

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

- **FY 2021-2022 Budget** – Due to increased revenues during the last quarter of the fiscal year, the Town closed the fiscal year in a stronger position than anticipated. The Finance Department is working to finalize year-end expenses. They will make their annual audit presentation in late 2021.
- **FY 2022-2023 Budget** – Director of Finance Steve Trotman has developed a new monthly report in a “dashboard” format. The first report, through June 2021, was provided to Town Council in the beginning of July.
- **Economically Sensitive Revenues** – Meals, Lodging, and Local Sales and Use Tax revenues continue to perform strong. For the month of July, Meals tax revenues were up approximately \$50,000 from pre-pandemic levels in previous years.
- **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)** – At its July 15 retreat, Town Council recommends the Town allocate a majority of ARPA funds for the following projects: East Main Street / Town Creek stormwater mitigation, Green Spring Road culvert replacement, The Meadows Sports Complex, and Virginia Creeper Trail trestle repairs. Town Council will take formal action to allocate these funds at its August 2 meeting.
- **Sports Complex** – Construction of the concession stand and maintenance building continues; concrete curb and gutter installation continues for parking lots; base mix asphalt work continues for the north parking lot. Street light installation has begun in the north parking lot. Finish grade work continues in areas of the project. Fencing work continues throughout the site. Sod has been placed on three of the baseball fields; other fields are nearing completion of base and root zones and will be ready for sod installation in August. Demolition of the addition to The Meadows house is in progress; detachment from the primary structure is scheduled for the second week of August. S&ME will be onsite during this phase to observe detachment per the existing MOA.
- **Park Street Improvements** – Town staff is scheduling an in-person meeting with Thompson & Litton to discuss progress, schedule, and risk management. The Town has still not received authorization from VDOT to acquire right-of-way.
- **Hassinger House** – The Town did not receive any proposals for sale of the property. This matter will be discussed at the August 2 council meeting.
- **Veterans Memorial Park Restrooms** – Electrical, gutter work, and ADA ramp/deck has been completed. The contractor will start the installation of the guard and hand rail for the ADA ramp later this month.
- **Fields-Penn House** – The rear porch reconstruction is complete; second coat of paint is in progress. Interior construction still in progress.
- **Sanitary Sewer System Inflow and Infiltration** – Based on the identified scope of work by the Town’s consultant, CHA, the Town Manager authorized staff to apply for a DEQ loan in the amount of \$3,314,000, with a possible 50% in principle forgiveness, for I&I project funding. The application was submitted for the second round of the SWVA Pilot Program on July 29.
- **Wastewater Contract Operations** – The Town received three proposals in response to the RFP for wastewater contract operations. The selection committee will meet on August 5 to discuss the evaluation of the proposals and reach a consensus on the preferred contractor operator.
- **VDOT Smart Scale Projects** – Work at Exit 17 continues on Gravel Lake Road; some utility and excavation work has started. Town staff participated in VDOT’s pre-construction meeting for the US-19/West Main Street intersection improvements. The project is expected to start in September.

- **Remsburg Drive Pedestrian Bridge** – Plans have been completed and the project is ready for bid. A meeting will be scheduled with the Town’s consulting engineer, Thompson & Litton, about moving this project to bid and construction.
- **East Main Street Sidewalk Connection** – Town staff is preparing to meet with the Town’s consulting engineer, The Lane Group, about moving this project to bid and construction.
- **East Main Street Town Creek Crossing** – The Town was given notice the \$50,000 grant has been awarded for the study of Town Creek. An agreement for grant funding through DEQ is forthcoming. Town Council has allocated ARPA funds for this project.
- **Boone Street Sidewalk Improvements** – The Town has submitted a pre-application for pedestrian improvements on Boone Street from Main Street to Walden Road. The proposed project includes the addition of sidewalk and stormwater structures.
- **Virginia Creeper Trail**
 - Conversion of the Meade Drive crossing to STOP control for trail users has been well received. The Town is preparing to install the two swing arm gates on the trail to slow down cyclists as they approach the intersection.
 - Town staff is coordinating with developer John White’s surveyor and attorney to complete documents needed for conveyance of Town property to Washington County for access road right-of-way. A public hearing will be required prior to conveyance of the property.
 - As a trail manager and stakeholder, the Town is participating in the development of a strategic plan for the Virginia Creeper Trail Conservancy (VCTC). Town representatives have participated in several meetings with the planning firm, Equinox, to solicit feedback about VCTC’s role and sustainability of the Virginia Creeper Trail.
- **New Police Officers** – Adam Heath and Justin Nichols both started in July. Officer Heath, who previously worked for the Town, is a certified officer and has already completed his field training. Officer Nichols is currently attending basic law enforcement training at the regional academy.
- **Retirement** – Sergeant Camille Finney retired on July 31 after 23 years of service. The video of her signing off duty for the last time had 2.4 million views on Facebook.
- **Marcus Alert** – Highlands Community Services hosted the first community stakeholders meeting for the new Marcus Alert program. Chief Holbrook and I will both attended. The next meeting is scheduled for August 22.
- **Life Saving Event** – Officers Johnson, Dea, Rogers, Huddleston, Heath, and Wilmoth were able to successfully negotiate with a person who was threatening to commit suicide with a knife she was holding. The incident ended peacefully.
- **Fire Department IT Improvements** – The IT Department is working to upgrade fiber connections to both floors. New cameras and switches have been installed.
- **Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Update** – The Berkley Group is working on revisions to the Use Matrix and Definitions, Zoning District Standards, and Special and Overlay Districts based on discussions from the June 28 Planning Commission meeting.
- **Director of Community Development** – Four candidates were interviewed for the Director of Community Development position.
- **CRC Outdoor Pool** – In mid-July, the outdoor pool experienced problems with the pump, which resulted in a temporary closure. The pump was replaced and the pool was reopened on July 29.
- **CRC Fitness Programs** – Aquatic and fitness classes are scheduled to start the first week of August.
- **The Meadows Operation Plan** – Recreation staff has completed a draft of The Meadows Operations Plan. This was a priority identified at the Town Council retreat.
- **Recycling** – Sustain Abingdon and Town staff are working to schedule a recycling event for August.

- **Natural Gas Franchise Agreement** – Atmos Energy was the only bid submitted for the natural gas franchise. The franchise agreement will be considered at the August 2 council meeting.
- **Outdoor Refreshment Area** – Staff continues to work with the Town Attorney and local stakeholders to develop proposed regulations for an Outdoor Refreshment Area (ORA) in Abingdon.
- **Prepared Meals Grant** – The prepared meals program continues to be a success. The Town has secured an additional \$200,000 for the program, which will allow it to continue into 2022. In July 1,350 meals were delivered to Faith in Action for a total value of \$16,200. A compliance review was completed with DHCD.
- **Sinking Springs Cemetery Brochure** – A new brochure for the Sinking Springs Cemetery was completed. A total of 8,000 were, some of which were delivered in time for the Virginia Highlands Festival.