

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
Teleconference via GoToMeeting
Wednesday, November 18, 2020
3:30pm

Mayor Paulin, Vice Mayor Sitoula and Councilman Albright met in a work session via teleconference on Wednesday, November 18, 2020. Also, in attendance were Town Manager Ryan Hicks and Town Clerk Andrea Brady. The meeting was open to the public via the GoToMeeting site.

Native American Heritage Month Proclamation – Town Clerk Brady read the proclamation for Native American Heritage Month. Vice Mayor Sitoula made a motion to approve the proclamation. Councilman Albright seconds the motion. Motion carried by voice vote. 3-Ayes, 0-Nays. A copy of the proclamation will be presented to Tribal Chair Francis Gray.

Community Events & Pavilion/Senior Center Rentals for 2020 – Karen Williams sent an email with the following information for the Council. October 31st Drive Thru Trunk-to-Trunk event was successful thanks to the BRIDGE Church, I.H. United Methodist Church, American Legion Post 233 Ladies Auxiliary & Women Veterans United Committee, VFD Post 7461 and Black Box Theatre for participating with handing out candy. DJ Psyborg of Mosquito Cove Entertainment for providing the musical entertainment. We had approximately 150 vehicles drive thru and a couple of pedestrians walk thru. We received several complimentary Facebook posts about our event. Councilman Albright also recognized Charles County Sheriff's Department for passing out candy. December 1st Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony – we were planning an Outdoor Tree Lighting Ceremony to be held on the Village Green at the Town Christmas Tree, set for the first Tuesday, Dec. 1st. BRIDGE Church offered to provide a sound system and their choir to sing a few Christmas Carols, however, COVID has reared its ugly head again so I am not sure just how to go about this event. Back to the drawing board, will keep Council posted after conferring with the Town Manager. Annual Gingerbread Classes & Holiday Festival will not be held this year. NETS will host their Drive Thru Thanksgiving Baskets Giveaway next week, however, they had to cancel their annual Christmas Store giveaway due to COVID. IH United Methodist Church still wants to host a Drive Thru Holiday dinner on Sat. Dec. 12 at the Pavilion. Mayor Paulin suggested a Facebook Live event for the tree lighting. He suggested having the choir present, keeping the attendance to less than 25 and broadcast it on Facebook Live. Councilman Albright also suggested the possibility of a drive thru event. Town Manager Hicks stated that the event will be outdoors no matter what. Vice Mayor Sitoula agreed with the idea of a Facebook Live event. Mayor Paulin will email Karen to discuss the ideas further.

Family Enrichment Center – Mayor Paulin has been unable to reach out about the extension on the Bond Bill at this point. Town Manager Hicks will provide Mayor Paulin with the contact information to help the request move forward. Town Manager Hicks stated that the drawings he has for expanding up or out are not very detailed, that the Council needs to get a clear picture of what they would like to do so he can work with ARRO to move the project forward. Mayor Paulin discussed the idea of a 3-level facility that would provide different services on each floor. Town Manager Hicks discussed the Henderson property purchase and inquired where the

funding will come from for the Family Enrichment Center. The Council discussed upcoming construction that will bring in revenue to hopefully help with the funds. The Council will discuss the Family Enrichment Center again at next month's work session.

The Council briefly discussed funding available to assist municipalities during COVID-19 including the Cares Act.

Town Hall Operations – Town Manager Hicks spoke about the recent information received from the Governor. La Plata Town Hall is still closed. Town Manager Hicks suggested closing the Town Hall again. The Council discussed Charles County's positivity rate and agreed that the Town Hall should be closed to the public. Town Manager Hicks discussed how business continues including scheduling drop off and pickup of permits. Councilman Albright made a motion to keep the Town Hall closed until January 2021. Vice Mayor Sitoula seconds the motion. Motion carried by voice vote 3-Ayes, 0-Nays. Town Manager Hicks and the Council discussed reinstating hazard pay. Vice Mayor Sitoula made a motion to reinstate hazard pay until January 2021. Councilman Albright seconds the motion. Motion carried by voice vote 3-Ayes, 0-Nays. Council agreed to close the Town Hall to the public as of Monday morning, November 23rd. The Council will discuss Town Hall operations and hazard pay again in January 2021. Telework will continue 1 day a week.

December Town Meeting Agenda – The Council has received input from Town's legal counsel about the comments received during the Zoning Ordinance hearing. ARRO is currently in the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan for the Planning Commission's review. Following the Planning Commission's review, they will make their recommendation to the Council. The Comprehensive Plan update does not prohibit the Council from adopting the Zoning Ordinance. The Council will review legal counsel's comments and hold adoption of the ordinance until 2021. No other changes or additions to the agenda.

Roundtable:

Mayor – Mayor Paulin received a request for a Town seal from NSWC for Captain Kraft who is being reassigned. Council agreed to send Captain Kraft a seal. Town Clerk Brady will type it up for their signatures this week. Mayor Paulin spoke with Captain Copeland today and the Base will be going to full lockdown soon. Military personnel will be unable to leave the Base. Morale with the Marines is currently very low. Mayor Paulin spoke with the MAC and they will be organizing troop donation boxes for the holiday to help boost morale. Once Mayor Paulin has further information it will be distributed to help promote donations.

Vice Mayor – Vice Mayor Sitoula spoke about the sign at the entrance to Town. A couple of people have mentioned that it is hard to see. Vice Mayor Sitoula suggested as part of the 101 celebration to make that sign more visible. Councilman Albright spoke about the sign being refurbished in the past, and if the person who did the work was available. Mayor Paulin mentioned previous discussions about redoing the Town seal and suggested rolling that out for the 101 celebration and installing a new sign at the same time to incorporate those changes.

Councilman – Councilman Albright suggested getting the employees lunch to show their appreciation to the employees in lieu of the Christmas party. Town Manager Hicks stated that lunch has been provided to the public works department a couple of times during COVID. Any lunches provided will need to be prepackaged. Councilman Albright would like to stop by on the day lunch is provided to express his thanks in person and the other members of Council would be able to come by as well.

Town Manager – SMECO used to hang the Christmas decorations for the Town each year but they no longer provide that service. SMECO absorbed the cost last year, but the quote from the company came in this year at almost \$7,000. The cost is to install and remove 60 Christmas decorations and around 30 banners. The Town is unable to do the job due to the lack of a bucket truck and a licensed electrician to go up in the bucket. Town Manager Hicks does plan to reach out to Ryce Electric for another quote. Karen has also reached back out to the company who provided the \$7,000 quote to see if they could bring the price down. Council agreed to wait on a final decision until they receive the additional quotes.

Town Clerk – Town Clerk Brady checked with Mayor Paulin on his progress in putting the Environmental Sustainability Committee (ESC) back together. An active ESC is one of the requirements for the Town's Sustainable Community application.

Mayor Paulin adjourned the work session at 4:13pm.


Andrea Brady, Town Clerk