

Council Work Session March 23, 2021

The Altavista Town Council's March 2021 Work Session was held in Council Chambers at the J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on March 23rd, 2021 at 5:00 PM.

Mayor Mike Mattox called the meeting to order and presided.

Council members

Present: Mayor Michael Mattox
Vice Mayor Reginald Bennett
Mr. Tracy Emerson
Mr. Timothy George
Mr. Jay Higginbotham (entered at 5:02pm)
Dr. Scott Lowman
Mr. Wayne Mitchell

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

Absent: Ms. Amanda Owens, Assistant Town Manager

1. Agenda Adoption

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

- Section #6, Item A: Brownfields Grant Update

Mayor Mattox stated, in consideration of the presenter's time, Joe Morici (Cardno), he asked Council for consideration of moving this item to be discussed before #5E: FY2022 Budget and FY2022-2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Discussion.

All Council members were in consensus to do so.

Mayor Mattox asked if Town Council had any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the proposed March 23rd, 2021 Council Work Session Agenda, to which there were none.

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

Motion carried:

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

Councilman Higginbotham entered the meeting at this time, 5:02pm.

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2. Recognitions and Presentations

- Source Water Protection Plan

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Council that Utilities Director Tom Fore and Community Development Director Sharon Williams worked together on this plan.

Background:

Source Water Protection is a voluntary program in Virginia. Proposed source water protection strategies are not mandated by state or federal regulations. Proposed commitments and schedules by waterworks' representatives are subject to change. Surface water is vulnerable to contamination by several pathways.

The purpose of the Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) is to protect surface water, which serves as a source of public water supply, from the threat of contamination because of accidents or unwise practices from nearby residential, industrial, commercial, agricultural, waste management, or transportation activities.

The goals of the SWPP are:

- To promote public health, economic development, and community infrastructure by maintaining an adequate drinking water supply for all residents of the community.
- To create an awareness of the communities' drinking water source(s).
- To provide for a comprehensive action plan in case of an emergency affecting the water source

Mr. Fore addressed Town Council in regard to this item. He stated, after two years of investigation and drafting the Source Water Protection Plan, the document was presented to the Altavista Planning Commission.

Mr. Fore stated the Planning Commission was in favor of the SWPP and recommended sending it to Town Council for approval consideration to implement the plan.

Mr. Fore reminded Council the town allocated \$70,000 in a previous CIP Budget for this project, however, the town was able to utilize a grant to fund the project, at no cost to the town, through the Virginia Department of Health Office of Water Programs.

Mr. Fore stated, at that time, staff was seeking direction from Council regarding the SWPP. He stated he would be happy to answer any questions Council may have.

Councilman Mitchell asked, if Altavista implemented the proposed SWPP, how the town would go about "advertising" and/or sharing the information with surrounding localities, especially those up river from Altavista, in order to make others aware of what Altavista was trying to accomplish with the plan.

Mr. Fore stated Town Staff would continue to work with the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District and the Virginia Department of Forestry as resources for water conservation and source water protection information and guidance.

Mr. Fore stated one of the main goals of the SWPP was to educate everyone involved. He stated, once adopted, the SWPP could be expanded as new information was gathered.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated having clean water was important and he appreciated staff's continued work in this matter and on this project.

Mr. Bennett stated, as Altavista strives to consider its downstream neighbors in this matter, he hoped the town's up-river neighbors would do the same for Altavista.

Councilman George stated he appreciated staff's due diligence in securing the fore-mentioned VDH Grant, in order to eliminate the cost of this project.

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Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any additional questions or comments in regard to the proposed SWPP for the town, to which there were none.

All Council members were in consensus to accept Town Staff's recommendation and proceed with the implementation process of the Source Water Protection Program/Plan for the Town of Altavista. The consensus included placing this item on the April 13, 2021 Regular Council Meeting Consent Agenda for official approval of this action.

3. Citizen's Time

Mayor Mattox asked if there was anyone attending the meeting that wished to address Council.

Mr. Jeremy Funderburk, Evington VA, came before Council with two items for their review.

1) Shade Sail System

Mr. Funderburk gave Council a pamphlet with information describing the shade sail system. He informed Council the structure was his personal design and he had engineered by Master Engineers, located in Lynchburg, VA.

Mr. Funderburk stated the self-supporting shade sail system was specifically designed for park use. He stated he recently presented Altavista's Parks and Recreation Committee with the same information regarding the shade sail system and received favorable responses.

Mr. Funderburk stated the Town Manager, Waverly Coggsdale, showed interest in the shade sail system as an item for Council's consideration for use at the Booker Building.

Mr. Funderburk stated he would be glad to answer any questions Council may have.

Councilman Mitchell referenced the "material" of the shade sail. He asked Mr. Funderburk if he manufactured the material.

Mr. Funderburk answered stating he did not. He stated the fabric was "commercial grade", and there were many companies that made the fabric, with multiple colors to choose from.

Mayor Mattox asked Mr. Funderburk if his shade sail system was similar to what the town already has/uses.

Mr. Funderburk stated his shade sails were almost identical with the town's current ones at Gateway Park, located at the south end of Broad Street. He stated the Gateway sails were placed at different angles, while his shade system was designed to extend straight out (counter-levered) eighteen feet from the base structure.

Councilman George asked if the structure and/or shade sails were "moveable".

Mr. Funderburk stated they were. He stated the system was designed to accommodate flexibility when the sun moves throughout the day for all-day shade coverage.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked Mr. Funderburk the wind rating for his shade sail system.

Mr. Funderburk stated the wind-load for the shade sails was 115mph. He stated, if a storm was approaching, it was recommended by the engineer to lower the shade sail(s).

Mr. Funderburk informed Council the system/structure itself was built to withstand hurricane force winds at 200mph.

Mr. Bennett asked how easy or quick was it to take down the shade sails.

Mr. Funderburk stated lowering the shade sails would take no more than five minutes.

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Councilman George stated, as a member of the Parks and Recreation Committee, all of the P&R members were impressed with the shade sail system when presented at their meeting.

Mr. George stated he felt the cost of Mr. Funderburk's shade sail system was reasonable.

Mr. Funderburk informed Council the cost was \$5,200 for each shade sail system/structure. He stated the cost included his "assistance/guidance" with installing the first system.

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

2) BBQ Competition

Mr. Funderburk stated, with Altavista's Annual Uncle Billy's Day (UBD) Festival being canceled for both 2020 and 2021, he shared his idea with Council in regard to the potential for the town to have a "1st Annual BBQ Competition/Festival".

Mr. Funderburk stated the festival would need to be held at a location with plenty of room for vendors and visitors; and also have ample parking for both. He asked Council to consider allowing the event at English (Community) Park for that reason.

Mr. Funderburk stated his idea also included allocating the revenue from the event to a local charity, such as the Lane Foundation, or any other charity of the town's choice.

Mr. Funderburk stated, with COVID restrictions starting to decrease, he hoped all restrictions would be lifted soon, enabling the BBQ competition/festival to be held in the fall of 2021. He stated he would need to know Council's decision soon, in order to start planning for the event.

Mayor Mattox stated, since the Altavista Area Chamber of Commerce was the current event holder for the annual UBD Festival, he suggested Mr. Funderburk reach out to them with his idea. He stated the Chamber was considering alternative events/ideas for 2021.

Councilman Mitchell asked Mr. Funderburk what date he was hoping to hold the event.

Mr. Funderburk stated his intention was to hold the BBQ Festival in cooler weather, potentially in October.

Mr. Mitchell asked if Council needed to make a decision that evening in regard to this item

Mr. Funderburk stated he was only seeking input from Council that evening.

Mr. Funderburk stated he wanted Altavista's first BBQ Festival to be well thought out and planned, and asked Council to consider making a decision soon, in order for him to start preparing for the event.

Council members were in consensus that the BBQ Festival was a good idea and to allow it to be held in English Park.

Councilman George asked if the BBQ competition would host professionals or amateurs.

Mr. Funderburk stated the intent was to showcase local talent from Altavista and surrounding localities.

Mayor Mattox suggested Mr. Funderburk also consult Altavista's AOT Main Street Coordinator George Sandridge as an additional resource for this event.

Councilman Emerson stated he felt the festival would be a great event for the community.

Councilman Lowman suggested Mr. Funderburk find out if, or when, other events were happening in the region in that timeframe and pick a date that would not interfere with those events.

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Councilman Mitchell shared his favor with the town having its first BBQ Festival and stated he was looking forward to the event.

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

Mr. Funderburk thanked Council for their time and their consideration of his ideas.

Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Funderburk for his presentations and for considering the festival idea for the Altavista community.

4. Items Referred from Previous Meetings

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

5. Items for Discussion (New and Unfinished)

A. Altavista Area Chamber of Commerce – Event(s) Update

Representatives: Director Brent Ashwell and Civic Chair Colby Worsham

Background:

Historically the Uncle Billy's Day event had been held annually on the first Saturday/weekend of June. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and imposed restrictions, the 2020 event was cancelled; and recently the Chamber announced the 2021 UBD event had also been cancelled. The Town of Altavista has financially assisted with the Uncle Billy's Day event in the past by annually setting aside \$20,000 in "seed money" for the event, as well as, sharing the insurance and porta-potty costs, an annual cost of approximately \$3,200. The Chamber Board is currently developing plans for potential, future events.

Chamber Director Brent Ashwell gave Council a brief update on the Chamber's recent changes and an overview of their events tentatively scheduled for calendar year 2021.

Mr. Ashwell referenced the Chamber's vacant Executive Director position. He stated the Chamber was currently conducting interviews for the position and expected the position to be filled by the end of April.

Mr. Ashwell also referenced the Chamber of Commerce website. He encouraged everyone to visit the revised website to see all of the improvements and updates that had been made.

Mr. Ashwell reminded Council, with COVID restrictions still required, the UBD Festival had been canceled. He stated, however, the Chamber was planning to hold other, smaller events in the summer and fall.

Mr. Ashwell stated, with that being said, the Chamber was asking for Council's consideration to "carryover" the unused \$20,000, from FY2021's canceled Uncle Billy's Day Festival, to the FY2022 Budget for use on other potential events.

Mr. Ashwell stated the Chamber would keep Town Staff and Council updated on their tentative plans.

Mr. Ashwell stated he would be happy to answer any questions Council may have.

Councilman Mitchell asked if the Chamber of Commerce revised their website themselves, or did they pay someone else to do it.

Mr. Ashwell stated the Chamber paid an outside source to update their website.

Mr. Mitchell referenced the town's annual UBD Festival. He asked for confirmation if the Chamber was going to stop being the host of that event.

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Mr. Ashwell confirmed that was correct. He stated, as of this year (2021) the Chamber would no longer be the host of the UBD Festival. He stated, however, the Chamber was willing to assist a new host for the event by providing vendor contacts and any other information they needed to help them continue the annual event.

Mr. Mitchell referenced the Chamber's fore-mentioned intent to hold other events. He asked, if the request to carryover the town's \$20,000 Chamber contribution was approved, what they intended to do with the funds if their tentative planned events did not occur.

Mr. Ashwell stated the funds would go back to the town at the end of that fiscal year (2022).

Councilman Emerson shared his favor in approving the monetary carryover request. He thanked Mr. Ashwell and the Chamber for what they do for the Town of Altavista.

Vice Mayor Bennett shared his appreciation for the Altavista Area Chamber of Commerce.

Councilman Higginbotham also shared his favor in approving the Chamber's request.

Councilman George stated he had volunteered at several UBD Festivals and had a great appreciation for what the Chamber had done over the years to make the event a success.

Councilman Lowman stated he appreciated the Chamber's intent to hold other events. He stated, when COVID restrictions are lifted, people would be ready to attend.

Councilman Emerson suggested the Chamber consider holding an event centered on the town's new boat access site, Dalton's Landing, that would soon be open.

Mayor Mattox stated, not knowing what the VA Governor may or may not do in regard to COVID restrictions, he appreciated the Chamber of Commerce looking ahead.

At that time, Chamber Civic Director Colby Worsham gave Town Council a brief overview of some of the events the Chamber was thinking of having that year. He assured Council the Chamber would continue to monitor the Governor's and CDC's, guidelines in regard to COVID-19/COVID restrictions for any and all of their scheduled events.

Mr. Worsham shared with Council a couple of the Chamber's tentatively scheduled events for the 2021 summer season:

- Drive-in Movie

Mr. Worsham stated the Chamber would ask for Council to consider allowing them to hold this event at Shreve Park, Altavista, on Saturday, April 17th, 2021. He stated the "gate opening" would be 6:00PM, with a show time of 7:00PM.

Mr. Worsham stated the Chamber estimated the event to have 50-60 vehicles. He stated the cost to attend would be \$10 per vehicle, not per person. He stated the Chamber hoped this would encourage a greater attendance.

Mr. Worsham stated the Chamber would like for either the Altavista Band Boosters or the Altavista High School Athletics Department to hold concessions for the events.

Mr. Worsham informed Council the Chamber had already been in contact with Steve Jester, Altavista YMCA CEO, in regard to the TGIF events being at that location. He stated Mr. Jester confirmed the events would not interfere with events at the YMCA.

Mr. Worsham stated the parking lot spaces would be numbered and movie tickets would be "pre-sold", in order to keep the number of vehicles to a designated amount. Mr. Worsham stated, if the first movie event was successful, the Chamber would like to have the movie event be reoccurring for the future.

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- TGIF Event(s)

Mr. Worsham referenced the Chamber of Commerce's annual summer event, "TGIF". He reminded Council the event was typically held on the third Friday of each summer month: May, June, July, and August.

Mr. Worsham stated the Chamber was asking for Council's consideration to hold the first TGIF event of 2021 (May 28th) in the parking lot between the Chamber's office, at the Altavista Train Station, and the library (Staunton River Memorial Library).

Mr. Worsham stated Washington Street would remain open, in order to allow for access to the Post Office drop-box in that alley.

Mr. Worsham stated, while there was public parking available on the adjacent Broad Street and at the Altavista Municipal Building (Town Hall), he asked Council to consider the possibility of the Chamber utilizing a town bus as a shuttle to the event.

Mr. Worsham stated the alternate location would give citizens a new area of town to visit, while also allowing the town to showcase its revitalization efforts in the Downtown District.

- BBQ Competition/Festival

Mr. Worsham concluded his overview by referencing a new idea the Chamber had discussed as a potential event in the fall. He stated it was the Chamber's intent to have a BBQ Competition/Festival.

Mr. Worsham stated the Chamber would like to include an "Old Timers" Ballgame, and possibly a small, mini-carnival. He stated, for that reason, the Chamber was asking for the town's consideration and permission to hold the event at Shreve Park.

Mr. Worsham asked if Council had any questions or concerns in regard to the fore-mentioned events or requests.

Councilman Mitchell shared his favor with all of the Chamber's proposed event ideas.

Mr. Mitchell suggested the Chamber share their event plans with the town's Steering Committee. He stated this would avoid conflicting event dates with other town organizations, but could also be an opportunity for collaboration.

Mr. Mitchell stated it would also be a good idea for the Chamber to let Chief Merricks, Altavista Police Department, know their intended plans for each event.

Mr. Worsham stated the Chamber had already been in contact with Chief Merricks in regard to their summer/fall event plans.

Councilman Emerson shared his favor with the Chamber's proposed event schedule. He stated he felt the "quality of life" efforts the town continues to offer its citizens, such as these proposed events, was the reason people and families were drawn to this community.

Vice Mayor Bennett encouraged the Chamber to "keep up the good work". He stated he was happy to see the younger generation of town citizens stepping-up to volunteer and bring "excitement" to the Town of Altavista and the community. He stated such efforts were needed in order for the town to continue to grow and thrive.

Councilman Higginbotham also shared his favor with the Chambers intended event plans.

Councilman George stated he was looking forward to volunteering and being a part of the "Drive-In" movie night.

There were no additional comments from Council in regard to the Chamber of Commerce.

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All Council members were in consensus to allow the Chamber of Commerce's first two event requests for the Drive-In Movie and TGIF summer events.

Mayor Mattox asked the Chamber to keep Town Staff and Council informed of the progress and details of the BBQ Competition and Festival requested for the fall. He stated Council would take this item into consideration at a later date for potential approval.

Mr. Ashwell and Mr. Worsham agreed to do so.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated Town Staff would work with the Chamber of Commerce, in regard to their event plans, and assist them in any way they could.

B. FY2021 Budget Amendments

Explanation:

To revise the FY2021 Budget to reflect changes that have occurred thus far during the fiscal year.

Background:

Items that arise during a fiscal year that have been previously approved by Town Council, require amendments to the budget. Some of the items may be receipt of unbudgeted revenue, which require an amendment to the budget as well.

Altavista Financial Director/Treasurer Tobie Shelton addressed Town Council in regard to this item. She shared a memo Council that indicated the nature of the budget amendments, as well as, the reason and when Council directed staff on the action.

Mrs. Shelton stated she would be happy to answer any questions Council may have, to which there were none.

Mrs. Shelton stated, at that time, staff was requesting Council to consider placing this item on the April 13th Regular Council Meeting Consent Agenda for approval.

All Council members were in consensus to do so.

C. Consideration of Grass Maintenance Services Contract

Explanation:

Grass maintenance is a key element in the appearance of the town and its properties. The goal each year is to ensure that grass maintenance services can be provided in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.

Background:

A "Request for Bids" for town grass maintenance services was sent out in February - in advance of the mowing season. Three bids were received on February 26th. All of these bids were significantly more than the budgeted costs for the upcoming year. The current fiscal year (2021) budget amount was \$42,240 for 30 cuts, and that was the number used for the proposed FY2022 Budget. Bids ranged from \$72,300 to \$88,050. Upon review of submissions, it was determined there was a potential for some of the areas to be mowed utilizing existing town employees and reducing the number of areas required contract. A spreadsheet illustrating the comparison between the costs was developed. The lowest bidder (Myers Lawn Care) was contacted related to the potential change in the scope of work to be reduced to only two areas: Green Hill Cemetery and Avoca Museum. The bidder was willing to honor the submitted pricing and the limited scope. The current mowing vendor was also amenable to completing the first month's mowing (April 2021) until a new agreement could be finalized.

Altavista Public Works Director David Garrett addressed Council regarding this item.

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Mr. Garrett informed Council, while discussing the mowing service contract with Town Staff, an option was discussed to also include the periodic grass mowing of town nuisance abatements to the scope of work in the contract.

Mayor Mattox referenced the fore-mentioned “nuisance abatements”. He stated, when the town issues the letter to a property owner for such a nuisance, he suggested placing emphasis what it would cost the homeowner if the town had to cut their grass.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale concurred with the Mayor to do so.

Mr. Garrett stated that he and Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens would work with the mowing contractor for the amount he would charge to conduct his service on each individual property mowed due to nuisance.

Councilman Higginbotham asked for confirmation on which town properties the contractor would be mowing and which ones Town Employees would be mowing.

Mr. Garrett stated the contractor would only be mowing the grass at Green Hill Cemetery and Avoca Museum; and any town nuisance abatements that arose. He stated Town Employees would be taking care of the rest of the town-owned properties. He informed Council, if approved, the revised contract would reduce the cost by almost \$10,000.

Councilman Mitchell asked how many “man hours” would this proposed revision be adding to the Town Employees’ schedule.

Mr. Garrett stated he was not sure of the total amount at that time. He stated he would gather the requested information and present it to Council at a future date.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he appreciated the town’s Department Directors working together on this matter and reducing the cost of the town’s annual mowing contract.

Councilman George referenced the new mower that was proposed in Public Works’ FY2022 Draft Budget. He asked if PW asked Hailey’s Appliance to quote the mower.

Mr. Garrett stated the item had not been released for bid at that point in time. He stated he would do so when the item was ready for the bidding/quote process.

Mayor Mattox stated he felt Public Works Director David Garrett, Utilities Director Tom Fore, and Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens were doing a great job at working together to achieve a successful outcome for this item and others like it in the FY2022 Draft Budget.

Mr. Garrett stated, at that time, Town Staff was requesting for Council to consider approval of the bid for town grass maintenance services related to the Greenhill Cemetery, Avoca and town nuisance abatements be awarded to Myers Lawn Care. He stated staff asked for this item be placed on the April 13th Regular Meeting Consent Agenda for final approval.

All Town Council members were in consensus to do so.

D. Consideration of Declaration of Town Property as Surplus

Explanation:

Town Staff has set two opportunities (March and September) for Town Departments to submit any items they wish to be considered for surplus for disposition. These items require Town Council’s approval to be declared as “surplus”, which allows the items to be sold or discarded as needed. The proceeds from the sale of these items go into their respective fund (General or Utility (Enterprise)) as miscellaneous revenue.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale shared the current list of items for Council’s consideration as surplus, which was mainly submitted by the Public Works Department (PW) and the Altavista Police Department (APD).

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Mr. Coggsdale informed Council the Public Works and Public Utilities Departments were requesting Council also consider allowing the funds from the sale of their (surplus) items to be utilized for the purchase of an additional mini-excavator.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, if this request was approved, the action would require the adoption of a resolution stating said action/approval.

Mr. Coggsdale stated Town Staff would be happy to answer any questions Council may have in regard to the current proposed surplus items.

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

Councilman Mitchell asked where to look and bid on items declared surplus.

Councilman Higginbotham referenced the 1975 John Deere Motor Grader listed with Public Works' surplus items. He shared his favor removing the item from surplus for now, and asking PW to investigate the cost of fixing the item before deciding to sell it as surplus.

Mr. Higginbotham asked for David Garrett's (PW Director) input on the matter.

Mr. Garrett informed Council that he contacted a mechanic to take a look at the motor grader and determine what would be needed to fix the clutch, or any other issue the equipment may have. He stated he would convey the results to Council when received.

Mr. Garrett reminded Council to keep in mind the motor grader was a 1975 piece of equipment, which may deem difficult for finding replacement parts.

Mr. Higginbotham suggested removing the motor grader from the list of surplus items until the mechanic could determine results for either repairing the item or discarded it.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked Mr. Garrett what he would do if he needed a motor grader for a town project; and what the cost would be to do so.

Mr. Garrett answered stating, if needed, the town would rent a motor grader. He stated, depending on size, it would cost between \$800 and \$900 per day to rent. He stated there was also the expense involved in transporting the equipment to town.

Mr. Bennett asked how many times per year did PW use a motor grader.

Mr. Garrett stated a motor grader was needed more often in the spring. He stated, however, the town had used a motor grader often recently than in previous years on town projects such as the APD Firing Range, clearing out for new and existing trails in English Park, etc.

Mr. Garrett stated, before the town's motor grader broke down, it was used at least six weeks out of the year, if not more.

Mayor Mattox shared his appreciation for the Public Works Director's due diligence on investigating whether or not the motor grader could be fixed.

Mayor Mattox shared his favor in Mr. Higginbotham's suggestion to remove the motor grader from the proposed surplus list until additional information was received in regard to whether there was a potential to fix the equipment or not.

Mr. Garrett stated he would have the requested information by Council's April Regular Meeting.

Councilman George asked, if the fore-mentioned motor grader was approved as surplus and sold, was it Public Works' intent to purchase a new one.

Mr. Garrett answered stating no it was not. He stated, if needed, the town would rent one.

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

There was a consensus of Town Council to place this item on the April 13th Regular Council Meeting Consent Agenda for approval of the declaration of proposed surplus items. The consensus included removing the motor grader from the surplus list for now, until further information could be gathered in regard to fixing the item. The consensus also included Council accepting staff's recommendation to adopt a resolution related to the potential use of said surplus revenue for the purchase of an additional mini-excavator.

At this time, there was a consensus of Council to discuss the "Informational Items and Updates" in Section #6 of the agenda before having their "FY2022 Draft Budget discussion".

6. Updates/Informational Items

A. Brownfields Grant Update

Background:

The Town of Altavista selected Cardno as the consultant for its Brownfields Project. A "brownfields property" is defined as any property where re-development is hindered by perceived or real environmental contamination. Cardno created grant applications to both the Virginia Brownfields Restoration and Economic Redevelopment Assistance Fund (VBAF) and the EPA Brownfields Program for site assessments. The Town was awarded \$23,600 in VBAF funds and \$300,000 in EPA Brownfield Assessment grant funds.

Explanation:

Cardno recently completed the assessment report for the former Lane Company site along Lane Access Road. This work was completed as part of the Altavista's Brownfields Grant Project; with funding coming from the Virginia Brownfields Restoration and Economic Redevelopment Assistance Fund (VBAF) and the EPA Brownfields Program. The assessment report will support an application for remediation work through the VBAF Site Remediation Grant program. The deadline for applications is April 2, 2021. In addition, the town used the grant to conduct an environmental assessment on the Spark Innovation Center and is exploring whether these funds can also be used on the VISTA Theater for an environmental assessment as well. Cardno also filed an application for remediation of the Spark Innovation Center's identified environmental items (asbestos and lead based paint).

Joe Morici, with Cardno, referenced the former Lane Company site. He informed Council that phase II of the environmental assessment process had been completed recently and a full assessment report would be available for Council's review by the following week.

Mr. Morici shared the Technical Memorandum he sent to Town Staff regarding his recent assessment of the old Lane site and gave Council an overview of the memo:

Cardno, Inc.
10988 Richardson Road
Ashland, VA, 23005

Date: Thursday, 18 March 2021
Project No: PB00307000 – Altavista Brownfields Project
To: Waverly Coggsdale Town Manager
From: Joe Morici
RE: Remediation Options for former Lane Furniture Site

Introduction:

Cardno provides the following findings and recommendations as the Town considers potential grant applications for the remediation of the former Lane Furniture site in Altavista, VA. The following recommendations are based on previous environmental reports provided to Cardno and the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment recently completed by Cardno at the site.

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Findings and Recommendations:

Soil and Groundwater Impacts Analytical results of soil and groundwater samples collected at the site show no significant impacts to groundwater and only limited impacts to soils in the general area of the former hazardous waste storage building. Elevated metal concentrations in this area above background concentrations across the site indicate impacts from historical operations on the site. While most detected concentrations are below the screening levels established by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) for industrial site use, Lead concentrations exceeded the industrial screening level. In addition, Arsenic and Cadmium exceed their respective unrestricted (residential) screening levels. Further delineation of the area is recommended, which can be completed under the Town's EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. However, Cardno recommends limited soil excavation and removal to address the elevated metal concentrations in this area. Asbestos-containing Materials Previous reports indicated as much as 6,500 cubic yards of debris on the site, but a recent survey by Cardno indicates only approximately 180 cubic yards of debris remain. Previous environmental site assessments indicated asbestos-containing materials (ACM) were found intermingled with the debris piles. Cardno recommends either segregating the ACM from the debris piles or treating all of the debris piles as suspect ACM, then properly removing and disposing of the ACM at a regulated disposal facility. In addition, previous investigations identified approximately 3,750 square feet of 9'x9' ACM tile in the administration building/guard house. Cardno recommends the proper removal and disposal of the tile. Cardno further recommends that air monitoring be conducted during removal activities and final clearance inspection be completed at the conclusion of removal activities.

Conclusions:

Cardno has developed the cost estimates in Table 1 for the above recommendations based on unit costs and estimates from similar projects in the area. Cardno believes the estimates to be conservative and cost savings may be realized once competitive quotes are obtained from remediation and demolition contractors. Currently, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) in coordination with VDEQ has an open solicitation for grant applications due on April 1st for a Virginia Brownfields Assistance Fund (VBAF) Remediation Grant. The grants can fund projects up to \$500,000, but require a 1:1 match. Funds and expenses expended in the past three years as well as those planned to be spent in conjunction with redevelopment of the site can count as match. Therefore, the Town would need to identify nearly \$200,000 in match to fund the project in its entirety through the Remediation Grant.

Task	Quantity/Unit	Unit Cost	Total
1) Project Management and Reporting			\$10,750
ACM Abatement:			
Floor Tile and Mastic	3,750sqft	2.50	\$9,375
ACM Debris	150cyd	150	\$22,500
Disposable Supplies	1lot	1,200	\$1,200
Mobilization/Demo	1ea	2,500	\$2,500
2) ACM Abatement			\$35,575
3) Air Monitoring	5 days	520	\$ 2,600
4) ACM Clearance Inspection		1,500	\$ 1,500
5) Soil Removal and Backfill	1,800cyd	15	\$27,000
6) Shell Building Demo	26,000sqft	4.50	\$ 117,000
7) Final Report		4,500	\$4,500
TOTAL			\$198,925

Mr. Morici referenced the old Lane "administration" building on the property and stated the recommendation was to only remove the (asbestos) floor tiles. He stated the building was considered to have historical value and could possibly be restored and utilize by any potential future buyer.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if it was the property owner's responsibility to take down the "concrete shell" building.

Mr. Morici referenced the fore-mentioned Virginia Brownfields Assistance Fund (VBAF) Remediation Grant. He reminded Council of the required match for the grant was \$200,000.

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Mr. Morici informed Council that some of the work the property owner had already accomplished could be utilized towards the \$200,000 requirement. He stated the town could work with the property owner in regard to taking the concrete shell building down in order to utilize those funds for the required match as well. He stated, subsequently, the grant would help take care of the rest of the issues on site.

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

Councilman Emerson reminded Council of the two “crosswalk tunnels” the property owner had already taken down. He stated the cost to do so was approximately \$80,000-90,000, which was almost half of the \$200,000 grant requirement.

Councilman Lowman stated, if the property owner were to agree to take the concrete shell building down, the cost, along with the \$90,000 tunnel removal, would be more than enough to be utilized for the VBAF grant “match” requirement.

Mr. Morici stated that would be a good strategy. He informed Town Council, if they desired, Cardno would contact the property owner on the town’s behalf and offer the opportunity to him in regard to this strategy.

Councilman George stated he felt the proposed collaboration would be a good incentive for the property owner, as remediation efforts of his property would increase its value.

Mayor Mattox asked if Cardno could have this accomplished by the April 1st deadline.

Mr. Morici stated, if the property owner concurred, he assured Town Council that Cardno could have the town’s VBAF Grant application completed in time for an April submission.

Mr. Morici stated, if for some reason the town was unable to submit an application for the VBAF Grant in April, there would be another opportunity to do so in November (2021).

Mayor Mattox referenced the recent purchase by Mr. Farris of the “river property” adjacent to the old Lane Company property. He asked if river property could also be considered during the remediation grant process.

Mr. Morici stated the newly purchased (river) property did not qualify for the VBAF Grant, however, the town was able to utilize the EPA Grant funds they already had for use with that property, as well as any others in located within the town. He reminded Council the town had until September 2023 to use the EPA funds.

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

There was a consensus of Council to authorize Mr. Morici/Cardno to work with the owner of the old Lane property in regard to securing his collaboration for a fund match, in order to move forward with submission of an application for a VBAF Site Remediation Grant, by the deadline of April 1st, 2021.

Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Morici for the “good work” he does for the Town of Altavista.

B. Dalton’s Landing Canoe Launch

Background:

This project was previously approved by Town Council. The Town received a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

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The grant award was for \$236,703.20. The original construction contract with Counts and Dobyns was \$412,670; there have been two Change Orders totaling \$77,922.27. The completion date for the construction contract is May 1st. To date the expenditures for this project total \$244,369.49, with \$159,699.03 being construction and the remaining \$84,670.46 covering recreational easement payment, engineering, NEPA document, permits, trash cans and other related costs.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Town Council that the contractor of this project was able to complete the “in-water” work within the designated timeframe.

Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council the project’s contract had a completion timeframe of May 1st, 2021. He stated staff would keep Council updated on last steps in the process and address any “loose ends” before opening the site.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if there were any issues at the site currently.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, to his knowledge, there was not.

Councilman Mitchell referenced the Dalton’s Landing background description cited in Council’s Agenda Packets. He asked for verification that the project was estimated to go over its initial budget by \$10,000.

Mr. Coggsdale stated he felt the project would be completed “within budget”, but he would confirm the project’s “numbers” and relate the information to Council.

Mr. Coggsdale referenced Vice Mayor Bennet’s previous suggestion of having an event to celebrate the opening of Dalton’s Landing. He asked for direction from Council in regard to the suggestion.

There was a consensus of Council for the town to hold a “grand opening” event to celebrate the completion of Dalton’s Landing and open the site to the public.

Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the town’s last National Night Out event. He referenced the food (hot dog, chips, and drink) that was free to patrons of the event. He stated the food was donated to the town’s event by an individual.

Mr. Bennett stated there were local organizations and individuals that may be interested in donating or volunteering for the “long-awaited” event.

Mr. Bennett also suggested the town consider having music, or a band, at the event. He stated the opening event may be small, but it could be the start of “an annual event”.

Mayor Mattox stated he felt Dalton’s Landing had ample parking when using the site, but shared his concern with limited parking for an event such as a “grand opening”.

Councilman Emerson suggested having a “shuttle service” available during the event.

Councilman Mitchell informed Council that a “private business” near Dalton’s Landing had expressed interest in supplying shuttle service to and from the site.

Mr. Bennett stated that the owner (Larry Dalton) of the adjacent property/field to Dalton’s Landing had also expressed the possibility of allowing overflow parking to utilize his field for a small fee (\$1) per vehicle.

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

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C. Spark Innovation Center

Background:

Town Council included this project in the FY2021 Budget/Capital Improvement Program (CIP). An allocation of \$200,000 was included in the Altavista's General Fund budget for this project. The town applied for, and received, grants from USDA and the Tobacco Commission; the USDA grant was \$100,000 and must be used for furnishings, while the Tobacco Commission funding was \$184,306, and will be used for the construction portion of the project. The town hired Hurt & Proffitt to do the design work related to this project and a bid date is being set for late March/early April. Hurt and Proffitt has suggested the contract period run until late 2021/early 2022; previously the Town had established a project completion date of September 2021. At this time, staff does not have an engineer's opinion of probable cost for this project

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated Town Staff was continuing to have weekly meetings with the design/engineering team of this project in order to gather the most current and updated information.

Mr. Coggsdale informed Town Council that the project's design plans were nearing the point of finalization; and would soon need to be advertised for "bid". He stated, at that time, staff was requesting Council to consider allowing the design/engineer team to give them a brief presentation for review and consideration at their April 13th Regular Council Meeting.

There was a consensus of Council to do so.

At this time, 6:05PM, all Council members were in consensus to take a short, fifteen minute break before continuing with the meeting/agenda.

After the break, Town Council returned to Section #5/Item E. of the agenda, *FY2022 Budget and FY2022-2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)*, for discussion.

Background:

The Town Budget is comprised of its General Fund, Utility Fund (Enterprise), Highway Fund and Cemetery Fund. Each year, Town Staff presents a draft budget and capital improvement plan (CIP) to Town Council for their review and consideration. State Code requires the town to adopt its budget prior to July 1st of each year. Adoption of the budget is the formal process of allocating funding for the services/expenditures and projects approved by Town Council.

Explanation:

The FY2022 Draft Budget and CIP documents were provided to Town Council at their February 9, 2021 Regular Council Meeting. The first budget work session was held on February 23, 2021; staff provided an overview of the proposed budget and capital improvement plan. At this evening's work session, Town Staff sought to begin finalization of the budget and capital improvement plan through Town Council's input and direction. Typically, the "First Reading" of the budget is held at the April Regular Meeting and Council schedules the required public hearing on the budget and capital improvement plan for their May Regular Meeting. For the past several years, the budget has been adopted at Council's June Regular Meeting.

Mayor Mattox asked Council for their input on how to proceed with the budget review. He suggested, instead of going through the draft budget line-by-line, for Council to take turns referencing only the items in which they had questions or concerns.

All Council members were in consensus to do so.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated Town Staff was available to assist and support Council in any way they needed during the review process.

Mayor Mattox informed Council that he asked the Town Manager to put together a pro-forma with comparison of revenue verses expenses from the past two and future ten years.

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Mayor Mattox stated, if the projections stayed true to the estimates, the town's expenses would exceed its revenue in just ten years' time. He asked Council to keep this in mind when considering CIP requests.

The Town Manager stated the town could not predict, but projected future revenue. He stated the estimated revenue could be higher or lower, which depended on a multitude of things. He stated, therefore, the presented pro-forma was for planning purposes only.

Mr. Coggsdale stated Town Staff would evaluate "actuals" every year and update the pro-forma accordingly, for Council to consider during each fiscal years' budget process.

Mayor Mattox stated he felt the town could benefit from "tightening the belt" on CIP items, in order to save the town some money in the long run.

Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council the pro-forma did not include CIP items. He stated the pro-forma concentrated on operational costs, and CIP items were considered "negotiable".

Councilman Higginbotham asked if CIP items could be inserted into the pro-forma.

Mr. Coggsdale stated he could include CIP items once the CIP Budget had been adopted.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council to share the items in the draft budget they wished to discuss further. He started with Councilman Mitchell and continued around the dais.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale asked Council to start by discussing "Operations" first, before moving forward with their discussion in regard to CIP items.

All Council members were in consensus to do so.

Councilman Mitchell shared a few items of his concern with the FY2022 Draft Budget.

- Altavista's Master List of Fees

Councilman Mitchell referenced the "Fortune Teller Fee" currently included on the Master List. He stated he did not know of any recent time that a Fortune Teller had done business in the Town of Altavista. He stated he felt listing the fee was unnecessary.

Town Attorney John Eller informed Council the fee was initially included in the town's Master List of Fees because the item was listed in the Virginia State Code.

Mr. Mitchell asked if there was any reason why the town needed to leave the item/fee on the Master List, or if it could be removed.

Mr. Eller stated the item was "permitted" by State Code, but was not required. He stated the town could choose to remove the Fortune Teller Fee from its Master List if so desired.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Treasurer, Tobie Shelton, if there had ever been a Fortune Teller do business in the Town of Altavista.

Mrs. Shelton stated, not to her knowledge, during the time of her employment at the Town of Altavista/Town Hall Office (20 years).

Mr. Mitchell asked Council to consider removing the item from the Master List of Fees.

There were no additional questions or comments in regard to this matter.

- FY2022 Draft Budget – "Projected" Revenue

Mr. Mitchell referenced the line item, "Interest Revenue", on page two of the draft budget.

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Mr. Mitchell asked why the item had a zero figure as the projected revenue for FY2022.

Town Treasurer Tobie Shelton answered Mr. Mitchell. She stated, under previous direction from Council, when the Draft Budget was originally given to them in February, the interest was kept out of the General Fund revenue and allocated for future CIP items.

Mr. Mitchell asked if the projected revenue was shown in the Draft CIP Budget.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale, confirmed by Mrs. Shelton, stated it was not. He stated, until this budget process (FY2022), the interest revenue had been in the town's General Fund and utilized for "operation expenses".

Mr. Coggsdale stated, in the FY2022 Draft Budget, the town's interest revenue was accounted for in "Reserves". He stated, as Council requested, a separate account was created in Reserves for the interest revenue, which would be allocated for future CIP items that were considered as "investments" to the community.

- Spark Innovation Center

Councilman Mitchell referenced the \$30,000 projected in the FY2022 Budget. He asked if that was a placeholder for operational expenses.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated the \$30,000 was projected "rental" revenue for the center. He stated the projected expenditures were estimated at \$70,000 per year.

Mr. Coggsdale informed Council, due to the delayed opening of the Spark Innovation Center, Town Staff would revise the projected numbers for both revenue and expenditures.

- FY2021 Projected Non-Departmental Operations Budget of \$1.9 million

Councilman Mitchell asked why the amount was so large.

Town Treasurer Tobie Shelton answered Mr. Mitchell. She reminded Council the Operations Budget included such items as a transfer-out to the Altavista Fire Company. She stated she would itemize the line item and bring the information back to Council.

- Community Development Department – Proposed FY2022 Expenditures

Councilman Mitchell asked if a breakdown was available of the proposed "Operations and Personnel expenses" in FY2022 for the Community Development Department.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Council the breakdown of the requested information for the Community Development Department could be found on pages 31-34 of the FY2022 Draft Budget.

- Altavista Economic Development Authority (AEDA)

Councilman Mitchell referenced page thirty (30) of the Draft Budget, which gave a breakdown of the AEDA's FY2022 proposed budget. He reminded Town Staff, in regard to the line item "Grant Program Funding", that Council previously approved the amount to be \$100,000, not the noted \$25,000.

Mr. Mitchell asked Council to consider allowing Town Staff to revise that line item in the AEDA's proposed budget to show the appropriate amount, as previously approved during the adoption of the "abbreviated" AEDA Plan in October 2020.

All Council members were in consensus to do so.

Mr. Coggsdale stated Town Staff would make the appropriate changes.

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Next, Councilman Emerson shared a few items of his concern with the FY2022 Draft Budget.

- Altavista Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) - PCB Issue/Remediation

Councilman Emerson referenced the funds allocated in the town's budget (\$569,707.59) for potential use towards PCB remediation. He asked Town Staff how long the town needed to continue keeping the funds earmarked for this purpose.

Mayor Mattox referenced the overflow pond located at the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP), where the PCB issue had occurred. He stated once the current "generator" project at the WWTP was completed, the overflow pond would be obsolete.

Councilman Higginbotham reminded Council, once the overflow pond was deemed obsolete, the town would still need to "stabilize" the pond, potentially capping (covering) it. He stated that action would cost money, and at that point, the cost amount was unknown.

Mr. Emerson stated, even if the pond needed to be tested two or three more times over the next few years, the PCBs would eventually be completely gone. He stated he felt the fore-mentioned half-a-million dollars could be better utilized for the town's current CIP needs.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Council, although the two items involved the same site, the WWTP's Generator Project was separate from the overflow pond PCB matter. He stated the generator project was implemented in regard to Altavista's Class I Reliability issue for the town's permit.

Mr. Coggsdale reminded Town Council that the Town of Altavista was currently enrolled in a Voluntary Remediation Program, therefore, the town would need to continue monitoring the overflow pond and its PCB levels.

Mayor Mattox asked staff to investigate the town's current options for satisfying its "voluntary remediation" with the DEQ, so the funds earmarked for the PCB issue could be released for use elsewhere in the town's budget.

Councilman Mitchell asked if the town was still required to remain in the Voluntary Remediation Program.

Utilities Director Tom Fore stated, if the town was not in the voluntary program, the DEQ could enforce mandatory requirements.

Mr. Emerson stated, with the PCB issue decreasing and the potential for the town not to need the overflow pond in the near future, he asked if the funds earmarked for the PCB issue could be reduced, and a portion of the funds be released for other CIP items.

Mr. Coggsdale stated it could be done if that was Council's desired to do so. He encouraged Council to consider if there were any additional actions they wished staff to implement in regard to "PCBs".

Councilman George asked Mr. Fore how many acres the overflow pond consisted of.

Mr. Fore answered stating the pond size was six acres..

Mr. George asked if the town had intent to raise the dams at the overflow pond.

Mr. Fore stated, at that time, they did not. He stated, if the town wanted to raise the dams, the town would need to acquire a permit to do so, which was very costly.

Mr. Fore stated Town Staff would do everything they could to contain the overflow pond.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he thought the town had submitted a request to drain the pond.

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Mr. Fore confirmed Mr. Higginbotham was correct. He stated the request was for permission to pump out some of the water in the pond and discharge it, but the town had not yet heard back from the request.

Councilman George asked if the town had enough “dry land” to expand the site if needed.

Mr. Fore stated the town had other areas on the site, such as the previously filled-in lagoons, that could be utilized if needed.

There were no additional questions or comments on this matter.

Council continued the FY2022 Draft Budget discussion with items from Vice Mayor Bennett.

- Mr. Bennett referenced the town’s Master List of Fees. He stated Altavista had some of the lowest “cost of living” rates in the surrounding area. He stated some of the fees and rates had not been changed/increased since the 1980’s.

Mr. Bennett stated, in the pro-forma shared with Council that evening, the town’s expenses were project to exceed its revenue in approximately ten years. He suggested Council consider increasing some of the town’s fees/rates, such as real estate taxes, in order to keep the town’s operating budget “on track”.

- Mr. Bennett also referenced the town’s revenue from FY2021 to the projected FY2022, which had a decrease of \$273,900. He stated Council should keep this in mind when considering proposed CIP items for the next few years.
- Mr. Bennett continued by discussing town expenditures. He referenced the projected “Administrative Expenses” listed in the FY2022 Draft Budget.

Mr. Bennett stated he felt the town’s postage budget (\$11,200) was a large amount. He asked staff to consider ways of decreasing that expense. He suggested implementing “no paper bills” to individuals using the auto-draft system for their utility accounts.

Mr. Bennett stated he felt it would be beneficial to the town to “streamline” its administrative operations as much as possible. He suggested the town consider distributing its employee paystubs electronically, which would save on paper, envelopes, and postage.

Mr. Bennett also referenced the town’s “office supply expenses” in the FY2022 proposed Administrative Budget, as compared to previous years. He asked what items caused such a significant increase.

Altavista Finance Director/Treasurer Tobie Shelton stated the FY2022 Draft Budget included replacing some of staff’s computers. She stated this does not happen every year, therefore, the budgets fluctuate from year to year.

Mr. Bennett asked if the town could save money by purchasing a year-supply of paper, or any other office supply, at one time.

Mrs. Shelton stated she was not sure where the town would store such a purchase, but staff would investigate that option.

- Vice Mayor Bennett concluded his “items of concern” in regard to the FY2022 Draft Budget by referencing the town’s “utility” expenses. He asked why there was such an increase in this item from the previous year.

Altavista Utilities Director Tom Fore stated the increase in rainfall over the past year or so had contributed to the town’s utility costs increasing. He informed Council the current Electrical Upgrade Project at the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) would help lower those costs when completed.

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Mr. Bennett asked if the town ever had an “energy audit” conducted for its offices and/or buildings.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated it had. He informed Council there were multiple firms that solicit the town each year for this purpose. He stated the town chooses one of the firms and allows an audit approximately every two years or so.

Mr. Bennett asked for the outcome of the last energy audit completed for the town.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the audit was conducted on the town’s energy bills, in order to make sure the town was being charged the correct rates, which it was.

Mr. Bennett stated the town offices/buildings would be more energy efficient by upgrading to items such as on-demand hot water heaters and LED lighting.

Utilities Director Tom Fore stated the current Electrical Upgrade Project for the WWTP was a result of an energy audit that had been conducted on the facility.

Mr. Bennett stated he felt the town needed to explore all avenues of becoming more energy efficient.

Mr. Coggsdale stated staff would be glad to investigate the matter further.

The FY2022 Draft Budget discussion continued with comments from Mayor Mattox.

Mayor Mattox referenced the Town of Altavista’s annual contribution to the Central VA Planning District Commission (\$1,063), the Campbell County Small Business Development Center (\$6,000), and the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance (\$4,268), all totaling \$11,331.

Mayor Mattox stated he did not feel the town received the assistance from these three organizations to justify continuing its annual contributions. He reminded Council the Town of Altavista was a tax-payer to Campbell County and had access to those services as such.

Mayor Mattox stated the town could utilize the fore-mentioned funds on something that would be a “direct” asset to the community.

Councilman Mitchell referenced a previous meeting when this matter was previously discussed. He stated the town was told they would receive assistance from the county for the same services, however, business owners would have to go to Rustburg (county seat) for the assistance, rather than the organizations physically coming to Altavista.

Mayor Mattox stated, as a business owner, he would have no issue in traveling only sixteen miles to take a class or receive assistance if needed.

Mr. Mitchell shared his favor in continuing the town’s annual contributions to these organizations. He stated, by doing so, he felt the town was helping to provide Altavista business owners with a great service in town.

Mayor Mattox stated he would much rather see the funds offered directly to “new” business owners to help them start/grow their business in Altavista, instead of continuing the annual contributions. He stated, by doing so, could also help the town fill some of its vacant store fronts.

Mr. Mitchell shared his favor in doing so, and suggested the town start that program with in the upcoming fiscal year (FY2022).

Mayor Mattox informed Council that Altavista’s AOT Main Street Coordinator George Sandridge was currently investigating the possibility of this idea.

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At that time, Councilman Higginbotham shared his thoughts in regard to the FY2022 Draft Budget and his fellow Council member's comments.

- Mr. Higginbotham referenced the Vice Mayor's earlier comments. He stated he agreed the town needed to keep in mind its expenses compared to its revenue when considering CIP items for the upcoming/new fiscal year.
- Mr. Higginbotham referenced the Mayor's comments in regard to the \$11,331 the town spends on annual contributions county organizations. He stated he agreed with Mayor Mattox and Councilman Mitchell, both of which had been on the board of one or more of the mentioned organizations, that the funds would be best utilized if re-allocated for Altavista small business grant opportunities.

Mr. Higginbotham stated, the town could try the suggestion for one year, and if the plan did not work as Council intended, the town had the option to re-join the organizations.

- Mr. Higginbotham also referenced Vice Mayor Bennett's suggestion to increase some of the fees/rates on the town's Master List in order to increase town revenue.

Mr. Higginbotham stated the Town of Altavista had a lot of "older" citizens that were on fixed incomes or tight budgets, and he was not in favor of raising any of the town's fees or rates.

Councilman George continued the FY2022 Draft Budget discussion.

Mr. George referenced the Town of Altavista's "employee pay scale". He stated there were employees working for the town only making \$12-\$13 per hour; while places like Target and Hobby Lobby were starting their new employees at \$15 per hour with benefits.

Mr. George stated the town had lost employees recently to places that were offering higher wages. He stated he felt the town should increase its hourly paid employees pay by 5%, in order to stay competitive in wages and keep good workers in town.

Town Treasurer Tobie Shelton informed Council the increase would cost the town approximately \$93,240 to do so.

Councilman Mitchell asked what the \$93,240 included.

Mr. Shelton stated the amount was for a 5% raise "across the board" for all non-salary town employees. She stated the amount did not factor in an annual performance increase.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked what the rate of increase range for performance was currently.

Mrs. Shelton stated the percentage was currently set at a 0-3% potential for increase based on an employee's annual performance evaluation.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated the "merit" increase was based on the evaluation from an employee's supervisor and/or department director.

Mayor Mattox stated he felt the town had quality employees, and he was in favor of continuing to use the current "merit system", over an "across-the-board" raise increase totaling \$93,240.

Mr. George stated, if not across-the-board raises, the town could consider raising the annual evaluation percentage range from 0-3% to 0-5%, for those employees that had been "exceptional" at their job.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, generally, an employee pay scale was effective for approximately five years. He stated after that time, employers needed to evaluate their pay scale in order to be competitive in the job market.

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Councilman Mitchell stated VDOT recently mentioned their intent to increase their pay scale by 5%. He stated he did not want Altavista to lose town employees to the state for that reason. He suggested the town be “proactive” with their efforts in retaining good employees.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, since the town had not increased their pay scale since CY2017, now would be a good time for Town Staff and Town Department Directors to evaluate the town’s current pay scale, and accordingly, share the information before Council.

Councilman Emerson informed Council the Campbell County Sheriff’s Department recently approved a 5% pay raise for their officers; and the State of Virginia recently approved an 8% pay raise for their officers (State Police).

Mr. Emerson stated the Town of Altavista was considered a business/employer and in the same “job market” as other employers competing for good employees. He stated he felt it was the town’s responsibility to stay competitive with their wages.

Mr. Emerson also shared his favor with Councilman George’s suggestion to give hourly town employees a pay raise. He stated, if the town was currently in a position to give its employees a (5%) raise, they should do it, because the opportunity may not be available in the budget next year, or even the next two or three years.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, if the pay raise was approved, the \$93,240 would not come from the town’s Reserve Fund, but would need to be accounted for in the budget. He asked Council to keep in mind that a “pay raise” would be considered “reoccurring”, therefore the item would show as an increase in the Administration Operating Budget moving forward.

Councilman Mitchell suggested Council defer any action for this item at that time, but keep the item in mind when continuing the FY2022 Draft Budget discussion.

All Council members were in consensus to do so.

Councilman Lowman concluded the FY2022 Draft Budget discussion with his comments.

Mr. Lowman referenced Mayor Mattox’s comments in regard to the town’s annual contributions to certain Campbell County organizations. He stated he felt the town should consider the \$11,331 annual donations as “insurance” for the town to always have those services available when needed, and not have to travel to Rustburg to utilize them.

Mayor Mattox reminded Council the Town of Altavista was a part of Campbell County, and as such, the same services were already available to the town, without having to pay for them.

There were no additional comments in regard to this item.

Mayor Mattox stated, if there were no further concerns from Council in regard to “Operations” in the FY2022 Draft Budget, he asked if Council was ready to move forward with discussions in regard to the draft budget’s proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) items.

All Council members were in consensus to move forward.

Councilman Mitchell started the discussion regarding the proposed FY2022-2026 CIP.

Mr. Mitchell referenced the draft CIP in regard to Parks and Recreation (P&R). He stated he appreciated all of the hard work the Parks and Recreation Committee volunteers and staff members do for the Town of Altavista and the community.

Mr. Mitchell stated his following comments were no reflection of their hard work. He stated he felt some of the line items in P&R’s CIP Budget could be adjusted or eliminated.

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- Mr. Mitchell referenced the line item “English Park Entrance Improvements”. He stated he was not in favor of moving forward with the \$660,000 proposed plan at that time. He reminded Council the N&S Railroad owned the property on the right side of that entrance to the park, and without knowing the railroads future plans for their property, he felt the town should postpone any work to that park entrance until the matter could be investigated.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he would rather use the \$660,000 towards amenities in the park.

Councilman Emerson stated, if or when the proposed English Park Entrance Improvement Plan was implemented, he suggested Council consider making the proposed improvements to the lower entrance of the park, closest to the boat ramp, instead of the entrance adjacent to the railroad’s property.

Mr. Mitchell stated the idea had been discussed by the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Councilman George, also a P&R Committee member, informed Council the committee also discussed the idea of moving the “entrance improvements” closer to the park itself, and upgrading the English Park sign area that currently sits across from the Booker Building. He stated improvements to that area would be less costly than the CIP plan.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale reminded Council the English Park Entrance Improvement Plan currently in the FY2022 CIP was derived from previous direction by Council to improve the pedestrian access from Pittsylvania Avenue into English Park.

Mr. Mitchell stated in Council’s initial discussion for improving the English Park entrance, he didn’t think the improvements would cost as much as \$660,000.

Mr. Coggsdale informed Council there was a possibility the improvement plan would be eligible for VDOT TAP funding. He stated there were other town projects (Bedford Avenue light pole upgrades) that would also fall into that category, so the town would need to prioritize which projects they wished to consider for the VDOT opportunity.

Mr. Coggsdale stated there may be other grant opportunities available for the English Park Improvement Plan. He stated, if Council desired, staff would investigate the matter further.

Councilman Emerson stated the N&S Railroad may also have grant funding available for the project. He suggested Council allow staff to contact the railroad in regard to the matter.

Councilman Emerson suggested that Council postpone the consideration of this CIP item until staff could gather additional information in regard to funding of the project.

All Council members were in consensus to do so.

Mayor Mattox stated, with the meeting reaching close to three hours long at that point, he asked Council if they wished to continue their budget work session that evening, or finish the CIP portion of discussions at a later date.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale reminded Council that the next evening was allocated on their calendar for further discussions, if Council wished to extend their budget work session.

Town Council was in consensus to continue moving forward with the meeting that evening.

Councilman Mitchell continued with his “items of concern” in regard to the FY2022 proposed CIP.

- Mr. Mitchell referenced the CIP items “English Park River Access Improvement” and “English Park Boat Ramp Parking Improvements”. He stated he felt the two items were counter-productive to one other.

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Mr. Mitchell stated, if river access at the boat ramp was upgraded to include kayak access, the intent would be to accommodate more people. He stated, however, the proposed parking improvements to that area seemed to reduce the number of parking spaces available.

Mr. Mitchell referenced the recent poll conducted by the town inquiring what improvements or additional amenities town citizens would like to have in Altavista. He stated the boat ramp and its parking were not mentioned in the results of that poll.

Mr. Mitchell shared his favor with either eliminating these two CIP items, or moving them to another fiscal year for further consideration.

- Councilman Mitchell moved forward and referenced the \$1.4 million “Shoreline Stabilization Project”. He stated he felt the cost of the proposed plan was more than Council originally thought it would be.

Mr. Mitchell suggested staff evaluate using the same process of stabilization as was used up river for the new Rt.29 Business Bridge Project, which would be less costly to the town.

Mr. Mitchell also suggested decreasing the allocated funds for this project to \$100,000.

- Councilman Mitchell continued and referenced the “English Park Ball Fields Expansion Project” proposed in the CIP budget over the next couple of years. He stated he did not see the need in the Altavista area for such an expenditure.

Mr. Mitchell informed Council that Campbell County recently approved the expansion of the ball fields at Timbrook Park.

Mr. Mitchell suggested Council consider removing this item from the proposed CIP.

At that time, Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale referenced the Shoreline Stabilization Project fore-mentioned by Councilman Mitchell. He shared with Council a photo for their visual reference of the process that was proposed in the CIP for this project.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the Flex Mat shown in the first photo would mature to a more natural looking state in approximately 12-15 months, as shown in the second photo.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, he was not advocating for the use of this process, he was merely sharing with Council the option to consider compared to rock and boulders.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any additional questions or comments in regard to Councilman Mitchell’s comments and concerns in regard to the proposed CIP items/budget.

Councilman Emerson stated he did not have any other concerns with the proposed CIP.

Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the proposed “English Park Entrance Enhancement Project”. He stated he felt the project needed to be evaluated further before moving it forward.

Mr. Bennett also referenced the line item “Dog Park Project”, under English Park Improvements in the CIP. He stated there were a lot of dog owners that already utilize the park and it would be safer to have a dog park allocated for their specific use.

Mr. Bennett stated, by having an allocated space for dogs to roam free, he felt there would be more people (dog owners and non-dog owners) to use the park. He asked Council to consider moving this item in the CIP, from FY2026 to FY2022.

Councilman Emerson asked the cost of the Dog Park Project as estimated in the draft CIP.

Mr. Bennett answered stating the project was estimated to cost \$70,500.

There was a consensus of Council to move the item forward/closer in the CIP to FY2022.

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Councilman Higginbotham continued the budget discussion.

Mr. Higginbotham referenced the town's newly acquired property on Main Street, the old Vista Theatre.

Mr. Higginbotham stated, if it was the town's intent to utilize "historic tax credits" for the property, the building would need to be restored to its original state as much as possible, which would be costly. He suggested Council consider allocating funds in the FY2022 Budget for the restoration of the building.

Councilman Mitchell stated, if Council decided to eliminate the English Park Entrance Enhancement Project from the CIP, it may leave room in the budget for the theatre project.

Councilman Lowman suggested allocating at least \$200,000 in the budget for this project. He stated the amount would help cover the cost for a potential "match" to any grant funds the town may utilize for the project.

Mr. Higginbotham asked how long the process would take to acquire a grant for this project, and if Council wanted to wait to seek grant opportunities, or move forward with the project.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated the first place to start would be to conduct a "building assessment" of the interior and exterior. He stated, when applying for grants, there needed to already be a plan and budget in place, including drawings for the proposed design.

Mayor Mattox asked how much was in the town's "undesignated reserves".

Mr. Coggsdale stated the town currently had \$1.4 million in reserves.

Councilman Lowman asked Community Development Director Sharon Williams if there was a grant available through the DHCD to do a feasibility study on the project.

Ms. Williams stated the DHCD had declined to conduct another feasibility study in Altavista until the last project, Spark Innovation Center, was complete and the center was open.

Dr. Lowman suggested Council consider having Hurt & Proffitt (one of the town's on-call engineers) conduct an assessment of the building, in order to move this project forward.

There was a consensus of Council to allocate \$500,000 in the FY2022 Budget for the Vista Theatre Restoration Project.

7. Public Comments (Non-Agenda Items)

There were no town citizens present at the March 23rd, 2021 Council Work Session.

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

8. Matters from Council

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

Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the soon-to-be complete Dalton's Landing Canoe Launch Project. He stated he felt there would be a lot of people utilizing the new site.

Mr. Bennett stated it was everyone's responsibility to keep the river and launch site clean. He suggested the town consider having "large" waste containers, and possibly recycle bins, at the launch site.

There were no additional comments or questions from Council.

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At that time, Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale addressed Council in regard to an item not on the agenda.

Mr. Coggsdale informed Council the Autumn Care Nursing Home in Altavista was in the process of remodeling their facility. He stated Autumn Care contacted him to offer the town, as a donation, a few tables they were no longer using.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the round tables would seat four to five people, and were foldable for easy storage. He stated, if Council desired, the tables could be used for, and stored at, the Booker Building.

Mr. Coggsdale asked for Council's direction in the matter.

All Council members were in consensus to accept Autumn Care's table donation; and to authorize staff to place the tables at the Booker Building for use and storage.

9. Closed Session

DATE: Tuesday March 23, 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 in regard to the annual performance evaluation of the Town Manager.

Section 2.2-3711 (A)(5) regarding discussion concerning a prospective business, or industry or the expansion of an existing industry, where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Bennett, and 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 8:08 PM.

Notice was given that Council was back in regular session at 8:29 PM.

FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION:

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

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

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

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;

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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

Notice was given, there was no official action(s) taken by Council during this Closed Session.

10. Adjournment

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

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

Mayor Mattox adjourned the meeting at 8:31 PM.

Michael E. Mattox, Mayor

J. Waverly Coggsdale, III, Clerk