

TO: Mayor Webb and Town Council
FROM: James Morani, Town Manager
RE: Town Manager Report for October 2020

- **FY 2020-2021 Budget** – Through the first third of the fiscal year, meals tax revenues are down 10.2% from the previous year while lodging taxes are down 46.5%. For FY 2020-2021, the total decrease in meals, lodging, and local sales and use taxes is 17.7%. Fiscal year projections for these combined revenues is a decrease of 32.2%.
- **The Meadows / Exit 17 Commercial Development** – Holiday Inn Express (The Meadows) construction is in its final stages but no expected completion date has been established. Hampton Inn project (Washington Crossings) continues in-framing stages with addition of third floor and beyond.
- **Sports Complex** – The Town has executed the construction contract with Quesenberry’s. Baker’s Construction is near completion of the storm drain, utility, and grading work at the Sports Complex site. Town staff and consultants held a meeting with Quesenberry’s to discuss potential cost savings on several items.
- **Bond Issue (Sports Complex and Public Safety Radios)** – The sale of the bonds were finalized on October 22. The Town received a favorable interest rate of 2.28%. Including the refunding of the 2013 loans in the bond sale resulted in a savings of over \$50,000. The closing is scheduled for November 12, at which time the Town will receive the bond proceeds.
- **Police Department Training** – Department-wide firearms and use of force training was conducted. Other officers received training in SWAT, human trafficking, and bomb identification.
- **Police Officer Recognition** – Highlands Community Services (HCS) presented the “Delta” award to Lt. Chris Jennings for his work in handling a crisis situation involving a man threatening to jump from the Cummings Street Bridge.
- **News Article on Police Officer** – Investigator Yancey Wilmoth was featured in a front-page story in the Bristol Herald-Courier.
- **Comprehensive Plan** – The Comprehensive Plan was adopted by Town Council on October 5.
- **Zoning and Subdivision Code Update** – Staff is finalizing the RFP for the Zoning and Subdivision Code Update.
- **Coomes Recreation Center** – CRC management is working on filling positions for the phase 2 opening, which will include opening of the indoor pool.
- **Creeper Trail Visitors Center (Findlay House)** – We have seen high foot traffic at the Virginia Creeper Trail Welcome Center, averaging 80 people per day on weekends. We’ve been able to direct visitors to shopping, dining and evening entertainment to round out their trip to the trail.
- **Travel Writers** – With funding from the CARES Act, Abingdon hosted its first press trip in 2020 with four travel writers from South Carolina, North Carolina, Louisiana, and Ohio. Highlights included a short ride on the Creeper Trail, wine tasting courtesy of Abingdon Vineyards, and a ghost tour. While we have seen immediate results from social media and blog posts, we expect most of the ROI to come in the next months and even years.
- **Tourism Grant** – The Town has been awarded a \$20,000 Marketing Recovery grant from Virginia Tourism Corporation. These funds can be used throughout 2021 for additional marketing and advertising.
- **Small Business Relief Fund** – Staff continues to work with local businesses to facilitate the submission of applications for Washington County’s Small Business Relief Fund.
- **CDBG Urgent Need Grant** – Tonya Triplett is working with Cam Bell to finalize the Town’s policies for the program. We are expecting to implement the program by early January.