

**TOWN OF TRYON  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
TRYON TOWN HALL – MCCOWN MEETING ROOM  
WORK SESSION  
JUNE 21, 2022 6:00 PM**

Present: Mayor J. Alan Peoples

Mayor Pro Tem Chrelle Booker

Commissioners: Crys Armbrust, Bill Ingham

Absent: Commissioner Bill Crowell

Staff Present: Town Manager Zach Ollis

Town Clerk Susan Bell

Town Attorney William Morgan

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Peoples called the work session to order.

Mayor Pro Tem had nothing at this time.

Commissioner Ingham asked how many fire hydrants are bad. Town Manager Ollis will get with the water department to find out. We have a problem getting supplies, but he will check.

Commissioner Armbrust asked about adding the covered breezeway at Rogers Park to the agenda. We have been talking about this for two years. He also asked about the water fountain. Ollis replied it is on. Armbrust replied the water pressure is very low. Ollis will get someone to look at it. Armbrust asked about the public space signage at the St. Luke's Plaza. Ollis can order another sign, two by three. Armbrust replied that will work and the placement of the sign is strategic.

Town Manager Ollis reported TDDA is here tonight concerning the open position. Commissioner Armbrust would like to see Economic Development as the principal function of the position. There are numerous people out there that can do that. To the best of his knowledge, we have had very little economic development in the past two years. Commissioner Ingham has seen economic development downtown.

Ollis asked if the board is satisfied with the current salary in the low \$40's and asked what your idea of economic development is. Some think large manufacturing plants is the idea of economic development. Armbrust replied no, our initiative is to preserve rural quality of our lifestyle. Ollis responded that is great, but he wants to be sure and on the same page, talking about grants etc., making improvements downtown, but not overall business recruitment. We need to find someone that has economic development background, with resume experience that can also manage the TDDA function of the town and the Main Street portion as well. Armbrust replied we need to make sure the intentional line of authority. Ollis agrees with that and he has made it clear that is the way it works. He feels that we build a committee, choose who we want to interview, interview, discussion and the town makes the final decision, with consensus.

Mayor Peoples asked Crys, with economic development, what exactly are you looking for. Armbrust replied someone who can confidently write a grant and proceed to receiving a grant. We also need an official spoke person to tell Tryon's story. Ollis replied that one thing we were looking at was sending

Paige to PIO training. Do you want someone with that experience? He is not sure if we will get someone with all these qualifications for that salary.

Wanda May responded in defense that nothing has been done in the last couple of years. The foundation was closed down because of COVID. Paige and Zach were on the ground working very hard to attract businesses and that is all we are capable of right now. Armbrust knows that and has taken that under account. There are differences in how we are today and how we were three years ago. May does not disagree, that they need help. The transition when Paige got here, the office moved out and made a nice office at Town Hall, but it was like TDDA didn't have a presence anymore. They were invited to use the room, but the computer, furniture disappeared. This the second time that it has happened. Ollis replied the office space down there was not conducive to work in. There was a leak and he was not going to let one of his people work in that situation. Paige did get rid of the printer and a few other things, because we did cost sharing here at Town Hall, with our equipment, because looking at the finance of TDDA it was not sustainable. May agreed. As a board member, they felt they were homeless. She wants to talk about this position, because they need to know how they fit in with this position. They never did this before. Would we be an advisory board to a Main Street manager? She assumes this person would run the Main Street program and they would work with this person just on that part of it. This person should run the Main Street and give us direction. In the past the board directed the person. This person needs to make sure we are accredited with everything we are supposed to.

Armbrust replied with the Main Street model properly implemented and efficiently run, the model is very useful, particularly to small communities. We need that efficiency. We need a person who can run those four distinguished areas. Ollis replied Paige did a good job, considering some of the board members did not want to take direction and the fact that they didn't have hiring and firing authority. He was not going to let the board tell her that she needed to fill out a pie chart of her daily activity. May responded they did not understand the transition and how things changed. Ollis feels we can accomplish all those goals. He just doesn't want to exhaust the volunteers. There are only so many volunteers in this town and we have a lot going on. He just doesn't want you guys to get burnt out. We need a person to do Main Street and the overall vision of TDDA, someone to find volunteers and not just rely on the town. Mayor agreed on the volunteers. May just wants a good working relationship. They have a letter of agreement to work at. Ollis explained we can all work on that and how we move forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Booker asked if May was concerned about the position being quasi? May responded no. It makes since, it gives us more credibility, it gives that person more job security sitting in that chair. There is nothing but good about it. She did fight that concept for many years. She had heard for years from the Main Street program, that if you want to maintain your autonomy you need to stay out of the building, so that you are not getting mixed up with everything. She has no problem with that. The definition needs to be worked on. Ollis will work on the definitions and can make that happen.

Armbrust asked if the new dialogue had begun with the Polk County Community Foundation. May responded they have tried to meet Sarah and so far they have not been able to meet with her, but it is high on their list. Armbrust asked what was the problem. May responded she is not sure if it is scheduling or what.

Armbrust then asked about the problem on the town side. Ollis responded he had talked with Peter Eisenbrown and others. Bill Crowell is going to set something up with her. They haven't got around to the grant proposals. Armbrust doesn't feel that Peter is the right person for this.

Mayor Peoples responded that maybe with new people, we can reapply. There were guidelines that we didn't follow. He knows three or four that were done incorrectly.

Ollis asked if everyone is pleased. The board agreed. Mayor sees that person as a director that tells us what to do. We don't supervise her. Ollis asked what would you like to see the position named. Main Street Director/Economic Development or Economic Development/Main Street Director. Mayor Peoples thinks we will have to pay more for the second name, but feels it should be first.

Mayor Pro Tem Booker stated that she has been selected as the Vice President of the National League of cities. Next year she will be President. This means we will have to have a conference here. Mayor Peoples asked how big is that conference. Booker stated maybe 160. Hopefully we will find the room. She would like to hold this in Tryon. The Board agreed.

Armbrust asked when the asphalt will be laid at Pacolet and Melrose Avenue. Ollis explained it should be NCDOT, but our guys are going ahead with it. They were laying asphalt today. He will get with Jody and find out.

Armbrust asked where we were with the sidewalks on Pacolet. Ollis explained the quote came back higher than expected. He is going to talk with William. He has contacted more than three contractors that haven't responded. He's going to ask William about this. The prices are going up.

Armbrust asked where are we regarding Chestnut. Ollis will look at the CIP and see. We have to finish Braewick first. Once the bid goes out, we then start to get the money reimbursed.

Mayor Peoples responded it is up to us to repair it, but it was not us, that let it go into disrepair.

ADJOURN

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

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J. Alan Peoples, Mayor

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Susan B. Bell, Town Clerk