TOWN OF CHILHOWIE, VIRGINIA

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Director Public Works: Jay Keen
Fire /EMS Chief: C. David Haynes
Building Official: C. David Haynes
Recreation/Special Events Coordinator: Jeff Smarr
Legal: Cassel & Crewe, P.C.

Town Manager's Report to Mayor and Town Council
July 14, 2022

Closure of the Bristol Landfill and Potential Affects on Towns and County

In mid-June I met with the administrators of Saltville, Marion and Smyth to discuss the imminent closure of the Bristol Landfill. Smyth County takes all its solid waste from the Transfer Station on Route 107 and transports it to the Bristol Landfill. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has mandated that the Landfill not take any more outside trash, or be closed.

As we understand it the Landfill has to give the County a 90 notice of its cessation taking outside garbage. As of June 14, this notice has not been received. According to County Administrator Shawn Utt the County pays Bristol $17 per ton for the refused. He expects that figure to double to at least $35 at a new landfill, and the amount and location of that landfill has yet to be determined. The County charges $58 per ton for incoming garbage. Regarding the Towns, Marion picks up their garbage with their vehicle and crew, and Chilhowie and Saltville utilize a contract carrier – in both cased Green for Life (GFL).

Our contract with GFL allows them to change their rates based on new landfill charges. The contract states the dollar increase would be applied times the number of tons charged (around 71 or 64 per month based on either GFL or County numbers) divided by 1,100 customers. If the numbers above hold true and the increase in the charges increase by $18 a ton, then GFL would increase our rates per customer to around $1.10 per month. $1.10 times 1100 customers would equal around $14,520 annually. GFL currently charges us $12.50 per customer. Since we are charging our customers more than that I think we could absorb that kind of increase, at this writing, without raising rates.

Again, with some many variables still not known at this writing these numbers are very preliminary and could vary. More will be known after the County receives notice of the closure and completes negotiations with another landfill.

Additionally, sometime after our meeting a memo was put together outlining the issue and its potential implications. Although I agreed with the concept, I did not want to sign the document until I had presented the issue to you at the July Council meeting. I believe the other three localities governing bodies met the week of June 20 and the issue was discussed. I sent you an email on this situation on June 21.

Update on East Lee II Pedestrian Project

You have in your agenda packet a revised Appendix A regarding the East Lee II Pedestrian Project. As you recall from last month's Council Meeting, I wrote a May 27 letter to Mr. John Dew of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) requesting additional funding, as Mr. Dew had requested, I do.

In the letter I asked for $134,868 in funding including the Town's 20% at $26,973. In addition, as advised by Mr. Dew, offered to put another $10,000 up on top of the Town's 20%. As you can see in Appendix A the form includes the new monies, namely $622,202 for the total revised estimate. VDOT's share is $489,762 and the Town's $132,441. The Town's portion includes the extra $10,000. The money allocated in this year's budget should cover that demand.

On July 11 I emailed John and asked him if I could report to Council that with this new Appendix A that the project would be bid out this year, and if the extra $10,000 helped in this endeavor. He responded on July 12 and stated "I think it reasonable to tell Council that the Advertisement Authorization is anticipated next month", and added further "and the additional $10,000 offered by the Town helped secure additional Transportation Alternative funds needed to fund 80% of the expected higher bid / construction cost,". In the email John pointed out that VDOT could have opted to have the Town fund any additional cost over the initial $487,334 allocated earlier in the year.

With the construction window rapidly closing, I hope we get authorization to bid next month. That would put construction starting in mid-September and would leave about a 90 window to substantially complete the project before cold weather. Admittedly that is a tight schedule.

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Wastewater Regional Study

On June 15 I attended a meeting at Mt. Rogers PDC that involved the three Planning Districts in Southwest Virginia. They are Mt. Rogers, Cumberland Plateau and Lenowisco Planning District Commissions. The meeting was attended by about 60 people from a variety of localities in Southwest Virginia.

Three engineering firms are leading the study – Thompson and Litton, The Lane Group and Onsite Systems Engineering. The stated study components will include an inventory of existing wastewater and collection system and identify needs; solicitation of input from regulatory agencies, owners; update the 2005 study; identify and evaluate unserved areas; identify funding sources; and, develop recommendations for future regionalization priorities, public education and system operation and maintenance. The Town was given a questionnaire involving both billing and operations and that information was turned in the first of July.

Update on Splash Pad Project

Mr. Nathan Brown of Barrington Landscape Architects will be on hand to present formally the concept of the proposed Splash Pad. You have in your revised agenda packet that will be at your seat on Thursday the cost estimate and drawings of the proposed facility dated April 14, 2022. The estimated cost of the facility is $291,112.50 high and the low $204,197.50.

As mentioned earlier Recreation / Special Events Coordinator Jeff Smarr and I had met on May 18 with Mr. Mike Robinson of the Smyth County Foundation and talked several times about this project; and, inquired more specifically if it would be eligible for funding from the Foundation. Mr. Robinson responded recently that the Grant Committee of the Foundation had preliminarily looked at the project and the committee felt it met the broad guidelines of "offering direct and immediate or near immediate benefit to the health and well-being of Smyth County Residents".

As a result of the Committee's meeting, Mr. Robinson invited the Town to make a formal application for partial funding of the project. Jeff Spickard and I will be working on the application and will submit it the end of the month. It is my understanding that the full Foundation Board will meet on August 16 to evaluate the Town's funding application.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.
Town Manager