

TO: Mayor Webb and Town Council
FROM: James Morani, Town Manager
RE: Town Manager Report for March 2021

- **FY 2021-2022 Budget** – The proposed budget will be presented at the April 22 meeting. Director of Finance Steve Trotman will also discuss the proposed amendment to the FY 2020-2021 budget.
- **Economically Sensitive Revenues** – Through March, meals tax revenues are down 7.9% from the previous fiscal year while lodging taxes are down 42.3%. March saw an increase of 13.8% in meals tax revenues and decrease of 10.6% in lodging tax revenues from the same month in the previous year. For FY 2020-2021, the total aggregate decrease in meals, lodging, and local sales and use taxes is 13.7%. Fiscal year projections for these combined revenue streams is a decrease of 32.2% so the Town is well above its total projected revenues.
- **Sports Complex** – Contractor has completed electrical and communications fiber conduit installation; started storm drain installation, access road construction, ball field fine grading and underdrain installation. Initial site work inspections are currently underway.
- **Park Street Improvements** – Staff has contacted a VDOT-certified acquisition consultant to obtain a proposal for negotiation with the property owners on the project where right-of-way or easements are required. Negotiations will start once the Town receives authorization from VDOT.
- **Hassinger House** – The boundary adjustment for the property has been finalized. The Town will obtain an updated appraisal prior to advertising the property for sale. The proposed re-zoning of the property to Office and Institutional (OI) has been recommended by the Planning Commission and will be considered by Town Council at the May 3 meeting.
- **Fields-Penn House** – Facilities maintenance staff raised the front porch to match the door threshold for ADA compliance. The Town has received quotes for exterior painting and a new HVAC system and ductwork. Proposals are being solicited for roof replacement and staining/preserving the perimeter wooden fence.
- **Sanitary Sewer System Inflow and Infiltration** – Final bid documents have been assembled and staff is working to establish an advertisement date.
- **VDOT Smart Scale Projects** – Town staff continues to participate in Exit 17 progress meetings.
- **Remsburg Drive Pedestrian Bridge** – Draft design plans have been submitted by Thompson & Litton.
- **East Main Street Sidewalk Connection** – This project will be bid when funds become available in the upcoming fiscal year.
- **East Main Street Town Creek Crossing** – No new activities; awaiting notification of grant awards.
- **Traffic Study** – Staff is reviewing the draft report.
- **Annual Asphalt Resurfacing Work** – Staff met with the paving contractor to discuss Valley Street potholes east and west of Cummings Street. Also discussed were modifications to the section of Plumb Alley behind Barter Theatre to mitigate water runoff on private property.
- **Virginia Creeper Trail (VCT)** – Work continues to convert Meade crossing to STOP control for trail users. Staff met with consultant to develop proposal for repairs to Trestle #4 at Watauga Road.
- **Tree Removal Project** – All trees have been removed successfully. Public Works staff is in the process of removing stumps and reconstructing sidewalk, curb and gutter, and pavement damaged by roots. This work is expected to be completed in April.
- **Missing Child Task Force** – APD is a member of the newly established U.S. Marshals Missing Child Task Force. The FBI conducted training at the Coomes Recreation Center for officers involved with the unit.
- **Police Officer Applications** – New officer testing was conducted over two days. This involved a written test, preliminary interview, physical agility test, and 1.5 mile run. Twelve applicants participated in the testing process.

- **Police Department Training** – Twelve officers completed training courses during the month. Investigator Austin attended the FBI/U.S. Marshals Missing/Abducted Child training. Officer Johnson and Investigator Wilmoth completed training related to search warrants in Major Case investigations. Officer Richardson completed the Crisis Intervention Team training, which involved 40 hours of in-person instruction.
- **Traffic Monitoring** – A traffic counter has been deployed in the community. Chief Holbrook will use this as a tool for the police department by analyzing traffic volume and speeding. This will help in the decision-making process by implementing data-driven enforcement. The device was first deployed on Valley Street. Chief Holbrook will present this data to Town Council at the May 20 meeting.
- **Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Update** – Stakeholder meetings and the public input workshop will be held on April 1.
- **Washington County Courthouse** – HPRB approved the demolition of the Elliot Building located at 179 and 181 East Main Street. A Courthouse Committee meeting will be held on April 14 to discuss and evaluate proposals for the project.
- **Franchise Agreements** – Town management is working with the Town Attorney on franchise agreement renewals for Atmos Energy and Comcast.
- **Sewer Rate Study** – Davenport & Company has been engaged to assist the Town with the sewer rate study. A draft RFP has been prepared for solicitation of consultants for the project.
- **Employee Benefits** – For the second consecutive year, premiums for the Town’s health insurance plan will not increase. The Town is offering a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) to employees, which will be effective July 1. The FSA is a voluntary program that allows employees to pay for medical expenses while reducing their taxable income. The Town’s new benefits consultant, Pierce Group Benefits, will hold on-site open enrollment meetings in mid-April. Employees will meet individually with a benefits counselor. Town Management and HR are working to enhance employee benefits and streamline the enrollment process.
- **Economic Development/Tourism Activities**
 - Staff is working with Washington County to expand the Enterprise Zone into downtown
 - Discussed with DHCD the possibility of expanding the prepared meals grant program beyond August
 - Met with DHCD and MRPCD regarding housing study grant process
 - Completed reconciliation of CARES Act funding
 - Virtual FAM tour for groups with Virginia Tourism Corporation, William King Museum, Barter Theatre, and the Crooked Road
 - Washington County Business Challenge
 - Best of Abingdon
 - Every Tuesday Small Business Spotlight
 - Continued development of marketing materials and management of social media content
 - Distributed brochures to hotels, restaurants, and other local businesses
 - Most hotels reported two sold out weekends in March for Bristol races. They are also reporting increased business and are booking into September.