



**Mayor:** Gary L. Heninger  
**Council:** Donna S. Blevins  
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## ***TOWN OF CHILHOWIE***

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**Town Manager:** John E. B. Clark, Jr.  
**Clerk/Treasurer:** Marlene L. Henderson  
**Police Chief:** Andrew K. Moss  
**Director-Public Works:** Jay Keen  
**Fire Chief:** C. David Haynes  
**Building Official:** Randy Sturgill  
**Director-Recreation/Special Events:** Ron Cahill  
**Legal:** Cassel & Crewe. P.C.

### **Town Manager's Report to Mayor and Town Council March 11, 2021**

#### Lease Situation with Tourism Association and Other Issues

At the Smyth 12 meeting on February 23 discussion ensued about an anticipated additional funding request from the Tourism Association (and the Chamber of Commerce). I mentioned that additional funding would be presented to Council, but I would weigh my recommendation with the capital costs the Town will be footing in the future and had in the past. I mentioned that the Town is bound by the organizational ordinance to pay only \$2.00 per capita.

The participants then asked me to present a proposal to them to take to their respective bodies and they would then advise their Tourism Authority members. I also advised that I was going to appear before the Tourism Authority Board at its March meeting and present the need and suggestions for a new lease. I was again advised to present that to the Smyth 12 Group, and they would advise their members on the Tourism Board.

To that end you have a proposal on the needed changes our Attorney Paul Cassell advises we need in the new lease (highlighted in red). You also have in that proposal I have added as a cost sharing scenario involving all localities. That proposal states that of capital expenditures of over \$1,000 the Town of Chilhowie would pick up 25% of the charge, and the other localities the balance at a rate of 73% for Smyth, 20% for Marion and 7% for Saltville.

As I was asked I will take this proposal to the Smyth 12 meeting the end of this month and present this proposal, if approved by Council.

#### Proposed Cross Walk at Pine Avenue and Lee Highway

You have in your packet an email from Joshua Lewis of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) regarding a crosswalk across East Lee Highway at Pine Avenue. This idea was discussed at the

Planning Commission's quarterly meeting in January and they asked that VDOT be contacted about the installation. Chair Lynn Pease was to appear before council in January to present the idea for Council's endorsement, but a family emergency prevented him to come to the meeting, and we failed to bring it up in his absence.

As you can see in Joshua Lewis' email of February 12 the project seems to be gaining steam and an ADA (Americans Disability Act) ramp is slated to be installed on the south side of East Lee Highway, along with striping and signage. I will have this item on the agenda to get Council's formal endorsement.

#### Sewer System Evaluation Study (SSES) Update

Work on the SSES study by Hurt and Proffitt (H&P) has speed up the past couple of weeks. As you know the Town received a \$67,500 grant to do this study from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and a \$22,500 grant from Mt. Rogers PDC, for a total of \$90,000 to do this study. The project is slated to be completed by June 1, 2021 and consists of smoke testing of at least 16,000 feet of line, and camera evaluation of at least of 10,000 feet of line.

H & P installed meters at five locations in February and began smoke testing the week of March 2. They began cameraing lines the week of March 8. We put notices out on our Nextel Account and on our Facebook page to notify our citizenry of the testing, and to not be alarmed if they see grey or blue smoke coming for the ground or manholes.

You have in your agenda a second drawdown request from H&P, dated February 12 to DEQ and signed by me on the project for \$5,040. The Mt. Rogers money (which we have in an account) drawn on this request is \$6,720, giving the total drawdown \$11,760.

Project Engineer Dennis Amos of H&P will be at the Council meeting to give an update on the SSES project. Director of Public Works Jay Keen will also give input on the project, which involves several personnel from the Sewer Treatment Plant and Public Works Department.

#### Meeting with VDOT on Street Maintenance Issues

On February 23 Jay Keen and I met with VDOT staff to go over some general maintenance issues. I had been wanting to have this meeting for some time but was unable to schedule it because of the COVID outbreak. At the meeting was VDOT Resident Engineer Mr. Allan Sumpter and Assistant Engineer Mr. Joshua Lewis. District Administrator Mr. Donnie Necessary was unable to attend because of a death in his family.

I have been concerned about VDOT maintenance of streets in Town, especially since the town does not receive maintenance money. Towns over 3,500 people in Virginia receive maintenance money from VDOT based on the number of lane miles within the corporate limits. For example, Marion receives about \$1,500,000 per year and has to use that money for capitol and maintenance needs including paving, snow removal, pipping, ditching etc. (Saltville also receives maintenance money, one of two localities under 3,500 population that receive that money.) In light of that of the Town being dependent for VDOT to maintain the great majority of streets in Town, we had several comments about that service.

On Street sweeping I mentioned that that had not been done since 2019 and I wanted to bring that to their attention. At the time, I had called VDOT about a week before the 2019 Apple Festival and was told they had no one available. I then called the Town of Marion and they swept the streets for us. I said in the meeting I had called too late in 2019 but wanted to know what VDOT was planning this year. Alan said they would do the sweeping again after April 15, 2021.

We pointed out pothole repairs needed and additional street paving on Town Street. Alan asked Jay to get a priority list of streets that needed to be paved and give to him. The proposed crosswalk was also discussed, as mentioned above, and a contractor will soon be selected to begin the job.

The grading and salting schedule was also discussed. For several years the Town has been getting salt from VDOT and plowing and applying to both Town and VDOT streets, in a “gentleman’s agreement”. VDOT stated that their accounting folks in the District or Richmond had picked up on situations like this and it affected their accounting. We said the situation has worked great over the years and if we didn’t do VDOT streets in Town then most would not be addressed. They said they understood that but would await developments, particularly for next year. Perhaps we could be designated then a VDOT Snow Contractor and operate under that premise in 2021-22.

#### Resolutions of Appreciation

Our staff has prepared two resolutions of appreciation for retiring employees from the Town. Bill Rutledge retired in October, 2020 from the Town after being work at the sewer treatment plant in 1991 and ending as Chief Operator at the plant. He is being recognized for 30 years of service.

Jimmy Doane begin work with the Town in 1999 in the public works department and retired in both a full time and part time position as one of the Town’s two meter readers the end of December, 2020. He is being recognized for 22 years of service.

The Town was very fortunate to have these two key individuals who dedicated much of their lives to the service of the Town and its citizens within and without the corporate limits. We wish them their best in future endeavors.

#### Possible Railroad Avenue Remaining Status

Following Council’s recognition of Black History month, a motion was made to investigate renaming Railroad Avenue to Lomans Avenue. As you can see by my letter of February 19, I asked the first Baptist Church on the street to convey their feelings to Council on this possible change by March 11, since they are the predominate and only structure that faces Railroad Avenue, before I proceed further.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.  
Town Manager