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TOWN OF CHILHOWIE

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Town Manager: John E. B. Clark, Jr.
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Police Chief: Andrew K. Moss
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 March 10, 2022

Biosolids Insurance Application

You have in your agenda packet a February 9 a letter to Ms. Ann Chandler of the Virginia Risk Sharing Association (VRSA) containing a packet applying to CHUB, their underwriter, for insurance on our application of sludge from the sewer treatment plant at two farms. The farms are the Berry Farm off Carlock Creek Road north of Chilhowie, and the Heath Farm off Fox Valley Road near Seven Mile Ford.

The Town applies about 60 dry tons of sludge from the plant annually that we apply in the Spring. We have to apply for the insurance every year. The premium has been running around \$6,000 per year and covers all aspects of the process from the transportation to the actual application.

After I sent the application for insurance on the two fields, I discovered that we will applying on only one field this year, the Heath site off Fox Valley Road The Berry farm is in recovery and we cannot use it this year and the Heath field has plenty of capacity. I have contacted Ms. Chandler about this to see what, if any, discount on the premium we could get only one field. I have not back heard from her at this writing but will continue to monitor the situation.

East Lee Highway Pedestrian II Project

As I mentioned last month, we have run into a temporary easement issue that our Engineer, Tim Mullins of Thompson and Litton (T&L) had not anticipated. It involves property on Second Street.

When T&L developed the plans it was revealed that a temporary easement would have to be utilized for the construction of the project. Tim indicated to me that he thought we could simply talk to the owner and obtain permission for the area estimated at 2,242.73 square feet. Instead, John Dew of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), who administers the Locally Administered Projects (LAP), says we have to go through a formal VDOT process to attempt to gain the temporary easement.

To that end Tim Mullins came up with an amount of offer to made based on the area affected on the lot and submitted other required comments. It is my understanding from his email of February 28 that he has submitted the necessary information and is awaiting comments / clearance from VDOT's right-of-way division. Once clearance is obtained from VDOT we will approach the owner about the easement and any costs associated with it. Then, I believe, the project can be bid out.

Letter to the County for Funding in the 2022-23 Budget

You have in your agenda package two letters dated February 16 from me to Smyth County Administrator Shawn Utt requesting funding for the 2022-23 budget. The first was for Fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and the second for recreation. Chief David Haynes assisted me with the Fire and EMS letter, and Recreation / Special Events Coordinator Jeff Smarr the recreation letter.

Regarding Fire and EMS funding, as you can see we requested 72,500 in additional funding, or from \$212,500 this fiscal year to \$285,000. This year's \$212,500 in funding consists of \$92,500 for the Fire Department and \$120,000 for EMS. To County's credit this funding has been increasing every year the past several fiscal years and was \$100,000 not too long ago. David Haynes said this additional funding would allow hiring two additional employees, which would result in the staffing being fully completed with 24 hour employees, 8 (eight) hour employees and part time employees. While obviously, no decision has been made by the Board, we have heard preliminarily that a funding increase for the Department is being proposed.

Regarding Recreation funding we asked for an increase from \$5,625 to \$10,000. The letter explains how the Town's offering have increased over the years from boys and girls basketball, cheer leading and football that served 261 youth in 2021, to additional services at the farmers market and music venues at the park along the Middle Fork of the Holston.

Health Department Funding Opportunities

We have had meetings with Hurt and Proffitt (H&P), Health Department and staff the past few weeks on funding opportunities through the Health Department for replacement of water lines. The staff and I met with H&P on February 23; and, the staff, H&P and Health Department on March 2.

As I understand it the Virginia Health Department will be receiving about \$85 to \$90 million through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, above their normal allotment of around \$20 million. This money will be earmarked to eliminate old transite lines and lead service connections. As I further understand the make of this money is 49% principal forgiveness (grant) and the rest low interest loans of around two percent (2%) at multiyear terms. In order to get the principal forgiveness you have to participate in the loan program also. It is may further understanding we have lines in our water system that would qualify, particularly from the corporate limits to Seven Mile Ford. We also may be able to "piggyback" a meter replacement project through this money.

I have asked Dennis Amos of H&P to appear before council and explain the program. I believe the grant application deadline is May 6. I believe the application can be for both the preliminary engineering report (PER) and the construction phase.

Contract for Master Plans on the Dog Park and the Splash Pad Complex

You have in your agenda packet two contracts for Master Plans for the Dog Park and the Splash Pad Complex through Nathaniel Brown of Barrington Landscape Architecture in Lebanon. As you recall Mr. Brown did the Streetscape layout for the plant and tree plantings. Council approved me soliciting these proposals and executing them last month.

The Dog Park is slated to be put along south bank of the Middle Fork behind the Exxon and along the walking trail from the H.L. Bonham House and Visitors Center / Smyth County Chamber of Commerce. I think it would be an excellent accompaniment for that organization by having the Dog Park there. There are several acres of land in that area that would be available and by natural terrain it is far above the 100 year flood level. There is also a possibility that an old abandoned cabin, with old hewed logs, could be incorporated into the design.

The Splash Pad will be designed in the Old High School / Little League field area, or possibly in the lot(s) in front and south of the Old High School. In addition to possible American Rescue Plan Act money, possible other funding could come from the Smyth County Community Foundation. The Foundation funded the Wellness Center in Saltville and the Holston Hills Community Golf Course in Marion. Funding for this project would certainly be within their grant guidelines, as stated on their website, of supporting projects "that contribute to the improved physical, mental, and emotional status of the citizens of Smyth County....."

Mr. Brown said he would have the Master Plans completed in a couple of weeks and present it to the Town Council at its April or May meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.
Town Manager