

TO: Mayor Webb and Town Council
FROM: Mike Cochran, Town Manager
RE: Town Manager Report for November 2022

FINANCE & TREASURY -

- The FY 2021-2022 audit has been completed and will be presented at the December 2022 council meeting.
- Finance has been looking at where we have money at and the yields on those funds. As such, we are in the process of moving some money to different institutions to take advantage of the greater rates available.
- TACS, our third party past-due tax collection service provider has been working well. As of 11-20-2022, the town has received from TACS \$65,426.67 for real estate taxes and \$34,717.75 for personal property taxes.
- In addition to the TACS collections, as of November 15, 2022 the treasurer has received \$2,574 in delinquent sewer payments and \$14,133 in delinquent personal property taxes plus the administrative fees through IRMS & the Virginia State Rebate. These collections were for October and November, 2022.

RECREATION -

- **The Meadows** - Staff is working on having a well permitted and installed to be used to irrigate the fields and provide water for the splash pad. The regulatory paperwork is in process. This will vastly reduce the cost to maintain the fields and operate the splash pad once it is finished.
 - Travel team tournaments for 2023 are being scheduled.
 - **Bike Pump Track at The Meadows** - Staff is working on maximizing the reach of our funds on this project. We are slated to receive \$70,000 from the county as part of their tourism ARPA funding from the state. This amount plus what we already have will enable the asphalt part of the track to be built. Once additional funding is identified, the dirt 'skills' part can be added to the project.
- **Note** - there is a pump track in the Johnson City area that was built in the last couple of years. Using some analytical

software, we know that they received approx. 7,000 unique visitors to that track in the past year. Besides being an amenity for our residents, this track will bring tourists to town helping to diversify the tourism base to the local economy.

PUBLIC WORKS -

- **Street Department/Solid Waste/Central Garage**
 - ✓ Winter operations vehicle prep completed.
 - ✓ Leaf collection town wide. (Completed)
 - ✓ Christmas parade preparations for traffic control measures.
 - ✓ Potholes repairs on town streets prior to winter completed.
 - ✓ Central Garage conducting routine and repair maintenance.
 - ✓ New automated trash truck onsite and being prepped for operations.

- **Facilities Maintenance/Parks & Grounds**
 - ✓ Parks and Ground Finishing up Creeper Trail and Town Parks winterization.
 - ✓ Christmas decorations installed throughout town.
 - ✓ Moving forward on HVAC upgrades at train station (In progress).
 - ✓ Bench program for memorial benches (In progress).
 - ✓ Completed work for gates at Watauga Parking Lot.
 - ✓ HVAC Sports Complex Building "A" completed

WASTEWATER OPERATIONS -

- The Lane Group- Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study (SSES) - The Lane Group scheduled to present the update to Town Council at the December Council Meeting. An amendment to the original task order was approved for adding the evaluation of six sewer pump stations within the system for \$35,000. This study will provide a comprehensive overview of the status of the sewer system.

- A Morton Thomas (AMT) - **East Main Street Flood Mitigation**- The project is in progress. Geotechnical survey has begun. The Preliminary Design phase is 10% complete as of 11/16/22.

- East Main St. Sidewalk has run into a bit of an issue, as the proposed price of the project increased substantially, approx. \$50,000 for the 300 foot section of sidewalk. The next step includes talking with VDOT for any additional monies that might be available.

- The VA Creeper Trail Trestle 4 repair design had a revision/addition of a vehicular pre-manufactured bridge to allow for access to the span's base for future maintenance.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS -

Tourism has hosted different travel writers over the past few months and those articles have been published. These mentions are one of the more impactful ways of getting the town's name out to our potential visitors.

Articles:

"20 Ways to Celebrate Christmas in the Blue Ridge Mountains"

<https://blueridgemountainstravelguide.com/christmas-in-the-blue-ridge-mountains/>

Blue Ridge Outdoors Top Adventure Towns

<https://www.blueridgeoutdoors.com/go-outside/top-adventure-towns-2/>

Love Exploring - Virginia's Most Charming Small Towns

<https://www.loveexploring.com/galleries/157022/ranked-virginias-most-charming-small-towns?page=1>

MSN Travel - Virginia's Most Charming Small Towns

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/travel/tripideas/ranked-virginias-most-charming-small-towns/ss-AA1462yV#image=7>

10 Best USA Today - 10 Cideries were just voted as the Best in the United States

<https://www.10best.com/interests/drinks/10-best-cideries-united-states-2022-readers-choice-awards/>

Elizabethton Star - Barter Theatre Host 21st Annual Young Playwrights Festival

<https://www.elizabethton.com/2022/11/16/barter-theatre-hosts-21st-annual-young-playwrights-festival/>

Activities:

Working with partners on **January Jams** for six nights in January. We are waiting on confirmation from the promoter, but it looks like January 14, 20, 21, and 26, 27, 28. We hope he will be ready to make announcements soon.

We are working with several groups and motor coach tours on 2023 bookings.

The 2023 Abingdon Fiddlers Convention is scheduled for **June 9-10, 2023**.

Tourism staff organized the **Festival of Trees**, tree lighting, and **Town Wide Merchant Open House** on November 20. Most of the merchants did

very well for the 4-hour open house, and several are continuing to be open the first three Sundays in December.

The **Abingdon Visitor Center** had over 200 visitors on November 20 for the open house and tree lighting. All had a great time as we sang along with Virginia Highlands Community College Choir, sipped hot cider, and visited with Santa.

Total Visitors - 438

Working with partners to live stream the 2023 Abingdon Kiwanis **Christmas Parade**.

FIRE DEPARTMENT -

- The Town of Abingdon Fire Department responded to 61 incidents in the month of November. Responses occurring inside the Town of Abingdon Corporation Limits totaled 36 (59%) with 24 (39%) occurring outside the corporation limits and 1 incident outside the County (Tennessee).

POLICE DEPARTMENT -

- The police department participated in a FFA Career Fair at Abingdon High School
- During Veterans Day, the PD highlighted all the APD officers who are military veterans.
- Officer Huddleston was recognized by Mothers Against Drunk Driving for his activity during 2022.