

Council Meeting Minutes

August 3, 2021

The Tazewell Town Council met in a budget meeting at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Present:

Absent:

Mayor Michael Hoops

Vice Mayor Terry Mullins (via Zoom)

Councilmember David Fox

Councilmember Emily Davis

Councilmember Joe Beasley

Councilmember Glenn Catron

Councilmember Chris Brown

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

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDS

Manager Day stated that this meeting is to discuss the ARPA funds that the town has received and to gather ideas and discuss projects that council would like to see it go toward. He knows there has been several projects discussed over the last few years. He has been speaking with Jim Thompson with an idea and found out that it didn't go through. He is still trying to move forward though. He has talked to another motel developer also. He and Mr. Thompson also called the Spectrum Center and also talked to Paul Mylum. One of the fear's is that future councils will not continue supporting endeavors of previous councils and will not follow through with the bond payments. Its risky for a private entity to back projects like this. Our opportunity is to do it in house and hire a management team. If we could take a sum of money and say here is x amount in equity to back the project.

He stated at the IEDA meeting last night they approved to demo the show room at the Ramey property. He said there is probably \$100,000 in store front glass and steel in that building. They discussed the possible size of a sports complex and stated that they may have to change the original size they planned on. They discussed in door track possibilities. They discussed removable tracks, flat tracks, etc. Mr. Thompson has been right there the whole time working with us on the possibility of a sports complex. It was stated that if we have the right manager in there, we can have it booked all the time.

Councilmember Brown stated that even if we have to have a smaller facility than what was originally planned, if we coordinate with the schools and the YMCA to use their facilities, we could still hold tournaments here.

Mr. Thompson believes that we will need a hotel with we begin holding tournaments. Councilmember Brown stated that this could bring in outside tax dollars to our town and create a tax base that we don't currently have here. It would also create jobs here in our area. Councilmember Catron stated that if the sports complex is operational, we have to have people to run it and manage it which creates those jobs. But it will also have to have concession workers, referees, etc.

They discussed indoor versus outdoor facilities. It was stated that Abingdon has an outdoor facility. It was asked where the closest indoor facility was and it was stated that it would be us if we had a sports complex. It was stated that at the time we do not know the cost of an outdoor facility. Also, we have the land right now to do the indoor facility.

They then reviewed a power point presentation that discussed the ARPA funds more in depth. The town has received \$2.1 million. We are set to receive another \$201 in June 2022. These funds must be spent by December 31, 2024 or we have to return what is not spent. It was stated that we can use these funds for revenue shortfalls due to Covid19. They reviewed line items in the general fund, water fund and sewer fund that could have had short comings due to Covid19. The totals for each fund are as follows:

General Fund \$205,320.00; Water Fund \$18,150.00; Sewer Fund \$65,483.00

We can use these funds for revenue recovery and that would increase our fund balance for each fund by these amounts. Councilmember Catron stated that our auditors did want us to build up our fund balance.

Continuing to view the presentation, funds may be used to counteract educational disparities. Councilmember Brown stated that if we offered use of a room in the sports complex facility to the schools, they could host after school programs and he also stated that the county and schools also received ARPA funds and could contribute to the sports complex as well. Manager Day stated that it would be great to be able to work with other county organizations to move forward and make these programs happen. They then finished reviewing the presentation. Manager Day stated that he wanted to give everyone an opportunity to voice their ideas.

Vice Mayor Mullins stated that he was pleased to hear what we have put together. His top two ideas would be the indoor sports complex because it could be used 365 days a year and an outdoor facility would be seasonal. Also, he would like to see Kidzown remodeled. He would like us to do something for the youth and for our community. Manager Day stated that the estimate we had received on updating Kidzown was about \$340,000 and possibly \$200,000 for the splash pad.

Mayor Hoops stated that he supports the sports complex but he would also like to look at our emergency services and address their needs as that directly effects our community. He would also like to see a digital sign placed out by Hardees. He would like to see Kidzown updated. He stated that there are only two entrance/exits out there and if you are trying to watch your child it can be difficult. Manager Day stated that there had been a ladder truck mentioned previously for the fire department. A ladder truck is estimated at about \$1.2 million. He stated that a digital sign would be about \$35,000.

Councilmember Beasley stated that he would like to see us address the needs of our emergency services. He would like to see us address the sports complex, Kidzown, and also the drainage problems on Carline that was brought to council's attention a few months back. Manager Day

stated that he did not know an estimate for drainage repair. He stated that EMS had applied for a grant for two new box ambulances at \$200,000. He also stated that they could get van ambulances for transports and they would cost about \$70,000 equipped.

Councilmember Davis asked about the pumper truck getting repaired. She asked if it was worth repairing or did it need to be replaced. Manager Day stated if it could be fixed it would buy us some time. They discussed the truck and said they thought it was a 90's model truck. Councilmember Davis stated that she would like to do as much as we can with the money we received. She would like to see Kidzown updated and suggested that we could put funds into it but also try to raise funds and use outside sources and donations as well. She also stated that we need to try and keep our emergency services equipped and up to date.

Councilmember Fox stated that he would like to see us use the funds on police, fire and EMS. He stated that the police department has cruisers going down due to mileage and they need new cruisers. He stated that as they break down, we could replace them. He also stated we could work out a fleet package deal like other localities had done. Manager Day stated that we have a rotation program for the police department already in place. Each year they buy two new cruisers and take two off the road. Councilmember Fox stated that the fire trucks are out of date and they need new trucks to serve if the hospital or Heritage Hall were to need them. He also stated that he would like to see Kidzown remodeled. He also discussed that senior citizen's need to have something to keep them active. He feels that people don't know what a sports complex could do and we need to show them what it could bring to our area. He asked if the sports complex would house indoor softball. It was stated that it probably couldn't be held in there but they may be able to put some batting cages in there. He also stated that the fire department has asked for a tanker truck.

Councilmember Catron stated that he was all in for a sports complex and Kidzown. He also asked what updates needed to be down to the pool. Manager Day answered it needs about a \$100,000 liner installed. Councilmember Davis stated that the lane markers were wearing out too. Manager Day stated that they were painted every other year. Mayor Hoopes stated that if we put the splash pad where the kiddie pool is the smaller kids could still play in the splash pad and it would draw more people. Councilmember Catron encourages conversation with the Board of Supervisors and the School Board.

Councilmember Brown stated that economic development and updating and maintenance were two different things. If we do maintenance and repairs, it a once and done expense but we still don't have a tax base. He asked did we want to fix the here and now or fix for years ahead. He stated that without economic development we are in trouble and he thinks the sports complex will bring in that tax base and the outside tax dollars to support the town for years to come. Manager Day stated that out of all the things mentioned there is only one thing that could make the funds to do this without using the ARPA funds and that is the sports complex. Councilmember Beasley stated that we budget for the day-to-day maintenance and we could use a portion of these funds for that but the bigger ticket items should be looked at now. He also feels we need to try and look 10 years down the road. Councilmember Brown stated that we have got to find a way to get tax dollars in this town and this will help with that and help looking ahead.

Councilmember Catron made a suggestion that 75%-80% of the funds be spent on economic development and the rest could be split between the other areas that were mentioned. Manager Day asked if they were all in agreeance to that. He asked if they would like to address Kidzown,

they all answered yes. He asked if they would like to take out the kiddie pool and put a splash pad there. They answered yes and added they would like to get outside funds and donations to help offset part of the cost. Mayor Hoops asked if we were going to try to look for outside sources as well for the sports complex. Manager Day said yes, we were and we already have to go toward it.

It was discussed that about \$500,000 would go toward updating Kidzown and adding a splash pad at the park. We would also be using part of the funds to look at our emergency services departments. Mayor Hoops stated that the Shott Foundation may have grant opportunities we could apply for. Since they have buildings in town, they may want to award grants in order for us to better protect their buildings. Council discussed splitting the funds 80%-20%. Then decided to allocate an even \$1 million to be put into the community and updates right now. They then stated that the remaining \$3.2 million would be used toward economic development. Councilmember Beasley stated that has been asked several times about a permanent location for the farmer's market. Councilmember Brown stated that he is willing to give a 50-year lease on the grassy area by his office. They could use his parking lot on the weekends as he will not be there then. They then discussed what to do first. It was stated that we could do Kidzown during the winter time because it will not be used during that time. Manager Day stated that he will contact the company that provided the quotes and bring back the information he gets from them. It was asked would it be possible to use the existing equipment from Kidzown that is still in good shape as that could cut down on the cost a little. It was also stated that we would still look for grant opportunities and community donations for this project as well.

With no further comments, Mayor Hoops adjourned the meeting at 6:39pm.