

June 2, 2025
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**CITY OF SOUTHPORT
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
223 E. BAY STREET
9:00 A.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Richard Alt
Mayor Pro-Tem Rebecca Kelley
Aldermen Marc Spencer, Robert Carroll, Frank Lai, Lowe Davis,
Karen Mosteller

STAFF: Noah Saldo, Interim City Manager
Tori Deviney, Deputy City Clerk
Charles Drew, Fire Chief
Tom Stanley, Public Services Director
Maureen Meehan, Planning Services Director
ChyAnn Ketchum, Public Information Officer

A. Call to Order

Mayor Alt called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

B. Invocation

Alderman, Reverend Lowe Davis gave the invocation.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Alt let the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. Public Comment

Alderman Lai made a motion to open public comment, seconded by Alderman Spencer. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**

Mr. Greg McLean, 304 E. 8th Street, addressed the Board. He shared his experience as maintenance chief at Ft. Bragg to support his knowledge of stormwater. He spoke about the recurring flooding at his home during a rain event. He stated that the water from John Smith Cemetery flows into his backyard, which has become a “retention pond.” Mr. McLean talked about

a storm one week prior that filled his yard with 4–5 inches of water and inundated his air conditioning unit. He stated his concern about mold developing under his home and he asked the city to consider putting a retention pond along the fence line of the cemetery.

Asking for resolution and help from the city, Ms. Megan Loughran, 814 Cape Harbor Drive, spoke about the flooding history of her home since 1994 and “living on pins and needles every time the sky opens up.” She stated that a drainage ditch along Cape Harbor Drive used to be cleaned out once a year when her parents lived at the residence.

Stating her understanding that Doshier Memorial Hospital pumps water into the backyards of her neighborhood, Ms. Ann Logan, 611 Fodale Avenue, spoke to the Board about flooding. She indicated that she has documentation dating back to 1979 regarding the problems with the drainage ditch and she pointed out that, in the past, the ditch would be cleared out by the city. She questioned why that activity has not continued. Ms. Logan stated she contacted Public Services Director Stanley and was unhappy with his response.

Mr. Woody McRoy, Jr., 613 Fodale Avenue, retired city employee, shared his experiences cleaning out the drainage ditch twice a year. He asked why the city stopped that practice.

Ms. Mary MacLean, 612 N. Fodale Avenue, acting as a proxy for neighbors who were unable to attend the meeting, talked about the repeated flooding in the neighborhood; eight (8) homes have had interior flooding, and an 87 year-old man’s home has flooded twice. She referenced a 1979 letter to the State Port Pilot that said; *“the town acted, came onto private property and dug a ditch”* which to her implies the city is responsible for the care of the ditch they dug. Ms. MacLean talked about the desperation of the owners to protect their property, the potential impact of 100 houses to be constructed across the street from the Northwood Cemetery, and she pleaded with the Board to take action to alleviate the flooding problems.

Ms. Katie Ward, 613 N. Fodale Avenue, shared her anxiety regarding the flooding of her home; *“I have lived through two (2) floods in the house. It’s the scariest feeling.”* She stated that she has pictures from 2019 when the city put in a culvert and redid the ditch. Ms. Ward emphasized that since her childhood she has seen her uncle Woody clean out the ditches in Southport and she questioned why that practice has not continued after his retirement. She added that in 1970 the city deemed the area buildable, in 1973 the first flood happened, and since that time, the ditch was dug out year after year. She pointed out that several elderly people live in the neighborhood, many of the houses are for sale in the area, and flood insurance is unaffordable.

Mr. Ed Long, 605 N. Fodale Avenue, retired law enforcement with Brunswick County, spoke about the flooding history of his home since 1980, the thousands of dollars he has spent replacing every appliance and air conditioning system, and his familiarity with the drainage ditch. He noted that the city used to get inmates to clean out the ditch. He stressed that the people of the neighborhood cannot continue to live with the repeated flooding, and he asked the city to address the issue.

Deputy City Clerk Deviney read an email submitted by Ms. Tammy Saxton, 670 N. Fodale Avenue, regarding the drainage ditch that runs behind her home. The email reported her contact with Mayor Hatem in 2020, the ditch being cleared out at that time and her assertion that the ditch has not been cleared out since. The email spoke about the September 16, 2024 no name storm that flooded her home, her belief that the ditch would be cleared out after that storm or during the winter to prepare for hurricane season, and her disappointment that the debris is still in the ditch. Ms. Saxton's version of a conversation with Alderman Spencer regarding the issue was included in the email. Her email indicated she has photos of damage from the 9-16-24 and 5-27-25 storms.

Deputy City Clerk Deviney read an email from Mr. Martin "Marty" Dorward, Plein Air Festival Chair, expressing appreciation to the Board and city staff for partnering with Up Your Arts on the successful Plein Air Festival May 1, 2, & 3; "there were over 75 participating artists, over 300 patrons visiting the festival wet paint sale, a Kids Plein Air, art demonstrations, music, and food truck. Franklin Square Park was the perfect venue for the festival providing the space needed, stage, shade, nearby restrooms and adequate close parking." The email went on to specifically acknowledge city staff: Parks and Recreation Director Hemphill and her staff, Community Relations Director Allyna Dail Taylor, Public Services Director Tom Stanley and his staff, Police Chief Todd Coring and Police Officer Katie Ward.

Alderman Kelley made a motion to close public comment, seconded by Alderman Spencer. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**

E. Approval of Agenda

Alderman Kelley made a motion to add to the Agenda, Update of Stormwater Issues as Item #1. Alderman Spencer seconded the motion. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**

Alderman Carroll made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Alderman Kelley. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**

Mayor Alt read the Ethics Statement:

"If any members know of any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest concerning matters on the agenda, please so state at this time."

No conflicts of interest stated.

F. Approval of Consent Agenda

Alderman Spencer made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Alderman Mosteller. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**

1. Approval of a Contract for Construction of the Weather Tower (agenda pages 3-9)
2. Resolution Requiring the Live Streaming and Recording of the Board of Adjustment Meetings (agenda page 10)

Resolution #25-0602.01

**A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHPORT BOARD OF ALDERMEN AS TO THE
RECORDING AND BROADCASTING OF CITY MEETINGS**

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the Southport Board of Aldermen adopted Resolution #25-0410.01 on April 10, 2025, to require the live streaming and recording of all the Board of Aldermen and Planning Board Meetings.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE
CITY OF SOUTHPORT THAT RESOLUTION #25-0410.01 IS AMENDED AS
FOLLOWS:**

1. Paragraph #1 is rewritten to read "All meetings of the Board of Aldermen, Planning Board, and Board of Adjustments Regular, Special, or Emergency, where a quorum of either Board is assembled for deliberations, and the conducting of business shall always be live-streamed and recorded." All remaining provisions of resolution #25-0410.01 remain the same as adopted.

Adopted this 2nd day of June 2025.

/s/ Rich Alt, Mayor

/s/ Tori Deviney, Deputy City Clerk

G. Special Recognition

1. Recognition of Doshier Hospital on the Occasion of their 95th Anniversary

Mayor Alt read the Proclamation recognizing Doshier Memorial Hospital's 95th anniversary. He presented the proclamation to Ms. Lynda Stanley, President & CEO. Ms. Stanley thanked the Board for the recognition, stated that the hospital does not pump water into people's yards, and she invited everyone to the June 7 Community Cookout, "Chew & Chat."

INSERT PROCLAMATION

H. Agenda

1. Stormwater Issues Update

City Manager Saldo reported that several tracts are being pursued relating to the city's stormwater system:

1. Ordinance changes
2. Pursuing Federal & State grants to update the entire stormwater system
3. A strategic study has been performed on the system to pinpoint the critical areas
4. Pursuing funding within the city's budget
5. Create a policy/comprehensive plan for how stormwater system issues will be addressed in the future

Responding to a question from Alderman Kelley, City Manager Saldo indicated that written permission is required from all property owners for the city to go onto private property to clean the drainage ditches. He pointed out that many of the ditches are the property of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and the city will have to coordinate with them.

Alderman Davis encouraged neighbors to communicate with each other. Alderman Mosteller suggested the city manager reach out to the City Attorney to determine if there are alternatives the city can pursue.

Noting that his home has flooded multiple times, Alderman Spencer spoke about Ms. Saxton's misinterpretation of his comments. He added that the drainage and flooding issues are personal to him.

Mayor Alt spoke about the interior flooding of Liberty Commons Nursing and Rehab Center, Fodale Avenue, and the subsequent renovations and installation of a pump to connect to the city's stormwater system upgrade during Phase I of the BRIC grant project.

Mayor Alt talked about walking the drainage ditch with Mr. Ed Long and discovering an area of blockage. Mayor Alt emphasized that the Board and all city staff are working on a resolution to the decades-in-the-making flooding issues. He added that the city is actively pursuing additional federal funding available through a \$1.5 billion grant earmarked for damages from Potential Tropical Storm #8 (\$750M still unencumbered).

Alderman Kelley asked the public for patience while the city takes steps to improve the stormwater system.

2. Presentation by Otto Connect Inc., Parking Management
(agenda pages 11-46)

Mr. Jim Varner, President and CEO of Otto Connect Inc., presented an overview and assessment of paid parking for the city. He explained “SurfCAST,” a mobile app and web/cloud-based parking management tool. He stated that license plate details are used to set up and monitor parking permits and to issue parking violations based on city ordinances. He emphasized that Otto Connect’s goal is to create value for the city, residents, and visitors with a seamless, easy to use, parking management solution.

Mr. Varner reviewed the following:

- Residents/Owners options and application process
- Visitor application process
- Parking rates (\$5/hr. is typical)
- Areas for parking: “Designated,” “Premium,” “Discount,” “Resident Only”
- Enforcement
- Violations/Citation Fines
- A typical sign template
- Otto Connect implementation costs and timeframe (1-2 months after city approval)

Mr. Varner stated the revenue sharing is 35% of all revenues based on the number of spaces and requirement to monitor for two (2) hour limited parking periods.

Responding to multiple queries from the Aldermen, Mr. Varner responded with the following:

- 900 parking spaces are estimated for a city the size of Southport
- All areas are to be measured to determine the number of spaces
- Visitors to residents would be required to pay to park unless provisions are made for resident parking permits
- Signs every 30 feet will be on poles (installed by city)
- Most towns make provisions for employee parking
- Estimated annual revenue \$1M
- Otto Connect anticipated revenue, 1 third of all revenue collected

- Otto Connect provides services in Oak Island, Varnamtown, Holden Beach, Sunset Beach, Ocean Island, and Beech Mountain (majority are beach parking; three (3) cities have a combination of downtown and beach parking)
- Special events (4th of July, etc.) would have free parking
- Provisions can be made for parking for church services
- All violation fees would be retained by the city (with a state-authorized exemption)
- There is no third party involved
- No due process action has ended up in a court of law
- Unpaid violations are submitted to a collection agency after 30 days and reported to the credit bureaus if they remain unpaid

Alderman Carroll stated he wants residents, business owners, and employees to have free parking, or he could not support paid parking.

Alderman Kelley stated her opinion that paid parking is not the right choice for Southport and she emphasized not scaring businesses away.

Alderman Spencer shared his idea for a model paid parking system: a city-wide parking permit, a permit for every piece of property owned by the city, visitors park on residents' private property or pay to park, regional passes provided for neighboring communities, parking passes to churches at a discounted rate. He estimated providing 10,000 passes at \$250 each.

It was noted that many residents do not have parking on their property and use the right-of-way for parking.

Pointing out that a recent parking study concluded Southport was not ready for paid parking, Alderman Mosteller expressed her reluctance to see 250 signs in the historic downtown area, and she spoke of her 100+ year old house, which has no space for parking.

Referencing the provision to pay a violation penalty within six (6) hours of getting a ticket, Mayor Alt asked about due process. Mr. Varner indicated that there is a multi-level review process handled by first-level support personnel, most issues are due to incorrect license numbers being input, and all the cities that Otto Connect serves, delegates the due process to Otto or the city does it. City Manager Saldo indicated that an additional final dispute process could be implemented with the city. Alderman Davis expressed concerns about the city being sued

Pointing out that her license plate was read incorrectly, Alderman Kelley shared her experience receiving a parking violation on Oak Island. She stated the violation was dealt with immediately.

3. Amendments to Update the UDO for Consistency with NC General Statutes (agenda pages 47-55)

Planning Services Director Meehan explained the proposed amendments to multiple sections of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) for consistency with the North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 160D. She reviewed the proposed amendments to Section 2.10.B.4. Planning Board Action, Section 2.15.D. Penalties and Remedies for Violations, Section 2.15.E. Transferring Lots in Unapproved Subdivisions: Violation and Section 4.2 No Subdivision Without Plat Approval. Director Meehan reported that the Planning Board had reviewed the proposal, recommended approval at its March 20, 2025 meeting, and a duly advertised public hearing was held on May 8, 2025.

Responding to a query from Alderman Mosteller, Director Meehan stated the city can dictate civil penalties and staff will look into what other cities charge per day per violation, increasing the penalty from the current \$25, and return to the Board of Aldermen with a recommendation.

Alderman Mosteller made a motion to adopt the amendments of the UDO for consistency with NC General Statute Chapter 160D and adopt the consistency statement. Alderman Kelley seconded the motion. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**

4. Southport Emergency Operation Plan (agenda pages 56-169)

Referencing the final draft of the Emergency Operations Plan as provided in the agenda packet, and pointing out the last plan was prepared by City Manager Rob Gandy in 2006, Fire Chief Drew reported on the specifics of the plan:

- The Plan is a collaboration of all departments involved during a disaster or State of Emergency
- The City Manager and all department heads have reviewed the plan
- The Plan details the operations of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- The Plan details the phases of operations for activation
- The Plan defines the duties and responsibilities of each department during activation
- The Plan meets all FEMA requirements and legal requirements in State Statute 160A
- All potential hazards for the city are recognized and covered in the plan
- The Plan is National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliant

- Provisions for annual plan review and review after each emergency incident is included
- Every department head will sign off on the document once the Board of Aldermen have adopted the Plan

Chief Drew reported that he is currently working on Chapter 6 & 7 of the Southport Code of Ordinances that has not been updated since 1974. He indicated that he wants to include the NIMS discussion in the ordinance revisions.

Alderman Mosteller pointed out minor revisions to staff title listings:

- Public Information Roster – refer to Officer instead of roster
- Animal Control Officer – change to Animal Protective Services

Responding to a query by Alderman Kelley, Chief Drew stated that the Fire Department has always held an after-action briefing. Alderman Kelley thanked Chief Drew for including an after-action briefing in the Plan.

Stating his enthusiasm for having a new emergency operation plan, Mayor Alt emphasized that with the adoption of the Plan, each employee will know their role during an emergency.

Alderman Lai made a motion to approve the 2025 Emergency Operation Plan, seconded by Alderman Carroll. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**

I. Manager's Report

City Manager Saldo reported on the status of the shoreline stabilization project; all Phase I easements have been executed, and he anticipates all designs, permits, bidding, and construction to start early winter 2025. He added that Phase II is proceeding.

City Manager Saldo reported that the city closed the sale of the Sunny Point adjacent 400+ acres to the North Carolina State Wildlife Commission.

J. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Alt thanked city staff for their responses during the recent rain event. He talked about a car flooding during the height of the storm and the vehicle owner's praise of the fire and police departments for rescuing him and his wife.

Mayor Alt announced that he would be signing the contract to start construction of the Weather Tower with a 90-day timeframe to complete the work.

K. Board Comments

Alderman Lai thanked the Police and Fire Department personnel for their handling of recent flooding issues. "I'm afraid this is the new normal," he said.

Alderman Spencer announced the passing of a personal friend and a Southport lifetime resident, Mary D. Harrington. He talked about the emotional rollercoaster of the flooding issues, and for his wedding anniversary, he thanked his wife for ten (10) years of patience.

Alderman Kelley thanked city staff for their responses during the recent flooding. She thanked the city manager for providing updates on the stormwater improvements project. Pointing out that school is out of session, Alderman Kelley cautioned everyone to watch for children.

Alderman Davis announced that the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting would be held on Tuesday, June 3, at 6:00 p.m. at the Parks and Recreation Department building next to the city gym. She added that eight (8) applications were received for consideration of appointment to a vacancy on the committee. Alderman Davis invited everyone to witness the flag-lowering held every evening at 7:30 p.m. at Waterfront Park, Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Alderman Mosteller stated her appreciation for all the donations received for the construction of a new weather tower. She noted that Downtown Southport Inc. donated \$10,000 and the Cannon Foundation provided a grant for \$5,000. Mayor Alt pointed out that no taxpayer money is being spent on the project.

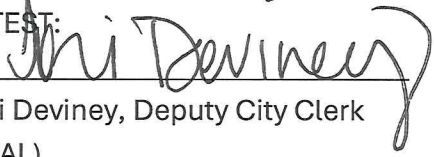
L. Adjourn

Alderman Kelley made a motion to adjourn at 11:35 a.m., seconded by Alderman Spencer. **Unanimous vote; motion carried.**



Rich Alt, Mayor

ATTEST:


Tori Deviney, Deputy City Clerk
(SEAL)

