

Virginia: At the regular meeting of the Council of the Town of Chilhowie held at the Municipal Building, June 10, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Honorable Gary L. Heninger, Mayor presiding; Councilors Donna Blevins, Billy L. Clear, F. Brent Foster Lewis W. Shortt, Jr., and P.J. Wolfe.

Absent: Julie Sturgill.

Also Present: Mr. John E.B. Clark, Jr., Town Manager; Mrs. Marlene Henderson, MMC, Clerk-Treasurer; Messrs. Paul Cassell, Town Attorney; Jay Keen, Director of Public Works; Andrew Moss, Police Chief; David Haynes, Fire/EMS Chief; and Ron Cahill, Recreation/Special Events Coordinator.

The meeting was held in the Council Chambers. Social Distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic was observed.

Mayor Heninger called the meeting to order. Lewis Shortt gave the Invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Brent Foster, second by Lewis Shortt Council adopts the regular May 13, 2021 meeting minutes. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Citizen Time:

Ms. Heather Carter, Chilhowie Library, appeared before Council to introduce the newest Library Board of Trustee member, Mrs. Nellie Harmon. Ms. Carter reported the Library is currently planning the Summer Reading Program that will take place under the Will Walker Farmer's Market and Community Pavilion. The Summer Reading Program is partnering with the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry who will provide a hot meal for those participating in the program. Ms. Carter expressed her gratitude to the Town and Mr. Ron Cahill for supporting the Chilhowie Library.

Public Hearing:

- Selling One Half Acre Lot on River Road Tax Account 53-A-78 for \$8,600 – Mrs. Marlene Henderson, Clerk-Treasurer, presented the following:

**Invitation to Bid on Surplus Land/Public Hearing Notice
Town of Chilhowie**

By order of the Chilhowie Town Council, a lot and property located on River Road has been declared surplus and available for sell. The property's tax classification is 53-A-78 and account number 96130. It contains approximately one- half acre and once held a house with an address of 160 River Road until it was demolished and removed by the Town of Chilhowie. The property is zoned Agricultural (AC). Sealed bids will be received on the property, clearly marked "River Road Lot Bid", Attention to the Town Manager, at the Chilhowie Town Hall, PO Box 5012, 325 East Lee Highway, Chilhowie, Virginia 24319 until 4:00 p.m. June 3, 2021 when they will be opened and publicly read.

At the Chilhowie Town Council meeting on June 10, 2021 at 7:00 p.m., all bids, including the high bid, will be presented to the Town Council for their consideration to sell and convey at a Public Hearing. The public will be invited to comment on the bid, and it being deposited at the stated price. The Town of Chilhowie reserves the right to refuse any and all bids.

By the Authority of the Mayor and Town Council,

John E.B. Clark, Jr.
Town Manager

Published in Smyth County News May 26, 2021 and June 2, 2021 editions.

Mayor Heninger opened the Public Hearing at 7:08 p.m.

John Clark Thank you Mr. Mayor and Mrs. Clerk, we did advertise this as she read and we received a bid from Mr. and Mrs. Luis and Martha Quirarte, 918 West Main Street, Saltville, Virginia, in the amount of \$8,600.

Paul Cassell Mr. Mayor, you should just ask for comment of disposition on the property of the bid of \$8,600, and any other comment they may have about the disposition of the property.

Mayor Heninger Any comment? We can talk too.

Paul Cassell Yes sir.

Mayor Heninger I think we have talked about it and everything and that is a large amount of money, but we have a lot tied up in it with the advertising, clean up, hauling

the house away, so I think we need to accept it and go on. That is my opinion, what is yours?

P.J. Wolfe Were there any easements? There wasn't was there?

Paul Cassell We asked our Public Works Director about that and he said there were not.

John Clark The Town bought that for a phenomenal price from Mr. Charles Keith in 2018. We asked him to remove the house and he came to us and wanted to...

Mayor Heninger And our crew tore the house all the way down. Anybody else want to speak on it?

Mayor Heninger closed the Public Hearing at 7:10 p.m.

- Leasing H.L. Bonham Building to Smyth County Chamber of Commerce – Mrs. Marlene Henderson, Clerk-Treasurer, presented the following:

Public Hearing Notice- Town of Chilhowie
Leasing H.L. Bonham Building to Smyth County Chamber of Commerce

The Chilhowie Town Council will be holding a Public Hearing to lease space in the H.L. Bonham Building, 408 White Top Road, owned by the Town of Chilhowie, to the Smyth County Chamber of Commerce, pending lease agreement. The Public Hearing will be held at the Chilhowie Town Hall, 325 East Lee Highway, Chilhowie, Virginia on Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Any citizen may attend and state their views thereon.

By Authority of the Mayor and Town Council,

John E.B. Clark, Jr.
Town Manager

Published in Smyth County News May 29, 2021 edition.

Mayor Heninger opened the Public Hearing at 7:11 p.m.

Sarah Gillespie As you all know I am the Director of the Chamber of Commerce and I have with me Mary Bagley, President and Gwen Beattie who is our upcoming President for next year and we just wanted to say thank you all so much for

thinking of us and giving us the opportunity for us to come to the Bonham House. It is a great location and a beautiful facility. I have no doubt that we will finalize the terms on the lease and make that happen and we have worked with John. As of right now we plan to have a July 1st move in date. We are working to have phones and things like that transferred over and we hope we are going to continue to do more to build that area up so it's a location that people come to so we can direct them into our Town and County and across the regions to different destinations.

Also use it for the small businesses for things that we do. Stuff we have dreamed about is having office space for small businesses and all the things that building has the potential to be, it is so big and in such a great spot and well centered in our County. I think that we will be able to do a lot with it and we are excited. Mary and I have been dreaming big and I have to reign myself back in, but we are excited. We appreciate you all so much and if you have any questions please just reach out and let us know.

Mayor Heninger

Anybody else?

Brent Foster

Do we have someone else that is going in, so Sarah is not there by herself?

John Clark

Ron is regrettably leaving, and we have hired another who I will announce tonight, Recreation/Special Events Coordinator. I have talked to this individual and told him sometime this year we will probably look at moving him down there. I will get his input on that to, but that will be along the lines of Regional Development that the deed requires to give cause for, but I do want to get some input from him but I am sure he will be fine with it.

Brent Foster

Okay.

Mayor Heninger

Will you be upstairs and downstairs?

Sarah Gillespie

Yes, so downstairs will be left largely as it is to serve as a Tourism Center as well. We have been in contact with the Virginia Tourism Association to make sure that we know all the guidelines that need to be followed to keep that open as a Tourism Center, so we keep our Interstate signage. We are still listed as a Welcome Center with Virginia Tourism and also it still gives us the ability to have County brochures in every Welcome Center across Virginia for free which is a huge asset. So, we will have downstairs largely set up as it is now, it will serve as the Tourism Center and the upstairs will

be office space for myself and I plan to hire an assistant. We hope that we will have desk space for Tourism to be there when they want to be and then office space if small businesses need desk area and if people throughout the County need meeting space it, it would really serve as an asset.

Mayor Heninger closed the Public Hearing at 7:14 p.m.

Old Business:

- Disposition of Lot on River Road – Council was requested to accept or reject the high bid for the purchase of the lot on River Road.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by Lewis Shortt Council accepts the highest bid in the amount of \$8,600 subject to adequate information to prepare a deed. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Disposition of Lease on Bonham Building – State Law requires a Public Hearing and authorize if Council would like to proceed with the preparation of a mutually agreeable lease by both parties, the Town of Chilhowie and the Smyth County Chamber of Commerce.

Motion by Lewis Shortt, second by Donna Blevins Council shall lease the H.L. Bonham House to the Smyth County Chamber of Commerce upon a mutually agreeable lease. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Adoption of 2021-2022 Budget – The total of the Proposed Budget is \$5,161,841 that includes an outside corporate limits water rate increase of 2.5%. inside corporate limits water rate increase of 5.0%, no increase for outside corporate limits for sewer and inside corporate limits sewer increase of 5.0%. These increases will be effective October 1, 2021. The budget also includes a \$0.40 increase for cigarette tax that will become effective January 1, 2022.

Motion by Donna Blevins, second by P.J. Wolfe Council adopts the 2021-2022 Budget, water and sewer rate increases and the cigarette tax rate as advertised. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Update on Downtown Revitalization Project and Submission of Pay Request 12 – The Downtown Revitalization Project is 75% complete. Pay Request Number 12 is in the amount of \$26,096.25. Of the pay request \$1,610 is from Town funds for Construction Administration fees for Hurt and Proffitt and the \$24,486.25 is the Bishop match funds.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council approves Pay Request Number 12 in the amount of \$26,096.25. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Situation with Solid Waste Pickup and Republic’s 3.6% Consumer Price Increase and Extension of Contract to December 31, 2021 - Republic agreed to forgo the 50% increase on solid waste until December 31, 2021 that was originally scheduled to become effective July 1, 2021. A meeting was held with the Town of Saltville concerning the rate increase. Mr. John Clark, Town Manager, will be working with Mr. Brian Martin, Town of Saltville Town Manager, in the near future for a possible joint Request for Proposals. The Request for Proposals may be in three parts, pricing for the Town of Saltville and Town of Chilhowie together, pricing for just Chilhowie or pricing just for the Town of Saltville. Another option is to purchase a garbage truck and staff at an estimated cost of \$350,000.
- Update on Lyons Gap Water Project – The Town of Chilhowie advertised for bids for the Lyons Gap Water Project with one bid received from Teater’s Trucking in the amount of \$64,000. The project is estimated to be completed in twenty-one days.
- Update on Sewer System Evaluation Study and Scoping and Cost and Funding Opportunity – Hurt and Proffitt has concluded the Sewer System Evaluation Study and determined the total estimated cost to rehabilitate the system is \$2,069,974. The Department of Environmental Quality has a grant funding opportunity opening for this type of project in the amount of 50%, but it is unknown at this time the maximum amount that can be applied. It is also possible other funding resources might be available.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council authorizes the Town Manager to pursue grant opportunities. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Update on Junk Car Enforcement – A total of eight inoperable vehicle notices were sent certified mail on May 10, 2021, giving the owner of an inoperable vehicle sixty days to bring the vehicle into compliance. The deadline to bring the inoperable vehicles into compliance is July 6, 2021. Two letters were returned to the Town due to the individual not signing and claiming the certified letter. At this time all but two vehicles have been brought into compliance.
- Situation with Tourism Association Vacating Building – The Smyth County Tourism Association terminated the Lease with the Town for the H.L. Bonham Tourism Center. Mr. John Clark, Town Manager, attended the Smyth County Board of Supervisors with Mrs. Janice Orr, Director of the Museum of the Middle Appalachians. Mrs. Orr stated the Town of Saltville and the Museum of the Middle Appalachians relied on the H.L. Bonham Tourism Center to direct traffic to the Town of Saltville as well as the Museum. The Smyth County Board of Supervisors took no action.

Mr. John Clark, Town Manager, reported that he along with staff conducted a walkthrough of the H.L. Bonham Tourism Center and found it to be filthy and stated the building requires a deep cleaning and pressure washing. Mrs. Sarah Gillespie, Director of Smyth County Chamber of Commerce, stated they plan to leave the downstairs area of the building as it is to serve as a Tourism Center and hopes by utilizing Ambassadors, they will find unique ways to bring the public in.

- Application of Sludge to Fox Valley Site – The Department of Environmental Quality was present at the Heath Farms while two hundred tons of biosolids were applied. The land application was successful.
- Update on Dollar General on West Main – Mr. Jay Keen, Director of Public Works, reported he received site plans that are too small to read the detail and has requested a larger print of the site plans. The property has been closed on and taxes have been received. The relocation of the water and sewer lines needs to be revisited but the project is moving forward.

- Update on Cares Act Funding on Delinquent Utility Accounts and Information on The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Funding – The Town has received \$7,146 in funds that have been evenly distributed to delinquent utility accounts. Mr. John Clark, Town Manager; Mrs. Marlene Henderson, Clerk-Treasurer and Mr. David Haynes, Fire and EMS Chief, attended a Zoom meeting concerning the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Funding and learned the Town will receive funds in the amount of \$1.7 million over the course of two years. The Town will have until 2026 to exhaust all funding within the guidelines these funds are allowed to be utilized.

New Business:

- Submission of Special Use Permit for Event at County Owned Pathway Park – Mr. Ty Lewis appeared before Council proposing to host a Rodeo October 15th and 16th, 2021 at the County owned Pathway Park. Mr. Lewis submitted the Special Use Permit and all requested documents to Smyth County and obtained approval. Mr. Lewis stated that the event would be held at the upper end of the property with parking available on the lower side of the property. There will be no parking along Highway 11 and the Middle Fork of the Holston River will be blocked off. Mr. Lewis has invited local food vendors and is planning events for children. He is seeking an event filled with family fun with enough seating for an attendance of two thousand people.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by Lewis Shortt Council approves the Special Use Permit for a Rodeo scheduled for October 15th and 16th, 2021 at the Smyth County owned Pathway Park. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Committee Reports:

- Wellness and Parks Committee – Mr. Ron Cahill, Recreation and Special Events Coordinator, submitted his resignation effective June 25, 2021. The position was advertised, and three applicants applied. The Wellness and Parks Committee met Monday, June 7, 2021 and interviewed two of the applicants. Mr. Jeff Smarr was offered and accepted the position and will begin Monday, June 14, 2021

Department Reports:

Mr. David Haynes, Fire and EMS Chief, reported the notification of the Saltville Rescue Squad dissolving, and the Town of Saltville is absorbing the department. The Town of Saltville plans to

staff two trucks daily. The Chilhowie Fire and EMS Department will still assist the Town of Saltville when in need but the call volume for Chilhowie to assist Saltville is expected to decline.

Chief Andrew Moss reported several Police Officers have been attending trainings such as Officer Reedy attended an Investigation Course, Officer Perry is attending Instructor's School, and Chief Moss was recently appointed Secretary to the Southwest Virginia Chief's Association.

Mr. Jay Keen, Director of Public Works, reported they have begun site prep for the handicap fishing pier in the Recreational Park. The Public Works Department has removed seven dump truck loads of debris from the area within the Recreation Park.

Mr. Ron Cahill, Recreation and Special Events Coordinator, reported the Senior Citizens group is working toward utilizing the Community Room again. Farmer's Market is seeing an increase in vendors and hopefully over the next few weeks will have an increase of patrons at the market. Mr. Cahill expressed his gratitude to the Town for the support received during his service to the Town.

Any Other Council Business:

Each Council member received an evaluation form to be completed to evaluate the performance of Mr. John Clark, Town Manager. The evaluations are due by June 25, 2021 and will be discussed during a closed session at the regular scheduled Council meeting July 8, 2021.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council adjourned this meeting at 8:16 p.m. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Absent	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Gary L. Heninger Mayor

Marlene L. Henderson, MMC Clerk