

Town Council Work Session, Tuesday, August 23, 2022

The August 2022 Work Session for Altavista's Town Council was held in Council Chambers of the J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on Tuesday, August 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 (entered at 5:06pm)
Dr. Scott Lowman
Mayor Michael Mattox
Mr. Wayne Mitchell

Also Present:

Mr. Gary Shanaberger, Town Manager
Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Treasurer/Finance Director
Mr. Thomas Merricks, APD Chief of Police
Ms. Sharon D. Williams, Community Development Director
Mr. Tom Fore, Public Services Director
Mr. Jeff Arthur, Public Works Manager
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney
Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Assistant Town Clerk

1. Agenda Adoption

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns in regard to the August 2022 Council Work Session Agenda, to which there were none.

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

Motion carried:

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

2. Recognitions and Presentations

There were no items scheduled in this category.

3. Citizen's Time

Mayor Mattox asked if there were any citizens present that would like to come before Town Council regarding a non-agenda item. There were no citizen comments.

4. Items Referred from Previous Meetings

4.1 Jenks River Trail Discussion

Under previous direction from Town Council, Public Services Director Tom Fore presented Council with the estimated cost for (21B) stone to complete the Jenks River Trail Project, \$252,000, at both needed locations, if done by an outside contractor.

Councilman Mitchell asked how long it would take the town's Public Works Department to complete the project.

Mr. Fore stated that Public Works could only work on the project a little at a time, therefore he estimated a potential timeframe of 3yrs for the town to complete the work themselves.

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Councilman George referenced the large field at the back area of English Park. He stated, since the funds previously allocated to turn the area into sports practice fields were re-allocated to help fund the Jenks River Trail Project, he asked if the project could be considered at a future meeting.

Councilman Mitchell reminded Council that the funds were reallocated to also help balance the FY2023 Budget, and that there was a consensus of Council at that time to move the Multi-purpose Fields Project to the following fiscal year (2024).

Mayor Mattox suggested the matter be discussed during the FY2024 draft CIP process.

Councilman Higginbotham asked Mr. Fore if the town had enough staff at that time to continue working on the Jenks River Trail Project.

Mr. Fore stated that Public Works was almost fully staffed and, after mowing season was over, the department would return to the Jenks project.

Councilman Emerson stated he favored the Jenks River Trail Project moving forward and asked when the 2nd pedestrian bridge would be installed.

Mr. Fore informed Council that the contractor, English Construction, was diligently working to prepare the area for the new bridge's installation and should be completed within a week's time.

Mr. Emerson also referenced the aforementioned back fields of English Park and stated, what to do with the area had been discussed for many years and he was in favor of the Multi-purpose Fields Project being discussed again during the FY2024 draft CIP process.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett stated there was another CIP project that he was an advocate for that also had to be moved to another fiscal year in order to help balance the FY2023 Budget. He stated it was a difficult process deciding which projects to move forward and which items to postpone. He said the town may need to consider increasing its revenue or cutting back on having multiple projects going at one time.

Mr. Bennett referenced the post-meeting notes taken by staff for the Town Manager and asked that Town Council members also receive the notes as a reminder of the actions/votes taken and directions given to staff during meetings. Staff agreed to do so.

Councilman Higginbotham asked what scope of work needed to be done to get the back field in English Park ready for use as practice fields for area youth sports.

Councilman George said that Campbell County started the work when they owned the property, but the field needed "touch-ups" on grading and seeding.

Councilman Higginbotham said he believed the field needed to be mowed as close to the ground as possible, in order to evaluate its condition.

This item was postponed for further discussion.

At this time the Town Council elected to move item #9, Closed Session, up on the agenda.

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)(8) Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter.

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The motion was made by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, and seconded by Councilman Tracy Emerson.

Motion carried.

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

Town Council went into Closed Session at 5:24 p.m.

Council entered back into regular session at 6:12 p.m.

FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION:

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

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

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

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 the 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 identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by Town Council.

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

There was no direction to Staff or official actions taken after this Closed Session.

5. New Business

5.1 FY2022 Carryover Requests

Background:

At times, a project's completion date does not coincide with the end of the fiscal year (June 30th). As such, funds need to be "carried over" into the current budget period, to support the incomplete activities.

Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Altavista's Director of Finance and Administration stated that Staff was requesting to carryover unexpended funds totaling \$1,624,050, for projects budgeted in FY2022 that were not completed during that fiscal year. She stated the itemized breakdown of the carryover request was included in Council's agenda packet.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Council if they had any questions regarding this request, to which there were none. There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to place this item on the September 13th Regular Meeting Consent Agenda for official approval.

5.2 FY2022 Year-end Budget Amendments and Departmental Transfers

Background:

Items that arise during a fiscal year, that have been previously approved by the Town Council, require amendments to the budget. A memo was included in Council's agenda packet that indicated the nature of the budget amendment requests, as well as the reason and when Council directed Staff on the action. Some items may be receipt of unbudgeted revenue, which also requires an amendment to the budget.

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Director of Finance, Tobie Shelton, addressed the Town Council regarding this agenda item. She stated the requested budget amendments were to revise the FY2022 Budget to reflect changes that had occurred during the fiscal year.

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

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to place this item on the September 13th Regular Meeting Consent Agenda for official approval.

5.3 Altavista Police Department (APD) Request to Purchase Ford F150 Responder Vehicle

Background:

The town's current CIP budget allowed for the replacement of a police vehicle.

Chief Merricks asked for Council's approval to replace an existing SUV with a Ford F150 Responder, a quad cab truck with a five foot bed, and if approved, the vehicle would be outfitted and used on patrol. He said the F150 was proven to be a tough vehicle, and he believed the APD having a truck would be a great asset to the department and its community service.

Chief Merricks stated the purchase of the F150 could be done with the existing budgeted funds. He requested Town Council's consideration for approval of the F150 Responder.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions regarding the APD's request.

Councilman Mitchell asked Chief Merricks if he believed an F150 truck would be as versatile for the police department as an SUV.

Chief Merricks stated that he believed it would be more versatile because the F150 truck could be outfitted with a cage to contain criminals, the same as an SUV, with the luxury of being a truck with a bed for multiple uses.

Councilman Emerson informed Council that his employer, the Campbell County Sheriff's Office, had trucks in their fleet and he believed the trucks were a tremendous asset.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated, with the Staunton River running adjacent to Altavista, he believed the APD having a truck would be beneficial for emergency situations.

Councilman Higginbotham stated, since a truck was heavier built than an SUV, he asked if it was necessary to add the police package to the requested F150 truck.

Chief Merricks stated that a "police package" was pertaining more to a heavier suspension for everyday use than it was to the motor, and he believed it was essential to help the truck hold up better and last the desired timeframe.

Mr. Higginbotham asked Chief Merricks to investigate the difference in operation costs between an F150 truck and an SUV, particularly when used as a take-home vehicle.

Mayor Mattox reminded Council that the APD only had a few officers that lived in town, and he believed a take-home vehicle was a good incentive to encourage officers to live within town limits.

There was a unanimous consensus of Town Council to allow Chief Merricks to purchase an F150 Responder quad cab truck as the replacement vehicle budgeted for in the CIP.

5.4 Purchase of Real Property – for use in the DHCD Acquire-Renovate-Sell Program

Background:

Town Staff identified a town parcel with a derelict structure and addressed, per code, the concern with the property owner for remediating the matter. The owner previously had the property listed for sale and, after staff's inquiry, confirmed it was still available.

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The aforementioned property owner also informed staff of two additional parcels that he owned in town that were vacant and available for sale. Staff approached Town Council with the information, and Council was supportive of acquiring the three properties, for use in the Altavista's Acquire-Renovate-Sell Program, a DHCD housing program.

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins informed Town Council that an Agreement-of-Sale had been signed by the aforementioned property owner for the town's purchase of Tax Parcels 83A-20-12A, 83A-20-12, and 83A-11-57-13.

Mr. Perkins stated that staff was seeking authorization to place this item on Town Council's September's Regular Meeting Consent Agenda for approval of a \$7,500 expenditure from the General Fund Reserves to complete the purchase of said properties.

There was a unanimous vote of Town Council to place this item on the September 13th Consent Agenda for official approval.

5.5 Dearing Ford Industrial and Manufacturing Park (DFIMP)

Public Services Director Tom Fore referenced the DFIMP fields and stated, currently the town maintained and mowed the said fields. He informed Town Council that staff had recently been approached by an individual inquiring about the possibility of them mowing the fields, free of charge to the town, in exchange for the hay produced from mowing.

Mr. Fore stated, if approved, staff would work with the Town Attorney to draft an RFQ to advertise the work; to include the stipulation of the contractor awarded the job would carry their own insurance, so that there would be no liability for the town. He stated, at that time, staff was seeking direction from Town Council whether they wished to allow the option of outsourcing the mowing responsibilities of this property.

Mayor Mattox asked Council for their input on this matter.

There was a unanimous approval of Town Council to authorize Town Staff to move forward with the process of outsourcing the responsibility of mowing the fields at the Dearing Ford Industrial and Manufacturing Park, working with the Town Attorney to draft an RFQ, and including in the contract the requirement for the contractor to carry the appropriate insurance. This service to be free of charge to the town in exchange for the collected hay from mowing the property.

6. Unfinished Business

6.1 Town of Altavista – State Route 29 Guide Signs

The Service Signs (large blue signs) on State Rt 29 approaching the RT 43 exit, both northbound and southbound, have been identified as needing information that guide motorists to Town attractions such as Avoca, English Park (and Splash Pad), and Dalton's Landing Canoe Launch. Town Council directed Staff to research, collect, and report information related to securing signage for the Specific Service Signs along State Route 29.

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins reminded Town Council that the Economic Development Budget was identified as the funding source for this item, under "Contractual Services: Advertising", for both the annual fee and the one-time printing and shipping expenses.

Mr. Perkins referenced the "brown sign" previously inquired by Council for Dalton's Landing Canoe Launch and stated that a third-party contractor handled the SGS Program for VDOT regarding the aforementioned signs. He shared, while there was no annual fee involved with brown signs, there was a \$250 application fee, plus the cost to fabricate and install the sign, which would range from \$2,000 to \$5,000, depending on size.

Mayor Mattox asked if the Economic Development Budget would also cover the brown sign.

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Mr. Perkins stated that the Economic Development Budget was only identified to cover the cost of the Rt. 29 guide signs, which included Dalton's Landing, however, he would investigate if there were additional funds available to cover the cost of having a brown sign at Dalton's Landing, if Council desired.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions regarding this item.

Councilman Higginbotham asked, if a guide sign was damaged, who was in charge of fixing or replacing the sign.

Mr. Perkins stated, once installed, VDOT was responsible for maintaining the guide signs.

There was a unanimous consensus of the Town Council to place this item on the September 13th Consent Agenda for official approval; without a brown sign for Dalton's Landing.

7. Informational Items from Staff

7.1 Updates from the Town Manager

- Town Manager Gary Shanaberger reminded Town Council that the Town of Altavista would be conducting a (required) public hearing on the proposed issuance of bonds of the Town, in one or more series, in the estimated maximum principal amount of \$11,600,000, for the purpose of financing capital improvements related to the Town's water and sewer infrastructure/systems.

Mr. Shanaberger stated that the Public Hearing would be conducted during Town Council's Regular Meeting on Tuesday, September 13th, 2022, beginning at 6:00pm, in Council Chambers, 510 Seventh Street, Altavista; and any interested persons may appear at such time and place and present their views.

- Mr. Shanaberger referenced the grant pre-application submitted by the town to the Virginia Business-Ready Site Program regarding the 83 acres recently purchased as part of the Dearing Ford Industrial and Manufacturing Park. He stated that the pre-application was successful.

Mr. Shanaberger informed Council that staff met with Jamie Gillespie, LRBA, on Friday, August 19th to discuss the town's next steps in the process, and the information she needed from the town in order to submit the actual grant application for the potential funds of \$240,000. He stated the town could use the funds for planning purposes, such as environmental and utility studies.

- Mr. Shanaberger stated that Town Staff Managers and Supervisors would be starting the first of three training classes on Tuesday, September 20th, with the next two scheduled for Wednesday, October 19th and Thursday, December 1st.

7.2 Altavista Post Office – Regarding Back Alley

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins referenced Council's June 28th, 2022 Work Session, when Ben Campbell, Altavista Post Office Officer-In-Charge, presented Council with a request to change the back alley of the Post Office into a one-way street. He stated, after multiple meetings between Town Staff and Mr. Campbell, staff drafted a proposed plan for Council's consideration.

Councilman Mitchell asked if a public hearing was needed for this item.

Mr. Perkins answered no, since the alley was town-owned property, a public hearing was not required, however, staff would make every effort to inform citizens of the change ahead of its completion.

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Mr. Perkins shared with Council a map of the alley and the proposed plan, as drafted by Town Staff after multiple meetings with Public Works, and Mr. Campbell, which portrayed changing the post office alley into a one-way street, in the direction of entering the alley from 7th Street, going to Washington Street.

Mr. Perkins stated that Staff had contacted businesses adjacent to the alley for their input and shared the proposed plan, which was found favorable. He informed Council, in an effort to promote additional safety in that area, a speed bump and stop sign had been added behind the library, where 8th Street enters the public parking lot on Washington Street.

Mr. Perkins said, if Council desired, that Public Works was prepared to have the post office alley project completed within the next 60-90 days.

There was a Consensus of Council for Staff to move forward with the proposed plan as presented; to turn the alley behind the Altavista Post Office into a one-way street, in the direction of entering the alley from 7th Street, going to Washington Street.

7.3 Town of Altavista's Economic Development Incentive Policy for Downtown Altavista

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins referenced Altavista's Downtown Incentive Policy, adopted June 8th, 2021. He stated, with funding appropriated annually to this initiative, he informed Council that two applications had recently been approved under this program; one for rent subsidy, and one for façade improvements.

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

8. Matters from Town Council

- Councilman Tracy Emerson referenced the town's Emergency Overflow Pond (EOP) and asked Public Services Director Tom Fore for an update on the progress of the Mister/De-watering CIP Project for the EOP.

Mr. Fore stated that the Mister was ordered and received and would be in operation as soon as the electrical portion of the installation was complete.

- Councilman Emerson also stated, with the Mister only costing \$200,000 of the previously appropriated \$600,000 for addressing the pond's PCB issue, he asked Mr. Fore, did the town need to continue holding the remaining \$400,000 in reserves.

Mr. Fore stated he did not have a need for the remaining \$400,000 for this project. He stated the next step for his staff was to fill the EOP pond with dirt.

Councilman Higginbotham asked Mr. Fore if he would need any of the remaining funds for purchasing fill dirt for the EOP.

Mr. Fore answered that he would not. He said the Public Works Department had been stockpiling dirt to utilize for this project.

Mr. Emerson suggested that Town Council consider reappropriating the remaining \$400,000 back into the General fund to use on other town projects.

- Councilman Tim George asked if the Ash Tree Removal Project had been completed for English Park.

Public Works Manager Jeff Arthur said that he would contact the project's contractor for an update and keep Council informed of the progress.

There were no other questions or comments from Town Council.

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9. Closed Session, conducted by Town Council

This session was conducted earlier in the meeting.

Regarding: *Section 2.2-371 1 (A)(8)* Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, specifically, legal issues associated with the zoning and other regulation of solar development in the Town.

10. Adjournment

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

The August 23rd, 2022, Council Work Session was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Michael Mattox, Mayor of Altavista

Gary Shanaberger, Town Manager/Town Clerk