

**This is Radio Hatteras. Hello. I'm Grace with the Weekly News Summary for June 9, 2024.**

**Commencement happened Saturday night**

The whirlwind of the final month of last activities for the Class of 2024 at Cape Hatteras Secondary ended Saturday night, June 8, 2024.

During the month, graduating seniors participated in a last band concert for band members, banquets for scholarship and athletic awards, baccalaureate, a commencement rehearsal and a Walk of Fame through the hallway of Cape Hatteras Elementary School.

All that activity, all that school work, culminated Saturday night. Around 7 o'clock, the Commencement Ceremony started with dignitaries ushered to seats on the podium or front row. Then, 56 graduating seniors at Cape Hatteras Secondary walked into the gymnasium with the graduation band playing and the audience filled with families and friends standing to watch the final stage of this education journey.

The Class of 2024 valedictorian Grace Catherine Vernesoni and Salutatorian Sherlyn Ingrid Mendieta-Lozano rose at different times to deliver their speeches.

Go to Island Free Press to see photographs and additional information about the ceremony.

**Dare Commissioners adopt budgets**

On June 3, 2024, Dare County commissioner unanimously adopted the county's operating budget and capital improvement plans for the county, Dare Schools and the Water Fund.

The county's Fiscal Year 2025 operating budget at \$136.17 million.

At issue is the long list of infrastructure projects listed in the Capital Improvement Plan for the Dare County Board of Education and its decision to proceed with the Dare County Early College. That Early College plan is to build a new building, currently estimated at \$23 million, on the new campus of College of The Albemarle-Dare County in Manteo.

The Early College construction is slated for Fiscal Year 2025 at \$25 million.

As announced at the meeting, the extra \$2 million is now reserved for a Manteo High School field house as well as additional expenses in excess of the estimated \$23 million for Early College.

The commissioners' operating budget includes no property tax increase.

Of the General Fund budget, the largest expenditures are allocated to public safety, which includes the Dare County EMS Department, Dare County Sheriff's Office and Dare County Emergency Management Department at 32%; education, which includes Dare County Schools and College of The Albemarle - Dare Campus 23.5%; human services at 14.6%; and general government at 12.3%.

Dare County employees receive a 4% cost of living pay adjustment for full-time and part-time benefits-eligible county employees. The 3% employer 401K contribution is maintained and the merit plan remains in place but changes to a salary increase.

Dare County's contribution to Dare County Schools for Fiscal Year 2025 is increased by \$2.5 million to a total of \$30.8 million. Included is \$1.63 million for increased pay supplements for staff.

"Recommended Capital Improvements Plan for the County, Dare County Schools, and the Water Fund," was reached.

The plans as presented are for five years.

For all five years, capital improvements plans for the county total \$88 million for 44 projects; for Dare County Schools \$66.29 million for 30 projects; and \$13.18 million for county water.

The county water fund, an enterprise operation, pays for capital projects through water rates, which next Fiscal Year increase by 5%.

School infrastructure and county projects that are \$50,000 or less are funded through Capital Outlay Funds. On Hatteras Island for Fiscal Year 2025, four items are scheduled: purchase a new work truck and mower trailer, repair a basketball goal and resurface the tennis courts, both at the Fessenden Center.

To respond to those critics that said they didn't know about Early College, the superintendent responded with a timeline that started in 2015.

After a ribbon cutting at the new Station 7 Helicopter hanger, the commissioners approved the three improvement plan budgets.

In response to the conversation, Board of Education Chairman David Twiddy suggested a pause so the Board of Education could convene to discuss the timeline for Early College.

The Board of Education held a Special Meeting, Wednesday, June 5, 2024 starting at Noon at the Dare County Schools Administration Building. The agenda only had one item: discussion of the timeline for Early College. Superintendent Basnight reviewed the list he presented to the Board of Commissioners with five members of the Board of Education.

### **Cape Hatteras National Seashore launches Adopt-a-Beach program**

Cape Hatteras National Seashore is looking for organized groups of individuals to adopt sections of Seashore beaches to remove trash and help keep the beaches clean, safe and pristine.

For this first year of the program, the Seashore is adopting out 18 sections of beach, focusing on the year-round off-road vehicle routes north of Oregon Inlet and on Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands. Each section is roughly two-miles-long.

To adopt a section of Seashore beach, a group must commit to completing four cleanups each year and meet all reporting requirements. Upon completion of their first cleanup, each group will be acknowledged via signage at the entry point to their adopted area for the remainder of their commitment.

More information, including requirements, how to sign up and maps of adoptable areas are available at [go dot nps dot gov slash adopt a beach](https://www.nps.gov/adoptabeach). Training and cleanup supplies will be provided to group leaders following signup.

### **Commissioners set hearing for proposed ordinance about releasing balloons within unincorporated Dare County**

On Monday, June 3, Dare commissioners set a public hearing for July 15 to consider enacting a new ordinance against releasing balloons.

The new section reads

#### **§ 96.06 RELEASING BALLOONS WITHING UNINCORPORATED DARE COUNTY**

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, nonprofit organization, or corporation to knowingly and intentionally release, participate in the release of, intentionally cause to be released, to litter by abandoning and not properly disposing of all waste material, any type of balloon inflated with a liquid, air, or gas within the limits of Unincorporated Dare County, any waters within the zoning

jurisdiction of Unincorporated Dare County, or the beach and/or dune areas within unincorporated Dare County.

The following are not violations of the Section:

(A) Balloons released by a person on behalf of a governmental agency or pursuant to a governmental contract for scientific or meteorological purposes.

(B) Hot air balloons that are recovered after launching.

(C) Balloons released inside a building or structure that do not make their way into the open air.

In another section, the penalty is spelled out.

Any person found to be in violation of the new section shall be subject to a civil penalty in the amount of \$250 to be recovered by Dare County in a civil action in the nature of debt if the offender does not pay the penalty within ten days after having been cited for violation of the ordinance.

### **Dare agencies receive resiliency funding**

Nearly \$6 million of \$30 million in state disaster-relief money is marked to go to 10 resiliency efforts along the coast. North Carolina Emergency Management announced Tuesday that a total of 27 grant recipients statewide were selected for the first round of funding through the 2023 Disaster Relief and Mitigation Fund. Emergency Management is under the N.C. Department of Public Safety.

Two projects on Hatteras Island received grants. The grant winners are Dare County for Old Lighthouse Road Stormwater Improvement \$770,000 and Frisco Volunteer Fire Department Fire Station for resilient design \$425,000.

State agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations and public authorities could apply for the \$30 million authorized through the 2023 Appropriations Act. Eligible categories of work authorized for the grant are flood mitigation efforts, transportation resilience, disaster relief and flood mitigation technical assistance for small and underserved communities, and local cost share assistance for federal funds on approved federal mitigation grants.

### **Marine Fisheries Commission adopts temporary rules for mandatory harvest reporting**

On June 6, 2024, the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission adopted temporary rules to implement mandatory harvest reporting required by a new state law.

The North Carolina General Assembly passed Session Law 2023-137 in the fall of 2023. Section 6 of this legislation requires that any person who recreationally harvests Red Drum, Flounder, Spotted Seatrout (speckled trout), Striped Bass and Weakfish (gray trout) must report that harvest to the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Marine Fisheries.

Additionally, the new law requires anyone holding a commercial fishing license who is engaged in a commercial fishing operation to report all fish harvested to the division, regardless of sale.

The requirement becomes effective December 1, 2024.

The division's temporary rules will go before the N.C. Rules Review Commission for approval on June 26.

More information on this mandatory harvest reporting requirement can be found on the Division of Marine Fisheries website at [deq dot N C dot gov slash mandatory dash harvest dash reporting](http://deq.nc.gov/mandatory-harvest-reporting). The state's Wildlife Resources Commission also adopted temporary rules governing recreational harvest of the same species.

Coastal Review Online reports: "Of more than 2,000 written comments submitted to the fisheries commission, 83% opposed the rules, ... People who wrote in opposition to the rules argued that

they are unenforceable, unnecessary bureaucracy and government overreach, and raised concerns about the accuracy and reliability of their collection. The 10% of public comments the fisheries commission received in favor of the rules argue that they will lead to better data that will help the state manage its fisheries resources.”

Read more at Coastal Review at [coastalreview.org](http://coastalreview.org).

### **Rodanthe beach reopened**

The Cape Hatteras National Seashore staff has reopened the beach from South Holiday Boulevard to the north end of Ocean Drive in Rodanthe, which means that all temporary closures associated with the home collapse have been lifted.

The unoccupied home at the end of Ocean Drive in Rodanthe collapsed into the ocean at 2:35 in the morning Tuesday, May 28, resulting in a multi-pronged effort to remove debris from the adjacent shoreline.

Dozens of seashore employees, Chicamacomico Banks Fire & Rescue members, and local volunteers assisted with the cleanup efforts, which began hours after the initial collapse.

### **Cape Point is open after a brief closure**

The tip of Cape Point and the adjacent south-facing shoreline was temporarily closed on Friday morning, May 31. American oystercatcher chicks are no longer in the area. National Seashore staff reopened the point after a three-day closure.

**Fessenden Center** posted this Facebook message: “The Cape Hatteras Secondary School Soccer Field on Buxton Back Road will be CLOSED for field maintenance now until fall soccer school practices begin. Thank you for your cooperation!”

And the center has another request: The Fessenden Center staff is in need of empty, rinsed, 2 liter bottles for an upcoming summer camp. Drop them off during office hours. Thank you!

**The Hatteras Island Cancer Foundation** is holding its annual Pop Up BBQ Benefit on Tuesday, June 11 from 5:30 until the barbecue runs out. The event will be held between the Hatteras Post Office and the Hatteras Library. Crazy Johnny’s BBQ will provide barbecue pork sandwiches, baked beans, coleslaw, macaroni salad, drinks and homemade desserts. Plates are \$20. Hatteras Island Cancer Foundation receives 100% of the proceeds.

And, three markets with lots of vendors are in full swing this week on Hatteras Island:

On Tuesday, Avon Farmers Market is open from 9 to 1 next to Vacassa Realty.

On Wednesdays, the Tri-village Market runs from 9 to 1 on the Soundside of Camp Hatteras in Waves.

On Thursday, visit Old Trent Market from 9 to 2 at Frisco Woods Campground.

**Now, be safe out there. Thanks so much for listening. This is Radio Hatteras.**