

# South Bethany Breeze

Spring/Summer 2025

## **THE STATE OF THE TOWN:** **YEAR-END FY2025** **MAYOR EDIE DONDERO**

As we enter the last couple weeks of Fiscal Year 2025, the Town remains in a strong financial position. We expect to close out the year with a budget surplus, though one considerably smaller than that of previous years. Any surplus funds will contribute to the Town's operating, asset replacement, and infrastructure reserves.

The Council recently passed a \$3.5 million operating budget for Fiscal Year 2026, which includes funding capital expenditures of \$166,950 for the replacement of a generator and several life-guard stands, purchase of a new police vehicle, and repairs to stormwater drainage infrastructure. With the adoption of the new property assessments performed by Sussex County, we were able to reduce the property tax rate from \$1.30 per \$100 of value to \$0.051 per \$100. The new rate will impact property owners in very different ways: 31% of the bills will reflect a reduction in property tax or an increase of \$100 or less; 61% of the bills will show an increase between \$100 and \$500; and 8% of the bills will have an increase of \$500 or more. Thus, for most property owners, the new rate will result in the first property tax increase since 2009. The rising costs of materials, services, benefits, utilities, and

other operating expenses necessitate the increase in property tax revenues, which is the only source of revenue over which the Town asserts control.

Improving drainage throughout Town continues to be a high priority. Benefitting from the addition of a new full-time employee, public works staff have worked extensively to locate, map, and assess the condition of all stormwater infrastructure throughout Town and address deferred maintenance. Drains were raised where needed, basins were cleaned of debris and vegetation, and hydro-jetting cleared a number of clogged pipes. A new type of check valve that serves to prevent backflow into drains was tested in several locations and is working very well. Over time, staff will install these valves on drainage pipes in the most flood-prone areas.

Our police department has worked diligently over the past year to prepare to become an accredited law enforcement agency. This will ensure our department is operating fully in compliance with Federal, State, and local laws and best practices, and makes them eligible to receive Federal and State grant funding. We expect them to be awarded full accreditation by the Delaware Police Accreditation Commission (DPAC) as soon as next month. Congratulations, SBPD!

The Town has hired planners from the University of Delaware's Institute for

Public Administration (IPA) to engage the community in discussions about challenges related to flooding and coastal resiliency. The feedback provided via a survey and several public meetings will inform future resiliency efforts and the Town's planning of projects and infrastructure improvements. The Council highly encourages property owners to participate in this effort and have their opinions heard.

Preparations for summer are in full swing. Contractors hired by the Town recently cut invasive phragmites plants in wetland areas. The public works team is busy spreading mulch, installing Mobi-mats on the beach, and tuning up mowers and equipment. The annual algae harvest in the canals is scheduled for next month; cold winter temperatures stifled growth and eliminated the need for two harvests this year. Beach Patrol try-outs are underway, and positions are being filled. The Town staff and Board of Elections are preparing for the Town election on May 10<sup>th</sup>. The Community Relations Committee and South Bethany Historical Society are planning a special event on Memorial Day weekend; details are coming soon.

The Council and I wish all residents and property owners a safe, joyful spring and summer!

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**Town of South Bethany • 402 Evergreen Road • South Bethany, DE 19930**  
**Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, closed weekends & holidays**  
**Visit the Town Website: <https://southbethany.delaware.gov/>**  
**Get Connected! Visit our website to sign up for email notifications**  
**Find us on Instagram @southbethanytownhall**



# TOWN ELECTION 2025



The Town Election will be held Saturday, May 10, 2025, at Town Hall from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Polls close at 3:00 pm SHARP. There are three Council seats open.

**WHO CAN VOTE?** You can vote if you are a property owner or a resident, both defined as the following:

**PROPERTY OWNER** in the Town for a period of ninety (90) consecutive days immediately preceding the date of the Election. A property owner is a natural person who holds title of record or deed in his/her name; or listed as a trustee to a fee simple estate, or who holds a life estate to real property located in the Town.

**RESIDENT** of the Town means any natural person who has been physically residing within the Town corporate limits for at least thirty (30) days prior to any scheduled town Election and who maintains residency within the Town on the date of election.

**QUALIFICATIONS** - 18 years of age, citizen of the U.S., a property owner or a resident (as defined above).

## TWO WAYS TO VOTE - ABSENTEE AND IN-PERSON

1) **ABSENTEE** (Two-Step Process) - 1) **Starting April 17**, pick up/complete an affidavit and return to Town Hall; 2) Receive

an Absentee Ballot and return to Town Hall before 3:00 pm on Election Day. A completed affidavit which requests that an Absentee Ballot be mailed to the voter must be received at Town Hall no later than four (4) days prior (May 6, 2025) to the day of the election. Town is not responsible for U.S. Postal Service delays if you return the ballot by mail. Any ballots received after 3:00 p.m. on Election Day will not be counted.

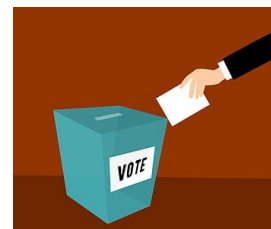
**NOTE: AFFIDAVITS & ABSENTEE BALLOTS ARE NOT AVAILABLE UNTIL APRIL 17.** Requests for affidavits can be by phone, email or mail. An affidavit form will be available on the Election page of the Town website at southbethany.delaware.gov. Affidavits requested via mail & Absentee Ballots will only be sent via regular USPS mail (no Fed Ex, no UPS, no overnight, no certified). **TOWN HALL IS CLOSED ON APRIL 18, 2025 IN OBSERVANCE OF A HOLIDAY.**

**2) VOTE IN PERSON** - Saturday, May 10 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

**AND THE CANDIDATES ARE.....**

**Council (3)**

Russell Beland  
Steven Gallagher  
Mark Giler  
Christine Keefe  
Cindy Van Horn



## Increasing Our Community Resiliency: Committee Update

*[The Resiliency Committee recommends to Council projects and regulatory actions that enhance South Bethany's ability to endure and recover from storm surges, tidal flooding, sea level rise, weather events, and other potential risks. In addition, we provide information to owners on how to protect their properties from these challenges.]*

The York Road Flood Mitigation Engineering and Design project is winding down. The engineering team from AECOM is completing final design plans that entail a six-inch raising of a 750-foot section of York Road using porous pavement and improving drainage infrastructure in the project area. If implemented, this will alleviate approximately 86% of the current amount of roadway flooding, thereby providing immediate relief and "buying

time" until large scale efforts to address rising sea levels can be planned and implemented. A second phase of this project is being discussed which will address roadway flooding on some of the low-lying secondary streets in York Beach including Bristol, Plymouth, Carlisle, and Victoria.

The recent elimination of FEMA's BRIC grant program is a major obstacle to the Town's progress on resiliency efforts. We were awarded a BRIC grant in 2024 to fund a flood mitigation study in Cat Hill but now have learned that we will not be receiving those funds. As a result, the study is on hold until an alternative source of funds is identified. With state and federal grant opportunities disappearing, it is likely that all future resiliency projects will have to be funded solely by the Town.

In addition to mitigation projects, the Committee is researching potential changes to the Town Code that will enhance community resiliency. Our efforts include outreach to other coastal communities to learn of the changes they have made and what has worked. We are also researching how other towns fund resiliency projects and/or create dedicated funding reserves for recovery from natural disasters and unexpected events.

The Committee looks forward to learning the results of the community survey and hearing feedback from property owners at the community planning sessions. This will help guide our work and direct our education and outreach efforts.

Chairwoman, Edie Dondero

# Just the Facts

## RESPECT, PROTECT, COLLECT: CARRY-IN/CARRY-OUT TRASH ON THE BEACH



To combat beach litter and promote environmental responsibility, the Town of South Bethany is implementing 'carry-in/carry-out' trash policies, reminding all visitors to pack out all trash, instead of relying on trash cans on the beach.

Why carry-in/carry out? **Public Awareness:** encourages visitors to be mindful of trash and take responsibility for its disposal. **Environmental Quality:** less litter means cleaner beaches and healthier ecosystems. **Resource Management:** removing trash is costly and time-consuming. This system reduces the need for extensive trash removal efforts. Everyone deserves to enjoy and relax on our beautiful beach, so please remember... **CARRY IN/CARRY OUT!**

## ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

**Ordinance 214-24** Chapter 42, Building Construction, 42-5, B and C; and Chapter 145, Zoning, Article XVII, 145-68 A(1), (6) and (9), regarding when building permits are required

**Ordinance 215-24** Chapter 138, Voting, Absentee, regarding voting eligibility language

**Ordinance 216-25** Amending Chapter 100 and adding a new section to establish a "Quiet Period" for the Town

**Resolution 1-24** Set the FY 2025 Property Tax Rate and Rental Tax Rate

**Resolution 2-24** Revise South Bethany's Schedule of Fees

**Resolution 3-24** Adopting an Operating and Capital Budget and Reserve Allocations for Fiscal Year 2025

**Resolution 4-24** Commending Shaun Baldasano

**Resolution 5-24** Recognizing Derek Abbott

**Resolution 6-24** Recognizing Tim Saxton

**Resolution 7-24** Commending U.S. Senator Thomas R. Carper

Ordinances & Resolutions can be viewed at  
Town Hall or at  
[southbethany.delaware.gov](http://southbethany.delaware.gov).

## SOUTH BETHANY BIKE RODEO, JULY 12, 2025

The Police Department will be sponsoring another South Bethany Bike Rodeo on Saturday, July 12, 2025, from 10:00 am to 12 noon. As in past years, we will have a small safety training riding course, fire and/or rescue vehicles with associated personnel and a bike safety inspection station. We have bike helmets, reflector bags, safety vests and battery-operated bike lights as giveaways. We also hope to have an ice cream truck and a shaved ice vendor at the event for refreshment. Bethel Ministries Assisting Bicycle Communities (ABC) also plans to partner with us for this event. They bring significant technical and training expertise to all elements of bike safety. Please put this event on your calendar as it will be great fun!

## IMPORTANT REMINDER TO EVERYONE VISITING TOWN HALL

With summer just around the corner, we want to remind everyone who visits Town Hall to park only in the assigned parking spaces for Town Hall and the Police Department, and do not enter the area past the stop sign to the Public Works, Artesian, or Sharp Energy facilities. Anyone wishing to speak with someone in Public Works must come to Town Hall. The stop sign also applies to bicyclists, walkers, runners, and dog walkers. It is a very busy area with constant vehicle and truck traffic, and your safety is very important to us!

## DUMPSTERS AND OVERNIGHT PARKING

Municipal dumpsters at Town Hall are for Town Hall use only. Public use is not permitted. Overnight and weekend parking in the Town Hall parking lot is not permitted. These areas are under 24-hour surveillance. Thank you!



## DNREC'S DROUGHT RESOURCES AND AWARENESS WEBSITE

To explore current drought conditions and water supply updates, visit DNREC's new website that tracks these conditions.

<https://climate.udel.edu/drought/>

### From the Treasurer's Desk

I would like to thank the Budget & Finance Committee members, all staff members, and comments from the public and the Town Council for all your efforts to achieve an approved budget for the fiscal year 2026. The Town will continue to fund the police department, maintenance, maintain roads and improve our drainage network. It is unfortunate that we lost the anticipated \$213,750 FEMA Grant funds, due to the Federal Government's recent cuts that would have assisted with flooding concerns.

Randy Bartholomew

## Community Relations Committee

The Community Relations Committee hosted a Fall Bonfire on the Beach on Friday, October 4th and the 3rd Annual Holiday Tree Lighting/ Community Food Drive on Friday December 7th.

The CRC also hosted successful Coffee and Conversation events featuring Code Enforcement Officer Joe Hinks in September, Councilwoman Cindy Van Horn in October, the South Coastal Village Volunteers in November and Councilman Bob Biciocchi in December. The Spring/Summer Coffee and Conversations will take place every third Friday at Town Hall (unless otherwise noted). Featured speakers will

be the Mayor and other council members as well as speakers/topics of interest to the community.

The CRC is working with the South Bethany Historical Society to refurbish and update the Storyboards on Russell Road. The finished storyboards should be completed by Memorial Day week-end.

The Spring Bonfire on the Beach will take place on Friday, April 25th at 7pm. The CRC will host a welcome celebration for the South Bethany Beach Patrol on May 23rd.

Chairwoman, Lisi Biciocchi

## CODE ENFORCEMENT

**Recycle carts** – Recycle collection times change in May to every Friday for pickup. Many people are unaware of the proper storage and placement of their carts, so for simplicity here is the Town Code: 114-6A (5-7) [\(5\)](#) Trash containers and recycle carts not stored in a bin should be placed at curbside the day before pickup and removed after collection on pickup day. The property owner or occupant shall place recycling carts and all protective containers of solid waste at curbside, but not on the public right-of-way, in order that the recyclable materials and solid waste may be conveniently removed by the collector. [\(6\)](#) Except for pickup, the owner or occupant of any property shall not keep trash cans containers or recycle carts at curbside unless stored in a suitable bin. Bins for storage of waste containers larger than 55 gallons shall be open on one or two sides and should have no floor or a low floor to facilitate the removal of containers. [\(7\)](#) Waste containers that are not stored in bins shall be kept at or under the house.

**Mosquito prevention** - Keep gutters clean of tree debris to promote proper roof drainage and help control mosquito breeding. Consider purchasing mosquito dunks to help cut back on the mosquito population. Here are two handy links for mosquito control products. <http://www.summitchemical.com/mosquito/mosquito-dunks/>



<http://www.arbico-organics.com/category/natural-mosquito-control-products>

**Vegetation** - Trim back trees to promote new vigorous growth. If you have trees that are next to the canals please trim branches back so that tree debris doesn't litter our canals.

[§ 104-12 Vegetation.](#)

[§ 125-2 Activities prohibited.](#)

**Grass Clippings** - To protect waterways and prevent water pollution, avoid allowing grass clippings to enter canals or storm drains by keeping them on your lawn, using them for composting, or disposing of them properly. Grass clippings contain nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus, which can cause excessive algae growth (eutrophication) in waterways. Excessive algae can block sunlight, harm aquatic life, and deplete oxygen when it decomposes. Grass clippings can clog storm drains, leading to flooding and preventing the proper functioning of drainage systems. Please do your best to keep our waterways safe and clean! [§ 104-7 Duty to mow and trim.](#)



**Mold & Mildew** - Please take the time to inspect your home for mold and mildew growth. This type of growth can lead to staining and damage to house siding. Consider having your home professionally power washed. [§ 104-17 Repair and maintenance of exterior structures.](#)

Questions? Contact Joe Hinks at 302-539-3653, extension 102.



# welcome

South Bethany **WELCOMES** Nick Donatoni to the Public Works Department. Nick has extensive experience in Public Works with a Township in New Jersey. His focus for South Bethany is on stormwater. Please say hello to Nick when you see him this summer!

Police Chief Lovins welcomed Chase Morris to the Department on March 17. Officer Morris graduated from the Academy at the top of his class with the highest GPA!

We also welcome Corporal Tyler Bare to the Police Department. Cpl.

Bare is a 10-year veteran Police Officer, whose grandfather was South Bethany's first police chief! Cpl. Bare is currently a Field Training Officer (FTO) with the Department.

Welcome Corporal Bare and Officer Morris!

## NEW TO SOUTH BETHANY?

Welcome, Neighbor! Stop by Town Hall to pick up a "Welcome Bag," which provides information about the Town. Questions? Call Town Hall at (302) 539-3653, extension 101.

## COMMUNITY EVENT

The University of Delaware's Institute of Public Administration (IPA), along with the Town's Community

Planning Advisory Group will be hosting a community meeting regarding future resiliency efforts and the Town's planning of projects and infrastructure improvements at Town Hall, on Thursday, May 15, 2025, from 12:30 to 2:30 pm.

## SAFETY CORNER

*by Councilman Bob Shields*

As summer approaches, please remember beaches will be unguarded until Memorial Day weekend so we must ensure that residents and visitors avoid heavy surf and riptides. Also, don't dig deep holes on the beach, as they can become dangerous.

**Highway and Pedestrian Safety: Pedestrians,** give special attention to crosswalks at Coastal Highway and make sure they are clear before crossing. **Motorists:** you must stop anytime a pedestrian is in the crosswalk on your side of the highway. You also must stop if the car in an adjacent lane stops even if no one is crossing. **Cyclists:** always ride with traffic and obey traffic lights.

**Boating and Water Safety:** proceed slowly through the canals - they are a no wake zone. Remember, boating and alcohol do not mix! Canals can be dangerous to small children. Never allow unattended children to play by the water and make sure there is a life preserver (with lanyard) handy to assist someone who has fallen into the water.

**For Property Owners on the Canals:** please consider adding the house number for your street address to the back of your house. This could minimize confusion and save critical moments for police/EMT response in the event of an emergency like fire, intruder, medical or a general safety event.

Delaware's Statewide Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Workgroup



# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



HELP COLLECT WIDGEON GRASS SEED IN SOUTH BETHANY CANALS.



Are you a South Bethany resident who loves getting your feet wet for a good cause? We're looking for assistance collecting and removing widgeon grass seed right from the canals in your community.

*Volunteers will wade into shallow canal areas and gently pull up long, flowering widgeon grass shoots for seed collection.*



**Tentatively scheduled  
May 27 – May 29,  
depending on seed  
readiness**

**CONTACT US FOR MORE INFO!**

Brittany Haywood  
Delaware Sea Grant  
**HAYWOBL@UDEL.EDU**

# CANAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE

## Spring Updates and Actions to Keep South Bethany Eco-Friendly

Spring is here, and it's time to enjoy South Bethany's beautiful canals! Our town was recently recognized as one of the "Top 10 Eco-Friendly Places to Live in DE," highlighting our signature canal network. The Canal Water Quality Committee (CWQ) is proud to share important updates and reminders to help us maintain that distinction. Our canals are particularly vulnerable to nutrient overload and algae blooms, so every action we take to protect them makes a big difference.

**Algae Harvesting — Delay Your Launch to Support Clean-Up.** We're collaborating once again with the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and Solitude to harvest algae blooms during the week of May 5th (weather permitting). **We strongly encourage residents to delay their boat launch until after the clean-up.**

Even a short delay in your boat launch will significantly maximize the clean-up's success. Algae blooms not only look unpleasant but can also produce odors and deplete oxygen in the water, posing risks to aquatic life and clog propellers.

**Widgeon Grass — It's Helping Our Canals!** That thin green grass you may have seen in the canals is called Widgeon Grass. It's not a weed — it's an essential aquatic plant that improves water quality by adding oxygen and reducing excess nutrients. DNREC, UD Sea Grant Program, and the Center for Inland Bays (CIB) are studying why this plant is thriving here so they can crop the grass, harvest our seeds, and transplant them elsewhere more appropriately — which is good news for our boaters concerned about navigation. Volunteers are needed to support this research. See the volunteer advertisement on Page 5 of the newsletter to learn more about this exciting project and how you can get involved.

**Nutrients Are A Key Problem — Help Us Reduce Them.** Excess nutrients fuel algae growth, cause water quality and appearance issues, and reduce aquatic life:

- ☒ Cap off or redirect pipes from directly discharging into the canals.
- ☒ Inspect and maintain your bulkhead to prevent erosion and nutrient runoff.
- ☒ Trim canal-side vegetation to reduce organic debris buildup in the water.
- ☒ Skip Spring fertilizing that fuels *spring/summer* algae growth; focus instead on Fall fertilization with slow-release, low-nitrogen fertilizer. Also, use eco-friendly weed controls, like the formula on our [website](#).

**Every Action Counts.** By working together and following these simple steps, we can keep South Bethany a thriving, eco-friendly community and protect our beautiful canals.

Chris Vanuga, Chair

# YOGA



## ON THE BEACH!

South Bethany, Division Street

7:30AM Thursday through Sunday

\$15 (Cash or Venmo)



## South Bethany Beach Patrol is Hiring!

Tryouts will be held at 12 noon on the beach at South 2nd St. South Bethany

**April 26th  
May 17th**

Must be 17 to apply  
Competitive Wages

Perks & Bonuses available

For questions email [beachpatrol@SouthBethany.org](mailto:beachpatrol@SouthBethany.org)







# TOWN HALL INFORMATION PAGE

Town Hall is opened 7:30 am - 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday  
Closed holidays & weekends



## TOWN HALL 302-539-3653

### STAFF

### NAME

Town Manager	Maureen Hartman
Finance Director	Renee McDorman
Code Enforcement Officer	Joe Hinks
Town Clerk	Matt Amerling
Admin. Assistant	Brittany Hollis
Public Works	Nick Donatoni
	Greg DeMarco
	Jim Priano (seasonal)
Beach Patrol Captain	Ryan Dacey

### POLICE DEPARTMENT 302-539-3996 (non-emergency)

Chief of Police	Jason Lovins
Corporal	Shaun Baldasano
Corporal	Ken Huff
Police Officer/PIO	Matt Boyd
Corporal	Tyler Bare
Police Officer	Chase Morris
PD Admin Assistant	Coleen Meyer
Parking Enforcement	Dee Ramsay

### TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor	Edith Dondero
Councilmembers:	
Mayor Pro Tem	Christine Keefe
Treasurer	Randall Bartholomew
Secretary	Robert Biciocchi
Councilmember	William (Tim) Shaw
Councilmember	Robert Shields
Councilmember	Cindy Van Horn

We are always looking for volunteers to help with Committees and events. Have some time on your hands? Stop by Town Hall for more information!



Reminder: The **South Bethany Property Owner's Association (SBPOA)** is not affiliated with the Town. All questions/comments for SBPOA should be directed to the SBPOA President.

For more information, visit [southbethanypoa.com](http://southbethanypoa.com).

## TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS 2025/2026

**Meeting dates/times are subject to change; meetings can be attended in person or accessed via the virtual link provided on all agendas.**

**Town Council meetings are normally held the 2nd Friday at 9:00 a.m.**

**Town Workshops, if necessary, are normally held the 4th Friday at 9:00 a.m. (unless otherwise noted)**

DATE	TIME	MEETING
April 18		TOWN HALL CLOSED (Good Friday)
April 25	9:00 AM	Town Council Workshop
May 9	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
May 10 (Sat)	9 AM to 3 PM	Town Election
May 26		TOWN HALL CLOSED (Memorial Day)
June 13	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
June 27	9:00 AM	Town Council Workshop
July 4		TOWN HALL CLOSED (Independence Day)
July 11	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
July 25	9:00 AM	Town Council Workshop
Aug. 8	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
Aug. 22	9:00 AM	Town Council Workshop
Sept. 1		TOWN HALL CLOSED (Labor Day)
Sept. 12	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
Sept. 26	9:00 AM	Town Council Workshop
Oct. 10	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
Oct. 24	9:00 AM	Town Council Workshop
Nov. 11		TOWN HALL CLOSED (Veterans Day)
Nov. 14	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting

### ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

State Police Non-Emergency	302-855-2980
DNREC (Boating complaints outside of Town limits)	800-523-3336
U.S. Coast Guard	800-424-8802
Republic Services (Trash, Recycling, Yard Waste)	800-762-8888
DE Solid Waste Authority (Landfill)	800-404-7080
Artesian (Water and broken pipes)	302-453-6930 *
Sharp Energy (Emergency)	302-856-6648
(Complaint)	302-539-7898

**\*Reminder: Property owners or concerned neighbors must call Artesian, not Town Hall, regarding broken water pipes.**