

**Town of Washington Park
Municipal Building
June 2, 2025, 7:00 p.m.**

United Bank	General Fund	\$ 464,021.85
United Bank	Capital Reserve Fund/Truck Account	82,100.00
United Bank	Capital Reserve CD	83,085.62
United Bank	Powell Bill Checking	56,411.92
United Bank	Powell Bill/Saving CD	10,981.07
United Bank	American Rescue Plan Account	97,926.34
Total		\$ 794,526.80

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. Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Rumley. Passed by all.

Public Hearing FY26 Budget: Commissioner Dale made a motion to go into a Public Hearing for comments on the proposed FY 2025-26 budget. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all. Clerk Alligood presented a brief overview of the budget. No comments were made from the public regarding the proposed budget. The Board asked what amount of fund balance the proposed budget would leave at the end of FY26; that will depend on what the Board approves in the final budget. Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to close the Public Hearing and return to the regular meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all.

Public Input: None

May Minutes and Financial Report: The May minutes and financial report were reviewed. Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to approve the minutes and financial report; seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all.

Old Business

Townscape Committee Update: Meeting notes from the May 23, 2025, Townscape Committee were reviewed (copy included with minutes). The trees on Isabella will be hand planted a few at a time. Brief discussion regarding the potential need for a push lawn mower to help maintain the island. Dudley Landscaping to install drain lines at the municipal building, pending 811 marking.

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

Resilient Coastal Communities Program grant projects:

Phase 3 – Engineering/Design of Living Shoreline

Received reimbursement from NCDEQ: \$28,510.28. Received, paid, and submitted for reimbursement May invoice from RK&K \$7,489.83. Public Open House for the Living Shoreline project scheduled for Tues. June 3 from 4:00 - 7:00 pm. On-line option has also been made available for anyone unable to attend the meeting on June 3.

Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap (CAWAG) – Wastewater Analysis: TEAMS meeting held on May 19; discussion centered around format for PER, information needed to improve chances on grant application for design/construction, connecting to the line along Brick Kiln Road. PER will provide several options for consideration.

Stormwater Analysis: awaiting decision from RCCP Phase 3 Grant application.

320 Isabella Avenue: McGregor Bell attended the meeting. He spoke with Jeff Huss (City of Washington) last week. Mr. Bell understands the decision made by the Board to proceed with condemnation but is hopeful to beat it. He anticipates meeting with Mr. Huss at the property next week to discuss what work has been done, and what is needed. Mr. Bell is still looking for the right contractor and is scaling back the scope of work to be performed. He will address the landscaping needs. The Board expressed their frustration with the pace of how things are progressing; they said they would like to see him have a sense of urgency to get a contract signed and additional work started. It was also noted that this could set a precedent; it is on a slippery slope that needs to be flipped around. Resident and neighbor, Bill Rianhard, commented his main concern is a fire hazard; he feels Mr. Bell has an obligation to his neighbors and the community to resolve the situation. Mr. Bell said with things now in motion at the City of Washington, it will be on him to act before the clock expires. He does not know if he has done enough work to pass the threshold for condemnation. He has removed the addition on the back of the house and the shed, items that were mentioned in the prior report. He will discuss that in more detail with Mr. Huss when they meet. Mr. Bell will let the Clerk know if he is able to attend the next meeting.

602 Small Street: The Town attorney sent a letter to the resident noticing a hearing for June 2 at 6:30p. On Monday afternoon (June 2) at 1:55p, the resident left a voicemail indicating she would not be able to attend the hearing tonight; she also notified Attorney Sasnett. The Board felt her not being here was an indication that she does not have a plan to address the situation. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to ask the Town attorney what needs to be done to move forward, to obtain authorization to go onto the property to assess it, and then have the work done to abate the nuisance. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all.

New Business

Budget Amendment: no amendment presented at this time

Mid-East Commission (MEC) Ordinance Review: The current agreement with the MEC to conduct an ordinance review expires on June 30, 2025. As the full review has not been completed, the agreement needs to be extended to December 31, 2025. Commissioner Rumley made a motion to extend the agreement; seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all. The Planning Board is scheduled to meet June 17 for an initial review of the ordinances. Discussion on whether or not the Board of Commissioners should attend the planning board meeting. It was decided to let the MEC present to the Planning Board first, then present the updated ordinance language to the Board of Commissioners.

FY26 Budget: Clerk Alligood updated the Board on best practices for establishing a fund balance amount. According to the LGC, no minimum amount is required. Local

governments are encouraged to determine an adequate fund balance available for their specific unit and circumstances. There is no formula to calculate; it is up to the Board on what amount or percentage they would like to establish. The Board noted they would like to set a target between \$450,000 and \$500,000 as the fund balance amount. Discussion covered concerns about natural disasters and the streamlining of FEMA; the state of and safety concerns with the playground. If the proposed fund balance is \$500,000, Commissioner Bowen suggested moving the tax rate to bring us to that amount. Mayor pro tem Peacock indicated that a decision would need to be made on another garbage truck before setting the tax rate. While two trucks will require additional costs and overhead, it would also mean each truck is being used half as much. Having a second truck will allow time for the larger truck to be worked on properly to extend its life. We will need the larger truck to continue to handle debris and a small truck would be used just for trash. In researching trucks, Mayor pro tem Peacock noted he has not seen a decent used 12yd truck and the quote for the 8yd is through the state contract. It is estimated that we have spent approximately \$80,000 on the current truck, including the purchase price; a new transmission was installed right after it was purchased. Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to buy a new garbage truck. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all. The discussion then switched to lowering the tax rate. Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to set the tax rate at \$0.15; seconded by Commissioner Rumley. Passed by all. Mayor pro tem Peacock then made a motion to approve a 3% COLA in the budget; seconded by Commissioner Rumley. Approved by all.

Public Input Procedure: Clerk Alligood proposed editing the language in the public input procedure as noted: *"If time remains after all persons who signed-up have spoken, individuals who did not sign-up will have an opportunity to speak, each being allowed three (3) minutes, until the allocated 30 minutes expires. The Town Council typically will not take any action on items mentioned during public comment, but will reserve the right to take action at the following a future Town Council Meeting."*

Commissioner Rumley made a motion to approve the proposed changes; seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all

Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Cowell: To follow-up on the Townscape Committee report, Commissioner Cowell made a request to purchase a push mower to assist with maintaining the island planting project, and any other areas that would benefit from a smaller mower. Clerk Alligood was asked to research it with PW Supervisor Todd Askew and bring information back to the Board. Also discussed a need to spray on Isabella where the crepe myrtles are coming back up; she will speak with Stuart Dudley to see what he recommends. Spanish moss on waterfront – it can be pulled out and removed in the shorter trees; a spray of ¼ c baking soda to one gallon of water will kill it, but it will still need to be removed. Ask PW staff to work on trees as they are able.

Commissioner Bowen: Update on the ditch easement beside the tot lot; the attorney is working on title work and Sorrell is working on resurveying the lot to show easement line.

Mayor pro tem Peacock: nothing to add

Commissioner Rumley: There were reports of vandalism, property damage, and one report of controlled substance in the 500 block of River Road during the month of May.

Also reached out to Sheriff Hammonds for a report each month noting patrols made through town.

Commissioner Dale: The magnolia tree beside the tennis courts has been removed; need to also remove an old dogwood that is leaning near the fence. Some residents have noted concern with the playground; discussion concerning playground upgrades that are needed. Brian Wood provided a quote of \$1,000 (\$250/ea) to have the four (4) diggers refurbished. The carousel needs a bushing, new mulch and painting will also be needed, as well as updating the benches. Commissioner Dale would like to consider spending up to \$5,000, after the new fiscal year, to address some of these needs. He asked Commissioner Rumley to make a note on the neighborhood facebook page of these plans. Commissioner Dale also noted the ditches need to be a priority now, with the start of hurricane season. There was also a comment regarding the tennis court lights being on past 11p and residents still playing. Mayor pro tem Peacock will look into getting a timer so the lights will go off at 10p.

Clerk's Report

Deposits received in May totaled \$47,116.00 (Ad Valorem / NCVTS: \$4,887.33, local option sales tax: \$12,065.09, quarterly solid waste tax: \$74.75, annual Alcoholic Beverage tax: \$1,523.55, Reimb. RCCP: \$28,510.28, Tennis/PB keys: \$55). PZA Contract with MEC – Planner Mary Archibald has been assigned to work with the Town. A No Parking sign has been ordered to place on Edgewater just passed the bridge. The July 4 holiday is on a Friday; trash pick-up will be Tuesday and Thursday that week. The July Board meeting is currently scheduled for July 7; due to vacation schedules, Commissioner Bowen made a motion to move the July 7 meeting to June 30. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all.

Closed Session: Not needed

The next regular meeting will be Monday, June 30, 2025, at 7:00 pm at the Municipal Building. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

April S. Alligood, Clerk
Town of Washington Park