

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 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 April 7, 2026. 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, Deputy Building Official Joe Tabor, Public Works Director Allan Ladnier, Human Resources & Risk Management Director Mindy McDowell, Grants Administrator Carolyn Martin, Planning Director Amanda Crose, Parks & Recreation Director Stephen Glorioso, Project Manager Sarah Harris, Mary C. O'Keefe Center Director Sarah Qarqish, and Executive Administrator & Public Affairs Officer Lauri 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 Tillis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

**PRESENTATION/PROCLAMATION**

- a. PRESENTATION: Ocean Springs Environmental Alliance - Arbor Day and Earth Day - Hope Landis

Hope Landis and Carla Culpepper spoke on behalf of the Ocean Springs Environmental Alliance (OSEA), providing a brief history of the organization, which was established in 2019. They discussed their partnership with the City, including tree giveaways, lectures, demonstrations at the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Arts Center, and tree planting events at the dog park and other locations. They expressed appreciation to Building Official Darrell Stringfellow for his assistance and presented him with a certificate of appreciation. They also announced the upcoming Earth Day event to be held at the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Arts Center on April 18, which will include food, music, children's activities, and environmentally themed booths.

- b. PROCLAMATION: Parkinson's Awareness Month

The Mayor proclaimed April 2026 as Parkinson's Awareness Month.

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- c. Recognition of employment years of service: 10 years - Sewer Asst Supervisor Eric Kordek and Street Supervisor Jon Lizana; 5 years - Mary C. O'Keefe Center Director Sarah Qarqish, Police Sergeant Ronald Bennett, Police Lieutenant Archie Wallace, and Truck Driver Lloyd Helveston

The Mayor recognized employees for years of service. Sarah Qarqish, Ronald Bennett, and Archie Wallace were present and accepted their certificates from the Mayor.

**AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Discuss Bicycle Safety Plan

Alderman Pfeiffer stated that Jackson County completed a bicycle safety plan in 2018 that included Ocean Springs with resident input. She requested that the Board review the plan and schedule a work session with the Police Department and Planning Department to determine what updates or additions the City may want to consider. She further requested that a future agenda item be placed to discuss scheduling the work session.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

**Mayor/BOA:**

- a. Authorize and waive all associated costs for the Ocean Springs Chamber-Main Street to host their annual Taste of Ocean Springs at the Civic Center on May 15, 2026, as a potential rain-out date; to advertise the resources of the city
- b. Authorize and waive all associated costs for the Ocean Springs School District JROTC to host their end-of-the-year banquet at the Civic Center on April 22, 2026; to advertise the resources of the city
- c. Approve the temporary road closures from April 24, 2026 at dusk through April 25, 2026 at dawn in the Marshall Park area of Washington Avenue as requested and authorize coordination with the Police Department for traffic control and public safety
- d. Authorize and waive all associated costs for Krewe Unique to host their annual Halloween fundraising event at the Civic Center on Saturday, October 24, 2026,

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from 7:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m., which serves as a donation drive for unwrapped Christmas toys, which will benefit the Discovery Christmas Toy Drive; to advertise the resources of the city

- e. Authorize and waive all associated costs for Krewe Unique to host their annual scholarship and outreach fundraiser at the Civic Center on Saturday, August 22, 2026, from 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.; to advertise the resources of the city
- f. Authorize and waive all associated costs for Krewe Unique and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) to host their annual backpack giveaway at the Civic Center on Saturday, July 25, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.; to advertise the resources of the city
- g. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for Lost Fest on April 11, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., in the parking lot of Lost Springs Brewing, Mosaic's and Neon Moon - Downtown Ocean Springs; no road closures are requested as the lot owned by the businesses will be used and closed for the event; event organizers are requesting 6 trash cans (\$30) and 6 barricades (\$60); the event will be at no cost to the City; the applicant pays the associated event cost to include providing their own security

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

- h. Authorize the Mayor and the Mary C. O'Keefe Center Director to execute the Memorandums of Understanding for programming partnerships at the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Arts Center with Grand Mag Music Curtis Rockwell and Sabrina Stallworth

**City Clerk:**

- i. Approve Minutes: Recess Meeting March 17, 2026
- j. Accept March 2026 Aged Receivables Report
- k. Ratify check for \$140.00 to Kimberly McCarty for Winter Basketball Referee Fees

**Fire Department:**

- l. **REMOVED DUE TO DATE CHANGE:** Authorize Employees #2450 and #2378 for Out-of-State travel to Pueblo, CO for the PER-290 Tank Car Specialist Course on April 12, 2026; all associated costs to be paid by FEMA/DHS
- m. Authorize ratification of the Fire Department's application for a Lowe's Grant to fund improvements and expansion of the Bernard Beugez Fire Station (Station 2)

**Human Resources/Risk Management:**

- n. Accept resignation of Part-time Dispatcher Nichole Sacurato, effective March 31, 2026; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- o. Authorize employment of Joel England, Part-time Patrolman, effective April 8, 2026; \$20.00 hourly rate; pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements

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- p. Accept resignation of Firefighter Conner Havard effective April 3, 2026; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position
- q. Accept resignation of Firefighter Bradford Laneaux effective April 9, 2026; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position.
- r. Authorize employment of John Avara, Firefighter II, effective April 11, 2026; \$17.08 hourly rate; one year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- s. Authorize employment of Cameron Woodell, Ground Maintenance, effective April 8, 2026; Step 1 \$15.00 hourly rate; one-year probationary status, pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements
- t. **ADDED:** Accept resignation of Purchasing/Administrative Assistant Amber Carter effective May 1, 2026; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position

**Planning Commission (PC):**

- u. Approve the request for a Residential Short-Term Rental Permit at 808 Desoto St #10 - PIDN: 60119106.000; PC recommends approval

**Grants Administration:**

- v. Authorize execution of Closeout Documents with LJ Construction, Inc. –R-109-282-08-KCR: Fort Bayou Improvements: Manhole Replacement – Katrina Disaster Recovery Funds (KCDBG)
- w. Authorize Closeout for the FORT BAYOU STORM DRAIN IMPROVEMENTS project – American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) / MS Municipality and County Water Infrastructure Grant (MCWI) – MDEQ Agreement # 127-2-CW-5.6 – Lane Construction Co., Inc.

**Building Department:**

- x. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through March 31, 2026
- y. Accept Code Enforcement Report through April 1, 2026

**Parks & Recreation Department:**

- z. Accept Parks Advisory Board Minutes — March 25, 2026
- aa. Authorize and waive all associated costs for Ocean Springs Upper Elementary Use of Highway 57 Sport Complex for the annual 4th, 5th, and 6th grade annual kickball tournament

**Public Works:**

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

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**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 Hinton, seconded by Alderman Stennis, 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 Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to accept the monthly budget report.

- c. City Clerk: Budget Amendments - Clay Boyd Pavilion and Water Main Replacement

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to authorize \$4,000.00 from the 2% Tourism Fund for replacement of the pavilion at Clay Boyd Park.

A motion was made by Alderman Stennis, seconded by Alderman Messenger, and unanimously carried to authorize \$137,186.14 from the Enterprise Fund for replacement of the 10-inch water main from the City Hall well to Russell Avenue.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Harley Klein spoke on the importance of bike paths in the City and the need to address and regulate e-bikes.

Julia Illanne thanked the Aldermen who requested a State Auditor investigation of Securix, stating that residents who received citations were denied due process. She also spoke regarding the moratorium that was voted down and suggested that certain ordinance changes be considered to address density concerns.

**MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM**

Alderman Tillis stated that e-bikes should be addressed and regulated.

Alderman Stennis complimented the work on Martin Avenue, stating the concrete improvements look good, and thanked Public Works. She also spoke on the importance of integrity and ethics in government, emphasizing transparency and accountability to constituents. She referenced concerns related to the Securix contract and stated her

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commitment to ensuring accountability.

Alderman Wade requested that Public Works clean the ditch on Westbrook Street.

Alderman Pfeiffer noted that there are five meetings remaining before the deadline associated with the parking garage lease and requested a work session to review documents, understand obligations, and determine next steps. A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to schedule a work session to discuss the parking garage lease.

Following discussion, the work session was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 15, after 5:00 p.m.

Alderman Messenger thanked Public Works for the flowers at the Parktown Subdivision entrance and stated that she has received constituent concerns regarding e-bikes, agreeing that the issue should be addressed.

Alderman Hinton thanked City staff and stated that e-bikes have been a concern. He noted that he has spoken with the Police Chief about incorporating safety education in schools and agreed on the importance of addressing the parking garage lease.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

The City Clerk returned to the meeting and announced that a motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to go into executive session to discuss two personnel matters, transactions regarding security plans and devices, and the parking garage lease.

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to come out of executive session, where the following actions were taken:

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Tillis, and unanimously carried to prohibit the possession of cell phones during executive session, requiring all individuals present to deposit their cell phones outside the executive session meeting area.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Wade, to allow compensation as a 1099 employee up to the amount the city currently pays, for consideration. The motion carried with a vote as follows:

Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Blackman, Alderman Hinton

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Nay: Alderman Stennis, Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Messenger

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman and seconded by Alderman Tillis, to accept the parking garage lease and authorize the Mayor to sign. The motion carried with a vote as follows:

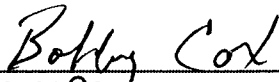
Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Blackman, Alderman Hinton

Nay: Alderman Stennis, Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Messenger

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

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

The meeting ended at 7:56 p.m.

  
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Mayor Cox

  
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City Clerk Christine Millard

