

**TOWN OF TRYON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY 24, 2020 12:00 P.M.
BUDGET WORK SESSION**

Present: Mayor J. Alan Peoples

Commissioners: Crys Armbrust, Bill Crowell, Bill Ingham

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Chrelle Booker

Staff Present: Town Manager Zach Ollis Town Clerk Susan Bell

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Peoples called the budget work session to order.

Town Manager Ollis stated with this meeting you have two items. The revenues and expenditures that haven't changed and Jamie before she left provided a cash flow chart for TDDA. It's broken down month by month. It shows profit and loss. That's for the overall outlook. Representatives from TDDA are present. You had asked me to provide a budget that included the position. Right now, it is fully funded.

Gordon Hamilton, TDDA, thanked the board for considering this. He reported on his communication with the Polk County Community Foundation. It's not every day that an organization loses its President, Director and funding all in the same day. TDDA received a letter from the Polk County Community Foundation stating they had indicated to them in the past that they were not interested in providing operational funds. They have done so in the past, but going forward they are not going to do that until the next fiscal year. That would be 2020-2021. Shortly thereafter they received another letter from them stating they were not sure if TDDA was going to be able to fulfill the spirit and commitment of the original agreement for funding of this year. The last quarter or payment for the year, they were told they are welcome to reapply for those funds. So not only are they losing the funding for next year they are probably going to lose a portion of their funding for the last quarter of this fiscal year (\$6200). That is a breach of contract, because the agreement is between TDDA and the Polk County Community Foundation, it's not between Jamie and Scott. It's between individuals at the Foundation. TDDA is not going to pursue that, but in response to their concerns TDDA is fully committed to those things that they promised to do under Scott and Jamie. They hired Jessica to work on all the programming things that Jamie was working on to keep the momentum going. The Board is going to step up and do all the things that were part of the agreement, the clearly stated objections of the agreement. The spirit of the agreement is ambiguous and they are still looking to understand what that really means. They do not know if they are going to honor their agreement to fund the \$6,200. They do not know what remedies are available to them if they don't fund this amount of money. They don't know if it is worth it. That is the situation that TDDA is in. If you look at the spreadsheet, it's not easy to understand, but it is very helpful. It shows their cash flow and that we can make it through the year, but it also includes the payment from the Foundation, that they aren't going to receive.

As they go into next year, they are going to have to look very seriously at car washes and bake sales or whatever other options for funding the operations of the organization. They feel they are in a good

position to take this organization further than it has ever been. They just need to cover the salary and get the right person to fill the position.

Mayor Peoples stated he feels that the Town could buy into that fairly easy. Commissioner Armbrust stated he doesn't think the Board should bind future councils, so at the most he feels it should go through the next election. Mayor Peoples asked why, if it is for the betterment of the town and we have ample proof that it works. Armbrust stated it does not create a positive situation binding future councils to their decisions. If they think it is a positive thing, then they will do the right thing. Peoples stated we can't bind them anyway. Ollis stated future councils can do away with it if decided to.

Ollis asked when they received the letter from the Foundation. Mr. Hamilton doesn't know the exact date, but it was the first work day after he started as Interim Director. The week after that they received the second letter. The day they held the going away party for Jamie.

Ollis stated we have included in the budget the funding for the position. The salary is not advertised, but it is what we can go max for the best person. He believes you have \$25,000 in operations and the Town gives \$15,000. Basically, if you fund that position regardless of what the salary is, this will free up the money that they make through memberships. Any funds that is made off of their events, goes all into programming. Crowell asked about the donations at \$9,500 and memberships at \$7,500. Is that a factual number? Mr. Hamilton stated yes, but they haven't finished the year. They will push membership and for donations. Ollis has met with the Chamber of Commerce. They have a new president and vice-president and they are hard after memberships. He feels that TDDA needs to get on memberships as soon as possible.

Mayor Peoples feels that we should fund it for at least two years. Armbrust asked when this will begin, July 1. Everyone agreed. Armbrust asked about the oversight, accountability and deliverables. Mr. Gordon stated from his observations, this person would be a city employee and report to the city manager or top administrator. They would be the support for the non-profit 501c3. The non-profit would be guided by this person and they both work in collaboration with one another. This person would have enough experience to break it down into parts and would be intelligent enough to talk about what is involved with planning and what is involved in grant writing. That is their vision. A substantial portion of this person's time would be devoted to the board, so that the board can accomplish its mission, which is to provide economic development for Tryon. His vision is to connect some of the dots that need to be connected in Tryon. Selling Tryon with the right person and right board. Armbrust stated that will depend on the skillset of the individual hired. You have a great opportunity to connect Tryon using TDDA as a cultural heritage destination. Mr. Hamilton stated that is what we are looking for in a person, someone that understands that. Armbrust asked when they expect to move forward. Mr. Hamilton stated they would like to have someone start at the beginning of the fiscal year. The panel would make a recommendation to the town manager for the final decision. The town manager is ultimately responsible for that person. He would like to have a panel of people from TDDA and outside TDDA and maybe a member of the town council. Then we would give the top two or three people to the town manager as recommendations. Crowell stated this is because the person is going to work for the town manager.

Ollis gave a breakdown of Main Street numbers across the state. Sixty-four towns are actually doing well. Twenty-three of them do it in such a way that we are talking about. A town position, hired and

fired by the town and that works with a board of some type of downtown variety. There is twenty-two of them that use strictly city departments. They don't have a downtown development group they just do it in-house. There is fourteen and we are one of them that operates as a 501c3. There's three remaining in the 501c4 and there's two left that operate as a 501c6. Armbrust stated it is interesting that we had the discussion in 2016 about how to setup TDDA and TDDA was adamant that it would be separate.

Ollis has talked with Main Street and other towns about this. The majority has the position as a town position funded by the town who works together with the non-profit. It takes a lot of burden off the non-profit. Most feel like when asking for money, it is for salaries. The board works the same. The town just provides the staff member.

Wanda May asked if the 501c3 could help get the comprehensive plan done. Ollis stated it could. He suggested two members from council, two members from TDDA and one community member to be on the hiring panel. Everyone agreed. Ms. May asked about a job description. If they have one it probably needs to be updated. To keep the 501c3, the paperwork needs to be sent in. Crowell is happy with the position. He has seen what TDDA has done for the town. Mayor Peoples stated that we have grown. Ollis stated you want the position to start July 1. Everyone agreed. Advertise it for four weeks. Get the job advertisement out April 2nd. Mayor Peoples stated this would give Zach time to look over the job announcement. Ollis asked for TDDA emails to start a thread. Mr. Hamilton stated that would give them time to look over the job description and tweak it.

Mayor Peoples asked for questions concerning the budget. No questions. Mr. Hamilton and Ms. May thanked the Board.

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

J. Alan Peoples, Mayor

Attest:

Susan B. Bell, Town Clerk