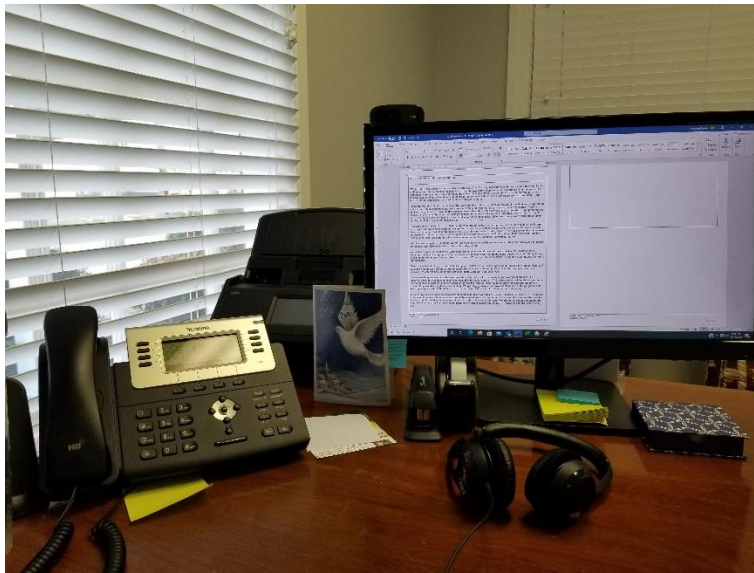


Wilson County: Town of Sims

COVID-19 Grant Outcomes and Accomplishments

County and local governments used these funds in many ways, including: supporting public health and safety personnel, equipment for health departments, grants for small businesses and non-profits, and economic support to individuals.

Session Law	Item	Total Funding Authorized to Town of Sims
S.L. 2020-4	Local Government Assistance	\$15,000



Desktop, Headset, Telephone and Webcam Purchased with CRF to Allow Continuation of Town Business

When COVID first began, Town of Sims employees were unable to participate in online meetings and were sharing a phone between four regular office staff members. The internet connection was extremely slow and staff kept getting kicked offline during online meetings. Their computers were older and could not handle the online capacities either. They also had to cancel the meetings the town hosted because of these limitations and the indoor gathering limitations, and their meeting space (Community Center) had no internet capabilities. They had no ability to telework, either.

With the help of Computer Central of Wilson, they were able to determine that they needed two new desktop computers, as well as headsets/microphones and web cameras, to have at town hall to participate in online meetings. For these desktops, they got backup power supply boxes to ensure the safety of the devices. They needed two laptop computers to use at the Community Center for hosting meetings, and to use for teleworking from any remote location, if needed. They also got a projector and screen to use for their meetings so staff could remain distanced inside while participating and viewing maps online, graphs, and more that they would normally have to crowd around to view.

New cabling was needed for Town Hall for improved internet connection and phone service, as well as a new internet service provider and phone provider. They installed a new phone system so each office worker would have access to their own phone, and no longer had to share a cordless phone and risk

infection. The new service allows participation in conference calls, if needed, and receive phone messages if teleworking. It also allows for multiple calls at once. The two scanners allow staff to scan and email documents for teleworking as well.

With the new computers and phone system, they were able to establish separate workstations for employees to ensure social distancing while in the office and for teleworking needs. Since staff were no longer sharing a workstation, they also needed Computer Central to set up file sharing on their server and computers to access the same files both in the office and when working outside the office.

They installed a point-to-point at the Community Center in order to have internet capabilities for hosting online meetings and using the laptop/projector to ensure social distancing. They did the point-to-point to avoid putting all new lines in at the Community Center to keep costs lower. They also purchased a printer to use at the Community Center for meetings.

Given the limited staffing and no one to handle tech needs, they opted to let Computer Central host the server and also purchased back up services, anti-virus and anti-malware coverage through them. Due to issues with the phone service after the new system was installed, they opted to host their phone service through Computer Central as well.

Since everything has been installed, Town of Sims staff have started to host town meetings again with great success. For instance, they were able to host a meeting with a guest speaker who was able to join the meeting remotely, keeping the numbers down in the meeting. For those residents uncomfortable with meeting in person, they can also join remotely into the meeting. Staff are able to carry on town functions and make progress while keeping everyone safe. Without these services, town business would still be on hold indefinitely.

They are now able to attend the necessary meetings held online with UCPCOG, TAC, Powell Bill Office, etc. to continue to represent the town. Attendance at some of these meetings are a requirement or the town would no longer either receive funding or be included in these organizations, all of which are vital to the town. They have been able to resume updating the Land Use Plan and host meetings regarding this plan, which is critical with the 160-D Deadlines from the state.

These upgrades allow teleworking if and when needed. This is extremely important with limited staffing. Even if staff must be out of the office to quarantine, they can still complete the work that needs to be done without endangering the health and safety of other staff members and residents. The upgrades also ensure the continuation of all town business, including committee meetings, even during the pandemic, by allowing committee members and guests to participate remotely.

Until these upgrades, all town meetings (other than our Board of Commissioners meetings, which were limited to ten people so only two members of the public could attend) were cancelled. This was extremely difficult as they were in the process of updating their Land Use Plan, working with new subdivisions, updating ordinances, etc. where meetings (with 10+ people) were necessary; therefore, they could not proceed. Once the new equipment and system was installed, they were able to resume these much-needed meetings and proceed with these areas of town business.

Without this funding, none of this would have been possible. Many aspects of town business would still be “on hold” without the ability to host and participate in meetings remotely. The Mayor, Financial Officer, and other staff can still conduct business outside of the office, if needed. This is not only reassuring to staff, the Board of Commissioners, and residents, but also vital to continue operating the town efficiently.





Desktop, Headset, Telephone and Webcam Purchased with CRF to Allow Continuation of Town Business



Projector and Screen for Socially Distanced Staff Meetings



Printer Purchased with CRF for the Community Center

