

**TOWN OF TROUTMAN  
400 NORTH EASTWAY DRIVE  
TROUTMAN, NORTH CAROLINA**

**TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA BRIEFING MEETING MINUTES**

**August 10, 2020 – 4:00 P.M. – Troutman Town Hall**

Presiding: Mayor Teross W. Young, Jr.

Council Members Present: W. Paul Henkel; Paul R. Bryant; Sally P. Williams; George W. Harris; Edward R. Nau

Council Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Bryan Gruesbeck, Town Manager; Danielle Upright, Deputy Town Clerk; George Berger, Planning Director; Steve Shealy, Finance Director; Emily Watson, Parks & Recreation Director

Press Present: None

Others: Benjie Thomas, Town Engineer; Wesley Morris, Troutman Fire Chief

**I. MAYOR YOUNG CALLED THE AUGUST 10, 2020 AGENDA BRIEFING MEETING TO ORDER**

• **Adjustment(s) to the Agenda Briefing Agenda**

Addition(s):

(\*) Discuss Mill Village Sewer Project as Agenda Item 5.

• **Adoption of the Agenda**

\*Upon motion by Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember Harris, and unanimously carried, approved the Agenda Briefing Agenda as amended.

**II. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**A. Mayor and Council Items**

**Council Comments:**

• **Councilmember Harris**

. Questioned the total of less than 1% revenue, and the 7% for expenditures as shown in the 1 month's financial report asking if that percentages are normal or is it a reflection of COVID-19. Finance Director Steve Shealy responded that it is normal. Revenues are low due to property tax not coming in until December or January and that there is about a three month lag on sales tax. As for expenditures, liability insurance and dues are paid at the first of the new fiscal year.

. Requested that before Planning Director Berger leaves that Mr. Berger take him around Town in order for him to get a better realization of areas in regards to new and future development.

. Informed Council that he took a tour of the Fire Department last week commenting that the addition is really nice.

- Councilmember Bryant
  - . Requested that the Town Manager and Finance Director provide Council with a monthly update regarding COVID-19 year-to-date trend to help Council in moving forward with the contingency list.
  - . Informed Council that Charles Delnero's (citizen and former Board of Adjustment member/volunteer) wife passed away on Saturday, and recommended that condolences be made per card or letter.

**1. Consider Contract Between the Town of Troutman and Troutman Fire Department for Fire Service, (Wesley Morris, Troutman Fire Chief)**

Troutman Fire Chief Wesley Morris addressed Council requesting approval of a contract between the Town and Fire Department for fire service. He stated that ISO inspection is scheduled for Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup> by the State Fire Marshall which requires a Fire Service contract, hence the reason for the request. Fire Chief Morris explained that there is no significant difference between the old contract (dated 2002) and the proposed updated contract, but felt that an updated contract was needed due to the change in funding. He thanked Council for their consideration. Mayor Young asked Chief Morris to express Council's regards to all First Responders.

\*Upon motion by Councilmember Bryant, seconded by Councilmember Harris, and unanimously carried, approved contract between the Town of Troutman and Troutman Fire Department for fire service.

(Copied in full, contract is attached to these minutes and is filed on CD titled: Town Council Supporting Documents" dated August 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in CD Book #1 titled: "Town Council Supporting Documents")

**2. Fire Department Report/Update, (Wesley Morris, Troutman Fire Chief)**

Chief Morris reported that the Fire Department has been busy this year even though medical calls have somewhat lowered. He stated that COVID-19 had a slight impact on the department with medical equipment and contact with patients. They were fortunate that only two (part-time) employees had to be quarantined. In regards to the new addition of the building, the last of the inspections (elevator, fire alarm, and sprinkler system) is to take place tomorrow and if they all pass, a final building inspection will take place. Chief Morris is hopeful to move in within the next few weeks. If possible, he is wanting to hold a ribbon cutting and open house in the near future. The department has purchased new air packs, and a new tanker has been ordered. The department is also expecting to purchase a new engine.

**B. Staff Business**

**1. Discuss Christmas Decorations, (Emily Watson, Parks & Recreation Director)**

Parks and Recreation Director Emily Watson stated that Council allocated \$20,000 in this year's budget for Christmas decorations. She requested a general consensus from Council on which direction to go in regards to theme or style of décor stating that the earlier in the year decorations are purchased, the price is cheaper. Ms. Watson stated that she has talked with some downtown business owners, community members, Betty Jean Troutman and Patty Wilson, the Parks & Rec. Committee, and Staff who came to a consensus to go with a general winter theme that can be left up a little longer past Christmas. It was narrowed down to a fun and festive snowman theme (Option 2), or a classier theme of warm white lights in the trees along the greenway with grapevine deer with bows or wreaths around their necks and lit garland around the Depot (Option 1). She explained the differences between the two proposed options stating that the snowman would basically be seen at night when lit, during the day only wire frames will be seen. The deer could be enjoyed day and night. Some of the citizens were not in favor of the snowman due to the snowmen not being able to be seen during the day. Ms. Watson explained that the company will put up and take down the decorations along

with maintenance and storage (cost \$7,000 yearly). She recommended Option 1, the classier theme with the lights, greenery, and brown deer with the Town supplying the storage for all decorations. Ms. Watson also suggested establishing a downtown beautification team/committee made up of town citizens and business owners having a hanging of the greens week (beginning the 1<sup>st</sup> week in December) with the help of Paxton, the committee, and herself. She informed Council that there has been positive feedback in regards to relocating the new 18' pre-lit Christmas tree this year from the Park to the corner of the Town Hall lot so it would be visible from Hwy 21. Council agreed with Ms. Watson's recommendation of Option 1.

## **2. Department Staffing, (Bryan Gruesbeck, Town Manager)**

### **• Parks & Recreation**

Town Manager Gruesbeck commented that as the Town grows and expands its greenway and park with more activities being held, Council is aware that the Town is pressed for staff and staff hours to help maintain those facilities that the community enjoys. He stated that right now with the Town's budget and staffing situation the Town has an opportunity to add or increase the current Park Maintenance and Facility Technician (Paxton Hix) from part-time to a full time position. Manager Gruesbeck stated that staff is in favor of making moving Mr. Hix to full time and asked Council if they had any questions or reservation before moving forward referencing materials that are included in Council packets (position description, inner-local agreement with the county, etc.) Parks and Rec. Director Emily Watson explained that there are issues that will need to be resolved/revised regarding the inner-local agreement with the county such as mowing, seeding, scheduling, fees, etc. Mayor Young requested that Finance Director Steve Shealy provide for Council the total cost of the position including benefits.

### **• Planning and Zoning**

Town Manager Gruesbeck commented that it is with great reluctance that he accepts George Berger's resignation; he will be going to the City of Statesville. Therefore, the Town's immediate needs are not going away; he has talked with N-Focus (same company provides the Town with Code Enforcement) and they have provided a proposal for an Interim Planning Assistant while the Town proceeds with the selection and hiring process of a Planning Director. In just having received the proposal, he has not had an opportunity to review it. He is wanting to have the Interim in place by August 23<sup>rd</sup>. The position will require a minimum of 3 days a week in-house. Manager Gruesbeck will have a job advertisement ready to go out tomorrow for the full time Planning Director position and expressed optimism that that the position will draw a lot of interest (perhaps national attention) from experienced Planning Directors. The vacancy will be posted in appropriate professional listings (i.e. NCLM, APA, ICM, etc). He stated that he will keep Council updated and engaged during the selection process. Manager Gruesbeck concluded by wishing Mr. Berger the best in his future endeavor. Mayor Young thanked Mr. Berger for his time with the Town, complimenting his work.

## **3. Discuss COVID Related Water / Sewer Cut-off Extensions, (Gruesbeck and Steve Shealy, Finance Director)**

Finance Director Steve Shealy, who has been working with the state and School of Government regarding COVID related issues, reminded Council of Governor Cooper Executive Order placing a moratorium at the beginning of COVID, not allowing (specifically) residential water to be cutoff, charge late fees, etc. The moratorium expired on July 29<sup>th</sup>; therefore, the Town has sent letters to residential customers that accrued balances on their utilities offering a 6 month payment plan to repay past due balances. He requested Council's input offering the same to approximately 10 business that owe past due balances (since COVID and is COVID related) on a 6 month plan also. Mr. Shealy outlined the method of the repayment plan.

\*Upon motion by Councilmember Bryant, seconded by Councilmember Harris, and unanimously carried, approved that a letter be send to businesses offering a 6 month payment plan and that the letter includes language stating that the Governor's order only referenced residential, and that the Town is offering this plan out of courtesy.

Store Manager brought it to the Town Clerks attention commenting it was an oversight.

**\*5. Discuss Mill Village Sewer Project, (Benjie Thomas, Town Engineer)**

Town Engineer Benjie Thomas requested direction from Council regarding monetary choices stating that at Council's July meeting the bid was awarded to the low bidder (bid was a little over \$547,000) and in adding up all other work and fees, the total came to \$729,801; the Town's approved loan is 1.1 million leaving a significant margin. Therefore, Council suggested adding back to the project two of the items (control system and generator for the Rimmer Farm Road pump station and for the Iredell Avenue pump station) that had been taken out. Since these items did not go out to bid, Mr. Thomas could not provide an exact cost, but estimated the cost between \$100,000 and \$200,000. The state is willing to loan the money, the interest rate would be 1.82%. He stated that in order to proceed, all paperwork and budget needs to be submitted to the state with Council earmarking \$150,000 for the additional work. A 2% fee will be charged on the requested amount. Engineer Thomas recommended to earmark the funds now, and pay the fee while the funds are still available.

\*Upon motion by Councilmember Henkel, seconded by Councilmember Williams, and unanimously carried, approve additional \$150,000 to the Mill Village Project for two control panels and one generator.

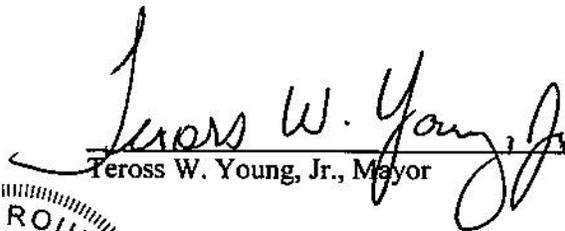
**OTHER**

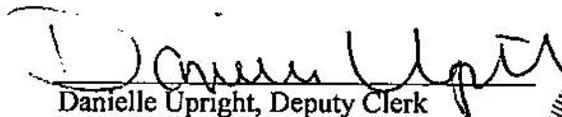
**Manager Comments:**

- Staff has received a quote from a local firm that specializes in updating/improving Audio-Video (AV) equipment in the Council Chambers. The quote (included a new camera, new wiring, and audio) was a little higher than what was originally budgeted but the Town will have a better product and be able to present meetings in a multi-media fashion. He stated he will be following through with a receiving a second quote. Manager Gruesbeck informed Council that if this item goes over budget, money received from the county for COVID reimbursement can be used for this item. He will present additional information at Council's Thursday meeting.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

\*Upon motion by Councilmember Bryant, seconded by Councilmember Harris, and unanimously carried, Agenda Briefing of August 10, 2020 was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

  
Teross W. Young, Jr., Mayor

  
Danielle Upright, Deputy Clerk

(\*) Motion

