

Altavista Town Council Work Session, Tuesday, August 22, 2023

The August 2023 Work Session for Altavista's Town Council was held in Council Chambers of the J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 7th Street, on Tuesday, August 22nd, at 5:00 PM.

Mayor Mike Mattox called the meeting to order and presided.

Town Council

members present:

- Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett
- Mr. Tracy Emerson
- Mr. Timothy George
- Mr. Jay Higginbotham
- Dr. Scott Lowman
- Mayor Michael Mattox

Absent: Mr. Wayne Mitchell

Also Present:

- Mr. Gary Shanaberger, Town Manager
- Mr. Matthew Perkins, Asst. Town Manager
- Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Director of Finance and Administration
- Mr. Tommy Merricks, Altavista Chief of Police
- Mr. Tom Fore, Director of Public Services
- Mr. Paul Hill, Asst. Director of Public Services
- Mr. Jeff Arthur, Manager of Public Works
- Mr. John Eller, TOA Town Attorney
- Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Assistant Town Clerk

1. Agenda Adoption

With no amendments needed, Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns in regard to the August 2023 Work Session Agenda, of which there were none.

Councilman Tracy Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried, with a 6-0 vote from Town Council.

2. Recognitions and Presentations

▪ Awards of Recognition

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger recognized Mr. Tom Fore, Altavista's Public Services Director, for his recent award from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); which stated, "in recognition of the significant contribution made to improve wastewater treatment plant operations with the Commonwealth of Virginia, through his participation as a presenter (teacher) at the Annual Virginia Tech Wastewater Operator Short School for five consecutive years".

Mr. Shanaberger shared his appreciation for Mr. Fore's willingness to share his time and knowledge with the students attending this school. He stated that it was an asset to the Altavista community to have Mr. Fore overseeing its water and wastewater operations.

Mr. Fore informed Town Council that DEQ also recognized the Town of Altavista with an appreciation award for allowing him to participate the Wastewater Operator Short School, which was developed in 1979, after Virginia's implementation of its Clean Water Act. He said this was the first year that the school offered operators an exam, and one of Altavista's operators participated, and was currently awaiting the results of their exam.

Mayor Mattox and Council gave Mr. Fore a standing ovation, and thank him for his service to the Altavista community and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

3. Citizen's Time

Mayor Mattox asked if there were any citizens present that would like to come before Town Council regarding a non-agenda item. There were none.

4. Unfinished Business

▪ Vista and Leggett Feasibility Study

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger informed Town Council that the Town received three submissions from this RFP, and all three were from good, strong companies.

Altavista Town Council Work Session, Tuesday, August 22, 2023

Mr. Shanaberger stated, after review by Consultant Robert Lee, Assistant Town Manager Matter Perkins, and himself, that Staff was recommending CJMW, Lynchburg, VA, with a proposal of \$43,500.

Mr. Shanaberger reminded Council of the \$25,000 grant the Town received to complete a feasibility study on the Vista property; however, adding the Leggett property increased the scope of work and therefore the cost. He stated that Staff was requesting an additional \$25,000, by utilizing funds that the Town initially allocated for this project, to cover the cost increase, which included a 10% contingency. He said the deadline for the study was in November (confirmed as November 30, 2023).

Councilman Higginbotham asked for clarification of the deadline. He asked if the grant needed to be used by November, or was the feasibility study due by that date.

Mr. Shanaberger stated that the grant required the feasibility study to be complete and delivered to the Town by the November date.

With a motion by Councilman Tracy Emerson, seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, Town Council accepted Staff's recommendation to award CJMW the feasibility study contract, and also approved Staff's request for the additional \$25,000. The motion carried, with a 6-0 vote in favor of these two actions

- **Pittsylvania Avenue Washout – Contractor Award**

Background: at the August 8th Town Council Meeting, Altavista Director of Public Services, Tom Fore, referenced the washout occurring on the riverbank alongside the English Park boat ramp, below Pittsylvania Avenue. He stated, while consulting with VDOT, Staff was given the best course of action, and between the two bids submitted for the work, Concrete Foundations, at \$90,000, was Staff's recommendation. Mr. Fore asked for Council's approval. Council moved the item to the August Work Session, asking the Town Attorney, John Eller to investigate VDOT's and the Town's responsibilities.

Mr. Fore stated, with the Town Attorney's recent submission of his research on the matter to Town Council, he asked for Council's approval to award this project to the recommended contractor, so that the project could move forward.

With a motion by Councilman Jay Higginbotham, seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, Town Council accepted Staff's recommendation to award Concrete Foundations the bid for the Pittsylvania Avenue Washout Remediation/Restoration Project.

5. New Items for Discussion

- **FY2023 Budget Amendments and Departmental Transfers**

Director of Finance and Administration Tobie Shelton presented this item. She informed Town Council that the Town's annual audit was scheduled for the week of August 28th. She said, the presented budget amendments were the final amendments to the FY2023 Budget to reflect changes that occurred during the 2023 fiscal year.

Mrs. Shelton stated, due to the time restraints because of the upcoming audit, Staff was requesting that Council approve the amendments that evening (August 22, 2023).

After Council's review of the amendments, Councilman Tracy Emerson made a motion, that was seconded by Councilman Scott Lowman, to approve the FY2023 Budget amendments as presented. The motion carried with a 6-0 vote in favor of the approval.

- **TOA Annual Delinquent Tax Listing**

Altavista's Director of Finance and Administration, Tobie Shelton, reminded Town Council that annually, in accordance with Section 70-3 of Altavista's Town Code, Staff prepares a list of uncollectible and delinquent taxes from the previous fiscal year (in this case, FY2023). She said final notices were mailed to all individuals, advising that action would be taken if taxes were not paid within the deadline.

Mrs. Shelton informed Council that this year's outstanding taxes totaled \$44,022.33, an increase of \$5,087.48 over last year's total, with Personal Property Taxes accounting for much of the balance \$39,073.01, and \$4,949.32 represented outstanding Real Estate Taxes.

Mrs. Shelton requested, if Town Council reached a consensus, to place this item on the September 12, 2023, Town Council Regular Meeting Consent Agenda, for approval to advertise the delinquent list, and pro-rate the cost of the ad to the delinquent taxpayers.

Altavista Town Council Work Session, Tuesday, August 22, 2023

Mrs. Shelton said that Staff was also requesting to write-off delinquent Personal Property Tax for deceased individuals in the amount of \$810.34, delinquent Personal Property and Real Estate taxes under \$20.00, in the amount of \$237.12, and uncollected taxes totaling \$6.76, for which no bills were sent; and additionally, due to statutes of limitations regarding Personal Property taxes, approve Staff to write off 2018 Personal Property Taxes totaling \$3,449.42, with collection efforts continuing through June 2024.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had questions regarding the request, of which there were none.

Town Council unanimously agreed to place this item on the September 12th Consent Agenda.

- **Altavista Police Department (APD) - Surplus Request**

Altavista Police Chief Tommy Merricks requested Council's permission to declare five (5) Watchguard, in-car cameras as surplus. He said the APD no longer used Watchguard cameras, and had since upgraded to Axon in-car cameras.

Chief Merricks informed Council that the Appomattox County Sheriff's Office currently did not have in-car cameras. He asked Town Council, if the surplus request was approved, to consider allowing the APD to donate the Watchguard cameras to the Appomattox County Sheriff's Office.

Chief Merricks stated, if Council was in consensus of both of the requests, this item could be placed on the September 12th Consent Agenda for official approval.

Town Council shared their favor in Chief Merrick's requests, with a unanimous consensus to place the items on the September 12, 2023, Regular Meeting Consent Agenda.

- **Water and Wastewater Improvements for New Infrastructure – Policy Discussion**

Town Manager Gary Shanaberger shared with Council the following policy proposal:

**TOWN POLICY ON OFF SITE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS
FOR LARGE HOUSING AND REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENTS**

This policy will apply to projects of a minimum of ten (10) dwelling units where the current Town water and/or sewer infrastructure is insufficient to service the new Development. All improvements within the Development's property line will be the sole cost and expense of the Developer.

The Town will consider contributing to the cost for the installation of new water and/or wastewater improvements up to the Development's property line. The Town is under no obligation to contribute to any costs to install or upgrade any infrastructure for the Development. Each such Development project will be internally evaluated by the Town to determine its financial implications and benefits to the Town. The Town Council will make final determination of how much (if any) or what percentage (if any) of the costs and in what manner (in kind or credits) the Town will contribute to any such costs for such off-site infrastructure work.

Mr. Shanaberger informed Council that, over the past few months, Staff had been asked about the Town's policy on improvements to infrastructure. He stated, with the Town not having a written policy on the subject, he collaborated with Town Attorney John Eller and Town Staff to draft the proposed policy.

Town Council shared their favor with the Town having a policy on infrastructure improvements for housing developments; and with a motion by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, that was seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson, Town Council accepted Staff's proposal and approved the draft document as presented. The motion carried with a 6-0 vote in favor of the approval.

6. Staff Updates

- Assistant Public Services Director Paul Hill referenced the "mister" system being used to help de-water the overflow pond at Altavista's Wastewater Plant. He informed Council, after the manufacturer assessed the damaged equipment, the Town was told the repair would cost \$5,400. He said the manufacturer and the supplier both agreed to split the cost with the Town, at 1/3 of the price (\$1,800) being paid by each party.

Mr. Hill said, after the mister was repaired and returned to the Town, that the equipment would tentatively be scheduled to be back in operation by spring of 2024.

Altavista Town Council Work Session, Tuesday, August 22, 2023

- Town Manager Gary Shanaberger referenced an ongoing VDOT project that would extend the pedestrian sidewalk on Main Street, in front of Advanced Auto and O'Reily's. He informed Council that the project was currently in the design stage of the construction process, and VDOT had asked for confirmation on the placement of the Town's decorative light poles.

There was a consensus of Town Council for the decorative lights to be on the backside of the new sidewalk, away from the street, to help keep the poles from potentially getting damaged from traffic.

- Town Manager Gary Shanaberger informed Town Council that there was a public hearing scheduled for Tuesday, September 12th, during Council's regular meeting.
- Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins referenced the three houses currently in Altavista's Acquire, Renovate, Sell Housing Program, and stated that two of the three houses were under construction, with foundations complete and framing beginning that week. He informed Town Council that there was a fourth property being considered for the ARS program, and he was currently investigating a potential funding (grant) opportunity for that project.

7. Matters from Town Council

There were none on this date.

8. Town Council Closed Session

Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3) Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

Section 2.2-3711 (A)(8) Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

Notice was given to Staff by Town Manager Gary Shanaberger that, following the closed session, with no further discussion or deliberation, Town Council took the following actions:

- Town Council Approved, 6-0, to transfer the property previously known as the "Frazier Farm" (121.9 acres located on the north end of Seventh Street) to the Altavista Economic Development Authority, so they may develop the property for the benefit of the Town.
- Town Council also Approved, with a 6-0 vote in favor of transferring the "Fauntleroy Tract" (83.4 acres located on Dearing Ford Road) to the Altavista Economic Development Authority, so they may develop the property for the benefit of the Town.

9. Adjournment

Mayor Mattox asked if there were any additional comments or concerns from Town Council or Staff, of which there were none.

The August 22nd, 2023, Town Council Work Session was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Michael Mattox, Mayor of Altavista

Gary Shanaberger, Town Manager/Town Clerk