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TOWN OF CHILHOWIE

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Director-Public Works: Jay Keen
Fire Chief: C. David Haynes
Building Official: Randy Sturgill
Director-Recreation/Special Events: Jeff Smarr
Legal: Cassell & Crewe. P.C.

Town Manager's Report to Mayor and Town Council September 9, 2021

Requests For Proposals (RFP) on Solid Waste Pickup and Responses

As I reported earlier, we received five Statement of Qualifications (SOQ's) following our solicitation for solid waste pickup through our RFP. The Public Works Committee met on August 25 and went over this issue. I had supplied them and the rest of Council the RFP, the company's responses through their SOQ's, and a matrix giving a summary of their responses showing five criteria.

I was impressed by the responses of the companies. The Public Works Committee went over all of the SOQ's and will recommend one company to ask to come to an interview. Several staff members were also present. The Public Works Committee is going to request a Continued Council meeting of the full council, as opposed to just the committee, to conduct the interview. It is my understanding that the continued meeting will be requested the week of September 13. If that interview does not prove fruitful we can set up another meeting or meetings.

The goal is to have Council action on the selected company at the Continue Meeting or meetings, thus giving plenty of time for logistics to be worked out before the December 31, 2021 ending date of the present contract. Those logistics include working out a new contract, picking up old containers (if applicable), placing new ones (if applicable), working on new routes and dates (if applicable), setting up the accounting (if applicable), etc. etc.

Upcoming Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Projects at White Top Avenue under Interstate – 81 and Route 107 / Lee Highway Intersection

On August 31, the staff and I had a meeting with VDOT personnel, and the contractor for the White Top Avenue Project, on that project. Staff along with me were Director of Public Works Jay Keen, Fire Chief David Haynes and Police Chief David Haynes. Also at the meeting was Smyth County Emergency Services Director Curtis Crawford. The projects will be two separate projects, although their timelines will interact.

Regarding the White Top Avenue Project, it is set to begin September 13 and scheduled to be substantially completed in September of 2022. Boring Contractors of Abingdon has the contract, the same contractor who did our East Lee Highway I Project and our Downtown Project. It is my understanding from the meeting that for the first four weeks of the project one lane will be closed. After that time both will be open for a period of time. Then at a designated point the other lane will be closed for four weeks. The lane closures will cause congestion, of course, but that is to be expected. Our emergency services are aware of the situation, and the school will be also. Monthly progress meetings will also be scheduled in the future.

Regarding the 107 / Lee Highway Project, that project is slated to begin in November, 2021 and also be substantially completed in September of 2022. W&L Construction won the bid. VDOT personnel acknowledged that it would make good sense to for two projects to be combined. But, because of different funding sources that was not possible.

Streetscaping Contract on East Lee Highway and Main Street

You have in your agenda packet a contract with Barrington Landscape Architect out of Lebanon for planting along East Lee highway and on Main Street. The owner is Nathaniel B. Brown. As you recall we budgeted \$10,000 for this item in the 2021-22 budget. I was referred to this firm by Tim Mullins of Thompson and Litton.

The plan will designate the types of trees and planting to plant, in relation to weather, hardiness, beauty, maintenance, etc. etc. The company will also submit the plan to VDOT in order to obtain a Land Use Plan. Barrington will also help bid the project out and has knowledge of several companies in the Bristol and Tri Cities area that specialize in this type of work.

When the plan is completed, hopefully by the October 14 meeting, I will ask Mr. Brown to come to Council and present the plan for approval. Mr. Brown has indicated that November / late year is an excellent time to plant trees and other plantings.

Status on Sewer Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) Study / Project

At the August Council meeting, I incorrectly stated that the \$2.1 million grant had been awarded and that the grant amount was 75%. We had previously been told that construction funding would be at the 50% level, with no knowledge of a funding cap. What is actually the case is that the Town was awarded a seconded Sewer System Evaluation Study (SSES) at 75% funding from the Department of Environmental Quality. The DEQ grant was for \$64,125. Ms. Karen Doran's July 26 letter of DEQ stated the grant's tentative award. That letter is attached in your agenda.

Also attached in your agenda is my June 19 letter to Mt. Rogers PDC asking that they grant us an additional 25% on the \$85,500, or \$21,375 on the Phase II SSES. I have been told by Executive Director Aaron Sizemore that these SSES grant matches are a priority of the PDC and we have been tentatively funded. As you recall we were funded 100% on the Phase I SSES by the DEQ and PDC in the amount of \$90,000 and that study was completed early this year.

Speaking of that Phase I Study, that study basically dealt with the sewer line in the corporate limits and close proximity and resulted in the \$2.1 million grant application. It did not study any of the sewer in the Seven Mile Ford area. Jay Keen is very concerned that we have serious I&I issues in that area. In a phone conversation with DEQ personnel on August 16, Jay and I expressed concerns that the \$2.1 million project did not take into account the Seven Ford area, and before the Town made that type of commitment we wanted to get that area studied through the SSES Phase II. Further, we thought we might getting a bigger “bang for the buck” if both areas could be studied and compared. DEQ assured us that the application could be amended to take into account the SSES Phase II area of Seven Mile Ford. I have talked with Dennis Amos of Hurt and Proffitt on the Phase II study and he has assured me we could have the Phase II study done in time, say by April 2022, to have its findings incorporated into the grant.

Meeting of Mill Creek Steering Committee with Washington County Service Authority (WCSA)

On September 1 we had the yearly meeting of the Town – WCSA Steering Committee (although 2020’s was postponed because of COVID). Attending were Robbie Cornett, Executive Director of the WCSA, two board member and staff; for the Town Vice Mayor Brent Foster, Clerk / Treasurer Marlene Henderson, Jay Keen and me. Also attending was Robert Hilt of Rural Development in reference to the Mill Creek upgrade \$3.4 Loan and grant project.

Several important items were discussed. One was using the remaining grant money to replace the chlorine contact tanks at the Mill Creek water treatment plant. I sent Council the full report in an email on September 1 of the need for the replacement. This project will be totally independent and separate from the Frizzell project and will not play into that dispute. The tank replacement estimate is \$936,300, with the remaining grant money \$653,510, leaving a balance of \$282,790 between the Town and WCSA. The Town could use some of its American Rescue Plan Act money towards this deficit. Brent Foster will make a recommendation to the full Council to advertise the project, as will the WCSA steering committee members to the full WCSA Board.

Another important item is the reallocation of capital costs at the plant. That allocation has been 56%-44% Town to WCSA, which had been billed based on historic usage in the past (Operation and maintenance monthly costs have always been billed on the amount of water used). The past several years the usage has swung more like 45%-55% Town to WCSA. This and other issues will be discussed at a continued meeting of the steering committee in October.

Staff Recommendations on Use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

You have in your agenda packet a document entitled “Staff recommendation And Comments for Need on Allocation of Funds from American Rescue Plan Act”. As we have discussed before the staff put this together for a future presentation to the full Town Council at a Continued or Special Meeting.

All department heads contributed to this effort and put their spending priorities in eleven (11) different categories. One responder put very detailed comments, while others just put general comments. I have done no statistical analysis of these numbers at this writing. And, am not sure at this time how I could do an analysis of the numbers and categories that would be helpful to Council. I still plan on requesting a continued meeting of Council this Fall, with department heads, to present these recommendations. Then, when a document is finalized, have a public hearing and get public input.

Old High School (OHS) Roof Situation

At the aforementioned Public Works Committee meeting on August 25, another item discussed was the roof at the OHS. As you recall when the project was bid earlier, we only had one bidder and the bid came in over budget. Council voted at the August meeting to continue the item to the September meeting. At the August 25 committee meeting the committee asked that will bid the project again, with the stated right of refusal by Council.

As you can see by the attached advertisement the bids are due 4:00 on September 14 at 4:00. We have done some more outreach and it seems there is more interest in the project. At a continued meeting to do an interview for the solid waste provider, Council could evaluate bids and take necessary action, thus saving time until the regular October meeting. Before accepting any bids the second time at a continued (or regular meeting) the first bids would need to be rejected.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.
Town Manager