TOWN OF CHILHOWIE, VIRGINIA

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Director Public Works: Daniel W. Combs
Fire /EMS Chief: C. David Haynes
Building Official: C. David Haynes
Wastewater Operations: Luke A. Lowe
Water Operations: Don Cole, II
Special Events/Recreation: Stephen Fields
Legal: Cassell & Crewe, P.C.

Town Manager's Report to Mayor and Town Council
February 13, 2025

Good evening, Mayor Heninger and Members of the Town Council.

Here's a brief look at what's going on in our town:

Hurricane Helene Recovery

Our staff continues to work with FEMA, our engineering partners, and consultants to address the repairs needed to bring the town to full recovery. Design work continues for the permanent repairs at each of the three aerial sewer crossings that were destroyed during the storm. Final design work is expected to be complete late this month or early March. Mr. Dennis Amos will attend the March Town Council meeting to discuss the design process and provide an update on regulatory approvals.

Ms. Eller, Mr. Fields, Public Works, and I met with FEMA representatives once in late January and then again on February 11th to conduct site visits allowing FEMA to see first-hand and document the damage to our facilities and update them on our recovery progress and plans going forward. Everyone has been very helpful.

The security fencing at Widener Spring and Reid Store Pump Station is approximately two-thirds complete. Damaged fencing has been removed, new poles are set, and the new fence will be installed after this week's weather event and associated muddy ground. The damaged drain tile at the Widener Spring is in more disrepair due to the high water over the past two weeks. Your staff has completed a list of specifications, known as a "spec sheet", that has been provided to several qualified local contractors to place bids on replacing the culvert and installing heavier abutments to mitigate future damage from storms or other disasters.

Sewer Improvement Project Update

The relining of the planned sewer pipes is complete, with the exception of a couple of small areas that had been identified as needing repairs IF funding were to become available. Rehabilitation of manholes is now underway. The project will result in numerous leaking manholes being "dried in" which will result

in less Inflow and Infiltration, while also adding years of life to these key components of the town's wastewater collection system.

The work associated with Change Order Number 1 continues along Bonham Avenue. The "open cut" section of this project (running through the CHS band practice field) is now complete and the next phase (under Highway 11 and along Bonham Avenue to Old Stage Road) is well underway with laterals being connected as progress is made. Even after this work, our engineering consultants and contractors feel strongly that the town will have approximately $300,000 of our original funding package that can be used to reline areas not originally planned for this project. In addition to a section of line running from Pathway Park to the town's wastewater treatment plant, Mr. Combs and Mr. Keen showed me a section of the town's collection system running from Highway 11 under the river to the Town Shop that is in need of repairs. If all goes well, these two problem areas will be included in an upcoming Change Order.

The monthly progress meeting for this project was held on February 5th. A copy of the meeting minutes is provided in your agenda packet.

The end result of this project should see a considerable reduction of the inflow and infiltration (I&I) entering our wastewater system. This reduction should correlate to reduced operating costs for our wastewater treatment plant, including reduced electricity consumption and overall better efficiency.

VDOT Communications

Last month I was requested to contact our state legislators about the community's ongoing concerns about safety at the Interstate 81 exchange at Exit 35 prior to their departure for the 2025 General Assembly, which convened on January 8th. A copy of this letter was provided to you in last month's Town Council meeting agenda. I received a telephone response from our legislators stating that they would look into this matter while they are in Richmond for the current session of the General Assembly.

will no longer need to rely on a TRAN as a protective measure to be able to satisfy the town's debts.

Smyth 12

The Smyth 12 reconvened in January with strong representation from Smyth County, Chilhowie, Marion, and Saltville. It was the consensus of all in attendance that a concerted effort will be made to continue these meetings going forward.

DHCD Enterprise Zone Regional Training Conference

On January 14th, the town hosted representatives from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and provided space at the Fire Training Center for their annual regional training sessions for the Virginia Enterprise Zone Program. The town is a participant in this economic development program and was more than happy to host this event.

Mount Rogers Regional Cigarette Tax Board and General Assembly Action

On January 22nd, staff represented our town at the quarterly meeting of the Mount Rogers Regional Cigarette Tax Board. The town's membership on this board continues to be a reliable and convenient mechanism for collection of the town's tobacco taxes. It was discussed at this meeting, and should be noted by elected officials, that revenues from this tax stream continue to decline modestly. This is due to the fact that fewer people in our community smoke tobacco, but inversely the number of people who vape is increasing.

To address this issue that could result in dramatic future declines in revenue, numerous localities around the Commonwealth asked for action at the state level to rectify the oversight of vaping and other non-traditional nicotine delivery systems not being included in the last revision of these laws. Members of the General Assembly acted on this and introduced House Bill 2488, which was not passed and, in fact, did not make it out of committee.

DEQ Regional Water Supply Planning Program

Town staff will attend the kickoff meeting for this program on March 4th in Tazewell. I will provide you an update on this next month.

Questions

As always, I welcome any questions about the status of the town's busy activities. Thank you!

Respectfully Submitted,

J. Brian Martin
Town Manager