

SMITHVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN
WORK SESSION
January 20, 2026 6:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers and Via Videoconference

1. Call to Order

Mayor Boley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum of the Board was present: Marv Atkins, Kelly Kobylski, Melissa Wilson, Leeah Stone, Chelsea Dana and Dan Hartman.

Staff present: Cynthia Wagner, Chief Lockridge, Chuck Soules, Jack Hendrix, Matt Denton, Linda Drummond and Mayra Toothman.

City Attorneys present: Padraic Corcoran.

2. Follow Up Discussion for Alternative Delivery Methods

Public Works Director Chuck Soules gave a brief recap of the November 18 work session which included a discussion of the alternate delivery methods.

The Board and staff discussed ongoing challenges with capital projects, including contractor delays, limited capacity among low-bid contractors, and unforeseen site conditions that frequently lead to change orders and cost increases. These recurring issues have made it difficult to manage schedules and budgets predictably under the traditional design-bid-build delivery method, where projects are designed independently and then awarded to the lowest bidder with limited contractor input during design.

To address these concerns, staff evaluated alternative project delivery methods that better integrate design and construction. These approaches involve bringing contractors into the process earlier to collaborate with engineers and city staff. Contractors often have extensive experience with similar facilities across multiple communities and can anticipate common issues related to constructability, materials, scheduling, and costs. Early collaboration is expected to improve cost control, reduce change orders, and create more realistic schedules.

Staff noted that they had been consulting with industry professionals and reviewing various options. Staff recommends alternative delivery methods for the wastewater treatment plant expansion and park project.

For the wastewater treatment plant expansion, staff explained that the project is necessary to address capacity limits and includes major system upgrades such as treatment processes, disinfection improvements, and electrical work. The recommended delivery method for this project is Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR). Under this approach, the city would select an engineer to complete partial design work, then select a construction manager who becomes involved early in the process. The engineer, contractor, and city staff would collaboratively review design details, materials, constructability, costs and scheduling.

The construction manager would later bid out individual work packages transparently and provide the city with a guaranteed maximum price. This shifts much of the construction risk to the contractor and is intended to reduce unexpected cost increases. Staff emphasized that this approach should result in fewer surprises, better coordination, and stronger cost and schedule control. Early procurement of long-lead equipment, such as generators or pumps, would also be possible, reducing future delays.

Staff noted that recent work at the water treatment plant demonstrated the importance of anticipating hidden conditions, such as older materials, and confirmed that corrective actions taken there were completed successfully and safely. The CMAR approach is expected to reduce similar issues on future projects by addressing risks earlier in the process.

For the Smith's Fork Park project, staff provided background on the park's role in the city's broader parks strategy and the planned improvements, including new athletic fields and supporting infrastructure. Due to the scale, complexity, and specialized nature of sports field construction, staff recommends using an owner's representative rather than proceeding directly with a traditional delivery method.

An owner's representative would not perform construction but would act as an extension of city staff, providing independent expertise throughout the project. This role includes advising on delivery methods, cost estimating, scheduling, constructability, risk management, and procurement processes. Staff explained that this is particularly valuable because no current staff members have direct experience managing large sports complex projects, while owner's representatives typically bring experience from similar projects in other communities.

The owner's representative would help ensure that costs are reasonable, design decisions are appropriate for local conditions, and unnecessary upgrades are avoided. They would also help evaluate whether options such as CMAR, design-build, or turnkey construction teams are the best fit for the project, while protecting the city's interests and maintaining transparency.

Board members expressed support for both recommendations, noting that alternative delivery methods are likely to result in more accurate pricing, fewer change orders, and greater contractor accountability. Several members emphasized that involving contractors earlier and relying on experienced advisors mirrors best practices seen in other complex construction projects, such as residential builds.

Additional discussion highlighted the importance of durability, appropriate lighting, accessibility, turf selection, and long-term maintenance for park facilities. Staff also shared feedback from other public entities that had used traditional delivery methods and encountered similar problems, reinforcing the value of earlier contractor involvement.

The Board conveyed confidence in staff's research and recommendations, emphasizing the need to trust staff expertise while maintaining oversight. The Board directed staff to move forward with alternative delivery methods for both projects, with future formal actions required to designate and implement the selected approaches.

3. Project List for MARC Grants

Assistant to the Public Works Director Mayra Toothman noted that the city has been very successful over the past few years in securing grant funding for a wide range of infrastructure and improvement projects, largely through the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC). The memo provided to the Board included a full list of completed and ongoing grant-supported efforts, such as streetscape work, the Main Street Trail, the 144th Street lift station, Commercial Street sidewalk upgrades, the upcoming Riverwalk project, and Second Creek improvements. More grant-eligible projects are also planned for the coming years.

Because MARC's next grant application window opens next month, Mayra presented three possible projects for the Board to consider for submission. The first project was the next phase of the downtown streetscape and Mayra presented two possible options for it. The first option would extend the existing "Streetscape Lite" design along Commercial Avenue from Church

Street to Meadow Street. The second option would focus instead on Church Street and Smith Street between Bridge Street and Main Street.

During discussion, Board members expressed concern that choosing the second option would leave a conspicuous, outdated gap in the middle of the downtown area—right around the park and the public restrooms, which also have ADA challenges. Several members also noted that the utilities and service line conditions along Church and Smith Streets will present more problems than along Commercial Avenue. There were questions about stormwater, past utility work, and potential risks such as leaks or future issues after paving. Because Option 1 is more straightforward and would complete a contiguous section in the part of downtown where most community events occur, the Board agreed that it made the most sense and directed staff to move forward with Option 1 for grant submission.

Mayra presented the second project, the Eagle Parkway Trail. She noted that this project had been submitted previously and was supported by letters from Clay County. Board members discussed the potential to coordinate with the county again, especially since the county is currently working on its Parks and Recreation Master Plan and has expressed interest in completing the trail connection. Much of the needed right-of-way already exists, and portions of the trail have been built north and south of the proposed segment. Although there are stormwater considerations along the route, collaboration between city staff, the county, and possibly future developers may help resolve those challenges. The Board felt the trail project was still worth pursuing and could be a strong candidate under programs like Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). They also suggested that a joint application with the county could strengthen the proposal. The Board directed staff to move forward with submitting the trail project again.

Mayra presented the third project, improvements to Pope Lane. Mayra noted that this project had also been submitted in a previous cycle, but its complexity, traffic considerations, and potential developer involvement make it less suited for MARC funding at this time. The Board agreed that while the project is important, it would likely be better pursued through other funding avenues—perhaps in coordination with highway officials or through development-driven improvements as the area grows. They did not recommend submitting Pope Lane for this MARC cycle.

Staff confirmed they would proceed with preparing detailed materials for the two selected projects: the Commercial Avenue streetscape (Option 1) and the Eagle Parkway Trail. As part of the grant requirements, the city will gather public input, and staff plan to publish project information on the city's website so residents can review the proposals and submit comments.

4. Discussion of Stormwater Improvements

Assistant to the Public Works Director Mayra Toothman presented findings related to the Dundee Road Improvements Project, which was identified through a stormwater needs assessment. Mayra explained that during heavy rainfall events, Dundee Road experiences flooding due to the absence of curb and gutter and the roadway sitting residents. Staff reported that initial plans to add curb, gutter, and overlay would not resolve the problem and could worsen drainage conditions for some homes. As a result, staff recommended full roadway reconstruction and regrading to provide a long-term solution. The revised estimated cost exceeds the original estimate, and staff proposed advancing engineering and utility evaluation in the current year while deferring construction until adequate funding is available.

Board members agreed that addressing the issue comprehensively is preferable to implementing a partial solution that fails to resolve the underlying problem. Board discussion

emphasized the importance of doing the project correctly, even if it requires additional time and resources, and noted that this approach would build trust with affected residents.

5. Adjourn

Alderman Hartman moved to adjourn. Alderman Kobylski seconded the motion.

Ayes – 6, Noes – 0, motion carries. The Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Linda Drummond, City Clerk

Damien Boley, Mayor