

**TOWN OF TRYON  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
FEBRUARY 15, 2022  
TRYON TOWN HALL – MCCOWN MEETING ROOM  
WORK SESSION  
6:00 P.M.**

Present: Mayor Pro Tem Chrelle Booker

Commissioners: Crys Armbrust, Bill Crowell, Bill Ingham

Absent: Mayor J. Alan Peoples

Staff Present: Town Manager Zach Ollis                      Town Clerk Susan Bell  
                    Fire Chief Josh Walton                              TDDA Director Paige Henderson  
                    Town Attorney William Morgan

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Armbrust asked about the drainage behind the Bank of America building. Town Manager Ollis will give them a call. He has been meeting with Jonathan, because he has a problem with Kenny McCannon and the Bank of America building. Kenny owns the Post Office building. Jonathan owns the Bank of America building which is still under a Bank of America lease. TFAC, Melrose and Kenny all thought it was ours to fix. Ollis explained to him that it was the property owner that would need to fix. That is part of the issue. He can contact the state. Armbrust explained this is a continuing issue, because five years ago, they had to replace a lot of that pipe. Ollis stated yes, all the way from the French drain to right past the drive through.

Commissioner Ingham asked while we are talking about Pacolet, what about the area where the light pole was. There is plywood and a cone over the area. Ollis explained it was supposed to have been fixed. He will check on this.

Armbrust reported that it is part of the historical district and feels we need to get in touch with Clay Griffith about the historical distinction. All of those buildings are eligible to be in the historic district. Ollis will contact him.

Ollis reported that Trace was supposed to be here this week to give a quote on the sidewalks. Armbrust wants him to take the sidewalk to the curve at the Baptist Church. Ollis explained the building John Walters is in, needs some repairs and he would much rather get a quote and be prepared if you want to get the sidewalk done.

Armbrust wishes the owners would take the plans that we did and it would make it look like Rainbow Row. Crowell explained they are going to put a deck on the back of the wine bar. Ollis believes there is a second retail shop going in the building that John Walters is in. He has some ideas about doing the same on Pacolet that you have done on Trade Street. He will get with the attorney on what has to be done to allow alcohol on the streets. Another thing, the gentleman of the wine bar asked about removing the tree on the corner. The tree has been donated and has a plaque on it. We could help with

some landscaping. Armbrust thinks he should put a couple of benches there. Ollis has told him he didn't think we could remove the tree, but he would check. Now he knows what to tell him.

Armbrust wants at some point to review the five-year plan. Booker asked if we were close to the end of the five-year plan. Crowell stated no, the plans are for water and sewer projects.

Armbrust reported the people from New York that bought the Nina Simone house did a photo shoot for a pretty large article in the New York Times. He will let everyone know when it comes out. It went very well.

Crowell replied that tonight airing on Central Piedmont Community College Public TV station Charlotte is Tryon. We can't get it, but maybe we could stream it. Ollis stated they are all uploaded to the website. Armbrust replied there will be a piece in the March issue of the "Our State" magazine on Nina Simone. Ollis stated we are getting recognitions because we were voted 3rd best for outstanding small towns.

Crowell asked if any fundraising had been planned for TDDA this summer. Henderson replied the branding kickoff she is hoping to do that for May's, 4<sup>th</sup> Friday. We want to have that like a community party. She has the handout for the branding that you can look at. Armbrust asked what the status of the tag line is. Henderson reported they have updated it to be "Your Best Life. In Stride". That is what is on their official recommendation. You can use it how you like. With all projects, some like it and some don't. Armbrust still doesn't like it. Henderson responded you can look at the information. She has given it to Tracey so that she can be upfitting the ExploreTryon website. She will be working on the TDDA website and Tim is going to update the ordinances. She can send you an electronic copy if you desire. They would like to hold like a block party downtown to get this started. She hopes to get some signs downtown and other stuff to hopefully get people excited about it. Shawn came and spoke to tourism last week and it was actually probably the best meeting we have had. They were really excited and love the changes that were made. They came back in November to talk to everyone involved in this. They sent out surveys to every member on each of the boards and only received about twelve responses. Half were super positive and half were kind of wishy washy. They did take all the constructive criticism from the comments and made updates. People had issues with certain colors, they updated those. The biggest thing was the tag line and they felt that saying "Your Best Life" was more personalized to tie into, it's your best life if you live here. When they did the community survey they received 500 responses, in those they kept hearing these are the best years of our life in Tryon. This is what I have been working all my life for, is Tryon. They would love to have some type of fundraiser. Ollis suggested he and Crowell cook a pig. Henderson replied this is a big expense for TDDA. She thanked the Town for coming in on this with them.

Commissioner Crowell was handed a petition of signatures to turn in for support of the kayak dock on Lake Lanier. She will bring more to him next month. The signatures are all citizens of the town.

Mayor Pro Tem Booker asked to see the changes to the branding. Henderson showed her where they made color changes and some of the custom logos. They have done some mock ups so we can do some ads. The biggest updates people asked for was Tourism wanted a new rack card. They designed that for us and Tracey is working on the background for it. People asked for Morris not to be less mosaic. The first run, none of us could see it. Crowell responded once you see it, you can't get it out of your head.

Mayor Pro Tem Booker asked if we were ever going to get the letters on the hill done. People seem to like those. Henderson replied we could cut letters out of the new design. Booker stated we have the

opportunity to have the entire town on video. Henderson responded we have a lot of photos on file. That would be a great addition to our files. Armbrust stated there are two videos that have been done by Erik Olsen of the town. Booker stated it's all about promotion. Each merchant would have their own video. Crowell asked about the cost. Booker stated there is no cost. She will get more details. Henderson responded it would be great to have extra footage. Within a year, downtown will look different. Armbrust stated it already looks a lot different. Ollis stated there have been many changes since he came.

Commissioner Ingham stated we are talking about bathrooms at almost every meeting. We are going to get something done. On another note, recently he found out that one of Thousand Pines rentals, someone got a high-water bill and once it got so high, they sent in a new renter to get the water turned back on. They owe around \$3,000. There was a leak, but they weren't notified until they were told they had a roof leak and saw water running. Ollis replied we are going to start getting rental agreements to make sure the person is living there.

Booker asked how much did the water bills go up. Ingham responded you get to flush, wash, and trash hauled off for a few extra dollars. Ollis when we raised rates last year, we did it in January at the board's request. Then we raised them again in July. Rates went up 2.5% in January and about 2.5% in July. This might be the reason it seems like a lot. When we compare us to most places, we might not be super cheap, but we are reasonable. Henderson asked if it was done to cover infrastructure. Ollis replied it was in the fifteen-year plan. Commissioner Ingham stated the cost of chemicals keep going up.

Ollis reported that a couple of months back we talked about the fire department's apparatus and wanting to sell the brush truck to buy a mini pumper. The Fire Chief was able to work out something with Columbus who has a mini pumper and wants a service truck. Also, Walton held a bid opening yesterday for a new fire truck and he will be telling you about this and some bylaw changes later.

Fire Chief Walton reported Columbus Fire Department approached him about Tryon's service truck that has no water and minimal rescue equipment on it. They did some research and talked to the membership about this. The value of their truck with equipment is greater than our truck that they are wanting to swap for. They are negotiating on the equipment. If they leave all the hose and ladders on the truck, Tryon will have no out-of-pocket expense. The mini pumper with rescue equipment will allow them to respond to a medical call and then a fire call without coming back to the station. Columbus is getting their title to make this happen.

Armbrust asked if he envisioned us needing a ladder truck. Walton explained he has it in his five-year plan. The issue now is they have no place to house it. He plans to look for a place to build a new station, followed by the purchase of a ladder truck. ISO dropped, but they said it would help us with our rating if we had a ladder truck. Both Columbus and Saluda have ladder trucks. Columbus has agreed to cover downtown if a ladder truck is needed. Crowell suggested adding on to the current fire department.

Ollis stated in talking about police vehicles they have gone up by \$2,000 and he is looking for them to go up more this year. Booker asked if they were going to be electric. Ollis stated no, the vehicles are to be pursuit ready. Electric cars are not.

Fire Chief Walton referenced the purchase of a new truck. They received four sealed bids. It was posted and he opened bids yesterday. Membership at the fire department would like to purchase a Pierce.

Pierce is the highest bid out of the four. He can put the reasons why in an email if you want. They made the list today. When they wrote the specs of what they wanted, Pierce is the only one that met all the specs. Armbrust asked what is the lowest bid. Walton stated the lowest is \$573,000 and the highest is \$676,000. They figured in suspension and motor, especially with climbing Hogback. All of them came close, but none of them could do the tack force suspension. The roll protection with Pierce is greater. They wanted a thousand gallons and requested a low hose bed for injuries. The higher bed has higher statistics with injuries. Four guys was close, but still couldn't meet their request. He is asking, can they award Pierce the bid, even though it is the higher of the four bids. Attorney Morgan explained if it is the only fully responsive bid, then legally you can. You are saying the others didn't check all the boxes. Walton responded correct. Pierce is the only one that checked all the boxes of what they wanted. Booker likes the idea of more safety.

Ollis explained what we will do is have William to draw up the papers, because you are supposed to award to the lowest responsive and responsible. Once drawn up, William will make sure it is correct and this board will vote on it next month. Walton explained the way they finance these now. You can do two year finance deferred, so we can finish paying off Engine 3 and then immediately rotate to the payment to the new one.

Walton explained they are changing bylaws. These haven't been updated since 2015. They have had some issues. He sent them a draft of what they have been talking about and they continue with discussion. He will have everything laid out for you at the next meeting. No major changes except the requirements. They dropped a few that are not fire specific classes and changed the percent of responses that you need to have. No department around has that high of a number. This round is eligibility and the next round will be junior eligibility and a few minor things like that.

Ollis responded what he is saying the debt service for Engine 3 is two more payments. It will take two years for us to start paying for the new one. So, you will see almost no difference in payments.

Mayor Pro Tem Booker adjourned the meeting at 6:52 pm.

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J. Alan Peoples, Mayor

Attest:

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Susan B. Bell, Town Clerk