

Westbrook Council of Beach Association
Minutes
June 2, 2025

The Westbrook Council of Beach Association (WCOB) meeting was called to order by President Pat Marcarelli at 7:04 pm.

Roll call was taken with the following in attendance:

Pat Marcarelli	President
AnnMarie Ferreira	Treasurer
Virginia Wynne	Recording Secretary
MaryJane Monahan	Special Projects Secretary
Andy Calderoni	Chapman Beach
Jackie Keith	Pilot's Point
Rick Parks	Old Kelsey Point
Michael Tosatti	Grove Beach Terrace
Jack Zmary	West Beach
Ian Polun	Coral Sands Beach
Gary Bazzano	Grove Beach Point
Ron Botelho	Coral Sands Beach
Ed Hartman	Island View
Bruce Monahan	Coral Sands
Cindy Nero	Coral Sands
Marilyn Ozols	Middle Beach
Peter Gillespie	Town of Westbrook
Tom Nobile	Pointina Beach
Lucy Nobile	Pointina Beach
Joseph Morello	Middle Beach

Minutes Approved

Motion made, seconded, to approve the Minutes of the May 5, 2025 meeting that have been posted on-line. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

AnnMarie Ferreira reported that there is \$1,491.65 in the checking account and \$6,401.11 in the savings account for a total of \$7,892.76. Motion made, seconded, to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Passed unanimously.

Dues - AnnMarie handed out the dues letter to those representatives in attendance and will mail the remainder to the beach associations.

President's Guest Speaker – Peter Gillespie / Town of Westbrook Town Planner

Peter spoke to the group regarding the results of the Coastal Resiliency Plan which, together with the communities of Old Saybrook, Fenwick Borough and Clinton, contracted to address the impact of climate change, storm surge, flooding, extreme weather and sea level rise. Peter indicated that a grant was received for 95% of the funding of the Plan which was compiled by Colliers Engineering and was based on community input. The Plan addresses how sea level rise will affect the beach communities, as well town infrastructure including buildings housing the Fire Department and Town Hall as well as Oxford Academy. Members are encouraged to review the Plan; the Appendices in particular, for implications for specific heavily impacted locations such Old Mail Trail, West Beach, Coral Sands, Seaside, Middle Beach and Little Stannard Beach, and others [see attached portions of the Appendices relative to Westbrook].

Peter gave some examples of projections and issues:

- by 2050, sea level is expected to rise by 20”;
- Buildings impacted by greater than 6” of water are currently 137 but are projected to be 457 by 2070.
- Those affected by “100-year events” are currently 2631 but are expected to rise to 3159 by 2070.
- Federal funding sources previously available are currently up in the air. The future of FEMA is unknown. There are some Town and State funds which are available and will be investigated.

Recommendations for strategies for mitigation are included in the Plan. The Board of Selectman signed off on the Plan and its implementation for the Town of Westbrook.

The implementation of the strategies will be addressed by a newly formed “Coastal Resiliency Implementation Committee” and volunteers with some expertise in these areas are being sought. Please contact Peter at the Town Hall if you wish to volunteer for this Committee.

Peter took questions and input from attendees around possibilities to improve the town processes for homeowners who wish to make changes to their properties towards hazard mitigation including streamlining permit and variance approvals for raising buildings to the required elevation of 13’+; possible financial assistance and guidance. Other possibilities include catch drain improvements, paving of Old Mail Trail.

Updates on Other Projects Around Town addressed by Peter:

1. Pilot's Point: as mentioned in last month's minutes, the Marina was purchased by Blackstone Corp., a large private equity firm, but as of today, they have not contacted the Town with any proposed projects or changes.
2. Westbrook Outlet project: This project went quiet for a while but the developer has recently re-filed with the DEP for permits/septic. No permits issued yet but the developers hope is to start the project next year. As a reminder, the COB requested an impact study which is in process and the results will be considered by the Town during the permitting process.
3. Old Dunkin' Donuts site: As previously mentioned, they have moved forward with a different franchise (same owner as Krauser) in order to meet zoning requirements and expects to open in the next few weeks as a deli, ice cream, sandwich shop.
4. Charter Oak Tavern: has opened with limited seating due to septic issues in the Town Center. The Town is re-working the Septic Plan due to the cost of the previous plan and will be looking to see if there are any State funds available to assist.
5. Viking Motel is working on developing a plan to present to the Town but is currently doing some cleanup to the property.
6. Sidewalk Projects still being implemented
7. The blighted property adjacent to Subway is in the permit process to tear down and re-develop.
8. Singing bridge is a State project and repair of same is on the horizon within the next few years. Because of its historical designation it is not expected to change, just be maintained/repared.

Peter was thanked for his time in keeping the COB informed of the above.

Committees:

Harbor Commission (Andy Calderone)

As mentioned last month, Andy reported that the new on-line mooring registration system is moving along. The Harbor Master (Charlie McSorley) is requiring that a picture of gear be included as part of the inspection process which is considered a better alternative than having to hire an outside company to perform the inspection with a corresponding additional cost. They are continuing to remove derelict moorings and using numbered stickers to track moorings. Currently 45 people have applied but have not completed this new requirement as of yet.

Hunger/Food Drive/YMCA Garden (Pat Marcarelli and Michael Tosatti)

The Food Drive is 7/12/25 from 9-1 on the Town Green. Still looking for volunteers to collect money and/or food from each Association to Fill a Boat. A new Chairman for this initiative is also sought to coordinate the event going forward. Please contact Pat M. if interested.

YMCA Community Garden - Michael Tosatti reported that 30 beds of gardens have been planted and that last year generated about 2500 lb of produce for the Westbrook Food Pantry and is on track to increase output in 2025. The WCOB is a co-sponsor for this project and volunteers still are welcome for harvesting in about a month on Monday evenings (approx. 5-6pm) for delivery to the Food Pantry by Tuesday AM. If you want to help with this project, contact Michael Tosatti.

Good and Welfare

Nothing to report this month

Old Business

Looking to re-start the Literacy Volunteers Program. If interested, contact Pat M.

For next meeting Pat will check on the status of the Westbrook Economic Action Initiative.

The bus tour of the Westbrook beaches is delayed due to cost estimates for use of the bus, but will be re-visited at upcoming meeting for other alternatives. This is thought to be a worthwhile information gathering exercise.

Next Meeting – Monday July 7, 2025 at 7 pm at Westbrook Town Hall in the Multi Media Room across for the Selectman's Office.

Adjournment: Motion made to adjourn the meeting. So approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Wynne, Recording Secretary