

December 31, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR: BOARD OF ALDERMEN

MEMORANDUM FROM: WALTER ECCARD

SUBJECT: 2024 REVIEW

The year 2024 was a year of growth and progress. This report lists some of the many accomplishments the Board can be proud of.

Turning first to the budget. As we prepare for the major projects described below, it is important to understand that, due to conservative budgeting over an extended period, the Town is in a strong financial position. We ended the 2023-24 fiscal year with a surplus of \$1,049,608. For the past 5 years the Town has reported surpluses of a combined \$2,227,501. As of December 17, 2024, the General Fund had a balance of \$ 8.583 million and the enterprise fund had a balance of approximately \$ 7.8 million. This is usually the low point for the general fund as substantial property tax receipts are received in January and February.

For the current fiscal year, we increased property taxes by 2.4 cents to a total of thirty-one cents per hundred. To put this in perspective, 5 years ago our tax rate was 35.5 cents per hundred. It should be noted that during this period there was a reevaluation that resulted in an increase in property values for most Shallotte taxpayers.

In many respects 2024 was a year of preparation for several major projects. Phase 1 of Mulberry Park will be completed in 2025 as will the addition of the kayak launches to the riverwalk. For the Riverwalk expansion approximately \$680,000 remains from grants received from the State. This is more than enough to cover the remaining costs for the kayak project.

For Mulberry Park/ Price Landing approximately \$2.1 million remains from State grants. The Shally Shuttle will begin operation in January 2025, and will be the first circulating transit system in Brunswick County. Significantly, for the first two years, individuals will be able to use the service at no cost.

Significant work took place on the new administration building, meeting chamber and Police Station. The Town hired an architect and has made significant progress on the design of this new building. We are in the process of hiring a construction manager at

risk. Once that firm is selected, our current schedule calls for us to begin construction by the end of 2025.

In addition, we are working on a collector street study with GSATS (Grand Strand Area Transportation Study—our MPO) that will be completed in 2025. That study will be helpful in ensuring future growth is well planned.

The fees collected for new construction are another indication of the substantial growth that has taken place and continues. For 2024, total fees collected totaled over \$1.048 million with over 115 permits for new homes. This continues the growth that took place in 2023 when a total of \$1.1 million was collected. At the present time 102 applications for new sewer collections have been issued. This is a 19% increase over sewer permits issued in 2023. All of this indicates substantial growth in 2025 and beyond.

2024 was an active year for the Parks and Recreations Department as they continued to expand events for Town citizens. There were 7 summer markets and 3 holiday markets (which featured over 50 vendors, live music, food trucks and pictures with Santa). There were 12 summer concerts (an increase over 2023), an Easter event with over 1500 participants, a Christmas parade, employee lunches and much more.

The Fire Department answered approximately 1030 calls in 2024. In addition, the Fire Department continues to be the only Department in Brunswick County with performance results that are designed to provide timely response to medical and fire emergencies. In keeping with the Town's transparency goal, these results are published monthly.

The Police Department also was very busy with over 14,400 calls. Significantly a citizen volunteer corps was established and now has 24 members who provided 1740 hours of service in 2024. These additional resources were extremely useful in expanding coverage during town events and other special events.

Public Works answered over 330 sewer service calls, inspected 19,270 linear feet of new sewer lines, and 10,230 linear feet of new roads in addition to their daily work for the Town. The landscaping and ground crew did excellent work and from the numerous comments I have received, their work is appreciated by the citizens of Shallotte. They provide exceptional service to the Town and its residents.

In summary 2024 was a stellar year serving the citizens and businesses of Shallotte. We are fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated work force.