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Billy L. Clear
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Police Chief: Andrew K. Moss
Director-Public Works: Jay Keen
Fire Chief: C. David Haynes
Building Official: C. David Haynes
Director-Recreation/Special Events: Jeff Smarr
Legal: Cassell & Crewe. P.C.

Town Manager's Report to Mayor and Town Council
November 10, 2022

Update of East Lee Highway II Pedestrian Project

On October 26 we met with Grant Pennings, Project Manager of Jones Road and Bridge to discuss when to issue the Notice to Proceed on the East lee Highway Phase II Project. Also at the meeting were Tim Mullins of Thompson and Litton, Angela Wolfe of Mt. Rogers PDC, Reggie Plummer of the Virginia Department of Transportation and Jay Keen with the Town.

The main reason for the meeting was to discuss when to start the project. As you recall the project was bid out on September 6 and Jones Road and Bridge was the only bidder at $489,050. Because the project was $36,037 over the construction budget, additional monies had to be secured before the Notice of Award. An earlier allocation also had to be secured in the Spring. These additional allocations caused delay the in the start of the project.

At the meeting it was agreed by all that it would be very problematic to start this project now. If it started it would have to be shut down towards the end of the year. Since the asphalt plants will close the middle / end of this month gravel would have had to be laid and maintained throughout the winter, along with other traffic controls. And, as pointed out many times, we could have had the issue of dealing with fire vehicles in freezing weather if started now. We will meet again early next year to determine when the Notice to Proceed will be issued. I anticipate it will be in February or March, 2023.

The Notice of Award was signed on September 26. The contract between the Town and Jones was also signed and is effective September 26. Once the Notice to Proceed is issued the contractor will have 90 days to bring the project to Substantial Completion and 90 tot Final Completion.

Update on Redesign of Town Website

On October 20 I along with Deputy Clerk Treasurer Felicia Eller met with Chamber of Commerce Director Sarah Gillespie and Green Spring Collaborative Representative Tobi Cardinale to discuss and update of our website page. I have been very disappointed with what we have now and included money in this year's budget to address the redesign.

The website has not been redesigned or substantially updated for over ten years, which is a very long time I am told. The present website does not present the Town very well, in my opinion, and has several defects in my eyes. Among other defects the temperature is rarely correct. It is hard to get things changed with the present company, and we are severely limited in the number of changes we can make. The Fire / EMS Department also utilizes the same company as the Town's and also is dissatisfied with the service.

The Chamber has been working with this company for a number of years. It is my understanding they do the Chamber's website along with the Town of Saltville. I am hoping to use the Chamber as a consultant on switching over our website. I believe Sarah will appear at the November Council meeting to help present the proposal.

Securing of 315 and 327 Sulphur Springs Road

As I have reported earlier, we shuttered all first floor entrance of the two structures noted above as decreed by the Virginia Maintenance Code and the welfare of the community on October 28. Plywood sheeting was used in the endeavor. Notices were put in every door beforehand on October 20. As you know these apartments and house have been blighted and a public safety hazard for months. We have attempted to get the owner to bring the property up to minimum standards for months. The owner has been unwilling or unable to do so.

To briefly recap the apartments have no water / sewer, electricity or heat. Persons have been living in some of these apartments in these conditions for some time without the owner's permission. Building Official David Haynes, Chief Andrew Moss and I have been in contact with appropriate agencies to find housing alternatives for people living there.

To briefly recap recent troubling events at the property, a sump pump was placed in the creek across the road, with the line laying on Sulphur Springs Road, that went into an apartment(s) presumably to flush toilets. Upon this being seen the pump was removed by Public Works and Police in conjunction with an adjoining property owner at the creek. After a dispatch call to the property a couple of weeks ago a woman pulled a knife on the Chief and a Police Officer. Fortunately lethal force was not used although the woman asked the police to shoot her. Lights have been seen in the house particularly, that has no electricity as stated above, presenting the possibility of a fire endangering individual(s) there and

in adjoining properties. Junk and debris cover the properties making a health hazard to the surrounding area. We also have reason to believe that there has been illicit activities occurring at the properties.

Town Attorney Paul Cassell is pursuing civil penalties against the owner, as allowed by our Weed, Trash and Clutter Ordinance. As also allowed by the ordinance we will be putting a lien against the property for securing it. Sometime in the future we will clear the property of debris and also lien that against he property.

It is unfortunate that these drastic steps had to be taken, but the owner was unwilling or unable to comply. These steps had to be taken in the interest of the health and safety of the surrounding community.

Grant Application to Mt. Rogers Water and Wastewater Fund

You have in your agenda packet a grant application in the amount of $50,000 for a third finished pump at the Mill Creek Regional Water Treatment Plant. As you recall, the third pump will cost $212,000 and is needed with the plant capacity going from 2.5 million gallons a day (MGD) to 3.1 MGD. By contract with the Washington County Service Authority, the Town's 45% share of that capital cost is $95,400. If the Town is awarded the $50,000 grant that money can go against the $95,400.

We have been very successful securing this money in the past. We have received approximately $250,000 for at least five projects. These projects included the 1,000,000 tank repainting in 2015, the sewer relining project in 2016, the UV light and sewer grit chamber project in 2017, the Widener Springs pump replacement project in 2020, and the Lyons Gap water line replacement in 2020.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.
Town Manager