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Council: Billy L. Clear
Shannon Donnelly
J. Brent Foster
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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

August 10, 2023

Mt. Rogers Planning District Commission (PDC) Housing Study

At the Council meeting I have asked Mr. Jimmy Moss to appear and go over the housing analysis study in Smyth County and in the six county and two city Mt. Rogers Planning District Commission (PDC) area. Jimmy is the Housing Planner for the PDC. The lack of new housing in the region has been identified as a major issue, especially in relation to job growth and population growth.

Jimmy will present a comprehensive study, commissioned by the Department of Housing and Community Development, I believe, that was done by S. Patz & Associates, a real estate consultant. You have a copy of this report in your agenda packet. The overall purpose of the study is to assess the existing and future housing needs of the PDC, trends in employment and growth, for sale housing and costs, rental housing and costs, etc. in each locality.

Additionally, you have in your agenda packet a press release from the PDC promoting the development of new for sale housing units. The County put up $3,000,000 from its allocation of the American Rescue Plan Act seeking partners to move for on the development of new family single home units. That money will come in the form of grants, low or no interest loans, some of which may be forgiven. Interested persons / companies are asked to submit a Proof of Concept involving the number of units proposed, partner development experience, location, etc.

Situation with County Possibly Funding Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Deficit

As we discussed at the last meeting, and you may have read in the Smyth County News, negotiations have been underway for several weeks or months for the County to fulling fund EMS operations provided by the Towns of Marion and Chilhowie. As you know the County took over the EMS operations from Saltville earlier in the year and I think that set a precedent.

Marion has been in the forefront negotiating with the County on this issue and has had several meetings on the committee level, as I have heard and read about. We have also been in touch with the Board of Supervisors, especially our representative Mike Sturgill and County Administrator Shawn Utt that we expect the same proportional treatment as Marion. They both agreed that we would be given that equal treatment. To that end Shawn began asking us for some numbers on the cost of our EMS operation. Since our Fire and EMS Department is together we had to extrapolate those costs.

On July 12 Fire/EMS Chief David Haynes, Clerk Treasurer Marlene Henderson and I met with Shawn and Clegg Williams of the County to go over those numbers. Using data for fiscal year 22-23 ending June 30, 2023 there were a total of 1,540 incidents. Of those 1,333 were EMS calls or motor vehicle / EMS calls constituting 86.6%. Using another measure for calendar year 2022 there were 1,632 incidents. Of those 1,348 were EMS calls or motor vehicle / EMS calls constituting 82.6%. We blended those numbers to come up with an overall average of 84.6%.

Taking the total project expenditure $1,289,626 for the 2023-24 budget we extrapolated that $669,377 was EMS cost. (a significant line item in the budget is for the 20 year cost of the fire trucks at $139,780 which cannot be counted against EMS costs). Taking that figure and subtracting the estimated billing at $360,000 that left a balance $309,377 of cost. With the County slated to budget $220,000 for the EMS Department that left an estimated shortfall of $89,377. It should be pointed out that these are preliminary figures.

The County is putting together an agreement for his funding and will present it to our staff and Marion's for review. Once we are satisfied I will ask the County Staff to present it to Council. I think an item of this magnitude will require either a Continued or Special Meeting which I hope to have by the end of August.

Bids on Surplus Tanker / Pumper Truck and Aerial Truck and Offer from Smyth County

As approved by Council the two old fire trucks were declared surplus to make room for two new trucks that we expect to come in a couple of weeks. As you know the new pumper is costing $887,486 and the new aerial ladder $1,280,743 for a total cost of $2,168,229. We are financing the trucks through the Bank of Marion at a 20 year loan of 1.99%, I believe. The cost beginning this fiscal year is around $140,00 per year.

As you can see by the attached sheet there were three bidders on each of the trucks. The high bidder for the aerial ladder truck was $200,000 from Powellville Fire Company, Inc. of Pittsfield, Maryland. The high bid for the pumper tanker truck was $151,000 from Brindlle Mountain fire Apparatus of Union

Grove, Alabama. In the 2023-24 we had budgeted $250,000 in surplus equipment, so with these two bids were are in excess of our estimate by $151,000.

On July 26 County Administrator Shawn Utt and Emergency Services Director Curtis Crawford met with Fire / EMS Chief David Haynes. The Board of Supervisors had voted to ask them to request that we sell the pumper truck to them for $1 more than our high bid, in the interest of need in the County and intergovernmental cooperation. Upon consultation with Attorney Paul Cassell, he will look into

this matter and report back to us.

Both this possible exchange and acceptance of the high bids for the vehicles will be presented to Council for their consideration at the August 10 Council meeting.

Update on Splash Pad Project

The Staff and I met with a local contractor on August 2 to discuss the second part of the project. Our Architect Nathan Brown was also at the meeting. This contractor has done a lot of work for the Town

the last several years. As you recall National Pools of Roanoke has the bid at $168,000 for the pad itself at $168,000. More on that below.

The contractor t was interested in bidding the bathroom and appurtenances, all the concrete work and related work. He would give a labor price on that plus a supply price from a local supplier. He felt it would be better to get someone else on the fencing and landscaping because he could not provide those services, and if he did he would just have to mark it up. Our staff and architect agreed this would be the best strategy at this juncture. When and after the main footprint of the project is completed, we could take care of those amenities when the facility is opened in the Spring / Summer of 2024.

I encouraged the contractor to give us a price as soon as he could. As soon as I get the price I will take it to Council for approval. As you recall we formally bid the building side of the project out earlier this year and got no bidders. We can now negotiate with contractors on the balance of the project, as is approved by our Town Attorney Paul Cassell. Another contractor may also give a quote. If at all possible we would like to have a contractor on this portion of the project when National Pools begins in September.

Regarding the start of the portion of the contractor National Pools is doing, they were slated to start on September 15. But we realized that they could well put them in the midst of Apple festivals activities. We asked that they move their start date back to September 25. They agreed and we will be putting that extra 10 days on the back of the contract for scheduled completion.

Respectfully Submitted,

John E. B. Clark, Jr.

Town Manager