



**TOWN COUNCIL
Special Meeting
Cape Charles Civic Center, 500 Tazewell Avenue
September 4, 2025
6:00 PM**

At approximately 6:00 p.m. Mayor Adam Charney, having established a quorum, called to order the Special Meeting of the Cape Charles Town Council. In addition to Mayor Charney, in attendance were Vice Mayor Buchholz, Councilmen Butta, Grossman and Newman, and Councilwomen Ashworth and Holloway. Staff in attendance were Town Manager Rick Keuroglian, Project Manager Bob Panek, Treasurer Marion Sofield, Assistant to the Town Manager Pam Endlein, and Town Clerk Libby Hume. There were 14 members of the public in attendance.

A moment of silence was observed followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY, EXCLUDING TOWN HALL TOPIC: (3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER)

There were no comments to be heard, nor any comments received in writing prior to the meeting.

SPECIAL MEETING ORDER OF BUSINESS:

A. *Contract Award for Harbor Boardwalk Reconstruction, Phase 2:*

Project Manager Bob Panek stated that the evaluation of harbor capital assets by our marine engineering firm, Langley & McDonald, indicated that the boardwalk which was built on top of the 4 bulkhead at the outer harbor needed continuing repair to extend its service life. A subsequent inspection revealed that much of the decking, supporting stringers and battens were rotted and a three-phase plan was developed to reconstruct the boardwalk with pressure treated lumber rated for ground contact and synthetic decking. The first phase of 139 linear feet near the bath house was completed this spring. The second phase of 380 linear feet was included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget and would go to the west end of the bulkhead. The last phase on the west side of the bulkhead was planned for FY 2027. An invitation for bids (IFB) was issued on July 18, 2025 and four bids were received ranging from \$120K to \$184K. The low bid was Carolina Marine Structures which had the appropriate state contractor's license. They successfully completed many projects in the Hampton Roads area and were recommended by Langley & McDonald. The FY 2026 budget included \$129K for this project.

There were questions as follows: i) Vice Mayor Buchholz asked when the boardwalk was built. Bob Panek stated that it was at least 15 years old, adding that he doubted that the proper grade of pressure treated lumber was used for the original construction and there were areas where the boardwalk had collapsed. The IFB specified the use of ground contact pressure treated lumber; ii) Councilwoman Ashworth asked when the construction would begin and the projected duration. Bob Panek stated that work would begin one month after contract award, after the materials arrived and would take about one to two months. The first phase of 139 linear feet took less than a month to complete.

Motion made by Councilman Grossman, seconded by Councilman Butta, to authorize the Town Manager to award the contract to Carolina Marine Structures in the amount of \$120K with a contingency reserve of \$9K should additional damage be discovered during reconstruction. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

TOWN MANAGER COMMENTS:

Town Manager Rick Keuroglan commented as follows:

- i) He thanked everyone who was in attendance this evening, adding that it was always great to see the public participating, even if it was just to listen.
- ii) He asked Council if there were any questions related to his weekly report. There were no questions. He added that in a future report, he wanted to include information regarding public works projects, so the public was aware of the status of each project. Councilman Butta asked that an update be provided regarding demolition by neglect, adding that Council had asked for this update for August but did not receive it. Town Clerk Libby Hume responded that Katie Nunez was working on the presentation for the September 18th Council meeting.
- iii) He read an email that he received from David Gomer, adding that he needed to hear the things noted by Mr. Gomer and he wanted Town Council to hear it as well. He viewed this as an opportunity to work out solutions and an opportunity to show accountability on the Town's part to get things resolved. He responded to Mr. Gomer thanking him for taking the time to write his letter and informed him that he took a walk along the beach and took inventory of the fishing pier and landing by Tazewell Avenue. He noticed a lot of broken boards and was really disappointed and horrified of the condition. He took pictures and videos and met with the public works crew leader and gave him an action list. We could replace the boards immediately. He created a list with action points and sent it to the public works director, Ralph Bowen, and we would meet to discuss it when Ralph returns to the office.

Councilwoman Holloway stated that several years ago, she and Vice Mayor Buchholz suggested evaluating the public works staff to see if we had adequate staffing and whether we had the right people in the right positions. She had met with Mr. Gomer and was glad that he submitted his letter. The public works crew worked so hard and had so much to do but we needed to provide direction with expectations.

Rick Keuroglan continued by stating that the summer had been really busy and things were starting to slow down some so it was the perfect time to switch gears and tackle these other areas.

There was much discussion as follows: i) Councilman Butta thanked Claudette Lajoie and the members of the Civic League for the work done on the Civic Center building pulling out vines, etc. The Town needed to maintain our facilities. If we needed more people, we needed to hire more; ii) Councilman Newman stated that he had previously asked whether the public works department was fully staffed. It was evident that the department was not fully staffed. He was not throwing anyone under the bus because he knew Public Works worked really hard. He previously sent a list of simple maintenance issues to John Hozey. There were too many embarrassing things that had been allowed to happen. He thanked Claudette Lajoie and the Civic League for their efforts to assist the Town. The issues were not all on Town property. He cited the Post Office and other buildings throughout the town. We needed to put dollars where they were needed and mobilize support where we could. We just approved \$120K to repair the harbor boardwalk, but where were the dollars for these other things? He expressed his gratitude to Mr. Gomer for submitting his letter; iii) Vice Mayor Buchholz added that he had spoken to Mr. Gomer and recommended that he write a letter to the town manager; iv) Rick Keuroglan added that the beach pavilion was also in bad condition; v) Councilwoman Ashworth stated that it seemed that most of the items discussed would be part of the beachfront master plan which was a long-term project, but we would not let things deteriorate any further. She suggested allotting funding and getting the manpower to repair things versus watching them fall apart; vi) Councilwoman Holloway added that the Town was always working on big projects, but we also needed to

maintain what we had; vii) Rick Keuroglan stated that we would solve these issues together; viii) Councilman Butta stated that more trash cans were needed along Mason Avenue, especially by Brown Dog Ice Cream. Councilwoman Holloway commented that the issue was not the number of trash cans, but that they needed to be emptied more frequently.

MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMENTS:

There were no additional comments.

Motion made by Councilwoman Holloway, seconded by Councilman Grossman, to adjourn the Town Council Special Meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Mayor Charney

Town Clerk

**September 4, 2025 Town Council Special Meeting
Information Provided in Writing**

Letter from David Gomer

Hi Rick,

Welcome!

I've been walking the beachfront with my dog every morning for years, and while I love this daily routine, I've increasingly noticed how neglected the area has become. While I'm not someone who typically complains, the lack of attention to what is arguably our town's focal point has become impossible to ignore. It makes me question whether Public Works has adequate oversight, direction, or supervision. Yes, there's Ralph, who may be in charge, but the state of things suggests a serious lack of organization and care.

Let me paint a picture of the issues I see regularly:

- Broken stand-up paddleboards and chairs left near trash cans for weeks.
- Blocks of concrete and debris in the surf.
- Hazardous conditions on the LOVE beach pier, including broken, splintering boards and exposed screws that could injure someone's feet.
- Sand covering streets and steps, creating safety hazards for residents and visitors alike.
- Empty dog waste bag dispensers.
- Unrepaired holes in the concrete boardwalk that have gone untouched for over six months.

These are just a few examples, but they illustrate a pattern of neglect that is both frustrating and disheartening. I've lived in Cape Charles for 24 years, raised two wonderful kids here, and watched the town evolve over time. I was deeply involved in real estate on the Shore and have always cared about this community. However, I've reached a point where my morning walks—once a source of joy—now leave me frustrated and questioning the direction of our town's maintenance efforts.

Public Works seems to have plenty of expensive equipment at its disposal, but I wonder if there's a clear plan or any accountability for its use. As a business owner myself, I'd wager there's no organized list of projects or daily tasks guiding their operations. Instead, it feels like a disjointed, "pick-up football game in the park" approach—hardly what one would expect from a town department responsible for such an important asset.

I recently saw a roll off which indicates they plan to "clean" the beach soon, but honestly, this feels like a futile exercise. The last time they cleaned the beach, the machine mostly collected sand and seaweed, with very little trash—because there isn't that much trash left on the beach to begin with.

Before the town spends time and money on proposed redesigns or reimagined versions of the beachfront, I strongly urge you to focus on resolving these long-standing maintenance issues. Improving the existing infrastructure and addressing safety concerns should be the first priority. Without fixing the basics, any new project will only serve as a shiny veneer masking deeper problems.

I urge you, the town council, and the mayor to take a walk along the beachfront in the morning and ask yourselves some critical questions:

- Do I feel safe walking on the boardwalk, stairs, or concrete areas?
- Would I want my grandmother or my children navigating these conditions?
- Is this the image we want to present to visitors and residents alike?

One moment I'll never forget was seeing two parents carry and push their legless son in a wheelchair through the sand piled up on the dune boardwalk crossing so he could see one of our beautiful sunsets. It was heartbreaking. I apologized to them, feeling ashamed that they had to endure such a struggle. Similarly, I've seen mothers trying to push strollers through the sand-covered boardwalk—another unnecessary challenge caused by poor maintenance.

Public Works seems capable of emptying the trash cans on a regular basis, but beyond that, I wonder: can they truly address the bigger issues?

I hope you'll consider these observations seriously and join me in advocating for meaningful improvements. Our beachfront deserves better, and so do the residents and visitors who cherish it.

Thank you for your time,

Priority Issues & Action Steps

1. Abandoned Items

Issue: Paddleboards, chairs, and other gear left near trash cans for weeks

Action:

- Implement weekly sweeps for abandoned items
- Designate a temporary holding zone before disposal
- Add signage discouraging gear abandonment

2. Debris In Surf Zone

Issue: Concrete blocks and hazardous materials in the water

Action:

- Conduct shoreline inspections twice monthly
- Coordinate safe removal with Public Works
- Document and share cleanup progress

3. Fishing Pier and Tazewell Landing Pier Safety Hazards

Issue: Splintering boards and exposed screws

Action:

- Complete full pier safety audit within 7 days
- Prioritize urgent repairs
- Post temporary warning signage until resolved

4. Sand Accumulation

Issue: Sand covering streets, steps, and boardwalk crossings

Action:

- Increase frequency of sand removal
- Assign staff to monitor high-traffic areas
- Explore low-profile sand barriers near walkways

5. Dog Waste Bag Dispensers

Issue: Empty or neglected dispensers

Action:

- Create weekly refill checklist
- Assign responsibility to specific staff
- Track usage and adjust inventory for high-demand zones

6. Boardwalk Surface Damage

Issue: Unrepaired holes in concrete for over six months

Action:

- Identify and mark damaged areas immediately
- Schedule repairs within 30 days
- Use temporary patching if full repair is delayed

Oversight & Accountability

1. Task Scheduling

Action:

- Develop daily/weekly maintenance schedule
- Use shared checklist or whiteboard for tracking
- Review progress during weekly staff meetings

2. Visual Documentation

Action:

- Take before-and-after photos of maintenance work
- Share updates on town website and social media
- Encourage residents to report issues via online form (Report-a-Concern)

3. Leadership Walkthroughs

Action:

- Schedule monthly site visits with Public Works leadership and Town Manager
- Invite community members for feedback
- Use walkthroughs to update priorities and staffing

Community Engagement

1. Public Communication

Action:

- Acknowledge resident concerns publicly
- Share maintenance updates regularly
- Invite volunteers and civic groups for beautification efforts

Action Checklist

Addressing residents' concerns and improving safety, accessibility, and appearance of the beachfront

General Clean-Up & Oversight

Task	Action	Responsible Party	Timeline	Status	Completion %
Remove abandoned beach items (paddleboards, chairs)	Weekly sweep and disposal protocol	PW Crew	Immediate & ongoing		
Clear debris from surf zone (concrete blocks, trash)	Shoreline inspection and safe removal	PW Crew	Within 7 days		
Refill dog waste bag dispensers	Weekly restock checklist	PW Crew	Immediate & weekly		

Infrastructure Repairs

Task	Action	Responsible Party	Timeline	Status	Completion %
Inspect and repair Fishing pier: splintering boards, exposed screws	Full safety audit and urgent repairs	PW Crew	Audit within 7 days; repairs within 30 days		
Patch holes in concrete boardwalk	Identify, mark, and repair damaged areas	PW Crew	Mark immediately; repair within 30 days		
Remove sand from streets, steps, and boardwalk crossings	Increase frequency of sand clearing	PW Crew	Biweekly or after major weather events		

Planning & Accountability

Task	Action	Responsible Party	Timeline	Status	Completion %
Create daily/weekly task schedule	Assign recurring duties and track completion	PW Dir	Begin within 1 week		
Conduct monthly leadership walkthroughs	TM + PW Dir. site visits	Town Manager's Office	Monthly		
Document maintenance with photos	Before/after shots for transparency	PW staff	Ongoing		
Improve public communication	Share updates via website/ social media	Town Manager's Office	Weekly or as needed		

Community Engagement

Task	Action	Responsible Party	Timeline	Status	Completion %
Respond to resident concerns	Acknowledge feedback and outline actions	Town Manager	Immediate		
Invite volunteers for beautification	Partner with civic groups	Event's coordinator	Plan within 30 days		

General Clean-Up & Oversight

Task	Action	Responsible Party	Timeline	Status	Completion %
Remove abandoned beach items (paddleboards, chairs)	Weekly sweep and disposal protocol	Beach crew	Immediate & ongoing		
Clear debris from surf zone (concrete blocks, trash)	Shoreline inspection and safe removal	Maintenance team	Within 7 days		
Refill dog waste bag dispensers	Weekly restock checklist	Assigned staff	Immediate & weekly		

Infrastructure Repairs

Task	Action	Responsible Party	Timeline	Status	Completion %
Inspect and repair LOVE pier (splintering boards, exposed screws)	Full safety audit and urgent repairs	Facilities team	Audit within 7 days; repairs within 30 days		
Patch holes in concrete boardwalk	Identify, mark, and repair damaged areas	Concrete crew	Mark immediately; repair within 30 days		
Remove sand from streets, steps, and boardwalk crossings	Increase frequency of sand clearing	Street maintenance team	Biweekly or after major weather events		

Planning & Accountability

Task	Action	Responsible Party	Timeline	Status	Completion %
Create daily/weekly task schedule	Assign recurring duties and track completion	Public Works leadership	Begin within 1 week		
Conduct monthly leadership walkthroughs	Council + Public Works Director site visits	Town leadership	Monthly		
Document maintenance with photos	Before/after shots for transparency	Assigned staff	Ongoing		
Improve public communication	Share updates via website/social media	Town Manager's Office	Weekly or as needed		

Community Engagement

Task	Action	Responsible Party	Timeline	Status	Completion %
Respond to resident concerns	Acknowledge feedback and outline actions	Town Manager	Immediate		
Invite volunteers for beautification	Partner with civic groups	Community coordinator	Plan within 30 days		