



Town of North Beach Mayor and Town Council Town Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, January 15, 2026

Location: Zoom

Beginning: 7:00 PM

Adjourn: 8:04 PM

Mayor and Council Attendance:

Mike Benton, Mayor
 Allen Creamer, Councilman
 Michelle Crosby, Councilwoman
 Gregg Dotson, Councilman via Zoom
 Mary Healey, Councilwoman - Absent
 Mickey Hummel, Councilman
 Ken Wilcox, Councilman

Staff:

Linda Vassallo – Town Administrator
 Stacy Milor – Town Clerk/Human Resources Manager
 Emma Donaldson – Assistant Waterfront Manager
 Donnie Bowen – Public Works Director
 Rick Crump – Planning and Zoning Director
 Joanne Hunt – Town Treasurer

Agenda

- Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes
- Scheduled Appointment
- Staff Reports
- Public Comment
- Mayor’s Report
- Town Council Member Reports
- Adjournment

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

- Jan. 15, 2026, Town Council Meeting was called to order at 7 pm by Mayor Benton.
- Approval of Agenda: Councilman Wilcox moved to amend the agenda and place the election of the Vice-President on the February 2026, Town Council Agenda. Seconded by Councilwoman Crosby. All in favor. Motion carried. The agenda was approved as presented.

Meeting Minutes

- Minutes from Dec. 11, 2025, Town Council Meeting. MOTION was made by Councilman Hummel to approve the minutes as submitted. Seconded by Councilman Wilcox. All in favor. Motion carries.
- Minutes from Jan. 8, 2026, Town Council Work Session. Councilman Dotson moved to approve the minutes from the Jan. 8, 2026, Town Council Work Session as submitted. Seconded by Councilman Hummel. All in favor. Motion carried.

Scheduled Appointments:

No Scheduled Appointments

Staff Reports

All staff reports are located on the Town website under Board Docs

<https://go.boarddocs.com/md/nbeach/Board.nsf/Public>. If there are any questions regarding any report, please contact the Department Head.

- No public comment

Business Items:

2026 Town of North Beach Election Guidance - on Jan. 8, 2026, the Mayor and Town Council discussed HB 322, which allows municipalities to partner with the State of Maryland to support the administration of local elections. Following the Council’s discussion at the Work Session and in response to Council questions, staff refined cost estimates by obtaining updated pricing and clarifying the scope of services under each election administration option. The revised figures reflect a more accurate comparison and include cost components that required follow-up confirmation, such as vendor support levels, State administrative charges, Town staffing, legal requirements, and public outreach costs.

Option 1 - Town Run Election (Independent Town Administration)

Election would be administered by the Town, within municipal limits. The Town must:

- Notify the State of the Town’s intent.
- Appoint an Election Board by April 1st.

Fiscal Impact:

- **Independent Contractor: \$19,000**
 - ✓ \$11,700 (approx.) for independent contractor, with enhanced support (see Table I)
 - ✓ \$7,300 (approx.) for Town costs (including Town Election Board salaries and administrative costs)
- **State Equipment Lease: \$26,300**
 - ✓ \$19,000 (approx.) to lease State voting equipment, including State administrative costs, with limited State support (see Table I)
 - ✓ \$7,300 (approx.) (including Town administrative costs and estimated printing/ mailing costs).

Option 2: State-Run Election (State Administration)

Election would be administered by the State, outside the municipal limits at the North Beach Volunteer Fire Department (NBVFD). The Town must:

- Submit request to the State to transfer authority.
- Update the Town Charter.

Fiscal Impact: \$17,000

- \$0 - estimated direct cost to the Town for State administration.

- \$7,000 (approx.) - Town costs (Town Charter update: legal fees, public hearing, etc.) \$10,000 (approx.) - Town costs (a State-run election moving out of Town Hall to NBVFD represents a notable change from prior practice. This will require enhanced public outreach to ensure continuity of voter participation, avoid Election Day confusion, day of signage, and support a smooth transition to the new process).

Conclusion/Recommendation:

The staff is requesting a vote of the Council to proceed with Option 1 or Option 2. If Option 1 is selected, please further direct staff to use either a private contractor or pursue an agreement with the State.

Options:

1. Town-run election (the Town administers the election), using either:

- A private contractor, *or*
- An agreement with the State

2. State-run election (the State administers the election)

- **MOTION** made by Councilman Hummel to continue the election in the North Beach Town Hall and hire a private contractor to assist with the election with an approximate cost of \$19,000.00. Seconded by Councilman Creamer. VOTE: AYE: Councilman Hummel, Dotson, Creamer; NAY: Councilman Wilcox and Councilwoman Crosby. **MOTION passes 3-2.**
- **MOTION** was made by Councilman Wilcox to add a non-binding referendum question to the ballot asking residents if they prefer the Town election to be conducted in the Town Hall or at the North Beach Volunteer Fire Department. Seconded by Councilman Hummel. **All in favor. Motion carried.**

Mayors Report

- The Mayor thanked everyone for coming out. He thanked the Council for their vote on the election tonight, we are elected to make these decisions.

Council Reports

- Councilmember Crosby, Community engagement: Noted limited engagement in response to the recent newsletter reporting. Emphasized that, given the current state of democracy, the burden is on the Town to actively engage residents. She has been reaching out directly to neighbors via email to gather their opinions. Councilmember Crosby also reported that she has followed up on her letter to the County Commissioners regarding the establishment of an HOA Committee.
- Councilmember Dotson thanked Councilman Wilcox to changing his motion to a non-binding question on the 2026 ballot question. Thanked everyone for coming out. It was nice to have a good meeting and conversation on a business item. Stay warm and keep safe.
- Councilmember Hummel thanked everyone for joining tonight. Was happy to see the Council working together on a subject, not agreeing and continue to move forward and work together. The Polar Bear Plunge was fun, cold and I always enjoyed participating.
- Councilmember Creamer thanked everyone for attending and aligned with Councilwoman’s community engagement, it is especially important to get the community involved. I will continue to move towards getting all the Town committees back up and running in 2026. In the next month or two I will have a proposal to introduce for the committees.
- Council Member Wilcox thanked everyone for attending and reminded everyone the temperatures are dropping and to look out for your neighbors.

Adjournment

- Council Member Creamer motioned to close the meeting at 7:45 pm. Seconded by Councilman Wilcox. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Signed by:

B92245BAE09249A...

Stacy Milor, Town Clerk/HR Manager

Signed by:

BA48EC7ED321455...

Mike Benton, Mayor