Virginia: **At the regular meeting of the Council of the Town of Chilhowie held at the Municipal Building, February 11, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.**

Present: **Honorable Gary L. Heninger, Mayor presiding; Councilors Donna Blevins, Billy L. Clear, F. Brent Foster, Lewis W. Shortt, Jr., Julie Sturgill and P.J. Wolfe.**

Absent: **None**

Also Present: **Mr. John E.B. Clark, Jr., Town Manager; Mrs. Marlene Henderson, MMC, Clerk-Treasurer; Messrs. Paul Cassell, Town Attorney; Jay Keen, Director of Public Works; Andrew Moss, Police Chief; C. David Haynes, Fire/EMS Chief; Randy Sturgill, Building Official and Ron Cahill, Recreation/Special Events Coordinator.**

The meeting was held in the Community Room in order to practice Social Distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mayor Heninger called the meeting to order. Randy Sturgill gave the Invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Donna Blevins, second by Brent Foster Council adopts the regular January 14, 2021 meeting minutes. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Public Presentation:

- Resolution in Recognition of February being Black History Month – Mrs. Marlene Henderson presented the following:

RESOLUTION in Recognition of Black History Month 2021

WHEREAS, The Town of Chilhowie, Virginia wishes to commemorate and celebrate the accomplishments of our African American citizens every day, but especially in this month set aside to honor Black History, and;

WHEREAS, the theme for Black History Month 2021 is "The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity", and;

WHEREAS, Chilhowie's shared history includes the invaluable and countless contributions of our citizens of African American Heritage, and;

WHEREAS, a large number of African Americans lived, worked and thrived in an area on both sides of the Middle Fork of the Holston River until relocated in the early 1980's as a part of a flood relocation project and this is now known as the Town Park, and:

WHEREAS, our community was honored to have had a store operated on "Railroad Avenue"**,** started and run for many years by a community entrepreneur George Washington Lomans, a very successful businessman, and;

WHEREAS, noted political activist, publisher, journalist, entrepreneur and orator Marcus Garvey once said: "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots", and;

WHEREAS, all our citizens can take every opportunity to understand the common humanity underlying all people, to develop pride in their own identity and heritage, and to respect and accept the identity and heritage of others, and to celebrate Representation, Identity and Diversity of the Black Family as this year's theme;

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Town Council of Chilhowie adopts this resolution to recognize February 2021 as BLACK HISTORY MONTH in our TOWN OF CHILHOWIE, and that this resolution be entered into the minutes of the Town so as to be a permanent part of the records of the Town of Chilhowie, Virginia.

Adopted this 11th day of February 2021.

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Gary L. Heninger, Mayor Marlene L. Henderson, Clerk Treasurer

Motion by Brent Foster, second by Lewis Shortt Council adopts the Resolution in Recognition of Black History Month 2021. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Mayor Heninger presented the Resolution to Mr. William Fields, Mrs. Deborah Montgomery and Mrs. Lillian Thompson. Mr. William Fields stood before Council and shared Black History within the community. Mr. Fields reported the Historical Marker at the Recreation Park is faded and worn and requested the Town to restore the Historical Marker.

Mr. Bill Clear, Councilman, inquired as to how to change the name of Railroad Avenue to Lomans Avenue. Mr. Clear requested staff to look into the matter.

Motion by Bill Clear, second by Brent Foster Council requests Town Staff to look into changing the name of Railroad Avenue to Loman's Avenue. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Citizen Time:

Ms. Heather Carter, Chilhowie Library, appeared before Council to give an update of Library events. Wednesday, February 17, 2021 the Chilhowie Library is handing out COVID Care Packages. The packages contain items such as mental health information, hand sanitizer and masks donated by local businesses. The Chilhowie Library in conjunction with the Town plans to have a story walk for Easter. At the end of the story walk children will be given goodie bags with candy and free books plus a photo opportunity with the Easter Bunny.

Old Business:

- Report on Pay Request 1 on Sewer System Evaluation Study – Hurt and Proffitt is currently conducting a study to locate areas of high infiltration and inflow. Areas identified are Lyons Gap area, H&R Block area and Hardees area. Smoke testing will be conducted within those areas. The Town received funding from the Department of Environmental Quality in the amount of $67,500 and the Town received a grant for 25% from Mount Rogers Planning District Commission. Pay Request Number 1 for the study is in the amount of $7,320.

- Presentation of Contract for East Lee II Pedestrian Project from Thompson and Litton – The East Lee II Pedestrian Project will start at Church Avenue, proceed on East Lee Highway to Walton Avenue, cross Lee Highway along Walton Avenue and tie into the existing sidewalk in Downtown on East Main. Mr. Tim Mullins, Thompson and Litton, appeared before Council to review the contract. The proposed contract is standard and is the same type of contract Thompson and Litton used on the Phase I project.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by Donna Blevins Council approves the contract and authorizes the Town Manager to execute documents. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Presentation of Contract for East Lee II Pedestrian Project from Mount Rogers Planning District Commission – Mount Rogers Planning District Commission is offering services involving compiling and completing pay requests, interviewing workers on project to ensure their pay is within the Davis-Bacon guidelines, monitoring contractor and subcontractor rosters, attending project construction and board meetings at the cost of $10,000. The Town will pay $5,000 prior to the start of the project and $5,000 at the completion of the project.

Motion by Julie Sturgill, second by Brent Foster Council approves the contract with Mount Rogers Planning District Commission at the cost of $10,000 for administration of the project. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Report on Pre-Construction Meeting on Phase II of Downtown Revitalization Facades Project – The Town received documents for the Notice of Award, Notice to Proceed, Agreement Between Owner and Contractor for Construction and Preconstruction Conference Minutes for the Phase II of Downtown Revitalization Facades Project. Wallberg, LLC was the lowest bidder at the cost of $118,890. Mr. Randy Sturgill, Building Official, reported Phase I of the Downtown Revitalization Facades Project is mostly complete.

Motion by Donna Blevins, second P.J. Wolfe Council approves the contract as presented. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Letter to Frizzell Construction Company Regarding Dispute on Mill Creek Regional Water Treatment Plant – Mr. Paul Cassell, Town Attorney, reported a letter was sent to Frizzell Construction Company concerning the Mill Creek Water Treatment Plant Upgrade Project. Cassell and Crewe, P.C. continues to work on the matter on the Town's behalf.

New Business:

- Request to Hold Migrant Health Fair – Mrs. Kim Stewart, Southwest Virginia Community Health, appeared before Council to request the use of the Recreational Park on Sunday, May 2, 2021 from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m. to hold a drive through Migrant Health Fair. Southwest Virginia Community Health will follow all COVID-19 guidelines to provide a safe environment for their staff, volunteers and participants. The Migrant Health Fair will require participants to preregister for an appointment that will be available every fifteen minutes.

Motion by Julie Sturgill, second by Brent Foster Council approves Southwest Virginia Community Health to host a Migrant Health Fair at the Recreation Park on May 2, 2021. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Vacancy for Meter Reading Position – The recent hire for the position of meter reading did not work out therefore the position is open. Fourteen employment applications were submitted for the position. Mr. Jay Keen, Director of Public Works, narrowed the applicants to five for interviews. The interviews were conducted, and Mr. Keen will discuss those with Mr. John Clark, Town Manager, within the next few days to select a candidate.

- Application for Insurance for Biosolids Application and Procedure – A letter was sent to Virginia Risk Sharing Association for a liability insurance policy to cover the Town from the point of origin to the destination of two different local farms for land application. The cost of the policy has been in the $6,500 range. The Town applies about sixty dry tons of biosolids in the spring of the year. This method of disposal is cheaper than hauling the waste off to a licensed landfill.

- Report on Lyons Gap Water Project and Thompson and Litton Proposed Contract – The Lyons Gap Water Project is to upgrade the line at the end of Lyons Gap Road to the corporate limits and provide fire protection to both White Hall Apartments and Heatherwood Apartments who are currently served by an old two-inch line. The Town is currently obtaining easements for routes involved. Thompson and Litton have been requested to prepare permits for the stream crossing.

  The Town received funding in the amount of $35,750 from Mount Rogers Planning District Commission for Water and Wastewater projects. The money received from Mount Rogers Planning District Commission must be spent by June 30, 2021. Mr. Tim Mullins, Thompson and Litton, reviewed the proposed contract.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council approves the proposed contract from Thompson and Litton and authorizes Town Manager to execute documents. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Abstain	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Councilwoman Donna Blevins abstained from the vote due to her Husband is an employee of Thompson and Litton.

- Report on 2021-2022 Health Insurance Premium – The Local Choice Health Benefits Program reported a one-time rate decrease of 4%. Health Insurance open enrollment is April 15, 2021 through May 15, 2021 with coverage beginning July 1, 2021. Mrs. Marlene Henderson, Clerk-Treasurer requested approval to begin the health insurance renewal process.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by Julie Sturgill Council approves the health insurance renewal process. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Report on Delayed February Water/Sewer Bills – The Town mailed the water/sewer bills at the local post office on January 28, 2021. The bills were transported to Greensboro, North Carolina, to be sorted. A COVID-19 outbreak was reported in the postal system at Greensboro and the water/sewer bills were delayed by ten days. Chilhowie citizens began receiving the bills on February 9, 2021. Since there was such a delay in the postal service it was requested to waive the 10% penalty for the month of February 2021.

Motion by Bill Clear, second by Brent Foster Council waives the water/sewer bill 10% penalty for the month of February 2021. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Report on On-Line Bill Payment and CARES Act Delinquent Bills Relief – The Town has been in contact with Converge, the merchant service provider, to begin the process of being able to accept on-line payments via www.chilhowie.org. Converge will place a 3.5% fee on the amount of the water/sewer bill being paid which will go directly to Converge for the service provided.

  Smyth County received funds for delinquent water/sewer bills to assist customers who are behind in bill payments. Letters were sent to seventy water/sewer customers who have until February 19, 2021 to complete an application to accept assistance with their delinquent bills. The assistance will not pay their bills in full but will aid in catching up the delinquency. Water/sewer customers that completed the CARES Act Delinquent Bill Relief application will be contacted the week of February 22, 2021.

- Proposal on Fire Training Building – The Fire Department is requesting the construction of a Fire Training Building to be erected at the Burning Building site. Mr. Curtis Crawford, Smyth County Emergency Management Coordinator, reported Smyth County would like

to jointly construct the classroom since the Burn Building serves County wide trainings. Mr. Crawford reported the Smyth County Board of Supervisors has earmarked $5,000 for the project in a good faith effort for the project to move forward. An agreement will be required between the Town of Chilhowie and Smyth County concerning splitting the cost of erecting a Fire Training Building.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council refers the matter to the Finance and Personnel Committee. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

- Report on COVID Vaccinations Schedule – The majority of the Town's staff is scheduled for their second vaccination on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. Mr. Curtis Crawford, Smyth County Emergency Management Coordinator, reported the latest COVD statistics for Smyth County with 2,471 cumulative cases and 62 active cases. An estimated 17% of the County's population has been vaccinated.

- Report on Various Police Issues – Mr. Andrew Moss, Chief of Police, reported on police activity. The break in at Chilhowie Drug is still under investigation and the Department has been assisting with Emergency Custody Orders among other police activities. Chief Moss submitted a quote from Power DMS, a software that will allow the Officers to have Policy and Procedure Manual amongst other information, on their smart phone in the amount of $2,625.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by Julie Sturgill Council approves the purchase of Power DMS in the amount of $2,625. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Department Reports:

Mrs. Marlene Henderson, Clerk-Treasurer, reported the budget is doing well with Water revenues at 58%, Sewer 57%, Meals Tax 66% and Lodging Tax 60%.

Mr. David Haynes, Fire and EMS Chief, reported the EMS Department is experiencing high numbers of EMS calls due to COVID. Also, Smyth County Fire and EMS Chiefs will begin to meet monthly with Mr. Curtis Crawford, Smyth County Emergency Management Coordinator, who will communicate with Smyth County Board of Supervisors concerning needs and/or issues.

Mr. Crawford reported he is currently collecting a survey from citizens on emergency services to get a base line of public opinion of fire and rescue.

Mr. Ron Cahill, Recreation Director/Special Events Coordinator, reported the Town Manager and Mayor has signed the 2021 Little League agreement. The Little League also included a plan on how they plan to abide by the Governor's mandates for COVID-19.

Any Other Council Business:

Mr. Brent Foster, Councilman, inquired if the Public Works crew could replace the boards on the picnic tables at the Little League fields due to being in such rough condition.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council approves the replacement of the picnic table boards at the Little League fields. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Mr. Foster also inquired if the Town could change the due date or penalty date for Business License to allow businesses more time to file and receive tax information.

Motion by Brent Foster, second by P.J. Wolfe Council refers this matter to the Finance and Personnel Committee. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

Mr. Foster requested the Town to send a letter to the Virginia Department of Transportation concerning the ditch at Food City Gas N' Go. The ditch is not very visible and is very deep and numerous people have wrecked into that ditch. Mr. John Clark, Town Manager, stated there is a meeting scheduled with the Virginia Department of Transportation on February 23, 2021 and he will mention the matter.

Mr. Foster stated Mr. Vernon Sturgill approached him concerning the erosion of the creek toward his driveway and inquired if the Town could assist him with this concern and move the creek and bridge. Mr. Jay Keen, Director of Public Works, reported Mr. Sturgill can contact the Army Corp of Engineers for assistance. Town Attorney Paul Cassell stated that the Town cannot do anything on private property.

Mr. Lewis Shortt, Councilman, inquired about signage to keep tractor and trailers off Old Stage Road. Mr. Shortt stated the drivers GPS system brings them around Old Stage Road and requested a sign stating "No Thru Trucks" to be installed. Mr. Keen, Director of Public Works, reported the Virginia Department of Transportation has recently installed "No Thru Trucks" signage.

Motion by Lewis Shortt, second by Brent Foster Council adjourns this meeting at 8:41 p.m. The motion was approved with following recorded vote:

Donna Blevins	Aye	Bill Clear	Aye
Brent Foster	Aye	Lewis Shortt	Aye
Julie Sturgill	Aye	P.J. Wolfe	Aye

_____Mayor
Gary L. Heninger

_____Clerk
Marlene L. Henderson, MMC