



TOWN OF CHILHOWIE

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TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT TO MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL NOVEMBER 10, 2015

Transitions in Police Department through Classification Plan and Police Officer Opening

You have in your agenda package an October 22, 2015 letter from me to Sergeant Aaron Smith where I accepted Chief Steve Price's recommendation that he be promoted to Lieutenant from the position of Sergeant. As you recall this position opened up when Assistant Chief Rick Romans retired on November 1. The Chief recommended to Council that the new position replacing the Assistant Chief be a Lieutenant and not an Assistant Chief (Grade 17 compared to 18) due to the relative inexperience of the potential replacements to the retiring officer. Council accepted the Chief's recommendation and authorized him and me to proceed in filling the position.

As I have stated before the Classification Plan was well suited to address this situation, as with all others. It allowed a systematic process where the promoted Sergeant was compensated for the extra responsibilities by going up the Grade 13 to 17. The pay for the position was still less than the retiring officer by several thousands of dollars which was fair to the retiring officer, considering his years of service to the town and experience, and was a net savings to the Town.

Regarding the Police Officer I Position, the Chief went through the applications and vetted the top candidates. We are fortunate that Officer Ben Dillow applied for the job and was offered the job. Officer Dillow accepted the job and will begin as a Police Officer II (since he had four years experience with the Chilhowie Department several years ago, as opposed to a Police Officer I). Officer Dillow previously had been an officer with the Town of Marion for about two years. He will begin November 23.

Advertisement for Bids / Proposal on Sewer Relining

You have in your agenda packet a copy of the "Request for Bid Proposal" for the Sewer relining project in the area south of Valley Health Care Center and east of Loaves and Fishes on Pine Avenue. As you recall the line is experiencing severe infiltration and inflow (I&I) problems and is surcharging at several points under and near the Norfolk Southern Railroad Track. Attached in your agenda packet are two pictures of the area showing the surcharges after heavy rainfall and a drawing of the project area.

The project is one of relining, instead of line replacement since a significant amount of the line needed to be replaced is either under or on Norfolk Southern right-of-way. Getting permits for a dig there for a new sewer line would be time consuming or nearly impossible, not to mention the high cost.

As you remember the Town applied for funding from the Mt. Rogers PDC (PDC) through the Southwest Virginia Water and Wastewater Fund. Council passed a resolution supporting the funding application in July. We received notice of funding on the project in October. The Town has a one eighth match on the funding.

In the advertisement I asked interested parties to submit both a bid price and proposal concerning the qualifications and experience of their firm. Sewer relining is a fairly new procedure in this area, and not as easily done as awarding a contract on a cost per foot in normal sewer replacement project. I wanted to insure that the Town would get a qualified contractor by making the award on a cost per foot basis *and* from the standpoint of the firm's qualifications.

Issuance of Notice of Award on H.L. Bonham Tourism Trail

You have in your agenda packet an October 28 notice of Award to King General Contractors Inc. of Bristol. It appears that the contractor has met all the requirements of the Virginia Department of Highways (VDOT) and we are not ready to move forward with the project.

In addition to, and related to, submitting the documentation that the Notice refers to I believe the contractor has to get his bonding together including Payment Bonds and Performance Bonds. After that information is secured the Town will then issue a Notice to Proceed.

Sometime in the near future a Pre-Construction Conference will be held on the project. I anticipate it being held before the end of the year. It will be interesting to see how much construction can be done during the winter. I anticipate some can be done, particularly on the trail, but I am sure most of the work will not be done until late winter / early Spring of 2016. While the delay of having rebid the project cost us about two good construction months, the project will be moving forward soon after being on the books and unrealized for at least eight years.

Insurance Situation with Applying Bio Solids (Sludge)

We have been addressing recently a situation on liability insurance on land applying our sludge. As I understand it the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is requiring localities that land apply the sludge to have a liability policy of at least \$2 million unless it can prove it is sufficiently "solvent" (for lack of a better word) using a DEQ formula in case of some pollution claim. We apply approximately 125 tons of sludge to a nearby farm in the Cleghorne Valley Section once a year.

The Virginia Municipal League Insurance Pool (VMLIP) does not offer coverage of this type. But they do have an affiliated company that we are getting together information to get a quote. The DEQ formula mentioned above is a very complicated one. Clerk Treasurer Marlene Henderson is working on that formula in an attempt to see if we are compliant for DEQ standards. Without getting into much detail that are two categories we can "self administer" the test involving deficits or surpluses, outstanding debt to revenues, budget expenditures, etc. If we find ourselves compliant under DEQ standards then we simply write a letter to that effect, sign it, and then the issue is over.

If that is not the case then we will have to compare the premium of the new pollution policy and compare that to the cost of taking the sludge to an approved land field in the Bristol, Tennessee area to see which is cheaper. We will keep you informed on this situation.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Employees Gain Higher Certifications

I was very pleased to see two of our employees at the sewer treatment plant have gained higher certifications in that field. You have in your agenda packet two November 4 letters from me to Leroy Sullivan and Luke Lowe acknowledging

their accomplishments in passing their wastewater operators certifications. Luke gained his Class III certifications and Leroy his Class II. A Class II is as high as a Chilhowie employee can reach because the plant is rated a Class II plant.

These certifications are not easy to obtain. You have to be well versed in chemistry, math, biology, chemistry to name a few disciplines. You also have to work at least six months to a year gaining experience at a licensed plant before you can advance in each certification starting with a Class V and advancing to a Class I. I am sure that even if you had a PHD in the field that person would still have to work out their experience requirements to a significant degree, and pass the tests, before receiving the wastewater certifications.

Employees with the proper sewer and water certifications are very difficult to find and / or develop because of the experience requirements and rigors of the job. At my previous employer because of a retirement and two job transitions within three months we had gotten to the point that we had only one properly certified water operator at the water treatment plant. If something had happened at the town springs to force the water treatment plant to operate full time (which had happened in the past with some frequency) we would have had to issue a boil water notice. We operated under that threat for over nine months because we could not find anyone, anywhere (I even tried contracting from an engineering firm) to fill that void with the proper certifications. It took that long before the newly hired employees passed the test(s) to gain the proper certification. So, I have learned that lesson from experience and know the Town is fortunate we have these employees.

The employees advanced two grades each in the pay and classification plan, from a Grade 4 to Grade 6 and Grade 6 to Grade 8. The increases in monetary terms were about \$1,400 and \$1,800 annually for each employee. This again shows the value of the plan in that the pay progress is on a set schedule instead of an arbitrary amount that could change from time to time, employee to employee.

Public Works Projects

The Public Works crew did an excellent job this month in replacing a water line of about six hundred feet on the west end of Town. The line had to be reconnected to about six residences.

The crew is patching utility cuts and pot holes November 5. They will begin replacing a sewer line off about 200 feet on Orchard Avenue in the near future and then start replacing a water line of about 300 feet on Fern Lane near Apple Valley Trailer Park. We will begin installation of the budgeted and planned on sewer line off Midnight Drive this winter or early Spring. The Public Works Department has been delayed in beginning many of these projects due to the failure of the Mill Creek Water Plant the past several months. Now that the urgency has been mitigated we are now we are beginning to catch up on other projects.

Proposed New E-911 Agreement

County Administrator Michael Carter asked each of the Town Managers of the county to meet with him and his staff on the proposed E-911 agreement on November 4. I believe we have worked out on a new agreement on the staff level that is fair to both the county and town financially, and provides a framework for future cooperation and planning. I am very pleased with what we orally discussed and agreed on, although I have not seen the new draft at this writing. The new proposed agreement will be redrafted and sent to each of the towns in the near future. I will present it to the Town Council on December 10 for your consideration. More on that in the future.

Football and Cheerleading Recreation Program Reports

You have in your agenda packet a report on the Town's 2015 Football Recreation Program prepared by Football Director Junior Clemons, Cheerleading Director Vonda Alison and compiled by Human Resources Employee Felicia Eller. As you

can see we had 104 football participants in three divisions. 68.3% of the football participants had Chilhowie addresses. Cheerleader leading had 81 participants, of which 66.7% had Chilhowie addresses.

Football and Cheerleading is one of the four sports the Town sponsors including wrestling, and boys and girls basketball. In addition to new overtures we made recreation this year, including background checks, and \$1,000 payments made to Directors following completions of their seasons, we also asked for an end of program report which is included for your review.

Respectfully Submitted and Happy Thanksgiving,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.
Town Manager