

**Town of Washington Park  
Municipal Building  
May 1, 2023  
7:00 p.m.**

United Bank	General Fund	\$ 425,119.56
United Bank	Capital Reserve Fund/Truck Account	82,100.00
United Bank	Powell Bill Checking	36,097.04
United Bank	Powell Bill/Saving CD	65,758.45
United Bank	Capital Reserve CD	76,782.50
United Bank	American Rescue Plan Act Account	<u>136,919.94</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 822,777.49</b>

**Present**

Thomas Richter, Mayor  
Jeff Peacock, Mayor pro tem  
Lee Bowen, Commissioner  
Belinda Cowell, Commissioner  
Wade Dale, Commissioner  
Patrick Nash, Commissioner

**Absent**

Mayor Richter called the meeting to order. Commissioner Dale made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Cowell. Passed by all.

Mayor Richter called for public input. Mr. Paul Kennedy was present and spoke about the survey conducted by residents soliciting suggestions for spending the \$136, 402.51 American Rescue Plan Act grant received by the Town of Washington Park. Mr. Kennedy said that the group had not yet tallied the survey responses, but were working on a spreadsheet and graph that would reflect all the responses, both paper and online. Mayor Richter thanked Mr. Kennedy and said that the Town Board was looking forward to seeing the results of this survey. He also said that that the Planning Board, with Beth Byrd as acting chairperson, would be working on holding a public meeting soon to review the survey results and any other suggestions from the public that are received. Mayor Richter thanked Mr. Kennedy and his group for their work on this community-wide effort.

Ms. Kim Warren spoke about the state of the yard at 320 River Road, asking what efforts were being made to enforce the Town's ordinance about weeds and debris at that location. Ms. Warren noted that this affected the property values of the adjoining properties. The clerk said that she had recently sent a letter outlining the violations of the ordinance. Mayor Richter said that he would speak personally with the owners and follow up with specific suggestions for a timely clean-up plan.

The financial report and the minutes were approved upon motion by Commissioner Bowen. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all.

## Old Business

320 Isabella Avenue: The clerk read an email from the property owners which said that three "No Trespassing" signs had been installed around the property; that they had met with an electrician who will install a temporary pole to provide electricity to the property; and that they had met with their architect to review preliminary drawings for the renovation.

North side of Isabella Ave East end: no report.

Possibility of underground power lines on Isabella Avenue: Clerk Dale read a memo from Mayor Richter regarding his conversation with Macon Respass of the City of Washington Electric Department about underground wire service in the Isabella median. Mr. Respass very roughly estimated that putting the primary lines underground would be conservatively \$800,000, and that putting secondary lines with step-down transformers to bring the current down to residential power requirements would be conservatively \$400,000. He also commented that each house would demand an under-the-road bore cut. The homeowner cost (per household) to get power (under the street) from the transformer to a house would be between \$2000 and \$5000. He added that many homes might need additional serious work to bring them up to the code requirement. Mr. Respass added that he did not think that the City of Washington would want to pay for these changes, so it would be up to Washington Park and the homeowners to pay for the changes.

Mayor Richter had also asked Mr. Respass about pulling out the trees under the power lines on Isabella Avenue and replacing them with trees that would grow to a shorter height. Mr. Respass said that the City of Washington would probably not want to deal with that job or money, but that Washington Park could do it at Washington Park's expense. Mayor Richter added that Washington Electric would have to review and approve any work that is done in their electric easement in the median.

Commissioner Cowell said that she had contacted East Carolina University Planning Department regarding landscaping, and that ECU had shown some interest in having their students do a Planning studio project in the fall. She will follow up with ECU and report back to the Board about landscaping possibilities.

Drainage: Commissioner Bowen is continuing to get estimates for drainage work throughout Washington Park.

Eastern Washington Park town boundary: no report.

Parking vehicles in the Town's rights-of-way: no report from the Planning Board.

Washington Park tree cut on College Avenue: Clerk Dale read an email response from the Town Attorney regarding possible solutions. Discussion followed. Commissioner Cowell made a motion to speak with the resident about paying for a replacement tree. Seconded by Commissioner Nash. Passed by all

Short-term rentals: no report. Clerk Dale will follow up with Beth Byrd of the Planning Board

Multi-family housing: no report. Clerk Dale will follow up with Beth Byrd of the Planning Board.

Resilient Coastal Communities Program: The clerk reported that she had received word that there had been some technical issues with the program and that some portions of the applications needed to be resubmitted. She said that she was reassured that Washington Park was still on the list for Phases 1 and 2 of the RCCP for erosion control and groin replacement.

ARPA fund uses: see above. No further discussion at this time.

FY 2023-24 Budget: The clerk presented the budget to the Board. She pointed out that this budget keeps the current tax rate of \$.29/\$100. She reported that the property value in Washington Park is \$50,522,782.00 per the Beaufort County Tax Office and the registered motor vehicles are \$6,057,525.00 for a total property value of \$56,580,307.00. The clerk reviewed the changes in the budget from the previous year, including a cost-of-living increase for employees, higher health and property insurance costs, higher audit cost, higher retirement benefits, higher costs for general Park maintenance, and higher fire and EMS contract with the City of Washington, Discussion followed. There were no additions to the budget as presented. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to accept the budget as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Cowell. Passed by all. The clerk will advertise the Budget Public Hearing to be held at the June 5, 2023 meeting at 7:00. The budget will be available for viewing in the Municipal Building on May 30 and May 31 in the Municipal Building.

### **New Business**

Mayor Richter, Commissioner Bowen, and Mayor pro tem Peacock met with Danny Koonce, Division 2 Maintenance Operations Support, NCDOT to look at estimating the repair of specific sites in several streets throughout Washington Park. Commissioner Bowen had contacted a paving contractor to bid on the repair work. Commissioner Bowen will review the NCDOT estimate of costs and the other estimate to arrange for the work to be done. The clerk presented a budget amendment for increasing the Powell Bill area of the General Fund in the amount of \$64,000 per the NCDOT streets survey. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to approve the budget amendment. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all.

### **Reports**

Commissioner Dale – reported that there would be a Inner Banks Legal 5K on June 10, 2023 in conjunction with the Summer Festival; that there is a wedding scheduled for Saturday, May 20, and that the fire ants treatment of the eastern waterfront area and median has made an improvement in those areas

Commissioner Nash – no report.

Mayor pro tem Peacock – asked to go into a closed session later for a personnel issue.

Commissioner Bowen – reported on streets and drainage. See above

Commissioner Cowell – reported on beautification and landscaping. See above.

### **Clerk's Report**

The clerk reported that four tennis keys and three pickleball keys had been sold last month; that \$12,763.47 in local option sales tax had been received in April; that \$1461.15 in ad valorem taxes had been received in April; that one fence permit had been issued; and that she had made phone calls to the property owners at 412 Fairview, 411 Fairview, and 320 River Road regarding high grass. The clerk reported that four back truck tires had been purchased for \$1526.32; and that a bill for professional services from January 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023 had been received from the Town Attorney for \$7155.00.

Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to go into closed session for a personnel issue. Seconded by Commissioner Nash. Passed by all.

Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to return to the regular meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Nash. Passed by all.

The next regular meeting will be Monday, June 5, 2023 at 7:00 pm at the Municipal Building.

There being no further business, Mayor Richter adjourned the meeting.

Denise D. Dale, Clerk  
Town of Washington Park