

**Town of Washington Park
Municipal Building
April 8, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**

United Bank	General Fund	\$471,771.74
United Bank	Capital Reserve Fund/Truck Account	82,100.00
United Bank	Capital Reserve CD	78,836.07
United Bank	Powell Bill Checking	48,141.96
United Bank	Powell Bill/Saving CD	67,517.28
United Bank	American Rescue Plan Act Account	<u>137,814.42</u>
	Total	\$886,181.47

Present: Thomas Richter, Mayor, Jeff Peacock, Mayor pro tem, Lee Bowen, Commissioner, Belinda Cowell, Commissioner, Wade Dale, Commissioner, Vail Rumley, Commissioner

Absent: None

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

Public Input

Isabell Farrell noted she had questions regarding the Townscape committee, should the Board vote to re-instate it. It was noted the committee does not have to be sworn in and Commissioner Cowell will be the Board's point of contact for the Committee. The committee will use the approved ordinance as guidance for implementation. Mayor Richter thanked the group for agreeing to serve.

Minutes and Financial Report

The March financial report and March 11, 2024, minutes were approved upon motion by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all, with Commissioner Cowell abstaining since she was absent from the March meeting.

Old Business

Contractor vs. Resident Debris Pick-up: The Board continued discussions on not picking up known contract generated debris and ways to remedy the situation; no easy way. As a way to continue efforts on educating residents and hired contractors, it was suggested to prepare a letter/information sheet that could be shared with contractors. The informational letter can be distributed to residents via the email list and the next Town Crier. Mayor Richter asked Commissioner Rumley to work on a draft letter on behalf of the Board.

Drainage North side of Isabella Ave East end: No report.

320 Isabella Avenue: Clerk Alligood read an email update from McGregor Bell. He noted adjusting the drawing to bring the addition into compliance with the setback requirements. The Board would like Mr. Bell to provide a timeframe for the project.

Tree cut on College Avenue: Clerk Alligood reported the tree has been planted; Stuart Dudley will bill Mr. Spain for the cost.

Resilient Coastal Communities Program grant: Clerk Alligood reported the Phase 2 open house was held on March 20, 2024; proposed projects were prioritized by

attendees. The next CAT meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 10 at 10 a.m. Discussion held regarding the pros and cons of proceeding with a holistic plan/study now in order to have projects ready if/when additional funding becomes available. Commissioners Bowen and Rumley noted they are willing to get quotes or estimates from engineering firms.

ARPA funds: The Board previously decided to use the revenue replacement category for the ARPA funds, allowing more flexibility to spend the money on other projects. The funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and expended by December 31, 2026. Clerk Alligood provided a proposed grant project ordinance which will obligate and expend funds at same time. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to adopt the proposed grant project ordinance. Seconded by Commissioner Rumley. Passed by all.

New Business

Re-instate Washington Park Code of Ordinances Title IX, Chapter 94, *Trees and Shrubs*: Commissioner Rumley made a motion to reinstate Chapter 94 of the Code of Ordinances. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all. In so doing, the Townscape Committee was re-activated. Residents Isabell Farrell, Neil Kirven, Anne Baxter, Kathleen Taylor, and Frances Hogan will serve on the Committee, with Derek Cooper being named as an alternate member. Ms. Farrell stated she would like to meet with the Mayor and Commissioner Cowell to get an understanding of desired projects for the group to begin working on. She will contact Clerk Alligood to coordinate a meeting time.

FY24 Audit Letter: The clerk presented the FY24 Audit Contract Letter with Nunn, Brashear, and Uzzell, PA in the amount of \$9400. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to approve the annual audit contract letter. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all.

Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Dale: The new tennis net has been received; it will be installed as PW staff time allows. Staff also repaired the wind screen on the tennis court. The Exodus run on March 30 had approximately 200 participants. On April 26-28, there will be a Bike NC event in Washington where 1500 to 2000 participants are expected. Commissioner Peacock noted the crank on one of the tennis nets is not working. The clerk will ask PW Supervisor Askew to look into it.

Commissioner Rumley: Efforts continue to schedule a community watch meeting with Lt. Richards from the Beaufort County Sheriff's office. Chris Newkirk, Beaufort County Emergency Services Director, shared with Commissioner Rumley they anticipate grant award notice for the flood gate water devices and water rescue boat, presented to the Board at the January 9 meeting. He also shared that Beaufort County received federal funding for VIPIR radios which will allow multiple agencies within the county to better coordinate emergency response. As it is approaching hurricane season, it is a good time to remind residents to review current flood coverage, in order to have necessary coverage in place timely prior to any storms. Additional discussion regarding the FEMA flood mitigation programs.

Commissioner Rumley also mentioned the house at 320 College Avenue, and how it appears to be in bad shape. Mayor Richter knows the son of the owner and will reach out to him to discuss.

Mayor pro tem Peacock: Budget time is here. Notify Mayor pro tem Peacock or Clerk Alligood of any budget items to be included for consideration.

Commissioner Bowen: Has not received quotes on road work.

Commissioner Cowell: Spoke with Todd Williams at Worthington Farms and Stuart Dudley regarding tree options for Isabella Avenue. One suggestion was the dwarf magnolia tree, also referred to as the banana shrub. The max height is 15 feet and approximately 15 feet wide. The cost for a 4 ½ foot (15 gallon) tree is \$60/each and Dudley landscaping can plant them for \$25/each. Other options include dwarf myrtles or dwarf Japanese maples. The newly re-established Townscape Committee can review these options and make a recommendation to the Board. There is a tree on the waterfront that is rotting out and dying, and it will need to be removed. Commissioner Cowell and Mayor pro tem Peacock will take a look at it with PW Supervisor Askew.

Mayor Richter: The owner of 617 College Avenue, Chris Tkach, spoke with the Mayor and Commissioner Dale regarding the overgrowth of vegetation from three-acre wood onto her property. The Mayor walked the property and was unable to find any pipes noting the corners or lot lines. Discussion held. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to survey the property to locate and identify the four corners of the lot, not a full survey of the property; once established, contract to have a five-foot swath of vegetation cleared to create a buffer between the adjoining property. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all. The homeowner at 617 College would be responsible for clearing any additional/remaining vegetation on her property.

Clerk's Report

Deposits received in March totaled \$23,602.80 (ad valorem \$2068.53; local option sales tax \$15,838,72; NC vehicle tax \$2,558.35; quarterly utilities tax \$3,112.20; tennis key \$25). Received payment notice from the Board of Elections for the 2023 Municipal election, in the amount of \$2,094.80. Also received notice of the 2nd primary, scheduled for May 14. Paid Stuart Dudley \$6850 for removal of trees on Isabella (Powell bill fund); purchased new flag for municipal building. Budget prep to begin - retirement percentage increasing from 12.85% to 13.6% and the Fire/Rescue agreement with the City of Washington will be \$45,842 next fiscal year.

Closed session:

Commissioner Bowen made a motion to go into closed session per N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(1), (5), and (6). Seconded by Commissioner Rumley. Passed by all.

Commissioner Dale made a motion to return to open session. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Approved by all.

The Board notified Clerk Alligood that she has successfully completed her six-month probationary period.

The next regular meeting will be Monday, May 6, 2024, at 7:00 pm at the Municipal Building. There being no further business, Mayor Richter adjourned the meeting.

April S. Alligood, Clerk
Town of Washington Park