

Pearisburg Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, March 13, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. in the Pearisburg Town Council Chambers. Present for the meeting was Mayor Dickerson; Council Members Eaton, Clark, Journell, Ballard, Williams and Harrell; Town Attorney Hartley; Town Manager Meredith; Town Clerk Harless; and Building Official Wilson. Also, present were citizens Lee and Anne Wheeler, Robert Smith, Anita Hines, Jeanne Jeffers, Sonu Chawla, Patrick O'Brien of New River Valley Regional Commission (NRVRC) and Amelia Whittaker with the Virginian Leader.

Williams made a motion to approve the minutes to the February 13, 2018 Council Meeting. Ballard seconded the motion. Voting yes: Mayor Dickerson; Council Members Eaton, Clark, Harrell, Journell, Ballard and Williams. The motion carried by a vote of 7 to 0.

Mayor Dickerson opened the Public Hearing on the Pearisburg Downtown Revitalization Project for a CDBG Grant Application. Meredith stated that Patrick O'Brien would be doing a presentation on the CDBG Grant funds on revitalization. The County applied for a Planning Grant and was awarded. The grant funds were used to get designs from Hill Studios to revitalize downtown buildings, create a festival shelter and community green space. He stated that Phase II is to apply for the implementation grant.

Patrick O'Brien stated the grant was a maximum \$700,000 grant through the Department of Housing and Community Development. The purpose of the application funding is to connect the towns in the County to Pearisburg Downtown District through tourism, the New River, hiking trails and connecting the local towns. He stated that Hill Studios worked on designs to make the towns connect with lots of ideas. There is \$700,000 to work with on the grant application. He stated that one requirement is to designate the project target area that has been identified on the map presented to Council on Wenonah Avenue and Main Street in the downtown. He also provided the document from Hill Studios on all the initiatives they created for Pearisburg. O'Brien explained that all the items couldn't be covered under the \$700,000. It is very targeted towards the blight elimination goal, limited to public space improvements and exterior of buildings.

Façade improvements will be included for the seven buildings the architects designated in the zone. He stated a cushion in the budget was built-in for other properties in case one of the seven didn't want to participate. The vision from Hill Studios was the area between Allens

Furniture and the old Town Shop. They would like to construct a "Town Green" area and Event Shelter as components in the grant application. There would be another component behind the Town Hall. O'Brien went over the Fact Sheet with the budget on the six components of the project application. He identified a few of the tasks that the Town or County could do on paving or grading as In-Kind match from Public Works Department. Another item was to create design guidelines for the Historic District in the downtown. O'Brien also stated that ARC and VDOT grants can be used to help finish portions of the proposed items listed in the budget.

O'Brien stated that an Economic Restructuring Plan must be submitted. It details some of the economic strategies to develop the downtown area. The goal is to make sure businesses are successful and maximize tourists coming into the downtown area. O'Brien went over these items with Council. The grants deadline is March 30<sup>th</sup>. The public hearings are part of the grant requirements. Council will need to adopt a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to submit the grant. By submitting the application, Council is not committed to the grant or accepting the grant funds.

Mayor Dickerson asked if anyone had a comment or question.

Anita Hines, downtown business owner, addressed Council about the artisan space in the proposed incubator. She felt a manager was needed for the incubator. She felt it was a wonderful concept and idea. The Town would incur the cost of maintenance and utilities. O'Brien stated this concept was in a future phase and would require a new grant. Hines understood it was just a concept for later.

Hines asked about the components of the proposed grant. She asked if the plan called for the town to fund the Grant Manager position. O'Brien stated that funds included funding Grant Manager. He stated that other initiatives not included in the current grant application would be included in other organization and grant programs. He stated that ARC grants would be available to purchase buildings and VDOT grants could help fund gateway portions.

Anne Wheeler, President of the Pearisburg Merchants stated that the current concept is much improved from the initial plan first reviewed. The Merchants gave comments for Council to consider since the last revitalization, which included: No upkeep of facades on Wenonah Avenue and Main Street; Owners don't maintain their doors, windows and awnings; and were not provided a folder of information about maintenance and upkeep of buildings. Wheeler asked Council to remember these comments, so the same mistakes were not repeated. She asked if

building codes for upkeep and maintenance on what needs to be done inside and outside of the buildings were being enforced. She stated that the business owners have discussed and created a list of ideas for the revitalization project, such as facades of buildings, business recruitment and signage. The owners have a project idea for floral installation in beds and containers in conjunction with the County. They also have ideas for the library and recreation departments and for sponsored events to go in conjunction with the festivals. Wheeler stated the Merchants supported council and are working to help anyway they can.

O'Brien started that Narrows was currently working on their façade renovation program design. This will help with record keeping and lays out an annual inventory of conditions. Ballard asked who enforces the program. O'Brien stated the contracts are between the owner and the Building Official. He explained the forgivable loans on the facades and how Council can subordinate them.

Meredith asked if there were any circumstances making the Town responsible for repaying the money. O'Brien stated that if DHCD specified requirements were met, the town would be reimbursed for construction costs. He indicated these requirements are different from the 10-year commitment to keep the facility in the same use. In this grant, the focus will be on the exterior of the buildings and not the interior.

Harrell asked how many property owners had committed. Meredith stated that 6 of the 7 were interested but had not signed the commitment agreement. Harrell asked about the deadline for the property owners to sign. O'Brien stated that the application would be more favorable if the business owners filled out the commitment agreement.

Clark asked what the building owners needed to provide upfront. O'Brien stated the owner's match could be cash or receipts from improvements since last July and can count this as cash share. Also, if you use receipts, more cash from the grant will be needed.

Clark asked if the Town could only do the facades and not the rear of the buildings for the green space. O'Brien indicated it was possible to ask for a lesser amount. He stated that the grant application would include usable public space with utilities. He indicated the plan in the fall would be to apply for an ARC grant and merge the grants together. Clark asked what type of match the ARC required. O'Brien stated it was a 50/50 matching grant and the Town can use in-kind for the match. Clark asked about the cost to apply. O'Brien stated the only cost the town incurred was the \$3,000 for the façade designs by Hill Studios.

Mayor asked if other business owners wanted to participate did they need to be in the designated area. O'Brien said the businesses would need to be a continuous zone. If you change the zone, you are committing to change all the blight in that area. He stated the other side of the street wasn't included because it looked good.

Eaton asked about Town Staff roles in the grant process. O'Brien stated that any staff assistance would be considered as in-kind. However, the grant manager selected should do most of the paperwork. Meredith inquired about the procurement process. O'Brien stated that the firm chosen would need to do a lot of work to turn designs into construction drawings. Some of the work would be split between the Grant Manager and Town staff.

Clark asked O'Brien if staff or council needed additional time to prepare the application could we apply next year. O'Brien stated that the Town could apply next year but Council needed to take into consideration inflated cost for the proposed projects. Clark asked if the application deadline was every March and how many years have these funds been available. O'Brien stated he was aware of funds since the 90's.

Eaton asked if the Town could re-allocate the \$95,164 to another area if all 7 businesses didn't participate. O'Brien explained there was a 90-day period during which a pre-contract meeting would outline the budget and approve the plans with DHCD. During this time changes could be discussed. Eaton asked about the in-kind match of \$171,480. O'Brien stated there is no match requirement. He felt the tasks chosen Town staff could perform and stated the Town would receive more points for in-kind match. O'Brien stated he could reduce the amount, but he would need to take out something else in the grant to offset it. Ballard asked O'Brien if he estimated the amount. O'Brien stated Hill Studios had chosen the calculated the amount based on labor and equipment use.

Clark asked O'Brien to explain No. 4 Design Guidelines for buildings and signage. O'Brien stated that the Town would create the rules regulating the downtown. Ballard asked O'Brien if there were any reason for the Town not to apply for the grant. O'Brien stated the grant process, once awarded, is a lot of work and will keep everyone busy. The process can be a little slow at times and individuals lose momentum. There is a large amount of back-end leg work that needs to be done.

Meredith stated a vacant downtown is often a symptom of a deeper underlying problem. He feels that institutional problems must be addressed and that the project targets those areas. He stated that it would be a shame to put a band-aid on a symptom of a deeper lying problem.

Journell asked when the winners would be announced. O'Brien stated it would be late summer to early fall and then leftovers in December. He stated that if the grant was not awarded, suggestions to improve the next application would be made. Meredith asked when the grant process would start if awarded. O'Brien stated by the end of the year. Within 90 days, the Town would be under contract with DHCD. Plans would be finalized within six months and the grant process takes two years total.

Clark asked if there was an estimate on Town staff and how many hours they will need to dedicate weekly. O'Brien stated it would vary depending on the amount of front end work which would keep them very busy. He stated the Grant Manager would prepare items to hand off to town staff. Once the project is rolling it goes to the architect, engineer and contractor. The consultant could be provided access to Town account to upload information for Town review. The Town Manager and staff would be interfacing with the businesses.

Meredith stated that the Town has an I & I Project that could overlap with this project. He had concerns about the amount of time staff would need to be available for the grant project. O'Brien stated the Grant Manager could do most things on behalf of the town. Meredith asked about the in-kind match timeframe. O'Brien it would be summer to early fall of 2019 before public works in-kind would begin. He stated there would be a separate project list for the public works employees. Mayor Dickerson closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Dickerson moved Item No. 9 up on the agenda pertaining to the Resolution to authorize the Town Manager to file the CDBG Grant application with DHCD. Eaton asked Meredith what he anticipated on overlap time for the I & I Project and CDBG Grant, if awarded. Meredith answered that it depended on when construction would begin. He stated that if the I & I started in the summer, completion would be 12 months out. Meredith stated that concerning the in-kind match, the Town would need staff to be present and accountable to do inspections. He felt that if construction on I & I could start and be completed in 8 to 9 months before the CDBG grant process starts it could work out. If the projects overlap, staff would need to split their time on the projects.

Clark mentioned Council might want to start efforts to get a stronger position across the board with a small staff. Meredith felt the Town Engineer would be heavily involved in both projects. He stated it would require staff keeping up with the in-kind match. Clark stated that the town needed some level of experience. Journell asked what dollar amount was needed to be included in the upcoming budget. Ballard stated that unless you are projecting overtime cost to complete the in-kind match, there are no additional funds needed. It would all be in-kind.

Ballard stated that approving the resolution only authorized the Town Manager to sign the application to be submitted. He feels that if the grant is awarded then Council could decide what how to proceed. Eaton asked if the Town applied and received the grant could we turn it down and reapply later. O'Brien stated the answer was yes. Ballard stated he was trying to understand why this would be a bad idea for the Town. He stated that he felt the project would be good for the Town. O'Brien stated this grant was very flexible in comparison to other localities.

Hines asked if the Town had a CDBG grant several years ago. Clark stated that she believed it was a CDBG Grant. Hines stated that she doesn't see a downside. She said there are volunteers willing to do some work. She felt the Town needed to come together with businesses and volunteers and make it happen. O'Brien stated that if DHCD approves of the project they will work with you to make it a reality.

Wheeler stated she was impressed by concerns and comments. She doesn't see a downside. She commented the tourist and hikers love our pretty town. She mentioned citizens interested in buying buildings. She mentioned Phase I of the Recreation Project and her desire to help.

Meredith stated that if Council desired to apply, staff could make it happen with some careful planning. He stated that we are losing businesses. We don't have a thriving downtown. He feels it's not solely about facades, but it's also about institutions and civic engagement. We need to go after these with robust energy. Once again let's not put a band aid on the symptom of a problem. Meredith stated that we have the operational capacity to do it successfully.

Ballard stated that he has not heard a good argument against applying. He asked someone to please speak up if there is a good reason not to vote for the application.

Ballard made a motion that Council approve the CDBG Resolution on the Pearisburg Downtown Revitalization Project. Williams seconded the motion. Voting yes: Mayor

Dickerson; Council Members Eaton, Clark, Harrell, Journell, Ballard and Williams. The motion carried by a vote of 7 to 0.

**RESOLUTION**

**AUTHORIZING THE PREPARATION AND FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR  
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT FUNDS THROUGH  
THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Pearisburg has previously participated in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Planning grant program as administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) in order to develop a Downtown Physical Improvements and Economic Restructuring Plan, and

**WHEREAS**, the Pearisburg Town Council has determined that there is a need and community support for an Economic Development – Business District Revitalization project, and

**WHEREAS**, The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is soliciting applications for the 2018 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to fund local community improvement projects, and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council has met the citizen participation requirements of the program by conducting two public hearings that were properly advertised in the newspaper as required by the CDBG program guidelines, and

**WHEREAS**, Pearisburg acknowledges the requirement that CDBG slum and blight removal activities occur in accordance with Title 36, Article 7 of the Code of Virginia and that the Town will, if necessary during implementation, contact and develop a Redevelopment or Conservation Plan, and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Pearisburg is eligible for and wishes to submit a 2018 Community Development Block Grant application for the Pearisburg Downtown Revitalization project for up to \$700,000 in grant funds for physical improvements to the VDHCD by March 30, and

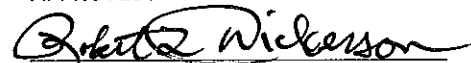
**WHEREAS**, the stakeholders and property owners have requested the Town to proceed in resolving the problems identified downtown and securing the necessary funding to being the downtown revitalization initiative, and

**WHEREAS**, a \$235,000 in local contribution, including in-kind and cash, from the Town will be expended for this project, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Town Council authorizes the Town Manager to sign and submit all appropriate documents for submittal of the CDBG application.

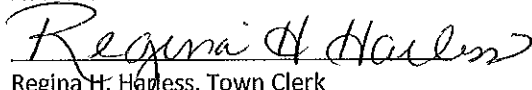
Adopted this 13<sup>th</sup> day of March 2018.

APPROVED:



Robert L. Dickerson, Mayor

ATTEST:



Regina H. Harless, Town Clerk

Journell reported on the Public Safety Committee. She stated that the members of Fire Department have been to the high school to recruit junior members. Chief Martin shared a letter with the committee complementing Pearisburg Officers from the Blacksburg Police Department when they assisted our department in a pursuit.

Ballard reported on the Property and Recreation Committee. He stated that repairs to the Community Center roof damaged by the wind have been completed, the dwelling at 301 Woodrum destroyed by fire has obtained a demolition permit and the ladies restroom renovations have been completed at the Library.

The Committee recommended that Council purchase and place a plaque in memory of Sandy Robertson for \$125 at the Pearisburg Library. Voting yes: Mayor Dickerson; Council Members Eaton, Clark, Harrell, Journell, Ballard and Williams. The recommendation carried by a vote of 7 to 0.

Eaton reported on the Finance Committee. The Committee discussed a request from a citizen to hold an adult softball league. The Committee agreed contingent upon there being no conflict with recreational sporting events for the Town. The Committee discussed a request for space at the Community Center to host Tai Chi once a week.

The Finance Committee recommended that Council approve Budget Amendment 2017-2018-05. Voting yes: Mayor Dickerson; Council Members Eaton, Clark, Harrell, Journell, Ballard and Williams. The recommendation carried by a vote of 7 to 0.

**BUDGET AMENDMENT FY 2017-2018-05**

EXPENDITURES	Current Budget	New Amount	Difference
21.3000.9210 Online Payment Service	\$ -	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
	Revenue	Expenditures	Difference
Current	\$4,295,691.00	\$4,289,491.00	\$6,200.00
Amended	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	(\$1,000.00)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,295,691.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,290,491.00</b>	<b>\$5,200.00</b>

For Council Action on March 13, 2018



The Finance Committee recommended that Council approve the contract renewal with Ricoh for Document Mall. Voting yes: Mayor Dickerson; Council Members Eaton, Clark, Harrell, Journell, Ballard and Williams. The recommendation carried by a vote of 7 to 0.

Ballard reported on the Public Works Committee. He stated that two representatives from Wendel, an architectural and engineering company met with the Committee on cost efficient creative solutions to community infrastructure needs. The water loss for January was 41.85%. The Committee discussed needed repairs to Ingram Tank, findings from Utility Services on water tanks for the town, the Carilion addition and Epperley/Jennell Development.

Eaton wanted to state that Wendel did an excellent presentation. She stated our water loss should be around 25 to 27 percent. Ballard stated the company would do a free analysis and identify areas in energy efficiency. He felt we should at least hear them out.

Williams made a motion adopt and approve a Resolution for Sandra Robertson. Harrell seconded the motion. Voting yes: Mayor Dickerson; Council Members Eaton, Clark, Harrell, Journell, Ballard and Williams. The motion carried by a vote of 7 to 0.

Journell made a motion that Council award the Giles Arts Council a Sub-Grant from the Arts Challenge Grant for 2017-1018 in the amount of \$8,000. Eaton seconded the motion. Voting yes: Mayor Dickerson; Council Members Eaton, Clark, Harrell, Journell, Ballard and Williams. The motion carried by a vote of 7 to 0.

On a motion by Journell, seconded by Ballard, passed by the following recorded vote, Council Members, Dickerson, yes, Williams, yes; Eaton, yes; Ballard, yes; Harrell, yes; Journell, yes; Clark, yes; Council went into Executive Session as permitted by Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A) (1), for discussion, consideration or interviews of candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of the Town of Pearisburg; as permitted by Virginia Code § 2.2-3711 (A) (3), for discussion or consideration of a matter involving the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the Town's bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the Town; and as permitted by Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A) (7), for consultation with legal counsel, and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in an open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the Town; and

consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by the Town regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

On a motion by Williams, seconded by Ballard, passed by the following recorded vote, Council Members Dickerson, yes, Williams, yes; Eaton, yes; Ballard, yes; Harrell, yes; Journell, yes; Clark yes; Council returned to regular session.

On a motion by Williams seconded by Ballard, and passed by the following recorded vote, Council Members Dickerson, yes, Williams, yes; Eaton, yes; Ballard, yes; Harrell, yes; Journell, yes; Clark yes; Council certified that the subject discussed in this Executive Session was the subject identified in the motion to go into Executive Session and only that subject, and that Council discussed no other subject while in Executive Session.

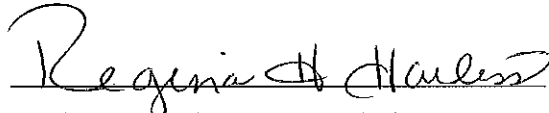
There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:



Robert L. Dickerson, Mayor



Regina H. Harless, Town Clerk