



**BELVILLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

May 28, 2026

Board of Commissioners Present:

Charles Bost, Mayor
Ryan Merrill, Mayor Pro Tem
Morgan Mehler, Commissioner
Hunter Smith, Commissioner
Lee Alexander, Commissioner

Board of Commissioners Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Athina Williams, Town Manager
Sharon Niemann, Town Clerk
Chad Staradumsky, Town Planner
Kemmy Goodson, Town CPA
Brenda Williams, Deputy Town Clerk/ Finance Clerk
Greg Bannerman, Grounds Maintenance Supervisor
Jace Sanchez, Administrative Assistant
Adrienne Harrington, Planning Consultant (via telecommunications)
William Bryant, Planning Consultant Cape Fear Engineering
Norwood Blanchard, Town Attorney
Charles Baldwin, Town Attorney

Others Present to Address the Board:

None

ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Charles Bost called the May 28th, 2026, BOC Regular Meeting, held at the temporary location of the NC State Highway Patrol Office, to order at 6:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

ITEM #2 – INVOCATION

Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill led the invocation asking for guidance, mindfulness and clarity to make the right decisions to better our town and community. Mayor Pro Tem Merrill then asked for a Moment of Silence to honor four individuals who recently passed away in our Belville Community: Donna Ibbs, long-time resident of Belville; Ronnie Bost, our Mayor's father and



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long-time resident; Durrell Clemmons, son of Tia Clemmons (General Manager of the ABC Stores,) and Katherine “Kay” Clark, mother of John Clark and Stephanie Smith. We send our condolences to the families and will continue to keep them in our prayers. Mayor Pro Tem Merrill asked for protection of law enforcement, first responders and all those who serve locally and abroad.

ITEM #3 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Charles Bost led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

ITEM #4 – WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Charles Bost welcomed everyone and apologized for moving the meeting to Thursday and expressed how much he appreciated everyone who reached out, and those who attended his father’s memorial service.

ITEM #5 - APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Bost asked for approval of the Agenda.

ACTION - Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to approve the Agenda.
VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

Mayor Bost recognized the two resolutions on the Consent Agenda, **R26-21 Resolution by the Belville Board of Commissioners Acknowledging Kim Cranford’s Third Work Anniversary with Appreciation and Thanks**, and **R26-22 Resolution by the Belville Board of Commissioners Designating June as Migraine and Headache Awareness Month Designating June as Migraine and Headache Awareness Month.**

ITEM #6 - APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of the April 28, 2026, BOC Regular Meeting Minutes and the April 28, 2026, BOC Special Budget Meeting Minutes
- b. Tax Collector Report
- c. Finance Report
- d. Planning Activity Report – Code Enforcement
- e. Special Events Report – Park Maintenance Report
- f. R26-21 Resolution by the Belville Board of Commissioners Acknowledging Kim Cranford’s Third Work Anniversary with Appreciation and Thanks
- g. R26-22 Resolution by the Belville Board of Commissioners Designating June as Migraine and Headache Awareness Month



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- h. After Action Report – Valentine Sweetheart Pop-Up Shop
- i. After Action Report – Easter Egg Hunt
- j. After Action Report – N. Brunswick Chamber Business Expo

ACTION – Commissioner Hunter Smith **MADE THE MOTION** to approve the Consent Agenda. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ITEM #7 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Bost asked if anyone present would like to come forward for Public Comments, but no one was present who wished to speak.

ITEM #8 – OLD BUSINESS

8.a. Update on Belville Riverwalk

1. Upcoming Events

Town Manager Athina Williams informed the board of upcoming events, the Food Truck Rodeo on June 20th, The Founders Day and 250th USA birthday Celebration which will be held together on June 27th, and the Youth Fishing Day on June 13th. She thanked Greg Bannerman for doing an excellent job of taking care of the park. She also mentioned that we are going to have Level Up Coffee coming soon, and we are hoping to get a farmers market vendor with vegetables and fresh flowers. Mayor Chuck Bost is excited that we are partnering with the VFW to celebrate the 250th USA birthday.

2. FY26-27 Draft Budget Discussion

Town Manager Athina Williams conveyed that the budget currently reflects a surplus of approximately \$30,000 as of our last meeting. We have a few budget items to discuss. We will schedule a Public Hearing to approve the budget at the Regular Board of Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, June 23rd, 2026. Mayor Charles Bost asked if we arrived on a decision for the “*No Donations Policy*.” Town Manager Williams answered that we decided to give \$1,250 to each of the five applicants for the FY 2026-2027, and in future years we will have a “No Donations Policy,” which will be in perpetuity, or until such time as we have extra funds.

Our next budget item, which remains from the last meeting, is the decision on the **Parks and Recreation Board stipend**. Mayor Bost conferred that we are trying to cut costs, and it looks like this is one area where most other Towns have already made the decision not to pay the Parks and Recreation Board. Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill removed his previous



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objection and is now in agreement with removing the stipend paid to the Parks and Recreation Board members.

ACTION – Mayor Charles Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to remove the stipend from the Parks and Recreation Board. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

Town Manager Athina Williams displayed Mr. Kerry Wooding's spreadsheets depicting alternative **health insurance scenarios**. She explained that insurance costs are rising, and at the last meeting, Mr. Wooding relayed that we expect a 26% increase. We are offering a new alternative which will increase costs by only about 2.6%, if we stay with Blue Cross and Blue Shield, however, employee deductions will increase. We also evaluated United Health Care, which at first sight looked a little less expensive, however, with the costs involved in changing carriers, and considering new doctors, the Town Staff is hoping you will honor our recommendation to stay with Blue Cross and Blue Shield Alternate 1 (Blue Options Gold) on the spreadsheet. Commissioner Hunter Smith asked if we looked into health savings accounts, upon which Town Manager Athina Williams said this is sometimes a burden to employees to keep track of. Commissioner Smith suggested that we should start shopping now to negotiate a price for next year. Discussion ensued among the board and staff.

ACTION – Commissioner Hunter Smith **MADE THE MOTION** to support the staff recommendation of Alternate 1 Blue Cross and Blue Shield Gold for the employee health insurance. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.** Town Manager Williams calculated the surplus as \$26,554 after the changes thus far.

Town Manager Athina Williams asked William Bryant, a planning consultant with Cape Fear Engineering, to come forward to discuss repairs needed at the Belville Riverwalk.

William Bryant introduced himself and walked the board through his structural and shoreline inspection survey. He clarified that there are several areas that need improvement:

1. *Observation Deck* –

Cape Fear Engineering did inspections in June and October of 2025 and reported on erosion problems. While we did some restoration work in 2015-2016, the structure was built around 2002, is nearing the end of its (approx. 20-26 year) life cycle. His group met onsite with TD Eure, the Riverwalk extension contractor, who agreed that we should start preparing plans for replacement. We could do some minor repairs now, why are we making plans to replace.

The Shoreline riprap has experienced damage from tidal and storm events, and the stones underneath the Observation Deck are undersized (2-4") instead of (12-15"). The filter



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fabric needs redone. He does recommend prevention of a large weight load on the deck. The board discussed closing it off for large events. Mr. Will Bryant was a marine contractor in Florida for nine years and has a lot of experience with shorelines. We received a proposal from TD Eure, as they are currently working on Phase II Riverwalk extension, and they estimated \$350,000 to replace the observation deck. Mr. Bryant suggested getting other price estimates and allowing Cape Fear Engineering to put together a price estimate for permitting and design fees and shoreline stabilization. These shoreline permits from agencies are not fast, and normally take about a year, so this must be figured into the timeline. Ideally the pilings would be removed and the decking rebuilt. He believes the penetration should be deeper than it currently is, and the timber ties should be larger. Commissioner Morgan Mehler stressed safety and asked how many people should be allowed. Commissioner Mehler strongly suggested blocking off the observation deck at high traffic times. William Bryant will confirm the number of people allowed with the structural engineer. He also mentioned moving the deck back 10-15 feet would help with future erosion problems and stabilize it more. Discussion ensued about combining this project with the playground restoration. The other option is to get TD Eure to replace some of the hardware, at a time and materials cost. This would give you the one to two years to get through the permitting process. Cape Fear Engineering will work on a proposal for replacement. The board decided to limit the load to 25-30 people until the issues are resolved and will wait to hear back from the structural engineer.

2. *Shoreline Erosion near Rowing Club.*

Will Bryant described this as not severe but observed runoff heading down near the rowing club entrance. He thinks this could be resolved with some fill. In one area near the picnic table, we should monitor the footpath traffic, and re-establish with maybe bushes or light fill, to deter run-off.

3. *Living Shoreline*

Natural vegetation to break up some of the wave action would create a wave break. Some species could be planted to break the waves. Discussion ensued and Mayor Charles Bost mentioned that the NCSU Coastal Dynamics Design Lab rendering brought this living shoreline idea to our attention.

4. *Playground at the park.*

Grounds Maintenance Supervisor Greg Bannerman pointed out some areas needing repairs on the larger playground. Staff and Parks and Recreation staff recently visited



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nearby playgrounds. Town Creek has a new one with artificial turf, which costs \$340,000. Greg Bannerman reported that the playground takes several layers of mulch, and he believes the artificial grass makes more sense, as it has a 10-year warranty. Ogden Park has a new playground with traditional mulch, which costs them about \$250,000. Another concern is the realignment of the traffic at the new entrance, and whether playground will be in a new location. Mayor Bost does not want to improve it and then have to move it. We need to decide where it will be and only do it once. Mayor Bost tasked staff to get recommendations and prices.

5. Tree Removal

Mr. Bannerman also discussed the 15 trees he is suggesting for removal. He has received two estimates: \$9,000 and \$9,700. This would include haul off and stump removal, and the area would be backfilled with soil. Discussion ensued.

Town Manager Athina Williams announced that this concludes the budget review. The Public Hearing to approve the budget will be advertised in June and held at the June 23rd budget meeting.

ITEM #9 – REGULAR AGENDA

9a. Phase II Vegetative Debris Removal Bid Tabulation

Town Manager Athina Williams explained that Barry Johnson of Johnson Environmental provided recommendations for primary and secondary debris removal contractors. This is activated only if we have a hurricane or storm. He assessed the contractors and pricing and suggests the primary contractor as: State Tree Service, Inc., which we have used in the past, and were very happy with. CTC Disaster Response is suggested for the secondary debris removal contractor.

ACTION – Commissioner Morgan Mehler **MADE THE MOTION** to approve the Johnson Environmental recommendation with **State Tree Service, Inc. as PRIMARY and CTC Disaster Response as the SECONDARY Phase II Vegetative Debris Removal Contractor. VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

9b. Project and Transportation Updates

Planning Consultant Adrienne Harrington, joined via telecommunications to give the Project Update, and reported that the Contractor of Riverwalk Phase 2 has finished the pilings on the southern end, and is working on framing and decking. Next week they will start on the gazebo,



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and it will take on a final polished look in the next four weeks. Completion date should be between July 20 to 24th. We are running about three weeks late. The natural surface trail is about done but will remain closed to the public until the construction is complete. Discussion ensued over the delay, but all were glad it will soon be complete.

Ms. Harrington stated that the Request for Letters of Interest have gone out for engineering services for the Gap in the Trail and the Belville Elementary Crossing /Entrance Relocation projects.

Adrienne Harrington was asking for the board's participation in the "Safe Streets for All" project regarding the Gullah Geechee trail and would like us to encourage public engagement and participation, which is accepting comments until June 12th.

Mayor Bost conveyed that he and Commissioner Hunter Smith attended the WMPO meeting and strategic plan in Wilmington, and most of the current projects are in Wilmington and Hampstead, with very little funded projects in Brunswick County. There is a big push for infrastructure ahead of building plans in our County. Mayor Bost has been an advocate for widening and improving NC133, and continues to mention the need to the WMPO.

ITEM #10 – CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Charles Bost read the statutes to go into closed session.

N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3) – To consult with the attorneys including litigation Urban Smart Growth 15 CVS 1217 and N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(5) acquisition of property.

ACTION – Commissioner Morgan Mehler **MADE THE MOTION** to go into closed session.
VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill **MADE A MOTION** to come back into open session.
VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

ITEM #11 – REPORTS/CLOSING REMARKS

- 11a. Town Attorney** - Attorney Norwood Blanchard confirmed that the record should reflect that we discussed Urban Smart Growth and possible property acquisition, and one potential lawsuit, but no action was taken in the closed session.
- 11b. Town Manager** – none
- 11c. Board of Commissioners** – none
- 11d. Mayor Pro Tem** - none
- 11e. Mayor** – Mayor Bost thanked everyone again for all your support during this week.



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ITEM #12 - ADJOURNMENT

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to adjourn. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

Minutes taken by Sharon A. Niemann

SIGNED:

Charles Bost, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sharon A. Niemann, Town Clerk