

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT

Executive Department



MEETING DATE:	September 8, 2026
PROJECT:	Consideration of Public Arts Committee Recommendation to Purchase a Sculpture Created by Walter Palmer (Fiscal Impact: \$23,000)
PROJECT MANAGER:	Chris Forster, MPA, CPFO, CGFM, Assistant Town Manager

REQUEST:

Town Council consider approval of the Public Arts Committee (PAC) recommendation to purchase a sculpture by Walter Palmer.

BACKGROUND:

The Public Arts Committee was established in October 2023 to carry out the Council approved public art policy. The committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Council on publicly funding public art or art to be placed on public property.

Staff received an option to purchase a sculpture by Beaufort County artist Walter Palmer. The artist has been creating artwork for over 40 years featuring his signature whimsical birds, with installations throughout the United States, Europe and the Caribbean. The purchase price for the piece is \$23,000. The sculpture consists of a base of wooden pylons with three seated birds made from bronze and resin. The larger bird is reading a book to two smaller listeners.

Considering the theme and wishes of the artist, the Public Arts committee would like the artwork to be located on Town property at the Bluffton Branch Library. There is another offer on the piece, so with a sense of urgency, the Committee would like to purchase the artwork and store it until a specific location has been finalized.

NEXT STEPS:

Approve, approve with conditions, or deny the recommendation to purchase the sculpture by Walter Palmer.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Design Graphics
2. Proposed Motion