

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
RECESS MEETING OF JUNE 16, 2026 - 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 June 16, 2026. Mayor Cox presided. 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 Mary C. O'Keefe Center Director Sarah Qarqish 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 Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to accept the agenda.

**PRESENTATION/PROCLAMATION**

**a. PRESENTATION: Fire Hounds Summer Program Sponsors**

Fire Chief A.J. Fitch recognized the sponsors of the Fire Hounds Summer Program and expressed appreciation for their continued support of youth programming and community engagement efforts. Sponsors recognized included the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce, Ocean Springs Lumber, Hinton's Paint, Lemon-Mohler Insurance Agency, HIBS Home Inspection, T.J.'s Custom Apparel, 1-800-BOARDUP, Ocean Springs High School Art Club, Ocean Springs Police Department, Ocean Springs Fire Department, and the Ocean Springs Firefighters Association.

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen thanked Chief Fitch and the Ocean Springs Fire Department for their efforts in organizing and conducting the Fire Hounds Summer Program and recognized the positive impact the program has on local youth and the community.

**b. PROCLAMATION: Recognizing June 16, 2026, as John Ray Vaughan Day**

Mayor Cox presented a proclamation recognizing June 16, 2026, as John Ray Vaughan

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Day in the City of Ocean Springs. The proclamation honored the life, contributions, and legacy of John Ray Vaughan and his dedication to preserving and promoting the history and heritage of Ocean Springs. Mr. Vaughan's wife and daughters were present and accepted the proclamation on behalf of the Vaughan family.

**AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

Julia Weaver addressed the Board regarding Consent Agenda Item 7-w and requested approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness application for improvements at 801 Porter Avenue on behalf of St. John's Episcopal Church.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Acceptance of Performance and Maintenance Bonds for Palm Pointe Phase 2**

Alderman Pfeiffer requested additional information regarding the performance and maintenance bonds. The Planning Director explained the purpose of the bonds, the applicable coverage periods, and how the bonds would apply to infrastructure improvements within the subdivision.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to accept the Performance Bond and Maintenance Bond for Palm Pointe Subdivision Phase 2.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Adopt a Resolution authorizing the lease of space in the N.E. Taconi Building to Community Action of South Mississippi – Head Start for less than fair market value and authorize the Mayor to execute the Lease Agreement**

Alderman Pfeiffer requested clarification regarding the fair market value of the property and the basis for the proposed lease amount. Staff explained that the City's lease rate of \$5.00 per square foot was established approximately three to four years ago and that the rate is below the current fair market value for commercial lease space in downtown Ocean Springs.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Hinton to adopt the Resolution declaring certain real property as surplus property and authorizing a lease with Community Action of South Mississippi, Inc. The motion carried with Aldermen Tillis, Wade, Hinton, Blackman, Messenger, and Stennis voting aye and Alderman Pfeiffer voting nay.

**b. Adopt a Resolution authorizing the lease of space in the N.E. Taconi Building to Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA, Inc. for less than fair market value and authorize**

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the Mayor to execute the Lease Agreement

A motion was made by Alderman Stennis and seconded by Alderman Wade to adopt the Resolution declaring certain real property as surplus property and authorizing a lease with the Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA. The motion carried with Aldermen Tillis, Stennis, Wade, Hinton, Blackman, and Messenger voting aye and Alderman Pfeiffer voting nay.

**c. Discussion of Mayor Pro Tempore Appointment**

Alderman Hinton cited Mississippi Attorney General Opinion No. 97-0448 and stated his position that the office of Mayor Pro Tempore extends for the duration of the Board's term and not for a one-year period. He further stated that, although the Board's 2025 action referenced a one-year term, the Board did not have the authority to limit the office to one year and that he would continue to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore.

**d. Ratify the Mayor's Proclamation of Existence of Local Emergency Related to Projected Tropical Disturbance and Authorization of Emergency Protective Measures**

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to ratify the Proclamation of Existence of Local Emergency Related to Projected Tropical Disturbance and Authorization of Emergency Protective Measures.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda.

**Mayor:**

- a.** Authorize \$500 sponsorship for the Friends of Jackson County Animal Shelter Pets 9th Annual "Paddle for Paws Poker Float" on August 22, 2026
- b.** Adopt a Resolution Requesting Financial Assistance from Jackson County for Mississippi Songwriters Festival, Inc.

**Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center:**

- c.** Accept donation for the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Arts Center Scholarship Fund from Gulf Coast Carnival Association, Inc.

**City Clerk:**

- d.** Approve Minutes: Recess Meeting May 19, 2026
- e.** Approve Minutes: Regular Meeting June 2, 2026
- f.** Approve Minutes: Special Call Meeting June 4, 2026

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**Police Department:**

- g. Accept OSPD Monthly Report for May 2026

**Fire Department:**

- h. Accept OSFD Monthly Report for May 2026

**Human Resources/Risk Management:**

- i. Accept termination of Dispatcher, employee #2899, effective June 9, 2026; authorize beginning the process to fill the vacant position
- j. Authorize the promotion of Patrolmen Adam Carter and Brandon Harty to Sergeant, \$26.01 hourly rate, effective June 20, 2026, six months probationary status
- k. Accept resignation of Firefighter Collin Jordan, effective June 17, 2026; authorize beginning the process to fill the vacant position
- l. Authorize removing Fire Captain Chad Jay from probationary status to full-time status, effective June 17, 2026
- m. Authorize employment of Thomas Palazzo, Firefighter Recruit, effective June 22, 2026; \$13.64 hourly rate; one-year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- n. Authorize employment of Kayla Stringer, Planning Office Administrator, effective July 1, 2026; \$17.00 hourly rate; one-year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- o. Accept resignation of Parks Grounds Maintenance Brandon Gonzales, effective June 5, 2026; authorize beginning the process to fill the vacant position
- p. Accept resignation of Assistant Mechanic Thomas Lizana, effective June 19, 2026; authorize beginning the process to fill the vacant position
- q. **ADDED:** Authorize removal of Deputy Court Clerk Anna Gunter from probationary status to full time status, effective immediately

**Planning Department:**

- r. Accept UDC Committee Meeting Minutes for April 29, 2026

**Planning Commission (PC):**

- s. Accept PC Meeting Minutes for May 12, 2026
- t. Approve the request for a lot split at 3711 Government Street - PIDN: 60127090.000; PC recommends approval

**Zoning Adjustment Board (ZAB):**

- u. Accept ZAB Meeting Minutes for May 12, 2026

**Historic Preservation Commission (HPC):**

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**(All Items Added after HPC Special Call 6/15/26):**

- v. Accept HPC Meeting Minutes for May 14, 2026
- w. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for construction of a new front entry porch; construction of a new wood/composite ADA accessibility ramp at the rear entrance; construction of a new concrete parking pad, handicapparking signage, and striping; paint the exterior with Sherwin Williams colors consisting of Banana Cream for the main body, Extra White trim, and Underseas for existing wood window accents at 801 Porter Ave - PIDN: 60137010.000; HPC recommends approval
- x. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for 5' expansion of an existing rear deck on the Northeast side of the building and screen the enclosure with like finishes; replace the screens on the existing porch with windows to match the existing at 915 Ocean Ave - PIDN: 60137400.000; HPC recommends approval
- y. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to install an elevator for accessibility purposes at the rear of the existing residence at 422 Martin Ave - PIDN: 60137604.000; HPC recommends approval
- z. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for demolition of an existing dumpster enclosure approximately 14' x 14'; construction of a new 18' x 27' laundry building with attached dumpster for The Roost Boutique Hotel at 604 Porter Ave - PIDN: 60137620.000; HPC recommends approval
- aa. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for expansion of the existing white gravel driveway to a width of 24'; installation of an additional white gravel overflow parking area approximately 55' x 65' in size for use by Maringouin at the Roost; installation of a parking sign measuring approximately 18" x 24" for the Maringouin at the Roost at 620 Porter Ave - PIDN: 60137614.000; HPC recommends approval

**Grants Administration:**

- bb. Authorize Execution of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with MS Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) for GOMESA funding – Sewer Relocation to Support the MDOT Highway 90 Widening Project - \$5,000,000.00

**Building Department:**

- cc. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through June 9, 2026
- dd. Accept the Building Department Permit Report for May 2026
- ee. Accept Code Enforcement Report through June 10, 2026

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

- a. City Clerk: Approve payment: Docket of Claims, all expenditures are appropriate

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and authorized by law, and spread the summary on the Minutes

Alderman Pfeiffer requested additional information regarding a payment to Jumeaux, Inc. The Project Manager explained that the expenditure was associated with work related to Lift Stations No. 88 and No. 2. Alderman Messenger requested information regarding the City's Waste Pro contract, including the remaining term of the agreement. A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, 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. Building: Review Tree Appeal for 2517 Havard Road**

Property owner Keith Watson addressed the Board regarding his request to remove several live oaks located at 2517 Havard Road. Mr. Watson explained that the site contains two live oaks with a water oak located between them and stated that removal of the water oak could negatively impact the stability of the live oaks. He further stated that acorns from the trees create a slipping hazard on the sloped driveway and adjacent areas of the property and expressed concern regarding potential liability because the residence is used as a rental property.

A motion was made by Alderman Tillis, seconded by Alderman Messenger, and unanimously carried to require the applicant to provide an arborist report addressing the condition of the trees and any potential liability concerns before further consideration of the request.

**c. Building: Review Tree Appeal for 117 Spanish Cove**

The Building Official reviewed the request for tree removal at 117 Spanish Cove and explained the basis for the administrative denial. The applicant was not present.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to uphold the Building Official's denial of the request for tree removal at 117 Spanish Cove.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Azur Waller addressed the Board regarding the City's short-term rental approval process. He expressed concern that neighboring property owners have limited opportunities to raise meaningful objections and requested that the Board review the current regulations during the short-term rental moratorium to provide a more balanced process for applicants and affected residents.

Dan Mobley, Chairman of the Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce, Tourism, and Main Street, provided updates on upcoming community events, including the Summer Sidewalk Sale, the rescheduled Red, White and Blue Festival, Friday at the Fort, and Independence Day fireworks activities. He also announced that Main Street Director Cynthia Sutton had been selected as Mississippi Main Street Director of the Year and

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thanked those who attended the Main Street annual luncheon.

William Betterton addressed the Board regarding drainage issues and emphasized the responsibility of property owners to maintain drainage easements and their property in accordance with the Unified Development Code. He encouraged the City to educate property owners regarding maintenance obligations and to consistently enforce applicable ordinances.

Lori Shields thanked Alderman Messenger and the Public Works Director for assistance with the removal of trees near her property, noting concerns regarding public safety and visibility in the area.

**MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM**

Alderman Tillis commended Fire Chief Fitch and the Ocean Springs Fire Department for the success of the Fire Hounds program and thanked those involved for their efforts.

Alderman Stennis also praised the Fire Hounds program and discussed ongoing concerns regarding conditions at 1209 Lola Road. She stated that neighboring residents had reported continued storage of construction equipment, trailers, dumpsters, and materials on the property despite previous Board discussion. The Building Official reported that a warning letter had been issued to the property owner and stated that if compliance was not achieved, charges would be filed and the matter would proceed through the municipal court process. Alderman Stennis expressed concern regarding the length of time the issue has remained unresolved and requested continued enforcement efforts.

Alderman Wade requested that Public Works clean the catch basins in the Twin Oaks area to improve drainage.

Alderman Pfeiffer requested updates regarding roadway striping on East Beach Drive, the Hanley Road and Government Street intersection, and thermoplastic pavement markings on Ocean Springs Road. The Public Works Director reported that he would follow up with Jackson County regarding East Beach Drive and that other striping work was anticipated in the coming weeks, weather permitting.

Alderman Pfeiffer also requested an update regarding the proposed East Beach boat launch agreement with the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Laboratory. The City Attorney reported that no response had yet been received from university counsel.

Alderman Pfeiffer requested that the findings report prepared by Covington Civil and Environmental regarding adjacent properties near the Leica property be placed on a future agenda and that a representative be invited to present the findings.

Alderman Pfeiffer discussed osprey nesting activity near Weeks Bayou and requested consideration of seasonal protective measures during nesting season. The Mayor

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stated that protective barriers would be placed near nesting areas prior to the Fourth of July holiday, as has been done in previous years.

Alderman Pfeiffer also requested that a future work session be scheduled to continue discussion regarding safety at Clay Boyd Park.

Alderman Blackman made a motion, seconded by Alderman Wade and unanimously carried to hire Mark Hawkins as a Sewer Laborer at a rate of \$16.48 per hour effective June 17, 2026, contingent upon successful completion of all pre-employment requirements.

Alderman Blackman also requested that Public Works continue cleaning culverts, drainage structures, and pipes in advance of anticipated heavy rainfall.

Alderman Messenger expressed concern regarding the increasing use of electric bicycles, scooters, and other motorized devices on City streets and sidewalks. Discussion followed regarding public safety concerns, enforcement challenges, and ongoing efforts to address the issue through education and potential legislative action.

Alderman Messenger requested an update regarding drainage and infrastructure projects that originated in Jackson County prior to annexation. The City Attorney reported that he had contacted the County Attorney and was awaiting additional information.

A motion was made by Alderman Messenger, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to direct Public Works to provide within thirty (30) days a written timeline for planned drainage and infrastructure improvements in Ward 6 and citywide, prioritizing the most urgent projects.

A motion was made by Alderman Messenger, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to direct Public Works staff to provide monthly public updates regarding drainage and infrastructure improvement projects through the City's website and social media platforms.

A motion was made by Alderman Messenger, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to schedule a work session in July regarding the City's Comprehensive Plan and to involve Aldermen Hinton and Pfeiffer in assisting with the planning process.

Alderman Messenger also proposed obtaining engineering proposals related to drainage and infrastructure improvements. Following discussion regarding the City's existing engineering contracts and procurement procedures for professional services, the motion and second were withdrawn.

Alderman Hinton thanked Fire Chief Fitch and the Ocean Springs Fire Department for the Fire Hounds program. He requested that staff continue monitoring roadway conditions associated with the Porter Avenue waterline project and provide updates regarding the Porter Avenue, Russell Avenue, and Washington Avenue drainage and



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infrastructure projects. Staff reported that the projects remain underway, with weather-related delays affecting schedules.

Alderman Hinton also discussed the parking garage lease matter and stated that the City is working through issues related to the lease timeline and future planning. He concluded by thanking City staff for their service and encouraging residents to remain safe during the anticipated severe weather event.

Mayor Cox thanked Public Works employees for their efforts in preparing for anticipated severe weather and noted that sand would be available for residents to fill their own sandbags if needed. He also thanked the Ocean Springs Police Department for its professionalism in responding to a recent officer-involved shooting and expressed support for the officers involved.

Mayor Cox reported that Ocean Springs received multiple recognitions at the Mississippi Main Street Association Annual Awards program, including Director of the Year for Main Street Director Cynthia Sutton, Outstanding Holiday Event for the Witches Ride, and Outstanding New Development for the 1515 Government Street project.

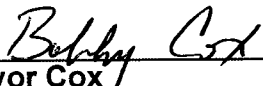
**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

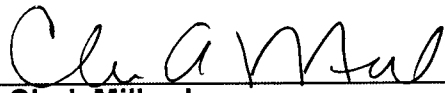
None.

**ADJOURN UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on July 7, 2026**

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

The meeting ended at 7:33 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Cox

  
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City Clerk Millard

