



**Mayor:** Gary L. Heninger  
**Council:** Donna S. Blevins  
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Brent Foster  
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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:** Jeff Smarr  
**Legal:** Cassell & Crewe. P.C.

### **Town Manager's Report to Mayor and Town Council April 14, 2022**

#### 2022-23 Budget Process

Clerk Treasurer Marlene Henderson and I continue on moving forward on developing the 2022-23 Budget Proposal. Department Heads were asked to get their requests in by March 11 and most had their's in by then. We are also not including any American Rescue Plan Act funding or projects, in the 2023 budget.

After the formulation is finished, and I send out a budgeted letter with all of the attachments, we will have a Continued meeting of Council after Council's regular meeting on April 14. This has been the procedure we have used the past several years. After Council inputs into the budget we will advertise for a Public Hearing. Last year we had the Public Hearing in May and adopted the budget at the June meeting. The budget can only be adopted after a seven day minimum period after the Public Hearing. This year's process could be similar, but all budget processes are difference and we will see how 2022-23's plays out.

#### Meeting of the Mt. Rogers Cigarette Board

You have in your agenda packet a report from the Mt. Rogers Cigarette Board. The member localities, at present, that make up the Board are the Counties of Bland, Pulaski, Smyth and Wythe; and, the Towns of Chilhowie, Dublin, Marion, Rural Retreat, Saltville and Wytheville. The Board employs an inspector, Mike Hounshell, who is a former Chief Deputy with the Smyth County Sheriff's Department and recently Police Chief of Damascus. His offices are at the Mt. Rogers Planning District Commission in Marion.

As I reported earlier the General Assembly passed legislation to allow a consortium to be formed and administer a uniform tax of 40 cents per pack. The tax and consortium went into effect on January 1, 2022. Some of the localities had never had this tax before, and others had varying rates. Chilhowie's rates before January 1 was 8 cents per pack. For this fiscal year we had budgeted \$100,000 for the tax, up from 2020-21's \$55,000. The coming fiscal year 22-23 we are currently looking at \$120,000.

As you can see by the report, the Town had a two month average of \$11,018. While the stamps would not be bought on a consistent level for each month (some months more and some less), I feel very good for our projected budget number of \$120,000 for the 2022-23 fiscal year. Each locality receives the tax

from within its corporate limits / county boundaries and pays an administrative fee for expenses of the Board.

#### Meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals

You have in your agenda packet my letter of March 22, 2022 of four property owners on Keesee Lane signing off and requesting four variances in order to subdivide a lot on Keesee Lane. The lots contain parcels 102-113 and are shown on the Smyth County tax map as 53D3-9. The proposed resubdivision plat is also included in your packet, dated March 18, 2022 by surveyor Billy J. Robbins.

In your agenda packet is also notice of Public Hearing for the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) to consider the variance requests. All adjoining property owners were notified by certified mail of the hearing as required by section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, as amended. The Public Hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 19, at 5:30 p.m.

On April 5 the BZA met after the regularly scheduled quarterly meeting of the Planning Commission. I had asked attorney Paul Cassell to attend. At that meeting he briefed the BZA members of the requirements of the Town Code and the Code of Virginia on issuing variances. Any decision of the BZA can be appealed to the Circuit Court.

#### Agreement with Smyth County on Fire and Emergency Management Services (EMS) Building

You have in your agenda packet a proposed agreement from Smyth County (County) on the Fire and EMS training building slated for construction near the burn building off Shop Road near the Virginia Department of Transportation Shop and Town Shop. The Executive Summary elaborates on the importance of the proposed facility and how it will enhance the public safety of the Town, County and area. The proposed agreement is for both construction and maintenance.

As you can see by the proposed agreement, the County agrees to put \$175,000 to the building and the Town the same amount. The Council has already voted to take the Town's share of the money from the American Rescue Plan Act funds. The agreement states that the Town will be the owner of the building. It also states that all operation and maintenance costs of the building will be split evenly by the Town by invoicing the County for these costs at the end of each fiscal year.

The staff and I have looked at the agreement and think it is very fair and beneficial to both the Town and County. I will ask Paul Cassell to also review the document. If acceptable to him we will recommend the agreement be adopted by Council.

#### Temporary Easement on East Lee Highway Pedestrian II Project

As I have discussed the last several weeks, the last milestone we have to address before the Phase II Project can be bid out is acquiring a temporary easement during construction for the area on Second Avenue that is adjacent to the Riverfront Restaurant. To that end we had a meeting on April 1 with the property owner, the engineer Thompson and Litton and staff to discuss the situation.

The owner was presented an offer on the property for the temporary easement, as required by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The offer was based on the appraised value of the lot, the amount of the lot being impacted, and then discounted by 90% since it was a temporary easement. The owner graciously declined the monetary offer. We have sent an easement form for her to sign and are awaiting its delivery.

Tourism Association Tour of Downtown and Letter of Appreciation From the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

On March 21 I conducted a tour of Downtown with members of the Tourism Association and Staff. It was my understanding that Executive Director Amanda Livingston wants to take similar tours throughout the County in the future with her board. The board and staff seemed impressed by the scope and depth of the work the Town did and its coordination with other with all the other agencies involved, and with the participation of property owners.

Additionally, you have in your agenda packet a thank you letter on March 8 to me from Ms. Amanda Healy, Associate Director of DHCD. I was asked to do a virtual presentation on January 20 at DHCD's annual meeting, normally held in Richmond. The Zoom meeting had well over 100 participants from throughout the Commonwealth. My presentation was on the completed \$1.3 million Downtown Project. Also assisting on the presentation were Angela Wolfe of Mt. Rogers PDC and Dennis Amos of Hurt and Proffitt.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.  
Town Manager