

TOWN OF BAILEY MEETING MINUTES  
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING – 4/20/2026

This Regular Public Meeting of the Bailey Town Board of Commissioners was held at Bailey Town Hall on April 20, 2026 at 6:30 PM.

The following Board members were present: Mayor Owen H. Strickland II, Mayor Pro Tempore/Commissioner Walter Wells, and Commissioners Richard Wilson, Dillon Bissette, Ervin Powell, and David Evans.

Also present: Town Administrator/Town Clerk/CFO Joel Killion, Police Chief Adam Gelo, and Town Attorney Nick Berry.

Mayor Strickland called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

**Invocation**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Adoption of Agenda:**

Mayor Strickland mentioned a request to move Mr. John Thompson's item to the beginning of the Administrative Reports section. When no one on the Board objected, Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented, and Commissioner Wells seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Evans: Aye, Wells: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Powell: Aye, Bissette: Aye.

**Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:**

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the regular public meeting minutes from March 23, 2026, and Commissioner Bissette seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Evans: Aye, Bissette: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Powell: Aye, Wells: Aye.

**Acceptance of Financials:**

The Board of Commissioners accepted the Accounts Summary from KS Bank, the Budget vs. Actual Report, and the KS Bank Statement for the General Funding Checking Account for March 2026.

**Public Hearing:**

None

**Public Comments:**

**Mr. Cecil Hawley** – Mr. Hawley commented that his garbage at his business at 6488 Main Street had not been picked up in three weeks. He also inquired about a utility billing refund check he received.

**Ms. Tina Beddingfield** – Ms. Beddingfield wished to dispute a discrepancy on a utility bill from when she owned Bonanza Grill back in 2019. She stated that her business was closed in December of 2019 and added that her utility accounts were closed no later than January of 2020. Then, recently, she received a notice that her state tax return was garnished for a \$3,000 water bill she owed the Town of Bailey. She said this was the first time she had heard of owing the Town.

Sewer/Water Commissioner Wells stated that he would work with Administrator Killion to look into this matter. He asked Ms. Beddingfield for contact information and any information she had on this matter. Ms. Beddingfield said she did not have any information to provide.

**Administrative Reports:**

Mr. John Thompson, Owner/Operator of Top Notch Lawn Care, had not arrived yet to speak at this time, as approved by the Board of Commissioners during the approval of the Agenda.

**Sewer & Water Department – Envirolink** – Mr. Andrew White was unable to attend due to a family emergency. In his absence, Sewer/Water Commissioner Wells reviewed Envirolink's Monthly Activity Report included in the Board packets.

**Cemetery & Landscaping Department – Mr. John Thompson, Owner/Operator of Top Notch Lawn Care** – Mr. Thompson arrived at this point and stated that the landscaping at the Cemetery, the spray field, etc. all looked good. He also mentioned that yard waste pickups had been running smoothly, without any foreign objects.

Sewer/Water Commissioner Wells then briefed everyone on Top Notch's involvement in the recent wastewater treatment plan inspection conducted by the NCDEQ and mentioned that Top Notch will be addressing some of the issues identified by the DEQ.

**Regulatory Department – Mr. Shawn Lucas, Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcer** – Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcer Lucas was not present at this time. But a written report from Mr. Lucas was provided in the Board packets, which Mayor Strickland referred the Board to.

Commissioner Powell made a motion to accept Mr. Lucas' report, and Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Powell: Aye, Evans: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Bissette: Aye, Wells: Aye.

**Police Department** – Chief Adam Gelo provided a brief update on the status of the hiring of the two part-time officers approved during the last monthly meeting. He then went over the department’s preparations for the upcoming 2026 N.C. Sweetpotato Festival.

**Administration – Mr. Joel Killion, Town Administrator/Town Clerk/CFO** – Administrator Killion directed the Board’s attention to the budget season-related documents included in their packets and reviewed the key dates for the budget season.

He then reviewed CD renewal information from KS Bank for the seven CDs the Town has with the bank.

Commissioner Evans provided some comments on the various CD interest rate options and suggested that the 9-month rate of 3.68% with a 3.75% APY would be best for the town.

Commissioner Wells made a motion to approve the renewal of the CDs at the 9-month rate provided by KS Bank, and Commissioner Powell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Wells: Aye, Powell: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Bissette: Aye, Evans: Aye.

Administrator Killion then reviewed the response from GFL regarding the Town’s response to GFL’s request for a Consumer Price Index (CPI) billing increase of 4.8% as of July 1, 2026.

Commissioner Evans asked several questions related to the GFL contract and asked about options available to the town, including seeking quotes from competitors of GFL. Commissioner Bissette also expressed interest in seek quotes of this nature.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to have Administrator Killion try to gather two competitive quotes, and Commissioner Bissette seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Evans: Aye, Bissette: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Wells: Aye, Powell: Aye.

Administrator Killion then informed the Board that the owner of the storefront on Hanover Street is requesting that the cement parking blocks that were removed by the Town’s contractor be returned to him since they belonged to him.

After some Board discussion, Commissioner Evans made a motion to seek pricing for the parking blocks, along with any fees associated with their purchase, and Commissioner Wells seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Evans: Aye, Wells: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Bissette: Aye, Powell: Aye.

Mayor Strickland asked for a motion to go into recess for five minutes.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to go into recess for five minutes, and Commissioner Bisette seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Evans: Aye, Bisette: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Wells: Aye, Powell: Aye.

**Committee Reports:**

None

**Old Business:**

**Review of Fee Schedule** – Mayor Pro Tempore/Commissioner Wells gave a brief update on where the Town is in reviewing the rate study provided by the Rural Water Association.

**New Business:**

**WWTP Permit Renewal Discussion** – Commissioner Wells reviewed some of the key areas of the Compliance Evaluation Inspection Report provided by the NCDEQ and informed the Board of the Town's efforts to respond to the State's concerns.

Mr. Rich Moore, the Town's Engineer with McDavid Associates, then approached the podium. He explained that the State, during this inspection, was looking for progress, and progress is what they saw. He said the State also saw how the Town wishes to work with them on their concerns and everything needed to get off the sewer moratorium. He also went over some of the issues identified by the DEQ and how the current sewer/water projects will be able to address them at no cost to the Town.

Commissioner Wells added that Mr. Moore will prepare a change of scope document for the Board to review and vote on that will allow the sewer/water project that is currently underway to address several of the issues identified by the State in the report.

Mr. Moore said that all he can do is recommend what will be on the change of scope document. It is the Board that will collectively determine how the grant funds are spent.

Commissioner Evans then provided some forward-thinking comments, stating that as we move toward getting off the sewer moratorium, we need to think about growing the tax base with the goal of using part of that growth to create our own sewer/water maintenance department, in addition to Envirolink. If this does not happen, the maintenance and monitoring of our rehabilitated/expanded sewer infrastructure will suffer and we will slip backwards and be right back on the moratorium.

**Well #2 – Property Boundary Issue at O'Neal & Finch Streets** – Commissioner Wells briefed the Board on a situation where a privately-owned strip of land between O'Neal and Finch Streets (beside Town-owned property on which Well #2 and the elevated water tank sit) has an eight inch main water line running through it that is a source for the Town coming out of the tank. This line is not in an easement but is in a right-of-way. Therefore, it is critical for the Town

engage the Town Attorney to look into this and figure out what needs to be done to protect the Town's water supply long-term. This, of course, is one of several easements the Town does not have that will need to be addressed legally, sooner than later.

Commissioner Wells made a motion to engage Fields & Cooper to review the proposed right-of-way next to the Town's Well #2 property, where Town water lines are located, and to recommend the best legal option to protect the Town's interests and secure permanent relief in these areas, and Commissioner Powell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Wells: Aye, Powell: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Bissette: Aye, Evans: Aye.

**Town Water Connections Outside Town Limits** – Commissioner Wells shared that he had heard from two property owners on Pace Road, requesting water utilities from the Town, utilizing water lines that were laid out there years ago for fire hydrants. He then mentioned that there had been discussions about possibly annexing properties adjacent to Town that wanted to access Town water.

Mr. Shawn Lucas, Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcer, then approached the podium to explain that it would not be spot-zoning if the Board put in a policy that, going forward, anyone wanting to access Town water must be annexed in. The property owner would voluntarily choose to annex into the Town. And so, Mr. Lucas strongly encouraged the Board to adopt a policy in this regard.

Commissioner Evans added that this would aid the Town in growing its tax base.

Commissioner Wells made a motion to have Zoning Administrator Lucas provide a sample policy regarding out-of-town water service and voluntary annexation for review by the Board of Commissioners and the Planning Board before any further discussion on its implementation, and Commissioner Bissette seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Wells: Aye, Bissette: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Powell: Aye, Evans: Aye.

**Emergency Generator Maintenance, Service & Implementation** – Commissioner Wells shared that the Town's emergency generator must be upfitted and regularly maintained in order to be properly utilized for emergency needs. He said that this would cost \$20,250 with \$20,000 coming out of Commissioner Evans' Economic Development/Long Range Planning budget.

Commissioner Evans commented that this would wipe out his budget, but then said that there is only enough water in the tanks to last two days if we had a water main break and no power. And, in case of an emergency, which could happen at any time, there would be no power to run the lift stations. And if there are no utilities, there can be no economic development. He then added that when the sewer/water projects are complete, we will be able to engage in economic development, but if we don't have water and sewer, we won't.

Commissioner Wells made a motion to have Clarke Water & Wastewater provide the necessary cabling and hookups for the emergency generator at Well #2 and at the three lift stations at a cost of \$20,250, \$20,000 of which will come out of Economic Development from the 25/26 Budget, and Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Wells: Aye, Evans: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Powell: Aye, Bissette: Aye.

Commissioner Wells then handed out a quote from Mr. Mark Boykin for a monthly service inspection of the emergency generator, to run it, to top-off fluids, and to make sure it runs properly. It would cost the Town \$50 per month.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to accept the proposal from Mr. Mark Boykin to service/maintain the generator on a monthly basis, and Commissioner Powell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Evans: Aye, Powell: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Wells: Aye, Bissette: Aye.

**Commissioner's Remarks:**

**Dillon Bissette** – No remarks.

**David Evans** – No remarks.

**Ervin Powell** – No remarks.

**Richard Wilson** – No remarks.

**Mayor Pro Tempore/Infrastructure and Sewer & Water Commissioner's Remarks:**

Mayor Pro Tempore/Commissioner Wells reminded the Board that he had asked for a volunteer to assume the Town's Sewer/Water Commissioner duties after questions were raised about his and Commissioner Evans' ability to serve in that role. He said he and Commissioner Evans believed it would be in the Town's best interest for another Commissioner to take the role to avoid future conflict.

Commissioner Wells asked each Commissioner whether they would take the role. Commissioner Wilson declined, stating that Commissioners Wells and Evans had already made the contacts and should continue ("You don't need to be changing horses in the middle of the street."). Commissioner Bissette declined and referenced an earlier email stating the same. Commissioner Powell also declined and said he agreed with Commissioner Wilson.

When asked for his input, Commissioner Evans suggested that he and Commissioner Wells discuss the matter further.

Commissioner Wells said he and Commissioner Evans would follow up with the Board after further discussion.

Commissioner Wilson said Commissioners Wells and Evans should continue in the role because they have already made the necessary contacts, adding that changing leads now could create problems.

**Mayor's Remarks:**

Mayor Strickland presented the Board of Commissioners with a copy of an email he received from Nash County with the Nash EMS Daily Staffing Levels as of 4/3/26. He reported that there were 7 dates where there was no coverage at all and 2 dates where there was half coverage (12 hours total coverage each day).

Mayor Strickland shared a Legislative Bulletin email from the N.C. League of Municipalities, provided by Administrator Killion, regarding a proposed property tax constitutional amendment advancing in the N.C. House. He noted that the amendment could affect both small towns and larger counties and encouraged the Board to stay informed. He also said he was unsure whether, if passed, the amendment would penalize Bailey for its recent tax increase or prompt State review.

He thanked the Board for approving the emergency generator work needed for emergency readiness.

Commissioner Evans said the amendment could have the opposite effect and cited examples in other states where local governments are required to keep annual tax increases within a set range (a minimum tied to cost of living and a maximum cap), with possible penalties for budgets outside that range.

Commissioner Wells said he reviewed Bailey's property tax history and noted there were no tax increases for 18 consecutive years, which contributed to declining fund balance due to insufficient revenue. He said the State later censured the Town for depleted reserves and added that failing to fund needs through taxes, fees, and similar revenue can have detrimental consequences.

Mayor Strickland said a \$0.01 annual increase would have been more manageable than a \$0.12 increase in a single year.

Commissioner Wells noted that costs have increased significantly over the years, especially since COVID.

Administrator Killion said the Property Tax History spreadsheet in the Board packets covers FY 2000/01 through FY 2025/26 (26 years). He noted there were no increases for the first 18 years, followed by increases of \$0.02 in FY 2018/19, \$0.05 in FY 2023/24, and \$0.12 in FY 2025/26—\$0.19 total over 26 years. He added that if the rate had increased \$0.01 each year, the total

increase would have been \$0.26, and said the Board is working to address the impact of long-term underfunding.

**Closed Session:**

None

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Powell seconded. Motion carried.

Vote: Mayor Strickland: N/A, Commissioner Evans: Aye, Powell: Aye, Wilson: Aye, Wells: Aye, Bissette: Aye.

Meeting adjourned.



Owen H. Strickland II, Mayor



Joel Killion, Town Administrator/Town Clerk/CFO