

TOWN OF IRON GATE
P. O. BOX 199
IRON GATE, VA 24448
Telephone No. 862-0770

The regular monthly Work Session of the Iron Gate Town Council was held on Monday, February 13, 2023 at 7pm, at Town Hall.

Present for the meeting were Mayor Craig, Councilpersons Kawahna Persinger, Debbie Harris, Jennifer Tyree, Mikki Curtis, G.W. Reynolds; Vice Mayor Councilperson Richard Erskine and Town Clerk/Treasurer Wendy Biggs. The only resident for the work session was Jimmy Jeffries.

The following items were discussed:

Mayor Craig asked Richard Erskine to present the invocation.

Mayor Craig began by welcoming everyone and stating that the bulk of the work session was going to be focused on the three (3) proposals for the RFP ad that was ran for engineering services and the application that was submitted to the VDH. As everyone knows, we have been awarded an ARPA grant in the amount of \$943,590.00 from the VDH ODW (Virginia Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water). Our project coordinator for this was Ellen Bright-Howard, but that has since changed to Barry Matthews, who is the Division Director, until another person can be appointed. Mayor Craig and Mrs. Biggs have both spoken with Mr. Matthews about the grant what the next steps are.

In each large project, there is a timeline of smaller steps to complete the larger project as a whole. Mr. Matthews has asked us to come up with a new timeline for those smaller projects, noting that it does not need to be exact. Mayor Craig and Mrs. Biggs will be working on that timeline and sending it to Mr. Matthews tomorrow. Also within the project application, there are different projects and how much those projects will cost. The important idea to note is to go down the list of the different projects and complete them in order of importance. For instance, the most important part to start with is the pressure reducing valve (PRV). In that project, there is funding built into that for land acquisition to be able to have the property in order to complete the PRV. We have reached out to the property owner and have had conversations about the acquisition, which the property owner is favorable to. In addition, we would need to have surveying, mapping and hydraulic modeling completed; then plans for the PRV and the specifications for the PRV; waterline replacement plans and specifications.

The next step in the project after the PRV will be replacing the 8" waterline from 5th Street and Railroad Avenue all the way to the back of the playground and possibly see about extending that line into the culvert under the railroad tracks. As many of you know, the line that fed part of the Tannery Road from 7th and Railroad Avenue was compromised a couple of years ago. We would like to have a backup plan in case the only line that we have going over to the Tannery Road ever fails. In the application, we did have the funding put in for a railroad bore and to bore under the Tannery Road to be sure to have a line in place. Once we get to this step, conversations with the engineers about this idea will take place, to be sure that we are looking at the whole picture and getting what we need.

The last steps in this project would be replacing some of the gate valves and fire hydrants. You always want to make sure you have enough funding to complete your main projects before tackling the smaller ones. We are fortunate to have this funding and to be able to do these projects and the best part is that it is all ARPA money that will be used for what we are discussing.

Mayor Craig stated that with all of this being said, we have three (3) engineering firms who are very qualified and all of whom are impressive. We have Thompson and Litton, who is our current firm and they are from Radford; then ECI (Engineering Concepts Inc.) who are from Daleville and who know the Town's sewer system because of the study they did in 2015 on the I & I issues; and we have The Thrasher Group, who have worked in both Clifton Forge and Covington and have been very accessible, despite their office being in Beckley. Council was then asked to look through the proposals and see if they had any questions. Mayor Craig also explained that the Town did not need to narrow it down to only one engineering firm and that we could enter into an open-ended contract with the firms. An open ended contract would mean that we would have them on retainer, but we did not pay them anything until they performed a service. Many localities have these type of contracts in case something comes up and if one firm cannot get to that particular project, another could. The Town could still have just one firm as well as two or three; it would be up to Council. There is plenty to look over and think about before the next Town Council meeting.

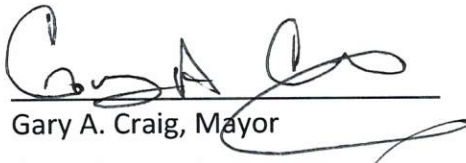
Councilperson Tyree suggested that maybe the engineering firms come and make a physical presentation if need be, due to all of the information that was in the proposals. Some people are visual and some are not; maybe a visual presentation would be a good thing in this situation. After some discussion, some Council members felt that it was a good amount of information to look over and to make a decision on by the next Council meeting. A question was asked if it was possible for Council to hear the presentations and then decide which firm to hire at a separate called meeting in order to have some time to look at all of the information given. It was noted that a called meeting could be done; but it would only be for what it was advertised for and there would need to be a two week advertising period for the called meeting. Council then further discussed it and decided to not have a called meeting to make the decision and to have a decision

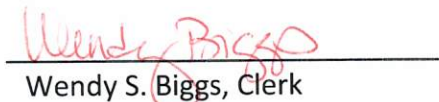
on the night of the Council meeting. There is a little over a week's time for everyone to have a chance to really look through the proposals and if Council has a question, please ask Mayor Craig or Mrs. Biggs; they would try to get the information if they did not have it.

There were also questions about where the water lines and sewer lines came down from Wesgate. Mayor Craig showed Council and Mr. Jeffries a map of where the lines are and how they run. There was some concern over the property acquisition, which would need to be discussed further with both Council, the Town Attorney and the engineering firm. Councilperson Tyree noted that we needed to be sure that if we needed to have property acquisition that we did not have the same problems that arose with the water tank. Councilpersons Persinger and Erskine also agreed, as they had been on Council around that same time.

Councilperson Tyree then asked if it was possible that the Council and Mayor had email addresses like those in other localities. In other words, more consistent email addresses such as "jtyree@irongateva" or kpersinger@irongateva". Mayor Craig thought that it may cost something to have that type of email address, but we could look into it. Mrs. Biggs asked how most of Council was contacted- was it by email, phone or face to face and that may be something to consider as well. Councilperson Tyree then asked if Town Attorney Jared Jenkins could give everyone an update on the case with Jennifer Simpson. She stated that we are getting closer to the court date; Councilperson Curtis confirmed that the case is to be heard on April 28th, with a jury present.

With no further business to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm.


Gary A. Craig, Mayor


Wendy S. Biggs, Clerk