

MINUTES  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
BEACH TOWNS BREAKFAST MEETING  
APRIL 12, 2019

Mayor Blair opened the meeting at 8:50 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Resort, 1706 North Lumina Avenue, Wrightsville Beach. Introductions followed.

**2019 Beach Towns Meeting Attendees**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Carolina Beach</b></p> <p>Mayor Joe Benson MPT Tom Bridges Councilwoman LeAnn Pierce Councilman JoDan Garza Councilman Steve Shuttleworth Town Manager Lucky Narain Interim Town Manager Ed Parvin Attorney Noel Fox Clerk Kim Ward</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>New Hanover County</b></p> <p>Chairman Jonathan Barfield, Jr. Vice-Chairman Julia Boseman Commissioner Patricia Kusek Commissioner Woody White Commissioner Rob Zapple County Manager Chris Coudriet Assistant County Manager Tim Burgess Comm. Affairs Coordinator Tufanna Bradley-Thomas Chief Financial Officer Lisa Wurtzbacher County Attorney Wanda Copley Deputy County Attorney Kemp Burpeau County Clerk Kym Crowell Shore Protection Coordinator Layton Bedsole Intergovernmental Affairs: Tim Buckland Primary Policy Group: Keith Smith</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Kure Beach</b></p> <p>Mayor Craig Bloszinsky MPT David Heglar Commissioner John Ellen Commissioner Allen Oliver Commissioner Joseph Whitley Attorney Andy Canoutus Town Clerk Nancy Avery</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>State Representation</b></p> <p>Senator Harper Peterson Representative Ted Davis, Jr. Representative Holly Grange</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wrightsville Beach</b></p> <p>Mayor Bill Blair Mayor Pro Tem Darryl Mills Alderman Ken Dull Town Manager Tim Owens Attorney John Wessell Town Clerk Sylvia Holleman</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Federal Representation</b></p> <p>Chance Lambeth, Dist. Dir. for Congressman Rouzer Adam Caldwell, Regional Rep. for Senator Tillis</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>City of Wilmington</b></p> <p>Mayor Bill Saffo</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Other Representation:</b></p> <p>Natalie Haskins English, Wilm. Chamber of Commerce Sue Bullock, Wrightsville Beach Chamber of Commerce</p>

**UPDATE AND AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR HURRICANE FLORENCE BY THE NEW HANOVER COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR.**

New Hanover County Emergency Management Director Steven Still gave an update and After Action Report for Hurricane Florence to show where they are and where they hope to go in the future. He said, "Once into recovery, Chris (Coudriet) felt we needed to have a post storm group to brainstorm over the hurricane. The Board reviewed our after action plans in March. At the staff level, communication did not work. The major part of communications that we feel could be improved on is a situation report – a checklist of things you have to fill in. The Planning Group compiles that into a document that goes to everyone. Flexibility was good. Continuity of staff was key. We would like to work with you as well – on contingencies. The 911 Center is inoperable in its current location. You should not see any difference in service from 911. The best thing was the partnerships we had with businesses and utilities. We were

looking at the potential for inland flooding coming down the Cape Fear River. By truck was the most economical way to get fuel in. We were also looking at flooding amounts higher than we have seen – a 1000-Year Event. We had a great partnership with the National Weather Center (NWC). The NWC said we were looking at catastrophic flooding. Their numbers were at least ten feet off. They said if Highway 421 had not breached, that would have been the Cape Fear River. In the event of another isolation, we need to have resources within our grasp in our county to hold us for longer than 72 hours. Training – we are looking to have an exercise May 13-16 (Ready in NC). One other item, the state has been pushing an initiative called Know Your Zone. Tim Buckland will be working on this. We want input from the Beaches, the City and the County.”

#### **STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE.**

Representative Holly Grange said, “I am still getting constituent calls about Hurricane Florence recovery. The system is mired in red tape and difficult to navigate. We are still waiting on federal money. With more than two hundred million dollars received from Hurricane Mathew, only about ten million of that has been handed out. We need input from you all. Senator Harry Brown’s distribution bill has shown its ugly head again. The impacts on coastal communities would be devastating if that sales tax redistribution comes to fruition. We are trying to get bills filed and get things ready for crossover to the Senate.”

Representative Ted Davis said, “I represent three beaches. I helped Wrightsville Beach with their specialized license plate. I will be glad to help other beaches as well. We are working on the inlet. I agree with Representative Grange that the redistribution of the sales tax would hurt us. I am vocal in opposition to that. Harry Brown gave me a list that shows the impact to the city and beach communities. I will get that to you. Be in contact with me. If I can help, let me know.”

Senator Harper Peterson said, “I am a freshman. I love the beaches. My dad retired from Fort Fisher four years ago. I was pleased to hear Steven Still talk about how we can do it better and not rest on our laurels. We do not know what is coming. Starting with Fran in 1996, we have done a good job but we always need to be prepared. It was inspiring to see how our citizens were. At the state level, the focus was on water quality, public safety, and public health. Two Bills have been introduced: one is offshore drilling. I think we need to be in opposition because it is a threat to our economy and environment. I will continue to defend our economy and culture. Second, we all have a right to know what is in our water; that it is safe to drink and our air is safe to breath. This Bill is about what is in the water and how to eradicate it. We have a high level of thyroid cancer. We need a healthy population and a safe environment. We have a poultry industry three times larger than our swine industry. We do not want to injure industries but we want to know how to control negative side effects. The poultry industry is not regulated. It deserves at least a study. We are the last stop for water coming down the Cape Fear River. I appreciate the work Representatives Grange and Davis do and I want to work with them and support them. I want to represent you in Raleigh. I’m on call 24/7. I will respond the best way I can.”

**FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE.**

Chance Lambeth, District Director for Congressman Rouzer, said, “Parts of our district will never recover from Hurricane Florence. It has made it crystal clear that storm water in our rivers and streams is important. We are looking at ways to maintain that better. We are working with USDA on crops and timber industries. The federal beach project for Carolina Beach is a little behind. 2020 is still the legislative goal – \$320,000 remains from what was budgeted. Cobra Zone for sand placement – looks like it will hold and we will be able to use that sand. We should get some resolution on that late this month from Atlanta. I hope they will let us continue to do what we do.”

Keith Smith, Primary Policy Group, said, “Thanks to everyone for letting my firm represent New Hanover County in Washington. We have a healthy relationship with our delegation. It takes fifty people to get your things done. We have had great success in the last three years because you have all worked together. That makes my job easier and more productive and effective. We extended the Carolina Beach project for two terms. We helped the Corps define when the new project would begin. The Corps is helping us to know which beach has Cobra needs. I am grateful to be in your service.” When asked where we are with Hurricane Matthew, Mr. Smith replied, “We knocked on Carson’s door at HUD. Records for October money should be completed in a matter of days. I was told they set aside some of the Matthew money to get started with Florence.”

Adam Caldwell, Regional Representative for Senator Tillis, said, “Thanks Keith and Layton for keeping us in the loop. There was \$236 million for Hurricane Matthew recovery. They only spent about 3% of that. We are waiting for May 1<sup>st</sup> to get money for Florence. If you have any issues, we want to be a resource for you. The Disaster Recovery Bill stalled in the Senate but talks are ongoing. We are also working on issues for Puerto Rico.”

**UPDATE FROM NEW HANOVER COUNTY ON THE RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED ROOM OCCUPANCY TAX COLLECTIONS SOFTWARE.**

Lisa Wurtsbacher, Chief Financial Officer for New Hanover County, said, “The software combs the web VRBO sites to find properties listed on those sites and make sure they are paying Room Occupancy Taxes (ROT). We received our first data dump in February. We had to go through it and scrub it. We wanted to send out letters to these people to say we don’t think you are paying ROT. We sent out 723 letters and got responses from 245 of them. Some are listing on Airbnb. They collect and send us a check. We asked them to send their statements to us. Forty-eight are new. We have already collected about \$10,000 from the people that initially responded. If no response, we will send out a new letter. Then we will send them a bill. I am pleased with the amount of folks that called in and will begin to pay. It will increase our ROT.” When asked what would happen if they choose to ignore the letters, Ms. Wurtsbacher said they would send out collection letters.

**UPDATE FROM NEW HANOVER COUNTY SHORE PROTECTION COORDINATOR REGARDING BEACH AND INLET PROJECTS IN NEW HANOVER COUNTY.**

Shore Protection Coordinator Layton Bedsole said, “What we are proposing to construct? Carolina Beach and Kure Beach CSDR projects are under construction. Mason Inlet Crossing is under construction. Future construction will have another crossing at Snows Cut. The Mason Inlet Relocation Project is coming up. We will have sand to place

on the north end. It shows we have a plan in place. That will allow us to assess the sand on how it moves up and down the beach. It focuses on Moore's Inlet Drive and shows why Wrightsville Beach needs to maintain that project. COBRA needs to be included in the Water Resources Act in 2020. In 2022 we do all three beaches. It will be a big push even with all the players. The last three days, I've heard a lot of comments about ROT should pay for this and that. 2022 will be a big push. It is not the time to look for other things to pay for." When asked about the inlet, Mr. Bedsole said, "It's a challenge with the Carolina Beach Inlet. It's the most ever-changing inlet in North Carolina except for Oregon Inlet. The challenge is whether there is enough money. There is one million twenty thousand dollars in that account. We are about to do an event that will use \$250,000. We will still have \$750,000. Two quarters remain. Perhaps we get a federally paid event from Florence. The Corps has three dredges on the East Coast. We schedule based on where the next dredge is as it comes by our area. My decisions have to be based on science, not emotion." Carolina Beach Town Manager Lucky Narain said, "If we have back-to-back hurricanes and the sand is eroded in a dramatic fashion but we don't get re-nourishment until three years pass, are there any provisions in the State to re-nourish?" Mr. Bedsole replied, "Many beaches in North Carolina do not have a federally authorized project and they build their own beach. We are lucky to have a federally authorized event through the Corps. It's all tied to the supplemental for that storm. We could do it early if the money is there. Our path federally is the Corps. Another is FEMA."

Representative Davis said, "I disagree on some of the comments on the Carolina Beach Inlet. I hope we can address with the County on what to do for future funding."

Carolina Beach Councilman Steve Shuttleworth said, "Thanks for your help. With the ROT, most beach towns are not concerned about the first three percent and they are satisfied with sand. I'm concerned with the second three percent and would like to have discussions with the City and County. I would like more allocations."

County Commission Chairman Barfield said, "A couple of years ago, the County and City put together the Garner Report. I want you all to look at the vision for New Hanover County. I think we need a united vision so we can market our story and invite folks to come. All elected officials need to sit at the table to discuss the vision. Roads and traffic and all of that goes into our vision. We are the economic hub for southeastern North Carolina. What does that mean to us, the State and the US? Think about that. I would love to convene a meeting later this year. Charleston is the number one tourist location in the US."

Mayor Blair thanked everyone for attending the breakfast meeting.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARDS, THE BEACH BREAKFAST MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 9:58 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia J. Holleman  
Town Clerk