

**Town of Washington Park  
Municipal Building  
January 6, 2025, 7:00 p.m.**

United Bank	General Fund	\$ 460,412.47
United Bank	Capital Reserve Fund/Truck Account	82,100.00
United Bank	Capital Reserve CD	81,290.44
United Bank	Powell Bill Checking	56,411.92
United Bank	Powell Bill/Saving CD	10,743.80
United Bank	American Rescue Plan Account	<u>98,064.49</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 789,023.12</b>

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

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

**Public Input:** None

At this time, the Board decided to address 320 Isabella Avenue (Old Business) since Mr. McGregor Bell had traveled from out of town to update the Board.

**320 Isabella Avenue:** Property owner McGregor Bell stated he has narrowed the scope of the project in order to bring it more in line with the budget. The potential contractor, Kasey Stone, is collecting quotes from subs; they anticipate having a signed contract later this month. They are scheduled to remove the back storage building and repair the door in the next couple of weeks. They plan to keep the same footprint of the house, adding a small bathroom on the first floor and a second bathroom upstairs. They have applied for a septic permit and the location for the septic has been approved. When asked how long the project will take once they get started, Mr. Bell said he was not comfortable saying how long it might be. The Board thanked Mr. Bell for attending the meeting. The Board felt it was good sign that they are keeping the same footprint and rehabbing instead of a total house modification.

**December Minutes and Financial Report:** The December minutes and financial report were reviewed. Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to approve the December minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Cowell. Passed by all.

**Old Business**

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

**320 Isabella Avenue:** Update above.

**Resilient Coastal Communities Program grant projects:**

Phase 3 – Engineering/Design of Living Shoreline

RK&K selected as the contractor for the engineering/design services; they are working on scheduling a kick-off meeting for the week of January 27.

Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap (CAWAG) – Wastewater Analysis:  
Provide technical assistance in identifying infrastructure needs and develop a Professional Engineering Report (PER) by 2026; working with Rivers and Associates on scope of PER; monthly check-in meetings 3rd Monday of each month.

Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities (BRIC) Stormwater Action Plan:  
Letter of interest submitted; anticipate invitation to apply will open around January 10 with the deadline for applications being February 7; if awarded, will require a 25% local match (approx. \$98,500). Clerk Alligood recommended holding the remaining ARPA funds in order to meet the required match, if the Town is awarded the grant.

Mayor Richter also asked about an update on the Mid East Commission Ordinance Review. Points of Contact are Seth Laughlin and Josh Hollis; adjustments have been made to Books 1 and 2; they are finalizing Book 3. They anticipate having the entire Ordinance ready for review later in January.

**320 River Road:** On December 13, DEQ Representatives Allen Stewart and Brooke Sherman met the homeowners and resident on site; Commissioner Bowen and Clerk Alligood were also present. They marked the riparian buffer zones for the resident and also noted wetlands overlap in the area and said we need to contact the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for further determination. DEQ's definition of noxious growth was not very specific. They indicated the resident could remove invasive species such as poison ivy or oak, which he has done; otherwise, they did not identify anything else that should be removed/cleared. Additionally, the discussion revealed Beaufort County has a "no rise certification" process; you cannot raise your property without getting a hydraulic engineer to evaluate what you plan to raise to make sure you are not creating flooding concerns for neighbors. The Clerk made contact with the USACE and a meeting is scheduled for mid-January with the homeowners and resident.

Commissioner Bowen noted DEQ's definition of noxious growth appears to differ from what the Town is concerned about. The heavy undergrowth is the main thing that fits our definition of noxious growth; hopefully the USACE can answer if it can be removed, trimmed, or if it is beneficial to wetlands and has to remain natural. Clerk Alligood spoke with Gene Fox, NC State Cooperative Extension Office, and he will help provide suggested language for the current ordinance review. Resident Derek Cooper and his mother were present. He noted the riparian buffer works to help provide a suitable habitat for the plants, and disturbing the soils can release things in the water you do not want. Part of what they are doing is protecting the waterways.

Before leaving, Derek Cooper noted, on behalf of the Townscape Committee, that they received an email from the Forestry Service notifying us the grant award has been secured for the tree inventory program. Additionally, he noted the Washington Park signs have been completed and are ready for installation.

**602 Small Street:** Clerk Alligood contacted Attorney Sasnett regarding a tax lien instead of a civil lien for any potential work the Town may conduct. Per Attorney Sasnett, that is an option; however the ability to collect additional fees, such as nuisance abatement fees, needs to be specifically stated in the Interlocal Agreement with the County to have them aid in that collection. Upon review, our agreement does not include that. The Town could file a "Claim of Lien" on the real property for the cost of the abatement; however, the Town may never be reimbursed as those claims are typically not paid unless the property changes hands. Clerk Alligood mentioned the Debt Set-Off

program that the Town participates in. She was asked to research and find out what would be involved with establishing a case. She was also asked to contact the attorney regarding options for next steps and procedurally what would be involved if we have a contractor perform the necessary work.

### **New Business**

**Request for Tree Removal – 505 Fairview Avenue:** The clerk was contacted by resident Liane Harsh regarding removal of a town tree due to possible root interference with the septic system. Commissioner Cowell has not been able to speak with the resident yet and investigate the tree. Commissioner Rumley shared one large pine tree in the back yard was impacting the septic tank and that tree was cut down. When it came down, it had a three-way split in the middle of it. The town tree of concern is larger and older than the one that was removed. Discussion about need to meet dead, dying or dangerous requirements; if not met, the town could possibly give the resident permission to cut it down. Commissioner Cowell will follow-up with the homeowner.

**Budget Amendment:** Proposed increase for advertising: \$200; contract services: \$3900 (Mid East Commission assistance); clerk salary: \$510 (additional 1% COLA); Clerk bond: \$30. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to approve the proposed budget amendment. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all.

### **Commissioners' Reports**

**Commissioner Dale:** The tennis court contractor is finishing up a job in Greenville and we are next on the list; however, work may be delayed until March or April, when the weather will be more cooperative. Upcoming events: March 15 St Patrick's Day 5K and Beer run; expect 300 participants. March 29 Exodus 5K Run; expect 150 participants.

**Commissioner Rumley:** Attempted car break in last night; arrest was made. Sammy Corey sent Commissioner Rumley photos of vehicles parking in the median.

**Mayor pro tem Peacock:** Brief discussion on options for another trash truck; will work with Clerk Alligood to explore new and used options.

**Commissioner Bowen:** No additional report.

**Commissioner Cowell:** received invoice for the completed Washington Park signs; amount approved in November. Grant funding for tree inventory – looks like approved.

Commissioner Bowen made a motion to go into closed session. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Approved by all.

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

**Clerk's Report:** Deposits received in December totaled \$45,818.97 (Ad Valorem / NCVTS: \$20,691.86; local option sales tax: \$12,478.03; quarterly utilities tax: \$3,548.39; Powell Bill deposit: \$9,100.69); Amanda Sasnett appointed Beaufort County Attorney; does not anticipate any conflicts. Will provide a waiver of conflict statement for Board's consideration at the February meeting. RPO meeting January 16 (10a; BCCC) – presentation on roundabouts. 511 Hickory Street – Mr. Zienty is aware of potential

buyers; still needs to remove the trailer; anticipate March timeframe to return. Purchased back pack blower – \$400. Carol Tayloe – having bulkhead put in. Office Depot – doing away with credit card service, eff. 1/31/25. Commissioner Dale made a motion for the Town to get a credit card. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all. Clerk Alligood presented the LGC letter to the Board for signatures.

Commissioner Bowen asked hypothetically, if the duplex (511 Hickory Street) is rehabbed without changing the footprint, can it remain a duplex or does it have to become a single-family residence. Further review/research needed.

The next regular meeting will be Monday, February 3, 2025, at 7:00 pm at the Municipal Building. There being no further business, Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Meeting adjourned.

April S. Alligood, Clerk  
Town of Washington Park