

**Town Council & United Way of Charles County  
Pavilion  
Monday, October 1, 2018  
6:31pm**

Those in attendance were as follows:

Brandon Paulin, Mayor  
Ron Sitoula, Vice Mayor  
Curtis Smith, Councilman  
Ryan Hicks, Town Manager  
Michael Bellis, Executive Director, UWCC  
Bill Dotson, Board Member  
Heather Cease, Agency Liaison  
John Morgan, Board Member  
Russell Yates, CPA, Treasurer  
Andrea Brady, Town Clerk

Mr. Bellis provided an overview on the UWCC involvement with the proposed Enrichment Center. Mr. Bellis previously poke with the Council on working hand in hand on the center. The project the Town had in mind was something the UWCC already had in “iron in the fire” for. Once verbal support was received the UWCC applied to the Charles County Charitable Trust for funds towards the Enrichment Center process. Mr. Bellis expressed the desire to have time to speak with the people that will be served by the center and to have a cooperative approach to the project.

The UWCC requested \$30,000 from the Trust. The funds will help develop curriculum and best practices, and will allow a part time staff person to liaise with the Town, County and stakeholders, and undertake the listening sessions and roundtables. The funds have not yet been released because the Trust would like to an agreement between the Town and the UWCC. The Trust suggested an MOU, but Mr. Bellis didn't feel that the Town and the UWCC were at the point yet since an MOU is more finite. To meet the need for the requested agreement, Mr. Bellis drafted a letter of intent that has been reviewed by the Board and given to Council for review. The letter explicitly states that neither party is locked in. The letter basically says the Town and the UWCC are working together towards advancing the relationship on this project. The Trust has given the deadline of October 15<sup>th</sup> to receive the letter. Mr. Bellis and the Board members present, wanted to meet to assuage any fears the Council may have, and to move forward with working hand in hand.

Vice Mayor Sitoula thanked the UWCC for meeting with the Council and stated that any help to the Town would be much appreciated. Vice Mayor asked what the plan is to make use of the funds. Mr. Bellis explained that the money will be used part towards curriculum development. UWCC has a focus on financially literacy and stability, but they are also a conduit to 30 other nonprofits they would like to bring into the community. Mr. Bellis stated that the Tri-County Services Bureau would love to come to the Western side with their Ready for Life program. Mr. Bellis explained that they anticipate, using around \$5000 toward curriculum development and

\$25,000 towards the part time employee to liaise with the Town. Mr. Bellis stated that the Enrichment Center is meant to be a pillar in the community and they need to have a sustainability plan.

Town Manager Hicks asked what would be needed square footage wise. Mr. Bellis did not feel they were currently at the point to discuss square footage. The UWCC wants to make sure what they are thinking of will meet the need of the Town first.

Councilman Smith stated that he was trying to understand why the Council isn't considering other non-profits to stand up another type of initiative. The only one Councilman Smith has heard considered is the UWCC. Councilman Smith felt the Council should define what the requirements are for the Enrichment Center, and then bring parties to the table, and he asked to know the reason for the hurry with the UWCC.

Mr. Yates explained that the Trust and the UWCC have an understanding that the UWCC would be doing this undertaking with the Town. Mr. Yates does not know other non for profits that have come forward. Mr. Yates explained that because the Trust, trusts the UWCC with this type of project they are prepared and anxious to move this project forward and they are asking for something formal saying yes, we are in this partnership together to move this initiative forward.

Ms. Cease mentioned that at their last department agency meeting the topic of the Enrichment Center came up because it had been publicized, and there were around 28 non-profits represented at the meeting. According to Ms. Cease there was a lot of excitement about the project. There are several non-profits that don't have the resources to serve in Indian Head but would like to, and they are excited about the possibility of a space to provide services in. Mr. Bellis feels the UWCC is uniquely qualified because they have the ability to bring a lot of different programs to the table.

Councilman Smith feels there should be a citizen advisory board that should be part of the process, and questioned the statement that the UWCC is uniquely positioned because they have partnership organizations. Mr. Bellis does not think there is another agency serving the County at their scope and capacity. Mr. Yates stated that he don't know of other non-profits in the County that have the funding to start planning this initiative.

Councilman Smith does feel the UWCC has a leg up, because when they found out about the project they went and found funding, but he asked, what if there is an organization that does not require funding. Councilman Smith asked that it not be said that because the UWCC was able to acquire funding, that it couldn't be done for less. Mr. Bellis explained that to have someone for curriculum development with a master's degree, it will cost money. Mr. Bellis expressed the UWCC's desire to do this right, to make sure all voices that need to be heard are heard, and it will require a dedicated person to do that. Are a small organization, but goal is to keep the overhead incredibly low to make the money service the community. Councilman Smith thinks it is important for Council to keep an open mind to afford other organizations the same opportunity, to not only assess the services the citizens need but also what they will come to the facility for. Councilman Smith thinks that even the Council signs the letter of intent, a series of public forums need to occur. Councilman Smith asked if the Council were to choose a different

organization what would happen with the funds. Mr. Bellis stated that they would go back to the Trust.

Mayor Paulin had no questions at this time, and asked to discuss the letter of intent, and agreed with the importance of being open minded to community forums and potential partnerships, and as the UWCC goes through curriculum development to make sure they get citizen input.

Vice Mayor Sitoula expressed a desire to be more involved once the grant funds are received, to be a part of the process building the curriculum and services, and the process of understanding the citizens' wants and needs. Vice Mayor Sitoula felt that Councilman Smith was right, other organizations should get the opportunity to be involved, but if an organization is willing to step forward with funds, it is easier for the Council and creates an opportunity for like-minded organizations to band together.

Councilman Smith asked for clarification on Vice Mayor Sitoula wanting to partner with the UWCC because it would be easier. Vice Mayor Sitoula explained that he feels a partnership with the UWCC would be more efficient and it would make more sense to go with an organization who is the best at what is being done that has existing and established partnerships. Councilman Smith stated that the UWCC says they speaking on behalf of the other organizations, but he does not know that, that is true. Vice Mayor Sitoula felt the Council needed to operate to a certain standard of trust, and stated that the UWCC has made considerable contributions, and has consistently allocated resources not just for themselves but other organizations as well. Councilman Smith stated that the Town has been able to apply for grants on their own and a citizen advisory board could help with this process.

Mr. Bellis stated that the UWCC is an independent non-profit organization, all money raised stays working in Charles County. The UWCC is a local organization, not a multi-national group that's going to come in and run things. Mr. Bellis stated that the UWCC is part of the fabric of Indian Head already and gave brief background on programs they have done to benefit the Western side of Charles County. Mr. Bellis stated that the take away from this meeting is that the UWCC has money in hand and they want to invest in the Town and see the Town thrive, they want the people of Indian Head and Western Charles County to succeed.

Councilman Smith explained that he is merely an advocate for the residents and he is asking the hard questions, but it is nothing personal against anyone. Councilman Smith stated that nuances matter if the Town is going to hand over a facility. Councilman Smith stated that the UWCC may be the best organization for the project, and if so he is all for it, but the Town is going to kick the tires to make sure they have the best organization moving forward.

Mr. Yates stated that to the Councilman's point about representing the constituency here in Indian Head, is there any reason the UWCC can't have input from the constituency that has been referenced. Councilman Smith stated that it would be prudent for them to do so.

Mayor Paulin made a motion to move forward with signing the letter of intent in good faith to move forward with the discussion and community meetings, so everyone can be involved in the

process moving forward. Vice Mayor Sitoula second the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: 3-Ayes, 0-Nays.

Mr. Bellis stated that it is not the intent of the UWCC to backdoor the Town into anything, the letter is a funding requirement, and there is no ill intent or bad faith in the letter. Councilman Smith reviewed the letter and expressed concern that while he read the line of what the parties do not commit to, he felt it did not say some of the things that were articulated at tonight's meeting. To provide clarification, Mr. Bellis read the letter aloud. Councilman Smith asked if the partnership doesn't work out, what the Town's out would be. Mr. Bellis explained that the UWCC has zero to do with the Town's bond bill, just as the Town is not responsible for the UWCC's funds from the Trust, so if something goes wrong on either one, this doesn't comment any one person to anything. The letter of intent is not an operations agreement, and no one is tied to anything more than the willingness to work hand in hand. Following the clarification of the letter it was signed by Council. (See attached)

Mr. Bellis expressed excitement over the project and the first step of a long journey, but one that he feels will culminate in a brighter outlook for the residents of Indian Head and Western Charles County. Mr. Bellis and the UWCC feel that Indian Head has a very bright future ahead.

Mayor Paulin adjourned the meeting at 7:05pm.

  
Andrea Brady, Town Clerk