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Town Manager's Report to Mayor and Town Council

March 12, 2020

Update on Mill Creek Regional Water Treatment Plant Project (WTP)

You have in your agenda packet two set of letters on the Mill Creek WTP Project. One set of letters, dated February 17, dealt with notices to the contractor and bonding companies that the owners are considering declaring a Contractor Default. The second set of letters dated February 20, to the contractor, manufacturer and bonding company notified them of continued defective items following a Warranty Inspection. All these letters were prepared by the Town's and Washington County Service Authority (WCSA) attorneys in accordance to contractor documents.

The February 17 letters dealt with three bonds dealing with Liquated Damages, and Owner Acceptance Tests. We contend that the former resulted from the contractor being several months overdue at \$580 per day and for warranty items. The other two involve the contractor failing to meet the Owner's Acceptance Test, and the manufacturer failing to meet the same. These were sent to the contractor, manufacturer and bonding companies.

The February 20 letters dealt with a listing of the items that were still defective at the WTP following the Warranty Inspection. These were to the contractor and manufacturer, along with notification to the engineer.

An attorney for Evoqua Water Technologies contacted me the week of March 2 about these letters. I have put him in touch with our attorney. It is our hope we can meet soon with all involved.

Meeting on the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) I-81 Turn Lane Project

On February 11 I attended a VDOT meeting in Bristol on the Interchange Turn Lane Project on I-81. This was a planning meeting involving any number of VDOT personnel and disciplines.

As I understand the project it will involve installing a single turn lane under the interstate and extending to at point to accommodate the off and on ramps on I-81. The existing metal barriers will be removed under the interstate bridge and replaced with concrete barriers that will use a smaller footprint and can be placed closer to the bridge supports. This will allow room for the center lane. In addition, the on and off ramps of I-81 will be widened to the inside to accommodate the new center lane.

I inquired about room for pedestrian traffic. I was told there was not enough room under the bridge to accommodate that, and that if there were additions to the project it might make the project be sent back for more planning. However, VDOT said they would take another look.

The project, when finished, is designed to improve the flow of traffic in a north / south direction on Route 107 and ease congestion of traffic on the off ramps from I-81. I believe the project is set to be advertised in early 2022.

Execution of Contracts on the Downtown Facades Project

As I reported to you in earlier emails we signed and executed the contracts between Walberg Construction, Inc. and the Town a couple of weeks ago. The two documents are the Notice to Proceed and the actual contract agreement.

The Notice to Proceed is effective on March 10. The contractor has 180 days to reach Substantial completion. The project will be on the north side of Main Street.

The contract between Wallberg and the Town is in the amount of \$80,595. Property owners can match that amount dollar for dollar by doing existing work during the time of the contract, or by having receipts within two years of the contract date.

Once this project is going in earnest, we will get bids or quotes on the south side of Main Street and hopefully start that project in late Summer / Early Fall, depending on interest and available funding.

Meeting with Vendors on Farmers Market

On February 23 I attended a meeting with Market Manager Ron Cahill and four vendors of our farmers market. Ron had sent invitations out to all the vendors who participated at the market last year. A copy of that letter was attached.

Several issues were discussed at the meeting including number of times to hold the market, start date, charging, arts and crafts and reservations. Regarding the start date of the market, April 23 was chosen. Although there will be no harvested crop then, of course, one of the vendors wanted that early date to be able to sell spring plantings like onions, cabbage, beets, etc. then.

Regarding the times during the week to hold the market the group of vendors were unanimous that it should be held once a week, on Thursdays as before. They were concerned if it was held more often the customers would become confused on the dates and the vendors had obligations at other places.

The vendors were good with the Town charging \$5 for every market day. As far as arts and crafts they saw no problem with have those items sold in conjunction with the food from the start of the market until about July when produce started to come in in earnest. Regarding spot reservation, it was my understanding that that it was acceptable to them for the spots to be on a first come, first-serve although they also wanted to think about it more.

Ron will make a full report at the March Council meeting and ask for motions to proceed with policies.

Letters to Smyth County on Funding Requests

You have two letters in your agenda packet, dated February 13, requesting funding from the Smyth County. These letters were due February 15.

The first and most impactful request deals with Emergency Medical Services (EMS). As you are well aware this issue has become more and more important as the years go on. We have been pressing the Board of Supervisors more and more over the years to shoulder up on their responsibilities for providing EMS support. They have been responding to a degree the last several years. This budget year we are more hopeful, especially after a meeting the Towns had with the new Board earlier this year.

The letter for the EMS funding was cosigned and co-developed by Chief David Haynes. As you can see, we asked for a substantial jump from \$93,777 to \$419,956 which could add another full shift. At present shift and staffing approximately \$189,983 in additional funding would be needed to balance the Fire and EMS budget.

You also have in your agenda packet my letter asking for recreation funding to be increased from \$4,500 to \$5,625.

Bids on Stage Roof at Recreation Park

On March 3 at 3:00 we opened bids on the roof at the Recreation Park. A copy of the bid tab is in your packet.

We received four bids ranging from \$6,350 to \$14,690. We estimated the cost to be \$12,500 in this year's budget. We are awaiting on the low bid contractor to provide a Certificate of Insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 as required by the bid, before we recommend award at the Council meeting. If that certificate is not received, we will go to the next low bidder.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.
Town Manager