



Mayor: Gary L. Heninger
Council: Donna S. Blevins
Billy L. Clear
Brent Foster
Lewis Shortt
Julie Sturgill
P.J. Wolfe

TOWN OF CHILHOWIE

**325 East Lee Highway
P.O. Box 5012
Chilhowie, Virginia 24319
Phone (276) 646-3232
Fax (276) 646-3012
www.chilhowie.org**

Town Manager: John E. B. Clark, Jr.
Clerk/Treasurer: Marlene L. Henderson
Acting Police Chief: Aaron Smith
Director-Public Works: Jay Keen
Fire Chief: C. David Haynes
Building Official: Randy Sturgill
Director-Recreation/Special Events: Ron Cahill

Town Manager's Report to Mayor and Town Council September 10, 2020

Request for Proposal (RFP) for East Lee Highway Sidewalk II Project

You have in your agenda an RFP for the East Lee Highway II project, officially known as the "Chilhowie Pedestrian Connector Phase II Project" by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The project was authorized to be advertised by VDOT in August and approved by the Town Council at its August 13 meeting.

The project will stretch from the end of Phase I Project at Church Avenue along East Lee Highway and continue westward to Walton at New People's Bank, then turn south and connect with the newly renovated Main Street. It will improve connectivity with Downtown, the Farmer's Market and the Old High School/Library and at the same time correct a drainage problem at the corner of East Lee Highway and Walton. The total cost of the project, administration, engineering and construction is estimated in the \$500,000 range.

The advertisement was placed in the Smyth County News on August 26, with a submission date of the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) of September 17. The advertisement and time frame for the submission of the SOQ meets all requirements of the Code of Virginia.

Five copies of the SOQ are required. These SOQ's will be presented to the Public Works Committee in late September and graded on four criteria that include experience on similar projects, qualifications and availability of specific individuals to provide services, performance references from previous projects and proximity to project. Also to be considered will be qualifications found in a firm data sheet. I hope to present these SOQs to the Public Works Committee, the most pertinent committee I believe, and have them make a recommendation to

Council at its October meeting. Additionally, I will ask the top ranked firm to make a short presentation at Council's October meeting.

Following Council's selection of the top ranked firm, I will ask the firm to submit a contract for both the Town's and VDOT's approval. I hope this can be done by VDOT in a short turn around time and approved at Council's November meeting. I don't think the design phase should last more than 90 days which would take us to mid-winter with the project ready to bid in the Spring of 2021.

As you know we have budgeted for the engineering design of the project this fiscal year 2020-2021. It will be at 20% of cost with VDOT picking up the other 80%.

Request for Proposal on Sewer System Evaluation Study (SSES)

You also have in your agenda RFP for the SSES through the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The ad was run in the Smyth County News on August 26 with deadline for submission on September 17, as with the RFP for the East Lee II Project.

As we have discussed previously, the SSES study will do a comprehensive study of infiltration and inflow (I&I) flows into the sewer system. The study will be done in both dry and wet weather over a one year period. The Town was awarded up to \$72,000 for this study, with the Town adding up to \$18,000, for a total of up to \$90,000 for the selected firm.

The criteria for selection of the firm will be not unlike the criteria for the East Lee Project. They will be five that includes Familiarity with SSES projects; knowledge and experience with DEQ as a funder; qualification and experience of individual on project team; capability to perform services in timely manner; and, proximity to project area and accessibility to client.

I will also present the SSES SOQs to the Public Works Committee and ask them to score appropriately. They will then report their recommendation to the Council at its October 8 meeting with the high scorer making a short presentation then.

Presentation of Bids for Farmer's Market Paving Project

You have in your agenda the results of the bids on the Farmer's Market that were opened at 2:00 on August 31. We advertised the bid in the Smyth County News August 8 and 15.

We had five bidders on the project. One of the bidders did not submit the necessary documentation, namely a certificate of insurance, and at least a Class B license, so that bidder was

deemed noncompliant. The other four bidders ranged from a low of \$35,230 to a high of \$44,208.50. The low bid was from AAA Paving and Sealing from Princeton, West Virginia.

We have \$31,000 in funds dedicated to the paving from Rural Development. If Council votes to move forward that will leave a balance of \$4,230 that will need to be picked up in Town Funds.

We have not put the drainage system in yet, simply because a final grade has not been established. If Council decides to pave we will begin putting the drainage structures in and hopefully will be done by the end of this month. Paving could start in October. Rural Development has asked that the project be completed by November 17, 2020.

CARES Act Funding

You have in your agenda a packet concerning funding from the Federal Government for COVID relief and reimbursement. I briefly talked about this last month's council meeting. As you can see by the July 31 email the Town is received \$297,272, based on population, and the County and other tow Towns amounts based on population. The County has received the month and will distribute it half this quarter and then half with the quarter starting October 1, it is my understanding.

In the packet of July 31 each locality had to do an estimate on the money was proposed to be spend in categories laid out, and report to the County. We received the email in July 31 and had to report back to the County by August 10, so we put a general estimate forward. You also have a page behind that email that was compiled by new County Administrator Shawn Utt that shows a compilation of how the money is slated to be spend by all Smyth entities.

In order to support small businesses in Chilhowie, we have earmarked \$22,000 for Small Business Assistance. The total County allotment is \$600,000. The Town of Marion has a earmarked staff in place to facilitate this assistance. We have the Smyth County Chamber of Commerce as our resource for business development. We will have Executive Director Sarah Gillespie at the September 10 meeting to present a proposed program to utilize and award this money to Chilhowie businesses.

You may have seen a program called "Smyth Strong" mentioned in the Smyth County News. This program was developed by the Smyth Economic Development Authority, the Saltville Industrial Development Authority and the Chamber. Sarah will present a similar program to Council for their review. It will involve a series of businesses development programs, not unlike the "Business Boot Camp" program done previously by the Chamber. Then a stipend will be awarded to those participating businesses to compensate for losses uncured during the pandemic.

By the Town utilizing a business development program such as this it will show the Town's commitment and good will to its small businesses, not unlike what is proposed to be done with the Town of Marion. Sarah tells me the Town business assistance money could be used as an addition to the money the County gives out.

You can also peruse the rest of the spending categories that the staff helped develop, in very general terms. Also, we are slated to spend CARE funds on an emergency Fire/EMS Chief vehicle.

Fishing Pier Funding from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Partners (USFWP)

You have in your agenda packet an August 17 letter requesting funding for a fishing pier at the Recreation Park. The letter requested \$6,278.40 and we received that amount on August 19. Public Works Director Jay Keen will be working with a local contractor to begin the job in the near future. I believe the fishing pier will be constructed at the river south of shelter number 1.

This fishing pier funding is part of a partnership program between the Town of Chilhowie, the USFWP and the Upper Tennessee Round Table. To refresh Council, and perhaps introduce to newly elected Council members, the program involved cutting the edge of the river bank a distance over around a 1,000 feet to allow for better access and more river capacity; the placement of round and square boulders in the river to improve fish and hellbender habitat; the planting of trees along the edge of the bank; and, the planting of wildflowers at the eastern end of the park.

The partners provided all of the material and contractors for the project and the Town provided much of the in-kind services. You can see by my June 17, 2019 letter the extent of the Town's involvement and commitment to the project. We estimated the Town has provided \$23,430 in services up to that date.

Police Chief Search

You have in your agenda packet information relating to the Town's search for a Police Chief. The deadline for application is 4:00 on September 10. As of September 3 we have five applications. I will be able to give Council a total number of applicants at its September 10 meeting. I would like to have a Chief named in October, and on board by this first/middle of November.

The ad for the Chief was placed in the Smyth County news, Bristol Herald Courier and Roanoke Times. It is also be advertised on the Virginia Municipal League jobs board on the jobs board of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP). You also have in your agenda the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and VACP, in which a Council interview was inserted.

The VACP will also be forwarding me a questionnaire for me to forward you on what, and the qualities, you will be looking for in the next chief. As soon as I get that document I will send it to you. Additionally, will scan all the applications to the VACP after the deadline. We will also be forwarding those applicants to you.

Applications for Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

As approved at last month's Council meeting, we are advertising for two new positions for the Fire and EMS Department. This result of the County increasing their funding for the department in the amount of approximately \$87,000. The application deadline is at 4:00 on September 4. At this writing on September 3 we have four applications.

We have written job descriptions for all three levels of training for the position and incorporated in our job classification plan at Grades 9, 11 and 14. I would like to have these two positions filled and have two additional persons on board no later than October 1. By Council authorizing these positions it will help immeasurably the present staff by decreasing their individual responsibilities and work time, which has been very taxing, and help the department to maintain its excellent level of service.

Respectively Submitted,

John E.B. Clark, Jr.
Town Manager