

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 2, 2017

TOWN RECEIVES NEARLY \$2 MILLION IN ADDITIONAL BRIDGE FUNDING

On Tuesday, February 28, 2017, at its monthly Work Session, the Luray Town Council was notified by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) that they were recipients of \$1,953,030 of State of Good Repair (SGR) funds through the state's new competitive application and project funding process. These funds require no local match. On February 16, 2017, the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board voted to allocate SGR funds statewide, and Luray's project was one of the fortunate recipients.

These funds are in addition to the \$2,025,427 Federal Transportation Grant that the Town received in 2012. With these additional funds, the bridge project is now fully-funded, and can proceed to advertisement.

Michael Fulcher, Program Manager with VDOT's Staunton District Office, made the announcement at the Work Session. Mr. Fulcher indicated that he was proceeding with funding verification, and authorization to proceed, from the state and federal transportation authorities. Since the project will be using federal grant monies, both agencies must review and approve all major project milestones.

Mayor Barry Presgraves thanked Mr. Fulcher for his assistance and advice, and for working with the Town closely during the projects continued development. Mayor Presgraves commented, "on behalf of the Council and the Town citizens, I want to thank you and VDOT for this additional funding, and for all of your hard work during this process".

The Town had received VDOT Revenue Sharing funds in 2016 for this project in the same amount, but those funds are 50/50 match funds, with the Town being required to contribute half of the total. The use of the SGR funds in lieu of the previously allocated Revenue Sharing Funds will save the Town \$976,515 in direct project costs. This was a fact not lost on Council, or the assembled citizens.

The Town's bridge management team was present for the announcement – the final evidence of a key effort over the past fourteen months. Project Manager, Patrick Racey, P.E., Project Engineer, Tyler Austin, P.E., (both of Racey Engineering located in Luray) and Bryan Chrisman, Assistant Town Manager were seen to smile and nod as Mr. Fulcher completed his remarks.

Mr. Chrisman stated that he "appreciated the support of the Mayor and Council in the making of the tough decisions on project funding and scheduling". He went on to note that the progress of the project, or this additional funding, wouldn't have been possible if not for the efforts of so many, including Mr. Dixon Whitworth, the Staunton District CTB member, Mr. Randy Kiser, P.E. Staunton District Administrator, Mr. Don Komara, P.E. Harrisonburg Residency Administrator, Mr. Fulcher, the Project Coordinator, Mr. Racey and Mr. Austin among others. Mr. Chrisman specifically mentioned the continued guidance of Mr. Racey, and the analysis work created by Mr. Austin that "allowed the Town to evaluate and choose its best funding option when compared to other applicant's submittals".

The Town also expressed its thanks to Congressman Bob Goodlatte and staff, the Virginia Secretary of Transportation Aubrey Lane, VDOT Commissioner Charles Kilpatrick, P.E., and to VDOT Chief Engineer Garrett Moore, P.E., for their support and assistance in the continuation of this important infrastructure project.

The Town Council elected to delay the project while the Bridge Management Team pursued this new funding source. This decision to delay was a difficult one for both the Council and the Management Team, but the possibility of 100% funding with no local match requirement was very enticing.

The Town will be able to use the still-available Revenue Sharing Funds on the critical Main Street Bridge Replacement Project as needed, or transfer it to other transportation-related projects in Luray. Two projects currently in the works are intersection improvements and a roundabout on West Main Street at Northcott Drive, as well as intersection and travel corridor improvements on Memorial Drive, with a new stop light at the intersection with West Main Street. The West Main Intersection Improvement Projects consists of several smaller projects, and is slated to begin in 2019 by VDOT. The Memorial Drive Corridor Improvement project will be begin in mid-to-late 2017, with work by a Town contractor.

The next steps for the bridge project will be to obtain final approval from VDOT and the FHWA, obtain a Request for Proposals on the street, and begin interviewing and hiring a Design-Build Contract Team. Project construction is slated to begin in early 2018, and will impact a significant part of Luray's downtown business and historic district.

When contacted later, Mayor Presgraves offered a summary of the evening's happy news by saying, "it's not every day that we get to save the town taxpayers nearly a million dollars on a capital project. I'm very proud of our people, and very happy that we have such good partners in VDOT".

For further information about this project, please visit www.luraybridge.com, or email thebridgeconnection@townofluray.com.