



# TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

## **EMERGENCY MEETING**

**October 6, 2016**

The Kure Beach Town Council held an Emergency Meeting on Thursday, October 6, 2016 for the purpose of discussing and deciding when and if a State of Emergency should be declared in anticipation of Hurricane Matthew. Notice of the meeting was posted on the Town's bulletin board and website on October 5, 2016 at 11:50 a.m. The town attorney was present and there was a quorum of council members.

## **COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mayor Emilie Swearingen  
Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Craig Bloszinsky  
Commissioner David Heglar  
Commissioner Joseph Whitley  
Commissioner Jim Dugan

## **STAFF PRESENT**

Building Inspector – John Batson  
Finance Officer – Arlen Copenhaver  
Public Works Director – Sonny Beeker  
Police Chief – Mike Bowden  
Fire Department – Hunter Ford  
Deputy Town Clerk – Nancy Hewitt  
Town Clerk – Nancy Avery

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Swearingen called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm, delivered the invocation, and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. She asked the Emergency Operations Coordinator, Commissioner David Heglar, to share his information with the public.

Commissioner Heglar said that New Hanover County declared a State of Emergency effective 12:00 p.m. today, in anticipation of Hurricane Matthew. He showed pictures of the current storm track and explained its implications for the town. He said, as of now, it looks like the storm is going to create a huge rain event for Kure Beach, and Public Works has been working on all of the storm water systems to make sure they're open. He said they have rented six additional pumps that are in place, with three additional pumps being brought in by tomorrow. He said that the town can also expect stronger than tropical storm force winds. He said with the ground saturation and the expected wind, there is a high likelihood the town will lose power sometime during the storm. He explained those factors could impact the town's ability to move water, which is why the town rented generators to be placed at the lift stations to make sure there's not another sewage event like the one that occurred recently. He said the department heads have been making preparations all week and report they are ready for the storm. Public Works crews will be here Friday night and all day/night Saturday and Sunday to deal with water issues. He



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said that the Police and Fire departments have increased their staffing for the storm event. He asked council to review the declaration for a State of Emergency he is recommending, to begin on Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m. He reviewed the declaration stating he is recommending a voluntary evacuation since he doesn't feel that we're anywhere near a mandatory evacuation according to the town's emergency plan. He said he recommends a curfew if power goes down during the nighttime since it's dangerous for people to be walking around town with no lights, and people don't like others walking around their houses when it's dark.

Mayor Swearingen said she agrees with the declaration, including the voluntary evacuation.

Commissioner Heglar said that, if there are a lot of people in Kure Beach on Saturday night and the town loses power for an extended period of time, Public Works may not be able to keep up with the full town's use of the sewer system while generators are powering the lift stations. He explained to the public the way the sewer system in Kure Beach works and the strain put on the system during an extended power outage.

MPT Bloszinsky asked what a three-foot surge of water could do to the town's storm water pipes that are on the beach.

Commissioner Heglar said that, if the storm surge plugs up the storm water pipes on the beach, the town will see ponding or even significant flooding on Route 421, since there is nowhere else for the storm water to go. He explained the scenarios of different size storm surges during low and high tides. He added that, if the storm doesn't turn out to sea as currently forecast, the town will probably sustain significant beach erosion. He asked the residents to clean up their property and secure it the way they feel is necessary and then make a decision on whether they want to stay or leave the island. He suggested the public not wait until Saturday to decide to evacuate since, if the storm track changes for the worse, the wind fields will make it difficult to drive a vehicle, especially on a road crowded with others who made the late decision to leave the island.

MPT Bloszinsky said that council can make the decision now to declare the State of Emergency effective tomorrow at 12:00 p.m. but, if anything changes, they can also change the declaration. He said he is in agreement with the current declaration, as written.

MOTION – Commissioner Whitley moved approve the declaration of the State of Emergency for the Town of Kure Beach, as presented, to go into effect at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, October 7, 2016.

SECOND – MPT Bloszinsky

VOTE – Unanimous



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Commissioner Dugan told the public that, if they start having problems with their water, Public Works may not be able to help them right away since the crews will be working on areas that are the deepest and creating the most damage. He recommended everyone keeping their cell phones charged.

Mayor Swearingen said that Warren Lee from the county's EOC has urged residents and guests to stay off the beach on Friday and Saturday. She said the town can't afford sending its emergency workers out to rescue them while they are trying to work on everything else in preparation for the storm.

Council took questions from the public. Below, are the questions and answers:

- At what wind speed does the Snow's Cut Bridge close? At 45 mph sustained winds.
- Is the rumor true that, when the bridge closes, Duke Energy cuts off the power? That is not true.
- At what point does the flooding become a problem for emergency services? The emergency trucks can get through the water on the roads, but if wind speeds sustain at 45mph, emergency crews will not be dispatched into the storm for emergencies.
- How much water on Route 421 would be considered "flooding?" One inch, or more of water.

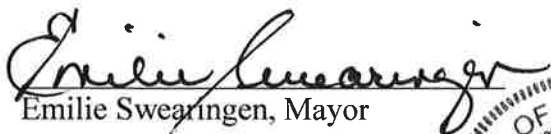
## ADJOURNMENT

MOTION – Commissioner Heglar move to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND – Commissioner Whitley

VOTE – Unanimous

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

  
Emilie Swearingen, Mayor

  
ATTEST: Nancy Hewitt, CMC, NCCMC  
Deputy Town Clerk



NOTE: These are action minutes reflecting items considered and actions taken by Council. These minutes are not a transcript of the meeting.