



JOINT SERVICES COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2020
2:00 P.M.
ZOOM MEETING

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM:

Scotty Hancock, Chair, Floyd County Board of Commissioners
Wright Bagby, Vice-Chair, Floyd County Board of Commissioners
Bill Collins, Mayor, Rome City Commission
Craig McDaniel, Mayor Pro-Tem, Rome City Commission
Jamie McCord, County Manager
Sammy Rich, City Manager
Gary Burkhalter, Assistant County Manager
Patrick Eidson, Assistant City Manager
Erin Elrod, County Clerk
Kristy Shepard, Human Resources Director, City of Rome
Johnny Bunch, Technology Services Director, City of Rome
Joe Smith, Clerk, City of Rome

GUESTS:

Olivia Morley, Rome News Tribune

WELCOME:

Mayor Bill Collins welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

UPDATE ON COVID-19:

City Manager Rich began by introducing the new Rome Safe Campaign, featuring the RomeGASafe.com website, that will begin on Friday, December 11. In partnership with our local medical facilities, local businesses are being asked to also partner with the City of Rome to pledge to follow best practices to minimize the spread of Covid-19. He also mentioned that City offices have remained closed to the public and that efforts had been successful in continuing business as usual while minimizing the possibility of the spread of Covid-19.

Mayor Pro-Tem McDaniel stated that he had received phone calls in opposition of the mask mandate that the City Commission passed on December, but feels that the City is doing the right thing at the right time. He spoke with Dr. Ken Davis at FMC, along with other doctors in Rome, and are all in agreement that increases in Covid cases has taxed their staff and that encouraging people to wear masks to slow



the spread is a necessity. McDaniel stated that a shut down would result in losing businesses in the area and that the City doesn't want that. He hopes that some compliance will keep the numbers down and that as a result there will be no need for discussion for a shut down. Mayor Collins said that he was also receiving phone calls regarding the mask mandate from business owners who don't want to have to police their customers when coming into their stores to make them wear a mask. McDaniel replied by reminding that there are no punitive measures against a business for having customers in a store without masks, only against the individual. Collins also mentioned that the City is in support of healthcare workers at all of the facilities in Rome and that they are very appreciated. He suggested that a letter from the City and County to these healthcare workers would be appreciated.

Mayor Collins asked the County if they had any plans to join the City in encouraging Floyd County citizens to wear masks to keep the Covid numbers from continuing to rise. Commissioner Hancock stated that they have reviewed their policies of masks in all of their county buildings, facilities and events, including basketball games, and stated they wouldn't issue a mandate but would hand out masks and recommend that they be worn and limit the number of people allowed. He also agreed with the need to make sure health care workers around Rome are encouraged and suggested that he would have County Clerk Elrod draft a letter from the County to show their support. Hancock will discuss with the Board devising a press release from the Floyd County Commissioners that encourages wearing masks. He applauded the City for doing the right things and stated that he is in total agreement with the City's choices and decisions. Collins asked Rich to draft an encouragement letter to healthcare workers in Rome and Floyd County. Rich said that he will get with County Manager McCord and come up with a letter in conjunction with the County to send out.

REDMOND TRAIL UPDATE:

County Manager Jamie McCord thanked the City and the Director of Engineering, Aaron Carroll, for the survey he completed to help answer questions from Norfolk Southern regarding the trail going under the trestle. The survey has been sent to NS and now all that remains is for them to take the survey, make it part of the lease agreement, and send it back for approval by the County and City.

WEBSITE:

County Manager McCord discussed the dire need to update the website. He reminded everyone that the County had been working on this for over a year and that Covid-19 had pushed for more content to be put on the web, which has increased the need to have a website that functions correctly. The County wants to keep a joint website but the decisions need to be made quickly. Municode is at the top of the list of consideration because it is already being used for minutes and ordinances. The County is also interested in Municode's meeting platform. Erin Elrod has been researching Municode's pricing and has looked at the Thompson/McDuffie website that is produced by Municode. She has analyzed the costs that Municode has quoted Floyd County for the upgrade of the website (\$40,000) and has compared to what other counties were charged (Putnam \$12,500 & McDuffie \$15,000). When comparing the



number of pages needed for the counties, based on a population formula set by Municode, the \$40,000 cost to Floyd County for 1,500 webpages comes to a very reasonable price of \$26.67 per page when compared to costs to Putnam and McDuffie which were \$50 & \$60 respectively. There has not been a quote for the city and county website together yet because Municode would like to discuss all technical aspects with the City and the County before quoting the cost to update a website that had a joint landing page with separate sites. If Municode were to upgrade and update the current RomeFloyd.com site, host and service it, it would cost approximately \$50,000 which doesn't include departments like Park & Rec who already have separately hosted sites. These sites can be redeveloped to match the new, upgraded joint site, but would be at a cost of \$3,000-\$5,000 per page.

Johnny Bunch discussed that the city and county need to come up with a joint package and present it to Municode because there has still been no specific model chosen. He feels that from a technical standpoint, there needs to be a main landing page and separate city and county websites off of that. McCord reiterates that the County is ready to make a move now and would like to come up with a joint team to work on these decisions but that it needs to be done sooner than later. Bunch stated that he doesn't want a rash decision made because this is something that we will have for years to come. Rich and McCord agree that a joint team needs to be put together and a decision needs to be made in the next 2-3 weeks, not 2-3 months. Elrod stated that going forward, whether sites are joint or separate, it needs to be clear who is responsible for maintaining and putting things on the website. Mayor Collins agrees with the plan to get a team together and Rich and McCord agree that a small team needs to be put together and a recommendation made by the end of the year.

HEALTH CLINIC RFP SCHEDULE:

Rich provided the schedule for the health clinic RFP; the deadline for proposals to be submitted is 1/5/21, committee review deadline is 1/14/21, and interviews would be held on 1/28/21. City of Rome HR Director Kristy Shepard stated that she hasn't received any questions or inquiries at this point. Commissioner McDaniel expressed that he hopes the RFP isn't shaped to favor one entity over another, but wants to enter into the process with an open mind. Rich stated that he thinks there will be several bidders. Assistant County Manager Gary Burkhalter stated that there are several criteria that will be used in the grading process and that price is only one factor. McCord stated that the County definitely wants to stay with the City and continue with a joint clinic.

JOINT PARKS & REC MEETING:

McCord stated the need to meet on an annual basis. The Parks & Rec has struggled over the past year due to Covid-19 and the upcoming year may potentially cause more concern. He mentioned that an additional \$600,000 was added to the \$1.6 million-dollar Parks & Rec budget just to keep it functioning. He suggested a meeting be set up for the end of December or beginning of January to help everyone be



aware of the status of Parks & Rec. Todd Wofford will present a State of Recreation report at this meeting. Kelley and Erin will coordinate with the Committee as well as the Parks & Rec Board to come up with a meeting date. McCord states that a Hall of Fame Dinner scheduled for late February is tentative at this point. Awards and scholarships will be given but may be done by Zoom if the dinner is canceled. More information about this will come in the proposed meeting with Parks & Rec.

ELECTIONS:

McCord stated that the County will provide the Elections Board with the tools and resources necessary for things to run smooth in the January election. Melanie Conrad was recommended to be the 2021 Chair by the Elections Board and was approved by the Commissioners. Melanie Conrad, Corey Townsend and John Scott Husser will be the 3 board members going forward. Additionally, Vanessa Waddell was appointed Interim Chief Clerk by the Elections Board. Early voting will begin soon and the number one priority now is finding a better location to hold the elections. Additionally, the Board is working with Virginia Harmon regarding the structure and the legislation behind the structure of how the Board and the Chief Clerk interact and their obligation to the election. McCord's wish is that there would be no need for early voting for next year's City election because of the location issues. The Floyd County Administration building is not parking friendly or user friendly. Commissioner Hancock asked how the cost to the City for the election was determined. McCord stated that all election costs go directly to the City, but that Robert Brady had never even invoiced the City for last year's election. City Clerk Smith mentioned that there will be Ward 2 Commissioner and school board elections next year. Hancock suggested that rather than paying a lump sum to lease a space to hold the election next year, maybe payments could be made monthly by the City to offset that expense with whatever location is decided upon. Rich said he was open to discuss that going forward. Collins asked if a location was in mind for next year. Hancock and McCord mentioned the Health Department but stated they are still in discussion. The voting needs to take place in a location that is easy to access, has ample parking, handicap access, an area for public viewing and a loading dock for the equipment. Commissioner Bagby suggested that Smith meet with Conrad to determine dates for the city elections next year. He feels that the Civic Center is a good location and if dates can go ahead and be chosen now, it can get on the Civic Center's schedule. Smith agreed and stated qualifying fees have to be set in January. He is waiting to get answers back from questions posed to City Attorney Andy Davis as far as what the City is mandated to provide for early voting. He will firm up dates when he gets answers.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Hancock asked for an update on the Atlanta Gas Light pipeline project. Rich stated that a lot of progress has been made to minimize the impact to the trees at Ridge Ferry Park (only 15 will be cut down) and that they are shifting the pipeline to the east of the parking lot so that it will not have to be torn up. There will be 5 easements presented for approval by the Commissioners on Monday night.



McDaniel congratulated Wright Bagby as being named Chairman of the Floyd County Commission, issued thanks to Commissioner Hancock for the great job he has done and congratulated Eidson on his new position as Assistant City Manager of Carrollton.

McCord also announced that animal control/PAWS has captured 3 more pack dogs from the downtown area. A total of 6 have now been caught since October.

ADJOURNED:

With their being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelley Parker
Executive Assistant,
City Manager's Office