Regular Council Meeting
April 20, 2020
7:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Elkton Town Council was held on April 20, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., at the Elkton Area Community Center with Mayor Joshua J. Gooden presiding.

Present: Mayor Joshua J. Gooden, Vice-Mayor Randell Snow, Council Member Margaretta Isom, Council Member Heidi Zander, Council Member Louis Heidel, Council Member Jay Dean, and Council Member Steve America.

Also Present: Town Manager Greg Lunsford, and Town Attorney Nathan H. Miller.

Present Electronically: Chief of Police David Harris, Public Works Director Troy Shifflett, Project Director Gaither Hurt, EACC Administrator Howard L. Taylor, II, Recreation Director Diane Johnson, Community Development Director Delores Hammer, Town Treasurer Clairen Sipe, and Clerk of Council Denise Monger.

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Gooden called the meeting to order. Council member Dean gave the Invocation. All present were asked to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZEN COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, REQUESTS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Due to the threat of transmission of the COVID-19 Virus and in recognition of a Governor's Order, citizens were asked not to appear in person at the April 20, 2020 meeting.

Chris Weaver, Superintendent, Lantz Construction, attended electronically, spoke of the renovations and construction of the Jennings House. He noted many people that worked for Lantz Construction were from Elkton and would be working on the project. He noted that McDaniel Bros. would be installing the electric. He noted that Lantz was a stable company with over sixty years in business. The company would stand behind their work. He noted that safety was their top priority. He noted that completion of the project was estimated at four to five months.

Wayne Printz, 336 West Washington, submitted a statement for the record via email dated April 19, 2020 as follows: "*I saw the agenda and was not surprised. I see that Lance will give a presentation when the public will not be able to attend or speak. I am not happy with this. I am asking for an opportunity to speak to the council about these issues. The system we are using allows this to speak remotely. Also I think that bringing the house and all the supporting data up when attendance is not allowed the media is not present could be looked as deceptive. Also the council has not had time to review the data. With everything going on with the virus I believe trying to slide renovations of the house in when people are loosing their jobs and the town finances are questionable is irresponsible and political. This is the Mayor trying to look good for the election with the public paying the bills. This project should be delayed and we should try to get grants and rebuild the Jennings house as a town project. Also, I believe the health and safety of the council, staff and construction people is being jeopardized for a political campaign goal. If the Council and the Mayor are so anxious to move the police dept and the staff back to the Jennings house why not move the council chambers and leave the employees where they are?*"

STAFF REPORT'S

Mr. Lunsford presented the Staff Reports since employees were attending electronically.

a. Town Manager

Mr. Lunsford thanked the Mayor and Town Council, leadership team, and the Town Attorney for their hard work and efforts. He was looking into

hiring an intern to work on some financial opportunities. He noted that the trash contract had been presented for renewal. The Town's website was being revised by Biz Lab at JMU which would be completed in a few months.

1. Public Safety

   Reports were provided to Council in the packet. No increase in statistics except calls for service. New safety protocols for service in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Public Works

   Pre-bids for the wastewater treatment plant phase III scheduled for March 25, 2020. Bid schedule presented. The Town's Drinking Water Report had been received. Paving was delayed due to their crew being sick with COVID-19. The Bridge Inspection Report was included in the packet. Final review of Sidewalk Plan scheduled for May. Letter recognizing Gaither Hurt for work on the VDOT project.

3. Community Development

   Additional signs installed in the Cemetery. Project ongoing for the Columbarium. Potholes in the Elkton Plaza were paved.

4. Elkton Area Community Center

   Proposals received for cleaning ceiling pipes, ducts, and deep cleaning. Part-time staff of the center called residents age fifty and older for well checks during the pandemic crisis. Mr. Taylor prepared organizational charts.

5. Parks & Recreation

   Some portions of the park were open; however the basketball and tennis courts were closed. Town moved forward to create a dog park in Stonewall Park.

6. Treasury

   Treasurer Sipe's reports were included in the packet. Revenue from meals tax increased from last month. Cigarette tax remained the same. Budget schedule included.

b. Town Attorney

   Mr. Miller reported no additional business; however he would be involved in the contract processes for the Jennings House and wastewater treatment plant.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Lineage Architects Recommendation for Jennings House

Vice-Mayor Snow moved, seconded by Council member Heidel, and carried to approve Lineage Architects recommendation, Lantz Construction, for the Jennings House.

Council member Isom expressed concern regarding expenses for the Town's wastewater treatment plant project and Jennings House.

Mayor Gooden stated there would be an increase in revenue from the EACC when the current offices used by Town staff would be rented. It was noted that approximately $2,500 in rental fees could be collected by the Town from the spaces currently occupied by Town staff at the EACC.

Vice Mayor Snow stated that approximately $1.4 million in separate tax payer debts would expire on the refinance debt. He noted that the $65,000 received from Rockingham County was to support the EACC, not the Town Hall. He noted the Jennings House renovations were an investment and since the interest rates were down, it was a smart investment.

YEAS: H. Zander, L. Heidel, and R. Snow

NAYS: M. Isom, J. Dean, and S. America

VOTE: (3 – 3 roll call) Tied

TIEBREAK: YEA vote from Mayor Gooden; motion carried

b. Jennings House Funding Proposals

Vice-Mayor Snow moved, seconded by Council member Zander, and carried to accept the 15 year proposal from BB&T for the Jennings House, with no payments for one year and an interest rate of 2.62%.

Vice Mayor Snow requested that the prepayment penalty be removed from the accepted proposal.

It was noted that the current offices the Town staff occupied were not up to building codes, and not private as needed for Town business.

YEAS: H. Zander, L. Heidel, and R. Snow

NAYS: M. Isom, J. Dean, and S. America

VOTE: (3 – 3 roll call) Tied

TIEBREAK: YEA vote from Mayor Gooden; motion carried

COMMITTEES

Economic & Community Development (S. America)

Council member America reported no additional business.

Finance (R. Snow)

Vice-Mayor Snow reported ongoing work on the budget. He briefly discussed capital improvement spending, under a different administration, at a cost of $2 million which included: $1.3 million for sewer treatment plant design, $20,000 for water and sewer lines to Countryside and $34,000 for EACC equipment.

Personnel (L, Heidel)

Council member Heidel reported no additional business.

Water & Sewer (J. Dean)

Council member Dean reported that the bid opening would take place on 4/22.

Streets & Sidewalks (H. Zander)

Council member Zander reported on the upcoming sidewalk project.

Public Health, Safety & Ordinances and Planning Commission (M. Isom)

Council member Isom reported no additional business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No Unfinished Business.

MAYOR'S BUSINESS

Mayor Gooden reported that two East Rockingham High School students planned to decorate the LOVE letters in honor of sexual assault awareness month. He read the note below that was sent from one of the students.

Dear Elkton Town Council,

Courtlynn Meadows and I are students from East Rockingham High School and we were preparing a project for the month of April since it is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Because of the virus that sprung upon us, we could not finish our project. We had planned to make every student in the school aware of what sexual assault is and give those who have been affected hope for overcoming what they have been through. We still want people to know the truths surrounding sexual assault, and how it affects a huge percentage of Americans. We also want to help the victims find healing and let them know that there is hope after the trauma. Thank you for allowing us to display our banners and spread awareness. Thank you so much for your time,

Peyton Downey

He briefly discussed ways to recognize East Rockingham High School seniors through displaying senior banners throughout the Town. He was working with Treasurer Sipe to coordinate orders and designs. He noted that if anyone was interested in sponsoring a senior, they could do so by contacting him or the Treasurer's office.

In relation to the Jennings House project, the Mayor provided an overview of the information below:

- *July 2016 – Moved Police Department out of Jennings House*
- *August 3, 2016 – Moved all other offices out of Jennings House*
- *September 2017 – Mold remediation and asbestos abatement completed*
- *March 2018 – Council reviewed three firms to study Jennings House (Frazier & Associates, Lineage Architects, and BRW Architects)*
- *May 2018 – The Elkton Town Council selected Lineage Architects*
- *September 2018 – Architects reported that the Jennings House was in excellent condition*
- *January 2020 – Town Council decided to move forward with soliciting bids for construction/financing*
- *February 2020 – Three construction contracts submitted to Lineage Architects*
- *March 2020 – Town Council received Lineage Architects' recommendation*
- *April 2020 – Town Council received funding proposals*

Mayor Gooden read the following statement:

"I wanted to share some information regarding the Jennings House. Information related to the Jennings House is certainly not new, as I outlined in the list above. Various derogatory, threatening and hateful comments have been posted on social media over the last three days in an order to spread lies and threaten council members. This resident has lied and spread rumors that the town council has agreed to raise real estate taxes to fund the Jennings House restoration which is far from true. We are fortunate to have an increased revenue stream in town due to the success of our many small businesses and over a dozen new businesses opening in town over the last 18 months. Meals and sales tax have been well above average due to the business friendly climate in town.

It would also be wonderful if the ex-mayor for the Town of Elkton was concerned about the town finances when he was in office and single handedly pushed to spend over $2 million of the town's savings over the course of two years, all on unbudgeted projects. Fortunately, unlike these expenses, the Jennings House Restoration is an investment into our town's heritage and future unlike frivolous spending on bouncy houses, broken ice skating rinks, parade floats and more.

The Jennings House will also be built based on the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code and comply with ADA regulations. The existing "temporary" offices where the staff is located were not completed to conform to state building codes, did not have a building permit, and was never given a certificate of occupancy.

This historic restoration will allow the Elkton Area Community Center to go back to being what it was intended to be used for....a community center for our residents and community center to gather and fellowship together."

CLOSED SESSION

Council member Dean moved to go into closed session under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711A.1 personnel issues. Duly seconded by Council member America.

YEAS: M. Isom, H. Zander, L. Heidel, R. Snow, J. Dean, and S. America

NAYS: None

VOTE: (6 – 0 voice vote) Motion carried

With no additional business the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor: Joshua J. Gooden

Recorder: Denise R. Monger, Clerk