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Town Manager's Report to Mayor and Town Council

July 11, 2019

Update on Farmer's Market Project

As you already know a Notice to Proceed was issued on the project on June 27. The project has until September 27 to achieve Substantial completion, and 30 days later until October 27, 2019 to achieve Final Completion.

On July 1 we had the pre-construction meeting attended by Dennis Amos of Hurt and Profit (HP), Angela Wolfe of Mt. Rogers PDC and Jay Keen, Randy Sturgill, Ron Cahill of the Town's staff, me, and Bobby Taylor of Taylor construction. You have a copy of that outline in your agenda. Several topics arose during the meeting. Bobby stated that the gauge of the roof was far too big and if built as speced the color availability would be very limited. He suggested going to a narrower gauge at 24 which he stated would be entirely sufficient. He even stated that that gauge is even larger than the new Blue Ridge Knife building roof. He said there would a cost saving and will he work up that information and saving in a letter to Dennis as a change order.

Also discussed was the bathroom(s). In the plans are one bathroom stubbed out from the slab. Bobby Taylor stated that if a second bathroom was built it would be very advantageous to lay the slab and plumbing while this construction is going on. That item is not included in the contract. After discussion the contractor and engineer will be working up a basic design for the second bathroom including footers, slab and rough plumbing. This additional cost could be put against the savings in the reduction of the roof grade and made into Charge Order Number 1. Hopefully when submitted and reviewed the differences in costs will come close to breaking even.

Other administrative issues were settled. These included the date of the monthly progress meetings, cutoff date for monthly work payment requests, retainage and payments submittals. Also discussed were the two plaques that will be installed on the building including the Will Walker Memorial.

Downtown Revitalization Project

The Downtown Revitalization Committee met on June 25 for the first time in a couple of months and several issues were addressed. As you know the façade portion of the Project has not been done. We have formally bid the project with no bidders twice and asked for quotes a third time off a bidder list with no success. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will require some type of work done there before the project is closed out.

A contractor from the from the Abingdon area came to the meeting and expressed interest in the project. Angle Wolfe of the PDC is planning to solicit contractors again late summer for the project to be started in the Fall of 2019. The contractors we have spoken to thinks that is a good time line along with the contractor mentioned above in Abingdon. That contractor mentioned above that the specifications done on the buildings were very informative and thorough and among the best he has seen. I was glad to hear that from a contractor because I was afraid the quality of the specs was one reason contractors had not bid on the project.

Concern was brought up by a couple individuals at the meeting about the height of the new lamps and the signs for the crosswalk. Regarding the heights of the five lamps, they were designed by HP over a year ago, along with American Electric Power, and the approximately 19 foot height was designed to give maximum light coverage. Additionally the lights were designed that height to mitigate any truck or large vehicles hitting the lamps and destroying them.

I also think the height of the lamps in relation to existing eleven or so overhead wires exacerbates that situation. But as you know the cost of the consolidation of those wires was found to be cost prohibitive and was not pursued.

Regarding the signs at the cross walk sign those signs were put in to Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) traffic division installed those signs based on their specifications. I have noticed the same size signs at pedestrian crossings at several locations including at the crosswalk at the Abingdon Farmer's Market. Perhaps smaller signs could be installed and I will inquire about that. However, I would be very cautious about removing those signs, particularly on a VDOT street, and have that liability particularly if some incident would happen at that location.

2020-21 Transportation Alternative (TA) Application through VDOT

You have in your application packet a copy of the pre application for VDOT's 2020-21 TA program. The deadline for submission of the pre application was July 1.

I spoke of this application briefly at Council's budget adoption meeting on June 27. I had attended an application workshop in Wytheville on April 10 on the project. Soon after that I met with Tim Mullins of Thompson and Litton and Angela Wolfe of Mt. Rogers PDC to look over some potential projects. As you know Tim was the project engineer on the East Lee Highway Project and Angela the Project manager. At a suggestion of a staff member here we looked at a project extending an new sidewalk, curb and gutter from the end of the recently completed project on East Lee Highway at Church Avenue to Walton and connecting to Main Street.

Tim Mullins thought this would be an excellent project for several reasons. So do Angela Wolfe and I. The project is new construction instead of replacement and is on a busy arterial route (Highway 11 / East Lee Highway). This will score a lot of points for safety improvements. The project also connects several significant points and areas. These include the newly revitalized downtown area, the Old High School / library and the farmer's market. Additionally, and as importantly VDOT said they are looking most favorably at projects in the \$300,000 to \$400,000 range. As you can see by the attached project budget, the project estimate is \$346,566, almost exactly in the middle of what VDOT is looking for.

Several more steps have to be achieved before the final application is submitted. As with VDOT projects of this type the Town would be responsible for 20% of the cost, or approximately \$69,313. If the project was funded it would occur in the next fiscal year, 2020-21 and not this one. Planning, and thinking ahead, has to begin now for the project to occur in 2020-21.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.
Town Manager