

September 30, 2022

TO: SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

FROM: LESLEY G. KING
TOWN CLERK

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL REPORT FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH, 2022

The Public Works Committee held a meeting on Monday, September 26th, 2022 at 3:45 p.m. at the Smithfield Center located at 220 North Church Street, Smithfield Virginia. Committee members attending were Ms. Beth Haywood, Chair, Mrs. Rountree, and Mr. Michael Smith, Vice Mayor. Other Council members present were Mr. Randy Pack, Ms. Valerie Butler, and T. Carter Williams, Mayor. Staff members present were Mr. Michael R. Stallings, Jr., Town Manager; Ms. Lesley King, Town Clerk; Ms. Ashley Rogers, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Amy Novak, Director of Parks and Recreation; Mr. Wayne Griffin, Town Engineer; Mr. Jack Reed, Director of Engineering and Public Works; Mrs. Tammie Clary, Director of Community Development and Planning; Mr. Eric Phillips, Lieutenant Police Department; and Ms. Deb Frank of Tourism. Also in attendance were Mr. Steven Bowman, Mr. Jeffrey Brooks, Bill Davidson, and Mr. Ryan Adams of Wavy 10 / Fox 43. There was no media represented.

Public Works Committee Chair, Ms. Beth Haywood, called the meeting to order.

A. MATTERS DISCUSSED BY COMMITTEE WHICH WILL BE ON THE COUNCIL'S AGENDA

1. Proposals from Blair Brothers, Inc. for Pipe Replacements at Ryder Court and 301 Winchester Place – Mr. Griffin explained that the Town has a couple of storm pipes that have failed and need to be replaced. The first location is in Cypress Creek at Ryder Court where there are two sections of the pipe (approximately 40') that needs to be replaced. The failed area encompasses four houses because the storm drainage runs behind all four houses. The failed pipe is at the wall of the drop inlet. The camera indicates that the failed area has two joints. Mr. Griffin stated that once the pipe is replaced, he would like to have Prism Contracting come and provide staff with a quote to have the entire pipe, approximately 120', lined. The depth of the pipe is approximately 8 feet. Mr. Griffin

stated that he has spoken to three of the four property owners, and they are okay with the Town working in their backyards. Mr. Griffin explained the second pipe replacement is in Waterford Oaks at 301 Winchester Place. The pipe is a 36" diameter HDPE pipe where approximately 64' of it is failing and needs to be replaced. It will be replaced with a 36" concrete pipe. The replacement pipe will go 64' from the existing drop inlet at Winchester to an outfall between the two houses. If this project is approved, it will take approximately three to four months to get the concrete pipe and materials. Mayor Williams asked how old the pipes are in these two locations. Mr. Griffin stated that both locations are approximately 26 years old. Mayor Williams asked if the town has upgraded its standards so that we are not replacing pipes after just 25 years. Mr. Griffin explained that the standard for putting in HDPE pipe has stricter regulations than in the past. He explained just for informational purposes these pipes were installed before they were annexed into the Town. HDPE is good a pipe; however, the installation must be done properly to prevent problems down the road. The manufacture has created the proper installation procedure for installing the HDPE pipe. This item will be sent to Town Council for consideration at their October 5th, 2022 meeting.

B. MATTERS DISCUSSED BY COMMITTEE WHICH WILL NOT BE ON THE COUNCIL'S AGENDA

1. Additional Item Discussed – Ms. Haywood expressed concern that employees in the Public Works Department that are at the lower end of the Town's pay scale did not get as much of a raise as the employees that are on the higher end of the pay scale based on percentages. She asked if we could revisit the pay scale percentages for the lower paid staff members. She explained that she had a conversation with a Town employee that had not really notice the pay increase because the percentage they received did not add up to much of an increase because they are on the lower end of the pay scale. The Town Manager explained that the intent was that anyone that got capped would receive the remaining portion of their raise in the next budget cycle. If there is a desire to do that before the next budget cycle, we can certainly do that. Committee asked what departments were impacted by the 15% cap. Ms. Rogers stated that there were a number of departments that were impacted by the 15% cap not just one. Ms. Haywood stated that she knows that there has been a lot of discussion over the years with the Police Department being understaffed, however ever since she has been on Town Council the Public Works Department has never been completely staffed. Ms. Haywood stated that she feels that we need to think about treating our staff that are making the least better. Ms. Rountree asked if the Town Manager if he was concerned with the action that was taken by Town Council. He explained that the Town is having trouble filling positions within the public works department. We are paying employees not much more than what they could go to McDonalds and flip burgers for. It is hard to find employees that want to do the physical work. Ms. Rogers mentioned to reference the Public Works Department the issue is not the 15% capping. It is that we compete very heavily with the private sector. When you look at the salary study the Town is comparable with other

surrounding municipalities; however, we are competing with the private sectors such as shipyards, Target, Amazon, etc. There is so much industry around Hampton Roads that require a similar skill set and they have higher starting pays. Ms. Rogers explained that with the inflation that has occurred since the study was done it has compounded the issues. The employees making the least are struggling because of the higher gas and food prices. The Town Manager stated that there are other localities that are looking at another raise the first of the year to try and keep up with inflation. If there is a desire to do that staff can definitely look into that. Ms. Butler asked what other departments within the Town look like when it comes to vacancies. Ms. Rogers stated that the Police Department and the Public Works Department are the Town's two largest departments and have the most vacancies. Do we know why these departments have so many vacancies. Is it compensation? Is it the environment? The Town Manager stated that there may be some of all of it. Public Works again are out in the field doing strenuous work and it is getting more and more difficult to find people that want to do that kind of work. Mr. Reed stated that in his world he feels that it is purely pay. He explained that cities and towns can elect not to pay or pay whatever they feel is reasonable but then we have to hire contractors to do the work. Paying contractors to do the work rather than town employees ends up costing the town more in the end. Again, we are competing with these other places in the private sector that have a better work environment. Work in the Public Works Department is not glamorous, and it is hard work. Employees are in the heat, the cold, and the sewer. There was continued discussion on the Town's starting pay compared to the starting pay in the private sector. Consensus from committee was to have staff work on putting something together including some out of the box incentives and bring back in the January time frame consideration. Mrs. Rountree stated that we should support the Public Works Department just like we support the Police Department.

Meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.