

**CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS - MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 3, 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 February 3, 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, Deputy Fire Chief Samuel Guin, Building Official Darrell Stringfellow, Public Works Director Allan Ladnier, Human Resources & Risk Management Director Mindy McDowell, Grants Administrator Carolyn Martin, Planning Office Administrator Rae Williams, Parks & Recreation Director Stephen Glorioso, Project Manager Sarah Harris, and Executive Administrator & Public Affairs Officer Laurri 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 Blackman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Messenger, and unanimously carried to remove item 5-b and accept the amended agenda.

**AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ralph Humphrey, agenda item 5-c, President of the Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks, stated that the donation of reef balls would be greatly appreciated.

Glen Miller, agenda item 6-aa, stated that he submitted a public records request regarding the number of tree removal applications since 2024 and expressed concern over an increase in the number of protected trees being removed for development and due to insurance requirements. He stated that he, along with his organization, A Voice of the Trees, are requesting a six-month moratorium on protected tree cutting within the City. He further stated that the City has a responsibility to take a position opposing insurance-driven tree removal in order to protect homeowners' ability to maintain insurance coverage.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Ordinance Introduction: An Amendment to Ord 2020-06 Appendix A – Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance of the Unified Development Code of the City of Ocean Springs, Mississippi; To Clarify Variance and Appeal Procedures

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In Article 6, Including the Recommendation Role of the Zoning and  
Adjustment Board And Final Decision Authority of the Board of Aldermen

No amendments were offered to the introduced ordinance. The ordinance will be considered for adoption at the Recess Meeting.

- b. Discussion to extend Residential Short Term Rental Moratorium 6-months  
Aldermen Stennis and Hinton recused themselves and exited the Boardroom at 6:10 p.m.

The Planning Office Administrator provided an overview of the Short-Term Rental (STR) waitlist, stating that there are six (6) applications on the waiting list within the Residential Density Zone and twenty-three (23) applications on the waiting list within the Citywide Residential Zone. Aldermen Tillis and Pfeiffer requested that a written breakdown of the waitlist be provided following the meeting.

A motion was made by Alderman Tillis and seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer to adopt a Resolution (**RES 2026-01**) extending the Residential Short-Term Rental Moratorium for six (6) months, effective February 19, 2026, through August 18, 2026. The motion carried with the following vote:

Aye: Alderman Tillis, Alderman Wade, Alderman Pfeiffer, Alderman Messenger

Nay: Alderman Blackman

Recused: Alderman Stennis, Alderman Hinton

Aldermen Stennis and Hinton returned to the Boardroom at 6:15 p.m.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- a. The City of Ocean Springs Annual Independence Day Celebration Fireworks Show on July 3, 2026 — Accept Barge Donation from Signet Maritime and Vice Construction — Adopt Resolutions to request assistance from Jackson County — and select a fireworks provider presented from quotes received

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Pfeiffer, and unanimously carried to accept the barge donation from Signet Maritime and Vice Construction for use in launching the fireworks during the July 3, 2026 Independence Day Celebration.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Hinton, and unanimously carried to adopt Resolutions (**RES 2026-02 and RES 2026-03**) requesting financial assistance from Jackson County Supervisor Randy Bosarge and Jackson County Supervisor Troy Ross for the Independence Day Fireworks display on July 3, 2026.

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A motion was made by Alderman Stennis, seconded by Alderman Wade, and unanimously carried to select Pyro Shows as the fireworks provider at a cost of \$20,475.00.

- b. Consideration of Ocean Springs School District Request to Adjust Board Appointment Schedules

Item removed prior to agenda approval.

- c. Authorize permission to donate five concrete reef balls to Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks, Inc.

A motion was made by Alderman Hinton, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to authorize permission to donate five concrete reef balls to Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks, Inc.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Alderman Blackman, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda except item 6-x pulled by Alderman Messenger.

**Mayor/BOA:**

- a. Authorize the installation of a streetlight on an existing pole at 524 Jackson Avenue and approve the increase of the MS Power bill by \$12.00 per month
- b. Authorize and waive the rental fee to allow YoungLife to host a Christian ministry to high school students in the Parks and Recreation building on Monday evenings for the dates requested; to advertise the resources of the city
- c. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the City of Ocean Springs Easter Egg Hunt on March 21, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., at Freedom Field
- d. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the 12th Annual Feed the Need Fish Fry and Music Festival on Sunday, March 22, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., inside and outside the Government Street Grocery, including the public parking lot, 1210 Government Street. Waive fees for trashcans (\$40) and barricades (\$180); city sponsorship to advertise resources of the city
- e. Authorize and waive the rental fee for the Ocean Springs High School girls' softball program to host an end of the year banquet at the Civic Center on Monday, May 18, 2026, from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.; to advertise the resources of the city

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- f. Authorize and waive the rental fee for the Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA to host their 2026 preschool graduation at the Civic Center on Friday, May 22, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.; to advertise the resources of the city
- g. Approve the Special Event Permit Application for the Independence Day Celebration on July 3, 2026, from 12:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., City event, over-time costs and event support costs apply

**City Clerk:**

- h. Approve **REVISED** Minutes: Regular Meeting January 6, 2026
- i. Approve Minutes: Special Work Session January 16, 2026
- j. Accept the January 2026 Aged Receivables Report
- k. Ratify electronic payments made to Amazon and Walmart to avoid late fees
- l. **ADDED:** Adopt Resolution Enrolling a Lien for Demolition Cost for 126 and 18 Earle Taylor Lane (**RES 2026-04**)

**Police Department:**

- m. Authorize Employee #2848 for Out-of-State travel to Stapleton, AL for Refresher Course in Report Writing for Law Enforcement from April 20-21, 2026

**Human Resources/Risk Management:**

- n. Authorize promotion of Dispatcher Chasity McLendon to Lead Dispatcher, effective February 14, 2026; \$20.60 hourly rate; six months probationary status
- o. Authorize a pay adjustment for Parks Maintenance Supervisor Scott Dossett to \$24.67 hourly rate due to grade reclassification, to ensure consistency with other supervisor classifications, effective February 14, 2026
- p. Authorize a pay adjustment for Public Works Maintenance Supervisor Ed Lamb to an hourly rate of \$23.95 due to increased supervisory responsibilities resulting from an increase in department crew size, effective February 14, 2026
- q. Authorize promotion of Equipment Operator Ethan Ewing to Drainage Supervisor, effective February 14, 2026; \$23.95 hourly rate; six months probationary status
- r. Authorize promotion of Drainage Laborer Frederick Jansky to Heavy Equipment Operations Supervisor, effective February 14, 2026; \$20.29 hourly rate; six months probationary status
- s. Authorize promotion of Drainage Laborer John Rodenkirch to Drainage Equipment Operator, effective February 14, 2026; \$18.04 hourly rate; six months probationary status

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- t. Authorize transfer of Street Laborer Ruban Price to the Beautification Department, as a Beautification Laborer, effective February 14, 2026
- u. Authorize transfer of Street Department Truck Driver Matthew Forehand to the Drainage Department, effective February 14, 2026
- v. Accept termination of Public Works employee #2876, effective January 27, 2026; authorize to begin the process of filling the vacant position

**Planning Commission (PC):**

- w. Approve the request for a Residential Short-Term Rental Permit at 28 Davis Bayou Circle - PIDN: 61066028.000; PC recommends approval
- x. Approve the request for Final Plat of the Savannah Estates Subdivision, Phase II – PIDN: 60123050.000; PC recommends approval

Alderman Messenger inquired about the wetlands delineation and requested a paper copy for review, as well as confirmation that all required materials had been submitted and reviewed. The Planning Office Administrator stated that all items on the checklist were submitted prior to the Planning Commission meeting and that the Planning Commission reviewed the materials and recommended approval of the final plat.

A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Messenger, and unanimously carried to approve the request for Final Plat of the Savannah Estates Subdivision, Phase II – PIDN: 60123050.000.

**Grants Administration:**

- y. Authorize Award of Construction Contract and Execution of Agreement – Washington Avenue Roadway and Drainage Improvements (Front Beach Drive to Lafontaine Avenue) – GOMESA Funding to JE Talley Construction, Inc. for \$673,253.75

**Building Department:**

- z. Accept Code Enforcement Report through January 28, 2026
- aa. Approve the Building Official's recommendations for the tree applications received through January 28, 2026

**Parks & Recreation Department:**

- bb. Approve the Facility Use Agreement of the Ocean Springs Baseball Organization Use of Highway 57 Sports Complex, Alice Street, Pine Street, and Clay Boyd from February 1st until May 14th
- cc. Approve the Facility Use Agreement of Ocean Springs Girls Softball Use of Highway 57 Sports Complex and Gay Lemon from February 1st until June 15th

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- dd. Approve the Facility Use Agreement of P360 Performance Sports, for the use of Highway 57 Sports Complex and Alice Street from February 1st until June 1st
- ee. **ADDED:** Authorize Facility Use Agreement with DEN Theatrics for use of the Ocean Springs Civic Center at a discounted rate of \$50.00/day due to the City / Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center partnership

**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 Wade, 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.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brian Rose stated that he submitted a one-sentence public records request seeking applications received by the City for the City Attorney position. He said that applications from five of the six applicants were released to the public with redactions; however, the sitting City Attorney, David Harris, filed a court action objecting to the release of his application. Mr. Rose stated that Mr. Harris argues his application should not be released and has further requested that all communications between himself and the City be deemed protected under attorney–client privilege.

Mr. Rose stated that attorney–client privilege belongs to the City, not the individual attorney. He expressed concern that the lawsuit was filed against him personally as a resident and journalist and that such action could deter citizens from submitting public records requests due to fear of litigation. He further stated that an employment application is not legal advice or work product, but rather a resumé, and that asserting attorney–client privilege in this context is concerning.

Mr. Rose stated that the City is not a party to the lawsuit and that the action was filed by Mr. Harris as an individual through a private law firm against a private resident, but that the case seeks a determination related to the City's attorney–client privilege. He requested that the Board of Aldermen considers whether this situation reflects the message they wish to convey and whether the courts are being misused in this matter.

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**MAYOR AND ALDERMEN'S FORUM**

The Mayor requested that the City of Ocean Springs participate in an effort to “adopt a community” in Ashland, Mississippi, which was impacted by a recent winter storm. He stated that Ashland is a small rural community in need of donations, including gift cards, toiletries, Ensure nutritional drinks, hygiene products, blankets, and adult diapers. Donations will be collected at the City’s fire stations and at City Hall, with delivery anticipated on February 16 or 17, 2026. The Mayor also announced that the March of the Mayors initiative is underway, with Ocean Springs collecting canned fruit through February 27, 2026, at City Hall and the fire stations. Additionally, the Mayor stated that infrastructure studies have been forwarded to Public Works to identify completed items. The information will then be reviewed by the Project Manager to identify additional projects before being sent to Neel-Schaffer for updates. He further noted that a capacity study of the City’s sewer lift stations will also be completed.

Alderman Tillis announced a fundraiser scheduled for February 14, 2026, in which Aldermen, City employees, and Jackson County officials will participate in a basketball game against the Harlem Wizards at Ocean Springs High School to benefit the Boys & Girls Club.

Alderman Stennis responded to Brian Rose’s public comment, stating that if the order were granted by the judge, it would prohibit citizens from accessing communications involving the City Attorney and members of the Board. She noted that many of the Aldermen ran on transparency and expressed that such an order would not align with those principles.

A motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Blackman, and unanimously carried to amend the prior approval for the Alice Street Ball Fields lighting project to authorize the purchase of light poles only from Mississippi Power and to further authorize the City to purchase LED light fixtures and contract the installation separately in order to upgrade the field lighting from HID to LED.

Alderman Wade stated that the Inner Harbor Park light timer is being tampered with and that lights and loud music are occurring after 10:00 p.m. The Parks and Recreation Director responded that the timer will be chained and locked nightly. Alderman Wade also thanked Public Works, Police Department, and Fire Department staff for the success of the Mardi Gras Day parade.

Alderman Pfeiffer announced that Historic Ocean Springs Association (HOSA) will be planting trees at the Civic Center near the Dog Park on Saturday, February 7, at 9:00 a.m. She also responded to Brian Rose’s public comment, stating that she has concerns when a resident submits a public records request and is subsequently involved in litigation. She stated that attorney-client privilege exists to protect communications, not relationships, and that it cannot be used to shield an entire category of records from the Public Records Act, as doing so could expose the City to future litigation.

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Alderman Blackman requested that the Parks Director obtain estimates and identify funding sources to repair tripping hazards on the walking track at the Civic Center. He also commended Alderman Wade for cleaning up beads following the parade on Government Street and thanked him for his dedication.

Alderman Messenger reiterated Alderman Tillis's announcement and encouraged the public to attend and support the Boys & Girls Club fundraiser against the Harlem Wizards at the High School on February 14th.

Alderman Hinton inquired about the status of hiring a new Fire Marshal. The Fire Deputy Chief responded that interviews had been conducted and that the top applicant was contacted earlier that day, with the expectation that the item will be placed on the next agenda. Alderman Hinton again thanked City staff for their efforts in ensuring the success of the Mardi Gras parade despite cold weather conditions. He then asked the City Attorney if he wished to respond to Brian Rose's public comment.

The City Attorney responded that the City is not a party to the matter referenced and that it is a private matter. He stated that the Mississippi Public Records Act establishes the procedure for classifying information as private, commercial, or privileged, and that such determinations are addressed through chancery court. He further explained that attorney-client privilege cannot be waived by the attorney but may only be waived by the client, and therefore the Board of Aldermen could take action to waive attorney-client privilege if it so chooses.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

The City Clerk returned to the meeting and announced that a motion was made by Alderman Wade, seconded by Alderman Messenger, and unanimously carried to remain in executive session for litigation updates regarding Securix and Upton.

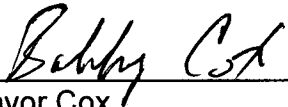
A motion was made by Alderman Pfeiffer, seconded by Alderman Stennis, and unanimously carried to return to open session. No action was taken during the executive session.

**RECESS UNTIL 6:00 P.M. on WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026**

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

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The meeting ended at 6:57 p.m.

  
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Mayor Cox

  
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City Clerk Christine Millard

