

**Town of Washington Park
Municipal Building
May 6, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**

United Bank	General Fund	\$ 469,119.09
United Bank	Capital Reserve Fund/Truck Account	82,100.00
United Bank	Capital Reserve CD	78,836.07
United Bank	Powell Bill Checking	41,291.96
United Bank	Powell Bill/Saving CD	67,517.28
United Bank	American Rescue Plan Act Account	<u>137,887.84</u>
	Total	\$ 876,752.24

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 mentioned the possible need to discuss a personnel matter during closed session. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all.

Public Input

Jamie Heath: Mayor Richter called on Jamie Heath with the Mid-East Commission to speak first with regard to the RCCP update. She reported the Community Action Team (CAT) recommends moving forward with the Living Shoreline at Public Shoreline Areas project; this recommendation is consistent with public input from the Phase 2 open house. Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to approve moving forward with the Living Shoreline project and have the Mayor sign the proposed Resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Rumley. Passed by all. Mayor Richter signed the proposed Resolution. Ms. Heath then provided additional information on two of the other potential projects:

- Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap: program provides technical assistance and a feasibility study in developing a sewer system or connecting to an existing system; no match required; MEC could assist with grant application and participate in initial meeting with DEQ for \$1,000 fee; threat of rising water tables is the reason discussion came up at a prior CAT meeting.
- Stormwater action plan (design) and system upgrade (construction): potential funding source is FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program; this program would require a 10% match; MEC could assist with this grant application for a \$2,900 fee.

The Board was amenable to future consideration for each project.

Chris Tkach: Spoke with regard to the invasive growth from the three-acre woods that have taken over the ornamental growth in her yard at 617 College Avenue. She asked the Board to take responsibility for cleaning up the ROW in order for her to be able to maintain her yard after that. The Board discussed three-acre woods at the April 8, 2024, meeting; however, there was a misunderstanding with regard to the motion made, specifically who would pay for the survey. Additional discussion occurred. Commissioner Bowen made a clarifying motion that the Town pay to define the ROW west side boundary for Spruce Street extension and from that line, the Town cut a five (5') swath to clear the area. After additional discussion, Commissioner Dale made a

motion to amend up to a ten (10') swath. Amended motion seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all.

Minutes and Financial Report

The April financial report and April 8, 2024, minutes were reviewed, along with the The January 8, 2024, February 5, 2024, and March 11,2024, financial reports, which required amending due to a clerical error. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to approve the April minutes and financial report as well as the amended minutes/financial reports. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all.

Old Business

Three-Acre Woods: see Chris Tkach public input summary above.

Contractor vs. Resident Debris Pick-up: Commissioner Rumley drafted a letter to distribute to all property owners and residents. She will make suggested edits and finalize the letter to be included with the next Town Crier.

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

320 Isabella Avenue: Clerk Alligood read an email update from McGregor Bell. He is meeting with potential builders during the next few weeks; after that, he will have a better idea of his timeline. He has obtained a permit for a new septic system.

Resilient Coastal Communities Program grant: see Jamie Heath public input summary above.

ARPA funds: The annual report was filed on April 16, noting revenue replacement as the chosen use of funds.

New Business

Proposed FY25 Budget: The clerk presented the proposed FY25 budget to the Board. Mayor pro tem Peacock pointed out the tax rate will remain the same, \$0.29. Per the Beaufort County Tax Office, property value in Washington Park is \$50,691,775 and the registered motor vehicles are \$6,469,141 for a total property value of \$57,160,916. The clerk reviewed the changes in the budget from the previous year, including: higher salaries, increase in town's percentage of retirement benefits, increase in insurance costs (health, comprehensive, auto, etc.), higher audit expense, and an increase in the Fire and EMS contract with the City of Washington. There are also some one-time costs included, such as a new computer and printer, increase in travel due to Clerk school, and an increase in general/contract services for the MOU with the Mid-East Commission for professional planning services. Additionally, the tennis court project will be carried over since not all of the money was spent this fiscal year. Discussion followed. Commissioner Dale made a motion to proceed with a new computer and printer now, with a not to exceed purchase price of \$2,500. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all. Otherwise, no changes were noted for the proposed budget. The clerk will advertise the Budget Public Hearing to be held at the next Board meeting, on June 3, 2024, at 7:00pm.

Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Dale: Staff fixed the crank on the tennis net. There was a medical emergency in the Park during the Bike NC event. Playground mulch is ready when staff has available time to put it out.

Commissioner Rumley: The Beaufort County Sheriff's Office put out a notice of a suspicious person that turned out to be an Optimum employee. Inquired as to a follow-up on 320 College Avenue; Mayor Richter spoke with the owner's son who indicated he will come down to take a look at the property. Led to discussion regarding housing and building codes. Commissioner Dale made a motion to have Mayor Richter speak with the Mid-East Commission regarding housing codes. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all.

Mayor pro tem Peacock: Les Woolard notified the Clerk today that for various personal reasons, he needs to resign his employment with Washington Park. Discussion followed. The Board asked Mayor pro tem Peacock to speak with Mr. Woolard and see if he would be willing to consider working part-time (without benefits).

Commissioner Bowen: The prior NCDOT survey suggested removing 6" of material; however, some contractors thought removing too much asphalt could hurt the base, so it was recommended to go with 4.5" instead of 6". Received four (4) quotes for the work; Tripp Brothers quoted the lowest price, as well as allowed for flexibility to add additional areas if needed. Discussion followed. Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to contract with Tripp Brothers with a not to exceed cap of \$125,000. Seconded by Commissioner Rumley. Passed by all.

Commissioner Cowell: Received a request from the Townscape Committee to replant two of the Cherry trees on Isabella, one in front of the municipal building and another one on the Wicker property (with permission) to replace the tree recently removed. Ok with the one in front of the municipal building but will need to see if the timing is right to replant anything on the Wicker property at this time. The Committee also shared information with her regarding possible grants from the NC Forestry Service

Clerk's Report

Deposits received in April totaled \$16,841.39 (ad valorem \$1,325.52; local option sales tax \$12,567.41; NC vehicle tax \$2,793.46; tennis/pickleball keys \$150; yard sale permit \$5). Issued one fence permit. Paid Woolard Towing \$500; paid Board of Elections \$2,094.80 for 2023 Municipal election. Received notice from Clegg's they sprayed at waterfront (\$500); no issues reported. 2nd primary May 14; Clerk Alligood will be attending the second session of Clerk school the week of May 13; she will be taking June 1981 – December 2014 minutes to be archived with the NC State Archives office.

Closed session: Commissioner Bowen made a motion to go into closed session per N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(1), and (5). Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all.

Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to return to open session. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all.

The next regular meeting will be Monday, June 3, 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