



**SURFSIDE BEACH TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
EMERGENCY MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 4, 2016 ♦ 4:00 P.M.**

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6 **1. CALL TO ORDER.** Mayor Childs called the emergency meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Mayor
7 Childs, Mayor Pro Tempore Ott, and Councilmembers Courtney, Johnson, Pellegrino, Samples and
8 Stevens were in attendance. A quorum was present. Others present: Administrator Fellner; Town Clerk
9 Herrmann, and Fire Chief Otte.

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11 **2. PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS.** (3 minutes). There were no public comments.

12
13 **3. BUSINESS**

14
15 **A. Ordinance #16-0835 to Declare a Localized State of Emergency in the Town of**
16 **Surfside Beach and to Authorize the Appropriate Action Be Taken In Connection Therewith**
17 **During the Hurricane Matthew Storm Event, Administrator Fellner.** Ms. Fellner presented the
18 ordinance, a copy of which is on file. She said Governor Haley has declared a state of emergency and
19 ordered an evacuation. She has closed Horry County schools for the next three days. In light of this,
20 because the storm (Hurricane Matthew) is capable of sustained winds as high as 100 miles per hour, the
21 town under authority granted it under state and local law may authorize whatever measures necessary to
22 respond appropriately to the emergency, and request that state and federal resources be mobilized in
23 response to this hazardous weather event. In the event of a state of emergency, which one has now
24 been declared, or disaster declared and it has been, approval of an expenditure or appropriation for debt
25 incurred or use of fund balance, fund balance reserve, or transfers from other funds will be by resolution
26 of Town Council through a telephone vote. This spending approval shall not require a supplemental
27 budget ordinance or budget ordinance amendment. All kinds of extraordinary things can happen; there
28 is an evacuation. She hoped that the councilmembers would leave town, and if she needs to authorize
29 funds for whatever reasons for whatever happens, she would need to do so by telephone conference to
30 authorize any expenditure over her limit of \$10,000. If council adopts the ordinance, it will be effective
31 immediately, because Governor Haley has already declared a state of emergency. Adopting the
32 ordinance will enable staff to work more effectively to protect the town.

33
34 Mr. Stevens moved to adopt Ordinance #16-0835 as presented. Mr. Johnson second.

35
36 Mr. Courtney said his family and he went through Hurricane Sandy. Residents would like to know
37 what the procedures are to get back into town once they evacuate their homes. He heard during a
38 hurricane preparation meeting that the planning building and zoning staff would check each house prior
39 to residents being allowed to reenter. That concerned him, because it took three weeks to get out of his
40 house, and months passed before the houses were inspected after Hurricane Sandy. Ms. Fellner
41 explained that the town has an agreement with multiple inspectors. There will be a whole crew of
42 inspectors checking houses for damage, not just our planning, building, and zoning staff. Mr. Courtney
43 said many people do not want to leave their homes, because it might be months before homes are
44 inspected. He proceeded to explain the conditions in New York after Hurricane Sandy: airports were
45 closed, the temperatures were 38-degrees, it took three weeks to get generators and water delivered to
46 the community; looting and burglaries occurred in the vacated homes and stores; the infrastructure was
47 completely wiped out, and police officers were sitting on the roofs of their patrol cars because of
48 flooding. Mr. Courtney said the department directors need to be aware of the possible problems and
49 work on them. He asked Chief Otte if he understood what he was talking about. Chief Otte indicated
50 yes. Mr. Courtney thought it was very important that the message be sent out, because many people in
51 his community will not leave. Their biggest fear is returning to find their belongings have been taken.
52 Ms. Fellner said for those people that did not want to leave, they could pick up a wrist band for
53 identification. Mr. Courtney said his question as far as what would be done to ensure the town was
54 secured was not answered.

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56 Mr. Stevens said during Hurricane Hugo in 1989 the National Guard was called in by the
57 Governor. They were stationed at every entrance to the county and each municipality beginning at the
58 waterway. If you did not have a local identification, you were not allowed to pass. The Guard was here
59 for about four weeks. Ms. Fellner said Governor Haley has already activated the Guard. Mr. Stevens said
60 the National Guard will be here, and he was sure they would do a good job protecting the town.

61
62 Mr. Johnson concurred with Mr. Stevens. There were no problems with looting during the
63 aftermath of Hurricane Hugo. The community came together and looked out for each other. This is a
64 small community and you look out for your neighbors and their houses, whether you are here or not. If
65 you do evacuate, there is a procedure to follow to reenter. A recommendation will be made about how
66 far inland you should go. You have the choice of staying or going. During Hurricane Hugo in 1989, the
67 reentry was very well organized, and he had no doubt it would be the same this time, if there is such
68 destruction as there was during Hugo. Ms. Fellner said the process was streamlined for reentry. If you
69 show your local license, you will be allowed to reenter. We all know this is no easy thing. It is a process;
70 the lines are long, and each license has to be read, because they do not want to let people who want to
71 abuse the system or looters back in.

72
73 Mayor Childs said during the last hurricane, there were very strict. If you did not have
74 identification to show you had property in town, you could not get in. That was years back, and things
75 have certainly changed for the better since then. I hope all councilmembers have their identification
76 cards. Ms. Fellner said they should. Mayor Childs said if not, go to the fire department to get one.

77
78 Mr. Courtney said the population has grown since Hurricane Hugo. There is only one way out of
79 town; Highway 544 to Highway 501. Everyone knows how hard it is to travel, especially on Saturdays
80 during the summer. During Hurricane Sandy, the biggest obstacle was reentry; it took weeks. The
81 process was way too long. And by that time, there was a lot of damage done to the homes. He just
82 wanted everyone to keep this in mind, and understand where his comments were coming from. People
83 that are here do not want to know about expenditures. They want to know why and how they can
84 reenter the town. That is a big concern for his community. It is not about leaving; it is how long will
85 take to get back to their homes. Ms. Fellner said there was no way to determine how long it would take
86 to reenter. It depends on the scope of the event. It might be three hours, three days, or three weeks.
87 The storm could turn into a Category 3, hit the town straight on and decimate Ocean Boulevard. We just
88 don't know. Right now, in Horry County we are only evacuating Zone A, which is from the Ocean to
89 Highway 17 Business. Should things change, there are several upcoming telephone conferences, and
90 staff is monitoring the activity. Two notebooks were shown to councilmembers that are the Horry County
91 and Town of Surfside Beach emergency operations manuals, which were written over the past four years.
92 Staff is very familiar with the plans, and are following the timetables, including the checklist to ensure
93 nothing is missing. She thought staff was very well prepared for this event. The disaster debris company
94 will be here to assist with clean up, if needed. There is no way to state what the time frame for reentry
95 would be. The storm could change in a few hours.

96
97 Mr. Johnson added that if there is a state of emergency issued, it is out of our hands. We have
98 no control of many things, including reentry.

99
100 Mr. Pellegrino asked if a discussion was held about cutting off power. Ms. Fellner said the power
101 grid is controlled by the fire chief, police chief, and her. The determination can only be made by all three
102 agreeing and a call will be made to Santee Cooper. Before power is cut off, a compelling reason must be
103 identified, and Town Council would be notified prior to the decision being made.

104
105 Mr. Ott said everyone should understand that if they do stay, there is a time you can no longer
106 leave. Ms. Fellner said emergency services, including ambulance, fire, and police, are not available once
107 sustained winds reach 45 miles per hour.

108
109 Ms. Samples thought it would be safe to encourage our residents to begin their evacuation
110 sooner rather than later. They certainly do not have to wait until tomorrow. Operationally, next week
111 we begin court. There are people who are on jury duty and planning to show up Monday morning. Have

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112 any decisions be made about court? Ms. Fellner believed it would be business as usual by Monday
113 morning, so long as this is not a horrific event. Right now, it is business as usual.
114

115 Mayor Childs said it would hard to get out of town. You cannot get out of town on a regular
116 Saturday. This event does put a lot of importance on the SELL (Southern Evacuation Life Line) project.
117 If things go the way they look like, I would encourage everyone to contact their State Legislators to get
118 the SELL project going. It has been held up for legal reasons for a long time, but that would be another
119 way to evacuate the coast area.
120

121 Mr. Courtney believed it was important for Town Council to meet after the event to assess
122 damage in town, if the hurricane does hit. Ms. Fellner said with your council identification you will be
123 allowed to reenter. She believed that council should meet to assess damage.
124

125 Mr. Stevens said the Weather Channel is anticipating Hurricane Matthew crossing the South
126 Carolina/North Carolina border to have winds at 105 miles per hour, which is a Category 2 storm. That
127 does not mean that will happen. It could be a Category 4. Ms. Fellner said every other municipality and
128 Horry County are bringing similar ordinances to declare an emergency to their respective councils. She
129 did not want to be in a situation where a decision had to be made, and it could not be made by a
130 telephone conference, because the emergency was not declared.
131

132 Mr. Courtney said it was very important for Town Council to meet to assess damages after the
133 event. Council is the key to get the information out to the community. The problem before was no
134 communication. We need to make sure the citizens get the information they need and that it is correct.
135 Ms. Fellner said absolutely.
136

137 All voted in favor to adopt Ordinance 16-0835. **MOTION CARRIED.**
138

139 **B. Resolution #16-174, Declaration of a State of Emergency for the Town of Surfside**
140 **Beach, Administrator Fellner.** Ms. Fellner presented the resolution, a copy of which is on file. She
141 explained that Resolution #16-174 was to declare the State of Emergency, and would be sent to
142 Governor Haley, and to the Federal Emergency Management Agency when the town applies for
143 reimbursements.
144

145 Mr. Stevens moved to adopt Resolution #16-174. Mr. Johnson second. All voted in favor.
146 **MOTION CARRIED.**
147

148 Ms. Fellner said there would be many things happening in the next few days to prepare for the
149 storm. We all have emergency plans to go by. If councilmembers have questions prior to leaving town,
150 please call. Mayor Childs will be in constant contact with her.
151

152 **4. TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS**
153

154 Ms. Samples: Thank you to staff for pulling this together so quickly, and everyone, please,
155 please, be safe.
156

157 Mr. Stevens: I just want to tell everybody I've been here all my life. I've been through every
158 hurricane from Hazel right on up to this coming one. Here's the thing you've got to think about, you
159 don't know what a storm will do. It's a Category 4. They say it will be a Category 2, but we don't know
160 what it's going to do. Ed Piotrowski (WPDE Meteorologist) can't even tell us what it's going to do. So,
161 use a little bit of caution. If you feel like you need to leave, leave, because there's going to be bumper to
162 bumper traffic out there. You need to get out of here, if you want to go west, as Horace Greeley would
163 say. Thank you for coming out. Thank you to staff for getting on top of this.
164

165 Mr. Ott: May the Lord and Savior be merciful to my town. Thank you.
166

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167 Mr. Courtney: I want to thank everybody for coming out. I want you to understand where I'm
168 coming from. I think communication is very, very important. During the last rain event, communication
169 was poor. He wanted to make sure phones were being answered, so communication could be sent to the
170 public so they would know when they can get back in. Not knowing what is happening at your home is
171 very frightening. That is why many people will not leave. I urge you to leave. Going through Hurricane
172 Sandy was not fun. We went three months without power; it took three weeks to get my family on a
173 flight to come to Surfside to our second home that became our permanent residence. My concerns are
174 leaving and getting back in. Hopefully, the storm will pass the town. God bless. Thank you.

175
176 Mr. Pellegrino: Thanks for coming. It's nice to see some concerned citizens. This is my first
177 evacuation. I've actually lived in the upstate a lot, so I always had people coming up to my house. I
178 don't really know all that much about the process. Please take heed of the warnings, and get to safe
179 ground. God bless.

180
181 Mr. Johnson: This is a good reason to have I-73 and the SELL road, as well. Thank you for
182 coming out. Be blessed and be safe. Thank you.

183
184 Mayor Childs: Thank you, Ms. Fellner, for all your hard work, and I know you will be busy,
185 slammed for the next few days. There's no doubt about that. I would urge anybody that is going to
186 leave, I'd leave right now as soon as you get out the door. The sooner you leave, you'll beat that traffic.
187 We all know what traffic is like around here without a storm. Good luck to everybody. God bless.

188
189 **5. ADJOURNMENT**

190
191 Mr. Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:25 p.m. Mr. second. All voted in favor.
192 **MOTION CARRIED.**

193 Prepared and submitted by,

194
195 Approved: October 11, 2016
196 _____
197 Debra E. Herrmann, CMC, Town Clerk

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199 _____
200 Robert F. Childs, III, Mayor

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202 _____
203 Ron Ott, Mayor Pro Tempore

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206 Timothy T. Courtney, Town Council

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209 Mark L. Johnson, Town Council

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212 David L. Pellegrino, Town Council

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214 _____
215 Julie M. Samples, Town Council

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217 _____
218 Randle M. Stevens, Town Council

219 Clerk's Note: This document constitutes action minutes of the meeting that was digitally recorded, and
220 not intended to be a complete transcript. Appointments to hear recordings may be made with the town
221 clerk; a free copy of the audio will be given to you provided you bring a flash drive. In accordance with
222 FOIA §30-4-80(A) and (E), meeting notice and the agenda were distributed to local media and interested
223 parties via the town's email subscription list. The agenda was posted on the entry door at Town Council
224 Chambers. Meeting notice was also posted on the town website at www.surfsidebeach.org and the
225 marquee.