

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 8, 2026
9:00 A.M.**

Meeting Called to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Dondero called the May 8, 2026, 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: 14. Virtual attendees: 19.

Adoption of Minutes

Councilman Bob Biciocchi motioned to approve the April 10, 2026, Town Council meeting minutes, seconded by Councilman Randy Bartholomew. Motion carried 7-0.

Councilman Biciocchi motioned to approve the April 24, 2026, Town Council Workshop meeting minutes, seconded by Councilwoman Cindy Van Horn. Motion carried 7-0.

Mayor Dondero stated that the public comment portion would be moved to after the Woods Hole Group presentation.

Presentation from The Woods Hole Group on proposed updated bathymetric survey, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) survey, and sediment sampling for the canal network

Dack Stuart, of The Woods Hole Group, presented a proposal for five tasks to update bathymetric and environmental data in the Town's canal system, as the previous 2018-2019 data is now expired. The proposed work includes an updated bathymetric survey (Task 1), submerged aquatic vegetation survey (Task 2), sediment coring (Task 3), and support for permitting processes (Tasks 4 and 5). The total cost for the proposed work is \$105,045. Mr. Stuart explained that the previous dredging data from 2018 is no longer valid due to regulatory requirements, and the new project will target 6 feet below mean low water instead of the previous 4 feet depth. He noted that widgeon grass presents a challenge as it cannot be moved or transplanted, though alternative solutions may be explored to address navigation issues. The Town's canal system, designed as dead-end channels with limited tidal flushing, typically requires dredging every 20 years, with the last dredging occurring in 2008. Mr. Stuart estimated that dredging costs could range from \$758,000 to \$1.82 million for removing approximately 7,500-15,000 cubic yards of sediment. He stressed, however, that this is only an estimate and Mr. Stuart confirmed that periodic maintenance plans could be implemented if needed, with 5-year maintenance cycles focusing on hot spots rather than full system dredging.

Public Comment

Fred Reitzel, 135 Elizabeth Way, recommended aligning Charter language with State Code, particularly regarding resident requirements and removal procedures for commission members.

Joe Conway, 160 Henlopen Drive, expressed concerns about a lack of direct engagement with the Planning Commission before Charter amendments, and questioned the process for changes to the Town Code.

Laura Larson, 404 Tamarack Drive, stated concerns about how the new rule for canopies and Shibumis on the beach were enacted.

Tony Cardillo, 304 York Drive, expressed his thanks to the Town staff and Council for the flood mitigation project and for putting drains in along York Road, near his home.

Nancy Loube, 117 Elizabeth Way, requested Council vote no to reducing the Council size from 7 to 5.

Chris Vanuga, 150 Henlopen Drive, expressed concerns about the Canal Water Quality committee's potential dissolution and proposed forming a different ad-hoc committee to address canal water quality and other engineering challenges.

John Beauregard, 108 Petherton Drive, agreed with Mr. Vanuga and emphasized the importance of preserving the community's investment in and focus on canal maintenance and water quality.

Vote on appointment of new council member to fill term beginning May 19, 2026, and ending May 2027

Mayor Dondero stated that Carolyn Bell had withdrawn from consideration for the vacant seat, so there remain two applicants: Russell Beland and Sarah Long. Councilwoman Van Horn motioned to appoint Sarah Long as the new Council member to fill the vacancy, seconded by Councilman Biciocchi. Motion carried 5-2 (with Councilmen Randy Bartholomew and Mark Giler voting no).

First reading of Ordinance 222-26, proposed amendments to Town Code Chapter 20, Planning Commission

Council discussed changes to the Planning Commission ordinance, which was described as a "house cleaning" exercise to eliminate redundancy and improve language. The main points of discussion included the number of Planning Commission members, with Councilman Giler questioning the need to change from 9 to 7 members, and whether members should be required to be residents or property owners. Council decided to keep the membership requirements unspecified, allowing the Council to make appointment decisions on a case-by-case basis. They also discussed the role of ex-officio members, clarifying that liaison positions would be non-voting members to facilitate communication between the Council and Planning Commission.

Discussion and vote to retire Canal Water Quality as a standing committee (Biciocchi)

Councilman Biciocchi provided a detailed history of the committee's work over the past 20 years, including digitizing records, creating visualizations of water quality data, and working with the town manager on preventative measures. Councilman Biciocchi suggested that, having achieved its objectives, the committee may need to be reformed or replaced with a more efficient structure, potentially in the form of a joint committee task force. Councilman Biciocchi motioned to end the existing Canal Water Quality committee with the condition that Council reform a committee with a focus on canal network interests, seconded by Councilwoman Van Horn. Motion carried 7-0.

Leadership Reports

Mayor's Report – Report submitted.

Town Manager Report – Report submitted.

Police Chief Report – Report submitted.

Treasurer Report – Report submitted.

Committee and Commission Reports

Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee – Report submitted. The committee will hold a meeting on May 19 to discuss the upcoming July bike rodeo and more.

Budget and Finance Committee – No report submitted.

Canal Water Quality Committee – No report submitted.

Charter and Code Committee – No report submitted.

Community Relations Committee – Report submitted.

Planning Commission – No report submitted.

Resiliency Committee – Report submitted. The York Road project has been completed, except for the striping, which was supposed to happen this week, but was delayed due to the rain expectancy. The Town will be sending some letters to residents of the York Beach neighborhood that the AECOM team working on the next phase of that project will need to be on site and may request access to some people's property for topographical surveys. Also, Verdantas – the company that's doing the bulkhead analysis – may want to ask for access to certain landowners' properties to measure their bulkhead height. The Town will send a letter to all residents in the neighborhood, letting them know that might be happening and they might be getting a knock on the door, and anyone who does not want someone walking on their property will let us know, and we'll have a list of no-go places for both contractors.

Adjournment

Motion by Mayor Dondero, seconded by Councilman Bartholomew, to adjourn the May 8, 2026, Town Council Regular Meeting at 10:58 a.m. Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Council Secretary



Town Clerk



Date of Approval