

## **Council Work Session Minutes**

March 9, 2017

The Tazewell Town Council met in a budget work session at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Present:

Mayor A. D. Buchanan Jr

Vice-Mayor Terry Mullins

Councilmember Chris Brown

Councilmember Jack Murray

Councilmember David Fox

Councilmember Jennifer Boyd

Staff present were: Town Manager, Todd Day; Clerk-Treasurer, Leanne Billings; Executive Assistant, Robin Brewster.

Absent:

Councilmember Glenn Catron

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Motion was made by Councilmember Fox to reconvene the meeting. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Murray. On vote, Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Councilmember Murray, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Boyd, aye.

Mayor Buchanan reconvened the meeting. Manager Day showed a slide show of various projects, leaks, repairs, and events.

### **BOWLING ALLEY TOUR**

Before the meeting, council went to the bowling alley property and toured the building. The bowling alley section of the building is very structurally sound. It is estimated that it would take \$120,000.00 to upgrade the building. Other buildings around the area are not the best cosmetically. We do have some codes that we can enforce for the structure of buildings but not always for cosmetics. We cannot make someone paint their building however, the IDA can give paint as a grant if the owner will agree to paint it. The end of March is the deadline for the current tenant of the bowling alley to vacate. Discussion then went to what the town should do with the building. Councilmember Brown suggested an indoor batting cage and using it for the wrestling club. Councilmember Fox suggested an obstacle/training course for kids and adults and also mentioned a trampoline site. Councilmember Boyd suggested using it for public works. Manager Day stated that he needed direction from council before he could move forward with

the budget. It was stated that even if we move public works to that building it could still be considered an eye sore because of the equipment, salt bins, dumpsters, etc. The old Ramey Ford building was also mentioned. They are currently trying to subdivide the lots. Town officials have met with Robert Ramey and Mack Payne about the property. Manager Day stated that there was discussion about donating it to the Town. As for the other side of the bowling alley, the theater side, it is not in good condition. Councilmember Mullins stated that he would like to see it be saved if it could be because once it is gone it is gone. Manager Day stated that he plans on putting \$60,000.00 in the budget for the bowling alley. He also stated that 20 feet of the property was in the flood plain and if that part is torn down it will not be able to be rebuilt. Councilmember Brown stated that maybe it could house an indoor soccer field. Mayor Buchanan suggested a basketball court. Councilmember Brown made a motion to try and find a use for the building that would be recreational. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Boyd. On vote, Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Councilmember Murray, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Boyd, aye.

## **EMS UPDATE**

Manager Day stated that the EMS committee has been reestablished. Historically the rescue squad has had problems in billing. Due to Obamacare regulations if an employee worked over 29 hours they needed to be fulltime. Due to this, the number of part time employees dropped but full time employees increased. It costs the town \$90,000 in benefits and salary. Once the county rescue squad stopped running our calls drastically increased. Councilmember Murray is looking into expense vs. revenue of the EMS. He then went over the bills that are outstanding to our EMS. He stated that WV Medicare owes a lot to us and the self pay customers have \$141,000.00 in outstanding bills. He spoke with Kitty at Dr. Catron's office to see how they handled delinquent accounts and they suggested taking a warrant in debt out at the court house. This costs \$65.00 per case. TOTEMS generated \$195,000.00 in revenue last year. In 2016 they had 1800 + calls with over 900 being in the county. He projects that the EMS will collect \$300,000.00-\$325,000.00 this year. However, they are operating on a \$500,000.00 budget. If we decide that we cannot afford the rescue squad, the county by law will have to take them over to provide EMS service to the county. All across the commonwealth rescue squads are not making money. The group held discussion about EMS expense, getting county calls, and getting the county to pay us for running calls in the county. Councilmember Brown stated that it is not fair to the town taxpayers to have to pay for the town rescue squad to run calls in the county. Manager Day stated that Bluefield is getting ready to add a transport side to their EMS. We have not tried to do that because we do not want to run into a case where our squads are tied up on transport calls and do not have anyone here to run emergency calls. Councilmember Brown asked if we could have an audit of the EMS records to make sure that the billing is being done correctly and we are being paid correctly since this is all a new process for us. Councilmember Boyd asked if we could make it to where we only ran town calls. Manager Day stated he would check to see if that was possible. Councilmember Murray stated that he did not see how we could keep operating and losing money. Manager Day stated that we could look into having a forensic audit and get an estimate of what that would cost. Councilmember Fox made a motion to contact an audit firm and get an estimate. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Murray. On vote, Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Councilmember Murray, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Boyd, aye.

## **THEATER**

Manager Day stated that the owner of the Claypool Hill movie theater was interested in the theater here. Town Attorney Pyott is drafted a legal document. The town would like the individual to see opportunity to put money into it and have some skin in the game. If he can operate a productive theater and stay for 10 years, then maybe the town can give him the building, or if they don't do that then they can invest in it and walk away. It was asked what if we lease it, and then in 10 years give it to them. The IDA will be over this building.

## **WALKING TRAIL UPDATE**

Manager Day, Councilmember Brown and Frank Barnes have discussed the fence along Rt 460 and stated that the town would like to have 10 feet to have a walking trail. VDOT agreed to widen Rt 61 an additional eight feet from the park basketball court to exit three interchange. This is close to where the walking trail would be. David Nichols left the town \$25,000.00 to do a walking trail and the town would have to match it.

## **RECYCLING CENTER UPDATE**

Manager Day stated that the recycling bin project was started however we have had to pull workers off of that job to work on other things so it is taking a bit of time to get the project finished.

## **MEALS TAX**

Currently there is a section for meals tax in the incentive package the town offers. There is only one business that has applied for the incentive package and that was the day care. If a new restaurant opens and applies for the incentive, they would get their meals tax back. If other restaurant customers go to the new restaurant to try it out, the other restaurants meals tax will go down and then the town would lose money. Manager Day thinks that it would be a good idea to revisit the meals tax incentive. Councilmember Brown made a motion to remove the meals tax incentive from the incentive package. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Fox. On vote, Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Councilmember Murray, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Boyd, aye.

## **CIGARETTE TAX**

Three percent of cigarette tax goes to the YMCA. Current rate is \$.10 a pack. This is not mentioned in the incentive package and it is not meant to be.

## **WELCOME TO TAZEWELL SIGN**

The welcome sign that will be placed on Rt 460 coming from Bluefield will be built in house. It will be done this season. However, Manager Day did state that he does not really like the location of the sign but we didn't have that many options.

## **TRAIN STATION**

We are waiting on one document so we can move forward and go to ad.

## **OLD BUILDINGS IN NORTH TAZEWELL**

There are ways to address the cosmetics, we can redo the code but we cannot be selective. We can try to offer incentives and give IDA \$15,000.00 seed money.

## **WATER ACCOUNTABILITY**

Held discussion on accountability and stated that currently the Fourway tank is being used as a relief valve.

## **WATER PLANT & WATER PURCHASE**

The water plant was sold to PSA. There is an 8% transmission fee that is paid. The master meters are calibrated every year. We buy every drop of water that comes out of the plant. The county has three master meters that tell what goes out into the county. They pay us back for that plus 8%. When we switched meters the accountability went up.

## **WORK SESSION AT SEWER PLANT ON MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup>**

David Dawson will be at the sewer plant on March 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. He is coming to show what his plan is for the sewer plant.

## **BUDGET WORK SESSION POST COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Vice Mayor Mullins stated that he would like to see sign designating Clinch River put where the road crosses the Clinch River.

Councilmember Brown stated that the basketball court and the tennis court needs repaired.

Manager Day stated that we will be fixing the basketball court and getting new nets and setting the poles back in the ground correctly.

Councilmember Fox discussed lawfit at Dunford Park.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Fox. On vote, Vice Mayor Mullins, aye; Councilmember Brown, aye; Councilmember Catron, aye; Councilmember Murray, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Boyd, aye.

Mayor Buchanan recessed the meeting at 8:46 pm.