

AUGUST 27, 2020

The Clarksburg City Council met in CONFERENCE (Work) SESSION on Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 6:20 P.M. (immediately following the 5:00 p.m. Special meeting) at the Clarksburg Municipal Building – Council Chambers, 222 West Main Street, Clarksburg, West Virginia, with Mayor Kennedy presiding.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Frank Ferrari
Marshall Goff
Lillie Junkins
Gary Keith
Jim Malfregeot
Vice Mayor Jimmy Marino
Mayor Ryan Kennedy

ALSO PRESENT:

Harry Faulk, City Manager
Annette Wright, City Clerk

With attendance previously taken, Council proceeded with the following agenda:

- **Presentation regarding RGPAC – Ryan Tolley, Executive Director, RGPAC** – Mr. Tolley addressed Council to provide status updates, review of financial statements and budget reports. Said financial statement reflected an ending balance of \$66,099.63 as of June 30, 2020. Mr. Tolley noted the strong performances at the RGPAC prior to the pandemic and the decrease in revenues as a result thereof. Mr. Tolley apprised of the work his department has done to reschedule acts, as well as the booking of private events. Also, Mr. Tolley noted the virtual events that have been held and/or planned and stated that the working capital of \$66,000 is a testament to the patrons and supporters of the RG. Work is continuing to mitigate refunds noting a large financial investment in those previously scheduled events. Also, all overhead and costs are being reduced as much as possible including the facility's utilities, etc. Mr. Tolley stated that \$5,000 has been raised through virtual events. Mr. Tolley apprised that they have been able to work with numerous organizations to receive grants for future events and to sustain their operations and that the capital campaign contributions have been critical during this time. With regard to the concerns associated with COVID, it is anticipated that things will not be fully open and operational until the spring of 2021 and that is where they are putting their focus. Mr. Tolley informed that the RGPAC does not qualify for PPE monies as we are a municipality but noted that by the end of the year an additional \$120,000 would be coming from committed capital campaign funds. Mr. Tolley commented that he has optimistic views of 2021 as the RG was doing very good before the pandemic. Brief discussion was held concerning the community theater with Mr. Tolley informing that "The Adams Family" would be done in 2021.

Mayor Kennedy noted about a \$54,000 FY loss with Mr. Tolley contributing such to the pandemic. Vice Mayor Marino pointed out that the \$66,000 did not include the debt service and remarked that the previous Council (other than Mayor Kennedy) raised taxes to renovate, restore and supplement the cost (the 1% sales tax) stating that this figure would be in the red by a fairly substantial amount had it not been for the implemented 1% sales tax. Vice Mayor Marino also noted the cost of utilities and salaries and inquired as to what has been done to cut expenditures. Mr. Tolley stated that salaries were temporarily adjusted, lights have been turned down and the HVAC has been adjusted to save money. Vice Mayor Marino stated that all other services provided by the City are "essential" and opined that the RG was not an "essential" service. Vice Mayor Marino noted that the operations at the RG are pretty much halted until spring 2021; however, the City is going to still be making the quarterly \$109,000 debt service payments and that he was not in favor of burdening the taxpayers with this debt adding that theaters should be left to the private sector and that you don't see municipalities in the theater business.

Vice Mayor Marino noted the data to review and the need to develop a plan moving forward remarking on the possibility of furlough(s) inquiring as to the need for \$200,000 in salaries. Mr. Tolley responded that he has been very busy over the last four months trying to find the most creative ways to protect and preserve the ticket sales and that he fully believed in the theater as an asset to the City and that he and his team are fully committed to the project.

Mayor Kennedy inquired if they had looked into off-site advertising to help with revenues with Mr. Tolley stating that they wanted to put their focus into the promotions of the events at the facility stating that such offer a better revenue margin and that it would be challenging to coordinate the off-site advertising with the event advertising; however, such may be worth looking into.

Councilmember Junkins stated that she understood that they are trying to keep their head above water as it looks pretty grim and that we have to get creative.

- **Explanation of the demolition process/Update on current demolition list and other vacant properties** – City Manager Faulk referenced the map located on the easel in the front of the Chambers as well as the legend therefor. Mr. Faulk stated that they have a game plan in place and will be hiring the new Code Enforcement Director. Mr. Faulk stated that he would like to bring in a software program called GEO Plan (property management program) at an upfront cost of \$30,000 to \$50,000; license fee per user \$10,000 to \$15,000 annually. Once the new director starts, they will sit down as a team and determine how many properties can be demolished in-house. Mr. Faulk stated that another full-time code enforcement officer and MS4 person was needed since Mr. Barberio resigned noting that 50% of said salary would come from the Sanitary Board's budget.

City Engineer Tom Brown explained the NOV process, the demolition process, how the process works for properties that contain asbestos, etc., as well as Public Works involvement with the same. Vice Mayor Marino inquired if Council would be able to have some input on the structures that can be taken down in-house with Mr. Faulk pointing out that fire-damaged structures would be given higher priority noting the liability thereof to the City. Public Works Superintendent John Workman explained that every time we move the equipment, we have to hire a contractor and they try to look at the area(s) to see where the most accomplishments can be made. Mr. Workman stated that there are 30 houses on the current list and that he did not have any problems with Council having input. Councilmember Ferrari noted that some of the properties were located within the TIF District and that monies were available therefor through TIF funds. Councilmember Ferrari commented that he thought we needed to have the asbestos reports ready so we can move forward more expeditiously with Mr. Brown stating that he thought it would be wise to develop a revolving fund therefor. With regard to those structures identified for demo, Mr. Brown noted the opportunity of the property owner(s) to go before the Code Appeals Board. Brief discussion was held concerning the boarding up of structures as well as the equipment and manpower needed for the demolitions. Mr. Workman pointed out that there is a risk to the employee regarding exposure to asbestos and the certifications necessary therefor. Vice Mayor Marino remarked that there was discussion at one time about the Animal Control Officer being certified in property maintenance and inquired why such never went forward with Mr. Faulk stating that they could look into the same. Mr. Workman explained that it only takes Code Enforcement a few minutes to write up the NOV but it takes his crews much more time to actually take care of the violation (i.e., the mowing, boarding up, etc.).

Brief discussion was held concerning NOV's with Finance Director Kim Karakiozis confirming that we are not collecting much on the NOV's. With regard to the asbestos testing, Mr. Brown informed that we use Stantec to do the testing and put the removal thereof out to bid. Concluding discussion, Council was in agreement to designate funds to allow for asbestos testing on all structures on the demolition list.

- **Finance Committee Recommendations** – Mr. Faulk noted that the City received \$2.1 million in COVID monies which left us with a budget surplus with Finance Director Kim Karakiozis informing that we have applied for another month of salary reimbursement funds. A copy of the Finance Committee Recommendations is attached hereto and incorporated herein as "Attachment 1."

Councilmember Junkins inquired as to the trackers for all City vehicles with Mr. Faulk stating that he does not have a good cost yet.

Mr. Faulk advised that the City would be switching cell service from U.S. Cellular to AT&T and a proposal therefor would be put together. With regard to decals, Mr. Faulk confirmed that every City vehicle would be decaled.

Mayor Kennedy noted that a 3% COLA was granted at the last meeting and inquired as to the recommendation for police salary increases with Mr. Faulk stating that he and Chief Kiddy are working on the same to be presented at the next work session.

With regard to the sidewalk program, Mr. Ferrari inquired if there were plans for the program between now and November with Mr. Brown responding affirmatively.

Mayor Kennedy noted the necessary budget revision to incorporate said recommendations.

Meeting concluded.

E. Ryan Kennedy, Mayor

Approved: September 17, 2020

Annette Wright, City Clerk