

**TOWN OF TRYON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SEPTEMBER 17, 2019 6:00 P.M.
TRYON TOWN HALL – MCCOWN ROOM
WORK SESSION**

Present: Mayor J. Alan Peoples Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Bill Ingham
Commissioners: Crys Armbrust, Bill Crowell, Chrelle Booker

Staff Present: Town Manager Zach Ollis Town Clerk Susan Bell
 Town Attorney William Morgan Public Works Director Jody Morse
 Water Plant Supervisor Greg McCool

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Peoples called the work session to order.

Town Manager Ollis stated that Closed Session needed to be added for discussion of 45 E. Livingston Street. PWD Morse has worked to get information ready for you. Ollis showed pictures from the dam at the Town Lake in 2007 and current pictures. Morse stated there is only two to three feet of water in it now. Water is coming through the rock dam, because it is a rock dam with no concrete.

Ollis asked Water Plant Supervisor McCool to come regarding how much water is pulled from the Town Lake.

Commissioner Armbrust stated we rant this town for one hundred years off of this lake. In the 1950's, we acquired Lake Lanier to supplement town lake. That supplementation reversed and Lake Lanier became the Town's main water source. He understands the present water plant was outfitted using the presumption that Lake Lanier would be the principle water source. The Town has done maintenance for seventy years to the point that Lake Lanier is our main water source. He asked what it will take to be absolutely free of Lake Lanier as a water source. Public Works Morse asked why, would you want to get rid of a water source, when Tryon is blessed with having plenty of water. Armbrust stated Tryon is blessed with several water sources. He can assure that in the upcoming decades the principle issue is going to be water. In his opinion, a North Carolina municipality should in no way be beholden to South Carolina entity for a lifeline like water. If we owned it, he would be fine. Point of fact we do not own it outright and do not have full municipal rights. It costs the Town of Tryon taxpayers every year.

Water Plant Supervisor McCool stated we own the dam, we own the bed and we own the water. The only thing Tryon stands to gain is the water. He would like to bring up the fire at Melrose Inn. When Columbus brought in their ladder truck, they used a million gallons of water in one day. They could not keep up with the pumps running wide open. And that's not in a drought situation. You have to think about fire protection. He has never seen it run over 300 gallons a minute. He's not saying if you run a brand new line up there and it is not during a drought. Gary had told him the most would be between 500 and 550 at most if we are lucky.

Armbrust asked in your experience as a long time employee of the water department is the liability to the Town. McCool stated there is liability there. He is the one signing off on reports. Who is to say we have an engineer look and they say it looks fine like it is or it needs minimal work done. This is the lifeline of Tryon, if you have any growth. Say the mountain gives 600 gallons a minute. That is saying no growth, no fires and no drought. Armbrust stated he doesn't agree that is the lifeline, because clearly for 100 years it was not. McCool stated back then you didn't have as many water lines and it was direct filtration, there was no backwashing and no regulations. Armbrust stated you do realize we are sitting here tonight with the potential discussion of approving a request doing \$50,000 of work. That's a liability. What do you think the study will lead to? McCool stated that is a tough question. Does he think the dam is fine, he does. Does it need some updating, probably does. He's not an engineer. That's why you need an engineer. DEHEC inspects the dam every years and they put us at a high risk hazard, because you have people down below. Ollis stated the dam is over twenty years old and that makes it a high risk.

Attorney Morgan stated that he has read the statutes in South Carolina and the corresponding regulations. He assumed the high risk dam is the impacts of the dam. Armbrust stated it burst in 1929. Commissioner Crowell stated that was because it was an earthen dam. Commissioner Ingham stated he remembers working at the water plant when there was a drought. You better not give up your backup plan. McCool stated the line coming from Saluda is dead, there is no water coming from there. Columbus is on wells and we guaranteed them like 200,000 gallons a day if they want it.

Armbrust stated he doesn't want to give up our backup plan. That's all that Lake Lanier should be is a backup. Back to your comment about Columbus if they want it. We will always put Tryon first. Columbus has not voiced a desire yet to have that 200,000 gallons a day. He feels that we are under no obligation. McCool stated they do use it from time to time if they have a break, something they can't control. It's an emergency thing.

Ingham stated in talking about growth, such as a brewery, he worries about the town lake being our only source. Crowell stated you have Pearson's Falls, Town Lake and Dark Corner. He would like to keep our water rights, but it could be \$2,000,000 coming our way. That money he would like to see coming off the mountain. We are protecting Greenville County taxpayers that pay a million dollars a year in taxes.

Ingham stated if we don't do something we are going to get fined. That will cost money and we don't know what it will take to bring the water down the mountain. Crowell stated they tore the settling pond down. McCool stated they haven't used that since the 80's.

Mayor Peoples thanked the Board and stated this is the first board that he has gotten to pay attention. He has been working on this since 2002. We need all the water rights anything water that we can get. Water is becoming a preemie. We don't know what it is going to cost to fix Town Lake. We are going to need a study done to find out the details. McCool stated if you were going into a drought situation the water coming down and the lake turbidity would be pretty close. During a rain storm that lake will stay pretty much the same. The water coming off the mountain will be running red mud. They would have to shut down. Armbrust stated he doesn't believe that. Ingham asked why he asked them questions, if wasn't going to believe their answers. Armbrust stated he's not going to accept and answer that says there can be no further discussion. Crowell stated we are not saying that.

McCool stated the water gets really bad and gets bad quick. You have about thirty minutes. When the water comes in we add chemicals and that causes it to floc. When the water changes with rain water and mud, it changes the whole chemistry. Then you are back to figuring out how to make that work. If you miss it and you don't catch it, you have a minimum of two hours throwing that water to waste, because you can't do anything with it.

Mayor Peoples stated we don't have the answers, we just need to put it on the agenda and direct the Town Manager to find out what it would cost. Armbrust stated this is his bottom line, he would be more interested to throw money at an engineering firm about bringing our earlier systems up to code, than throwing \$50,000 at a study of Lake Lanier dam. Mayor Peoples stated we are probably going to have to do both. Armbrust stated probably. Ingham stated this is the water that we use today and we are being told to do a study. Attorney Morgan stated you are being ordered to, essentially. Crowell stated we need to get the town lake back running, because they are telling us to drop the lake. Ingham stated don't get me wrong he would love to see water coming from town lake, but he doesn't want us to decide that we are not going to do this study on the dam, because we may have to spend just as much money and then find we are going to have to spend more money. He knows we are going to have a better deal up there, but he doesn't want to cut off our nose to spite our face with this.

PWD Morse stated he had talked with Gary Walker today and asked if he could give him a guestimate on what it would cost to get the water from the mountain running again. Dark Corner running again. He said he couldn't tell him how many millions and millions of dollars it would cost to fix that. We are going to have to run a brand new line, put a new dam up there. Miles on top of miles of new lines. Some of the water lines are on top of the ground right now, because when they put the lines in hundred years ago, there was rock. We are going to have the same thing as on Howard Gap where the mountain washed away. There are places right now where the mountain has shifted. You are going to be spending millions to get this done. Armbrust stated if you think millions of dollars is a lot of money then you are in the wrong business.

Attorney Morgan stated there is a provision to get an extension on the time. Ollis stated we can get an extension, we just have to have an engineer signed on. Armbrust asked when the deadline is. Ollis stated December 1. Armbrust stated he would like to put it off if we can use this as a rationale. Ingham stated we are going to have to do the report. Crowell asked if we could task Greenville County to help pay for this. DEHEC is requiring us to put in a cut off valve in case of a really bad storm, we can lower the lake.

Attorney Morgan stated you do need an emergency action plan. McCool stated we have one. Morgan stated you might want to look into grants for dam upgrades. National Dam Safety Program Grants. The only thing is you are a North Carolina municipality and the dam is in South Carolina. Not sure how that will work. An extension would give Zach time to find out about how assistance.

Ingham stated we need to ask for an extension, try to find another engineer if we can and in the meantime search out these grants.

Crowell stated we need to find out how to enforce safety on the lake. Our deed tells us we are not allowed to adjust the spillway, we are responsible for keeping safety and harmony. Morgan asked how we are expected to do that with no police power in another state. Crowell suggested hiring a DNR person to write tickets on Saturdays. People might get the idea then. There would be a lot less alcohol

on the lake. Mayor Peoples stated obviously no one looked at this when we took over the lake. Ingham stated we have to start somewhere. But that has nothing to do with the inspection. Crowell stated if we have to spend two million dollars on the dam, he wants control over what happens on the lake. Attorney Morgan suggested adopting rules and regulations and asking Greenville County to adopt them and enforce them. Crowell stated they will not do anything.

Ollis will work on the extension letter. He will have to ask if we can have an extension without an engineer. The one engineer told me that if they were to bid it would be around \$50,000. This is all that they do and are very qualified. It could be less. No matter what is found out, they understand about having funds to make repairs. Crowell stated DOT may have to close the bridge. Morgan stated that is not our problem though. Ingham stated we are not going to know until we have the inspection. He agrees but until we find out about the inspection, we can go round and round with discussions.

Armbrust stated the Melrose Lodge situation. He would urge, after consultation with many, many citizens and several commissioners that we table this at this time. Mayor Peoples asked is it feasible to get permission from the owner to take our vehicles and push it down flat until such time as someone cleans it up. Ingham said just neaten it up a little. Mayor Peoples stated he saw several names on it, but he doesn't know who actually owns it. Ollis stated as far as he knows, it is owned by a LLC. Crowell stated we already have permission. Morgan stated we might want to get someone with knowledge of the asbestos. Ollis stated we already had an asbestos testing done. We are going on private property, are we going to be responsible for the stuff in the air. PWD Morse stated he wouldn't want to be up in the middle of it, not knowing what is underneath. He would hire someone with a large backhoe. Mayor Peoples is only asking if we can do this.

Ingham asked about Erskine Bridge. John Vining mentioned something about putting a stone there, something to identify it. Joyce Kimpton had told him that used to be Tryon's power plant originally. Ollis stated she had called him and told him the same thing, but he doesn't know the history of it. Crowell stated once upon a time, there was a power plant for Tryon Processing/Grover Industries that ran the mill up to where the wood mother love is. It was a twelve hour drainage. They actually used to flood all the Pacolet River passed Harmon Field. Ingham stated if it was, then we should put a marker there identifying it.

Armbrust stated that was the driveway to the Erskine house. Crowell stated not the bridge. The old road came up from Scrivens and crossed the river there. That bridge has off and on been there since Howard Gap Road.

Ollis stated as far as the rock goes we've already planned for rock to be on that bridge and have instructed Paul, that we want the rock to match the clock tower. Armbrust stated right. Ollis stated then we want to build a sign coming in from Highway 108 with matching rock as well. When you come in to town we will have a sign with rock, the bridge with rock and the clock tower. Armbrust asked him to add to the Town Manager's report. Ollis stated sure. Crowell stated the lake is not going to be there within a few years, it will just be a wet land, swamp.

Commissioner Booker stated we have had some pretty good work sessions, but asked if we needed one every month. Armbrust stated yes. It would be more productive for all if we were to submit our topics for discussion a couple of days beforehand.

Booker asked on the Nina Simone's house, people in town are having trouble telling others how to get there. Armbrust stated that will be dealt with in about two to three weeks when the kiosk goes in. A map will be at the kiosk. Ollis stated he tells everyone to google the church. That helps them to get there. Armbrust is having memorabilia from the Rock N Roll Hall of Fame delivered here. It will be displayed at the Film Festival, because they are doing a Nina film. Then it will go to Raleigh for a short while and then returned here to be displayed. The problem is that it has to have insurance.

Armbrust wants the board to focus on minimum housing and keep the projects moving forward.

Crowell stated we need to make new regulations on leaf removal, limbs, etc. At the end of leaf season you have to bag them, period. Limbs have to be a certain size. Armbrust stated that we have gone from a three month pickup program to a twelve month program. Ingham asked if we didn't decide to contract that out. Crowell stated we need to let the residents know when to put them out and be done with that street. Mayor Peoples asked about when the tornado came. Crowell stated we can have exceptions. The leaves are dropping later and later.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Armbrust so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

J. Alan Peoples, Mayor

Attest:

Susan B. Bell, Town Clerk