

Town Council Work Session, November 23, 2021

The November 2021 Work Session for Altavista's Town Council was held in Council Chambers of the J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on November 23rd, 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
Mr. Wayne Mitchell

Also Present:

Mr. Clarence Monday, Interim Town Manager
Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Treasurer/Finance Director
Mr. Thomas Merricks, APD Chief of Police
Mr. Tom Fore, Interim Public Services Director
Ms. Sharon D. Williams, Community Development Director
Mr. Jeff Arthur, Public Works Manager
Mr. George Sandridge, Main Street Coordinator
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney
Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Administration

1. Agenda Adoption

Mayor Mattox informed Town Council of an amendment to the agenda:

- Section #4. Items Referred from Previous Meetings: Jenks River Trail

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions or concerns in regard to the proposed November 23, 2021, Council Work Session Agenda, to which there were none.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Jay Higginbotham, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion carried:

VOTE:

Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes
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

2. Recognitions and Presentations

2.1 Citizens Police Academy Award Presentation

Staff Representative: Altavista Police Chief Tommy Merricks

Altavista's Police Chief, Tommy Merricks, and Mayor Mike Mattox presented participation awards to citizens that attended the town's first Citizens Police Academy: Larry Barbour, Frank Dalton Jr, Jason Daniel, James Arnot, and Larry Rowland. El Igne and Kameron Taylor also participated, but were not in attendance at the Council meeting.

Chief Merricks stated the academy program was designed to share with citizens some of the training that police officers initially go through. He stated he intended to continue the five-week program but extend it longer to include additional items.

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Mayor Mattox thanked the citizens for attending the APD academy program and Chief Merricks for promoting community awareness and involvement.

2.2 Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Presentation TMDL and BMP Recommendations presented by Lucy Smith, DEQ

Background:

This presentation was to make Town Council aware of DEQ's recommendations for Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) that were presented to the public. DEQ sought out the public's comments to assist with the TMDL for both Lynch Creek and Reed Creek by having public input meetings. On this date, Lucy Smith presented information to Town Council related to both streams.

Tom Fore, Interim Public Services Director, introduced Ms. Smith and turned the meeting over to her for the DEQ presentation.

Ms. Smith shared a PowerPoint presentation and gave Town Council a brief overview of the Department of Environmental Quality's TMDL and BMP recommendations.

Ms. Smith informed Council that TMDL was the amount of pollutant that could enter a waterbody and still meet the water quality standard and stated The Clean Water Act tasks DEQ to address impaired waters by conducting a TMDL study.

Ms. Smith shared with Council information regarding the town's fore-mentioned creeks.

- Reed Creek:
 - Located in Pittsylvania County and impaired for 8.90 miles.
 - Total Habitat and LRBS were low but reference site has healthy habitat. Sediment and bank stability are driving low Total Habitat Scores.
- Lynch Creek:
 - Located in Campbell County and runs through the Town of Altavista. It is impaired for 3.90 miles.
 - Total Habitat Scores were consistently low and driven by low riparian vegetation and bank vegetation.

Ms. Smith stated it was important to identify what was contributing to the excessive sediment found in the two watersheds (creeks) so the reduction scale could be calculated, and tools implemented for remediation, in order to meet TMDL goals.

- Regulatory Tools
 - WLA will be enforced
 - New permits will comply with TMDL
- Non-regulatory Tools
 - Voluntary funding opportunities
 - BMP support from local experts

Ms. Smith stated, once the town moved into the "implementation phase", the two watersheds would then be eligible for grant funding opportunities. She stated the next step was to take the study and intended plan to the state's Water Control Board in December, and if approved, the town could move forward with the implementation planning phase.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated he believed the record amount of rainfall in the area over the past couple of years had contributed to the excessive sediment in Lynch and Reed Creek.

Councilman George referenced Reed Creek being in Pittsylvania County and asked if the town was required to assist in the sediment remediation plan for that watershed.

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Ms. Smith stated, currently, all implementation plans for “best practices” were voluntary. She stated the DEQ TMDL and BML were tools that either community could utilize for funding opportunities.

Mr. George referenced Lynch Creek and the cow pastures were adjacent to the creek in some areas. He asked if the cattle in those areas would be restricted from drinking water from the creek.

Ms. Smith said the state could not restrict cattle from drinking water from the creek. She informed Council there was an option to work with the Soil & Water Conservation District to provide funding for “cattle exclusion” by offering water stations away from the stream.

Mayor Mattox stated the Staunton River was one of the town’s crown jewels and he believed the town should do everything it could to ensure it offered the cleanest water possible. He stated, by reducing the excess sediment in Lynch Creek and Reed Creek, not only strengthens their ecosystem, but also improves the resource for the town’s Water Plant

Tom Fore, Interim Public Services Director, stated he strived to keep the community educated on what the Public Services Department was doing and why they were doing it. He stated the town continues its efforts to protect its natural resources for, not only current citizens, but also future generations.

Mayor Mattox thanked Ms. Smith for the DEQ presentation and Mr. Fore for his due diligence on the matter and bringing the information to Council.

2.3 FY2021 Financial Audit Report

Staff Representative: Tobie Shelton, Town Treasurer/Finance Director

Background:

The Town is required to engage a public accounting firm to conduct an annual independent audit of the Town's basic financial statements in accordance with Governmental Auditing Standards. The audit must be conducted by licensed Certified Public Accountants who, at the conclusion of their test work, must opine upon the accuracy and completeness of the statements and whether the statements present fairly the financial position of the governmental activities, business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Town as of June 30th each year (the end of the fiscal year), this year being 2021.

Mrs. Tobie Shelton shared with Town Council a memo outlining the results of the town’s FY2021 Financial Audit Report.

DATE: November 17, 2021

MEMO TO: Mayor Mattox and Members of Council

FROM: Tobie Shelton, Finance Director

RE: FY 2021 Financial Report

David Foley, with Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates, will be attending the November 23rd Work Session to present our FY 2021, Financial Report, which covered the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. He will be able to answer any questions you may have concerning the annual report.

The representation letter found on page 1 of the report provides an overview of the auditing process and analysis of the Town’s financial condition. An “unmodified opinion” was issued on the Town’s financial statement, which is the cleanest opinion an auditor can give.

As noted in Exhibit 3, page 7, the fund balance total of the General Fund for FY 2021 was \$18,691,362. The General Fund balance increased in the amount of \$1,459,667 as indicated on page 9 (Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance – Governmental Fund) over last year.

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As noted in Exhibit 7, page 11, total net position of the Enterprise Fund for FY 2021 was \$12,516,382. The Enterprise Fund had a gain in net position in the amount of \$215,142 as indicated on page 12 (Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Net Position – Proprietary Fund) over last year. The Town continues to show a stable financial position.

Mrs. Shelton introduced David Foley, Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates, to give a brief overview of the report.

Mr. Foley stated “town management” was responsible for preparing and fairly presenting the town’s financial statements, to which he stated they did. He said, at the conclusion of an audit, his firm was required to give the town two documents: 1) a financial audit report and 2) a communication letter to those charged with governance, which was included in the report shared with Council.

Mr. Foley then went over the town’s FY2021 financial audit and results as outlined in the memo shared by Mrs. Shelton. He stated as a result of the audit, his firm issued the Town of Altavista an “unmodified opinion”, the cleanest possible result for a locality. He stated an unmodified opinion represents that the town’s financial statements had been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Mr. Foley said he would be happy to answer any questions Town Council may have in regard to Altavista’s FY2021 financial audit report.

Councilman Mitchell referenced the audit report’s mention of the Town of Altavista having a small staff and asked Mr. Foley to expand on that statement/observation.

Mr. Foley stated it was not uncommon for small localities to be small staffed. He stated when a locality had a small staff, regarding internal controls, it was difficult to adequately segregate duties with any one process. Mr. Foley said he believed the town had done everything it could with the staff it had to address that issue.

Mr. Foley referenced the Communication Letter that his firm is required to present to the town and stated there were no difficulties encountered while performing the town’s financial audit. He concluded his presentation by stating that Mrs. Shelton and her staff did an excellent job of working with his firm during the audit process, by having the required documents ready when the audit began, answering questions, and pulling additional documents that his firm asked for.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions for Mr. Foley in regard to Altavista’s FY2021 Financial Audit Report, to which there were none.

Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Foley and his firm for their services to the Town of Altavista.

Mayor Mattox also thanked Tobie Shelton, Altavista’s Treasurer and Finance Director, and shared his appreciation for the continued good work that she and her staff does.

Mrs. Shelton stated Town Staff would request the acceptance of the FY2021 Annual Report be put on the December 14th Town Council Meeting Consent Agenda.

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to do so.

3. Citizen’s Time

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

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4. Items Referred from Previous Meetings

4.1 Jenks River Trail – Pedestrian Bridge (#2)

Staff: Tom Fore, Public Services Director

Mr. Fore stated, per Council's direction, he solicited quotes from two companies for the second pedestrian bridge for the new Jenks River Trail, one being from the company that provided the first bridge. He stated he should have the quotes by the following week.

Mr. Fore informed Town Council that the project required an engineer (Hurt & Proffitt) to conduct a survey on the bridge's placement, which was needed to obtain a required permit from the county to continue the project. He requested \$3,000 to cover the cost of the survey.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if Town Staff could complete the work needed.

Mr. Fore stated the Public Works' schedule was currently full. He informed Council that Town Code required the survey from an engineer for such a project. He reminded Council that Hurt & Proffitt was one of the town's on-call engineer services.

Mayor Mattox stated the town was held to the same standard as its citizens, and if the Town Code said an engineered stamped survey was required, the town would do so.

Councilman George referenced the first pedestrian bridge project for the Jenks River Trail and reminded Council that one of the three quotes received included an installation cost. He stated, with Town Staff being so busy, allowing someone else to install the second pedestrian bridge may be something the town should consider.

Mr. Fore stated he would investigate the cost and consider that option.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Attorney, John Eller, since the dollar amount was under \$10,000, could Town Council vote on this request that evening.

Mr. Eller asked, if Council approved the request, where the funds would be coming from.

Mr. Fore stated his request would include utilizing the Jenks Fund to cover the survey cost.

Tobie Shelton, Altavista's Treasurer/Finance Director, confirmed there were funds remaining in the Jenks Fund (\$44,000) that could be used if approved by Council.

Mr. Eller stated, the Jenks Fund was allocated for use in the back section of English Park, where the second bridge would be located along the new Jenks River Trail, therefore it was appropriate to utilize the Jenks Fund for the survey request. He informed Town Council they could vote on this matter/request that evening.

Councilman Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Councilman George, to authorize Tom Fore, Interim Public Services Director, to use \$3,000 from the Jenks Fund for Hurt & Proffitt to conduct a survey pertaining to the second pedestrian bridge to be placed on the Jenks River Trail in English Park.

Motion carried.

VOTE:

Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes
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

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5. Items for Discussion - New and Unfinished

5.1 Claire Park Foundation – Request for Town Assistance with Driveway Installation Staff Representative: Tom Fore, Interim Public Services Director

Background:

Public Works' Staff need direction from Council when requests from non-profit organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity or the Claire Parker Foundation, need a driveway installed; whether staff should cut the curbing and build or rebuild the entrance for these organizations, which would both require staff time and materials in order to accomplish a new driveway installation.

Mr. Tom Fore, Altavista's Interim Public Services Director, informed Council that Jonathan Parker, Claire Park Foundation President, was looking to restore a third home by the foundation and requested the town assist with installing a driveway where none existed.

Mr. Fore stated the cost of adding a driveway to a property where none existed would be \$3,500-\$5,000 to a new homeowner. He stated Staff was seeking the direction of Council for how they wished to respond to this request and any such requests moving forward.

Mayor Mattox stated, if a non-profit organization was willing to restore a derelict house, or build a new one, to bring or keep more families in Altavista, he believed it would be worth the town's investment to offer assistance by installing a driveway to the property.

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to place this item on the December Consent Agenda for official approval; authorizing Town Staff to assist the Claire Parker Foundation with their potential third house by adding a driveway where none existed.

5.2 Public Services/Streets Department – Street Sweeper

Staff Representative: Tom Fore, Interim Public Services Director

Background:

Town Council asked staff to investigate if repairs could be made to the existing Street Sweeper instead of replacing it. Staff investigated the option and found that, due to the age of the sweeper (17yrs), it was unrepairable to the level the town needed it to be, and the repairs for the broken accessories could exceed \$40,000.

Interim Public Services Director, Tom Fore, informed Town Council that Public Works' FY2022 CIP Fund still had the previously approved amount for a Street Sweeper, of \$203,000. He stated the current Source Well quote was under budget at \$192,870.

Mr. Fore stated Town Staff was seeking Town Council's approval to move forward with replacing the Street Sweeper.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if the Town of Altavista was still conducting street sweeping services for the Town of Gretna.

Mr. Fore answered yes. He suggested, due to the continued increase in gas prices, the town should consider re-evaluating what they charge the Town of Gretna for this service.

Mayor Mattox asked which funding source covered the cost of street sweeping the town.

Public Works Manager, Jeff Arthur, answered that Bedford Avenue and Main Street were paid for through the town's General Fund and all other streets swept were covered under the Highway Fund.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any additional questions or comments regarding staff's request.

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Councilman George stated his confidence in Mr. Fore's investigation and recommendation and shared his favor in allowing staff to move forward with the purchase of a new sweeper and utilizing the funds previously approved and allocated for this purpose.

Councilman Higginbotham concurred with Mr. George, however, due to gas prices continuing to rise, suggested Altavista re-evaluate its agreement with the Town of Gretna pertaining to street sweeping services.

Mr. Fore stated he would review the contract and keep Council updated on this item.

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to place this item on their December 14th Regular Meeting Consent agenda for official approval.

5.3 English Park – Wayfinding Signage

Staff Representative: Tom Fore, Interim Public Services Director

Background:

The Town of Altavista's previous Assistant Town Manager, Amie Owens, was directed by Town Council to create and have installed "wayfinding" signage at English Park and trails. Staff received a proposal from Kim Cottle, Multi-Media, Inc. A meeting was held on Wednesday, November 17th with Tom Fore, Teri Anderson, and Kim Cottle to discuss the submitted proposal. The proposal was \$42,488, which included project specs, field work, materials, labor, and installation. With Council's directive, the signage could be in place by June 30th, 2022.

Interim Public Services Director, Tom Fore, informed Council that the larger proposed signs would be designed so the town could add additional verbiage in the future if needed.

Mr. Fore stated that staff was requesting a not-to-exceed amount of \$55,000 for this project, which would allow the inclusion of the newest trail that was currently underway, for its signage that was not included in the initial scope of work.

Mayor Mattox asked if there was a funding source designated for this project.

Altavista Town Treasurer, Tobie Shelton, answered the project currently did not have one.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council for their input on whether the town should designate a funding source or postpone this item until it could be discussed for CIP consideration during the FY2023 budget process.

Councilman Mitchell shared his favor with adding the Wayfinding Signage Project to the list of FY2023 CIP items.

Councilman George asked why the signage cost changed from \$42,488 to \$55,000.

Mr. Fore stated the quote was recalculated to include the additional cost for the new Jenks River Trail when completed, which was not in the original quote.

Councilman Emerson asked how many wayfinding signs were included in the proposal.

Mr. Fore stated there were multiple signs and mile-markers included and shared with Council a map of the locations for each new wayfinding sign.

Mayor Mattox asked when the quote would expire.

Mr. Fore confirmed the quote was good for thirty days.

Vice Mayor Bennett reminded Council that the town had been talking about and wanting signage for the English Park Trail System for a couple of years, and now there were two additional trails that had been added since the initial conversation, the Green Hill

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Connector Trail and the Jenks River Trail. He stated, since it was the town's intent to implement this project in the near future, they should consider moving forward because material costs may continue to increase.

Councilman George asked, if Council approved the proposal, would the project be placed under Parks & Recreation in the budget.

Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Town Treasurer/Finance Director, answered that, if approved, the item could be listed under the Parks & Recreation CIP for the FY2023 Budget, or Council could elect to utilize the Reserve Fund to move this project forward now.

Councilman Higginbotham suggested the town be mindful of English Park's "natural setting" and not have too many signs placed in the park and along the trails.

Mr. Fore informed Council, if the new signage was approved, the old existing signs would be removed and replaced with the new ones to stay consistent.

There was a unanimous consensus of Council to place this item on Town Council's December 14th Regular Meeting Consent Agenda for official approval.

5.4 Broadband Discussion

Background:

At Mayor Mattox's request, a Broadband Committee was formed in 2021 to evaluate the Town of Altavista's broadband needs. A goal was determined - to find ways to create "hotspots" downtown and to improve residential service throughout the rest of the town. Recently, Dr. Scott Lowman (Councilman) and Community Development Director Sharon Williams met with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to discuss the project. DHCD Staff decided to attend Council's January meeting to gain a better understanding of the town's goals and how the DHCD might be able to assist.

Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams referenced the broadband study conducted by the DHCD in 2016. She stated planning documents usually have a useful life-expectancy of five years, therefore the 2016 study was outdated.

Ms. Williams stated she and Dr. Lowman believed it would be beneficial for the town to have another discussion with the DHCD about the town's current needs and the needs of its citizens. She introduced Aaron Barnes, DHCD Broadband Planner, and stated he would continue the conversation.

Mr. Barnes stated there was a huge increase in interest for broadband services over the past two years, due to COVID. He said the DHCD had a goal to get universal broadband across the entire Commonwealth of Virginia by the year 2024.

Mr. Barnes explained that his job was to collect information from localities that have broadband and from companies that provide broadband services, to determine the areas/localities that do not have broadband or that may need increased broadband coverage. He stated he then "maps" the information together in order to connect the two groups.

Mr. Barnes introduced Ammar Omari, a Communications and Broadband Project Manager for the DHCD.

Mr. Omari stated his work focused primarily on the technical aspects of broadband and telecommunications; and he also conducted consultations to review submitted proposals.

Mr. Barnes stated, during this meeting, he would collect information regarding any issues Altavista might have pertaining to broadband access and also obtain the town's goals and objectives for having broadband offered in its community.

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Mr. Omari stated he believed the most important part to planning properly for internet service was understanding a locality's current needs, and what their needs might include in the future. He stated proper planning included obtaining citizen input, and the more information received, a more informative decision the town could make for its community.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions or comments.

Councilman, Dr. Scott Lowman, suggested looking at the town's needs in two ways, "the nice to have, and the need to have". He stated he believed the town's needs included the citizens needs and what the town needed to be competitive; and the "nice to have" would be to have wireless internet coverage in the town parks, which would be an amenity/asset for the town to promote.

Dr. Lowman shared his favor in conducting another broadband study, to include a citizen survey, and asked if the DHCD had a grant that would fund the study.

Dr. Lowman also asked how 5G internet would affect what the town would like to accomplish with broadband.

Mr. Omari explained that "5G" was the speed of internet service and was only affected when using wireless service, not cable/fiberoptics access. He stated the speed of wireless internet depended on the number of users within a service area, making fiber/cable internet faster and more reliable, however it was also more expensive.

Dr. Lowman referred to Mr. Omari's mention of CBRS and asked for its definition.

Mr. Omari informed Council that the FCC approved the CBRS (Citizen Broadband Radio Service), and if available in Altavista, the licensed spectrum could be used free of charge. He stated he had seen CBRS used by localities to offer internet access in their parks and other small areas to connect their 5G network.

Dr. Lowman asked if CBRS would be one of the items covered in a broadband study.

Mr. Omari answered it would, along with wireless and fiberoptic available options, and other information needed for the town to make its decision pertaining to broadband service.

Councilman George referenced Comcast being the only provider that currently serviced Altavista and asked if the fore-mentioned discount program was available with Comcast.

Mr. Barnes stated the fore-mentioned internet service discount was offered through a federally funded program and would work with any internet service provider, to citizens that qualified, which was typically low to medium income families.

Mr. George also referenced Campbell County's recent plan to add fiberoptic cable internet service to their existing network for better broadband coverage. He stated that he was unsure why Altavista was not included in that plan.

Community Development Director Sharon Williams informed Council that she and Waverly Coggsdale, Altavista's previous Town Manager, had a conversation with the Campbell County Administrator, Frank Rogers, before Mr. Coggsdale departed (August 2021) and was told he believed Altavista was better served than other parts of the county, so the town was not included in the county's current broadband expansion grant.

Councilman Lowman reminded Council that Altavista had existing fiber for broadband in certain areas and stated the task at hand was to find ways to expand the existing coverage to more areas and citizens throughout the town.

Councilman George asked who was responsible for the cost of expanding the town's broadband.

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Dr. Lowman stated a broadband study would help the town determine that aspect of their broadband expansion plan. He stated it was important to be well informed on the future plans of local internet providers so that the town could make an informative decision with grand funds or the citizen's money.

Mr. Barnes stated expanding its broadband coverage was an important economic tool for Altavista to bring in more industry and small businesses.

Mayor Mattox shared his favor in Altavista's vision to expand its broadband coverage and stated he believed the town should do as much as it could to move the project forward as soon as possible, because it would be an asset for Altavista's existing citizens, small businesses, and industries. He stated good broadband service would also help Altavista be competitive when promoting economic development and soliciting new industry.

Mr. Barnes concurred and stated it would be advantageous for the town to investigate what options were available to help widen its broadband coverage.

Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the fore-mentioned federal discount program regarding internet service and asked how soon the program would be available in Altavista.

Mr. Barnes informed Council the program was already available to anyone that qualified.

Mr. Bennett asked that Town Staff relay the program's information to Altavista citizens, by advertisement and/or social media.

Councilman Emerson shared his favor with the town moving forward with a broadband study to determine the town's overall needs and what options were available.

There were no further comments or questions from Town Council pertaining to this matter.

Mr. Barnes told Council they could contact him or Mr. Omari any time they had questions. He also shared the website address to the fore-mentioned federal discount program, commonwealthconnect.virginia.gov.

Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Barnes and Mr. Omari for their presentation and extensive information pertaining to broadband.

5.5 CY2022 Town Council Meeting Schedule

Background:

The Altavista Town Council currently meets twice a month. They meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month for their Regular Meeting (at 6:00 pm) and on the 4th Tuesday of each month for their Work Session (at 5:00 pm). The meetings are conducted in Council's Chambers of the J.R. "Rudy" Burgess Building (Town Hall), located at 510 7th Street. Based on past direction, there is no Council Work Session scheduled for the month of December.

Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Altavista's Treasurer/Finance Director, stated that Town Staff was seeking a consensus of Council to place the adoption of the FY2022 Town Council Meeting Calendar on the December Regular Meeting Consent Agenda, as presented or modified.

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to do so.

5.6 Proposed Organizational Structure

Background:

The vacancy of several positions throughout the Town of Altavista organization offered the opportunity for potential restructuring of the organization to be 1) more efficient, 2) to support and implement the vision and goals of the Town Council, 3) to assign work and accountability to staff under the direction of the Town Manager, 4) to improve

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communications internally, 5) to improve communications for the planning of community events, and 6) to ensure an appropriate span of control of those directors reporting directly to the Town Manager. Per Town Council's direction, Interim Town Manager Clarence Monday was asked to evaluate the existing structure and offer Council recommendations to coincide with the town's current needs and goals.

Interim Town Manager Clarence Monday stated he discussed his revision ideas with the new incoming Town Manager, Gary Shanaberger, and Mr. Shanaberger concurred with his recommendations. Mr. Monday shared with Town Council his proposal for the town's organizational structure update for their consideration.

Mr. Monday stated the revised organizational structure would consist of five (5) members of Town Staff reporting directly to the Town Manager: Assistant Clerk Crystal Hailey, APD Chief Merricks, Public Services Director (Interim) Tom Fore, Assistant Town Manager (Vacant), and Administration and Finance Director Tobie Shelton.

Mr. Monday stated the Assistant Clerk would represent staff at all town committee meetings for continuity, which was not done in all localities, but he believed was important to ensure meeting minutes were done uniformly. This did not include AOT.

Mr. Monday referenced the Altavista Police Department. He stated Chief Merricks did an outstanding job overseeing his department and would continue to report directly to the Town Manager.

Mr. Monday referenced the newly structured Public Services Department, which included Water, Wastewater, and Public Works. He stated the Public Services Director (currently "Interim" Tom Fore) would continue to manage projects within the town's Utilities Division and reported directly to the Town Manager.

Mr. Monday continued and referenced Altavista's Finance Director and Treasurer Tobie Shelton. He stated Mrs. Shelton was also head of the Administration Department and she would continue to report directly to the Town Manager for all three departments.

Mr. Monday referenced the Assistant Town Manager (currently vacant) and stated that person would continue to hold a supportive role to Town Council and the Town Manager.

Mr. Monday concluded by sharing that he believed a Town Manager and Town Council could not successfully implement their goals and objectives efficiently and effectively without the support of their staff working together to achieve those goals.

Mr. Monday stated the Assistant Town Manager would oversee and/or supervise multiple departments and groups for the Town of Altavista; including Community Development, with Community Development Director Sharon Williams, Transit, which was currently being done (temporarily) by Finance Director Tobie Shelton, and Economic Development by coordinating efforts with Campbell County, the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance, and with the Altavista Economic Development Authority (AEDA).

Mr. Monday stated the Assistant Town Manager would also attend Avoca Board Meetings and Altavista Area Chamber of Commerce Board Meetings and report back to the Town Manager and Town Council; and to relay any pertinent information to Town Staff that related to community events.

Mr. Monday informed Town Council that the new Town Manager, Gary Shanaberger, asked that, if Council approved the proposed organizational structure revisions, for Mr. Monday to revise the Assistant Town Manager's job description and move forward with advertising for the vacant position.

Mr. Monday stated that Town Staff was requesting this item be placed on either the December 14th Consent Agenda for approval or Town Council's Regular Meeting Agenda for further discussion and direction to staff. He stated he would be happy to answer any questions the Town Council had.

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Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the proposed revisions to the Town of Altavista's Organizational Structure.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked if the current budget had funds allocated for the Assistant Town Manager position, to which Mr. Monday stated it did.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he believed economic development was a critical subject and suggested it be the direct responsibility of the Town Manager.

Town Council concurred.

Mr. Higginbotham also stated, since the town did not currently have a Code Enforcement Officer, suggested code enforcement be the temporary responsibility of the Community Development Department until an Assistant Town Manager was hired.

Councilman Mitchell asked Mr. Monday for his input on whether the number of employees the Town of Altavista currently employed was sufficient to cover the delegation of current responsibilities and needs of the town.

Mr. Monday stated, while serving as Altavista's Interim Town Manager, he was able to observe daily operations and ongoing projects of all departments and found there were three areas that he believed to be critically in need: Utilities, Finance, and Administration.

Mr. Monday reminded Town Council that Tom Fore, former Utilities Director, was only working as the town's Interim Public Services Director on a part-time basis and it was his recommendation that the town hire an Assistant Public Services Director to learn from Mr. Fore before he fully retired. He stated there were "vacancy savings" in the current budget that would help cover the cost of the assistant position.

Mr. Monday went on to reference the Administration and Finance Departments. He stated Mrs. Shelton was in the process of hiring a replacement for the recently departed employee in Administration. He stated he believed the Finance Department would also benefit from having an additional employee and recommended Council consider allowing Mrs. Shelton to utilize vacancy savings to hire for that department as well.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he believed it would benefit the town for the new Assistant Town Manager to have an engineer background and to work directly with the Public Services Department Director. He stated he also believed community and economic development would be best served under the Town Manager.

Mayor Mattox concurred with Mr. Higginbotham. He stated he hoped the new Town Manager would be with the town for a long time and the new Assistant Town Manager to stay and take over the Town Manager position when that time came.

Mayor Mattox shared his favor with accepting the proposed organizational structure revisions, knowing the structure could be changed later if necessary.

Councilman Lowman stated he also liked the proposed organizational structure, but would prefer the new Town Manager have input before it was finalized.

Mr. Monday confirmed that Mr. Shanaberger, new Town Manager, had been consulted and gave input on the final proposal.

Mr. Monday stated, when he consulted with Tom Fore, Interim Public Services Director, regarding the proposed revisions to the town's organizational structure, Mr. Fore believed it would be more beneficial for the Assistant Public Services Director to have an engineer background/knowledge, requiring the Assistant Town Manager to only need management and administration experience.

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Vice Mayor Bennett thanked Mr. Monday for his time and due diligence with investigating and evaluating the town's needs to offer Council a viable option for consideration of the town's organizational structure. He also thanked Mr. Monday for consulting with Altavista's new Town Manager in this matter to ensure that he concurred with the changes.

Mr. Bennett stated he believed Mr. Monday's proposal offered a successful plan for the future and he was in favor of all of his recommendations.

Councilman Emerson shared his favor with the proposed revisions to the organizational structure and moving forward with hiring an Assistant Town Manager as soon as possible. He stated he was also in favor of allowing Mrs. Shelton to hire another employee for the Finance Department.

Councilman Mitchell thanked Mr. Monday for his efforts in creating his proposal and for including the new Town Manager in the process.

Mayor Mattox stated, with no additional funds being requested, this item could be voted on that evening.

Councilman Wayne Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, to accept Interim Town Manager Clarence Monday's proposed revisions to Altavista's Organizational Structure and adopting the chart as presented. The motion included utilizing funds from employee vacancies to hire an Assistant Public Services Director and an additional employee for the Finance Department. The motion also included allowing staff to move forward with advertising for the vacant Assistant Town Manager position.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes
	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

5.7 Replacement of Town Council's Meeting Tablets

Background:

Funds were included in the FY2022 Capital Improvements Plan for the replacement of Town Council's iPad tablets. The current devices would be six (6) years old in January 2022 and at the end of their useful life.

Finance Director Tobie Shelton stated that an argument could be made for both, to replace the iPads with newer devices or print each Council member a paper copy of their agendas. She stated a third option would be to offer Council both choices, and each Council member would select the option that works best for each of them.

Mrs. Shelton stated, at that time, staff was seeking direction from Town Council on how to move forward. She stated, should Council approve to move forward with purchasing new tablets, there may be "departmental savings" later in the fiscal year that could assist in offsetting most or all of any cost over the appropriated funds; however, it is too early in the fiscal year to make that determination.

Mayor Mattox asked for each Council member's input on this matter.

Councilmen Lowman and George both stated they preferred a Windows-based tablet, while Councilman Higginbotham stated he would be fine with either option.

Mayor Mattox shared his favor with having a paper copy of the agenda so that he was able to write meeting notes on the appropriate pages.

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Vice Mayor Bennett stated that he also liked having a paper copy of the agenda for writing notes, until he received that evening's agenda which was 231 pages large. He also stated, on paper, some of the numbers and graphs were too small for him to see and like the idea of being able to enlarge them when using a tablet.

Councilman Emerson shared his favor with Council receiving newer tablets, and for the tablets to have the capability of writing notes on their meeting agendas with a stylist pen.

Councilman Mitchell also shared his favor in staying with tablets and preferably Windows-based. He stated he believed tablets were easier to maneuver than paper copies of the agenda and also nice to have when needing to look at previous agenda or documents.

Councilman George asked when Council would receive their new tablets, to which Mrs. Shelton replied there were funds appropriated in the current budget for this item, so if a consensus was reached, she would move forward with ordering the tablets.

There was a consensus of Town Council to authorize Mrs. Shelton to utilize FY2022 appropriated funds (\$10,000) for replacing Council's existing, outdated, tablets with new Windows-based tablets. The consensus included authorizing her to either use a departmental transfer or reserve funds to offset any additional funds needed (potentially \$5,600).

5.8 Salary and Compensation Study

Background:

It is important for the town to ensure that its job position classifications and pay grades are kept up to date with the current job market. Keeping its salary and compensation package current and competitive is vital to the success of the town's employee recruitment and retention efforts. The Town of Altavista's current Pay and Classification Plan was last updated in 2016, therefore it is now necessary for the town to seek a professional firm to do the required market research and analysis to ensure that its plan is keeping up with the job market.

Interim Town Manager Clarence Monday informed Council there would be tier changes, mandated by government, to minimum wages over the next couple of years that could cause compression issues with employee salaries.

Mr. Monday also reminded Council that it had been five years since the town had a salary compensation study conducted to ensure the town was fairly paying its employees. He stated staff was seeking authorization to move forward with a new study to update the town's Pay and Classification Plan.

Mr. Monday stated there were specifications already compiled for the study and a funding source identified, and if Council approved, staff would seek quotes from entities that specialized in studies for local government. He stated the recommendations would be in time to incorporate into the current budget process for the next fiscal year.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council for their input on this matter.

Councilman George asked if the study would be for all employee salaries/compensation, to which Mr. Monday stated it would.

Mayor Mattox requested conducting the study with "local" peers, not distant localities.

Mr. Monday stated the town had the ability to control the area studied for this analysis and he would relay the preferred perimeter to the firm that conducted the study.

Councilman Higginbotham shared his concern with spending money on an outside agency to conduct a salary study and suggested the salary evaluation be done internally by the new Town Manager.

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Councilman Mitchell stated he could see both sides of whether to perform the salary study internally or use an outside firm but either way, he was in favor of the study being conducted.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated the town owned its staff a fair wage and compensation for their work and shared his favor in authorizing staff to move forward and seek quotes for the study.

Mr. Bennett stated that his previous place of employment conducted a salary compensation survey/study every year. He asked, with it being five years from the town's last study, what was the appropriate amount of time to wait in between studies.

Mr. Monday answered two to three years, unless something major happened in the job market.

Councilman Emerson recommended allowing Chief Merricks to have input for his department, by sharing the agencies he believed the town was losing officers to.

Mr. Emerson stated the town expected the best from its employees and he believed the town needed to compensate them for those efforts with competitive wages/salaries.

Mayor Mattox asked, if approved, how the study would be funded.

Altavista Finance Director Tobie Shelton informed Council there was a line item in the current budget for miscellaneous and professional services that would cover the cost of the study.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if the quotes for the study would be brought back to Council.

Mr. Monday stated staff's request included allowing staff to choose the most feasible quote submitted without going over the amount appropriated in the budget.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Tim George, to authorized Town Staff to seek quotes for a salary compensation study for the Town of Altavista, not to exceed the existing budget line item to cover the cost of the study.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	No
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

5.9 Altavista Community Transit System (ACTS) Budget Review

Background:

Annually Town Staff applies for a grant through the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), for funding of the Altavista Community Transit System (ACTS), which is typically 50% Federal Funds, 15% State Funds, and 35% Town funds. The CIP funding is budgeted as 80% Federal/State and 20% Town funds.

Altavista's Treasurer/Finance Director Tobie Shelton stated this item was being presented at this time due to the DRPT grant application deadline, which is February 1, 2022.

Mrs. Shelton stated staff was requesting authorization to apply for the grant again this year in the amount of \$140,540 for the FY2023 ACTS Operations Budget. She stated the amount was a 9% increase from the previous year due to health insurance increases, fuel cost increases, and the federal minimum wage increase from \$9 per hour to \$11 per hour.

Councilman Higginbotham referenced ACTS bus drivers being part-time and asked if they received town health insurance.

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Mrs. Shelton stated the fore-mentioned health insurance rate increase was pertaining to the salaried employees that oversee the town's Transit Department.

Mrs. Shelton stated the Transit FY2023 CIP included a \$26,000 line item for a shelter to be placed at Public Works for the town's two transit buses, which were previously housed at the old fire station, now the new Spark Innovation Center.

Mrs. Shelton stated staff was requesting this item be placed on either the December Consent Agenda for approval to authorize staff to apply for the DRPT grant funds., or Council's Regular December Agenda for further discussion.

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to place the item on the consent agenda

5.10 FY2023-2027 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Background

Annually, the Town is required to adopt its budget prior to July 1st, the beginning of the new fiscal year. During last year's budget process, it was the consensus of Town Council to receive the draft capital budget much earlier in the budget process to allow them more time to review the working document to ensure it reflected changing community needs, priorities, and funding opportunities. The Town Budget utilizes funding in the General Fund, Utility (Enterprise) Fund, State Highway Fund, and the Cemetery Fund. The funding comes from a variety of sources including taxes, user fees, state funds, and other.

Altavista's Treasurer/Finance Director Tobie Shelton stated that Council had received the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) project sheets detailing large capital projects and equipment purchases and their associated funding options for the following departments: Administration, Avoca, Altavista Community Transit System (ACTS), Police, and Public Works. She stated that Council would receive CIP project sheets for the remaining departments at a later meeting.

Mrs. Shelton stated that she and the directors of each draft CIP presented that evening would be glad to answer any questions Council may have.

Mayor Mattox stated, as this was the first time Council was seeing the draft CIP for these departments, he suggested Council review them over the next two weeks and have staff place the item on their December meeting agenda for discussion and consideration.

There was a consensus of Council to do so.

6. Updates and Informational Items

Interim Public Services Director Tom Fore updated Town Council on the following items:

6.1 Dalton's Landing – Solar Lights

Mr. Fore informed Council that the solar lights for Dalton's Landing were currently being installed, with Jeff Arthur, Public Works Manager, overseeing the project.

6.2 CIP FY2022 Vehicle purchase for Community Development

Mr. Fore stated the new Community Development vehicle had been delivered to Public Works, however, they were waiting on the "amber lights" to arrive for installation before delivering it to the Director, Sharon Williams.

6.3 CIP FY2022 Replace 2007 Freightliner Knuckle Boom Truck

Mr. Fore informed Council that the new knuckle boom truck was also delivered. He stated Public Works was currently putting the required decals on the truck so it would be ready for town operations very soon.

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6.4 Altavista YMCA Family Center – Erosión Repairs

Mr. Fore stated the town had received approval from the Army Corps of Engineers to enter the stream at this location for erosion repairs, however, they were currently waiting on a firm to confirm the town was not killing the endangered bugs living in the stream before moving forward on this project

6.5 English Park Restrooms – Eagle Trail Area

Mr. Fore informed Council that he continued to work with Linda Smith, City of Lynchburg, to determine a viable location to place the new restrooms. He stated the initial destination was not only in a flood plain, but also not feasible at potentially \$750,000. He stated they were currently looking at an alternate location (near the train trestle).

Councilman George asked if portable bathrooms (pottys) were allowed in the initially desired area, to which Mr. Fore stated they were.

6.6 Spark Innovation Center Update

Community Development Director Sharon Williams updated Town Council on the progress of this project. She stated the roof was almost complete, contractors were currently working on the exterior siding, and interior walls were being constructed for the offices and conference room. She shared photos with Council for visual reference. Ms. Williams informed Council that she ran into supply chain issues for materials resulting in a few change orders on the project.

Ms. Williams shared the web address for the Spark Innovation Center (www.sparkinnovationcenter.com) so online viewers were aware that they were able to pre-register to rent a space at the facility.

6.7 Meet New Town Manager, Gary Shanaberger

Mayor Mike Mattox, along with the Vice Mayor and Interim Town Manager, invited everyone to arrive at the December meeting early to meet Altavista's new Town Manager, Gary Shanaberger. He stated they planned to arrive at 5pm that evening.

7. Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)

There were no public comments on this date.

8. Matters from Council

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

- Councilman George referenced the Cemetery Connector Trail and asked when that trail would be connected to the existing trail in English Park.

Interim Public Services Director Tom Fore stated he had not looked at that project yet, but he would do so and update Council at their next meeting.

- Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the public restrooms adjacent to War Memorial Park. He asked if they were scheduled to be painted and/or updated any time soon.

Public Works Manager Jeff Arthur informed Council there was a CIP item in Public Works' draft CIP for FY2023 to paint all of the town park's public restrooms, including the concession stand at the War Memorial Ball Field.

Councilman Mitchell thanked Town Staff for continuing to do a good job of keeping Council informed and updated on the town's ongoing projects.

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9. Closed Session

There was no closed session scheduled for this meeting date.

10. Adjournment

Mayor Mattox encouraged everyone to be at the December Council Meeting at 5p.m. instead of 6 p.m. in order to meet the new Town Manager.

Mayor Mattox asked if there were any additional comments or concerns from Town Council, to which there were none. This meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Michael E. Mattox, Mayor

Clarence Monday, Interim Town Manager
Acting Town Clerk