

**MINUTES
CARBONDALE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
VIRTUAL WORK SESSION
DECEMBER 15, 2020**

Mayor Dan Richardson called the December 15, 2020, virtual Work Session to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

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| Mayor | Dan Richardson |
| Trustees | Lani Kitching |
| | Marty Silverstein |
| | Heather Henry |
| | Luis Yllanes |
| | Ben Bohmfalk |
| | Erica Sparhawk |

Staff Present:

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| Town Manager | Jay Harrington |
| Finance Director | Renae Gustine |
| Town Clerk | Cathy Derby |
| Town Attorney | Mark Hamilton |
| Interpreter | Jen Quevedo |

TOBACCO TAX REVENUE PROJECTIONS

Jay stated the Town passed a Tobacco Tax in April 2020. At that time staff didn't expect the State would put a Tobacco Tax question on the November ballot which they did. The tax passed and goes into effect in January 2021.

In the 2021 budget town staff has projected \$450,000 in revenue from tobacco. Jay stated that \$100,000 has been allocated to the Hope Center, and \$50,000 to administrative costs which leaves \$300,000 unallocated. Renae noted that in 2020 tobacco tax revenue has been decreasing slightly.

Jay asked the Board if they would like to lower the tax in 2021. If so, we would also need to lower the revenue projection.

Discussion ensued.

The Board agreed to leave the tax rate as is with the understanding that it can be revisited at any time. As a result, the revenue estimates will remain the same. The

Board would like to commit \$250,000 - \$275,000 to anti-tobacco programs and keep the rest as a cushion. Jay stated that smoking cessation stakeholders, etc. will be invited to the January work session.

Discussion ensued on identifying the Board's goals so the stakeholders will have guidance. The goals are: youth prevention, youth mental health and broader community health.

Trustee Sparhawk suggested bringing in a facilitator with expertise in tobacco (consumption) prevention to run the meeting. Trustee Kitching suggested putting out Requests for Proposals or Requests for Information. Jay suggested inviting the stakeholders to the meeting and ask them what are the most effective programs – some will be obvious.

The Board agreed that they would like to see new innovative ideas/programs.

COVID-19 ECONOMIC ISSUES

Jay explained that the State sent a letter to Garfield County informing them that they have moved to level red on the COVID dial. The Commissioners met last week and through a resolution, qualified restaurants, gyms and non-critical retail as essential services as a way to avoid the red restrictions. The County noted that the Garfield County municipalities may impose stricter requirements if they so choose.

The State is proposing a Small Business Relief Program which will make \$37 million available to certain restaurants, bars, gyms and movie theaters that are operating under severe capacity restrictions. Counties may apply for the funds (which they disperse) if they are enforcing red restrictions. The grants are nominal – up to \$7,000 per business. On December 18th the Town should know what the County is going to do. Staff is confident that the County won't pursue the program.

Jay noted that Carbondale's restaurants are confused about which restrictions they should be operating under (red or orange).

Jay explained that the State is proposing a 5 Star Certification Network and they are currently soliciting feedback. Mesa County established a 5 Star Program in the spring. Restaurants were able to operate at higher capacity if they exceeded the State's prevention guidelines. Jay noted that Mesa County now has the highest amount of COVID cases on the western slope.

The 5 Star Program may give restaurants, etc. the opportunity to operate more safely. The Chambers are working together so everyone is operating at the same level – it makes it more equitable, and safe.

Discussion ensued.

Trustee Bohmfalk stated that the State public health experts have put together a framework and our non-experts are ignoring it. There is no question that we are at the red level (four-fold). The County is looking for loopholes that will only prolong the spread. He believes the Board needs to advocate for the County to follow State guideline and criteria.

Mayor Richardson stated that there is a difference between the spring and now. The restaurants are taking precautions and they are on the brink of going out of business. This is not an easy decision. We now have a COVID, economic, and mental health crisis.

Trustee Sparhawk stated that she agrees with Trustee Bohmfalk. The County is passing the buck on a hard decision. Lots of restaurants are shutting down, or they doing take-out only. She wishes the State funding was a bigger incentive. She applauds the restaurants who are abiding by the red restrictions.

Trustee Yllanes agrees with Trustee Bohmfalk and noted that the 5 Star Program will be difficult to enforce and it will put more people in jeopardy.

Trustee Kitching stated that the Garfield County Commissioners believe that it is the individual's responsibility to control their own behavior.

Jay stated maybe the Town can come up with grants for small businesses and ask the County to match them. Jay noted that the City of Glenwood Springs requested that the Garfield County Commissioners use some of their \$80 million in reserves to help small businesses that have been severely impacted by COVID. Jay stated that the request is creating animosity between the County and the City.

Mayor Richardson opened the meeting to public comment.

Ryn Calhoon stated that if a medically informed response to a pandemic creates an economic hardship change the response to the economics, not the response to the disease. We are sending people into dangerous environments. More people in Carbondale have tested positive in the last 14 days than during the rest of the pandemic.

The Board asked what is the next step?

Trustee Bohmfalk responded we need to ask Garfield County to follow the State health guidelines.

Trustee Sparhawk answered we should start a discussion on leveraging matching funds for businesses.

Trustee Kitching advised the Board that we have to position the ask correctly. How does a grant enhance the appearance of the County – we need to show the upsides.

Trustees Bohmfalk and Kitching agreed to co-write a letter to the Garfield County Commissioners requesting that Garfield County follow State health guidelines thereby allowing partially opened businesses to apply for State Funding. Also, ask the County to provide matching funds to the Town's grants to small businesses until the economic stimulus package is in place.

ADJOURN

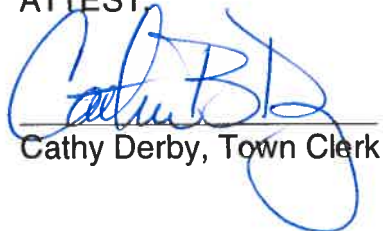
The December 15, 2020 work session adjourned at 8:15 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting is December 22, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVED AND ACCEPTED



Dan Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:


Cathy Derby, Town Clerk