

**TOWN OF ST. JAMES REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 4, 2025**

The St. James Town Council met in Regular Session at 4:01 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, in the Earl Dye Council Chamber.

**Council Members Present:** Mayor Jean Toner, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Board, Councilors Dennis Barclay, Bill Miller, and Lynn Dutney

**Staff Present:** Town Manager Jeff Repp, Finance Director Pauline Haran, and Town Clerk Jamie Burns

**Others Present:** Deputy Director of Emergency Management Diana Kelly, State Port Pilot Reporter Eliot Duke, and 11 residents.

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Toner opened the meeting at 4:01 p.m.

All in attendance joined Mayor Toner in honoring our flag.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Toner announced a change to the agenda, requesting the tabling, until the April 1, 2026 public meeting, of items 4A and 4B under Public Hearings and items 6A, 6B, and 6C under Old Business. These items were:

- 4A: Conditional Zoning & Conditional Rezoning Application Submitted by Ward & Smith, PA (Continued from 2/4/2026)
- 4B: Proposed Development Agreement Between the Town of St. James and Harbor Development Corporation, Canal Associates, LLC & D.R. Development Corporation. (Continued from 2/4/2026)
- 8A: Motion to Approve Resolution #26-01 of Annexation of Approximately 137.85+ acres and Being Located Contiguous to the Town's Municipal Boundaries and Adjacent to the Town's Event Center and Town Hall.
- 8B: Motion to Approve Ordinance 2026-01, Adopt the Conditional Zoning Proposal from Harbor Development Corp.; D.R. Development Corporation; Canal Associates, LLC; and the Town of St. James
- 8C: Motion to Approve Ordinance 2026-02, to Execute a Development Agreement between the Town of St. James and Harbor Development Corporation, Canal Associates, LLC & D.R. Development Corporation.

Mayor Toner called for a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Board and approved unanimously (Vote: 5/0)

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Toner asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes from the December 16, 2025 Closed Session, January 22, 2026 Work Session, or the February 4, 2026 Regular Meeting included in the consent agenda. Councilor Dutney moved to approve the consent agenda covering the noted meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously (Vote: 5/0)

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**MAYOR/COUNCIL/STAFF REPORTS**

Mayor Toner explained that these are appointments, made annually, that town council representatives have to various committees. The primary change since the original January approval was the appointment of Councilor Bill Miller to the Rural Transportation Advisory Committee. The revised council assignment list reflects the new appointment.

*Mayor Pro Tem Board moved to approve the 2026 Town of St. James Council assignments as presented. The motion was approved unanimously (Vote: 5/0).*

**OLD BUSINESS** – None

**NEW BUSINESS**

- 26-02 *Motion to Re-appoint Noel Nadol to a term ending February 7, 2029 and Appoint Gina Richards-McCloskey and Chris Lyon to terms ending March 4, 2029 to the St. James Emergency Management Group.*

Town Manager Jeff Repp presented the appointments to the Town of St. James Emergency Management Group. The motion includes reappointing Noel Nadol to a term expiring February 7, 2029, and appointing Gina Richards-McCloskey and Chris Lyon to terms expiring March 4, 2029.

*Councilor Dutney made a motion to approve the assignments of Noel Nadol, Gina Richards-McCloskey, and Chris Lyon to the emergency management group. The motion passed unanimously (Vote: 5/0).*

Following the appointment, new members were invited forward to be sworn in as a group.

*Town Clerk Jamie Burns swore in Noel Nadol, Gina Richards-McCloskey, and Chris Lyon as members of the Emergency Management Work Group.*

Town Council extended congratulations to new members. Mayor Toner expressed appreciation for their volunteer service.

- 26-03 *Motion to Adopt Resolution 2026-01 Adopting the Southeastern North Carolina Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan*

Town Manager Repp explained that this resolution comes before Town Council at least once every five years, as FEMA requires local governments applying for federal disaster mitigation or debris removal funding to have a hazard mitigation plan in effect. The southeastern region counties (Pender, New Hanover, and Brunswick) and municipalities joined together about twenty (20) years ago to create one comprehensive plan covering all three counties and municipalities within their respective counties.

Mr. Repp detailed that the process involves using consultants who meet with counties and municipalities to identify potential hazards including tornadoes, floods, nuclear events, and other threats. The plan documents these hazards and addresses

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how they would be handled by respective counties and municipalities. He noted that today they would be adopting the latest update to the Southeast Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The current update, exceeding 1,200 pages, would be effective for five years beginning in April. Mr. Repp noted that St. James emergency management group has contributed to the plan through their emergency operations plan, providing input on locally identified potential hazards.

*Councilor Miller moved to adopt Resolution 2026-01 adopting the Southeastern North Carolina Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Motion passed unanimously. (Vote: 5/0)*

Mayor Pro Tem Board inquired whether there were any requirements in the regional plan that aren't already covered in the town's emergency management procedures. Mr. Repp responded that he was not aware of any gaps.

26-04 *Motion to Adopt Resolution 2026-02 Opposing the Fuquay-Varina Interbasin Transfer*

Town Manager Repp explained that at the previous week's budget work session the council expressed a desire to adopt a resolution stating the town's opposition to the proposed interbasin transfer for the town of Fuquay-Varina in the middle of the state. The proposal involves taking water from the Cape Fear water basin without returning it to the same basin, instead discharging treated water to the Neuse River water basin. Mr. Repp detailed that the proposal calls for up to 12 million gallons per day to be pulled from the Cape Fear River, with an initial 6 million gallons being discharged to another water basin.

During drought periods, this could affect the amount of water available downstream and impact the ability to serve downstream customers. The resolution represents St. James' opposition to this proposed action as part of the public comment process. He noted that many municipalities along the Cape Fear River, including Brunswick, Pender, New Hanover, and Columbus counties, have adopted similar opposition resolutions.

Mayor Toner emphasized that while previous interbasin transfers have been approved by the state, those cases required water to be returned to the originating basin. This proposal represents a straight diversion without return, which would negatively impact downstream communities.

Mayor Pro Tem Board asked about the likelihood of state approval given overwhelming disapproval from surrounding municipalities. Mr. Repp acknowledged uncertainty about the outcome but explained that this is part of a formal review process involving the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality Water Resources Division. The resolution will be submitted to a hearing officer and reviewed by an appointed committee, with the process expected to take approximately two years. Mr. Repp provided context that this is one of only five such interbasin transfer requests in the department's history, making it relatively

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uncommon. He noted that while St. James primarily uses the Castle Hayne aquifer water rather than Cape Fear River water, the town does occasionally supplement from the Northwest Water Treatment Plant during periods of high demand or drought.

Mayor Toner reported that this issue was discussed at the morning meeting of the 19 county mayors quarterly gathering, confirming it is a high priority concern for municipalities throughout the region.

The discussion touched on potential impacts including changes to tide levels in the Intracoastal Waterway, effects on fishing and boating communities, and concerns about future water allocation decisions by Brunswick County.

Mayor Toner asked if Mayor Pro Tem Board, who is assigned to the water pressure improvement project, would also follow the status of this particular project to keep the town informed, which Mayor Pro Tem Board agreed to do.

*Councilor Dutney moved to adopt Resolution 2026-02, the resolution opposing the Fuquay-Varina interbasin transfer. The motion passed unanimously (Vote: 5/0)*

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – Noone signed up for public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 4:22 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Board made a motion to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor.  
(Vote: 5/0)

Mayor Toner adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved,

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Jamie Burns, Town Clerk

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Jean R. Toner, Mayor