

Town Council Regular Meeting

November 18, 2025 @ 2:30 PM

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



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kleinman called the meeting to order at 2:32 pm.

ROLL CALL

Council Members Present: Bruce Kleinman; Mayor, Councilmembers Darryl May, Gordon Weis, Dan Kortvelesy, and Raymond Hamilton.

Town Staff Present: Joe Cronin (Town Administrator), Tyler Newman (Zoning Administrator), Abby Grooms (Communication and Events Coordinator), 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

October 20, 2025

Councilman Kortvelesy motioned to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2025, meeting, seconded by Councilman May.

Councilman May motioned to amend page three of the minutes, seconded by Councilman Hamilton. The motion was to strike the last paragraph of the minutes and replace with:

"Councilman May added that he understands that Seabrook Island is in a vulnerable location. However, he added that the biggest threat to public safety on a regular basis is the traffic and the potential for traffic accidents, particularly in the summer months. But this position is an office job and does not have a patrol function."

Councilman May's motion to amend was approved UNANIMOUSLY.

Councilman Hamilton asked for a clarification on page four of the minutes. Councilman Hamilton asked what was meant by the phrase "market minimum."

Mr. Cronin stated what he meant was the minimum of the range recommended by the consultant pursuant to their classification and compensation study.

Mayor Kleinman asked Councilman Hamilton if he would like that clarified in the minutes.

Councilman Hamilton stated that they had discussed bringing employees up to the 50th percentile. He stated that now, the discussion has changed to just bringing employees up to the minimum of the range. He stated it was due to this change that he wanted clarification. He closed by stating that he was okay with leaving the minutes unamended on this topic.

Councilman Kortvelesy's original motion to approve the minutes as amended was approved UNANIMOUSLY.

October 28, 2025

Councilman Kortvelesy motioned to approve the minutes of October 28, 2025, seconded by Councilman May.

Councilman May motioned to amend the fourth paragraph, page three of the minutes, seconded by Councilman Hamilton. The motion was to delete the fourth paragraph and replace with:

"Councilman May stated that Seabrookers love trees as much as anybody, but there has to be a balance. He urged Mr. Owsiak and Councilwoman Honeycutt to drive on Bohicket Rd. toward Charleston in the morning when all the construction vehicles are heading in. He stated it is dangerous, especially when faced with the possibility of oncoming traffic crossing the centerline. He stated that at some point there must be a decision made related to trees versus the safety of people."

Councilman May's motion to amend the minutes was approved UNANIMOUSLY.

Councilman Kortvelesy's original motion to approve the minutes as amended was approved UNANIMOUSLY.

PRESENTATIONS

Michael Younginer

Mayor Kleinman announced that Mary Whyte, a well known artist that previously lived on Seabrook Island would be returning on December 3rd. He stated that he was proclaiming December 3, 2025, as Mary Whyte Day in the Town of Seabrook Island.

Michael Younginer gave a brief presentation on Ms. Whyte's many contributions to Seabrook Island, the Lowcountry, and the art of painting in general.

REPORTS OF TOWN BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

Utility Commission

Jim Ferland gave an update on the October financials of the Seabrook Island Utility Commission.

Mr. Ferland stated that the Seafields complex is connected and all documentation deeding sewer easements have been signed.

He also stated that the Pond Project is on schedule and slightly under budget. He stated the project will be completed by the end of 2025.

Councilman Hamilton asked with the pond project complete, what is the maximum flow that the utility commission could handle.

Mr. Ferland stated that the pond holds treated water. He stated that after completion, the pond could hold approximately 15 million gallons.

REPORTS OF TOWN OFFICERS & STAFF

Town Administrator

Mr. Cronin congratulated the newly elected council members. He congratulated Mayor Kleinman, Councilman May, Hamilton, and Utility Commissioner Jim Ferland on their reelection. He also congratulated the newly elected council members Tom Hund and Pat Faulkner.

Mr. Cronin stated that Town Hall would be closing at 2:00 pm on Wednesday, November 26, and closed on Thanksgiving Day and Friday.

Finance Director

Ms. Howard gave an update on the town's financials through October 31, 2025.

Zoning Administrator

Tyler Newman gave an update on the zoning and code enforcement activities since the October council meeting.

Mayor Kleinman asked Mr. Newman how long a typical inspection of a short term rental property takes.

Mr. Newman stated that an inspection of one property would take ten minutes or less.

Councilman Hamilton asked if when a property owner receives a rental permit, if that owner receives a checklist of what items in the property might be inspected.

The town's Short Term Rental Compliance Manager, Beth Rinehimer, stated that when she contacts the property owner to schedule an inspection, the owner receives a checklist of what will be inspected.

Councilman May asked Ms. Rinehimer if she inspected the general condition of the property for any major safety issues.

Ms. Rinehimer stated the general condition of the property is on the checklist.

Mr. Cronin stated the town can request additional inspectors to perform compliance inspections if there is general safety issue with the property.

**Communications and
Events Manager**

Abby Grooms stated the annual Holiday Extravaganza will be held at Town Hall on Thursday, December 11th, from 4:00 to 7:00 pm.

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING

Ordinance 2025-10

Councilman May motioned to approve Ordinance 2025-10 at first reading, seconded by Councilman Hamilton.

Councilman May motioned to amend the FY 2026 budget striking the salary associated with the proposed Public Safety Director and all associated expenses, seconded by Councilman Hamilton.

Councilman May stated that he researched the MGT Classification and Compensation Study to identify peer communities that employed Public Safety Directors. He stated that ten communities have police departments with the Public Safety Director also serving as the Chief of Police. He stated that Bald Head Island's Public Safety Director serves as both the Fire Chief and Chief of Police. He further stated there were only two peer communities setup in a similar way to what is being proposed on Seabrook Island. He stated one community is the Town of Kiawah Island. He urged the council to not use Kiawah as a peer community because their financial situation was vastly different to Seabrook Island's. He stated the other community was Fort Myers Beach, Florida. He closed by stating that just because Seabrook Island's slogan is, "make Seabrook Island uniquely yours," doesn't mean that we also need to be unique in our policies, and that he would like to see the salary and associated expenses proposed for this position transferred to the Seabrook Island Road & Drainage fund.

Councilman Kortvelesy stated that administration has recommended this position based on all the public safety obligations placed on the town. He further stated he is not in town hall on a daily basis, so he has no reason to doubt the town administrator's assessment related to needing a public safety official. The councilman went on to say that he was in a meeting with a software company operating in the field of emergency management, and due to the complexity and potential workload of administering to software of this caliber, he would prefer the town hire a dedicated public safety official so the software could be used to its full extent. He closed by saying that he didn't feel this

position would be an office job. He stated he would like to see them communicate with beach patrol on a regular basis to find out what issues they are having and to ensure the beach remains safe.

Councilman Weis stated he was not in support of including a Public Safety Director in the FY 2026 budget. He stated he would liked to have seen a document outlining the job duties of a Public Safety Director.

Councilman Hamilton stated it was his wish that the position not be funded until the town had a plan to fund both the town hall project and the Seabrook Island Road and Drainage project. In closing, Councilman Hamilton stated that if the town were to assume the security roles currently being administered by the Seabrook Island Property Owner's Association (SIPOA), then maybe he could justify the position.

Councilman Kortvelesy stated that SIPOA does not enforce town ordinances.

Councilman May replied that he could support funds being used to employ off-duty sheriff's deputies, similar to what is done on Kiawah Island, but said, unfortunately, that is not what is being proposed.

Mr. Cronin stated the hiring of an off-duty deputy was included as an item for consideration, but it was not actually included in the FY 2026 budget.

Mayor Kleinman stated he hoped the town doesn't regret not funding the position. He stated he thought the professional knowledge base the town would be missing by not hiring a public safety official is not being considered.

Councilman May stated he concedes that at some point, Seabrook Island will be hit with a storm. He said the question is will the employment of a public safety director materially mitigate the damage done by the storm.

After the preceding debate, the council moved on to a vote on Councilman May's amendment. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Hamilton	aye
Mayor Kleinman	aye
Councilman Kortvelesy	nay
Councilman May	aye
Councilman Weis	aye

Councilman May's amendment was APPROVED with four aye's and one nay.

Councilman May motioned to amend the FY 2026 budget, moving expenses related to code enforcement officers from the Public Safety Department to the Zoning & Code Enforcement Department, seconded by Councilman Hamilton.

Councilman May's motion was APPROVED unanimously.

Mr. Cronin stated that one other item that needed attention in the FY 2026 budget was the pending rewrite of the Comprehensive Emergency Plan. He stated that without a Public Safety Director, the town would be relying on an outside consultant to assist the town with the rewriting of the plan.

Councilman Kortvelesy asked why the town doesn't turn the project over to a consultant.

Mr. Cronin stated the town will use a consultant; however, the consultant will need to coordinate with staff due to staff being charged with increasing responsibilities in the new plan.

Councilman Hamilton asked what Placer AI is in the proposed FY 2026 budget.

Mr. Cronin stated that Placer AI is an analytics tool that aggregates anonymized cell phone data that the town can use to estimate the true population of areas around Seabrook Island at any one time. He stated that the data can be used to make funding, public safety, and tourism impact decisions.

Councilman Hamilton asked what the benefit is of having software related to short term rental compliance.

Mr. Cronin stated that the benefit is the software will compile all short term rental listings, including how many nights the property is occupied, rate information, and will webscrape ad content.

After amendments, the council moved on to vote on the FY 2026 budget as amended. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Hamilton	aye
Mayor Kleinman	aye
Councilman Kortvelesy	aye
Councilman May	aye
Councilman Weis	aye

Ordinance 2025-10 passed first reading UNANIMOUSLY.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Hamilton asked how difficult it was to move money between different funds.

Mr. Cronin stated that it is very easy to move funds between unrestricted funds. He stated if the council wanted to move funds between any type of fund, it would be done via a budget amendment. He closed by saying if the funds are being transferred out of a restricted fund, the council should document the purpose for which the funds will be used.

Councilman Hamilton stated the reason for his question was related to the need to keep funds in contingency. He asked why the council couldn't go ahead and appropriate those funds for a specific purpose like the Seabrook Island Road project.

Mr. Cronin stated that it is always a good idea to keep funds in contingency for emergency situations. He stated the current funds in contingency are approximately \$450,000. He stated that traditionally, contingency has been used as a parking spot until the council had a better idea of the cost of pending projects.

Councilman May stated that the Seabrook Island Club, SIPOA, and the Town of Seabrook Island are still working toward a solution on improving cell phone coverage.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kleinman declared the meeting adjourned at 4:01 pm.

Peter D. Wiggins II, MPA
Town Clerk