

Kramer's Korner

By the time you are reading this (in order of importance) the ducks will be flying south, the Phillies will be World Series Champions, and we'll all be making Thanksgiving Day plans. As Meatloaf says, "Two out of three ain't bad."

FEMA projects. An update on some of the expenditures utilizing these \$3.2 million in FEMA funds:

- **New Ladder truck for the Fire Department.** We have executed a purchase and have a new 100-foot aluminum mid-mount ladder truck ordered and paid for. Fire Chief Jason Baker believes that this is our best option for firefighting in town. One of the main benefits is the aluminum ladder structure, which is a vast improvement over the steel ladder we have had for 20 years that has caused considerable expense with corrosion maintenance issues. This truck will be in production for up to 24 months. Upon receipt, we will sell the one we have now. The town saved approximately \$57,000 by ordering it within 30 days of the bid submission. The total cost was \$1,763,968. Because we are using federal funds, we went through an extensive effort to ensure all federal and state procurement policies were followed.
- **New radios for the Fire and Police departments.** We received bids in mid-October to purchase new hand-held and vehicle-mounted radios for both the Police and Fire departments. These radios will have both VHF and 800 MHz capability, the latter being a standard within the North Carolina Department of Public Safety for emergency management. More importantly, perhaps, these radios will offer greater reliability for our first responders and considerably better interoperability with the county and state during a natural disaster. At the time of this writing, the board has not yet approved the purchase agreement, but I anticipate this within the next month.
- **New roof for town hall.** As I write this, we are close to completing a request for proposals to put out bid solicitation to install a new metal roof at town hall. Anyone familiar with the present condition of the shingles knows why this is necessary. We are being very exact with specifications because a properly manufactured and installed metal roof will provide protection for decades, but a bad metal roof is worse than a shingled roof. We hope to have a contractor selected in November.
- **New equipment building for the Public Services Department.** Our next priority using these FEMA funds will be a storage building for Sonny Cunningham's equipment. This will go on the present site of the dog park. Current plans are to move the dog park over to a parking area at town hall.

Regarding all of the FEMA-approved expenditures: The estimates we made late in 2020 in our initial submission to FEMA in January 2021 are, as anyone would expect, falling short of what the actual expenses are today. We have seen costs approximately 20% higher than what we discussed nearly two years ago. This means that we will likely have to scale back on the expenditures first listed here in previous articles. Again, all of these FEMA purchases must be related to public safety, disaster preparation and disaster response.

Salter Path Road watermain replacement. We have mailed letters to all property owners on the south side of the highway from Willow Road to the Atlantic Beach border. We have also been in direct contact with the commercial properties on the far eastern end of town. We hope to have the bids out soon on this and get this project done this winter, well before next summer season.



Storm water sheet-flowing south to north on Holly Road to the normal flood-prone areas on the east end of town during Hurricane Ian. —Photo by Brian Kramer

North Carolina Resilient Community grant and project design. We have accepted a proposal from an engineer to help us design roadway improvements on five streets on the eastern end of town to alleviate flooding during tropical and heavy rain events. This will entail design of paving with a 2% crown to the east and west and the installation of very slight infiltration swales on the town right of way. This project is for design only, and we will seek a grant in the future for installation. We are trying to prevent the runoff of rain down into the routinely flooded areas of these roads, which include Juniper, Yaupon, Willow, Holly and Cedar. The photo here was taken during Hurricane Ian and shows what happens on these roads each time we see heavy rain.

Audit of town finances. At the Board of Commissioners meeting on November 9 at 6 p.m., we will have our annual briefing by Martin Starnes and Associates of Hickory. Here you will hear about the status of our reserves and other key indicators of the town's financial position. If you cannot make it to the meeting, it will be broadcast via webinar, as all board meetings are. Contact Town Clerk Charlie Rocci at clerk@townofpks.com to sign up for this webinar.

Updated staff contact list. We have been able to go back to our former extensions since the lightning strike. Below is contact information for the town staff with current telephone extension information.

Brian Kramer Town Manager (252) 247-4353, ext. 16 manager@townofpks.com	Julie Anderson Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director (252) 247-4353, ext. 14 janderson@townofpks.com
Jason Baker Chief of Fire/EMS Department (252) 247-2268, ext. 30 jbaker@townofpks.com	Sonny Cunningham Public Services Director (252) 723-0055 scunningham@townofpks.com
Jim Taylor Building Inspector (252) 247-4353, ext. 18 biceo@townofpks.com	Ryan Thompson Chief of Police (252) 247-2474, ext. 20 rthompson@townofpks.com
Lois O'Leary Tax Collector (252) 247-4353, ext. 12 taxcollector@townofpks.com	Charlie Rocci Town Clerk/Planning Administrator (252) 247-4353, ext. 11 clerk@townofpks.com
Paige Taylor-Ward Permit Technician/Admin Assistant (252) 247-4353, ext. 10 admin@townofpks.com	Shelia Bupp HRO/Public Safety Admin (252) 247-2268, ext. 10 PSBAdmin@townofpks.com