

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 7, 2026 - 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 July 7, 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, Deputy Fire Chief Sam Guin, Building Official Darrell Stringfellow, Public Works Director Allan Ladnier, Human Resources & Risk Management Director Mindy McDowell, Planning Director Amanda Crose, Parks & Recreation Assistant Director Duvale Brown, and Project Manager Sarah Harris were also present.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Mike Barnett of First Baptist Church Ocean Springs gave the invocation, and Alderman Blackman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

PROCLAMATION/PRESENTATIONS

a. PROCLAMATION: Honoring Carolyn Frayser

Mayor Cox presented a proclamation honoring the late Carolyn Wilkerson Frayser in recognition of her distinguished career in public service and her historic contributions to the City of Ocean Springs and the State of Mississippi. The proclamation recognized Mrs. Frayser as the first female patrol officer, first female captain, and first female Chief of Police for the Ocean Springs Police Department, as well as the first female President of the Mississippi Chiefs of Police Association. It also recognized her continued service as the City's first Human Resources/Risk Manager and proclaimed July 7, 2026, as "Carolyn Wilkerson Frayser Day" in the City of Ocean Springs. Adam Wilkerson accepted the proclamation on behalf of the Frayser family.

b. PRESENTATION: Recognition of employment years of service: 5 years – Parks & Recreation Assistant Director Duvale Brown

Mayor Cox recognized Parks & Recreation Assistant Director Duvale Brown for five years of service with the City of Ocean Springs. Mr. Brown was present and received the certificate.

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c. PRESENTATION: Covington Civil and Environmental Update - Report Added

Alane Young of Covington Civil & Environmental presented an update regarding the environmental status of the former Leica property. The presentation summarized the site's remediation history, ongoing groundwater monitoring, MDEQ oversight, and future redevelopment requirements. It was reported that the remediation efforts have significantly reduced contaminant concentrations, the site does not presently pose a risk to human health or the environment, and monitoring indicates contaminants are not migrating off-site through groundwater. Board members discussed the presentation and asked questions regarding remediation efforts, redevelopment, and future monitoring.

PUBLIC HEARING

a. WITHDRAWN BY APPLICANT - Request for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a Bed & Breakfast at 703 Rayburn Ave - PIDN: 60119091.000; PC recommends denial

Prior to the public hearing, a letter dated July 6, 2026, was received from the applicant requesting withdrawal of the Conditional Use Permit application to operate a Bed & Breakfast at 703 Rayburn Avenue (PIDN: 60119091.000). Accordingly, no public hearing was held, and no action was taken by the Board.

AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Karen Richards addressed the Board regarding Item 3-c, Covington Civil & Environmental Update, expressing support for the Covington presentation and encouraging the Board to allow City staff and consultants to perform their work without unnecessary interference. She also commented on Item 6-a, A Good Neighbor Act, emphasizing the importance of neighbors communicating and working together to resolve issues. Ms. Richards concluded by requesting that the Board work together rather than against one another.

Chris Blanchard addressed the Board regarding Item 6-a, A Good Neighbor Act and the Davidson Road Ditch Project, discussing Phase I and Phase II of the project, construction progress, drainage and flooding concerns affecting adjacent properties, and considerations for moving the project forward. Mr. Blanchard also submitted a written statement outlining his concerns and requesting additional evaluation of the Davidson Road Ditch Project and related drainage improvements. A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to include Mr. Blanchard's written statement in the official minutes.

Liz Elmore addressed the Board regarding Item 3-c, questioning aspects of the former Leica site remediation and requesting additional review of historical remediation records and corrective action documentation.

Dan Mobley of Fenstermaker Engineering responded to comments and questions

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raised by Mr. Blanchard regarding the Davidson Road Ditch Project.

NEW BUSINESS

a. A Good Neighbor Act — Measha Michelle

Measha Michelle presented her proposed Good Neighbor Act, encouraging the Board to consider an ordinance requiring review of significant property alterations that could adversely affect neighboring properties. She stated the proposal was intended to promote communication, accountability, and prevention of foreseeable property damage while balancing private property rights. Ms. Michelle requested that the Board study similar ordinances adopted by other communities and consider placing the matter on a future agenda for further discussion.

**b. ADDED: Accept Plaque of Appreciation from the Town of Ashland in
Recognition of the City's Assistance During the February 2026 Ice Storm**

Mayor Cox accepted a plaque of appreciation from the Town of Ashland in recognition of the City of Ocean Springs' assistance during the February 2026 Ice Storm and expressed his appreciation to the citizens, volunteers, and City personnel who supported the relief efforts. A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to accept the plaque.

CONSENT AGENDA

Alderman Pfeiffer requested that Items 7-c and 7-bb be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration. Alderman Messenger requested that Item 7-x be removed for separate consideration.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of Items 7-c, 7-x, and 7-bb.

Mayor/BOA:

- a. Approve the Special Event Application & Run Permit Application for the Junior Auxiliary of Biloxi-Ocean Springs to host their annual "Kickin' It #FortheKids" on Saturday, November 14, 2026, from 6:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., at OS Bridge/Front Beach 5K, at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost**
- b. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for Mosaic Church to host their 'Summer Blowout' on Sunday, July 26, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at Fort Maurepas, at no cost to the City, the applicant pays the associated event cost**
- c. Adopt Resolution Requesting Financial Assistance from Jackson County for Renovations to the former Ocean Springs Police Department Building at 503 Dewey Avenue**

Alderman Pfeiffer requested clarification regarding the proposed renovations to the

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former Ocean Springs Police Department building at 503 Dewey Avenue. Mayor Cox explained that the funding request would assist with relocating the Building Department and Code Enforcement offices to the facility and noted that a similar request had been submitted previously but was not included in the County's budget cycle. A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to adopt the resolution requesting financial assistance from Jackson County for renovations to the former Ocean Springs Police Department building located at 503 Dewey Avenue.

- d. Authorize the Mayor to execute the Right of Use Agreement with Hancock Whitney Bank for use of the employee parking lot located at 901 Washington Avenue as a food vendor site for Cruisin' the Coast from 4:00 p.m. on October 7, 2026, through 5:00 p.m. on October 11, 2026
- e. Authorize the Mayor to execute the Right of Use Agreement with Hancock Whitney Bank for use of the employee parking lot located at 901 Washington Avenue as a food vendor site for the Peter Anderson Festival from 4:00 p.m. on November 6, 2026, through 5:00 p.m. on November 8, 2026
- f. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the Ocean Springs Sailing Squadron to host the Hobie 16 International Championship from September 12 – 25, 2026, at the Ocean Springs Yacht Club and adjacent beach, with overtime costs that may be incurred by the City, and all other associated event costs to be paid by the applicant
- g. ADDED: Adopt Resolution No. 2026-022 Terminating the Local State of Emergency Declared Due to Tropical Storm Arthur

City Clerk:

- h. Accept June 2026 Aged Receivables Report
- i. Approve the renewal of the electrical services agreement with Weaver Electric, Inc. effective through July 31, 2027
- j. Approve the automatic renewal of the AGJ Systems & Networks Complete Care Agreement for an additional three-year term, effective July 8, 2026, through July 7, 2029, with no change in pricing
- k. Approve Minutes: Work Session June 15, 2026
- l. Approve Minutes: Recess Meeting June 16, 2026

Police Department:

- m. Authorize Employee #1686 for Out-of-State Travel to Lexington, KY for ROCIC Homicide Conference from September 26, 2026 to October 01, 2026

Fire Department:

- n. Authorize Out of State Travel for employees # 1630 and # 2673 to Lafayette, Louisiana for CPR Instructor Training conducted by the National EMS Academy in Lafayette, Louisiana, on July 21, 2026

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- o. Authorize the Ocean Springs Fire Department to submit an application for the Dennis Leary Firefighters Foundation Grant in the amount of \$24,775.00 for the purchase of firefighter decontamination equipment

Human Resources/Risk Management:

- p. Authorize employment of Megan Maher, Dispatcher, effective July 8, 2026; \$18.57 hourly rate; one-year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- q. Authorize employment of Michelle Nunn, Animal Control Officer, effective July 8, 2026; \$18.00 hourly rate; one-year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- r. Authorize promotion of Firefighter I James King to Firefighter II, \$15.17 hourly rate; effective July 18, 2026; six-month probationary status
- s. Authorize removing Building Maintenance Technician Stephen Espinoza from probationary status to full time status, effective immediately
- t. Accept resignation of Sewer Laborer Brandon Toothman, effective June 24, 2026; authorize beginning the process to fill the vacant position
- u. Accept resignation of Public Works Maintenance Technician Trent Jeffcoat, effective July 1, 2026; authorize beginning the process to fill the vacant position
- v. ADDED: Accept the termination of Probationary Firefighter Employee #2954, effective July 2, 2026, and authorize beginning the process to fill the vacant position
- w. ADDED: Accept retirement of Street Laborer Frank Shockley, effective June 30, 2026; authorize beginning the process to fill the vacant position

Grants Administration:

- x. Authorize to Execute Grant Agreement – Tidelands Project – FY27-P412-13: OS Gateway Boat Launch Feasibility Study

Alderman Messenger expressed concerns regarding the proposed OS Gateway Boat Launch Feasibility Study, citing potential increases in traffic and the desire to preserve the natural character of the City's beaches. It was explained that the grant agreement was for a feasibility study only.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Wade to authorize the Mayor to execute the Grant Agreement for Tidelands Project – FY27-P412-13: OS Gateway Boat Launch Feasibility Study. The motion carried, with Aldermen Blackman, Hinton, Pfeiffer, Stennis, Tillis and Wade voting aye and Alderman Messenger voting nay.

- y. Authorize the award of the Deana Road Improvement Project to SCI, LLC, in the amount of \$2,054,378.10, funded through State Appropriations and Modernization Act proceeds

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Building Department:

- z.** Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through June 29, 2026
- aa.** Accept Code Enforcement Report through July 1, 2026

Parks & Recreation Department:

- bb.AMENDED:** Approve the Transfer of Two (2) 2009 Ford Ranger Trucks and One (1) 1998 GMC Sierra Truck from the Parks Department to the Public Works Department

Alderman Pfeiffer requested clarification regarding the amended agenda item transferring two 2009 Ford Ranger trucks and one 1998 GMC Sierra truck from the Parks Department to the Public Works Department rather than declaring the vehicles surplus for auction. Mayor Cox explained that the vehicles were being transferred because they were in better condition than those currently being used by Public Works Beautification.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to approve the transfer of two (2) 2009 Ford Ranger trucks and one (1) 1998 GMC Sierra truck from the Parks Department to the Public Works Department.

- cc.** Accept the Parks Advisory Board Minutes on June 17, 2026
- dd.** Approve the Facility Use Agreement for Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA use of Taconi Gym for Adult Volleyball on Sundays from August 2 to September 13, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- ee.** Approve the five-year reappointment of Eleanor (Liz) Elmore to the Parks Advisory Board starting August 1, 2026, and ending July 31, 2031

Public Works:

- ff.** Accept the 2025 Ocean Springs Drinking Water Quality Report
- gg.** Authorize the renewal of the Public Works electrical services agreement with Engel Electric effective through July 31, 2027

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

Alderman Pfeiffer questioned the Chamber of Commerce reimbursement request included in the Docket of Claims and inquired whether a formal agreement should be in place governing the procurement and reimbursement of services for the Friday at the Fort event. Mayor Cox explained that the Chamber of Commerce is now facilitating the event on behalf of the City. A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer and seconded by

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Alderman Stennis to require a formal agreement for future Chamber of Commerce reimbursements. The motion failed, with Aldermen Pfeiffer and Stennis voting aye and Aldermen Blackman, Hinton, Messenger, Tillis, and Wade voting nay.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to approve payment of the Docket of Claims, finding all expenditures 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 Hinton, and unanimously carried to accept the monthly budget report.

c. Building: Tree Appeal - updated 117 Spanish Cove Drive

Building Official Darrell Stringfellow presented the updated Tree Appeal for 117 Spanish Cove Drive. The applicant submitted the requested arborist report, which concluded that the tree's root system had been damaged. Alderman Tillis commented that, in his opinion, the tree appeared to be healthy and expressed concerns regarding its removal.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Hinton to approve the updated Tree Appeal for 117 Spanish Cove Drive. The motion carried, with Aldermen Blackman, Hinton, Messenger, Pfeiffer and Wade voting aye and Aldermen Stennis and Tillis voting nay.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Dee Francis Wichman addressed the Board regarding difficulties restoring natural gas services to her residence after the gas company identified a possible leak. She requested assistance in determining how to proceed and expressed concerns regarding the cost of obtaining a plumbing inspection. Mayor Cox encouraged her to have the gas line inspected before service was restored for safety reasons.

Becky Ball addressed the Board regarding a bicycle accident caused by an overhanging vine along Shearwater Drive near the bridge. She thanked City staff for their prompt response in removing the hazard and requested continued attention to vegetation maintenance in the area to improve public safety.

Cynthia Sutton, CEO of the Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce/Main Street, updated the Board on upcoming community events, including the First Responders Breakfast, the Façade Grant Award announcement, the July Sidewalk Sale and Tax- Free Weekend, and the rescheduled Blueberry Festival. Mayor Cox also recognized the Chamber's assistance with the Mayor's Youth Council Patriotic Flag Campaign.

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Measha Michelle asked whether a second arborist opinion should be considered for tree appeals when questions arise regarding a tree's condition. She also commented on the condition of Front Beach Drive and inquired about future roadway improvements for cyclists and motorists.

Steve Parker presented information regarding the environmental and economic value of the City's remaining pine flatwoods. He discussed the ecosystem services provided by the pine flatwoods, including stormwater management, groundwater recharge, habitat preservation, and other environmental benefits, and encouraged the Board to consider these values in future planning and development decisions.

Nikki Johns addressed the Board regarding traffic safety concerns on Government Street near Promenade Boulevard. She requested that the Board consider reducing the speed limit and improving visibility at neighborhood intersections, citing increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic, limited sight distance, speeding vehicles, and concerns for motorists entering and exiting the neighborhood. She also expressed concerns regarding the growing use of electric bicycles in the area.

MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM

Mayor Cox presented a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Laboratory regarding reopening the public boat launch. Leila Hamdan, a representative from the university, discussed the proposed agreement, including public access from sunrise to sunset on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, parking improvements, and anticipated reopening in August following installation of required signage. A motion was made by Alderman Stennis, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to move forward with finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding.

Mayor Cox also recognized the success of the Mayor's Youth Council Patriotic Flag Campaign and thanked the Chamber of Commerce and volunteers for their support.

Alderman Tillis reported concerns regarding a recently approved short-term rental on Iroquois Avenue and requested that staff investigate a disabled vehicle located on the property.

Alderman Stennis thanked Public Works and the Police Department for assisting with the East Beach No Fireworks Zone to protect nesting ospreys. She requested an update on the City's trash collection schedule, Porter Avenue and South Washington Avenue projects, and encouraged improved detour signage during roadway construction.

Alderman Wade thanked the Chamber of Commerce, Police Department, Fire Department, Parks Department, and Public Works staff for their assistance with the City's Fourth of July fireworks celebration.

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Alderman Pfeiffer requested updates regarding pavement striping at Hanley Road and Government Street and East Beach Drive. She thanked Parks & Recreation staff for improvements at Clay Boyd Park and requested that a workshop be scheduled to discuss the expiration of the short-term rental moratorium and potential revisions to the City's short-term rental regulations. Planning staff provided an update on current short-term rental permit availability and pending applications.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to authorize out-of-state travel for Employee No. 2808 to attend Criminal Interdiction training in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, July 21–24, 2026.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to authorize the Mayor to provide written permission for WAMA to apply for grant funding for the installation of a security system at the WAMA Community Center.

Alderman Messenger thanked Public Works Beautification for improvements to the flower bed at Lakeview Subdivision and commented on the Mississippi Municipal League Summer Conference.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to direct that a letter be sent to RCI regarding deficiencies in its Highway 90 grass-cutting contract, advising that failure to comply with the contract could result in termination and solicitation of other contractors.

Alderman Hinton thanked City staff and the Chamber of Commerce for their efforts during the Fourth of July celebration.

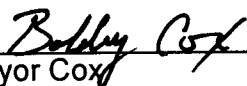
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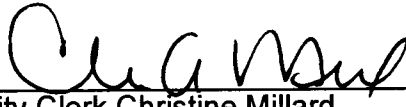
None.

RECESS UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on JULY 21, 2026

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

The meeting ended at 7:58 p.m.


Mayor Cox


City Clerk Christine Millard

