

Discretionary Grants Committee

Special Called Meeting

April 22, 2026 – 9:00 AM

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Seabrook Island Town Hall, Council Chambers
2001 Seabrook Island Road
Seabrook Island, SC 29455



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Faulkner called the meeting to order at 9:04 pm.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Patrick Faulkner, Chairman; Tom Abbott, Larry Phillips, Scotty Jones, Barbara Montagu-Pollock

Town Staff Present: Joe Cronin (Town Administrator), Amber Howard (Finance Director), and Peter Wiggins (Town Clerk).

FOIA STATEMENT

The Town Clerk confirmed that the meeting was advertised in compliance with the requirements of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Agendas were posted and furnished to news media and all others requesting notification.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 18, 2026

Mr. Jones motioned to approve the minutes of March 18, 2026, seconded by Ms. Montagu-Pollock.

Mr. Jones' motion was APPROVED unanimously.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Grant Requests
Seabrook Island Turtle
Patrol

Bill Nelson, a member of the Seabrook Island Turtle Patrol gave a brief presentation on the group's mission and presentation of their grant application.

Mr. Jones asked Mr. Nelson when trash receptacles were removed from the beach.

Mr. Nelson stated that the receptacles were removed approximately one year ago. He stated that the removal did not affect the practice of his group removing trash from the beach. Mr. Nelson stated that the receptacles did not need to be placed back on the beach to the satisfaction of the Turtle Patrol. He stated the Turtle Patrol places any

trash they find in the SIPOA receptacles at the beginning of each Boardwalk.

Mr. Abbott asked if there had been any discussion between Turtle Patrol and the SCDNR related to protecting nests from coyotes.

Mr. Nelson stated the nests are covered with a plastic, wired mesh, and tacked down with wooden stakes. He stated the grant request is related to purchasing the wooden stakes and mesh.

Chairman Faulkner asked where the other sources of revenue came for the Turtle Patrol.

Mr. Nelson stated the group gets some revenue through the sale of T-Shirts and a few member donations. Mr. Nelson stated that the \$800.00 requested was his best guess of how much the wooden stakes and mesh would cost.

Mr. Jones motioned to recommend approval of the grant request in the amount of \$800.00, seconded by Chairman Faulkner.

Mr. Jones' motion was APPROVED unanimously.

Barrier Islands Free Medical Clinic

Melissa Frank, Executive Director of the Barrier Island Free Medical Clinic, gave a brief presentation of the clinic's mission and grant application.

Mr. Phillips asked Ms. Frank how her group provides community wellness to Seabrook Island. He continued by stating he didn't see any beneficiaries of the services of the medical clinic on Seabrook Island.

Ms. Frank stated that due to Johns, Kiawah, and Seabrook Island all having the same zip code, it was difficult for her to identify exactly who are the main beneficiaries of her clinic's services. She stated she would estimate that over 70% of her patients are working on Seabrook Island performing housekeeping, landscaping, and maintenance and construction. She stated that if these workers are not healthy, they would not be able to perform these services for Seabrookers.

Mr. Jones stated he has worked in design and construction and can state that most individuals doing construction work on Seabrook Island depend on this clinic.

Chairman Faulkner stated that the clinic also provides meaningful volunteer opportunities for Seabrookers. He stated this opportunity enhances citizen participation, satisfaction, and sense of place. He stated there is also a good neighbor element on the part of the Town as well.

Ms. Montagu-Pollock asked if the grant money would be used for the items specifically on the application.

Ms. Frank stated it would only be spent on items listed on the application.

Ms. Montagu-Pollock asked if the committee could alter the amount on the application.

Mr. Cronin stated that although the committee is only making a recommendation, they could recommend a lower amount.

Mr. Abbott asked if the clinic has tried to negotiate reduced rates with their suppliers.

Ms. Frank stated that the clinic is a member of the National Free Clinic Association. She stated the association will try to negotiate lower rates with certain vendors. She stated there are still vendors that do not have discounted rates that require the clinic to purchase supplies at higher rates. She stated that both vendors listed on the application sell supplies to the clinic at a lower rate.

Mr. Cronin reminded the committee of the revised Project Eligibility guidelines approved by Town Council.

Mr. Abbott stated as he was evaluating the application, although the public benefit was clearly demonstrated, he stated he questioned whether the clinic was aligned with the mission of the discretionary grant fund. He stated her argument that the clinic provides healthcare to workers on Seabrook Island is compelling. He continued by stating that the argument that the clinic has 16 volunteers from Seabrook Island is not persuasive in terms of supporting the proposal. He closed by stating that the fact that many of the people that are working on the island use the clinic's services is reason enough to approve her request.

Chairman Faulkner motioned to recommend approval of the grant request in the amount of \$4,000.00, seconded by Mr. Abbott.

Ms. Montagu-Pollock stated she was in support of the application, but due to the limited funding of the grant program, wasn't sure about granting the \$4,000.00.

Mr. Abbott proposed a substitute motion to recommend approval of the grant application for \$3,000.00, and encourage the clinic to submit a supplemental proposal later in the year, seconded by Mr. Jones.

Chairman Faulkner stated that the limited funding is a legitimate concern. He stated that the applicants that have applied however, are here now. He continued by stating that if the committee continues to identify good causes, he could approach Town Council and Mayor Kleinman regarding additional funding for discretionary grants. Chairman Faulkner stated that he had not been told no regarding additional funding.

Mr. Phillips stated that he was prepared to make a motion that would recommend approval of the same amount the clinic received in 2025, \$2,500.00.

Mr. Abbott stated that the issue with \$2,500.00 is that that amount would not fully cover one of the itemized expenditures on the application.

Chairman Faulkner stated that the committee was making more work than necessary considering the difference is \$1,000.00.

Mr. Abbott's substitute motion was APPROVED unanimously.

Seabrook Island Page Turners

Sue Dostal and Ann Edwards of Seabrook Island Page Turners gave a brief presentation on the group's mission and grant application.

Mr. Jones asked if the group had discussed how they measure outcomes and impacts the programs and events have on Seabrookers.

Ms. Edwards stated the group distributes surveys after each speaking event. She stated the goal was to hear from their members about what types of books members would like to discuss. She said this helped them decide on what kinds of speakers they should invite.

Mr. Jones stated this is a difficult indicator by which to judge applications. He stated evaluating how these events impact the community, either by improving educational opportunities or mental stimulus benefit is difficult to measure.

Ms. Edwards stated that their events do provide a cultural, educational, and opportunity for connectivity, whether or not these benefits are measurable. She closed by stating that attendance at these events demonstrates there is interest in their speakers.

Ms. Dostal stated that she has been contacted by Seabrookers in 2026 asking when the Page Turners would have their next event, where in 2025, the group was reaching out to Seabrookers in an attempt to generate interest. She continued by stating that there are approximately 20 book clubs on the island, each with approximately 10 – 30 members per group. She stated that what the Page Turners

provide is opportunities for all of these clubs to come together for larger events. She stated these events are interactive by giving Seabrookers the opportunity to ask authors questions about themselves and their books.

Mr. Abbott stated it was a red flag for him that 100% of the funding for the Page Turners come from the Town of Seabrook Island. He stated that if the group were to charge \$10.00 for entrance to their events, multiplied by 500 people, totals \$5,000.00. He stated that he liked the prospect of grant funds being seed money for the group. Further, he asked if the group could partner with a publisher that could help attract authors, whose books in turn could be sold at Page Turner events. He closed by stating he would like to see more thought go into the prospect of creating a sustainable model that doesn't rely purely on the town's grant funds.

Ms. Dostal reminded the committee that while all of Mr. Abbott's points are valid, their group is an emerging organization. She stated the group is attempting to establish a viable model, and the Town's contributions make a difference. She stated that without the Town's funding, the group would still exist, but their events and programming wouldn't be as good. She continued by stating that as the group moves into 2027, their goal is to be a local voice for literary activities in the area.

Mr. Abbott asked if the group would be charging admission to their events in 2026.

Ms. Edwards stated that, for the first event in 2026, they would not be charging admission.

Ms. Dostal stated that there are events that the group will charge admission, such as Sunday brunch, dinner, or cocktail hour.

Chairman Faulkner asked how the authors are selected to speak at group events.

Ms. Dostal stated the group has contacted publishers and local bookstores to ask what types of books/authors they highlight that generate the most interest. She stated that group leadership created criteria and specifically, what was important, when asking authors to speak. She stated that what they determined was important was an author that writes well and speaks well, a book topic that resonates with Seabrookers, and a local author if possible.

Ms. Edwards stated that a four-member committee refines the criteria based on feedback from attendees, specifically the book topics and subject matter.

Chairman Faulkner asked what the group's expenditures were in 2025.

Ms. Edwards stated that the Town granted the group \$2,500.00, as well as a few in-kind contributions from various group members.

Ms. Montagu-Pollock asked if the group has considered using the Lakehouse rather than Club facilities.

Ms. Dostal stated they have considered using the Lakehouse.

Mr. Abbott asked what the budget is for the first event in 2026.

Ms. Dostal stated that the group strives to book authors that have relatively low or even no speaker fees. She stated the Seabrook Island Club has offered to assist them with speaker fees. She stated that a well-known author has recently purchased a home on Kiawah and they are in discussions to have her speak to the Page Turners.

Ms. Montagu-Pollock asked if the \$5,000.00 would be treated as a fund to pay whatever speaker fees these authors might require.

Ms. Edwards stated that due to the group experiencing difficulty finding authors who do not charge for speaking engagements, they need \$5,000.00 so they can begin to engage authors that need their travel expenses paid and possibly charge a speaker fee.

Chairman Faulkner proposed that the committee award the group \$2,500.00. He stated this would allow them to engage authors with the goal of the group reapplying for the remaining \$2,500.00 later in the year.

Mr. Phillips stated he disagreed strongly with that proposal. He stated if the group is awarded \$2,500.00, this will restrict what they might do with their events.

Mr. Jones reminded the committee that these authors are staying at individuals' houses, so their travel expenses are kept as low as possible.

Mr. Abbott stated he likes the idea of this group enhancing the feeling of community, but that the Town shouldn't be the sole source of funding. He continued by stating that he would like to see the cost of the luncheons increase so that the budget can be increased with the goal being a more sustainable model.

Ms. Dostal stated that when the group engages an author or publisher, the first question usually asked is if the group has the funds to support

a particular event. She stated that most speaker fees for the types of authors that the group is engaging is \$5,000.00. She stated the group is asking for \$5,000.00 not because it is the maximum amount allowed under the Town's grant program, but that is the speaker fee usually proposed by an author.

Mr. Phillips motioned to recommend approval of the grant application for \$5,000.00, seconded by Mr. Jones.

Mr. Phillips' motion was APPROVED unanimously.

Backpack Buddies Seabrook Island

Allan Stein of Backpack Buddies gave a presentation on the group's mission and grant application.

Ms. Montagu-Pollock motioned to recommend approval of the grant application in the amount of \$2,500.00, seconded by Chairman Faulkner.

Ms. Montagu-Pollock's motion was APPROVED unanimously.

Seabrook Island Photography Club

Bill Breunsbach of the Seabrook Island Photography Club gave a presentation on the group's mission and grant application.

Ms. Montagu-Pollock motioned to recommend approval of the grant application in the amount of \$1,960.00, seconded by Chairman Faulkner.

Ms. Montagu-Pollock's motion was APPROVED unanimously.

Seabrook Island Birders

Alan Fink of the Seabrook Island Birders gave a presentation of the group's mission and grant application.

Responding to a question from Mr. Abbott, Mr. Fink stated that one of the most difficult functions of the Birders is technology management. He stated that the group's members continuously upload content to the group's webpage, and currently, the website software provides management of all the different types of content. He stated that part of the grant request would turn this function over to a management organization.

Mr. Jones motioned to recommend approval of the grant application in the amount of \$2,150.00, seconded by Mr. Phillips.

Mr. Jones' motion was APPROVED unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the council, Chairman Faulkner declared the meeting adjourned at 10:57 am.

Peter D. Wiggins II, MPA
Town Clerk