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Council: Billy L. Clear
Shannon Donnelly
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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

July 13, 2023

Public Hearing on Surplus Property Near Southern End of Church Avenue

You have in your agenda packet a notice of Public Hearing published in the Smyth County News. The ad is soliciting bids on property declared surplus by the Town Council at its June 8 meeting. The minimum bid was set at $40,000. The ad was published in the Smyth County News on June 28 and July 5, as required by the Code of Virginia.

This property contains four lots north of the rail road and near the Southern end of Church Avenue. The lots are all in the 100 year flood plain and are zoned Business Industrial. Sealed bids were received by the Town on July 13 at 4:00 and were then publicly opened. The bids have to be for all the lots and not individually. As Town Attorney Paul Cassell has advised, the Public Hearing will be held to solicit public comment on the viability of the high bid and then selling the property. Council has the right to reject any and all bids.

Executed Contract on Installation of Sprayground (Splashpad) Park and Related Issues

You have in your agenda a copy of the executed contract with National Pools of Roanoke for the Sprayground Project. The contract is for $168,000. Paul Cassell had asked several adjustments be made in the contract, including insurance provisions for subcontractors of National Pools, time lines, and performance bonds, all of which were included.

The contract is for 180 days and will be scheduled to begin no later than September 15, 2023. The performance bond will cost an additional $5,040, and is 3% of the contract. We will pay the performance bond closer to the beginning of the project. As you can see in Section 18 Payments, we will pay for the project in four increments, starting with 25% when the project is started and ending at 5% when the project is completed.

We still do not have a contractor for the rest of the project including the bathrooms, fences, shelters, etc. We have several contractors who have expressed interested, including one who has done work for the Town before. Before the National Pools work begins I'd like to set up a preconstruction meeting with them, and perhaps invite several contractors who have expressed interest in the balance of the project. I will also ask our architect Nathan Brown to attend.

Grant Award From the Smyth County Foundation of $125,000 on the Sprayground Project

You have in your agenda packet an agreement from the Smyth County Charitable Fund (Foundation) for $125,000 for the Sprayground Project. As you recall we applied for this grant to the Foundation back in the Summer of 2022 and received notice of its acceptance later in 2022 or early 2023.

There was no formal agreement on the grant until now. There was no formal administrative framework concerning the Foundation until recently, when Executive Director Lynda Helton was hired, which certainly helped with the process. The agreement is very standard and requires the Town to construct the facility as we will do. It is my understanding that Ms. Helton will be at the Council meeting to present the $125,000 check.

Second Award from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on Infiltration and Inflow

(I&I) Project

You have in agenda packet a June 23 email and letters from Ms. Karen Doren of DEQ for the I&I Project. We had gotten an earlier award in December of 2022 for the project.

This package was somewhat confusing in that it was from two pools of money. After talking with Dennis Amos and some DEQ personnel we were able to sort it out. One pool of money for principal forgiveness (grant) was for $224,250 and the other $275,162. With the total second award being $1,248,531 the balance of the money is a 30 year 0% loan. The loan / principal forgiveness allocations is 60% loan and 40% principal forgiveness.

The funding for the project is now secured. As you can see by a handwritten breakdown I prepared on June 23, the total first and second award packages is $3,318,505, with $2,051,893 grant and $1,266,612 loan. This breaks down to a 61.8% grant and 38.2% loan for the total package. Taking the loan amount of $1,266,893 over a 30 year period would be $42,220.40 yearly. Using this fiscal year's sewer expense at $918,584, the $42,220.40 would only be an additional 4.6% increase.

We had hoped to bid the project out this month. Hurt and Proffitt has completed the design. But the Virginia Resources Authority will not let us close on the project until the 2021-22 audit is completed. The first part of the report has just been completed but now it was be certified by another auditor. At this writing I don't expect the project to be closed on until this Fall, and the project bid out later this year with a late winter / early spring of 2024 for construction to commence.

Hurt and Proffitt (H&P) Contract Proposal on Lead Inventory Project

You have in your agenda packet a June 30 proposal from Hurt and Proffitt for the lead inventory project. As you recall Council approved H&P proposal to conduct the study and authorized a proposal be submitted.

We were allocated up to $250,000 for the inventory by the Virginia Department of Health, $95,000 of it (38%) principal forgiveness. We met with Health Department personnel earlier this year about the project. They were as unsure about the aspects of the program as we were and a said as much. The only concrete thing we got out of the meeting was that the inventory had to be completed by October of 2024.

Class I Water Operator Don Cole attended a meeting with the Health Department on June 27 in Dublin along with Dennis Amos of Hurt and Proffitt. Some of what they learned at the meeting Dennis was able to incorporate into the proposal. Don further reported that the tragic events of Flint, Michigan about a decade ago played a large part into the formulation of the lead rules by the Environmental Protection Agency.

As you can see the H&P proposal has three phases in the project, with Phase One completed within 60 days of the contract authorization. They estimate their services will cost $34,000, with $4,000 being a lump sum fee and the balance an estimated hourly fee. I assume 38% will be principal forgiveness. As with the sewer project above, I don't see how we can close and begin the project until the VRA releases the project.

Resolutions From Localities on WDBJ Roanoke to Comcast

You have in your agenda Packet the resolution passed by the Town Council on June 8 requesting Comcast put WDBJ Roanoke back on the basic cable package. I sent it to the three Comcast contacts I was able to find, which took some effort. The resolution was also passed by all three Town Councils and the Board of Supervisors in June. I also copied our Congressional delegation and asked them for their support.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.

Town Manager