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EMPIRE END OF YEAR WRAP-UP 2021

IT HAS BEEN AN EVENTFUL YEAR, AND WE WANTED TO SHARE WITH YOU WHAT THE STAFF AND THE TOWN ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE YEAR.

Mayor Wendy Koch 2021 Accomplishments

WELL PROJECT Design & Engineering Grant: This phase of the Well Project costs \$249,000.00 and will be fully reimbursed to the Town through the grant we received from Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority (CWRPDA) for Design & Engineering.

WELL PROJECT State Revolving Fund (SRF): The Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRF) Credit Department approved an \$824,000 Disadvantaged Communities Direct Loan, and \$1,000,000.00 Principal Forgiveness. This means that we will have \$1,824,000.00 available to us through reimbursement for project costs, but we would only have to pay back \$824,000.00.

WELL PROJECT Additional Grant Funding: We are still eligible to apply for other grants between now and the completion of the project, hopefully by the end of 2022, which could decrease the amount of our loan. We will apply for the Energy/Mineral Impact Assistance Fund Grant (EIAF) in February 2022, with a maximum possible award of \$600,000.00.

PARKS Ball Placer: Arranged for a large amount of fill dirt to continue covering old mine tailings in the Ball Placer to advance us toward future development.

PARKS Welcome Park: Set and Accomplished goal to create newly designated park on the east end of town with additional parking. It does not officially have a name, but it is the first opportunity the Town has to welcome people driving westbound on Hwy 40. Arranged for a large quantity of fill dirt for the park and the labor and equipment to level and smooth it out, along with recycled asphalt pavement to cover the parking area of the park 6 inches deep.

ADMIN: Set & Accomplished goal to update financial reporting and procedures. This allowed the Town to rework the budget to hire additional clerical help to accomplish additional tasks, hire a code enforcement office, and provide health insurance to all full-time employees.

ADMIN: Set & Accomplished goal to start updating Ordinance 170 and update all Municipal Code.

PUBLIC WORKS: Set & Accomplished goal to coordinate with Public Works Paul Whillock and Clerk Piel to create a Fleet Maintenance program with detailed reporting.

PUBLIC WORKS: Set & Accomplished goal to coordinate with Public Works Paul Whillock to locate and price additional vehicles and equipment for future capital improvement expenditures.

PUBLIC WORKS: Set & Accomplished goal to coordinate with Public Works Christian Straughn to evaluate and maintain the heating systems for all town facilities.

Police Chief John Stein 2021 Accomplishments

Town projects worked on (including current working projects and completed): Traffic Calming, CDOT HWY 40 traffic engineering and redesign, Ball Placer, Clear Creek County Housing Strategy, Hazard Mitigation Plan, Emergency Operations Plan, Highway and Road Closure Plan, Tap Fees analysis and increase, Master Plan, 1033/1025 Program, updated ordinances including STR's, traffic speed limit, and OHV permitting, expansion of mental health services, employee benefits (insurance), eForce, State and Federal reporting, testimony to the House and Senate on proposed legislation, enforcement and cleaning of property through town cleanup day and code enforcement.

AWARDED \$49,969.18 in grants (total for multiple grants) not to mention \$18,420 funds received in 2021 for contract labor (received from East Troublesome Fire at end of 2020.)

Multiple awards and accommodations for Officer Andrew Lorenz; Including nomination of 2019 and 2020 Officer of the Year; Awarded 2020 Officer of the Year for entire county (awarded in 2021); Selected and awarded grant to attend the University of Denver's Daniels College of Business Public Safety Leadership Development Program; School Resource Officer for both Empire and Georgetown.

Hired Community Service Officer Trina Whillock, who will be our first dedicated Code Enforcement Officer. Officer Whillock has already been instrumental in expanding the Local Business Inspection and Business Licensing Program bringing in thousands of dollars of additional revenue and will work closely with Clerk Piel to continue updating our Municipal Code.

Town Clerk Jeannette Piel 2021 Accomplishments

Safety Coordinator: Revamped a CIRSA Safety Program, including all training, maintenance records, and vehicle records.

Treasurer: Created new Budget codes to reflect the Town's growth and update our financial reporting.

ADA Coordinator: Completed CIRSA training to become the ADA Coordinator for the Town.

Grant Administrator: Completed training in Grant Writing and Grant Administration.

Hazard Mitigation Program: Participated as an Empire representative to the Clear Creek County Hazard Mitigation Program, gathering data and developing goals to continue improving our preparation and response to all Hazards.

County Housing Strategy: Participated as an Empire representative to the Clear Creek Housing Strategy meetings and provided feedback and responses to the County.

CDOT Wildlife Bridge: Participated as an Empire representative to the CDOT Wildlife Bridge project over Hwy 40. Empire was one of several stakeholders consulted during the design phase.

Town Beautification: Defined a program to improve the aesthetics of the Town and make it more welcoming for residents and tourist alike, which includes flowers and landscaping projects in the spring and summer, visual improvements to the Hwy corridor including new street signs and permanent placement for the Street of Flags, Permanent Military Flag Tribute, and improvements to Town Hall & the Visitors Center.

Empire Business Partnership: Developed a program to support our local businesses, help them create relationships with other town businesses, and foster a stronger working relationship with the Town. Purchased gift certificates from local businesses to give to local residents as part of our Christmas Celebration.

ARP Grant Received: We received our first payment from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) of \$38,205.16. We will receive the final payment in 2022 for the same amount, for a total of \$76,410.32. We plan to use this funding for Water infrastructure which means this could go toward our well project.

CVRF Grant Received: The Town received reimbursement through the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CVRF) for unbudgeted expenses related to COVID. We received a check for \$7,824.00.

Town Events: Helped plan and coordinate events throughout the year. Town Clean-up Day, National Night Out, Halloween Party & Chili Cook-Off, & the Christmas Celebration.

Opportunities for Volunteering:

We are always looking for people who can help out with Town Events. Many hands make light work. Often, we are setting up tables, filling goody bags, arranging food, making signs, etc., and always welcome anyone who wants to lend a helping hand.

We need people to help with our Empire Farmers Market this summer, contacting vendors and helping with set-up on the scheduled Saturdays.

We also have some planting, weed cutting, and landscaping projects that would be great for an afternoon.

Please email the clerk if you would like to volunteer in any way, we would love to get you connected!

Opportunities for Donations:

Events:

We always welcome donations for any of our Town Events, especially our Christmas Celebration. We have committed to giving a gift to every kid aged 17 and under within the Town and providing lots of door prizes from local businesses to the families that come to the Christmas Celebration. If you would like to help, we can accept donations all throughout the year and designated them for Christmas, or any other event that you would like to support.

The town purchases wreaths for all our Veterans graves in the Empire Cemetery at Christmastime through Wreaths Across America with the Clear Creek County Veterans Coalition. You can donate through the Town, the Veterans Coalition, or directly with Wreaths Across America.

Beautification:

We also have several Beautification Projects that many residents have donated to. These projects improve the aesthetics as visitors drive through the Town and make everything look more welcoming. You can donate to specific projects that you are excited about!

We plant flowers ever summer along Hwy 40, and we would like to increase the number of hanging flower baskets and whisky barrels to extend further along the Hwy in both directions to the end of Town. We would also like to add deck planters to the Visitors Center Deck.

We have additional planting areas to landscape, with the possibility of planting shade trees and flowering bushes.

We have partnered with Friends of Clear Creek for the Street of Flags, and we would like to start installing flag poles that are permanent, however, that is a slow and expensive process.

The Town has created a Military Tribute by displaying the US Flag and all the Military Branch Flags on the Visitors Center. In the future, we would love to have a location for standing poles that can withstand our mountain winds a little better. Quality flag poles are expensive.

We have several indoor projects as well for Town Hall and the Visitor Center, to improve the storage and functionality, in addition to a little sprucing up.

Please email the clerk if you have any questions about donating. You can donate and deduct it on your taxes with our Tax ID #84-0620207.

THANK YOU TO THE STAFF, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, PLANNING COMMISSION, VOLUNTEERS, AND RESIDENTS FOR A FANTASTIC , PRODUCTIVE YEAR!!

Board of Trustees: Wendy Koch Mayor, Linda Robertson Mayor Pro-Tem, Denise Tennant, Lisa Kunze, Susan Owen, Shannon Hickman, Lorry Singmaster
Planning Commission: Sally Rush Chair, Wendy Koch, Denise Tennant, Tony Robertson, Eileen Wheelock

Town Clerk: Jeannette Piel

Police Chief John Stein; Officer Andrew Lorenz; Community Service Officer Trina Whillock

Public Works: Christian Straughn, Zach Hartman