



**Town of Clayton
Town Council Work Session Minutes
Monday, February 6, 2023 at 3:00 PM
Rotary Room, Town Hall
111 E. Second Street**

Council Present:

Mayor Jody McLeod
Mayor Pro Tem Jason Thompson
Council Member Andria Archer
Council Member Avery Everett
Council Member Michael Sims
Council Member Porter Casey

Staff Present:

Rich Cappola, Town Manager
Jim Cauley, Town Attorney
Lee Barbee, Interim Deputy Town Manager/Fire Chief
Heidi Holland, Town Clerk
Robert McKie, Finance Director
Michelle Snyder, Executive Asst. to Town Manager
Ann Game, Revenue & Utility Cust. Service Director
Shaun Mizell, Procurement Manager
Joshua Baird, Engineering Director
Ben Howell, Planning Director
Dede Bumgarner, Development Services Manager
Byron Poelman, Water Resources Director
Patrick Pierce, Economic Development Director
Nathanael Shelton, Communications Officer

Council Absent:

None

1 CALL TO ORDER

- a) Mayor McLeod called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

2 ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

- a) Rich Cappola adjusted the agenda as follows:

ADD: 3e. Traffic Impact Analysis Review by Third-Party Consultants Policy
Billboard Discussion
Juneteenth Celebration Discussion

Approve or Adjust the Agenda

RESULT:	CARRIED 5-0
MOVER:	Andria Archer
SECONDER:	Jason Thompson
YES:	Jason Thompson, Andria Archer, Avery Everett, Michael Sims, and Porter Casey
NO:	None

3 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

a) Development Services Software (30 Minutes)

Presenter: Jonathan Jacobs, Assistant Engineering Director

Rich Cappola stated staff and the development community have been asking for this software. Mr. Jacobs stated this software is a collaborative effect between several departments that have talked through the process.

Why:

- Increased Efficiency
- Automation
- Simplicity
- Project History
- Communication
- Transparency
- Metric Reporting
- Fee Tracking

He stated there are a lot of risk in errors with the current process and with staff changes, a lot of history has been lost. This software helps to reduce the risk of missing a step. This software would allow the information to be housed in one place and would be able to provide instructions to the public and inform them on what documents are required. The information would be submitted and routed to the appropriate department and staff.

This software would not require staff to manually route or track an application or permit. He stated we would have the ability but would now be required to.

Mr. Jacobs stated anyone would be able to use this software, it takes you to point A to Point B. Everything would be housed in one location. Applicants would be able to track history, there will be limited history during the review, but they would still be able to track their process. From the public side, they would be able to log into the development dashboard. This provides the public another opportunity to be involved in this process.

He stated most of fees are tracked in New World but a lot are separated in project files. This program would allow citizens to track fees that are due.

He stated as a user, you would create a name and password. Then submit an application through that process. Owners and developers would give rights to citizens that need the access to that project.

Shared was a screenshot of the portal on the website. The page can be customized and would be tailored to the Town. Shared was the permit technician's dashboard which shared various charts and stats that are available for this software, such as application lists, active permits, and outstanding fees.

Timeline

- **September - November 2022: Software Evaluation - Core Evaluation** took place. Operations, Development, Inspections, Engineering, Procurement and Admin were all part of this process.
- **January 2023: Contract and Cost Negotiations**
- **February 2023: Project Kick Off/Schedule**
- **Summer/Fall 2023: Software testing/limited Public Involvement**
- **Fall 2023: Back Office Implementation**
- **January 1, 2024: Go Live**

Mr. Jacobs stated Council would give final approval. Inspections Department has the funds for this. The intent is for those funds to be appropriated. The software chosen is Clariti and Johnston County has just decided to use this software as well. The implementation cost is \$385,000 for this with an annual cost of \$98,000 a year. The cost allows 45 users, which is sufficient for what the Town needs.

The software does come with mobile app option. This software would map out the day and provide the most efficient route. He stated originally the go live date was scheduled for July 2024, but it has been pushed forward to align with UDO. The end of this year is the goal to provide key developers access to test this and go through the process to see how it functions from an outside process.

Council Member Casey asked if this part of the budget? Mr. Cappola stated it was the intent to use the inspection funds.

b) Utilities and Billing Overview (30 Minutes)

Presenter: Ann Game, Revenue & Utility Customer Service Director

Ms. Game stated discussed their department and what is up and coming. She discussed each of her staff members and shared the length they have been with the Town. She stated she is proud of the longevity of her staff. She stated she manages the Town Hall front desk as well. She stated with the new phone system that has been installed, she has been able to track calls received, the average of calls is 3,000 per month. She discussed the front desk staff being assigned the safety aspect. They monitor the cameras at the front desk that view certain locations outside the building as well as inside. The front desk staff also greets all walk-in traffic and receives deliveries.

The cashiers work with all walk-in customers, verify documents for establishing service, process payments (Utility, Fire, Police, Parks & Rec, Library), and answers phone calls (averaging over 1,300 per month). She stated these staff members are the first line of defense and greeters.

Shared were stats on payments received between 2018-2022. These stats included cash, credit card, lockbox, and checks. She stated after COVID, the credit card users doubled. She stated the Town does not make any money on credit card payments.

She discussed the Collections Specialists, their duties include:

- Process credit card & all bank files
- Responsible for all daily deposits
- Set up & process bank drafts
- Process bad debt
- Lead on all disconnects for nonpayment

There was discussion on what happens on a cut off day. Ms. Game stated this list is triple checked before turning off anyone's service. She stated if the payment is received, service is restored the same day. She discussed the techs being able to see the disconnected services on the computer in their truck, which allows them to restore service immediately. Cold weather is taken into consideration on service disconnections.

Council Member Casey asked how are citizens notified their service would be disconnected? Ms. Game stated the citizen receive an email, that notifies them that they have 7 days before they are disconnected. Council Member Sims asked what do you do when they don't have email? Ms. Game said in that instance, their bill serves as their notice. Council Member Casey asked if the mass communication system would be able to help with this. Nathanael Shelton stated in the new system, this would show the record of how many times the citizen had been contacted.

Shared was Bad Debt Accounts Graph. Ms. Game stated renters are the large majority of citizens that owe the Town debt. Council Member Casey stated he would like to know how many renters we have.

Customer Service Representatives

- Process requests for new customers & move outs
- Collect utility deposits
- Educate customers on consumption
- Provide information about all Town services

Stats were shared on how customers apply for service. She stated walk in traffic has picked up back since COVID.

Billing Specialists

- Rate experts for customers
- Prepare all bills –monthly & move out
- Bill adjustments
- High consumption outbound calls
- Meter installs –ERP system & AMI
- Focus on AMI reporting (to avoid billing estimates)

Ms. Game stated 1300 bills are prepared every month.

Meter Techs

- Use AMI system to pull reading for work orders

- Meet with customers to understand high usage
- Conduct meter pressure tests
- Investigate AMI missing reads (to avoid billing estimates)
- Educate Customers on Their Bills

Successes

Ms. Game discussed that AMI was a great success and she thanked Council for their support. She stated it is one of the best things to happen to the Town. She stated the Town's AMI was featured in ElectriCites annual report.

- Customer Facing Portal (The portal would allow this and lets customers see how what they do affect their bill.)
- Ability to monitor usage on inactive accounts
- Electric meter alerts for power failure or tampers
- Rolled out the ATCOM phone system
- Celebrated Public Power Week
- Participated in Breakfast for Top Water Customers (will hold a breakfast for the Top Electric customers in the Spring)

What's on the Horizon?

- DataVoice Implementation
- Communication plan for potential rate increases
- Strategic approach to volume of phone calls
- New payment options for utility customers
- Series of videos for new customers (How to Read Your Bill and Money Saving Tips)
- Updating customer service policies
- Professional development

Mr. Cappola stated Ms. Game and her staff do a great job. He has received a lot of great feedback on her department from citizens.

c) Financial Security Discussion (15 Minutes)

Presenter: Robert McKie, Finance Director & Shaun Mizell, Procurement Manager

Vendor Security Enhancements

- SOP for Vendor Payment Information Changes –Finalized and Approved
- Vendor Package Enhancements:
 - Remove Package from Town Website –Done
 - Sole Distribution by Procurement Team After Department Request –New Process Implemented
 - Update ACH Payment Form to Require Existing Banking Information and Tax ID –Done
 - Verify New Vendor Banking Information and/or Remittance Address
 - Digital Signature Approval (Adobe) -Implemented

- **Change ACH Form Periodically –Annually (Incorporate Version Date as Header or Footer) –FY 2024 Implementation**
- **Checklist to Confirm Performance of each Step in the Process – Implemented**
- **Procurement Analyst, Procurement Manager, Assistant Finance Director, Finance Director Approval Required for Vendor Banking Changes –Implemented**
- **Cybersecurity Training for Executive Team & Finance Staff (NEOGOV) – Assigned**
 - **Prevent Phishing –Complete by March 4, 2023**
 - **Cybersecurity: Data Privacy and Safe Computing –Complete by March 4, 2023**

Mr. McKie stated with the incident that happened in November 2022, it led the department to look at a more sophisticated process. He stated they have made sure staff is trained and prepared for any fraudulent situations. He stated Tracy Stubblefield and Shaun Mizell have been working behind the scenes on this updated process. This process is currently being used.

He went into further discussion on the new changes and policies. Staff has been issued mandatory cybersecurity training.

Items under review:

- **Shift Risk Via ePayables–Tyler AP Automation Proposal Under Review**
- **Utilize GIACT to Verify Vendor/Customer Information & NACHA Compliance –Schedule Demo**

Council Member Archer stated it was discussed previously to potentially get a higher insurance policy, are any of these tied into this or is that separate? Mr. McKie stated the Town must have a more robust policy, to get a higher level of coverage we must be able to have certain boxes check. While we are on VC3, we won't be able to move toward this process until we are on our own server. She asked if he knew of a timeline. Mr. Mizell stated there are a couple of parties involved in the agreement and they have been waiting to hear back. As soon as questions are answered there would be an update on moving forward.

Mr. Cappola stated Ms. Game has been with dealing with sensitive information, she has been reevaluating her SOP's as well. He shared other examples of processes that have changed. the intent is to have staff keeping their SOP's current. Mr. McKie stated most of these items are considered best practices and as they go through this vendor security SOP, changes can be made as necessary.

Mr. Mizell stated when this started, he reached out to other municipalities. He stated we are now doing more than other municipalities. He went into further detail on the ACH form process. Procurement analyst Karen Malcolm has been looking at this very closely, if she sees anything, it is sent to IT and further

researched. Vendors are receptive and excited about this new process. This is being done on remittance addresses as well.

He stated staff is still going through various training.

- d) **Review of Quarter 2 Accomplishments (15 Minutes)**
Presenter: Rich Cappola, Town Manager

Mr. Cappola stated for the interest of time, this would be reviewed at later date. This information was printed out and distributed to council.

- e) **Council Discussion (30 Minutes)**

Traffic Improvement Analysis Review by Third-Party Consultants Policy
This discussion was to have a consultant review all TIA reports. Jonathan Jacobs stated staff met with stakeholders last week. He stated staff feels they have the ability to hire a third-party engineer. There was discussion on passing on the cost to the developer. He stated from staff perspective, they do not have any concerns, it would be an additional set of eyes over NCDOT. Council Member Casey asked if this was common in other municipalities, Mr. Jacobs stated it depends on the municipality. Ben Howell stated in a previous municipality, they followed a similar process, the third party would review and rerun simulations and often found tweaks that needed to be made.

April 1 would be the effective date, anything submitted after that date would be subject to a third-party TIA. The cost would depend on how in depth the report would be.

Mayor Pro Tem Thompson stated he would rather us be able to have the information to provide to the developer rather than they provide us with the information. Mr. Cappola stated we would have 2-3 consultants on a rotating basis.

Council Member Casey asked if we are maxing out other developer fees? Mr. Howell stated staff looked at surrounding jurisdictions and we are for the most part lower than other Johnston County jurisdictions.

Billboard Discussion

Patrick Pierce stated there are 17 billboards along 70 Business corridor. He stated some are long-term leases. There was discussion on what is required under our current code and either creating a simple text amendment to allow for billboards to move and be able to stick with their lease or to get these under contract so they could be moved. Mayor McLeod stated we should not let the billboard lease stand in the way of tax base or economic development.

Juneteenth Celebration Discussion

Mr. Cappola stated Juneteenth is recognized as a holiday and government offices are closed. Last year there was a digital celebration. There was discussion on hosting a larger event this year. Nathanael Shelton stated it has been discussed to have a local diverse community choir and story-teller Donna Washington, with a reception to follow at the Clayton Center. It was suggested to have this event on Saturday, June 17th from 3:00 – 5:30 p.m. with an hour reception. It was estimated the programming for the event would cost approximately \$2500.00 and an additional cost for the reception. There was discussion to reach out to our local churches to see if they would like to be involved. It was stated to have cake, peanuts, punch for this year's event and next year we could work with a larger budget.

4 CLOSED SESSION

- a) Closed Session to Discuss Personnel Matter in accordance with NC GS 143-318.11(a)(6)

A Closed Session was not held.

5 ADJOURNMENT

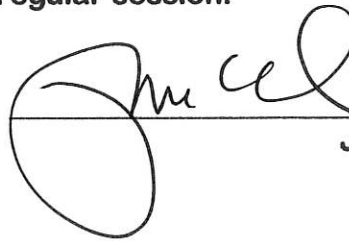
- a) Adjourn

With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn

RESULT:	CARRIED 5-0
MOVER:	Michael Sims
SECONDER:	Andria Archer
YES:	Jason Thompson, Andria Archer, Avery Everett, Michael Sims, and Porter Casey
NO:	None

Duly adopted this the 6th day of March 2023, while in regular session.



Jody L. McLeod
Mayor

ATTEST:



Heidi L. Holland, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk

