

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF**
2 **THE EMERALD ISLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**
3 **TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026– 6:00 PM**
4 **FLOYD MESSER JR. TOWN BOARD MEETING ROOM**

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6 **1. Call to Order**

7 The regular monthly meeting of the Emerald Isle Board of Commissioners was called to order by
8 Mayor Kyle Lagos at 6:00 PM in the Floyd Messer Jr. Town Board Meeting Room.

9
10 **2. Roll Call**

11 **Present for the meeting:** Mayor Kyle Lagos, Mayor Pro-Tem Jason Holland, Commissioners Roy
12 Brownlow, Alesia Sanderson, Josh Sawyer, and Kris Plum.

13
14 **Also present during the meeting:** Town Manager Frank Rush, Finance Director Laura
15 Rotchford, Town Clerk Lindsey Burton, Police Chief Michael Panzarella, Interim Fire Chief
16 Will Coffey, Planning Director John Nevel, Assistant Town Planner Greg Hayes, and Town
17 Attorney Marc Celotto.

18
19 **3. Opening Prayer**

20 Commissioner Brownlow led the group in prayer.

21
22 **4. Pledge of Allegiance**

23 Mayor Lagos led the Pledge of Allegiance.

24
25 **5. Public Comment**

26 There were seven public comments between 6:02 PM and 6:21 PM as outlined below:

27
28 Shane Guthrie, a candidate for Sheriff of Carteret County, introduced himself to the public and
29 shared his background, noting more than 34 years of experience in law enforcement. Mr. Guthrie
30 stated his desire to make the Sheriff's Office more community-oriented and better connected with
31 residents, and he asked for the public's support.

32
33 Joel Dunn expressed his support for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and stated that he had
34 sent an email to the Mayor and Board of Commissioners regarding the proposed rules, regulations,
35 and signage. Mr. Dunn also addressed the proposed coyote trapping plan, voicing concerns about
36 the trapping methods and offering three recommendations for managing the coyote population on
37 the island.

38
39 Dwayne McDougal stated his belief that the Town could eliminate the current parking contract
40 and generate sufficient revenue to purchase land for a new fire station and fund its construction.
41 He suggested installing entrance and exit gates at the eastern and western access parking lots as a
42 way to do so without burdening taxpayers.

43
44 Reena Pop expressed concerns regarding the use of motorized devices on the Town's bicycle and
45 pedestrian paths. She referenced research on the potential dangers of these devices and asked
46 questions regarding enforcement of the proposed rules and regulations.

1
2 Ronnie Wilson expressed his support for installing gates at the two Town-owned parking lots,
3 stating that this approach could generate additional revenue for the Town.

4
5 Kent Von Hertsenberg stated that the Town should emphasize more southern charm to highlight
6 its natural beauty. He also commented on parking revenue, suggesting it could be used to help fund
7 the construction of the new fire station.

8
9 Irv Monclova asked the audience to join him in a round of applause for retired Emerald Isle
10 Chief of Police Jeff Waters. He wished everyone a Happy New Year, congratulated the newly
11 appointed Board of Commissioners, and expressed appreciation for Town Manager Frank Rush
12 and the work he has done for the Town.

13
14 **6. We Heard You – Follow-Up To Prior Public Comments**

15 Mayor Lagos reviewed follow-ups to public comments from the December 9, 2025 Board of
16 Commissioners meeting and paper copies were available. A copy of the document can be obtained
17 through the Town’s website here:

18 [https://www.emeraldisle-nc.org/DocumentCenter/View/1813/Public-Comment-Follow-Ups-](https://www.emeraldisle-nc.org/DocumentCenter/View/1813/Public-Comment-Follow-Ups-12925-PDF-)
19 [12925-PDF-](https://www.emeraldisle-nc.org/DocumentCenter/View/1813/Public-Comment-Follow-Ups-12925-PDF-)

20
21 **7. Identification of Any Conflict of Interest**

22 There were no conflicts of interest identified for any topic on the agenda.

23
24 **8. Adoption of Agenda**

25 *Commissioner Sanderson made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. The*
26 *Board voted 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.*

27
28 **9. Introduction of New Employees / Recognition of Employees**

29 **a. Departing Fire Chief Bill Matthias**

30 **b. Interim Fire Chief Will Coffey**

31
32 Mayor Lagos thanked Billy Matthias for his service to the Town. Will Coffey presented
33 Chief Matthias with a shadow box of memorabilia. Chief Matthias thanked the town and
34 community for his time with the Town. Frank Rush announced that Will Coffey will
35 become the Interim Fire Chief.

36
37 **10. Proclamations / Public Announcements**

38 Mayor Lagos announced the Town’s Proclamation honoring the service of Irving Monclova. Irv
39 Monclova has been a valued member of the Emerald Isle community for more than 30 years. Mr.
40 Monclova was the driving force behind the establishment of the Neighborhood Watch program,
41 has been heavily involved in efforts to improve the Town’s Christmas decorations and establish
42 the Emerald Isle Hall of Fame, and helped maintain parks and recreation facilities over the years.

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2 **11. Consent Agenda**

3 **a. Minutes – December 9, 2025 Regular Meeting**

4 **b. Resolution Authorizing Beach Access Walkway Construction Contracts**

5 **c. Budget Amendment – General Fund (Heart Monitor Payments)**

6 **d. Resolution Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the American Shore & Beach**
7 **Presentation Association**

8
9 *Mayor Pro-Tem Holland made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. The*
10 *Board voted 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.*

11
12 **12. Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30,**
13 **2025**

14 Finance Director, Laura Rotchford presented the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the
15 fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, and reported that the Town remains in strong financial
16 condition. The Town’s statements have been audited and received a clean, unmodified opinion
17 and are available on the Town’s website for review, as well as a hard copy available at Town
18 Hall.

19
20 **13. FY 26-27 Budget**

21 **a. FY 26-27 Budget Calendar**

22 *Commissioner Brownlow made a motion to adopt the FY 26-27 Budget Calendar. The*
23 *Board voted 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.*

24
25 **b. Public Hearing – Early Citizen Input**

26
27 *Mayor Pro-Tem Holland made a motion to go into the Early Citizen Input Public Hearing.*
28 *The Board voted 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.*

29
30 Frank Rush highlighted milestone dates for the budget process leading up to the budget
31 adoption during the regular scheduled Commissioner meeting on June 9th.

32
33 There was one public comment during the Early Citizen Input Hearing.

34
35 Carol Peoples suggested a recurring allocation to support town-led conservation and
36 environmental protection efforts explaining how it can be a strategic investment opportunity,
37 including dune preservation efforts, living shoreline projects, and allocating funds for
38 ongoing installation and maintenance of native tree, shrubs, and grasses on municipal areas.

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40 *Mayor Pro-Tem Holland made a motion to close the Public Hearing session. The Board*
41 *voted 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.*

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14. Additional Discussion - Coyote Trapping Plan

USDA Wildlife Biologist Aaron Bowden responded to questions from the Commissioners regarding coyote trapping and provided information on coyotes’ food sources, migration patterns, and their status as a non-native species to the island. The Commissioners also inquired about the Town’s statistics on the island’s coyote population and the number of coyote-related complaints received by the Police Department over the years.

Commissioner Sawyer made a motion to proceed with this year’s coyote trapping plan. Mayor Pro-Tem Holland and Commissioner Sanderson voted in favor of the motion, while Commissioner Brownlow and Commissioner Plum voted against it. The motion passed with a 3–2 vote. Motion carried.

Commissioner Brownlow opposed the coyote trapping proposal due to his belief that there is insufficient supporting data, limited historical complaints, and lack of defined success metrics for the intervention.

15. Resolution Authorizing Updated Bicycle Path Guidelines

Parks and Recreation Director Candace Dooley presented a PowerPoint on the updated Bicycle Path Guidelines. Mrs. Dooley covered the topics of single-rider motorized vehicles, suggested speed, police monitoring, new signs, and the locations of these signs.

Commissioner Sanderson made a motion to approve the suggested bicycle path guidelines, with the exception of eliminating the prohibition on single-rider motorized vehicles. The Board voted unanimously 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.

16. Discussion - Emerald Isle Logo – 7th Street Water Tank

Frank Rush announced the opportunity to put the Town’s logos on the Bogue Bank Water Corporation water towers when they repaint this spring. Mr. Rush explained the cost and recurring fees that would be associated with this project. Bogue Banks Water Corporation’s Executive Director, Seola Hill was present to answer any questions from the Commissioners or public.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Hill for the offer but declined, stating the funds could be better allocated for other Town priorities.

17. Discussion – July 5, 2026 Fireworks Display

Frank Rush announced that Class A Fireworks is available to provide a fireworks show on July 5th for a cost of \$27,500. The preferred launch location would be the Bogue Inlet Fishing Pier, with the Western Regional Access serving as an alternative site if the pier is unavailable. Fire Chief Billy Matthias explained the logistical considerations for the event, including tides, closures, and staffing requirements.

1 *Commissioner Brownlow made a motion to approve the contract with Class A Fireworks for*
2 *the July 5th firework show, pending location. The Board voted unanimously 5-0 in favor.*
3 *Motion carried.*

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7 **18. Appointments Board of Commissioners**

8 **a. Planning Board – 1 Vacancy**

9 *The Board appointed Joni Brooks to a regular member term on the Planning Board that*
10 *expires in June 2028 by unanimous roll call vote, 5-0. Motion carried.*

11
12 **b. Civilian Military Community Council – Mayor Slot**

13 *Mayor Pro-Tem Holland made a motion to appoint Mayor Lagos to the Civilian Military*
14 *Community Council. The Board voted in favor 5-0. Motion carried.*

15
16 **19. Comments from Town Clerk, Town Attorney, and Town Manager**

17 There were no comments from the Town Clerk or Town Attorney. The Town Manager provided
18 the Board with updates on several items of general interest. The Commissioners' budget
19 workshop is scheduled for January 30th at 8:15 a.m. in the Town Administrative Building
20 conference room and will include more detailed sketches and drawings of Fire Station 2. A
21 deposit has been made for the Pebble Beach land acquisition, and construction of the Lee
22 Avenue sidewalk is scheduled to begin on January 14th. Regarding the Reed Drive drainage
23 improvements, a property owner in a key location has agreed to provide an easement for the
24 Town to install a pipeline, which is expected to shorten the route and reduce overall project
25 costs.

26
27 **20. Comments from Board of Commissioners and Mayor**

28 Commissioner Sanderson thanked the staff for the addition to the new mic stand on the podium,
29 and for all of their other hard work. She thanked everyone for their input on the various topics
30 and welcomed everyone to share their ideas and suggestions as the Town moves forward with
31 the budget process.

32
33 Commissioner Plum explained her rationale for her vote regarding the coyote trapping plan. She
34 thanked the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee for all of their hard work on their proposal, Laura
35 Rotchford and Frank Rush for their financial award, and everyone who attended the Commissioner
36 Meeting tonight.

37
38 Commissioner Holland announced that the Emerald Isle Fire Department is having a fundraiser
39 through the sale of Giving Tins, with \$5 from every tin sold donated directly to Captain Stuart
40 Gilgo and his family to help ease the financial strain during treatment. There will also be another
41 fundraising event hosted by the Fire Department in February. Commissioner Holland asked to
42 everyone to keep Captain Gilgo and his family in their prayers.

1 Commissioner Brownlow thanked Fire Chief Matthias for his service to the citizens and wished
2 him the best in his new endeavor. He thanked Laura Rotchford and Frank Rush for their financial
3 award by providing transparency and professionalism in their work.
4

5 Commissioner Sawyer thanked the public for their attendance, the staff for their hard work, and
6 the biologists who were in attendance to answer additional questions.
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9

10 Mayor Lagos congratulated Laura Rotchford and Frank Rush for their financial award and thanked
11 everyone for attending the Commissioner Meeting tonight. Mayor Lagos provided updates on the
12 events she has attended in her first month being Mayor. She noted that she sent out the first batch
13 of welcome letters to all new property owners within Emerald Isle and will be sending new owner
14 letters monthly with helpful town information.
15

16 **21. Closed Session**

17 **a. Attorney-Client Privilege, Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3)- Update on Pending**
18 **Legal Issue**

19 **b. Personnel, Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) -Consultation with the Town**
20 **Manager**
21

22 *Mayor Pro-Tem Holland made a motion to enter into a closed session Pursuant to § 143-*
23 *318.11(a)(3) and (a)(6) at 8:26 PM. The Board voted 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.*
24

25 **Closed Session Pursuant to § 143-318.11(a)(3) To consult with an attorney employed or**
26 **retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the**
27 **attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged. General policy**
28 **matters may not be discussed in a closed session and nothing herein shall be construed to**
29 **permit a public body to close a meeting that otherwise would be open merely because an**
30 **attorney employed or retained by the public body is a participant. The public body may**
31 **consider and give instructions to an attorney concerning the handling or settlement of a**
32 **claim, judicial action, mediation, arbitration, or administrative procedure. If the public**
33 **body has approved or considered a settlement, other than a malpractice settlement by or**
34 **on behalf of a hospital, in closed session, the terms of that settlement shall be reported to**
35 **the public body and entered into its minutes as soon as possible within a reasonable time**
36 **after the settlement is concluded.**
37

38 **Closed Session Pursuant to § 143-318.11(a)(6) To consider the qualifications, competence,**
39 **performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial**
40 **employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or**
41 **employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an**
42 **individual public officer or employee. General personnel policy issues may not be considered**
43 **in a closed session. A public body may not consider the qualifications, competence,**
44 **performance, character, fitness, appointment, or removal of a member of the public body or**
45 **another body and may not consider or fill a vacancy among its own membership except in**

1 **an open meeting. Final action making an appointment or discharge or removal by a public**
2 **body having final authority for the appointment or discharge or removal shall be taken in**
3 **an open meeting.**

4
5 **Present for the meeting:** Mayor Kyle Lagos, Mayor Pro-Tem Jason Holland, Commissioners Roy
6 Brownlow, Alesia Sanderson, Josh Sawyer, Kris Plum, Town Attorney Marc Celotto, Town
7 Manager Frank Rush, Finance Director Laura Rotchford, and Town Clerk Lindsey Burton.

8
9 *[The following minutes were produced by the Board of Commissioners and are Sealed &*
10 *Confidential under NCGS §143-318.10(e) until further notice.]*

11
12 *At 9:21 PM, Mayor Pro-Tem Holland made a motion to come out of the closed session. The*
13 *Board voted 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.*

14
15 **22. Adjourn**

16
17 *The Board adjourned on a motion made by Commissioner Sanderson. The Board voted 5-0 in*
18 *favor. Motion Carried.*

19
20 **The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:22 PM.**

21
22 Respectfully Submitted:

23
24 Lindsey Burton
25 Town Clerk