CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - Board of Aldermen
Special Call Meeting June 22, 2026 - Minutes

Be it remembered that the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Ocean Springs met in a Special Call Meeting at City Hall at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, June 22, 2026. A public notice stating the place, date, time, and subject matter of the meeting was posted within one hour of the meeting being called on both the City's website and at City Hall, where it was available for public examination and inspection.

Mayor Cox presided. Aldermen Tillis, Wade, Hinton, Pfeiffer, Blackman, and Messenger were present. Alderman Stennis attended the meeting by teleconference pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated Section 25-41-5. Let the minutes reflect that a speakerphone was present in the meeting room and that all persons in attendance were able to hear Alderman Stennis. City Attorney David Harris Jr., City Clerk/Finance Director Christine Millard, Deputy City Clerk Vicky Hupe, Police Captain Brian Kestner, and Public Works Director Allan Ladnier were also present.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried by roll call vote to approve the agenda.

The object of the meeting will be any matters pertaining to:

1. Discussion and action regarding proposals for Parking Garage Lease Agreement between the City of Ocean Springs and OHOS Development, LLC, for the lease of parking spaces located at 1515 Government Street, and authorization for the Mayor to execute an agreement if approved.

The Mayor stated that the proposed lease agreement was the result of negotiations with OHOS Development, LLC, and fulfilled the City's obligations regarding maintenance, security, and utilities associated with the public parking spaces. He further stated that the proposed lease provided these services at less than fair market value and that the parking garage would provide a significant benefit to the City, its businesses, residents, and visitors.

A motion was made by Alderman Tillis and seconded by Alderman Hinton to authorize the Mayor to execute the Parking Garage Lease Agreement between the City of Ocean Springs and OHOS Development, LLC.

Discussion followed.

Alderman Stennis expressed concerns regarding the legal authority supporting the grant agreements and the proposed lease arrangement. She questioned whether all necessary approvals had been properly authorized by previous Boards, stated her belief that the City should own the parking garage, and recommended retaining independent legal counsel before proceeding. She stated she would not support execution of the lease agreement.

Alderman Pfeiffer stated that questions regarding ownership of the parking garage and the legal framework governing the project had remained unresolved. She expressed concerns regarding the grant agreements, the potential impact of the developer's financing on the City's interests, and the lack of documentation requiring execution of the lease agreement by June 30, 2026. She stated she could not support the lease until those issues were addressed.

Alderman Tillis presented the results of his independent research regarding the project, including discussions with representatives of the Mississippi Development Authority and the Office of the State Auditor. He stated his understanding that execution of the lease agreement represented the final requirement for closing out the grant project and that failure to complete the lease could expose the City to litigation and repayment of grant funds. He further stated that leasing the parking spaces would limit the City's long-term financial obligations, preserve property tax revenue generated by the privately owned facility, and protect the City's relationship with state funding agencies. He expressed support for approving the lease agreement.

Alderman Hinton stated that the project had been presented for several years as a joint effort between the City and the developer. He stated that the lease arrangement had been contemplated as part of the grant process and that approval of the lease would benefit the City by providing additional downtown parking while minimizing costs to taxpayers. He expressed support for the lease agreement.

Alderman Blackman stated that Alderman Tillis had adequately expressed his position and indicated his support for the lease agreement.

Alderman Messenger stated that she believed the public should have been provided with additional opportunity for input regarding the proposal. She expressed concerns regarding the project and stated she could not support the lease agreement.

Alderman Wade indicated his agreement with the comments made by Aldermen Tillis and Hinton and expressed his support for the lease agreement.

Additional discussion followed between members of the Board regarding the grant agreements, the Memorandum of Understanding, future grant opportunities, the City's relationship with the Mississippi Development Authority, and whether execution of the lease agreement was necessary to satisfy grant requirements. Alderman Pfeiffer reiterated her concerns regarding transparency and documentation supporting the project, while Alderman Stennis maintained her position that the City should not proceed until ownership and legal issues had been resolved. Alderman Tillis reiterated that, based upon his research, approving the lease represented the best financial decision for the City and its taxpayers.

The Mayor stated his belief that approval of the lease agreement represented the appropriate course of action and noted his understanding, based upon discussions with the Mississippi Development Authority, that the agreement needed to be finalized by June 30, 2026.

Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried as follows:
Ayes: Aldermen Tillis, Wade, Hinton, and Blackman.
Nays: Aldermen Stennis, Pfeiffer, and Messenger.

The Mayor declared the motion carried and authorized execution of the lease agreement.

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried by roll call vote to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Mayor Cox

City Clerk Millard