



**Mayor:** Gary L. Heninger  
**Council:** Donna S. Blevins  
Billy L. Clear  
Brent Foster  
Lewis Shortt  
Julie Sturgill  
P.J. Wolfe

## **TOWN OF CHILHOWIE**

**325 East Lee Highway  
P.O. Box 5012  
Chilhowie, Virginia 24319  
Phone (276) 646-3232  
Fax (276) 646-3012  
www.chilhowie.org**

**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 June 9, 2022**

#### Request for Additional Funding for East Lee II Pedestrian Project

You have in your agenda package a letter dated May 27 from me to Mr. John Dew, administrator of local Projects, for the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). In that letter I asked for additional funding for the project.

Before the project could be bid VDOT required another cost estimate on the project. Tim Mullins of Thompson and Litton made an estimate of \$622,202 on April 26. VDOT had appropriated \$487,334. Because of that deferential John asked me to write a letter justifying the extra money. This will delay the project being bid out.

As you can see, I asked for an additional \$134, 868 in funding. The Town's 20% share of that is \$26,973 and VDOT's 80% share is \$107,895. John feels hopeful the Town will be awarded the extra money and he feels that the project could be bid in July.

#### Meeting with Mr. Mike Robinson with the Smyth County Foundation on Splash Pad Complex

On May 18 Recreation and Special Events Coordinator Jeff Smarr and I met with Mr. Mike Robinson, who is the chair of the Smyth County Foundation. The Foundation was founded after several buy outs of the Smyth County Community Hospital that was left to the community. Mike is a former Superintendent of Smyth County Schools. As you may know the Foundation has been very active in Smyth County the last few years lending money to the Town of Marion for the purchase of Holston Hills Country Club, and funding the Lifetime Wellness Center in Saltville. We wanted to talk to Mike and get his insights if he thought the Splash Pad Project would be eligible for funding, and the Foundation would want to partner with the Town. We presented him plans and cost estimates on the proposed project, which was done by our Architect Nathan Brown of Barrington Landscape Architecture.

The foundation's board guidelines for grant funding is for "offerings direct and immediate or near immediate benefit to the health and well-being of Smyth County Residents". Mr. Robinson agreed that this project should qualify under those guidelines. He stated he will be meeting with the grant committee in early June to see what we will need to do, in regards to the grant applications and other issues. In regards to the timeline, which he asked, we told him that we were looking to a 2023-time frame, if approved by Council.

In regards to funding, we had received both a low estimate on the complex at \$204,197.50 and a high estimate at \$291,112.50 from our architect. We chose the middle number for a total cost at \$250,000. We stated that we plan on asking the Foundation for half that cost at \$125,000 in their partnership with the Town.

I wanted to get all the funding options committed or pending before I formally asked Council to move forward on the project. As an aside, Jeff Smarr received a letter from Ms. Vicki Wilson and Ms. Rebecca Wilkinson Smith supporting the project. We had not asked for the letter. Jeff said he was asked about the project at an Apple Festival meeting held recently. He said nothing was official about the project and that funding has not been put together, plus it has not been approved by Council. Nonetheless, the letter was written and is attached in your agenda.

#### Dedication Ceremony for Scholle IPN Expansion

You have in your agenda packet several handouts regarding the dedication Ceremony for Scholle IPN held on June 1 at the facility. The expansion will be approximately 73,000 square feet and involve a new railroad spur of about 800 feet. These handouts include the Program of Events with all the featured speakers, and a joint press release from the Town by Gary Heninger and me. The keynote speaker was Governor Glenn Younkin.

As you recall the Town committed funding for the new water line to serve the building addition back on October 28, 2021. County Administrator Shawn Utt and Economic Director Kendra Hayden appeared before Council that night in Closed Session. I think Smyth County's efforts in this venture will also going to include this venture, along with some funding for the rail line.

#### Meeting with American Electric Power (AEP) on Additional Service to the Stage

With the onset of concerts at the Stage, an issue came up last season about getting more power to the Stage in order to accommodate larger amplifiers, more food trucks, etc. We had wanted to put another 20 amp service in earlier this year but were told that we did not have the capacity.

At a recent Council meeting staff was asked to get with AEP on a possible upgrade. On May 31 Jeff Smarr, Public Works Director Jay Keen and I met with a technician with AEP. As I understand it, with the railroad on the north side of the stage, the only possibly way to get more service would be from the east. He will be getting us quotes on both overhead and underground services. The way I gathered what he was saying is that the estimate will be well over \$10,000, but we will not know until we get it, of course. As soon as I get the estimate(s) I will share with Council.

## Status of Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) Project

We had a conference call with DEQ personnel on May 26 to discuss the \$6 million I&I Project with Project Engineer Dennis Amos of Hurt and Proffitt. Among other things discussed Dennis stated the design was moving along and that the project is still scheduled to be bid out in March of 2023.

We did receive some good news on the project regarding possible additional grant funding. As it stands now the approximately \$6,000,000 project is one half grant and one-half loan. But it was revealed at the meeting, DEQ is getting around \$75,000,000 from the Federal Government through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and that money can be put against loan amounts. I am unsure at this writing the process of applying for this money, whether we need to formally apply or if the money will be distributed by DEQ based on the project or equally among the projects on the books.

## Meeting with Hurt and Proffitt to Scope Health Department Funding Opportunities

I met with Hurt and Proffitt personnel on May 19 to get a better understanding of the Health Department money through the application we put in. As you recall this money is available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act passed by Congress.

The Town applied for \$6,220,000 for replacing the transite line between the corporate limits and Seven Mile Ford, and for replacing all the water meters on the whole system, both inside and outside the corporate limits, approximately 2,500 connections. As it stands now about half this money is grant (principal forgiveness).

Another \$750,000 is applied for through the Lead Elimination Assistance Program (LEAP). This program is all grant and consists of identifying lead lines between the meter and house and replacing it. \$250,000 is for the study and \$500,000 for the replacement.

I further understood that there is another \$30,000,000 that is allocated and available for these projects through ARPA Funding. We also applied for that money.

I will be keeping Council apprised of the events as they occur on this project.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E.B. Clark, Jr.  
Town Manager