

Town Council Work Session August 24, 2021

The Altavista Town Council's August 2021 Work Session was held in Council Chambers at the J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on Tuesday August 24th, 2021 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:

- Ms. Amanda Owens, Assistant Town Manager
- Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Treasurer/Finance Director
- Mr. Thomas Merricks, APD Chief of Police
- Mr. Tom Fore, Public Utilities Director
- Ms. Sharon D. Williams, Community Development Director
- Mr. Jeff Arthur, Public Works Department Supervisor
- Mr. George Sandridge, Main Street Coordinator
- Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney
- Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Administration

1. Agenda Adoption

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions or concerns in regard to the proposed August 24th, 2021, Council Work Session Agenda, to which there were none.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried:

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

2. Recognitions and Presentations

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens informed Town Council of the most recent updates and changes in Town Personnel.

- Town of Altavista Personnel Milestones:
 - Steve Bond, WWTP Manager August 2021 30 years
 - Bryan Mawyer, WTP Manager August 2021 5 years

- Retirements/Resignations:
 - Waverly Coggsdale III, Town Manager Departure Date: August 6, 2021
 - David Garrett, Public Works Director Departure Date: August 13, 2021

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Mayor Mattox took this time to applaud Amie Owens for her accomplishments during her service to the Town of Altavista as the Assistant Town Manager for the past year.

Mayor Mattox stated Ms. Owens had done a lot for the town, the community, and Town Council during her time in office and he felt her leadership and direction helped him be a better Mayor. He thanked Ms. Owens for her service and stated she would be missed by many.

Councilman Mitchell stated he was in favor of voting Ms. Owens into office and was very proud of the extraordinary things she accomplished for the town during her time as Assistant Town Manager. He stated he wished the town had a couple more years with her direction, but he wished her well on her new endeavor.

Councilman Emerson stated he felt that Ms. Owens had done a great job as the town's Assistant Town Manager over the past year. He stated he wished that she could have stayed in Altavista longer but understood that circumstances change and her decision to move back to her home state of North Carolina. He thanked her for her service and wished her well.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated he felt that Ms. Owens had made the town, Town Council, and Town Staff better during her time in office. He stated Ms. Owens brought a breath of fresh air to the town with her "fresh ideas". He asked Ms. Owens to visit Altavista from time to time and stated everyone could do the same with Ms. Owens in North Carolina.

Councilman Higginbotham shared he agreed with everyone's sentiments and thanked Ms. Owens for her service to the town during her time as Assistant Town Manager.

Councilman George thanked Ms. Owens for her service to Altavista. He referenced her upcoming position being in another "river town". He stated he appreciated her efforts on the town's "restroom project" for next to the river (on Eagle Trail in English Park).

Councilman Lowman thanked Ms. Owens for everything she had done for the Town of Altavista during her time in office. He stated he hoped she enjoyed her next employment endeavor.

3. Citizen's Time – Agenda Items Only

Mayor Mattox asked if there were any citizen(s) attending the meeting that wished to address Town Council regarding a work session agenda item, 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

4.1 Town Milling and Paving Contract – Additional Area Discussion/Consideration

Background:

At the July 27, 2021 Work Session, Town Council directed Staff to obtain a quote from the contractor currently working on the town's annual (now semi-annual) paving schedule related to extending the car lane, from where the existing pavement stops, to the new River Overlook area on Eagle Trail; and to also create a parking lot in that area. Based on the current contract, the amount to add this area is \$139,500.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens informed Town Council of the cost for two other forms of material for the proposed car lane.

- Crushed Concrete \$128,500
- Milling Base \$118,250

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Ms. Owens stated this project was proposed after the FY2022 Budget was approved, therefore, no funding is allocated in the current budget for this project. She stated Town Staff was currently working to find alternate funding sources for the project, such as the potential for VDOT Grant Funds.

Ms. Owens stated, at this time, Staff was seeking direction from Town Council if, and/or how they wished to move forward with this proposed project.

Mayor Mattox asked Council for their input on the matter.

Councilman Mitchell stated he did not feel this project was an emergency that needed to be considered at this time. He stated he would rather include the project with the list of proposed items to be considered during the next fiscal year (2023) budget process.

Councilman Emerson stated he was not against the town doing the project, but would also rather see the item postponed until the next fiscal year's budget consideration process. He stated this would allow Town Staff time to investigate funding options for the project.

Vice Mayor Bennett also agreed the town should allow Staff additional time to investigate funding options.

Mr. Bennett stated the new River Overlook was one of the park's nicest views of the river. He stated he felt the town would be doing a "dis-service" to its citizens if they did not extend the car lane to the overlook area and include the ADA accessible parking lot.

Mayor Mattox stated he appreciated Councilman Mitchell's reminder for Town Council to "stay within procedure". He reminded them they had previously agreed not to approve new items not already in the current budget, unless they were considered emergency situations.

Mayor Mattox stated he was in favor of the project, but also agreed it needed to be postponed until the next budget consideration process occurred.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he was in favor of the proposed car lane extension, but agreed, for budget purposes, it should not be considered at this time.

Mr. Higginbotham stated, if the town knew it wanted to complete the project sometime in the near future, he suggested utilizing any extra rock/stone the town may have to cover the car lane for now, which would serve as a good foundation for when the lane is paved.

Councilman George reminded Council that the ramp leading up to the new River Overlook was not ADA compatible. He stated, at their last meeting, the Parks & Recreation Committee voted against the proposed road extension, due to this fact, and there being no other reasoning for extending the road.

Mr. George asked if Town Staff was able to confirm whether or not VDOT would help fund the road extension.

Ms. Owens stated, unless the town chooses to bring the proposed road "up to standard" as an actual road, and maintained the road as such, the project would not be eligible for VDOT funding.

Councilman Lowman informed Town Council, due to the town adding the new River Overlook and its plan to continue Eagle Trail further, the town may be eligible for VDOT/DCR funding for this project through a "Park Access Grant". He stated the grant would also help cover the design and engineer aspects of the project.

Dr. Lowman stated, if Council desired, he and the Community Development Director Sharon Williams would be happy to investigate this option further.

Town Council was in consensus for them to do so.

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Councilman Mitchell asked if this project would be considered as a Public Works “street” project or a Parks & Recreation project.

Ms. Owens stated, at this time, the proposed project would be considered under Parks & Recreation.

There was a consensus of Town Council to postpone the proposed Car Lane Extension Project for Eagle Trail until the next fiscal year (2023) budget consideration process.

Town Council was also in consensus for Town Staff to investigate the possibility of the town qualifying for a VDOT/DCR Park Access Grant, as Dr. Lowman mentioned.

4.2 Jenks River Trail – Preparation for Millings

Background:

At Town Council’s August 10th Regular Meeting, Councilman George asked, while the paving contractor (Patterson Brothers Paving Company) was currently in town completing the town’s annual paving schedule, could they also prep the Jenks River Trail, so Public Works could place millings on the trail sooner rather than later. There was a consensus of Council for Staff to research and bring back to Council a cost for this proposal. At their August 17, 2021 Meeting, the Recreation Committee made a formal motion to recommend to Town Council approval of this project.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens informed Town Council that Patterson Brothers quoted \$23,750 for the proposed “trail prepping” project.

Ms. Owens stated the town would be able to utilize the Jenks Fund for this project. She stated, if this project was approved, the Jenks Fund would have a remaining balance of less than \$21,000.

Councilman Emerson asked for confirmation of what area is included in the \$23,750 cost.

Ms. Owens stated the entire area of the new Jenks River Trail that looped around to the recently installed pedestrian bridge was included in the quote from Patterson Brothers.

Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the fact that the Jenks River Trail was only being mowed. He stated, whether walking or biking, he felt it was a little dangerous in its current condition, due to exposed roots and stumps. He stated he felt the trail needed to be prepped/milled, sooner rather than later, to make the trail safer to use.

Councilman Higginbotham shared his concern with the current location of the Jenks River Trail. He stated it was the town’s intent to have the best river trail it could have, but he did not feel the current location of the Jenks Trail was as close to the river as it should be.

Mr. Higginbotham suggested Council meet at the new pedestrian bridge, adjacent to the Jenks Trail, to discuss the potential of relocating the trail as close to the river as possible.

Mr. Higginbotham stated he was not confident that Patterson Brothers would be able to get their milling machine very close to the river. He also stated he was not in favor of the town spending \$23,750 for someone else to do the work that he felt could be done by the town’s Public Works Department.

Ms. Owens stated Jeff Arthur, Buildings & Grounds Supervisor for the Altavista Public Works Department, worked with David Garrett on the new pedestrian bridge, as well as, on the Jenks Trail.

Ms. Owens stated, after her departure, Mr. Arthur would be Council’s contact for any questions they may have in regard to this project.

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Councilman George reminded Council that the Army Corp of Engineers were very stringent with their regulations regarding trail systems and how close they could be to the river and wetlands.

Mr. George suggested, if Council desired to adjust where the Jenks River Trail will be located, he suggested consulting with an engineer (from Hurt & Proffitt) to assess the possibility.

Mr. George stated he felt the town's Public Works Department was very busy during the summer months, not only with mowing, but with other duties as well, so he was not sure they would have time to add the Jenks Trail to their list of projects.

Mr. George shared his favor with allowing Patterson Brothers to prep the Jenks Trail and the town could then apply millings to the prepped surface.

Councilman Lowman stated he did not have a definite opinion either way, but he had hoped that individuals could see the river when walking/biking the new trail.

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

There was a consensus of Council to authorize Town Staff to contact an engineer (through town-retained Hurt & Proffitt) to assess/verify how close the Jenks River Trail could be located adjacent to the river, so the town could move this project forward.

There was also a consensus of Council to postpone allowing the town to use \$23,750 of Jenks Funds to hire Patterson Brothers to prep the Jenks River Trail, until such time as the town had received clarification from Hurt & Proffitt of the best option to locate the Jenks River Trail.

4.3 Town Council "Rules of Procedure"

Background:

One goal from the Town Council Retreat in March 2021 was to develop Council Rules of Procedure. At their July 13, 2021 Regular Meeting, Town Council was provided with an outline of potential topics for said document. A draft document for Rules of Procedure, as well as a Code of Ethics, was provided to Council for review and comments at their July 27th meeting. Town Attorney John Eller reviewed the draft document and made some suggested changes. The information was shared with Town Council and the Rules of Procedure and Code of Ethics documents are being brought back for discussion.

Mayor Mattox referenced this item being on Council's Meeting Agenda previously, on three separate occasions. He stated he would like to offer Council some direction by stating this item could be placed on the September Consent Agenda for approval, allowing Council additional time to review and consider this item, which also allowed the ability to remove the item from the Consent Agenda for further discussion if necessary.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any opposition to his suggestion, or any questions in regard to this item.

Councilman Mitchell confirmed he read the draft documents and felt it was a good "base document" to start with. He stated there were a few items in the draft he wished to discuss before Council made its final vote on the documents.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens suggested placing this item on September's regular agenda, allowing Council additional time to review and discuss the item.

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There was a consensus of Town Council to place this item on their September Regular Meeting Agenda for further discussion and consideration of the Rules of Procedure and Council Code of Ethics draft documents as presented.

4.4 Vista Theater Project Discussion

At their March 30th Retreat, Town Council requested they be provided a “draft” Scope of Services for a Feasibility Study for the VISTA Theater by their May Work Session. This was completed, approved, and a RFQ sent out in June, with eight respondents. Town Council decided the entire Council would serve as a “committee of the whole” on this project. Information from all the respondents were sent to Town Council members, via email, on July 16th. There was no discussion at the July Work Session, only the consensus of Council to move the discussion of this item to their August Work Session.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens stated, at this time, Town Staff was seeking direction from Town Council on how they wished to proceed with this project.

Mayor Mattox stated he would like for Altavista’s new Town Manager (when hired), not the interim, to be involved on the “ground level” of this item/project. He stated he felt it would be important for the new Town Manager to attend the project meetings to have a better understanding of what town citizens and the community need/want from this venue.

Mayor Mattox stated, by postponing this item, it may put the town behind on this project by three to four months, but he felt it would not be fair to a new Town Manager to have to “play catch up” on the project when they first took office.

Mayor Mattox referenced the front façade of the Vista Theater. He stated some Council members had expressed their favor with upgrading the façade as soon as possible; and placing “Coming Soon” on the exterior marquee to inform the community that the venue was being restored.

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

Councilman Mitchell shared his favor with both of the Mayor’s suggestions.

Mr. Mitchell stated he felt postponing the project would allow the additional time he felt the town needed to make a decision on which group/firm they wished to hire for the project.

Mr. Mitchell shared his concern with only relying on a feasibility study, that might miss crucial (structural) items needed for repair, which would increase the project’s cost from what the town was originally expecting.

Mr. Mitchell stated, rather than a feasibility study, he would like for an engineer to give the town a check list of the initial items needed to return the facility to a more structurally sound condition before moving forward.

Councilman Emerson stated he did not have an issue with postponing the project for a couple of months.

Mr. Emerson reminded Council the town has funds allocated in the budget for the Vista Theater Project. He shared his favor in moving forward with restoring the front facade of the building to reflect that the Vista Theater was being restored for use again soon.

Mr. Emerson stated, what the town did to the exterior façade would not affect what needed to be done to the interior of the facility later. He suggested allowing staff to gather cost estimates for the exterior facade upgrade for Council’s review and consideration.

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Vice Mayor Bennett shared his favor with Councilman Mitchell's idea of having an engineer give the town a checklist of items for initial repair, such as plumbing, electrical, and roof repairs. He stated those items were key in making the building structurally sound.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens reminded Town Council that the RFQ process was conducted for this reason. She stated, at this point, Council needed to select one of the eight respondents as their representative and they would conduct the actions Council members were requesting. She stated it would be up to Council to inform the chosen respondent how they wished to proceed and/or the next steps they wished to concentrate on first.

Mayor Mattox asked Ms. Owens, if she were a new Town Manager, would it be ok to come in after Council chose an engineer to work with, or would she rather be a part of the selection process.

Ms. Owens stated the selection process was only the responsibility of Town Council, not the Town Manager. She stated it would be up to the Town Manager to work with whomever Council chose to do the work; and act as a contact between the two entities.

Vice Mayor Bennett suggested Town Council make the decision of which respondent they wished to work with in order to move this project forward.

Councilman Higginbotham shared his favor in moving forward with selecting one of the eight RFQ respondents to work with the town/Town Council on this project.

Mr. Higginbotham referenced the building's exterior façade. He shared his favor with moving forward on this portion of the project, but suggested being cautious of which "exterior materials" they choose, keeping in mind the potential for historic tax credits.

Councilman George stated he liked the idea of getting the exterior marquee restored sooner, rather than later. He suggested the existing paint be removed and exposing the building original brick. He stated he felt this would add to the historic charm of the venue.

Councilman Lowman informed Council that he extensively read through all eight of the RFQs received. He stated three of the eight proposals suggested using Masters Engineers & Designers, an engineering company located in Lynchburg, VA.

Dr. Lowman reminded Council that Masters Engineers had already been in the building and initially signed-off on the town's purchase of the building. He suggested the town consider hiring Masters Engineers directly to do the initial "check list" that Council desires.

Dr. Lowman stated the town could still move forward with picking a firm from the RFQ respondents to oversee the entire project and perform such tasks as conducting citizen surveys and investigating available historic tax credits.

Dr. Lowman and Vice Mayor Bennett stated, while reviewing the eight RFQ respondents, they "ranked" them by their attributes that best matched this project.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if there was a consensus to use the facility for a theater.

Councilman Emerson stated he felt the facility would better serve the community as a "multi-use venue" for movies and live entertainment.

Councilman Mitchell stated he also liked the idea of a multi-use venue, for movies, plays, and music events.

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

There was a consensus of Town Council for the town to hire Masters Engineers & Designers engineering company to assess the Vista Theater building's structure and inform the town of the items that would need to be done first to make the building structurally sound, so the town can move forward with the Vista Theater Revitalization Project.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens informed Town Council that Masters Engineers was already retained with Hurt & Proffitt, one of Altavista's town-contracted firms, so there may be occasions when Hurt & Proffitt's name would be used on project documents along with Masters Engineers.

Councilman Higginbotham referenced the eight RFQ respondents for this project. He suggested Council narrow the list down to four potential firms and interviewing those firms to determine the best candidate for this project.

Town Council was in consensus to do so.

5. Items for Discussion - New and Unfinished

5.1 Lynch Creek Sewer Line Replacement Project

The Lynch Creek Project is the second of many sewer lines that need replacement because of Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) into the Town Collection System. The Lynch Creek sewer line has been a contributor of Inflow during heavy rain events and takes up capacity of the WWTP during rain events. The line is a failing 10" Truss Pipe. Hurt & Proffitt was hired in 2019 to evaluate the line by video and found multiple root intrusions, pipe deformities and cracks in the lines and manholes. Hurt & Proffitt has designed the project and with the completion of the railroad permitting for the bore, the town is now ready to "go to Bid" with this project.

Utilities Director Tom Fore informed Town Council that Biff Johnson, with Hurt & Proffitt, was in attendance that evening and available to answer any questions Council may have pertaining to this project.

Councilman Higginbotham asked Mr. Johnson to clarify where the issues were located and how bad the condition of the sewer pipe was.

Mr. Johnson informed Council that the entire section of pipe that his team was able to get a camera through was cracked and there were also several spots they could not get a camera to go through due to "root intrusion".

Mr. Johnson stated the existing sewer pipe was outdated Truss Pipe. He stated his team uncovered crushed pipes, pipe joints that were offset and allowing ground water to enter, and some places where the joints were open/separated.

Mr. Higginbotham asked how far the sewer line was being replaced in that area.

Mr. Fore stated the Lynch Creek Sewer Line Project included replacing the sewer pipe from Rt.29 Business to down behind the YMCA facility.

Mr. Johnson concurred it was Hurt & Proffitt's recommendation to replace the entire line.

Mr. Higginbotham asked Mr. Johnson what type of sewer pipe would be used to replace the existing damaged pipe.

Mr. Johnson stated Hurt & Proffitt would be using SDR35 PVC Pipe for the town's Lynch Creek Sewer Line Replacement Project.

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Mayor Mattox asked if Council had any further questions or if there was any objection to placing this item on the next Consent Agenda for approval, to which there was none.

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to allow Town Staff to put the Lynch Creek Sewer Line Replacement Project out for bid; and place the item on the September 14th Regular Council Meeting Consent Agenda for an official approval.

5.2 Town of Altavista – Annual Delinquent Tax Listing

Background:

In accordance with Section 70-3 of the Town Code, Town Staff annually prepares a list of the uncollectible and delinquent taxes from the previous fiscal year for Town Council to consider as a “write-off”. Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Altavista’s Treasurer/Finance Director, recently compiled the FY2021 list of uncollectible and delinquent taxes for Council’s review. Final notices have been mailed to all individuals advising action to be taken if taxes were not paid within town deadlines. The letter advised that their names, and amounts due, would be published in the Altavista Journal and possible legal action taken by the Town. Such legal action includes authorizing the Department of Motor Vehicles to withhold registration of all vehicles owned and/or co-owned by the taxpayer until their debt has been cleared; and/or submitting a claim to the Department of Taxation's Integrated Revenue Management System (IRMS) to withhold the delinquent tax from revenue taxpayers may receive from the Department of Accounts through tax returns or lottery winnings.

Town Treasurer Tobie Shelton informed Town Council that this year’s outstanding taxes total \$30,960.36, a decrease of almost \$4,100 over last year’s total. She stated Personal Property Taxes account for much of the balance due, in the amount of \$26,196.15, and the remaining balance of \$4,764.21 represents outstanding Real Estate Taxes.

Mrs. Shelton stated, at this time, staff was seeking Town Council’s approval to advertise the delinquent list, and pro-rate the cost of the ad to the delinquent taxpayers. She stated staff was also seeking approval to write-off delinquent Personal Property taxes for “deceased individuals” in the amount of \$804.08, delinquent Personal Property and Real Estate Taxes under \$20, in the amount of \$357.25, and uncollected taxes totaling \$11.98, for which no bills were sent.

Mrs. Shelton stated, additional, due to the Statues of Limitations regarding Personal Property Taxes, staff was requesting approval to write off 2016 Personal Property Taxes totaling \$3,446.81, with collection efforts continuing through June 2022.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions for Mrs. Shelton in regard to Town Staff’s request pertaining to delinquent and uncollectible taxes.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked what the remediation efforts for delinquent taxes included.

Mrs. Shelton stated Town Staff sends out several reminder letters throughout the year. She stated, when the March letters are sent, it includes the deadline for when a DMV Stop may be placed on the individual’s DMV account due to delinquent Personal Property Taxes.

Mrs. Shelton informed Council, if taxes are not paid, staff can also place a claim with the Department of Taxation's Integrated Revenue Management System (IRMS), to withhold the delinquent tax amount from revenue that taxpayers may be intitled to/receive from the Department of Accounts by tax returns or lottery winnings.

Councilman Higginbotham asked how long a Department of Taxation claim was good for.

Mrs. Shelton stated a claim is only good for one year. She stated the town must file with the Department of Taxation every year that it has a claim.

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Mrs. Shelton stated the Department of Accounts opens its tax retrieval program on November 1st of each year and is a “first-come, first-served” process. She stated, at that time, Town Staff starts entering its claims as quickly as possible.

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

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to place this item on the September 14th Regular Council Meeting Consent Agenda for final approval.

5.3 FY2021 Budget Amendments

Background:

Items that arise during a fiscal year, that have been previously approved by Town Council, require amendments to the budget to reflect changes that have occurred. Adoption of the amendments completes the process.

Treasurer/Finance Director Tobie Shelton stated, typically no formal action is made during a Council Work Sessions, however, in order to meet the town’s upcoming audit deadline, Town Staff was requesting approval that evening of the FY2021 Budget amendments.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions in regard to staff’s request, to which there were none.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to approve Town Staff’s request and adopt the FY2021 Budget amendments as presented.

Motion carried:

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

5.4 Uncle Billy’s BBQ, Bourbon, & Beer Festival – Sponsorship

Background:

Altavista On Track (AOT) will host a new Fall Festival on October 2, 2021, from 12-8pm at English Park; to be known as Uncle Billy's BBQ, Bourbon, & Beer Festival. The town gave AOT \$10,000 for the event and will be listed as an Emerald Sponsor, which includes free event tickets for its sponsorship.

Community Development Director Sharon Williams informed Town Council that, several months ago, the former Town Manager and Department Directors wanted to host an “employee luncheon” to thank staff for their continued hard work during the Coronavirus pandemic. She stated, due to recent changes in staff, the event has not occurred.

Ms. Williams stated Town staff believed free tickets to the Fall Festival would be another opportunity for the town to demonstrate support of staff for their continued service to the Town of Altavista and to boost employee morale.

Ms. Williams stated, if approved, the AOT Executive Board and Administration recommended the tickets be distributed in the following manner: 2-VIP tickets to each member of Town Council, 2-VIP tickets to the Town Attorney, legal counsel to both the town and AOT, and 2-VIP tickets to the incoming Interim Town Manager.

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Ms. Williams stated 60-General Admission tickets would also be given to Town Staff, one for each member; and the remaining General Admission tickets to be given away as part of a contest promotion on the town's social media page for correct answers to trivia questions about the town, its services, and its history.

Ms. Williams informed Council that General Admission tickets would entitle the bearer to receive full admission to the event, which included access to the music and entertainment, and five (5) samplings of beer and/or bourbon. She stated, or the ticket could be exchanged for a can of soda or a bottle of water.

Ms. Williams stated she and Mr. Sandridge, AOT Executive Director and Main Street Coordinator, would be happy to answer any questions Council may have.

Mayor Mattox stated, if approved, he would not be accepting the VIP tickets offered to Council. He stated he wanted to show support of the event and would pay for his tickets.

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

Councilman Mitchell applauded AOT and Town Administration/Directors for this gesture. He stated he felt this was a great idea.

Mr. Mitchell referenced the fore-mentioned "Employee Luncheon/Picnic". He stated he would be in favor of the town having an employee event every year and suggested the item be placed in the budget to do so.

Mr. Mitchell stated he could thank Town Staff and Town Employees at every Council meeting, but he felt it would mean more to "show" appreciation with an action, such as having an Employee Picnic and offering free festival tickets.

Mr. Mitchell stated he would also like to show his support of the Fall Festival and would be purchasing his own tickets.

Councilman Emerson shared his favor in giving Town Employees a free festival ticket. He stated he felt it would encourage them to come and potentially bring a friend or two, or their spouse and children, which would help increase event attendance.

Mr. Emerson informed Town Council that the Campbell County Sherriff's Department holds Company Picnics every year for its employees and their families. He stated it was great for company morale and a way for staff to meet the families of their employees.

Mr. Emerson stated he appreciated the free festival tickets and, if this item is approved, he would be using his tickets.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated he felt giving Town Employees free tickets to the Uncle Billy's event was a wonderful idea. He stated it was hard to find good employees, so it was very important for the town to offer such incentives in order to retain their good employees.

Mayor Mattox also shared his favor in the "free ticket" gesture. He stated he felt the festival would have a good turnout and he was looking forward to getting together with everyone.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he was in favor of giving Town Employees free festival tickets, but did not feel it was necessary to offer Town Council two (2) free VIP tickets.

Mr. Emerson stated, he did not need the free tickets, but if approved, would be "gifting" his tickets to a family he knew.

Councilman George asked what a VIP ticket entitled the recipient.

Ms. Williams stated a VIP ticket is a pass to all of the festival's entertainment. She stated it also includes a free BBQ meal, a collectible drinking glass/cup, and two free beverages.

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Ms. Williams stated there would be beer, bourbon, water, and sodas and the beverage option would be the choice of the ticket holding.

Mr. George asked how an individual could purchase tickets to the Fall Festival.

Ms. Williams informed everyone that tickets could be purchased from the event website, unclebillysbbq.org, as well as, at the Town Hall office.

Mr. George shared his favor in giving Town Employee free tickets to the event. He stated the employees would most likely bring friends or family, so he felt it was a “win/win” for the everyone.

Councilman Lowman also shared his favor with giving employees free festival tickets.

Ms. Williams reminded Council of AOT’s intent to promote the event by giving away ten (10) additional General Admission tickets to the general public, as a way of drawing the community to visit the event’s and the town’s websites and social media pages.

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

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to place this item on the September 14th Regular Council Meeting Consent Agenda.

5.5 Spark Innovation Center – Discussion Re: Usage of Old Fire Truck

Background:

At the February 9th and March 9th 2021 regular meetings, Town Council discussed parking an old fire trunk in the alley next to the new Spark Innovation Center, to pay homage to the original use of the building. A fire truck was located and is parked at the Department of Public Works facility. The Community Development Director informed Town Council that the construction documents for this project show the asphalt in the alley will be removed to extend utilities and calls for sod to be placed back in the area; the alley would be vacant. At their August 10th meeting, Town Council authorized staff to proceed with the Notice of Award for the renovation of the vacant fire station into the Spark Innovation Center. At that meeting, a question was raised for whether the old fire truck would be located in the alley adjacent to the center. Staff was directed to research if the truck was allowed in the alley, and if so, what would be required by the town to do so.

Community Development Director Sharon Williams updated Town Council on this item. She stated staff had contacted Fonda Craig, Senior Safety Consultant with the Virginia Risk Sharing Association (VRSA), the town’s insurance provider, to get her opinion on displaying the old fire truck outside of the Spark Innovation Center.

Ms. Williams stated Ms. Craig was unable to say yes or no to displaying the truck, but did express her safety concerns for the liability of having an old fire truck parked onsite, if still fully equipped and operational.

Ms. Williams stated, if the old fire truck was not going to be “accessible”, the town’s insurance company wanted details for how the truck would be enclosed (fenced) and details for the type of signage that would be provided onsite prohibiting getting near the truck.

Ms. Williams continued and reminded Council that, since this item was not included in the renovation plan for the Spark Innovation Center, a change order would be required to asphalt the alley to provide a safe surface that would support the weight of the vehicle.

Ms. Williams stated Mr. Biff Johnson, CEO/President of Hurt & Proffitt, provided a cost estimate of \$12,000 for the potential change order to have the truck in the alley.

Ms. Williams stated Town Staff and Mr. Johnson were available to answer any questions.

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Councilman Mitchell referenced two photos shared with Council, one with a fire truck in the alley and one without. He stated he felt the available alley space was very constrictive and, if a truck was placed there, it would obstruct the view of the newly renovated center.

Mr. Mitchell stated he had seen where other facilities used “wooden” structures to signify a specific vehicle (such as a fire truck or train) for a visual effect to acquire a desired theme/aesthetic. He stated this option would be safer and more child friendly.

Councilman Emerson stated he was not against Mr. Mitchell’s idea, but he would like the town to utilize the old fire truck in some manner. He stated the vehicle could be “cut down” and the front of the vehicle placed on the side of the building (like it was coming out of the wall) with a garden around it. He stated a fence could be used around it for safety measures.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated he liked the idea of having a child-friendly wooden fire truck in the alley, however if the structure was going to cost the same as keeping the fore-mentioned old fire truck (\$12,000), the old fire truck would be more visually appealing.

Mr. Bennett stated he felt the item needed additional discussion before moving forward.

Councilman Higginbotham shared his favor with having a miniature (wooden or metal) fire truck with Altavista’s emblem onsite at the Spark Innovation Center. He stated Council could allow staff to investigate the option further for Council’s consideration at a later date.

Councilman George asked if staff needed a decision on this item that evening.

Ms. Williams informed Town Council the first pre-construction meeting was scheduled for the upcoming Thursday, August 26th.

Ms. Williams stated, if it was Council’s desire to have the old fire truck in the alley at the Spark Innovation Center’s facility, Town Staff recommended authorizing the required change order for this item sooner rather than later.

Ms. Williams informed Town Council that the previous Town Manager, Waverly Coggsdale, suggested “using parts” from the old fire truck as decorative items inside of the Spark Innovation Center.

Councilman Emerson shared his favor in doing so. He stated items such as lights and ladders would be appropriate for this project.

Councilman George shared his favor with keeping the current plan for the alley to be a “green space”; not having a large fire truck blocking the alleyway or the view of the center.

Councilman Lowman stated he felt using the old fire truck for visual art to reference the facility’s previous use was a great idea. He stated it would continue the theme and reason behind the Spark Innovation Center’s name.

There was a consensus of Town Council not to place the fore-mentioned old fire truck in the (soon-to-be closed) alley beside the Spark Innovation Center, but to move forward with the current plans of asphalt being replaced by sod for a “green space” in that area.

Mayor Mattox also asked Town Staff to consider adding a “Memorial Wall” to the interior design of the Spark Innovation Center. He stated he felt it would be a great honor to the volunteers that started and worked in the old fire house and Life Saving Crew station previously located at the facility.

Councilman Emerson shared his favor with this idea. He stated there could also be rooms and/or areas in the center named after some of the founders of the original fire house.

There was a consensus of Council for staff to investigate these suggestions further.

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Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the bay door/windows located on the front of the Spark Innovation Center. He suggested there be a “lithograph” of a fire truck in the windows of the bay door, to emulate the look of a fire truck still being parked in the bay.

Ms. Williams informed Town Council that staff was currently working on the sign package for this project with Kimberly Cottle, Cottle Multi-Media Inc., and would inquire about their suggestions along with staff’s list of ideas.

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

5.6 Altavista Area YMCA – Request for Additional Ballfield

Background:

In early July, Councilman George forwarded information from the Altavista Area YMCA related to needs for another ballfield that could accommodate both baseball and softball with a seventy-foot base line. A meeting was held on July 12th, with representatives from the Town, Town Council, and the YMCA, to discuss the needs for such a field and the special requirements to do so. At that time, Town Staff began reaching out to ballfield designers/constructors for quotes that could accommodate both baseball and softball, and include the backstop, fenced dugouts, and bullpens. Three quotes were received which varied in cost from \$117,000 to \$248,000.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens reminded Town Council there was only \$25,000 allocated in the current (FY2022) Parks & Recreation CIP Budget, which had been intended for field prep for all of the fields in the back section of English Park.

Ms. Owens informed Council the request was brought before the Parks and Recreation Committee at their August 17th Meeting by Councilman George. She stated the committee voted unanimously in support of the YMCA’s request and recommending it to Town Council for consideration.

Mayor Mattox recognized David Tucker, a representative for the YMCA attending the meeting on this evening, and asked for his input on this matter.

Mr. Tucker stated the YMCA ballfields have a sixty-foot base line and a one-hundred and eighty-foot fence line. He stated that was adequate for the smaller, Little League, teams, but did not meet the requirements for the older kids and Dixie Youth ball teams.

Mr. Tucker informed Council the teams with children older than ten years of age were having to travel to Motley, VA to play ball, due to the requirement of a seventy-foot base line and a two-hundred and fifty-foot fence line.

Mayor Mattox informed Mr. Tucker that the town’s FY2022 Budget was adopted on July 1st, which did not include funding for this project. He stated, if there was a consensus of Council to investigate the YMCA’s request further, the item could be placed on the list of CIP items for consideration during the next budget process.

Mayor Mattox reminded Mr. Tucker that the Town of Altavista donates \$100,000 to the YMCA annually. He stated he would not be opposed to the YMCA allocating those funds to their youth athletic programs, which could help fund the additional ballfield request.

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

Councilman Mitchell stated, if the YMCA has a large enough program to justify the additional field, he would be in favor of this item being placed on the list of potential future CIP items for further review and Council’s consideration.

Councilman Emerson stated, during a meeting at the YMCA a few years ago, the need for additional ballfields (baseball, softball, and soccer) was the biggest desire.

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Mr. Emerson stated he felt English Park was one of the town's "crown jewels". He stated he felt adding a baseball field and soccer field would help when marketing the town.

Mr. Emerson reminded Council that the back fields in English Park had already been graded and properly drained for preparation of adding ballfields, which was the county's intent when they owned the property.

Mr. Emerson shared his favor in moving this project along as soon as possible and placing this item on the list of potential CIP items for future budget consideration.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated he heard parents had concerns about using the Motley ballfields. He asked Mr. Tucker if he was aware of any such concerns.

Mr. Tucker stated the only concern he was aware of was that Altavista parents and players were not happy with having to go to Motley to play ball. He stated sometimes the concession stand is locked, which is where the balls are kept; and sometimes there were no umpires available for games.

Mr. Tucker stated the YMCA takes good care of their fields and always makes sure the balls are available to the players.

Mr. Bennett reminded Council and Mr. Tucker that most stadiums and ballfields are named after people, companies, or businesses that fund building or upgrading the facilities. He suggested the YMCA investigate the option of private investments/sponsorships to help fund their additional ballfield project.

Mr. Bennett stated he was not opposed to the additional ballfield request, but he felt the town needed to be focusing their efforts on bringing more housing into Altavista.

Mr. Tucker informed Council there had been a couple of companies that recently indicated they would be willing to donate funds to this project.

Mayor Mattox referenced the town's \$100,000 annual donation to the YMCA and stated he felt the town always had a good return on its investment. He stated the YMCA was a successful enterprise due to its many partnerships with the Altavista community; and was one of the "crown jewels" of the Town of Altavista.

Mayor Mattox stated he also felt the \$100,000 would best serve the community as funding for the YMCA's youth athletics programs. He stated using the funds to help create and maintain the additional ballfields would be a great visual reference for the community to see how the funds were being allocated by the YMCA.

Mayor Mattox encouraged the YMCA to look for alternative funding sources for the additional ballfields and, if Council desired, the project would be placed on the list of potential CIP items for further discussion and consideration.

Councilman Higginbotham stated, as long as there was a need for another ball field and soccer field, he would support the project if there was a plan in place that was viable for both the YMCA and the town.

Mayor Mattox asked Mr. Higginbotham for his thoughts on the town funding the project.

Mr. Higginbotham stated, although the town had funded most of the upgrades in English Park, he supported the idea of the YMCA looking for additional funding sources. He stated a 50/50 match with private donors would be ideal.

Councilman Emerson suggested the town ask Campbell County to help fund the project.

Councilman George referenced the large fields in the back section of English Park that would be considered for placement of the requested additional ball and soccer fields.

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Mr. George stated the fields were graded and properly drained for ballfields, which was the intent when Campbell County owned the fields.

Mr. George referenced the \$25,000 allocated in the FY2022 Budget for use towards the continued efforts of prepping the area for future ballfields. He stated he felt \$25,000 would be sufficient to start the process of implementing a “final grading” of the area and possibly an infield and backstop for playing baseball and/or softball.

Councilman George stated he felt the large fields in the back section of English Park were a wonderful asset to the park and he felt it would be a shame not to utilize the fields.

Councilman Lowman shared his favor in the YMCA investigating additional/alternate sponsorship for this project. He stated he felt using the town’s \$25,000 to ask for “a 50/50 match” from other sources was a great idea.

There was a consensus of Town Council to place this item on the list of potential CIP items/projects for consideration during the next fiscal year (2023) budget process.

Councilman Emerson referenced the \$25,000 allocated in the Parks and Recreation’s FY2022 CIP Budget for improvements to the back fields in preparation of being ballfields. He asked when the town could move forward with this intent.

Councilman George stated the fields were currently not in a condition to be used as a ballfield, maybe for soccer. He asked if the town could start mowing the fields more often.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens stated the Public Works Department was currently understaffed and unable to add to their weekly workload at this time. She stated, after her departure the following week, Jeff Arthur would be the contact for Public Works.

Mr. George asked Mr. Arthur how many employees they were currently down.

Mr. Arthur informed Council the Public Works Department currently had three vacancies. He reminded Council the department had three zero-turn mowers, which were constantly mowing from Tuesday to Friday each week.

Councilman Mitchell stated it was great the YMCA already had potential sponsors for this project, and he was in favor of the town offering their \$25,000 allocation as a “match” to gain additional funds.

There was a consensus of Town Council to do so; and to figure out the “next steps” needed in the process to move this project forward.

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

5.7 Proposed Changes to TOA Organizational Chart

Background:

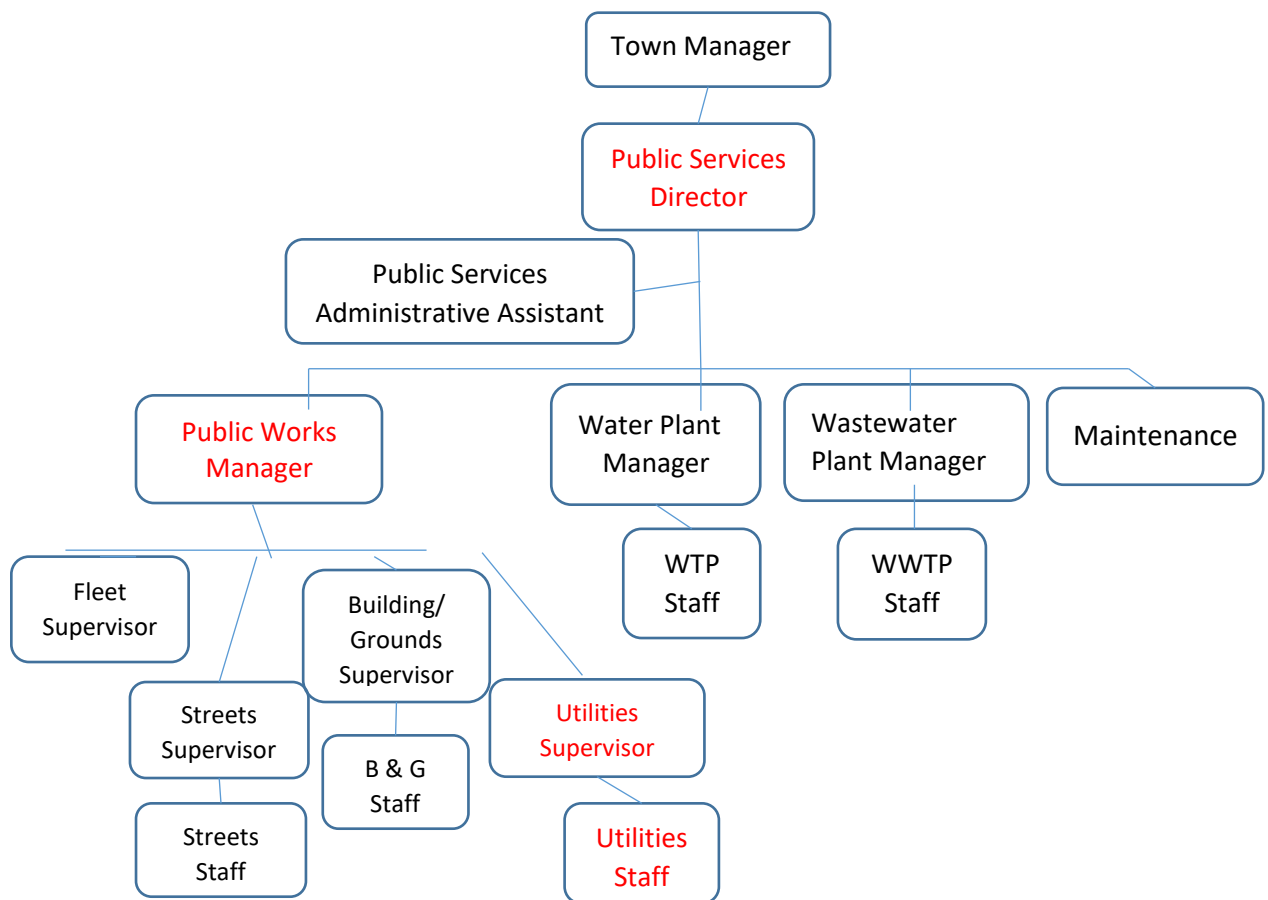
With the departure of key employees from Administration and Public Works, it became necessary to look at a potential “restructuring” of the town’s organizational chart, to better accommodate the flow of information. The consolidation of Public Works and Public Utilities to a new Public Services Department has been proposed.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens stated, with the departure of the Assistant Town Manager, it would be necessary for all departments to report directly to the Town Manager.

Ms. Owens shared with Council a chart of the proposed “Operational Structure Changes” for their visual reference.

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Proposed Structure of “Public Services” Department



Ms. Owens informed Council, if approved, there would be no adverse impact to the town’s FY2022 Budget, as these proposed changes would decrease the “salaries” line item.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions or comments in regard to the proposed organizational structure changes.

Councilman Mitchell asked if the proposed structural changes were meant to be temporary during the timeframe the town has an Interim Town Manager, or would the changes be permanent moving forward.

Ms. Owens stated the changes were being proposed as permanent.

Mayor Mattox asked Utilities Director Tom Fore for his input on this matter.

Mr. Fore stated he discussed the potential changes with the Assistant Town Manager and was in favor of the structural changes to the town’s organizational chart.

Ms. Owens reminded Council they were only responsible for appointing a Town Manager and Town Attorney. She stated the Town Manager hires/fires all department directors.

Mayor Mattox stated, as he understood, there would be no changes made to the Police Department, Administration Department, or the Community Development Department.

Mr. Owens stated that was correct. She stated the main change was to remove the Assistant Town Manager’s position until such time as Council decided whether to keep the position or to consider a “Code Enforcement” position under Community Development.

Councilman Mitchell shared his concern with a new Town Manager not being involved in this decision.

Ms. Owens stated Council had the option to postpone their decision, however, it was essentially Town Council that allocates the positions of each town department, and the responsibility of the Town Manager to structure the department under Council’s approval.

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

Councilman Mitchell asked when the Interim Town Manager, Clarence Monday, would start his employment with the town.

Ms. Owens confirmed Mr. Monday would start as Interim Town Manager on Tuesday, September 7th.

There were no other questions or comments from Council regarding this item.

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

6. Updates and Informational Items

There were no items for discussion in this section of the agenda.

7. Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)

There were no citizens wishing to speak at the August 24th, 2021 Town 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 comments or items for discussion.

- Councilman Mitchell asked when the signage for the new Cemetery Connector Trail would be installed.

Ms. Owens informed Town Council that she recently met with Kimberly Cottle, Cottle Multi-Media Inc., to discuss sign options for the entire park (English Park), which included the Cemetery Connector Trail.

- Councilman Mitchell also asked if it was permissible in the Town of Altavista to allow swimming pools, dog lots, or campers in the front yards of town residences.

Sharon Williams, Community Development Director, reminded Town Council that the town's Zoning Ordinance states that "accessory structures" could not be located in front yards. She asked Council to let staff know when they see such an issue, so that staff may investigate the matter and potentially send the resident a violation notice.

Ms. Williams referenced a camper being in a front yard. She stated a camper was considered a vehicle and the current code did not state that a vehicle over a certain gross weight needed to be parked behind the property.

Ms. Williams stated, these and similar issues would be reviewed and potentially addressed in the Zoning ordinance once staff completes updating the town's Comprehensive Plan.

- Name Councilman Emerson informed Council that he was constantly being asked where trails were located within the town and parks. Mr. Emerson asked if staff and Council could move the Park Signage Project along as fast as possible, in order to help citizens and town visitors enjoy all of the park amenities the Town of Altavista has to offer.

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- Councilman George asked the Assistant Town Manager to contact Hurt & Proffitt and inquire when an engineer could be available to meet with him and Councilman Higginbotham onsite at the Jenks River Trail.

Ms. Owens stated she would be happy to do so.

Mr. George stated his schedule was flexible.

Mr. Higginbotham suggested the entire Town Council meet at the site.

Mayor Mattox reminded Council they could not meet as a whole group, unless a meeting was “continued” for everyone to meet onsite.

- Mayor Mattox reminded Council that the Interim Town Manager Clarence Monday would be starting his position with the town on Tuesday, September 7th. He encouraged everyone to stop by his office and introduce themselves.
- Mayor Mattox also informed Town Council that The Berkley Group was currently working on the town’s announcement to advertise for the vacant Town Manager position and was due to be completed by the end of August.
- Mayor Mattox once again shared Council’s appreciation for the work Ms. Amie Owens has done for Town Council and the Town of Altavista during her time as Assistant Town Manager. He stated she was a good role model for the next person that comes after her.

9. Closed Session

Date: Tuesday August 24th, 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)(1) Discussion, consideration or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, discipline or resignation of specific public officers, appointees or employees of any public body

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

Motion carried.

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

Town Council went into Closed Session at 7:08 PM.

Notice was given that Council was back in regular session at 7:23 PM.

FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION:

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

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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

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. Wayne Mitchell	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Dr. Scott Lowman	Yes

10. Adjournment

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

Mayor Mattox adjourned the meeting at 7:25 PM.

Michael E. Mattox, Mayor

Amanda Owens, Assistant Town Manager
Acting Town Clerk