

TOWN OF EDISTO BEACH
Regular Monthly Town Council Meeting
January 8, 2026
6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Town of Edisto Beach
Town Hall
2414 Murray Street
Edisto Beach, SC 29438

The Regular Town Council Meeting was properly advertised and posted and met all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

Present

Mayor Crawford Moore, and Council Members Jerome Kizer, Robert Renner, Jay Watts, and Joey Bagwell. *Quorum of Council Present.*

Call to Order

Mayor Moore called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

Mr. Renner led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance and gave the invocation.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Kizer moved to approve the minutes of the Town Council Regular Monthly Meeting of December 11, 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. Renner and approved unanimously.

Presentations

Starfish Award

Assistant Fire Chief Ken Sallenger was nominated for the Starfish Award by Jeanine Rhodes, Edisto Beach resident, citing his leadership, kindness, and concern during and after a medical emergency involving a neighbor. Town Council expressed appreciation for Assistant Chief Sallenger's dedication and commitment to Edisto Beach and its residents.

Public Comment Period

During the public comment period, the following individuals addressed the council:

- Dave Ballard spoke regarding the proposed deer management plan, noting that 2025 deer numbers are lower than last year. He indicated he is not opposed to deer management, acknowledging that culling may sometimes be necessary to maintain a healthy herd, but suggested pausing this year, using the budget item to serve residents another way, and taking inventory of the deer population in late 2026.

- Kim Moredock spoke regarding the notification process related to the construction of a cell tower on Jungle Road and expressed opposition to the construction. Mrs. Moredock also spoke regarding the proposed pollinator garden at Jungle Road Park, noting concerns about the cost and that one bid was received (*Mrs. Moredock's written statement is attached to these minutes at her request*).
- Bess Kellett, spoke regarding the proposed pollinator garden. As the former South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) coordinator at Botany Bay, she described the butterfly tagging program at Botany, noted Monarch Butterflies are staying here year-round and will benefit from a pollinator garden. She expressed her support for the project.
- Marie Bost spoke regarding the proposed pollinator garden. She expressed her support for the project and indicated she installed a pollinator sanctuary at her place of business. She discussed the importance of pollinator plants and noted her pride that the pollinator garden will leave a lasting impact on residents and tourists.
- Bill Bowers spoke regarding the proposed deer management plan and the proposed pollinator garden. He asked whether the margin of benefit has been clearly defined, as well as the potential impact on taxpayers.
- Ginger McLauren spoke regarding the proposed deer management plan and the proposed pollinator garden and expressed concern there is a general lack of information and awareness about what is happening in the Town.

New Business

Approval of 2026-2027 Budget Calendar

Council was asked to consider and approve the Budget Calendar for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Mr. Renner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Watts, to approve the Budget Calendar for the 2026-2027 fiscal year as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

ATAX Application: Jungle Road Park Landscaping Services (Butterfly Garden)

Council was asked to consider and approve the ATAX application from the Town of Edisto Beach in the amount of \$60,700 to install a pollinator-friendly butterfly garden with irrigation and ongoing maintenance, reestablish the gravel path through the park, and install a rain garden feature with appropriate educational signage. The project was proposed by the TIDE Committee and approved by the ATAX Board.

During discussion, Council members noted ATAX funding for the project was approved. ATAX funds must be used for tourism, and this project benefits our tourism efforts. Unused funds would be returned to the state if not expended. Members acknowledged the cost but agreed the project is worth the investment.

Mr. Renner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Watts, to approve the installation of the pollinator-friendly butterfly garden at Jungle Road Park, funded by ATAX in the amount of \$60,700. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Deer Management Services

Council was asked to consider and approve the contract for deer management services to Lowcountry Wildlife Services, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$13,600 and deer processing in an amount not to exceed \$8,000.

Council members discussed the project, noting SCDNR approved the project based on its review of the annual deer population survey. Wildlife biologists recommended the project continue this year, and Council agreed we should defer to their expertise. The harvested deer meat will be donated to local food banks. Council noted they will review the program next year and may adjust or scale back efforts based on outcomes.

Mr. Bagwell made a motion to approve the contract for deer management services in the amount not to exceed \$13,600 and deer processing in the amount not to exceed \$8,000. Mr. Watts seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Appraisal Services for Beach Nourishment Project

Council was asked to consider and approve appraisal services in the amount of \$200,000 for the beach renourishment project. Colliers International Valuation & Advisory Services, LLC will conduct this appraisal work on 193 beachfront properties in close coordination with the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The Town’s Beach Preservation Fund will be used to pay for these services, which will be credited toward the Town’s cost share for the project.

Mr. Kizer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Renner, to approve the appraisal services for the beach nourishment project in the amount of \$200,000. The motion passed unanimously.

Ceremonial Swearing In

Mayor Moore administered the ceremonial oath of office to Police Officer Brian Dowdy. Officer Dowdy was accompanied by his wife and children. Police Chief Daniel Seyle welcomed Officer Dowdy to the Town of Edisto Beach, noting his 27 years of law enforcement experience. Several members of the Edisto Beach Police Department were in attendance.

Department Reports

The following reports were presented to Town Council:

Building Dept.	December 2024	December 2025	YTD
Business/Rental License Fees	\$10,509.21	\$16,891.24	\$89,212.24
Construction Permits	2	1	11
Other Permits	32	38	250
Permit Fees	\$13,017.50	\$9,186.50	\$84,258.00
Inspections	70	93	559

- Mr. Brown, Building Code Administrator, noted there are currently 22 new homes under construction.
- The department issued one certificate of occupancy and one new construction permit.

Fire Dept.	December 2024	December 2025	YTD
Medical Related Calls	12	19	153
Fire Related Calls	2	0	17
EMS/Misc.*	8	16	138
Public Service**	32	13	184

(*includes alarms, hazmat, public assistance, water rescue, etc.)

(**includes fire inspections, beach wheelchair loan, welfare checks)

- All self-contained breathing apparatus (SRBAs) were serviced, tested and certified.
- Chief Conley filed the Volunteer Strategic Assistance and Fire Equipment (V-SAFE) grant application. V-SAFE provides funding to volunteer fire departments in South Carolina for equipment purchases.
- Firefighters completed 203 hours of training.

Police Dept.	December 2024	December 2025	YTD
Miles Patrolled	12,192	14,012	80,884
Incidents & Calls for Service	134	130	1,289
Property Checks	1,626	2,543	12,737
Town Parking Tickets	8	8	450

- Chief Seyle welcomed Officer Brian Dowdy, a former lieutenant with Richland County Sheriff's Department, and noted Officer Dowdy is an asset to EBPD.
- The police department supported the Town Christmas Parade, including participation by a member of the Chief's family in the role of the Grinch.

Utilities Dept	December 2024	December 2025	YTD
Pumped MG Water	10,831,950	10,925,520	97,645,920
Treated MG Wastewater	3,082,068	2,729,240	25,360,551
Waterline Repairs	2	3	37
Work Orders	26	58	245

- Mr. Zemp, Utilities Director, noted the Advanced Metering Infrastructure System (AMI) is nearing completion.
- Dredging operations are to begin soon at the Wastewater Treatment Project site.

Administration

Mark Aakhus presented the following updates to Council:

- **Wastewater Improvement Projects**
 - Lift Stations: Pompano, Waterfront, Lee, and Scott Creek lift stations are all operational.
 - Wastewater Treatment Plant Project: Temporary ponds have been installed, power pole is installed, Dominion to turn on power next week. Dredging operations begin soon.

- **Advanced Metering Infrastructure System (AMI)**
 - Contractor is currently installing the meters; approximately 1,951 meters have been installed. Billing integration process, testing of the system, and training are underway.
- **Army Corps Project**
 - The appraisal scope of work (SOW) was approved. Estimated completion is 60 days, pending US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) review and approval.
- **Town Hall/EOC**
 - Project remains on schedule, with expected completion date in late March 2026.
 - Current work includes sheetrock, windows, initial painting, ceiling framing, and lighting.

Financial Information for December 2025, (YTD)	Received	Spent
General Fund	40%	41%
Water Fund	53%	41%
Wastewater Fund	54%	43%

- The Town has received 80% of the projected budgeted revenue from the local accommodations tax.
- The Town has received 60% of the projected budgeted revenue from the hospitality tax.

FOIA Update

- Administration-related FOIA Requests for the month of December:
 - Kevin Cook (1)
 - Kim Moredock (1)

Council Time

Mayor Moore recognized Sue Keith, Director, Colleton County Legislative Delegation, who was in attendance, and expressed appreciation for her continued support.

Executive Session

Mr. Kizer made a motion to go into Executive Session for the following item and this item only: Discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline, or release of an employee(s) related to the Town Administration Department, S.C. Code §30-4-70 (a) (1)

Council entered Executive Session at 6:56 p.m.

Open Session

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Kizer made a motion to exit Executive Session and enter Open Session. Mr. Renner seconded this motion, which was approved unanimously.

No action was taken following the executive session.

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Kizer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bagwell, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.
The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

APPROVED BY TOWN COUNCIL

Donna Rizer

Donna Rizer, Municipal Clerk
February 12, 2026

Have you heard about data centers in Colleton County? Of course you have. Citizens who are affected are having a chance to be heard. There are signs, public hearings, conversations on FB. Etc.

Compare that with the cell tower construction on Jungle Rd. Our notification was when construction began in Oct. No sign on sight, nothing in the paper, no mention in minutes of TC, Planning Commission or Zoning. This is a violation of state law. It has been a well-kept secret since 2017. Photographs used in the current permit application are from 2017!

When construction began, I filed a FOIA. I also filed an appeal through our local Zoning Board of Appeals. I was declined a hearing and told I had missed the deadline. When I asked to which deadline they were referring, they told me June 2021....4.5 years ago. You can't appeal something that you don't know exists.

The permit is unlawful and I have asked for construction to be stopped. I have shared that with officials but the construction continues. The Town has not acted in good faith with us.

On another topic. In a few minutes there will be a vote to spend \$60,700 on A butterfly garden at JRd Park. At the work session Tuesday I spoke against this for so many reasons. There's been no opportunity for public input. I have learned there are a lot of people here that know a lot about butterfly gardens. The price is unreasonable. The bid sheet on website was not a good description of the costs so Mr. Aakhus threw out a bunch of numbers. I believe I understood him to say that the annual cost of maintenance will be over \$8000.

The Town only has one bid!! Mr. Kizer said two vendors responded to the posting and met on site to discuss the project but only one submitted a bid. So, we have incorrect info on the website and we vote tonight. This is just another example of how our current officials eliminate the opportunity for the citizens to get in the

way of what they want. It is also interesting that I asked the group to share the name of the second vendor and they have not replied.

Residents have voice concerns about standing water, safety on our roads and bike paths, and upkeep on what we have. I don't think a butterfly garden is on the list.

Last fall the butterflies were amazing here. They were everywhere. Perhaps our officials had their heads in the sand and missed them.

Please vote no!