

Town of Swansboro
Board of Commissioners
October 5, 2024, Special Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Mayor John Davis, Mayor Pro Tem William Justice, Commissioner Jeffrey Conaway, Commissioner Pat Turner, Commissioner Joseph Brown, and Commissioner Douglas Eckendorf.

Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Pledge

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am. Mayor Davis led the Pledge of Allegiance. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and/or take action on providing relief funding for recovery efforts in Western North Carolina.

The three options were presented for consideration for distributing relief funding:

- **Divide Funds Among Local Organizations:** Allocate the funds to the local organizations and these groups would then distribute the funds to their counterpart organizations or missions in the affected areas.
- **Direct Purchase and Shipment of Supplies:** Empower town staff to purchase supplies (e.g., via Amazon or Walmart.com) and ship them directly to specified addresses in the affected areas. This would require logistical coordination by town staff and consideration of items appropriate for shipping, avoiding heavy items like bottled water.
- **Send Funds to an External Coordinating Entity:** Send the funds to an external coordinating organization such as the Franklin County Sheriff's Department, which is working through the lieutenant governor's office. This option involved relying on external entities to manage and distribute the funds appropriately.

Attorney Rasberry emphasized strict reporting to ensure compliance and transparency. For the \$40,000 disaster relief allocation, he highlighted the importance of using organizations like the Rotary and Knights of Columbus to avoid legal issues with direct funding to churches, stressing the need for written agreements with detailed audit trails to meet federal and municipal regulations.

The board discussed providing a \$40,000 aid package for disaster relief efforts in Western North Carolina, allocating \$10,000 each to four local organizations. After discussing funding sources, Finance Director Johnson confirmed that the balance remaining in ARP funds was \$20,000, which included surplus or not used funds and \$15,600 that was allocated for the Visitor Center renovations. She shared that those funds could be reallocated for relief funds instead and that the scope of work for ARP fund usage could be updated/ revised.

On a motion by Commissioner Conway seconded by Commissioner Turner, allocating funds in the amount of \$40,000 split evenly between ARP funds and the unencumbered fund balance,

to provide relief funding for recovery efforts in Western North Carolina, was unanimously approved. The funds were to be distributed through groups within the Swansboro Baptist Church, Swansboro United Methodist Church, Swansboro Rotary Foundations and St. Mildred's Catholic Church, with an audit trail ensuring transparency.

John Hislop, president of the Swansboro Rotary Foundation shared that the fund distribution would be handled by purchasing essential items, such as baby products, food, water, and cleaning supplies, using streamlined processes of purchasing prepaid credit cards from First Citizen Bank. He additionally shared that a truck was leaving the next day with 16 pallets of goods, and that logistical challenges remain in transporting these supplies to affected areas.

Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Turner, the meeting adjourned at 11:43 am.