

The regular meeting of the Murphy Town Council was held on October 5, 2020 at 5:00 pm at the Murphy Fire Dept.

Town Manager: Chad Simons
Attorney: Mack Cowan

Mayor: Rick Ramsey
Council: Barry McClure Frank Dickey
Karen Watson Gail Stansell
Barbara Hughes Noland Smith

WKRR was present

Mayor Ramsey led the Council with the pledge of allegiance.

Public Hearing – Community Development Block Grant Project Closeout

Mayor Rick Ramsey called the meeting to order and stated the purpose of the Public Hearing is to receive public comments for the Close-out of the 2016 Community Development Block Grant, Infrastructure Project, Grant 16-I-2921, Regal Street Water and Sewer Improvement Project.

Mayor Ramsey recognized Chad Simons, Town Manager, to speak about the project. Mr. Simons stated that the completed project included approximately 3,568 linear feet of new sewer line and approximately 4,025 linear feet of new waterline, which benefitted 91.66% of whom were low and moderate income individuals. A Manual Bar Screen was also installed at the Detention Center off Regal Street with left over funds. The grant amount awarded to the Town of Murphy for the Regal Street Water and Sewer Improvement Project was \$2,000,000.00; the total spent for the project was \$1,946,070.25.

No public comments received.

**Motion was made by Stansell, seconded by Smith to close the public hearing at 5:05 pm.
Motion carried unanimously.**

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by McClure, seconded by Stansell to approve the September 8, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Water and Sewer & Tax Releases & Refunds

Motion was made by Hughes, seconded by Dickey to approve the water and sewer adjustments of \$465.83. Motion carried unanimously.

Sewer EMS Station Project

Town Manager Chad Simons updated the Council about the Sewer EMS Station project. Mr. Simons reminded the Council that the Town had entered into an interlocal agreement with Cherokee County in March 2020 to pay for fifty percent of the sewer costs for the project. The idea was to get sewer access to the US 19/64/74 Corridor. The initial bid for the sewer project came in at about \$360,000. Mr. Simons

stated that the county opted to delay the project and reassess in January due to Covid-19. However, due to the increase in sales taxes the County has most likely decided to rebid the project this fall, Simons said. Mr. Simons stated that he still has uncertainties about the economy, especially since the fiscal stimulus ended in July. Mr. Simons said local sales tax distributions are up this year, but the water/sewer charges are still not quite where they were at this time last year. Mr. Simons also said the town has discovered problems within the collection/distribution system that must be addressed soon. Mr. Simons said the town may have additional grant monies left over from the Forest Service Project that they could use to help the county pay for the project, but he would not know if the funds could be used for the purpose until a few weeks. Mr. Simons said if the grant monies could not be made available, the town would have to spend fund balance to support the project.

Mr. Frank Dickey asked if the County has actually decided to move forward on the project. Mr. Simons said he did not know, but from conversations with the county manager it seemed likely that the county was going to move forward on the project at their meeting later tonight. Mr. Dickey said the town should wait until the county actually made a decision, and not worry about it until then.

Mayor Ramsey wanted to entertain a motion to defer a decision on this project until the county made a decision, and until the Town Manager knows if the Appalachian Grant monies will be available.

Motion was made by Dickey, seconded by Smith to delay a decision on the Sewer EMS Station project until the county formally votes to proceed on the project, and to authorize the Town Manager to negotiate with ARC and USDA to allow the use of leftover grant monies to support the sewer portion of the project if the county does vote to proceed with the project at the U.S 65/19/74 intersection. Motion carried unanimously.

Leak Adjustment Policy

Town Manager Chad Simons recommended the adoption of a new leak policy.

Motion was made by McClure, seconded by Watson to approve the leak adjustment policy. Motion carried unanimously. A copy of the policy is attached in the minute book.

Budget Amendment - Recreation

Town Manager Chad Simons said complaints were received about the condition of the slides at the playground in front of the rock gym. Mr. Simons said the recreation director assessed the slides and later brought in a company from Charlotte to evaluate their condition. The company recommended the installation of new slides, which would be cheaper than repairs. Mr. Simons said the slides are 20-25 years old. Mr. Simons said the proposal is to split the cost with Cherokee County.

Motion was made by Dickey, seconded by Watson to appropriate \$4,500 from General Fund Balance to Recreation to pay for the slides. Motion carried unanimously.

Monthly Reports

Motion was made by McClure, seconded by Smith to approve the monthly reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion

Town Manager Chad Simons sought guidance from the Council on how to deal with shared meter accounts when one customer refuses to pay, and the other customer on the shared meter is in good standing. Mr. Simons said the council could increase deposits for shared meter accounts, require the property owner to keep the account in their name, or require customers to get a separate tap made over a certain period of time.

Mr. Frank Dickey said the second option would be the best option to go with. Mr. Simons said he would work with Town Attorney Mack Cowan to draw up a draft ordinance for the Council to consider next month.

Barbara Hughes updated the Council about a new program Heritage Partners is doing called Echo Explorer. Mrs. Hughes said the program is for children, designed to encourage children to be outdoors. Mrs. Hughes also told the Council that Heritage Partners is nearly ready to put up the Heritage Partners directional sign poles for the River Walk.

Ms. Stansell asked about Halloween activities. Mayor Ramsey said the town would not be sponsoring or incentivizing any door to door trick or treat programs in town. Mayor Ramsey said he reviewed the CDC guidelines and discussed it the Cherokee County Health Director. Mr. Dickey said the pandemic is really hitting home in Cherokee County, saying that cases are rising rapidly and are present in both nursing homes. Mr. Dickey said the town and larger community needed to be vigilant moving forward.

Adjourn

Motion was made by McClure, seconded by Stansell to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:35 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Clerk: Signed Chad Simons

Mayor: Signed David Rick Ramsey

