

**CITY OF BUENA VISTA
REGULAR (VIRTUAL) COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 20, 2020**

The City Council for the City of Buena Vista met for a Regular (Virtual) Council meeting on Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Council Members Present:
Melvin Henson
Stanley Coffey
Tyson Cooper

Mayor Bill Fitzgerald
Danny Staton
Cheryl Hickman
Vice-Mayor Lisa Clark

Members Absent: None

ADG #1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND PRAYER:

Mayor Fitzgerald opened the meeting by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice-Mayor Clark delivered the prayer.

ADG #2 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Motion was made by Councilman Cooper to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilman Coffey, carried by Council.

ADG #3 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING (VIRTUAL) HELD ON AUGUST 6, 2020:

Motion was made by Council Member Hickman to approve the above-mentioned minutes, seconded by Councilman Staton, carried by Council except for Vice-Mayor Clark who abstained.

**ADG #4 RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS:
Citizens who desire to speak on matters not listed on the agenda below will be heard at this time. Citizens who desire to speak on a specific item listed on the agenda, open for public comment, will be heard when that item is considered.**

Ms. Kristina Ramsey presented the following update for Council:

- Community Business Launch Grant
 - We have just submitted an application for a Community Business Launch grant through DHCD in partnership with The Advancement Foundation, the group that runs the Gauntlet. If we receive the grant it would be used for improving the Gauntlet business launch and pitch competition in 2021. More specifically for better marketing, improving the training and classes, and for business awards.

- The 2020 Gauntlet showed to be successful despite the challenge of going virtual. We had 2 Buena Vista businesses, Vinyl Cuts and Gravista, participate and win a Silver award in the competition.
- Startup Shenandoah Valley
 - Staunton Creative Community Fund received funding from Go Virginia for their Startup Shenandoah Valley program. This program will look at traded sector businesses with the potential to scale and help them further develop and launch an innovative business model
 - Startup Shenandoah Valley will have a dedicated staff person that will spend 2 days a week in the Rockbridge area working with and reaching out to our businesses.
- Mural Grant
 - As most of you know from my email update earlier in the week and maybe from the News Gazette, we received a \$7,000 Main Street Community District Affiliate Grant to support the Mural in the town square, former Franks for the Memories location.
 - We applied for this grant in partnership with ActionBV. For those of you that don't know, Action BV is the community group started by Jamie Gooding that is dedicated to supporting small businesses and revitalizing and beautifying Buena Vista.
 - Benjamin Frey, a dual resident of BV and Philadelphia, has been selected to design the mural. He will work with Action BV to solicit community input to gather meaningful, future focused imagery that emphasizes the strengths of BV
- Tourism Wonderworks Grant
 - Tourism applied for and received a \$10,000 grant, which is designed to provide immediate recovery marketing funds to tourism organizations in the state that have been heavily impacted by the pandemic. The Tourism project, "Wanderlove: Small Towns, Big Backyard" Road Trip will provide travel inspiration for epic road trip activities in our region including outdoor recreation, hidden gems, small towns, and VTC's LOVEworks program. This campaign will include itineraries, blogs, a video, and video promotion on social media. All of this will launch on Monday featuring travel stops in Buena Vista, Lexington, and Rockbridge
- CBDG Planning Grant
 - Tom and I have been working heavily on this. In June we selected a consultant, Camoin 310, to create a marketing prospectus and begin investor outreach for our Opportunity Zone. Camoin has done a significant amount of research on Buena Vista and our market. We will soon have a digital prospectus outlining a few investment opportunities. Once this segment is

complete, Camoin will begin making phone calls to potential investors.

ADG #5 REPORTS:

1.) Mayor:

None.

2.) City Manager:

Mr. Scudder started his report by advising that he and Mayor Fitzgerald attended the Mayors/Chair breakfast on 8/19. He said that much of the discussion was about how the CARES ACT money is being used up and down the valley. He said that the 10th Street canal has been cleaned out and it cost about \$13,000.00 to do so. He said that he has been working with Tom Roberts on the Urban Forestry grant. Mr. Scudder said that we apply for it every year. He also said that we are having a lot of water leaks and that citizens are complaining about the excess run-off.

Vice-Mayor Clark wanted to know what account the \$13,000.00 came from for the canal clean up.

Mr. Scudder said the money was taken from the Public Works maintenance fund.

3.) City Attorney:

Mr. Kearney said Council has been talking about extending the time frame for virtual meetings. He suggested we put it on the agenda for our September 3rd meeting.

4.) Council Committee/Representative:

Council Member Hickman said there is some old playground equipment on 34th Street that is sitting on 2 lots. She suggested the City sell the lots and use the money for new playground equipment at GMP.

Vice-Mayor Clark wanted to know if Council Member Hickman was talking about selling the lots to a private individual and using the money for GMP.

Council Member Hickman said that was what she was referring to. She then said she has had some citizen complaints about getting letters from Alan about property maintenance and other people not getting letters. She said there are houses on Route 60 coming into town that are piled up with junk and areas around SVU that have not been mowed. She opined the letters should be sent across the board.

Councilman Cooper said we need to start working on vision planning again. He stated that Jay forwarded a memo from Tom Roberts concerning how Lexington did theirs and they spent about \$15,000.00 on it. He opined we need to look at ours again and start working on it.

Councilman Henson said they had a real good Parks and Rec meeting. They talked about some problems they have had at the park; both good and bad. Councilman Henson then asked Mr. Scudder if he had heard anything else on the Bontex building that is falling.

Mr. Scudder said he has not heard anything. He said we have sent out several letters and he will follow up with Alan on Friday. He also said he had spoken with their lawyer in DC about the situation.

Councilman Coffey suggested since the police are riding around all the time, if they see something that is not in compliance, they should report it to Alan.

Mr. Scudder said the police already do advise Alan if they see anything. He said he talked to Alan today about some sufficient code enforcement issues that we have in the City. He told Alan they need to get with Brian Kearney and address some of the issues we have with code enforcement. Mr. Scudder said we are going to go after those in the next week or so. He said we are going to send out some letters to address the code enforcement issues.

**CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS BOARDS,
COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES:**

**ADG #6 THE BUENA VISTA PLANNING COMMISSION:
MR. BRADYN TUTTLE HAS RESIGNED. HIS TERM WOULD
HAVE ENDED ON DECEMBER 31, 2020. THIS IS THE FIRST
TIME THIS HAS APPEARED ON THE AGENDA:
ADVERTISED THE NEWS GAZETTE AUGUST 19, 2020; WEB
SITE AND CHANNEL 18 AUGUST 14, 2020**

This item will be carried over to the next scheduled Council meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

**OB #1 SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE FOR
VACATION OF AN UNNAMED STREET RUNNING THROUGH THE
PARCEL KNOWN AS TAX MAP ID 47-1-E-A, LOCATED AT 6TH
AND MAGNOLIA AVENUE FROM THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA,
AND DONATION OF THIS LAND TO THE DABNEY S.
LANCASTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE REAL ESTATE
FOUNDATION:**

Motion was made by Vice-Mayor Clark to read the Ordinance by title only, seconded by Council Member Cheryl Hickman, carried by Council.

Ms. Wheeler read the following Ordinance by title only.

ORDINANCE – ORD 20-12

**Abandonment of Public Right of Way
Unnamed street traversing parcel**

Ordinance Text
3 August 2020

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA, that in accordance with Section 15.2-2206 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, that the public right of way described in "Exhibit A" ("the Property") attached hereto shall be vacated and abandoned.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that this ordinance shall be recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court for the City of Buena Vista, Virginia, and indexed under the names listed in Exhibit A.

This ordinance shall be effective 30 days following adoption by City Council.

William Fitzgerald, Mayor

ATTEST:

Dawn Wheeler, Clerk of Council

Date

Motion was made by Councilman Cooper to adopt the above Ordinance, seconded by Councilman Staton.

Ms. Wheeler polled Council as follows:

	Present	Absent	Yes	No	Abstain
Mayor Fitzgerald	X		X		
Melvin Henson	X		X		
Tyson Cooper	X		X		

Cheryl Hickman	X		X		
Vice-Mayor Lisa Clark	X		X		
Danny Staton	X		X		
Stanley Coffey	X		X		

OB #2 DISCUSS CARES ACT FUNDING:

Mr. Charles Clemmer, Director of Finance, presented a chart (see in minute book) of how the City will allocate the CARES Act funding. It is as follows:

- 1.) Rockbridge Community Foundation - \$50,000.00
- 2.) Business Recovery Grants - \$50,000.00
- 3.) Rescue Squad - \$23,000.00
- 4.) Fire Department - \$23,000.00
- 5.) Police Department - \$27,265.00
- 6.) Regional Jail - \$28,530.00
- 7.) Schools - \$50,000.00
- 8.) Salary Reimbursements - \$384,950.00
- 9.) Reserve for additional City use - \$493,617.00

Vice-Mayor Clark wanted to know if this chart was the final statement.

Mr. Clemmer said the smaller amounts are the first round of allocation of the funds and that leaves around \$500,000.00 for future projects.

Mayor Fitzgerald said we are looking at prices for a few things before we go any further. He said that some of the money will be used for IT so the Treasurer's office will be able to accept credit and debit cards for payment of services or taxes.

Mr. Scudder said he has looked at the HAVC systems at the municipal building and the library. He got quotes on both today. He said we will be looking at some of the other facilities as well. He has also talked to the Rescue Squad and the Fire Department about some further minor requests.

Council Member Hickman wanted to know the amount of the quote Mr. Scudder received for the HVAC.

Mr. Scudder said it will be around \$30,000.00 for both the municipal building and the library.

Motion was made by Council Member Hickman to approve the above expenditures, seconded by Councilman Cooper.

Vice-Mayor Clark wanted to know if she could ask a question before Council voted on the motion. She wanted to know if the funds in the gray area on the

chart that is marked “RESERVE FOR ADDITIONAL CITY USE”, could be used for any department within the City.

Mr. Clemmer said it is not only for the City but could be used for other needs within the City such as helping local businesses recover from the pandemic.

Mr. Kearney said before any of the reserved funds can be used, Mr. Clemmer will have to come back to Council for approval for the funds to be used.

Mayor Fitzgerald stated that Council has final approval on how the reserved funds are spent.

Mr. Kearney said as of now, we cannot use any of the funds for lost revenues.

Vice-Mayor Clark wanted to know when Council will look at the use of the funds again.

Mr. Scudder said he feels it will be a moving target. He opined they would be coming back as they see things evolve. He said he met with a lot of people to see what the money can be used for. He said he met with the IT people today and there is a meeting on Monday morning to talk about upgrading our IT so it will be more user friendly for not only our staff but the public as well. He said he met with our vendor, VTS, and told them he wants this to happen as fast as it can. Depending on the cost for the IT upgrade, we can look at how we are a little further along.

Council Member Hickman said the upgrade is definitely needed and will be a better way to do business.

Since the motion and second had already been presented, Council voted unanimously to approve the distribution of the CARES ACT funding.

NEW BUSINESS:

NB #1 DR. KEELER TO SPEAK CONCERNING THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

Dr. Keeler started his presentation by saying that he wanted to give Council an update on the school system as they prepare for the opening of schools on August 31st. He will also give Council the results of their back to school survey that was sent to the parents of the students. The meals program has been running from March 18 to the present time. This program will continue until schools are opened on August 31st. Dr. Keeler said he will also present the expenses the schools have endured during the COVID 19 pandemic. The school survey asked the parents if they would prefer to have the students come back, face to face, to regular school or have them stay home and their lessons supplied to them virtually. They had 903 responses to the survey. The survey showed 68.3% wanted the students to go back to school face to face. It also showed 28.9% wanted the students to do virtual learning. Based upon the CVC allowances and regulations of 6 feet between each student in a classroom, some of their classrooms can now only take 10 students with other classrooms being able to have 11 or 12 students. For Pre-K through grade 7, with Kling, Enderly and the Middle School, they can offer face to face Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. There will be a teacher workday on Friday and a deep cleaning of the schools. Dr. Keeler said they knew the High School was going to be a challenge because of the number of subjects that they must teach

along with the fact that they have more students in the High School. They will divide the total number of students into 2 groups: half will go to school on Monday and Wednesday face to face; the other half will go on Tuesday and Thursday face to face. The other 3 days for the High School students will be virtual instruction. He said they have been working on these plans since mid-May. In the survey they asked if parents could bring their children to school the first couple of weeks: 68.7% said they would bring their children to school. Another 22.2% said their children will ride the bus. The buses have restrictions as well. The original CVC rules said that you must have 6 feet between students on the bus. The school has some bus routes that carry 40 students that will now be limited to about 12 students per run. If that restriction had stayed in effect, we would have had to make 3 extra runs per day. The CVC changed the restriction from 6 feet to 4 feet and the Rural Health Organizations said they could use a meter which is about 39". They set up their health plans and submitted to the Department of Education. The plan was accepted with students being 4 feet apart on the bus. This will allow about 23 students on the bus: one per seat and wearing a face mask. They have also had to vamp up their technology. Now with virtual education they had to supply the students with either an IPAD or a Chrome Book. Pre-K through first grade will have an IPAD; grade 2 through 12 will have a Chrome Book. The school has purchased 500 new chrome books and 149 IPADs.

The meal program was done because of a grant from the USDA. Since March 18, 2020, they have fed about 960 meals per day, breakfast, and lunch. By the first day of school, they will have served 68,160 meals to the kids in Buena Vista. The grant will stop at that point. They have had a grant for the past 3 years for Pre-K through grade 7 to supply all children with breakfast and lunch. They have now extended that and granted to go ahead with giving breakfast and lunch from Pre-K through grade 12.

Dr. Keeler then addressed the expense associated with COVID-19. Part of their meal give away is dealing with the delivery for those children who cannot get to the school to be fed. Bucky Buchanan and the transportation crew has taken out 3 vans and helped get at least half of the meals delivered. The expense from March 8th until August 7th is \$17,558.63. This cost covers the wages of the drivers, the helpers, and the gas.

Dr. Keeler then spoke about maintenance expenses due to COVID-19. They had to buy 4 sprayer machines. They will use these sprayers to spray down both classrooms and buses that will be sprayed 2 times per day. The cost for these machines was \$5,750.00. They were given 84 cleaning buckets from Lowes. They took those buckets and put Kleenex, hand sanitizer, Lysol spray and wipes for the teachers to use. The costs for this for the weeks they are in school is approximately \$39,553.00. Kling needed new desks because they only had tables and they could not maintain 6 feet between students with the tables. They stored the tables and looked at purchasing desks. The cost for each desk was going to be \$200.00. Jerimiah and his kids that work for the school in the summer decided they would come up with a cheaper alternative. They put

together a desk that is stronger and the face of the desk is made so a kid can write on it and erase it. They saved the schools about \$9,000.00.

Dr. Keeler said the school's biggest expense is technology. They have spent \$288,042.00 since March to prepare for the upcoming school year. The breakdown is as follows:

WIFI -	\$ 9,769.00
T Mobile hot spots -	14,400.00
Chrome Books -	141,655.00
IPADs -	69,352.00
Live stream equipment -	15,689.00
Additional laptops for teachers -	24,760.00
Additional WIFI -	2,394.00
Wiring -	1,500.00
Power school enrollment -	3,185.00
Live stream school board mtgs. -	2,038.00
Special Education Teleconferencing -	1,800.00
Software student virtual -	<u>1,500.00</u>
TOTAL	\$288,042.00

Dr. Keeler said they have a number of things beyond that will need to be purchased during the year. They are going to need additional chrome books at a cost of \$141,655.00. They will also need covers for the chrome books; laptops for tech ed classes; software for CPE; additional equipment for Pre-K. All of this totals another \$317,643.00.

He said that COVID has not been kind to anyone. He said in 35 years he has never been through anything like this. The teachers and staff have been working very hard to get ready for the new school year. He opined this has been a strain on our school division and all school divisions. They are working very hard to keep the kids in school. Rockbridge Raffle came by the school this week and paid in full the delinquent meal funds in the amount of \$5,079.00. On Tuesday evening they got the news that the governor plans on cutting their sales tax for our school system another \$29,000.00. The CARES ACT money the school received for 2 years is about \$203,000.00. They already have expenditures over that. Dr. Keeler said he just does not know what the future is going to look like due to the virus and unfunded mandates from the State. The State wants every

school to have a registered nurse. We have 1 registered nurse and 1 LPN. The State wants us to hire 3 more RN's without any financial help from the State. Dr. Keeler thanked Council for the \$50,000.00 the City is going to give the schools from the CARES ACT funds. He also said if there is anyway Council can help more, it would be most appreciated.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

WILLIAM H. FITZGERALD, MAYOR

Dawn M. Wheeler, Clerk of Council