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TOWN OF CHILHOWIE

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Fire Chief: C. David Haynes
Building Official: Randy Sturgill
Director-Recreation/Special Events: Ron Cahill

Town Manager's Report to Mayor and Town Council July 9, 2020

Proposal From County Emergency Management Committee on Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for Towns and County

On June 16 Charlie Harrington, County Emergency Services Director, presented a report to the "Smyth 12 Group" consisting of elected and appointed officials of the four jurisdictions of the County. A copy of his report is included in your agenda packet and is entitled "Smyth County Fire and EMS Proposal".

The committee was headed up by Charlie but included a group of Fire and EMS personnel from departments throughout the County. Fire and EMS Chief David Haynes represented the Town. The committee recommends that the County responsibilities be divided up between the eastern and western part of the county, certain agencies disbanded and incorporated into existing agencies. Those recommendations are listed on the first page of the report.

The report states that for the western side of the county \$869,919 would be required to fund the Town of Chilhowie Fire and EMS Department annually. The eastern side of the County will be the Town of Marion's responsibility and will require \$946,862. Also in the report you have the numbers presented, although somewhat hard to follow.

The Town of Chilhowie's position in this process has been that it is the County's responsibility to pick costs up on EMS Services for areas in the County. That has also been Marion and Saltville's position. Marion's position, as I understand it, has been to have the EMS System run under the umbrella of the County.

About a year ago the County asked for requests for proposals (RFP) to cover the entire County with EMS Services. I believe the lowest cost estimate came in at the \$5,000,000 level. The proposal made by the committee would cost the County approximately \$1,816,781, about \$3.2 less than the RFP submission.

Unfortunately no Supervisors attended the June 16 meeting, only Acting County Administrator Aaron Sizemore. I assume the proposal will be presented to the full Board of Supervisors in the near future.

Smyth County Board of Supervisors Funding for Fire and EMS Department

On June 30 the Board of Supervisors approved their 2020-21 Budget. In the budget there was funding for all Fire and EMS agencies in the County, of course. As we have discussed many times and negotiations are still underway, and discussed above, the three Towns are asking the County to pay their fair share for this expensive and literally life and death matter.

Aaron Sizemore told me that the County had funded the Town of Chilhowie Fire and EMS \$185,000, which includes \$92,500 for Fire and \$92,500 for EMS. We budgeted \$100,000 for this fiscal year 2020-21, so we have a windfall in this area. We received \$97,500 from the County for fiscal year 2019-20 so the increase this year is \$87,500.

The good news is the \$87,500 increase to \$185,000 from the County. That is certainly a step in the right direction, and we are pleased of the County's renewed effort. However, with the Fire and EMS's budget at \$585,361 and calls outside the Corporate limits at an annual rate of about 70%, the County's Contribution should be in the \$410,000 range.

We basically asked for that figure in our budget request to the County in February of 2020. That would have allowed us to add up six full time EMS personnel, making a full second shift, and to cover our expenses. The increase of County funding by \$87,500 to \$185,000 gives us some options, though limited compared to a greater amount requested.

As you know our EMS Department is being run to its limits, with full time, part time and volunteers. This has been exacerbated by volunteers and part timers who cannot serve during the COVID Virus. With this addition windfall, David Haynes and I will be making a recommendation to Council on ideas on extra personnel to fill this growing need.

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Sewer Evaluation System Study (SSES)

We have been working with Hurt and Proffitt personnel on a new program through DEQ that involves a comprehensive analysis of the Town's entire sewer system for infiltration and inflow (I& I) and capital needs planning. We had foreseen this opportunity coming earlier this year and budgeted \$10,000 in matching funds

Combating I&I is an ongoing problem with any sewer treatment plant. Our plant is licensed at 999,999 Million Gallons per Day (MGD). The system is fairly tight and only goes over that limit during times of high rain fall. On occasion the plant has to be shut down and discharge made in the river during very high rains and floods.

It is very important to control I & I for both the environment and costs. Discharges into the river because of I & I is not good for the environment, of course. Costs associated with treating I & I, and not raw sewage, runs up electricity costs and taxes facilities such as intake pumps, clarifiers, digesters, sludge presses and other appurtenances. Electricity alone costs about \$6,000 per month, or \$72,000 annually, for the sewer treatment plant and accompanying pump stations.

The application is due on July 3. It is for a total of \$90,000, with the Town picking up 25% or \$22,500. As you can see I copied the first seven pages of the application, plus another one or two in your agenda. I will email the entire application to Council the week of July 6.

The timetable of the comprehensive study will be over an 18 month period as described in Section F, during wet and dry times. I think the decision for funding will be made in August by DEQ if we are awarded. If the Town is indeed funded we will have to budget for additional funds again in for fiscal year 2021 – 22. We budgeted \$10,000 for this fiscal year 2020-21.

DEQ wants the study to be very comprehensive and something so thorough that the final report could almost serve as a Preliminary Engineering Report if construction funds become available. If those funds do become available in the future, hopefully much of that money will be in grants / principal forgiveness. The Town would be positioned very well to compete for construction funds if we are awarded this SSES. Without it I am sure we would not be well positioned.

Downtown Facades Project and Bids on Phase II

You have in your agenda packet a pay request from Walberg Construction, Inc. the amount of \$20,254 for work on the Phase I project. At the monthly Progress Meeting on July 1 Walberg estimates that they will be close to completing the project by the next Progress Meeting in August. As far as payments this will take care of about 75% of the \$86,445 contract for Phase I, the north side of Main Street. The contractor has until September 10, plus unspecified rain days at the writing to complete the project.

The bids for Phase II were also due on project on July 1. This portion of the contract will involve doing the south side of Main Street, plus two remaining buildings on the northside funding permitting. We had contacted about eight contractors who had become qualified through Mt. Rogers Planning District Commission to bid on the project. Only one contractor, Walberg Construction submitted. But because of some issues with the bid submission the bid may not be in compliance. Attorney Paul Cassell is looking into that. If the bid is found to be non-compliant we will take bids again on August 5.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.
Town Manager