement specialist. He stated that centralized oversight would improve consistency, reduce delays, and strengthen compliance during purchasing processes.

Brian Rose spoke regarding the 1515 Government Street Parking Garage. His comments included concerns about the existing lease agreements and memorandums of understanding, questions regarding the history and use of GCRF grant funds, and the garage's use as collateral for developer loans. He requested additional clarity and transparency surrounding the financial arrangements tied to the structure.

Bill Moore commented on the Peter Anderson Festival, offering appreciation to Public Works, the Police Department, and the Fire Department for their work during the event. He expressed gratitude for the staff's support and efforts.

Chic Cody noted that Peter Anderson Festival vendors traveled from nearly every state and spoke about the economic and cultural impact of the event. He highlighted the importance of continued support for the festival.

Barbara Wilson requested the City consider granting a variance to allow a fireworks stand to operate in December on a property located in the annexation area. She asked for the City's cooperation in permitting the seasonal business.

Eamon Mohiuddin stated that he owns the property where the fireworks stand is located. He noted that the site is zoned CMX-2 and expressed his approval for fireworks sales to continue on his property.

Shea Dobson commented on the cost of public records requests. He suggested the City lower the fees, stating that current pricing was originally set at a high rate to discourage requests and should be reevaluated to support public access.

MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM

Alderman Tillis addressed items raised during General Public Comment, noting that the parking garage lease remains under review. He also requested the City Attorney examine whether an annexed property with a prior Jackson County zoning history for fireworks sales could be permitted to sell fireworks in December.

Alderwoman Stennis requested temporary "No Parking" controls on Bowen Avenue for the Peter Anderson Festival, consistent with Cruisin' the Coast measures, and suggested hiring a part-time staff member to assist with public records requests.

Alderwoman Pfeiffer asked the Public Works Director about sand accumulation on

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East Beach and the status of street sweeping. The Public Works Director reported that the sweeper had run through the area twice that day and that Jackson County had been asked to lower the sand level at the seawall to reduce blow-over onto the roadway. She also inquired about road striping; he explained that striping is performed by the County and has already been requested through the Road Department Director. Regarding sidewalk funding, she asked about potential options, and the Mayor stated that the City applies for sidewalk funding annually and will continue to pursue available opportunities.

Alderwoman Messenger expressed disapproval of the tree removals approved Consent Agenda Item 6-o on Rielly Road and at the Chick-fil-A development.

Alderman Hinton thanked Public Works for the caboose signage and citywide landscaping. A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderwoman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to amend the 2010 Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the annexed area for rezoning.

The Mayor congratulated Stephen Farnsworth on his appointment as Public Works Assistant Director.

The Executive Administrator & Public Affairs Officer announced the Veterans Day ceremony at the Vietnam Memorial at 1:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, 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 Hinton, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to enter into executive session to discuss personnel in the Police Department, litigation updates regarding the Estate of Clement Saucier, the Sarah Crear matter, the Rosenberg litigation, and the Securix litigation.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Messenger, and unanimously carried to come out of the executive session where the following actions were taken:

A motion was made by Alderman Tillis, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to uphold the Police Chief personnel recommendation.

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to approve the filing of an intervening complaint for interpleader in the Divine vs. Securix matter.



**REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2025 - 6:00 PM**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 3. PRESENTATIONS**
 - a. Historic Ocean Springs Association (HOSA) — Tree Canopy Renewal Project
 - b. The Mary C. O'Keefe 2025 Report
- 4. AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT** *** The Public is invited to address the Board for up to 5 minutes each for a maximum period of 30 minutes, **ONLY regarding issues listed on this agenda.** The Board will take all comments under advisement for potential action if warranted. **Please identify yourself and the agenda item.** If no agenda item is stated, you will be asked to hold your comment until General Public Comment at the end of the meeting.*
- 5. OLD BUSINESS**
 - a. Resolution of Intent to Grant Ad Valorem Abatement to Ocean Springs Senior Development, LLC
- 6. CONSENT AGENDA** ** All matters listed under Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by the Board of Aldermen and will be enacted by one motion. There will not be a separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.*

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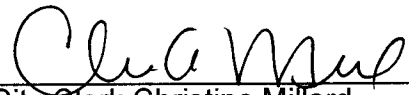
RECESS UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on NOVEMBER 18, 2025

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Hinton,
and unanimously carried to recess.

The meeting ended at 9:19 p.m.



Mayor Cox



City Clerk Christine Millard

