



Town of Hilton Head Island
TOWN COUNCIL
Tuesday, August 17, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.
MEETING MINUTES

Present from Town Council: John J. McCann, *Mayor*; Bill Harkins, *Mayor Pro-Tempore*; Tamara Becker, Alex Brown, Tom Lennox, Glenn Stanford, *Town Council Members*

Absent from Town Council: David Ames, *Town Council Member*

Present from Town Staff: Marc Orlando, *Town Manager*; Josh Gruber, *Deputy Town Manager*; Shawn Colin, *Advisor to the Town Manager*; Angie Stone, *Assistant Town Manager*; John Troyer, *Finance Director*; April Akins, *Revenue Services Manager*; Chris Yates, *Interim Director of Community Development*; Cindaia Ervin, *Finance Administrative Assistant*; Krista Wiedmeyer, *Town Clerk*

1. Call to Order

Mayor McCann called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. FOIA Compliance: Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island.

3. Roll Call

Roll was taken by the Town Clerk, and attendance was confirmed. Mr. Ames was absent, but excused.

4. Pledge to the Flag

5. Invocation – Reverend General Hay

Reverend General Hay delivered the invocation

6. Approval of the Minutes

a. Town Council Regular Meeting – July 20, 2021

Mr. Harkins moved to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Stanford seconded. The motion carried by a vote of 6-0

Mayor McCann moved to modify the agenda, moving agenda item 10(a) Consideration of Enacting a Local State of Emergency in the Town of Hilton Head Island, to the top of the agenda. Mr. Harkins seconded. The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

10 New Business

a. Consideration of Enacting a Local State of Emergency in the Town of Hilton Head Island

Mayor McCann stated that on Monday, September 16, 2021 at 9:00 a.m., he signed the Declaration of a Local State of Emergency. He said the item on today's agenda is for the Town Council to ratify said State of Emergency. The Mayor went on to say that the State of Emergency allows him certain powers that without it he could not do. For example, authorizing the Town Manager to take any necessary steps to protect Town staff and citizens coming to Town Hall and to hold public meeting virtually. He noted that at the prior day's meeting, the State of Emergency allowed for one of the Town Council members to participate remotely since he was ill. Mayor McCann stated that at no time was there going to be a discussion or consideration of enacting an ordinance which would require face coverings throughout the municipal limits. He stated this several times before inviting Jeremy Clark, CEO of Hilton Head Regional Health, to the podium to address Town Council about the status of the Hospital.

Mr. Clark stated that the medical staff and 1200 colleagues since the beginning of the pandemic have received great leadership from the Town and Chamber, who helped create a safer environment for residents, workers and visitors. He reported on the number of patients currently admitted to the hospital for treatment of COVID-19. He said the numbers have significantly increased over the past three weeks and continue to climb. Mr. Clark said the majority of the patients being treated have not been completely vaccinated and are under the age of 65. He expressed the importance of the vaccine and asked the Town to continue to support and stress this message throughout the community. Mr. Clark discussed the numerous locations where someone can receive the vaccine and reiterated its importance. He also talked about receiving the booster and the importance for those who are immunocompromised to get this shot. Upon the conclusion of his report to Town Council, Mr. Clark answered several questions posed to him from Council. Including vaccination rates, the locations throughout the community where citizens can be tested, and others.

7. Report of the Town Manager

Mr. Orlando thanked Mr. Clark again for his report and update. He stated for clarity purposes, as a result of the declared State of Emergency, he had instituted the requirement of wearing a face covering at Town Administrative Buildings. He said these buildings include Town Hall, Fire Rescue Headquarters and Facilities Management. Mr. Orlando said that he has a duty to protect his staff and help them protect themselves during the pandemic. He said along with the face covering requirement, there will be a pivot to virtual meetings. Mr. Orlando concluded and invited Angie Stone, Assistant Town Manager, to provide an update on the community response the Town is currently taking.

Ms. Stone said that like most others, the Town was caught off guard by the recent surge in cases due to the Delta Variant. She said in correspondence with the Town's Emergency Manager, there is a continued effort to monitor the data. Ms. Stone reported that the Town has reached out to DHEC to see about a combined effort for testing and vaccine clinics.

An unidentified citizen approached the podium to address the Mayor and Town Council about his concern that a mandate for face coverings was being discussed and passed at the meeting. Mayor McCann asked the citizen to take his seat, that there was not going to be a discussion or consideration of enacting a face covering ordinance.

Mayor McCann requested a motion for Town Council's endorsement and final ratification of the Local State of Emergency. Mr. Harkins made said motion, with Mr. Stanford seconding. With no further discussion, the motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

Due to the disruption of the meeting, at 4:25 p.m., Mayor McCann called for a recess of the meeting.

Returning to the dais at 4:40 p.m., Mayor McCann called the meeting back to order. Letting the audience know that he would be taking public comment, but there would be no further discussion about enacting a face covering ordinance and asked citizens to refrain from the continued discussion.

Joe Ryan: addressed the Mayor and Town Council to request that they not consider enacting a face covering mandate. He said that he nor anyone else would comply with such a mandate because it is a threat against their civil liberties. He also said the he was opposed to meetings returning to virtual.

Melissa Toro: addressed the Mayor and Town Council to not take away her Constitutional Rights by enacting a mask mandate. She said she moved from New York to South Carolina to be free.

Iris Shedlock: addressed the Mayor and Town Council reporting that the Corona Virus was actually computer generated and that variants do not exist. She also reported that she was not happy about the Town pushing the use of the vaccine.

Marty Baumgarner: addressed the Mayor and Town Council, stating that the reason everyone is fussing about the mask mandate today is because the Town unilaterally declared a State of Emergency without proper consideration with the citizens.

Lynn Greeley: addressed the Mayor and Town Council asking them to review the facts and requested that this no longer be called the pandemic of the unvaccinated. She reported statistics from the Israeli Health Administration, stating that over half of those infected with COVID-19 are in fact vaccinated. She went on to say that the civil liberties of the citizens where being taken away.

Brenda Dean: addressed the Mayor and Town Council on behalf of her kids. She stated that she has not seen the science that requires kids to wear a mask on a hot bus. She asked for what Council's reasoning is for requiring children to wear masks on a bus is. She said that they went the wrong way going after the children in the schools.

Keith Osborn: addressed the Mayor and Town Council to say he is not in favor of the vaccine or a mask mandate. He said there are other alternative therapeutics that work to combat the virus better.

Angie Hutchins: addressed the Mayor and Town Council reporting that she moved to the area last year from North Carolina so that she could have a fee place to live, breathe and function. She stated that she feels there is a lot of anger because she and other residents are being censored from speaking the truth.

Charles Kellen: addressed the Mayor and Town Council about the face coverings being ineffective, further stating that face masks should not be mandated and citizens should be allowed to make their own personal choice.

Deborah Stevenson: addressed the Mayor and Town Council stating that she had read several peer reviews which state that face coverings are ineffective for preventing the spread of this virus. She continued by stating that the vaccine is experimental and does not keep people from getting sick.

Joshua Martinez: addressed the Mayor and Town Council stating that he is a new resident of South Carolina, having moved from Pennsylvania. He said the reason he moved to South Carolina was to live in a free state. He also said he has been speaking to members of the local delegation about the validity of the vaccine and masks and about how neither work.

Kathy Bielinski: addressed the Mayor and Town Council about her work she used to do in the pharmaceutical industry running and managing clinical trials like the ones for the COVID-19 vaccine. She said that in her experience, she has never seen a clinical trial have less information than those of the vaccines. She said that the information that is provided is not enough data to show the validity of the vaccine.

Jim Stevenson: addressed the Mayor and Town Council in his capacity of a rocket scientist, noting that he had worked in the nuclear weapons industry. He stated that he feels the vaccine is bologna and all a big lie. He said people should be allowed to make their own choice to be vaccinated.

Ellie Short (note, unable to clearly hear name of citizen): addressed the Mayor and Town Council asking why the Town was pushing or forcing a vaccine that doesn't work on citizens.

Christos (note, unable to clearly hear name of citizen): addressed the Mayor and Town Council to state that the technology for the vaccine is experimental and that there isn't a doctor that can deny this information. He said that there is no long-term study to show that the vaccine is anything but experimental and the Town should not be providing information on it.

Citizen – name inaudible: addressed the Mayor and Town Council stating that given the narrative being pushed, the Town should take some element of liability.

Steven Schwartz: addressed the Mayor and Town Council stating that he had called the Governor's office earlier and was assured by a representative of the Governor that he issued an Executive Order forbidding local governments from issuing mass mandates.

Arlene (note, citizen did not state last name): addressed the Mayor and Town Council stating that she had recently moved back to the area and that this was not the area she moved away from. She said as a dental hygienist in a pediatric dentist's office, they found that the masks were terrifying to children. She said when asking a teacher to wear a mask, you are just scaring the students.

Kelly Hughes: addressed the Mayor and Town Council about the difficulties masks cause for those who are hearing impaired or born with a hearing disability. She said as a

lip reader, not being able to see peoples lips causes a lot of trouble for her as she can no longer communicate effectively.

Chris Ruffner: addressed the Mayor and Town Council stating that every time the Town invokes an emergency order, everyone thinks they are going to die and that it makes no sense to continue to take such measures.

Cherry Norris: addressed the Mayor and Town Council stating that she felt like what was happening was part of a playbook. She discussed many other matters currently taking place throughout the world, noting that communities are divided. She stated that she supports and validates everything that was previously said.

Mayor McCann closed the public comment portion by reiterating that a mask ordinance was not being discussed, only the State of Emergency. He called for a motion to reaffirm the ratification of the State of Emergency. Mr. Harkins moved to reaffirm, with Mr. Stanford seconding. The motion carried by a vote of 5-0-1, Mrs. Becker abstaining.

Several citizens within the audience spoke from their seats, not allowing for the meeting to be brought back to order.

8. Adjournment

The Mayor called for a motion to table the remainder of the meeting for another day and adjourn the meeting. By unanimous consent the meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Approved: September 21, 2021

Krista M. Wiedmeyer, Town Clerk

John J. McCann, Mayor