

**Town of Washington Park
Municipal Building
June 5, 2023
7:00 p.m.**

United Bank	General Fund	\$ 416,619.89
United Bank	Capital Reserve Fund/Truck Account	82,100.00
United Bank	Powell Bill Checking	32,397.04
United Bank	Powell Bill/Saving CD	66,080.31
United Bank	Capital Reserve CD	77,158.32
United Bank	American Rescue Plan Act Account	<u>137,068.71</u>
Total		\$ 811,424.27

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 Nash made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all.

Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to go into a Public Hearing for comments on the proposed FY 2023-24 budget. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all. Mr. Peter Farrell spoke to the issue of having the proposed budget posted on the website as well as having the budget available for viewing in the Municipal Building. A copy of the budget was passed around to the gathered public for their perusal and comments. Mr. Farrell also expressed his opinion that the Town public works employees should be given a raise. Clerk Dale said that a major increase in pay had been included in the 2023-24 budget that was presented and approved by the Board at the May Board meeting. No further comments were made regarding the proposed budget.

Commissioner Dale made a motion to close the Public Hearing and return to the regular meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Nash. Passed by all.

Mayor Richter asked for public input based on order of arrival to the meeting. Mr. Richard Cooper of 320 River Road said that he and his family were there to speak to the Board about their property. Mr. Cooper said that he and his family had been working on the property for over two years. He said that the project was not moving very quickly and that they were at a point where they would like to hire a landscaper to help with the heavy work and that they had requested a quote from a contractor. He said that they had removed many tree stumps as well as invasive vines and weeds. Mr. Cooper said that they had gotten a copy of the septic permit which included a sketch of the placement of the plastic septic tank installed by CH Elks and Sons in 2005. He said that both Mr. Elks and the County sanitarian told them not to use anything heavier than a lawn mower over the existing septic tank and field. Mr. Cooper said that they are trying

to accelerate their reclamation efforts that can be managed without heavy equipment. This includes continuing to remove brush in the gardens on both sides of the property, laying mulch, filling in the concrete trash pit and removing concrete created by the collapse of that pit. He said that later in the summer they hoped to rebuild the patios and the fish pond, as well as regrading the front yard. Mayor Richter thanked Mr. Cooper for his progress report and to keep the progress in motion.

Ms. Tricia Stowe of 304 Isabella Avenue said that she was there to get an update on the cost of getting the power lines on Isabella put underground. Mayor Richter told her of meeting with the City of Washington Electric Department and getting a rough estimate of \$1.2 million for primary and secondary lines with step-down transformers as well as homeowner costs of \$2000 to \$5000 to get power from transformers to their house. Ms. Stowe also asked about landscaping on Isabella Avenue in the median. Commissioner Cowell said that she had been talking to the City and Regional Planning Department at East Carolina University and that there may be an opportunity for graduate students to do a project in urban landscaping in Washington Park this fall. She will continue to pursue this opportunity.

Ms. Mindy Carr of 116 Isabella asked about the leaning utility poles in Washington Park that belong to the Telephone Company. Clerk Dale said that she would contact the utilities to see what can be done.

Mr. McGregor Bell of 320 Isabella Avenue reported on the progress at his property. He said that they had met with their architect to discuss changes to their initial drawings. He said that they had met with a second contractor, and have decided to separate demolition from the renovation and hope to sign with a contractor for demolition in the next few weeks. He said that they have begun to cleanout and remove furniture in preparation for the renovation. Mayor Richter thanked him for the update.

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

Old Business

320 Isabella Avenue: see above.

North side of Isabella Ave East end: no report.

Landscaping in Washington Park: see above.

Drainage: no report.

Eastern Washington Park town boundary: the Town attorney is continuing to locate the Flynn heirs.

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

Short-term rentals: no report. No report from the Planning Board.

Multi-family housing: No report from the Planning Board.

Clerk Dale reported that Beth Byrd, Planning Board Chair, is holding a meeting on Thursday, June 15, 2023, at 6:30 pm in the Municipal Building to discuss these issues as well as the survey conducted regarding ARPA grant funds usage.

Washington Park tree cut on College Avenue: no report.

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: Mayor Richter said that a letter from the Planning Board had been distributed to the residents about ARPA grant uses. Ms. Isabel Farrell said that there were 72 surveys returned with 238 recommendations for usage of American Rescue Plan funds. There will be a Public Meeting of the Planning Board with a facilitator from the Mid-East Commission on July 18, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the Municipal Building to discuss the survey results and all other suggestions from residents for uses.

NC DOT Survey of Streets: Commissioner Bowen said that he had analyzed the two quotes from the NCDOT based on their contracted amounts with S. T. Wooten, along with the quote from Ammex Paving. He is going to contact Ammex Paving and see if he would come back and go over the whole quote again so that all the patching work would be determined at one time.

FY 2023-24 Budget: Commissioner Bowen made a motion to adopt the proposed Budget and set the Tax Rate at \$.29 per \$100.00 of valuation. Seconded by Commissioner Nash. Passed by all.

Reports

Commissioner Dale – reported that there would be an 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 eastern waterfront area and median had been treated again by the pest control company as there was some new fire ant activity.

Commissioner Nash – no report.

Mayor pro tem Peacock – said that as the FY 2023-24 budget had been adopted, he would like to discuss the men's and clerk's pay raises for the upcoming fiscal year. Commissioner Dale made a motion to raise both Mr. Askew's and Mr. Woolard's wages by \$1.00/hour effective July 1, 2023. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to increase the clerk's salary by 3% effective July 1, 2023. Seconded by Commissioner Nash. Passed by all, with the exception of Commissioner Dale who recused himself from the vote.

Commissioner Bowen – reported on streets and drainage. See above

Commissioner Cowell – reported that a dead Town tree had been removed at 114 Spruce Street by Dudley Landscaping.

Clerk's Report

Clerk Dale reported that the ad valorem taxes received last month were \$4113.90; that the Town had received \$1772.15 for the Alcoholic Beverage tax; that four tennis keys and three pickleball keys had been sold, and that one yard sale permit had been issued. The clerk reported that the Planning Board's "whitepaper" and cover letter had been distributed by hand by Mr. Askew on May 26, 2023 and that the clerk had emailed that flyer to all residents' email addresses on file. Clerk Dale reported that the Town had received \$11,190.47 in local option sales tax and \$74.76 for solid waste tax. Clerk Dale reported that Beaufort County Soil and Water would be holding summer bidding for fall cleanout of Maple Branch. Clerk Dale said that she would be on vacation from June 19 to June 23, 2023.

The clerk asked the Board if they had any further suggestions for the advertisement and job description for the clerk's position. Discussion followed regarding placement of ads in the Washington Daily News, Greenville Daily Reflector, NC League of Municipalities, and NC Job Works. Clerk Dale will post the position accordingly.

The next regular meeting will be Monday, July 3, 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