

Council Work Session April 27, 2021

The Altavista Town Council's April 2021 Work Session was held in Council Chambers at the J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on April 27th, 2021 at 5:00 PM.

Mayor Mike Mattox called the meeting to order and presided.

Council members

Present: Mayor Michael Mattox
Vice Mayor Reginald Bennett
Mr. Tracy Emerson
Mr. Timothy George
Mr. Jay Higginbotham (entered at 5:05pm)
Mr. Wayne Mitchell

Absent: Dr. Scott Lowman

Also Present: Mr. J. Waverly Coggsdale, III, Town Manager
Ms. Amanda Owens, Assistant Town Manager
Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Treasurer/Finance Director
Mr. Thomas Merricks, Altavista Police Chief
Mr. Tom Fore, Altavista Public Utilities Director
Mr. David Garrett, Altavista Public Works Director
Ms. Sharon D. Williams, Community Development Director
Mr. George Sandridge, AOT Main Street Coordinator
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney
Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Town Administration

1. Agenda Adoption

Mayor Mattox informed Council of an amendment to the April Work Session Meeting Agenda.

- Section #9 Closed Section

Mayor Mattox asked if Town Council had any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the proposed April 27th, 2021 Council Work Session Agenda, to which there were none.

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Councilman Mitchell, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

Councilman Higginbotham entered the meeting at this time, 5:05 PM.

2. Recognitions and Presentations

There were no recognitions or presentations on this date.

At this time, Mayor Mattox requested that Council members ask to be recognized when they had a comment or question in regard to an agenda item. He stated this would keep from having multiple people talking at the same time; and would also help keep the meeting moving forward in a timely manner.

All Council members agreed to do so.

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3. Citizen's Time – Agenda Items Only

Mayor Mattox asked if there were any citizen(s) attending the meeting that wished to address Council regarding a work session agenda item, to which there were none.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Manager if there had been any phone calls or emails received from citizens with questions or concerns, to which there were none.

Mayor Mattox encouraged town citizens to reach out to Town Council or Town Staff anytime they have questions or concerns regarding the town.

4. Items Referred from Previous Meetings

There were no items from previous meetings scheduled for discussion at this work session.

5. Items for Discussion (New and Unfinished)

A. Altavista Community Transit System (ACTS) – Transit Bus Wrap Representative: Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens

Background:

The last Altavista transit bus purchased was “wrapped”, which included over the windows, and highlighted various town landmarks. The bus wrap was provided by Creative Edge Design and was approximately \$4,000. The transit bus that is being replaced is white with blue lettering and no wrap over the windows. It will be retired from the fleet and will be sold as surplus. A new transit vehicle was included in the town's FY2021 Budget and is being ordered to replace the older transit bus.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens informed Town Council the new transit bus would be ready for town use in two and a half to three months, but would then need to be wrapped before put into service. She reminded Council that Creative Edge already had the current design, but they could update the design if Council desired.

Ms. Owens stated, at that time, Town Staff was seeking direction from Town Council as to which graphic they would like on the new vehicle. She asked, if keeping the photo theme, did Council wish to use the same photos, or to highlight other landmarks in town.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions or input on this matter.

Councilman Mitchell shared his favor with the “photo” wrap design over the white bus with blue lettering wrap. He stated he also liked the town photos used for that design.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated he liked the photo wrap design for the new transit bus, however, he suggested Council consider updating the photos with newer places in town, such as the new splash pad in English Park and the new Dalton's Landing Canoe Launch.

Councilman Emerson shared his favor with the photo wrap design for the new bus. He stated he felt having photos of newer places would help “jazz up” the bus design.

Councilman George asked how long it would take Creative Edge to redesign the photo wrap; and how much would cost to do so.

Ms. Owens stated the town had a timeframe of approximately two months before needing the new wrap, and she felt Creative Edge could have the design ready by the time the new bus arrived, if Council was able to make a decision that evening.

Ms. Owens stated there was a cost of \$4,000 to wrap the transit bus, with an additional \$1,000 to \$1,500, if the graphics needed to be redesigned.

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Mr. George shared his favor with adding new items/places to the photo wrap design. He suggested, instead of Dalton's Landing itself, having a photo of a kayaker on the river.

Ms. Owens stated there was already a photo of a kayaker in the design that could be reused.

Mayor Mattox stated there were a lot of new changes/additions to the Town of Altavista recently, and he felt those things should be highlighted as much as possible.

Councilman Emerson suggested allowing Town Staff to work with Creative Edge Design for an updated version of the photo wrap design for the town's new transit bus.

All Council members were in consensus to do so.

B. FY2021-2022 Town Paving Plans

Representative: Bobby Wampler, Engineer Concepts and Altavista Public Works Director David Garrett

Explanation:

The Town of Altavista feels that having well-paved and well-maintained streets is imperative for the community. Utilizing a "paving plan" has assisted the town in making sure they have a record of maintenance; and also allows for future planning, to ensure the town is maintaining this important infrastructure on a continual basis.

Background:

The Altavista Spring Milling and Paving CIP Project's Bid documents were developed by Bobby Wampler from Engineering Concepts.

Currently there is \$450,000 allocated in the FY2021 Budget, and another \$450,000 proposed in the FY2022 Draft Budget, along with \$35,000 (in Water CIP) for driveway improvements. If approved, this would provide a total of \$935,000 for the paving project. Based on the engineer's estimate, there is a need to utilize an additional \$245,374 (which includes \$15,000 for engineering services), from Highway Fund Reserves, to equal the engineer's estimate of \$1,165,374. There is currently \$958,815.18 available for use in the Highway Fund Reserves.

Altavista Public Works Director David Garrett stated that Bobby Wampler would be sharing a brief overview of the town's proposed FY2021/2022 Milling and Paving Plan.

Mr. Wampler stated the proposed plan addressed fifteen locations, which included streets, alleys, and also the access roads to the McMinnis and Reynolds Springs.

Mr. Wampler referenced the project's engineer cost estimate. He informed Council the estimate was calculated using "unit pricing". He stated the unit costs for this year's plan were slightly higher than the bids received for last year's plan.

Mayor Mattox asked if Council had any questions for Mr. Wampler or Mr. Garrett in regard to this item.

Councilman George asked if a contractor had been "picked" for this project.

Mr. Wampler stated, if the proposed plan was approved by Council that evening, the request for bids (RFPs) would be sent to the newspapers the following day. He stated he anticipated the request for "bid award" to occur at Council's June 8th regular meeting.

There were no additional questions or comments from Council in regard to this item.

Vice Mayor Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to authorize Town Staff and Engineer Concepts, to move forward with the bid process and advertise for RFPs in regard to the FY2021/FY2022 Milling and Paving Project Plan as presented.

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Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

At this time, Altavista Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens addressed Town Council in regard to the FY2021 and FY2022 Paving Plans.

Ms. Owens informed Council the town would be combining both plans and conduct all paving simultaneously, in order to save the town time and the costs associated with “mobilization” for the paving projects.

Ms. Owens stated, moving forward, it was the town’s intent to only pave every two years.

Ms. Owens referenced the FY2021/2022 Paving Plan. She stated Town Staff was seeking Council’s approval to utilize funds from the town’s Highway Fund Reserves to complete the budget needed for the paving plans.

Ms. Owens stated, after recalculating the project’s budget with the estimated cost savings, the town would only need an additional \$180,374, as opposed to the initially estimated \$245,374 from reserves.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if the roads to McMinnis Spring and Reynolds Spring were already paved.

Altavista Public Works Director David Garrett stated they were, however, the tar and gravel was starting to break apart.

Councilman George asked for confirmation that the town would be doing two fiscal years’ worth of paving in one season, in calendar year 2021.

Mr. Garrett and Ms. Owens both confirmed Mr. George was correct.

Mr. Garrett asked Council to keep in mind the proposed costs were merely estimates until the paving project went out to bid. He stated, at that point, the numbers could be fine-tuned for Council to know just how much was needed to be transferred from the Highway Fund.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any additional questions in regard to this item, to which there were none.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Manager if a vote was needed in order to move forward.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated the vote to proceed with the bid process was the only vote needed that evening. He stated the paving project’s costs would be more definitive after bids had been received. He stated, at that point, a vote would be needed in order to authorize staff to transfer the necessary funds from the Highway Fund Reserves.

There were no further questions or comments in regard to this item.

C. Altavista On Track (AOT) – Request to Convert Façade Loan into Grant Program Representative: AOT Main Street Coordinator George Sandridge

Background:

As a designated Main Street Community, Downtown Altavista businesses have access to a Façade Loan Program, designed to assist with permanent improvements to the exterior of non-governmental buildings within the downtown district.

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Eligible improvements include: painting (including murals and restoration of historic murals), awnings, masonry repair/cleaning, storefront replacement/restoration, exterior lighting, window repair, cornice repair/replacement, roofing (such as standing seam metal, terra cotta tile, and shingle [slate, wood, asphalt]) that is readily visible from an adjacent public street or alley and is an integral part of the aesthetic design of the building, and restoration of historic and permanent landscaping (hardscape). Pursuant to CDBG Program Guidelines, major alterations to the program must be presented to the AOT Board and Town Council for their consideration and potential adoption approval. No additional funds are required as \$20,000 is currently earmarked in reserves for the program.

AOT Main Street Coordinator George Sandridge shared with Council a brief overview of their request. He stated Altavista On Track was seeking to modify the town's Downtown District Façade Program, by converting it from a loan program to an available grant.

Mr. Sandridge reminded Council the Façade Loan Program was initially funded in 2009 using \$50,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. He stated the program was currently considered a "matching loan" that must be paid back within 60 months (5 years) of receiving the loan.

Mr. Sandridge stated, by converting the loan and making it available as a grant, AOT felt it may incentivize more businesses to take advantage of the program. He stated, at their April 11th meeting, the AOT Board of Directors voted to recommend modification of the loan program to a grant program for Town Council's consideration.

Mr. Sandridge stated he would be happy to answer any questions Town Council may have in regard to AOT's request.

Councilman Mitchell asked Mr. Sandridge if the change was acceptable through the Main Street Program that AOT and the Town of Altavista was associated with.

Mr. Sandridge confirmed he spoke with the DHCD (Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development) and they stated, since the program had been closed in 2011, the modification was acceptable and could be restarted as a grant program.

Councilman Higginbotham questioned the regulations for the program, which stated the loan could be applied for "per person", rather than per building.

Mr. Sandridge stated the program and its regulations had been around for a long time. He stated, if approved, AOT would revisit the program's guidelines and regulations for any necessary updates and/or revisions.

Councilman Mitchell asked if the AOT Board would be the responsible party for reviewing and approving/denying the submitted applications for the program.

Mr. Sandridge confirmed they would.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if funding was allocated in the budget for this program.

Mr. Sandridge informed Council there was still \$20,000 remaining in the program from its previous funding source. He stated, in the event the program's funds were depleted, AOT would seek to replenish funding through state and federal grants, fundraising activities, or town contributions.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any additional questions or concerns in regard to this item, to which there were none.

Town Council was in consensus to place this item on the May 11th Council Meeting Consent Agenda for approval.

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D. Altavista Parks and Recreation Committee – Recommendation of Shade Sails Representative: Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens

Background:

At the March 16, 2021 Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting, Jeremy Funderburk, Shade Sail Structures, Inc., presented information, along with a scaled model of the rotating shade sail structure. He noted the product is a self-supporting, adjustable, cantilevered shade sail structure designed to shade outside areas from the sun. The shade sails are 18'x18'x18' commercial grade triangular mesh fabric. The framework design consists of a structural aluminum and steel column and custom machined bearing allowing the upper portion of the structure's 360 degrees pivotal movement. The structure rotates in a circular manner with a handle that allows movement to the desired position and locks it in place.

Altavista Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens addressed Town Council in regard to this item. She informed Council, at their April 20, 2021 Meeting, the Parks and Recreation Committee voted to recommend to Town Council the purchase and installation of a shade sails for both the Bedford Avenue Park and the Leonard Coleman Memorial Park.

Ms. Owens reminded Council that neither of the two fore-mentioned parks currently had a pavilion nor any type of shade structure.

Ms. Owens stated there were no funds allocated in the current nor the next fiscal year's budget for this project. She stated there was an estimated cost of \$10,000 for the fabrication and installation of both shade sails.

Ms. Owens stated she would be happy to answer any questions Council may have.

Councilman George stated he felt the shade sails were "reasonably priced". He stated he also liked the fact that the manufacturer of the shade sails was a local business.

Councilman Mitchell stated, since the item had not been previously discussed or approved for the budget, he suggested the proposed project be postponed until it could be investigated further, and considered for the list of future potential CIP projects.

Mayor Mattox stated he felt that Council should be given time to consider a proposed project before being expected to vote on the project. He stated Council was responsible for "prioritizing" potential CIP projects and needed time to evaluate each one.

Councilman George asked how much money the Recreation Committee recently "trimmed" off of the FY2022 Draft CIP Budget by postponing certain projects.

Ms. Owens stated the Parks and Recreation CIP Budget was decreased from \$1.4 million to \$390,000 by postponing or removing potential projects.

Mayor Mattox reminded Council there needed to be a consensus for this project to move forward. He asked for direction from Council.

Councilman George stated he was in favor of the project moving forward.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he would abstain from voting on this project.

Mayor Mattox stated all potential CIP projects needed to "go out for bid", not just given to one particular contractor, in order for the town to compare and have cost options.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated, although he liked the idea of adding a shade structure to both parks mentioned, he felt the project should be placed on the list of potential CIP items for future consideration.

Councilman Emerson shared his favor with moving the proposed project forward.

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Councilman Mitchell stated he also favored the proposed project, but would like to see the item placed on a future CIP for further consideration.

There was a consensus of Council to deny the proposed Shade Sail Project at this time.

E. Altavista Police Department (APD) - Request Regarding DCJS Grant Representative: APD Chief Tommy Merricks

Background:

The Altavista Police Department applied for a grant with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to assist with the on-going costs associated with the Axom Body-Worn Cameras that were approved and purchased as a FY2021 CIP item.

The Town paid a lump sum (\$25,250) in FY2021 and was scheduled to pay \$9,240 per year for the next four fiscal years (2022–2025). If received, the grant would provide \$18,480 towards the remaining payments.

Chief Merricks stated he was pleased to announce, on April 12th, the Altavista Police Department was informed they had been awarded a \$36,960 DCJS Grant through the Body Worn Camera Grant Program. He stated, included in the FY2022 Draft Budget was \$9,240 (previously allocated as an installment payment. He stated, with that amount, it would only leave another \$9,240 to meet the town's required \$18,480 match to accept the grant.

Chief Merricks stated, with the grant, the town would no longer need to include a \$9,240 payment in FY2023, 2024 and 2025, which would free up said revenue for other uses.

Chief Merricks stated, overall the DCJS Grant results in an \$18,480 savings to the town, however, to accept the grant, the town would need to pay the remaining balance of \$18,480.

Mayor Mattox stated he appreciated Chief Merricks' due diligence in acquiring this grant, for a savings of \$18,480 for the Town of Altavista.

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, to accept the Altavista Police Department's request and authorize the Town Manager to execute the Statement of Grant Award/Acceptance for the DCJS Body Camera Grant.

Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

F. Procurement – Contractor Prequalification Policy for Future Town CIP Projects

Background:

Recently Town Council requested that contractors for the new Spark Innovation Center Renovation Project be "prequalified". Section 2-215 of Altavista's Town Code establishes the town's authority to prequalify contractors, pursuant to the Code of Virginia §2.2-4317.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Town Council, upon further review, the Town Code indicates that a prequalification process for construction projects adopted by Council must be in place.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, based on this requirement, Town Staff, with assistance from the Town Attorney, has created a prequalification process for Council's consideration.

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Mr. Coggsdale stated, at that time, staff was requesting Council's approval of the prequalification process as presented; and authorize staff to create a prequalification application and any document(s) needed to implement the process per state and local code.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions in regard to this item.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked if this action was needed due to a "new" law or code.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the provision for prequalifying contractors was already in Altavista's Town Code, but the process had not been utilized for projects in at least twenty years. He stated the proposed approval would allow staff to update the Town Code accordingly.

Mayor Mattox stated implementing prequalification would streamline the bid process.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the background check and bonding ability of potential contractors would already be taken care of through this process.

Councilman Mitchell asked if the prequalifying process was intended for contractors only, and not the engineers for town projects.

Mr. Coggsdale confirmed that was correct.
(The town already has prequalified engineers "on-call" they can choose from)

Town Attorney John Eller informed Town Council the prequalification process would be used "per project", not one process for all future town projects.

Councilman Mitchell asked if there would be additional cost for a project by implementing a prequalification process.

Mr. Coggsdale stated there would not.

Mayor Mattox asked, since the proposed process would be modifying Town Policy, would the action need a consensus or a vote if approved.

Mr. Eller informed Council that adopting and implementing a prequalification process would require Town Council to have a vote on the adoption approval.

Councilman George asked what the town would gain by implementing such a process.

Mr. Coggsdale stated he was not very well-versed with prequalification. He reminded Council the item had been previously requested for further consideration by Town Council.

Councilman Emerson stated he felt the process would save the town time during the bid process of future CIP projects.

Councilman Higginbotham stated the process would also assure the town would be receiving bids from "quality" contractors.

Mr. Coggsdale referenced the town's previous desire to have at least three bids to consider for each project. He stated, with a prequalification process, having three bidders may not always be possible.

Mr. Higginbotham stated, with the Town of Altavista's location so near to Lynchburg and Danville, he felt confident the town would be able to find qualified contractors in the local and/or surrounding areas.

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Councilman Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, to approve the adoption of the prequalification process as presented for the Town of Altavista; and to authorize Town Staff to create an application and any other document(s) needed to implement the prequalification process, per State and Town Code.

Motion carried:

VOTE:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

G. Strategic Planning Retreat Follow-up – Work Plan Consideration

Background:

The Altavista Town Council held its Strategic Planning Retreat on Tuesday, March 30th. Mr. Kim Payne, of the Berkley Group, facilitated the retreat. Mr. Payne created a summary document of the retreat’s discussion, which included a Draft Work Plan (page 9 of the document) based on Council’s discussion regarding procedure/protocol for Town Council and Council Meetings. Mr. Payne also provided several procedural samples from other communities. The summary and meeting procedure samples were provided to Town Council in early April.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated Mr. Payne’s notes would be used to create “minutes” of the retreat. He stated there were a few corrections Mr. Payne needed to make to the notes, such as name corrections, before converting them into the meeting’s minutes.

Mr. Coggsdale stated Town Staff was seeking to assist Town Council in moving forward with their goals and objectives established during the Strategic Planning Retreat.

Mr. Coggsdale referenced the draft work plan that Mr. Payne created for the Town of Altavista in regard to discussion at the retreat. He stated Town Council would need to review the draft plan and determine if the plan included everything the town was trying to accomplish; and at some point, Council would need to consider adoption of the work plan.

Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the “procedures” mentioned in the retreat notes. He asked for Town Staff’s input, or any suggestions for improvement to Town Council Meetings.

Mayor Mattox stated it was Town Council’s responsibility to govern themselves and conduct Council meetings in an orderly fashion. He stated he felt the procedures would help Council better understand what is expected of them, of the Mayor, of the Vice Mayor, and of what Council also expects from Town Staff.

Mayor Mattox suggested Town Council set aside additional time to further review and consider the potential adoption of the policies and procedures. He stated he felt, by doing so, it would help Council become “more efficient”.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated policies and procedures were intended to help maintain consistency from one meeting/ or action/ to another.

Councilman Mitchell stated he felt having policies and procedures would help new members as well, by having a guideline to follow.

Mayor Mattox stated, allowing each Council member to have input in the policies and procedures process, would help Council feel that they had an important part in how decisions were made by Council.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, if Council desired, staff would place this item (policy and procedure) on a future, “post budget process”, work session for further discussion by Council.

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Town Council was in consensus to do so.

Councilman Mitchell referenced the draft work plan. He reminded Council there were a few items on the list that were “time-sensitive”.

Mayor Mattox suggested placing the adoption approval of the work plan on the May 11th Regular Council Meeting Consent Agenda.

There was a consensus of Town Council to do so.

H. Reserve Fund Policy and Pending/Future Town Project Funding

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, during the recent Town Council Strategic Retreat and the FY2022 Budget process, the matter of the town’s General Fund Reserves and its policy came up several times. He reminded Council that several large projects/purchases have also been recently discussed, such as the Vista Theatre, which may require funding, in addition to any already allocated funds.

Mr. Coggsdale referenced the General Fund Reserves. He stated at the previous Council meeting staff had indicated the reserve totaled \$1.4 million in “undesignated” funds. He informed Council, during staff’s end-of-the-fiscal-year process, they found there was a potential for the town to add another \$1.4 million to the General Fund Reserves, bringing the total of undesignated funds to approximately \$2.8 million.

Councilman Emerson asked if this would happen at the end of the fiscal or calendar year.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the additional funds would be available at the end of the current fiscal year, which was July 1st, 2021.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the additional funds were a result of a process the town’s Finance Director, Tobie Shelton, conducts at the end of each fiscal year. He stated sometimes funds are left over from projects that come in under the budgeted amount, therefore leaving the additional funds to be reallocated to the General Fund Reserves as undesignated.

Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council that receiving grant funds after a project has been budgeted can also “free up” some of the funds initially allocated for that project.

Mr. Coggsdale also referenced the town’s “policy” in regard to the General Fund Reserves. He stated the current policy requires the town to hold enough money in its reserves to cover 100% of the town’s operating expenses, which was currently \$6.1 million.

Mr. Coggsdale stated it was not uncommon for a locality to only reserve 50% of those expenses. He stated this was another option available for Council’s consideration that would free-up an additional \$3 million to undesignated reserves the town could utilize for future CIP projects.

Mayor Mattox stated, if Council decided to move forward with amending the General Fund Reserve policy and reallocate the fore-mentioned \$3 million to undesignated reserves, he would like staff to create a “separate” fund within reserves that would be utilized only for projects that were considered to be an investment in, or for betterment of, the community.

Mayor Mattox asked for Town Council’s input in this matter.

Councilman George stated the reserve funds were not currently drawing that much interest and he felt there were valuable projects that could be considered with the additional funds.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he was not against amending the reserve policy to free up additional funding for CIP projects, as long as the town held enough funds in reserves to “survive” if they were to ever lose another major industry considered a revenue resource.

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Vice Mayor Bennett stated he realized it was important to have a “nest egg” to survive off of during hard times, but he would like to see some projects completed sooner rather than later, such as revitalization of the Vista Theatre.

Mr. Bennett stated the town’s reserve funds were from tax payers and he would like to see the reserve funds allocated for projects that tax payers could benefit from, such as the new Spark Innovation Center, the Vista Theatre, and improvements to the town’s parks.

Mr. Bennett shared his favor with amending the reserve policy in order to gain the additional funds and stated he considered it to be an investment in the future of the Town of Altavista, its citizens, and its community.

Councilman Emerson stated he appreciated all the wonderful projects the Town of Altavista accomplished the past few years, such as the splash pad and Dalton’s Landing.

Mr. Emerson stated he felt the next big project for the town to complete would be the revitalization of the Vista Theatre. He stated the community was anxious to see the project completed and he felt they would appreciate it being done sooner rather than later.

Councilman Mitchell stated most localities only had 30-35% allocated in reserves as a backup for expenses, so he felt Altavista having 50% allocated as such would be an adequate amount.

Mr. Mitchell stated he was proud to be a part of a fairly progressive Town Council that was willing to invest in its community.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any further questions or comments in regard to this item, to which there were none.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, if there was a desire of Council to free up any additional funds from the General Fund Reserves, they would have to vote to amend the town policy as such.

Mayor Mattox suggested placing this item on the May 11th Regular Agenda for further discussion/consideration by Council, in order to give staff further direction on the matter.

All Town Council members were in consensus to do so.

6. Updates and Informational Items

A. Altavista Police Department (APD) National Night Out (NNO) Event Representative: APD Chief Tommy Merricks

Chief Merricks referenced the APD’s Annual National Night Out Event. He reminded Council, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was canceled in calendar year 2020.

Chief Merricks informed Council the Governor of Virginia, Ralph Northam, had recently decreased the restrictions and regulations for outdoor venues. He stated outdoor events were currently limited to 30% capacity, but he felt, even at that number, that English Park would be able to sustain with social distancing guidelines for the event.

Chief Merricks stated, if Council approved the event for this year, and keeping COVID guidelines in mind, the APD would not allow any business or organization tents/booths at the 2021 event, as were in previous years.

Chief Merricks recognized Pat DeBernard (recently deceased) as the main sponsor and server for the free food given out at the previous NNO Event. He stated Mr. DeBernard always wanted to be anonymous with his contributions, but it was greatly appreciated by the community and the APD.

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Chief Merricks stated, for this year's event, the APD would inquire if food trucks would be interested in attending the event. He stated this would take food serving out of the APD's hands and leave it to the "professionals", which would be considered more sanitary under the COVID guidelines.

Chief Merricks stated he was looking forward to another NNO Event and he felt the community would appreciate the town/APD being able to offer the event again this year.

Chief Merricks stated he would be happy to answer any question Town Council may have, and also take any suggestions for the proposed event.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions or concerns in regard to this item.

Vice Mayor Bennett suggested the APD inquire with local groups or organizations to help pay for, and potentially serve, the food for the NNO Event.

Chief Merricks informed Council that someone came forward and offered to pay for and serve food at this year's event. He stated, however, under the Health Department guidelines for COVID regulations, an individual would not be able to do so. He stated a food truck was already licensed and "regulated" under the Health Department for food service.

Councilman Mitchell thanked the APD and Chief Merricks for planning the NNO Event and for offering the community an event to look forward to this summer.

Mayor Mattox asked if Council had any additional questions or comments, to which there were none.

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to allow Chief Merricks and the Altavista Police Department to move forward with planning the 2021 National Night Out Event as presented, and to be hosted by the APD at English Park in Altavista.

B. Dalton's Landing Canoe Launch

Representative: Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens

Status Summary:

Dalton's Landing Canoe Launch has progressed well during March and April. The launch itself has been completed, with the exception of the safety railing on the launch stairs. The parking lot has been paved; there are some modifications required to meet ADA standards related to the handicapped parking grade. Berms, wooden guardrails around the parking lot perimeter closest to the river, permanent signage, and safety fencing in one area where there is a steep drop off, are not completed (as of 04-20-2021), therefore, the final inspection by Campbell County has not yet been scheduled. It is estimated the remaining items should be completed by early May, with an opening during the same month.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens informed Town Council that she would be visiting the canoe launch site the following day (April 28th) to determine the final "punch list" for project. She stated, as far as she knew, there was only one item remaining that would prevent the canoe launch site from opening soon, which was the addition of safety hand rails to the launch itself.

Ms. Owens stated the contractor indicated the handrails were currently being fabricated. She stated, hopefully during her meeting the next day, the contractor would have a definitive answer as to when the handrails would be completely installed.

Councilman Emerson asked Ms. Owens if there was an estimated completion date.

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Mr. Owens stated the contractor relayed the project may not be completed until mid-May, however, she reminded Council the project's contract indicates a "substantial completion date" of May 4th.

Ms. Owens stated, since the status report offered in Council's meeting packer, the berms had been installed. She stated, after the recent heavy rainfall, the berm/site work was reviewed and everything seemed to be holding as intended.

Ms. Owens stated Town Staff anticipated this project would be completed by mid to late May. She stated she would be happy to answer any questions Council may have.

Councilman George asked if the handrails would have pickets.

Ms. Owen stated they would not. She stated the handrails for the canoe launch itself were standard metal safety rails. She stated, for safety reasons, there was a picketed fence placed to one side, at the top of the canoe launch, due to the steep drop off to the river in that location.

Ms. Owens referenced Larry Dalton, a neighbor adjacent to the canoe launch site. She informed Council that Mr. Dalton had offered to enter into a contract with the Town of Altavista for the amount of \$100 per week, in regard to mowing grass at the site, and opening and closing the gate for operational hours.

Mayor Mattox suggested, if Council agreed with the proposed contract/agreement, to place the item on the May 11th Regular Meeting Consent Agenda for an official approval.

All Town Council members were in consensus to do so.

C. Altavista Community Development – DHCD Program Representative: Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams

Background:

Town Council has recently made "quality housing" a top priority for the Town of Altavista. The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is currently accepting applications for "housing rehabilitation and construction" funding through its Acquire, Renovate, and Sell (ARS) Program through July 25, 2021. Under the program guidelines, ARS providers, through their own capacity or through that of their partners, will develop a means to acquire, renovate, and resell undervalued homes to low-moderate income (LMI), first-time homebuyers.

Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams stated, under the direction of Town Council, and through the guidance of the Town Manager, Town Staff has been exploring options for how the town could create new housing units and/or improve existing housing units, in order to expand its housing options for existing, and potentially new, citizens of the Town of Altavista.

Ms. Williams referenced the ARS Program through the DHCD. She stated, in order for a locality to apply for funding through the ARS Program, they have to be able to demonstrate their capacity to either obtain two land lots, or have a \$200,000 line of credit.

Ms. Williams stated, if the town's application were approved, the DHCD would give the town a maximum of \$45,000 in ARS funds, awarded per project, for either construction or renovation of homes. She stated the \$45,000 would include \$2,000 for performance deliverables (acquisition: \$500, renovation: \$1,000, resale: \$500) incurred by the provider and \$2,500 for the rehab specialist/project manager. The remaining \$40,500 would be available for renovation draws and contingencies.

Ms. Williams stated, in addition to the ARS Program, there were other programs available, such as the Community Development Block Grant and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) as options to help localities deal with blight and a lack of quality housing.

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Ms. Williams stated, normally, such programs were not offered to a locality unless they were considered a “non-entitlement” locality, which Altavista was not. She stated, if approved, the DHCD would help Altavista establish priorities, using the neighborhood stabilization model created by HUD (Housing and Urban Development).

Ms. Williams informed Council that \$5 million dollars was allocated in the state’s budget for the ARS Program, but currently only \$900,000 had been spent/awarded for such.

Ms. Williams stated the ARS Program was intended to attract first-time home buyers. She stated, if Altavista was accepted into the program, the town would be required to market/advertise the new or renovated homes to individuals with low to moderate income.

Ms. Williams reminded Council the Town of Altavista was considered a part of the Lynchburg metropolitan statistical area, therefore, almost every renovation project in the Altavista area would qualify as low to moderate under the comparable statistics of The City of Lynchburg.

Ms. Williams stated, after sixty days, if the home had not sold to a low to moderate income first-time homebuyer, the town could then advertise the home to anyone. She stated the Virginia Housing Program, formally VHDA (Virginia Housing Development Authority) offers first-time home buyers funding assistance to purchase their first home.

Ms. Williams stated, before Town Staff investigated this option further, they were requesting Council’s consideration for whether or not staff should move forward with developing an application with the DHCD to submit for acceptance into the ARS Program.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions or concerns in regard to this item.

Councilman Mitchell asked, if the town were accepted into the program, but was unable to find a suitable piece of land to develop or home to renovate, would the town be liable to accept the \$45,000 without having a plan to use it.

Ms. Williams stated they would not. She stated the town did not have to have a property in mind in order to submit an application for the program. She stated, however, the DCHD would only be accepting applications for this year through July 1st, 2021.

Ms. Williams also informed Council, in order to be accepted into the ARS Program, the town would have to commit to renovating at least two homes. She stated, after that, they could apply for the \$45,000 funding (per project) and renovate as many as they choose.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if a contractor was able to apply for the \$45,000 loan.

Ms. Williams stated they could not. She stated the ARS Program was only for localities.

Ms. Williams informed Council that she discussed the opportunity with the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity and the Claire Park Foundation. She stated the Claire Parker Foundation liked their current model for buying, renovating, and selling homes, and was not interested in having “government interference” with their renovation projects; and the Habitat for Humanity organization informed her that they “hold” the loans to the homes they sell for 30yrs, so they were unable to take advantage of the opportunity with the town.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated he felt staff’s request was only to submit an application at this point, to see if the Town of Altavista would qualify for the ARS Program.

Ms. Williams confirmed that was correct.

Mr. Bennett shared his favor with allowing Town Staff to do so.

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Mr. Bennett stated, as a young husband, his first home was acquired through FFA (the Farmers Home Administration), which was similar to the Virginia Housing Program for first-time home owners. He stated, without the program, he would not have been able to purchase his first home.

Mr. Bennett stated he felt the Town of Altavista was currently “lacking” inventory options for “first-time home owner” opportunities, but felt this program could help with that issue.

Councilman George asked if the program was also for new builds or only home renovation.

Ms. Williams stated the option would be for either, and would be up to the town to decide.

Councilman Mitchell shared his favor with the Town of Altavista being part of the ARS Program. He stated the program was in line with an opportunity the Tobacco Region Commission offers high school seniors and recent graduates to stay in or move back to their home towns (\$10,000 to renovate their new home).

Mr. Mitchell informed Council of a discussion recently had between the AEDA (Altavista Economic Development Authority) and a local organization. He stated the group brought forth a plan similar to the one that was being presented by Ms. Williams.

Mr. Mitchell stated the group had the “skilled labor” Altavista would need to implement the ARS Program. He stated there may be an opportunity for the town to collaborate with the group on the ARS projects.

Councilman Emerson stated he felt it was an exciting opportunity for the town to be able to offer an individual the chance to become a homeowner, that otherwise would not be able to do so.

Ms. Williams informed Town Council, after the sale of a home, the town would have to pay the ARS Program back the \$40,500. She stated anything above that amount belonged to the town to use any way they choose.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any additional questions or comments in regard to this item, to which there were none.

Town Council was in consensus to allow Town Staff to move forward with applying for acceptance into the ARS Program with DCHD.

Mayor Mattox thanked Ms. Williams for hard work on this project and her due diligence in finding this program opportunity for the town.

Mayor Mattox stated he felt the ARS Program would be an asset for the Town of Altavista, and there would be a lot of citizens that would appreciate the town offering this opportunity.

D. Dearing Ford Business and Manufacturing Center

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale addressed Town Council in regard to this item. He updated Council on a couple of items related to the Dearing Ford Road property.

Mr. Coggsdale referenced the Gas Line Extension Project. He reminded Council that Meagan Lucas, Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance, applied for a grant from the GO VA Group for an \$800,000 Grant, which would require a \$400,000 match from the town.

Mr. Coggsdale informed Council that Town Staff had an initial meeting with GO VA. He stated they needed additional information from the town, which staff was working on.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, if GO VA concurs with the town’s submission, the application would then go to the state level for approval. He stated it would possibly be July before the town was informed of the results of the application.

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- Mr. Coggsdale then referenced the AEDA (Altavista Economic Development Authority). He informed Town Council the possibility of conveyance of the Dearing Ford Road property to the AEDA was discussed at their monthly meeting that morning.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, if Council desired, staff would place the item on May 11th Regular Council Meeting Agenda for further discussion and consideration.

Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council, to move the conveyance forward, required a public hearing on the matter. He stated, depending on the discussion in May, a public hearing could potentially be placed on the June meeting agenda.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions, to which there were none.

There was a consensus of Town Council to place this item on the May 11th regular agenda for further discussion and consideration.

E. FY2022 Draft Budget and FY2022-2026 Draft CIP

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated this item was placed on the agenda for “reminder” purposes only.

Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council of the public hearing scheduled during their May 11th Council Meeting, in regard to the FY2022 Draft Budget, FY2022-2026 Draft CIP, and 2022 Utility Rate Increases. He stated the public hearing was scheduled for 6:30PM.

Mr. Coggsdale stated Town Staff would be advertising the public hearing in the Altavista Journal newspaper, and the town’s website and social media page. He stated citizens would be informed, if they did not wish to attend a meeting or public hearing, they could submit their comments or questions online or to the Town Hall office before that date.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions, to which there were none.

Mayor Mattox thanked the Town Manager and Public Works Director David Garrett for their due diligence in regard to fixing the town’s Street Sweeper piece of equipment, instead of retiring it, which would require the town to purchase a new one.

Mayor Mattox stated he felt the savings from not having to purchase a new one at \$200,000 would be helpful towards other potential CIP projects.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the town already budgeted and accumulated the funds for the FY2022 Draft CIP item, which would stay in reserves allocated for the project. He the town could consider utilizing a portion of those funds to complete the repairs necessary for the sweeper to last a few more years.

Councilman Higginbotham referenced the town’s motor grader that Council recently opted to also remove from the FY2022 Draft CIP. He asked for an update on the item.

Altavista Public Works Director David Garrett informed Town Council that staff was able to find a mechanic to work and fix the motor grader. He stated the piece of equipment had been used since being fixed and it was “working fine”

Councilman Mitchell stated he saw where the town used the motor grader on Eagle Trail in English Park. He stated he felt the town has done a great job in that area of the park.

Mr. Garrett also referenced the three wooden bridges located on the Connection Trail between Green Hill Cemetery and English Park. He informed Council that Public Works would be installing “textured paint” to all three bridges that week as an additional safety measure, in order to ensure better traction for pedestrians using the bridges.

Mayor Mattox thanked Public Works for their good work.

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Councilman Higginbotham referenced the excavator recently listed as town surplus and approved to sell on GOV Deals. He asked Mr. Garrett if the excavator had been advertised.

Mr. Garrett informed Council there was a previous issue with uploading the item's video to the GOV Deals site, but the issue had been corrected and the item was now being advertised.

There were no additional questions or comments from Council in regard to the FY2022 Draft Budget, FY2022-2026 Draft CIP, or the 2022 Utility Rate Increase.

7. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

There were no town citizens present at the April 27th, 2021 Council Work Session.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Manager if there had been any questions or concerns for Council by citizens submitted through phone calls or emails, to which there were none.

8. Matters from Council

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any additional items or concerns for discussion.

- Councilman Tim George referenced the town's Jenks Fund (an account with funds from the Jenks' estate, allocated to only be used for projects related to the newest park of English Park).

Mr. George asked Town Staff for the fund amount received for that account in 2021.

Altavista Town Attorney John Eller, confirmed by Finance Director Tobie Shelton, stated the town recently received a lump sum of \$25,000. He also informed Council the town would be receiving an annuity payment of \$500 per month for the next five years.

Mr. George suggested using those funds to continue removing dead Ash Trees from English Park, specifically in the back section where the Jenks funds were designated for.

Mayor Mattox asked Attorney Eller if the Jenks Fund could be utilized for this project.

Mr. Eller confirmed the funds could be used for the proposed "tree removal" project. He reminded Council the funds could be utilized for any project related to the new/back section of English Park.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, if Council desired, Town Staff would be happy to bring Council a plan for the proposed Ash Tree Removal Project.

All Council members were in consensus for Town Staff to do so.

- Mayor Mike Mattox referenced Pat DeBernard (recently deceased). He asked for Council's consideration of the town writing a "letter of appreciation" to Mr. DeBernard's family, mentioning the good works he did for the Altavista community for many years.

Vice Mayor Bennett suggested the letter be a "proclamation" for the DeBernard family.

Councilman Emerson referenced the park benches in the town's parks that were available, with a \$900 donation, to be in honor or memory of someone. He suggested, with the permission of his family, the town place a bench in English Park in his honor.

Mayor Mattox shared his favor in Mr. Emerson's suggestion, along with the proclamation.

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Mr. Emerson reminded Council of the new picnic tables and chairs being added to the Eagle Trail Overlook in English Park. He stated the town could consider placing a plaque on one of those items, instead of the fore-mentioned park bench, in his honor.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated he felt naming the overlook in honor of Mr. DeBernard would be appropriate, considering all of the good works he did for the community.

There was a unanimous consensus of Council to dedicate the Eagle Trail Overlook in memory of Mr. Pat DeBernard, in honor of the good works he did for the Town of Altavista and its community.

Councilman George suggested someone check with the family before do so.

Councilman Emerson stated he would be happy to consult with Mr. DeBernard's family in regard to the town's intentions.

Mayor Mattox stated, if the family concurs, the proclamation would be read and presented to the family during the overlook dedication ceremony.

Mayor Mattox shared his appreciation with Council's "team effort" in this matter. He stated he wanted the Mr. DeBernard's family to know how greatly he would be missed.

- Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett referenced the new Dalton's Landing Canoe Launch. He suggested the town establish the site's rules and regulations to be posted and very visible to patrons of the river and access site.

Mr. Bennett stated the hours of operation for the park, and therefore the hours the entry gate would be open and closed, should be very visible.

Mr. Bennett also suggested the town consider and establish how those rules would be enforced.

Councilman Emerson stated there may be times when a individual did not allow enough time to complete their float before Dalton's Landing closing hours. He stated there to be town staff members assigned to the task of taking the phone call to unlock the gate and letting those individuals out.

Vice Mayor Bennett suggested the town charge a fee for such instances.

Councilman Mitchell stated these types of issues needed to be addressed before Dalton's Landing was open to the public.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, if there were no consequences, patrons of the site may not obey the posted regulations or the sites hours of operation.

Mr. Coggsdale stated this was a "policy issue" that Town Council would need to decide.

There were no additional comments from Town Council in regard to this item.

- Councilman Tracy Emerson referenced the update given that evening by Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens in regard to the Dalton's Landing Canoe Launch. He stated, in reference to her mention of having a meeting the next day with the contractor of the project, he asked Ms. Owens to inform Council with the results of that meeting.

Ms. Owens agreed to do so.

- Councilman Mitchell referenced the town's parks, streets and yards. He commended Town Staff for their continued efforts and great work they put into making the Town of Altavista a beautiful place to live.

There were no additional comments or questions from Town Council.

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At this time, Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale updated Council in regard to an item not on the agenda, the English Park Splash Pad.

Mr. Coggsdale informed Council the Governor of Virginia recently reduced restrictions to outdoor water facilities, such as swimming pools and splash pads.

Mr. Coggsdale stated Town Staff was currently in the process of deciphering which regulations applied specifically to splash pad attractions.

Mr. Coggsdale referenced 2020's intended opening of early May. He stated, since staff was still working through the new regulations, there had not been a definitive opening date scheduled for 2021. He stated it could possibly be late May before the town was ready to do reopen the attraction.

Mr. Coggsdale also referenced the town's intent last year to present Town Council with a plaque in honor of their efforts and achievement in developing the splash pad facility for the Town of Altavista and its community. He stated staff would coordinate a day to recognize Town Council with this accomplishment.

There were no additional comments from the Town Manager.

At this time, before closed session, Councilman Higginbotham excused himself from the Council Meeting, not to return.

9. Closed Session

Date: Tuesday April 27th, 2021

I move that the Altavista Town Council convene in closed session in accordance with the provisions set out in the *Code of Virginia*, 1950, as amended,

Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3) regarding 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

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Bennett, and seconded by Councilman Emerson.

Motion carried.

VOTE:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

Town Council went into Closed Session at 6:35PM.

Notice was given that Council was back in regular session at 6:56PM.

FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Bennett, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to adopt the certification of a closed meeting.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the town council has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

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WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the town council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Town Council hereby certifies, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the town council.

VOTE:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

Notice was given, there were no official actions taken by Council during this Closed Session.

10. Adjournment

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

Mayor Mattox thanked the Town Manager and Town Staff for the hard work they continue to do for the Town of Altavista and the community.

Mayor Mattox adjourned the meeting at 6:58PM.

Michael E. Mattox, Mayor

J. Waverly Coggsdale, III, Clerk