

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 11, 2025  
9:00 A.M.**

**Meeting Called to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Dondero called the July 11, 2025, Town Council meeting to order at 9:01 a.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Attendance and Absences**

In attendance were Mayor Edie Dondero and Councilmembers Randy Bartholomew, Bob Biciocchi, Mark Giler, Chris Keefe, Bob Shields and Cindy Van Horn; Town Manager Maureen Hartman, SBPD Chief Jason Lovins, and Town Clerk Matt Amerling. Public attendees: 6. Virtual attendees: 9.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Councilman Bob Biciocchi motioned to approve the June 27, 2025, Town Council meeting minutes, seconded by Councilman Bob Shields. Motion carried 7-0.

**Presentation of Resolution 4-25, honoring former Councilman Tim Shaw**

Mayor Dondero presented Resolution 4-25 to former Councilman Tim Shaw.

**Public Comment**

John Beauregard, 108 Petherton Drive, stated for boaters to be careful of the shallows in the channel located right before you get to Harpoon Hannah's.

**First Reading of Ordinance 219-25, Adoption of General Code revisions and codification of Town ordinances. (Dondero)**

Mayor Dondero gave the first reading of Ordinance 219-25. Mayor Dondero stated this draft has been reviewed by two town solicitors, and the general counsel from General Code so at least three attorneys have looked at it, as well as all the Town staff and the chief of police. Mayor Dondero stated she hopes that Council is pretty much ready to get through the first reading with minimal changes because if Council makes more changes to this today, it must go back to General Code who has to change it within the Code, and that's going to cost the Town more money.

After a lengthy conversation, Council had an amendment in section 50 and section 56 of attachment A as well as chapter 1-9 of the ordinance, regarding the monetary limit on violations, deciding to make the cost one-hundred dollars.

**Appointment of members to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee**

Councilman Randy Bartholomew motioned to appoint Beth Rosso, Dennis Roberts, Kathleen Wood, Robert Herb, Mark O'Brien and Edward Kelchner as members of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee, as well as appointing Councilman Shields as chairman of said committee, seconded by Councilwoman Cindy Van Horn. Motion carried 7-0.

### **Discussion of potential regulations on beach canopies (Shields)**

Councilman Shields stated we all realize that our beach is starting to get crowded – especially around the 4th of July, and while we're not anywhere near the Bethany Beach or Sea Colony level of density, it was crowded. One of the issues he's had a number of people bring to his attention is the use of these large cabanas or canopy tents which occupy a lot of space on the beach and oftentimes don't have anybody sitting under them. The purpose of this proposed ordinance is to try and eliminate what he calls the "monster canopies," which are 10 feet by 10 feet (10x10) or over, and have these elaborate anchoring mechanisms which stretch out to the side. Councilman Shields stated his recommendation is that Council only allow cabanas of 8 feet by 8 feet, but it could be 10x10, limit them so all anchor devices should be within their footprint, and Council may want to look at doing something about prohibiting or limiting tents set up with no occupants (people using tents as a place holder on the beach).

Mayor Dondero stated she doesn't think there is a need for an ordinance on this issue at this time, and Ocean City, Bethany and Rehoboth clearly have beaches that are much more crowded than South Bethany. She agrees that there's nothing more annoying than people who spread out and erect a big 10x10 canopy tent and then put their chairs around it with nobody really using it; however, it is her feeling that you can't regulate common courtesy. Mayor Dondero's biggest issue with this – which Councilwoman Keefe alluded to – is enforcement, which is ultimately going to fall to the beach patrol, and she thinks that is an unfair ask of them. The Town wants the beach patrol to be in stands with eyes on the water and not have them constantly turning around, worrying about measuring tent sizes, or the distance between tents, or getting into altercations with uncooperative folks who have erected these tents. There's already a lot of things beach patrol members are checking for, that is taking their time away from the water, and she feels like Council doesn't need to add to it. Mayor Dondero asked Beach Patrol Captain Dacey to share his thoughts, and his biggest concern was who is going to enforce this, which he knows will fall on the beach patrol; and will he have to arm each lifeguard with tape measures to go out and measure these things, because sometimes the difference between 8 feet and 10 feet isn't obvious. Captain Dacey also felt like this would be detracting from their responsibilities to keep eyes on the water. Because the Town doesn't have the staffing resources, when a beachgoer violating this doesn't comply, then the beach patrol or Town staff have to call a police officer, taking the officer off of Route One or away from a call to come down to the beach just to tell somebody to take their tent down. Mayor Dondero stated she doesn't feel this is necessary at this time, but it's something the Town can certainly revisit if we get more of a problem, and these tents start becoming more prolific.

After a lengthy discussion, a majority of Council agreed to move forward with asking the Charter & Code Committee to research an ordinance for limiting canopy tent sizes and having any anchoring devices fall within the footprint of said canopy tent.

### **Leadership Reports**

Mayor's Report – Report submitted. Mayor Dondero thanked Town staff and the SBPD for all their hard work during and after the Fourth of July celebrations.

Town Manager Report – Report submitted.

Police Chief Report – Report submitted.

Treasurer Report – Report submitted.

### **Committee and Commission Reports**

Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee – Report submitted, and the bike rodeo will be held tomorrow, Saturday, July 12, starting at 10 a.m.

Budget and Finance Committee – No report submitted.

Canal Water Quality Committee – No report submitted.

Charter and Code Committee – No report submitted, but the next meeting is being scheduled for July 22.

Community Planning Advisory Group – Report submitted. The next meeting will be held on July 28 at 10 a.m.

Community Relations Committee – No report submitted. The next coffee and conversation event will be with Councilman Shields on Friday, July 18, at 9 a.m.

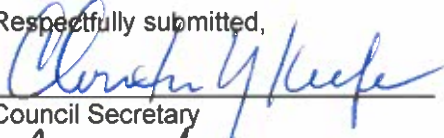
Planning Commission – No report submitted.

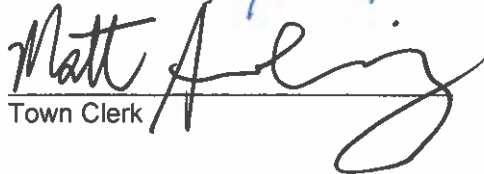
Resiliency Committee – No report submitted.

**Adjournment**

Motion by Councilman Biciocchi, seconded by Councilman Shields, to adjourn the July 11, 2025, Town Council Regular Meeting at 9:59 a.m. Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Council Secretary

  
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Town Clerk

8/8/2025  
Date of Approval