

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 2, 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 December 2, 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, 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 Stennis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. **DEFERRED UNTIL JANUARY 6, 2026** - Southeastern Construction & Remodeling, LLC – Pabst Rd – PIDN: 60127170.000 – Requesting Sketch Plat approval for a 123 – lot Townhome Subdivision (Holly Grove); PC recommends approval

AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. Proposed Agreement with the Ocean Springs Chamber-Main Street

Cynthia Sutton, Ocean Springs Chamber–Main Street CEO, stated that she does not believe a formal agreement is necessary. She explained that, at the City’s request, the Chamber prepared an agreement; however, additional items were inserted into that draft without the Chamber’s knowledge or their attorney’s approval, and that version is

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what appears on the agenda. She noted that each year, typically in July or August, the Chamber submits a request for funding from the food and beverage tax and the lodging tax fund. With that request, the Chamber provides detailed information and samples of the work they perform throughout the year as the marketing and tourism arm of the City. She stated that she does not recommend entering into a formal agreement, as the Chamber submits funding requests annually, and approval remains at the discretion of the Board.

The Mayor added that other municipalities and chambers do not operate under formal agreements.

Alderman Pfeiffer distributed a memo she prepared regarding the proposed agreement and stated that the City has a fiduciary responsibility to taxpayers. She said that establishing an MOU would be the proper and consistent way to conduct business with the Chamber.

b. Safe Solicitation Act

The City Attorney explained that House Bill 1197, the Safe Solicitation Act, includes an opt-out provision with a deadline of January 1, 2026. He noted that there is no opt-in requirement; therefore, if the City takes no action, it will automatically be subject to the Act. Chief Dye reported that the City's current enforcement practices under Ordinance 2024-07 are effective and recommended that the City opt out of HB 1197. He stated that administering the Act would place a strain on City staff due to the need to issue daily solicitation permits for roadway locations, and that allowing permitted individuals to solicit in traffic areas poses significant safety concerns.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton and seconded by Alderman Blackman to opt out of House Bill 1197, the Safe Solicitation Act, as allowed under Section 6 of the Act; to direct that this decision be recorded in the minutes as the City's official opt-out action; and to authorize the City Attorney to draft an amendment to Ordinance 2024-07, modifying it as needed to mirror any applicable provisions of the Act. The motion carried with a vote as follows:

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

Nay: None

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda, except item 6-e pulled by Alderman Pfeiffer.

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Mayor/BOA:

- a. Ratify the authorization and waiver of all associated costs for the Ocean Springs Greyhounds Cross Country/Track & Field teams to host their banquet on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at the Ocean Springs Civic Center; to advertise the resources of the city
- b. Authorize and waive all associated costs for Alpha Phi Alpha to host their annual 'All Black Affair', a community impact and scholarship-focused event, at the Ocean Springs Civic Center on Friday, December 5th and Saturday, December 6, 2025; to advertise the resources of the city
- c. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the Lost Moon Block Party on December 6, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the parking lot of Lost Springs Brewing, Mosaic's and Neon Moon in downtown Ocean Springs at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost
- d. Approve the Special Event Application for the Discover Christmas Parade and Toy Drive on December 7, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Parade begins on Front Beach Drive to Porter Avenue to Washington Avenue to Government Street, ending at Ocean Springs Lumber and Supply; waive barricade fees; applicant pays all other associated event costs
- e. **ADDED:** Authorize the Mayor to execute the rental agreement with Meridian Rapid Defense Group for New Year's Eve event barriers in the amount of \$4,620.00

Alderman Pfeiffer pulled this item for further explanation by Chief Dye. Chief Dye stated that after meeting with representatives, he determined that renting barriers would be more cost-effective than purchasing them. He explained that the Police Department identified the need for enhanced vehicular safety and crowd-protection measures during the New Year's Eve event. Meridian Rapid Defense Group provides a specialized Vehicle Safety Mitigation Plan, including Archer 1200 barriers, arrestor cables, and ADA ramps. The equipment and proposed deployment locations are detailed in the agenda packet.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to authorize the Mayor to execute the rental agreement with Meridian Rapid Defense Group for New Year's Eve event barriers in the amount of \$4,620.00.

- f. **ADDED:** Approve the installation of lighting at the Trentwood Drive location, with a one-time installation cost of \$2,000.00 to be paid from Ward 6 funds, and authorize the additional \$22.59 to be added to the City's monthly SREPA electric bill

City Clerk:

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- g. Ratify check 134704 to Crocker Heating and Air for an installed heat pump system at the Taconi Building
- h. Accept the November 2025 Aged Receivables Report
- i. Approve Minutes: Recess Meeting November 18, 2025

Human Resources/Risk Management:

- j. Authorize removing Planning Technician Elizabeth Dill from probationary status to full time status, effective December 2, 2025
- k. Accept resignation of Dispatcher Jennifer Mizell effective November 26, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- l. Authorize transfer of Dispatcher Jasmine Williams, from Part-time to Full-time status, effective December 6, 2025; Step 3, \$18.57 hourly rate; six months probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- m. Authorize removing Drainage Laborer Frederick Jansky and Street Laborer Kince Saucier from probationary status to full time status, effective immediately
- n. Authorize transfer of Parks Maintenance Robert Williams to Public Works Street Laborer, effective December 6, 2025, remaining eight months probationary status; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- o. Accept resignation of Water Laborer Rickey Cunningham effective November 26, 2025; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- p. Authorize the extension of the probationary period for Employee #2818 for six months (ending May 6, 2026)
- q. Authorize removing Building Inspector Joe Tabor from probationary status to full time status, effective November 25, 2025

Grants Administration:

- r. Authorize Award to LJ Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$61,636.25 – R-109- 282-08-KCR: Fort Bayou Improvements: Manhole Replacement – Katrina Disaster Recovery Funds (KCDBG)

Building Department:

- s. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through November 24, 2025
- t. Accept Code Enforcement Report through December 2, 2025

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Public Works:

- u. Adopt Resolution for the Sale of Surplus Personal Property with Value Less than \$1,000.00

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 Hinton, 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.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

James Lewis spoke about the curb at Holcomb Blvd. and Government Street and suggested that it be cut back further.

Bill Moore commented on the ditch/tidal basin along Holcomb Blvd. near Upper Weeks Bayou. He noted that riprap is being added but asked that the City explore a more natural solution. He stated that the area functions as a tidal basin rather than a simple ditch and shared that he has recently observed otters there.

MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM

Alderman Hinton addressed the Board regarding the recent special call meeting that did not have a quorum, stating that he was not contacted about his availability prior to the meeting being called. He emphasized that the Board must work together respectfully and in the best interest of the community, rather than working against one another. He noted that the matter involving the City Attorney has been addressed and voted on multiple times and stated that he supports the City Attorney. He reiterated the importance of communication and collaboration among Board members for the benefit of the City.

Alderman Tillis announced the annual Fort Bayou Subdivision Christmas Parade with Santa, which will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday at the corner of Bristol Boulevard and Nottingham Road and conclude at John Gill Park.

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Alderman Stennis requested an update on the timeline for repairs to Russell Avenue. The Mayor responded that a quote is currently being obtained to replace the water line extending to Government Street. Alderman Stennis also addressed the special call meeting held the previous week, stating that she was not notified that a quorum would not be present. She explained that she prepared for multiple possible outcomes, including the absence of a quorum and a press conference. She stated that honesty and integrity are important to her and noted that her personal attorney reviews matters involving legal issues. She further stated that a City Attorney should not benefit from any contract on which the City is required to take action.

Alderman Wade requested that the Public Works Director repair two sidewalks, one on Holcomb Boulevard near the pump station and one at the entrance of the school, while school is out for the Christmas break. He also commented on the special call meeting, stating that there is a lack of communication among the Aldermen. He noted that a press release regarding the special call meeting was issued the night before the official posting by City Hall and prior to the Aldermen being notified.

Alderman Pfeiffer stated that the City Attorney should have recused himself from presenting a proposal from which he would benefit and that another attorney should have reviewed the proposals. She stated that she stands by all remarks made by Alderman Stennis.

Alderman Blackman stated that he previously provided the Project Manager with a citywide sewer study completed in 2017 that identified issues, excluding annexation areas. He said he would like to see that study expanded upon to address potential repairs and updates and expressed interest in conducting similar evaluations for water, sewer, and drainage systems citywide.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to authorize Employee #2808 for out-of-state travel to attend the FBI Crisis Negotiation Course in Stapleton, Alabama, from December 8–12, 2025. Tuition for the course will be covered at no cost to the City.

Alderman Messenger stated that she will provide an update at a future meeting regarding the proposed development moratorium.

The Mayor announced that the Christmas Tree Lighting event at the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center has been rescheduled from Thursday to Tuesday, December 9th, due to inclement weather expected on Thursday. He added that all other holiday festivities will proceed as scheduled.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to go into a closed session to determine the necessity of

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entering executive session.

The City Clerk returned to the meeting and announced that a motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to enter executive session to discuss potential litigation, PFAS matters, the Fisher litigation, and contract negotiations.

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

Following the executive session, a motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Tillis to enter into an agreement with Milberg, Bryson and Napoli Shkolnik (NS) to provide legal services to the City for PFAS litigation. The motion carried with Aldermen Tillis, Wade, Blackman, Messenger, and Hinton voting aye; Alderman Pfeiffer voting nay; and Alderman Stennis abstaining from the vote.

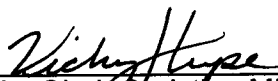
RECESS UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on DECEMBER 16, 2025

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

The meeting ended at 7:01 p.m.



Mayor Cox



~~City Clerk Christine Millard~~
Deputy City Clerk Vicky Hupe

