

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
RECESS MEETING OF NOVEMBER 18, 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 November 18, 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, Human Resources & Risk Management Director Mindy McDowell, 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

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

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

AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Discuss Legal Service Request for Proposals

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to recuse the City Attorney from any participation, including providing legal advice, on Item 4-a, because Alderman Pfeiffer stated that he was one of the attorneys who submitted an RFP, creating a conflict of interest.

The Mayor then asked the City Attorney to recuse himself. The City Attorney asked whether he needed to leave the room or simply remain silent, and the Mayor responded that either option would be acceptable. The City Attorney chose to remain in the boardroom but did not participate in the discussion.

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Alderman Tillis spoke in support of retaining David Harris as City Attorney for the remainder of his contract term.

Alderman Stennis outlined her concerns about continuing to have David Harris serve as City Attorney.

Alderman Pfeiffer also expressed her concerns regarding continuing legal services under David Harris and requested that the Board review the received RFPs and consider selecting a firm with greater municipal experience.

The Mayor expressed support for retaining David Harris as City Attorney.

A motion was then made by Alderman Wade and seconded by Alderman Tillis for the professional services agreement with David Harris, City Attorney, to remain in full effect. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: Alderman Stennis, Alderman Pfeiffer

b. Discussion of 1515 Government Street Parking Garage Lease

The City Attorney provided a detailed timeline regarding the 1515 Government Street Parking Garage and the Gulf Coast Restore Funds Act (GCRF) grant agreements associated with the project. He explained that the first activity occurred on July 19, 2019, during the administration of Mayor Shea Dobson.

He stated that on July 20, 2021, a proposed 99-year lease memorandum was presented to the Board; however, it was not approved. Subsequently, on August 17, 2021, the Board authorized the execution of an MOU that contemplated a long-term lease for the parking garage.

In January 2022, the first grant agreement with the Mississippi Development Authority was executed — GCRF Grant 20-09. This grant was not funded until July 1, 2023, when it was awarded as a \$2 million matching grant.

He noted that on July 1, 2023, an amended and restated grant agreement, GCRF Grant 21-09, was executed. This agreement provided \$6 million in funding with required matching funds totaling nearly \$14 million. He emphasized that both GCRF grant agreements incorporated the 2021 MOU.

The City Attorney described the GCRF funding request as being used as a “sales pitch” or aspirational project concept during development discussions. He clarified that the grant agreements were between OHOS Development and GCRF, not directly between the City and GCRF.

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Alderman Tillis asked about the ownership of the parking garage and stated that if the City does not hold ownership, then any lease must be structured to benefit the City rather than the developer. He stated he would not support the lease in its current form.

Alderman Stennis asked about the grant application initially stating that ownership would transfer to the City, then later changing to a lease arrangement, and whether the grant funds may have been received improperly.

The City Attorney stated that the GCRF funding is a reimbursement matching-fund grant, explaining that the developer has already provided more than the required matching amount. He stated he had been advised that MDA reviews expenditure reports and reimburses funds only after verifying that expenditures meet grant requirements.

Alderman Hinton stated that the parking garage proposal came before the Planning Commission several years ago, originally with ownership transferring to the City and later changing to a 99-year lease. He stated that multiple conflicts are currently being reviewed.

Alderman Pfeiffer stated that as recently as August 2024, OHOS informed MDA that ownership of the parking garage would be transferred to the City.

Alderman Messenger stated she would not support leasing the parking garage, expressing a preference for City ownership or no involvement at all.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda except items 5-j and 5-aa pulled by Alderman Pfeiffer and item 5-k pulled by Alderman Tillis.

Mayor/BOA:

- a. Authorize the installation of a 129W LED floodlight on an existing pole at Trentwood Park on Shadow Wood Drive at an installation cost of \$70.00, and approve the corresponding monthly increase of approximately \$19.13
- b. Approve the Special Event Application for Macedonia Church Homecoming Picnic on Saturday, November 22, 2025, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at MLK Park, at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost
- c. Authorize and waive all associated fees for Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church to host a luncheon for their congregation on Sunday, November 23, 2025, from 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., in the Ryan Youth Center, to celebrate the church's 134th anniversary; to advertise the resources of the city

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- d. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting, on Thursday, December 4, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Arts Center; authorize the street closure of Government Street from Ward Avenue to Magnolia Avenue from 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; overtime costs will be incurred
- e. Approve the Run/Walk/Bike Permit Application for the YMCA Winter Classic 10K Run on January 24, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., using the YMCA 10K route; the applicant will pay all associated event costs
- f. Authorize and waive all associated fees for Krewe of Unique to utilize the Ryan Youth Center on Saturday, January 31, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. to host the 10th Annual "Feeding of the Bands" for the 2026 Mardi Gras Day Parade; to advertise the resources of the City
- g. Authorize a \$500.00 Silver Sponsorship to Disability Connection for the 2026 Community Assist program
- h. **ADDED:** Accept donations for Materials

City Clerk:

- i. Approve Minutes: Special Call Meeting November 3, 2025
- j. Approve Minutes: Regular Meeting November 4, 2025

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer and seconded by Alderman Stennis to approve the November 4, 2025 minutes with more complete public comment revisions and with the transcript attached. This motion was revised prior to voting.

A motion was then made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to approve Item 5-j with public comment revisions made more thorough in the minutes.

- k. Adopt a Resolution to consolidate City fees and fines into the Adopted Fee Schedule, and to approve Exhibit A as the official City of Ocean Springs Fee Schedule

Alderman Tillis questioned the short-term rental fee listed in the fee schedule while the STR moratorium remains in effect. It was clarified that the fee schedule may be modified as needed when changes are warranted.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to approve Item 5-k — Adopt a Resolution to consolidate City fees and fines into the adopted Fee Schedule, and to approve Exhibit A as the official City of Ocean Springs Fee Schedule.

Police Department:

- l. Accept OSPD Monthly Report for October 2025
- m. Accept a donation check from Tractor Supply in the amount of \$500.00;

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Authorize donation to be used toward the purchase of a 3rd Law Combination Strike Face Dynamic Ram

Fire Department:

- n. Accept OSFD Monthly Report for October 2025

Human Resources/Risk Management:

- o. Authorize removing Patrolmen Andrew Bates and David Schink from probationary status to full time status, effective immediately
- p. Authorize transfer of Animal Control Officer Ashton Lanham to Patrolman, effective November 24, 2025; Step 1, \$21.00 hourly rate; one year probationary status, authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- q. Accept resignation of Patrolman Derick McGill, effective November 20, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- r. Accept resignation of Part-time Patrolman Cody Gill, effective October 30, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- s. Authorize the transfer of Fire Marshal Lionel Cothorn to Fire Training Chief, effective November 24, 2025; six (6) months probationary status, authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- t. Authorize employment of Kyle Jacquet, Parks Maintenance Technician, effective December 1, 2025; \$18.00 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- u. **ADDED:** Accept resignation of Dispatcher Landon Riley, effective November 17, 2025, and authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position

Planning Commission (PC):

- v. Accept PC Minutes for September 9, 2025 Meeting
- w. Approve a request for a Residential Short-Term Rental Permit at 145 Lafayette Circle - PIDN: 61380024.000; PC recommends approval
- x. Approve a request for a Residential Short-Term Rental Permit at 614 Clark Ave - PIDN: 61057010.000; PC recommends approval

Zoning Adjustment Board (ZAB):

- y. Accept ZAB Minutes for October 14, 2025 Meeting
- z. Deny a variance for an accessory structure side setback from 5' to 18" on the northwest side of the property at 5320 Pontiac Street - PIDN: 61059024.000; ZAB recommends denial
- aa. Approve a variance for a side yard setback from 10' to 5' on the north side of the property to construct an addition onto the existing house at 512 Dewey Ave - PIDN: 60137336.000; ZAB recommends approval

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The Planning Director explained that during the ZAB meeting it was noted that the applicant's lot does not meet the minimum lot area or width requirements for the R-2 zoning district. She stated that ZAB commissioners generally have authority to approve variances up to 25%; however, in this case the request represents a 50% reduction. One commissioner presented documentation and calculations indicating that, due to the exceptional narrowness of the lot, the effective variance calculated to 25%, providing justification for ZAB's approval recommendation.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to deny Item 5-aa — deny a variance request for a side yard setback from 10' to 5' on the north side of the property at 512 Dewey Avenue, PIDN 60137336.000.

Building Department:

- bb. Accept Code Enforcement Report through November 12, 2025
- cc. Accept the Building Department Permit Report for October 2025
- dd. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through November 12, 2025

The Mayor provided an update on the water main breaks that occurred earlier in the day. He reported that the break in Parktown East had been repaired and that a boil-water notice would be issued. He further stated that work on the break on the west side, near Bowen Avenue, was ongoing, with crews securing and tightening the clamp and expecting to complete the repair shortly.

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 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: 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 Stennis, seconded by Alderman Wade, 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.

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- c. City Clerk: Purchase of field lighting at Alice Street Ball Fields from Mississippi Power

The City Clerk/Finance Director provided an explanation regarding the proposed purchase of the field lighting at the Alice Street Ball Fields. She noted that the lease for the lighting expired in July. Mississippi Power provided a purchase proposal based on depreciation calculations and indicated that there is no room for negotiation on the price. Although the proposal has technically expired, Mississippi Power confirmed they will honor the quoted amount.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to approve the proposal from Mississippi Power to purchase the field lighting at the Alice Street Ball Fields in the amount of \$54,860.00.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

James Lewis stated that the meeting minutes should contain more detailed information to support accountability and transparency.

Brian Rose commented on the earlier recusal of the City Attorney and the City Attorney's subsequent remarks on the 1515 Parking Garage. He stated that the GCRF grant application is not a "sales pitch," noting that both the City of Ocean Springs and OHOS are listed as entities on the application and that they affirmed the accuracy of the information through a binding certification. He also expressed concern about the Board entering closed session, stating that the "potential litigation" exemption is being misused.

Cynthia Sutton with Ocean Springs Chamber/Main Street reported on the success of the Peter Anderson Festival. She stated that vendors participated from more than 24 states, 35% were first-time vendors, approximately 40% of attendees traveled specifically for the festival, and local businesses experienced a 40–50% increase above average. She thanked partners including the Ocean Springs Public Library, Peoples Bank, Keesler AFB, and nearly 200 volunteers. She gave special thanks to City Team Captains Stephen Glorioso and Monica Dickenson, as well as the Mayor and Aldermen who volunteered, noting that their involvement strengthens the partnership between the Chamber and the City.

MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM

Alderman Tillis stated that he experienced a change of conscience regarding his prior vote to grant a tax abatement for Lighthouse Assisted Living and wished to correct his vote. He explained that the abatement shifts the cost of development to the citizens rather than the developer and places the City at risk through potential loss of revenue. A motion was made by Alderman Tillis and seconded by Alderman Messenger to

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rescind the Resolution of Intent to Grant Ad Valorem Tax Abatement for the Ocean Springs Senior Development Center. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Messenger

Nay: Alderman Stennis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Blackman, Alderman Hinton

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to approve the payment of \$28,571.43 to ECO Commercial Roofing for the TPO roof system at the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center.

Alderman Pfeiffer requested that the MOU with the Chamber be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Alderman Messenger made a motion to adopt a temporary moratorium on certain types of residential development. The stated purpose was to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Ocean Springs by suspending consideration or approval of specified residential projects, rezoning requests, site plan approvals, and subdivisions for an estimated period of six months. The motion was seconded by Alderman Tillis. Alderman Hinton asked whether the moratorium would apply to all development, noting that her original intent was broader. She clarified that her concern was specifically development involving three or more homes. It was further clarified that the action would not be adopted as an ordinance, since ordinances are not temporary in nature, but rather as a resolution imposing a temporary moratorium. Alderman Messenger stated that her concerns stem from the pace of rapid development, ongoing drainage issues, impacts on City infrastructure, and the fact that the Comprehensive Plan has not been updated since 2010. Alderman Messenger then restated the motion as follows: to apply a six-month moratorium on any residential development consisting of three homes or more, citywide, to allow time for further review of impacts on infrastructure, the school system, municipal services, drainage, and overall public health, safety, and welfare. The motion failed with the following vote:

Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Messenger

Nay: Alderman Stennis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Blackman, Alderman Hinton

Alderman Hinton announced that the Board of Aldermen will hold a work session to discuss the Tree Canopy Committee on Thursday, November 20 at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Boardroom, and that the UDC Review Committee will meet on Wednesday, November 19 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Hall Boardroom. He also stated that emergency funds will be required for the water main break repairs.

The City Attorney informed the Board that the Safe Solicitation Act (HB 1197) recently passed and that the Board will need to decide whether to opt out or allow the Act to remain in effect automatically. He stated that this item will need to be placed on the next

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meeting agenda.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to go into a closed session to determine the necessity of entering 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 enter into executive session to discuss litigation updates on Fischer, Securix, three Ethics Commission complaints, potential litigation regarding PFAS, and matters related to the parking garage lease.

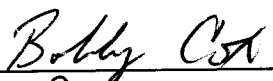
A potential conflict of interest was identified regarding a relative of Alderman Stennis and the issues regarding the parking garage. Alderman Stennis was advised of the conflict and chose to remain in the room without recusing herself.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to exit the executive session. No action was taken in the executive session.

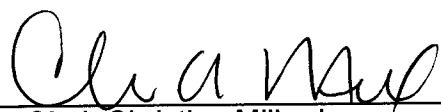
ADJOURN UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on DECEMBER 2, 2025

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to adjourn.

The meeting ended at 8:26 p.m.



Mayor Cox



City Clerk Christine Millard

