

**Town of Washington Park  
Municipal Building  
April 13, 2026, 7:00 p.m.**

United Bank	General Fund	\$ 328,847.62
United Bank	Capital Reserve CD	85,985.27
United Bank	Powell Bill Checking	60,908.20
United Bank	Powell Bill/Saving CD	11,364.30
United Bank	American Rescue Plan Account	98,457.78
NC Capital Trust	Surplus Savings	<u>50,126.67</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 635,689.84</b>

**Present:** Thomas Richter, Mayor; Jeff Peacock, Mayor pro tem; Lee Bowen, Commissioner; Wade Dale, Commissioner; Trey Howdy, Commissioner

**Absent:** Vail Rumley, Commissioner

**Approve Agenda:** Commissioner Bowen made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all

**Public Hearing Ordinance Review:** Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to go into a Public Hearing for comments on the proposed changes to the Town Ordinances. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all. No one present spoke during the public hearing regarding the ordinances. 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:** **Derek Cooper** spoke about concerns with dogs being allowed to run free. He does not think it is appropriate for someone else's dog to come onto his property and is in favor of an "under immediate command" clause in the ordinances. **Deanna Armstrong** stated she was in favor of a leash law. Discussion regarding enforcement of the Beaufort County Animal Control Ordinances, specifically any language that is not a part of the County animal control ordinance. Commissioner Bowen stated he thought even if the Town adopts a separate leash law, the County would still enforce the animal control ordinance, but just not enforce the leash law. Additional discussion needed with the Town attorney.

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

**Old Business**

**320 Isabella Avenue:** Third notice was sent to homeowners notifying them of continued accrual of fines. As of April 13, the outstanding amount due totaled \$2,450. The clerk was asked to speak with the Town attorney regarding the abatement process for yard maintenance; if/when the yard becomes in violation again, is another notice and hearing process required before abating, or can the Town go in and abate after a designated timeline is given for compliance. Also inquire about the process for establishing a lien on the property for the outstanding fines.

**320 River Road:** The flag locations were not showing on the preliminary map. Mr. Sorrell will install the iron stops and update the map. The clerk can proceed with review of the property for compliance.

**RCCP Update:** Engineering/Design of Living Shoreline (LSL) – Phase 3  
Received reimbursements totaling \$35,882.41. Paid RK&K invoice, \$4,600.88. Mr. Gordon Marsh met with the Townscape Committee to discuss plantings for Site 2B (Point).

Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap (CAWAG) – Wastewater Analysis

The long-term solution of development of a sewer system may not be realistic at this time due to costs and limited grant availability. Jamie Heath, Mid-East Commission, was present to provide information on another option, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Loan program. The NC Division of Water Infrastructure (DWI) has opened an opportunity for local governments to apply for a septic pilot program through the CWSRF. The program prioritizes malfunctioning and failing systems (not systems that simply have not been maintained and need a pump out, screen cleaning, etc.). Criteria for participation is the household has to be under the State Median Household Income, which is currently \$69,904. Local governments can apply for up to \$250,000 in funds for 100% principal forgiveness (if only wanted \$100K, could ask for just that). There is a 2% loan closing fee that the Town would be responsible for; the closing fee for a \$250,000 application would be \$5,000. The town would submit invoices from septic contractors then funding would go to the septic contractor as payment for the work, not to the property owner. Grant writing services can be covered through the town's participation in the CAWAG program and grant administration is an allowable expense through the program. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. If submit an application in June, funding of the contract would be early 2027. The Town would have three (3) years to spend the funds.

There is also an option of a revolving loan program for up to \$1.5 million in funds to serve households that make over the state median household income. The loans could be no or low interest for the property owners and the 2% loan closing fee is still applicable. Charging a low interest rate to the property owner could allow the Town to recoup the loan closing costs. There is the potential that Clean Energy Fund of the Carolinas could serve as a financial backer; in the event a participant defaults on their loan, they would cover the Town's repayment.

Ms. Heath will follow up with SERCAP on development of a maintenance program, with the Clean Energy Fund being a definitive backer, and return in May to update the Board.

Stormwater Analysis – Phase 3: Field work to begin.

**Uses for Municipal Building:** The clerk conducted research at the Register of Deeds, reviewed minutes and other documents but could not find any specific documents outlining uses of the municipal building. A note was found in the April 1976 minutes which indicated the Town attorney instructed the Clerk that the municipal building could not be used for a party or private purposes. Commissioner Bowen made a motion that the Municipal Building be used for governmental and associated functions only and not personal use. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. All approved. Brief discussion on potential federal funding specifically for small communities to make improvements to city hall buildings. Additional research needed.

### **New Business**

**NCLM AIM 2<sup>nd</sup> Resolution and MOA:** The NCLM has recently received another grant award that will fund several towns participating in this cohort of the AIM program. Because this funding comes from a different source, the NCLM's legal department has requested that all participating towns approve and sign an additional agreement. The terms of this contract remain the same as the agreement approved at the March 9, 2026 meeting. Commissioner Dale made a motion to approve; Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. All approved.

**Resolution Designating Deputy Finance Officer:** While four (4) people are authorized to sign checks on behalf of the Town, one of the signatures has to be a Finance Officer or Deputy Finance Officer. During the NCLM AIM assessment, it was recommended the Board designate a Deputy Finance Officer in order to be able to sign checks in the absence of the Finance Officer. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to appoint the current signatories on the general fund checking account, Mayor Richter, Mayor pro tem Peacock, and Commissioner Lee Bowen, as Deputy Finance Officers for the purpose of signing checks in the absence of the Finance Officer. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. All approved.

**Resolution Designating Bank Depositories:** During AIM training, it was noted each governing board of a local government shall designate banks or trust companies in NC as official depositories for their local government funds. Since the Town recently opened an account with the NC Capital Management Trust (NCCMT) company, they need to be designated as an official town depository. Additionally, when the Town's other accounts (General Fund, Powell Bill and CDs), were first opened, they were with First South Bank. Since they merged and the accounts are now with United Bank, they also need to be designated as an official town depository. This will bring the Town into compliance with GS §159-31. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to designate United Bank and NCCMT as official bank depositories for the Town of Washington Park. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. All approved.

**Ordinance Review:** Discussion covered various general topics of areas to address in the ordinance review, such as a leash law, contractor debris, golf carts and ADUs. Following the discussion, Board members decided to compile and provide the clerk with a list of their thoughts, comments, and edits by April 27. That information will then be compiled for the Board to review and discuss at the May 4 meeting, with an anticipated adoption of the ordinances at the June 1 meeting.

### **Commissioners' Reports**

**Commissioner Dale:** Ordered four new benches for the playground. Waterfront has been sprayed. Jimmy Spain told him about an issue with his neighbor's dog. It was suggested he contact Beaufort County Animal Control to report the incident.

**Commissioner Rumley:** The clerk presented the safety report in Commissioner Rumley's absence. Incidents reported: March 3 - harassment on Fairview Avenue; March 8 - suspicious behavior on Isabella Avenue; March 28 - citizen assist on College Avenue. The Beaufort County Sheriff's Office conducted 32 drive-through neighborhood checks in March.

**Mayor tem Peacock:** Continuing research on way to repair wind screens on tennis court.

**Commissioner Bowen:** No update on the drainage easement for 404 College Avenue.

**Commissioner Howdy:** Solicited bids from six (6) potential arborists; received two (2) which were handed out for review. Most trees in the Park are old and getting older; need to propose language on addressing tree concerns and send to the Townscape Committee for their thoughts. Met on site with an arborist and walked the Point property; Townscape committee member(s) present. The arborist thinks in spite of what the coastal organizations say, the pines need to go. Received three requests for tree removal: pine tree on College Avenue, will not be removed; one tree on Shorewood Drive, will be removed; and one on Beech St. is not dead but still needs to be replaced. The tree on Beech is a \$10 tree. The Board gave consent for that tree to be removed and replaced by the homeowner, at the homeowner's expense.

The tree mentioned at last month's meeting (Isabella) has now branched out and does not appear to be dead. However, a large limb did recently fall from the tree. That tree is scheduled to be taken down. Discussion to continue to use Dudley Landscaping and develop a relationship with an arborist to use when needed.

Derek Cooper provided comments on behalf of the Townscape Committee: funding from the state for a tree assessment is no longer available. The Committee continues to work on developing a list of trees that can be planted in the right of way.

#### **Clerk's Report**

**Deposits** received in March totaled **\$24,387.07** (Ad Valorem / NCVTS: \$5,999.32; Local Option Sales Tax: \$15,348.69; Qtr. Utilities Sales Tax: \$2,929.06; Tennis Court Keys: \$110). Provided **Zoning Letters of Compliance**: storage building 215 College Avenue, 413 Isabella Avenue; fence permit 410 Isabella Ave; driveway permit 607 Small St. Paid fee for **fall Municipal Election**: \$1,940.85. **Mailbox/lock box installed** at municipal building; allows residents to securely leave documents for the office. **Ethics Training – MEC**: April 21; additional training dates forthcoming. No applicants for the **Washington Electric Utilities Advisory Board**. Reached out to the County re: nutria and beaver; Beaufort County now participates in the **North Carolina Beaver Management Assistance Program (BMAP)** administered by USDA Wildlife Services and NC Wildlife Resources Commission. The local BMAP representative is Tim Wilson. He did an initial visit and said there was nothing of concern noted on the property. Bruce Taylor will be **working part-time with the Town** this summer. Working on **budget prep** for presentation at the May meeting.

**Closed session:** Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to move into closed session. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. All approved.

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

Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. All approved.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, May 4, 2026.

April S. Alligood, Clerk  
Town of Washington Park