



MIDDLEBURG TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 24, 2022



PENDING APPROVAL

PRESENT: Mayor Trowbridge M. Littleton
Vice Mayor Peter A. Leonard-Morgan
Councilmember Chris W. Bernard
Councilmember J. Kevin Daly
Councilmember Morris E. “Bud” Jacobs
Councilmember C. Darlene Kirk
Councilmember Cindy C. Pearson

STAFF: Danny Davis, Town Manager
Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk
William M. Moore, Deputy Town Manager
Ali MacIntyre, Director of Business Development & Community Partnerships
A.J. Panebianco, Chief of Police

ABSENT: Councilmember Philip M. Miller

The Town Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia held their regular monthly meeting on Thursday, March 24, 2022 in the Town Hall Council Chambers, located at 10 West Marshall Street. Mayor Littleton led Council and those attending in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. The roll was called at 6:00 p.m.

Public Hearing

FY '23 Real Property Tax Rate

Town Manager Davis reported that the property values, which were assessed by Loudoun County, increased by 19.77% for all properties, including new construction, with the average assessment increasing by 15.13% for existing properties as of last year. He reminded Council that the tax bill was based on two factors – the assessed value of the property and the tax rate, the latter of which was set by the Council. Mr. Davis noted that the tax rate for FY '21 was \$.1513 and reported that no increase was proposed in it. He explained that a public hearing was required for this rate as it would result in additional tax levies due to the increased assessments. Mr. Davis noted that the Council was discussing what would be the appropriate balance and advised that although the maximum rate was advertised for public hearing purposes, the Council could reduce the rate. In response to inquiries from the Council, he advised that the County was proposing to set their real property tax rate at \$.89, which was a reduction of \$.095 over the current rate and was \$.045 more than the equalized rate. Mr. Davis explained that the equalized tax rate was defined as the tax rate necessary for the average property owner to have the same tax bill as the previous year. He noted that the complication was that the assessed property values in some categories increased by more than others, meaning in this case that if the tax rate was equalized, it would result in a decreased tax bill for most residents. In response to an inquiry from the Council, Mr. Davis advised that the County proposed to add approximately 6.5% to the equalized tax rate, which was close to the inflation rate.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the details of the average residential property values by category. He noted that the assessed value increases were due to the demand for houses. Mr. Davis also reviewed the average tax bill, based on the four rate options that were being proposed, for each of the residential categories.

Mayor Littleton noted that the Town could only set one tax rate, which must apply to everyone.

Leonard Caldwell, 100 Sycamore Street, questioned whether the Town's budget was increasing by "a lot". He suggested that if it was not, revenues should be kept the same. Mr. Caldwell further suggested that if more money was needed, they should be increased.

Earlene Haley Coleman, 205 Windy Hill Road, noted that hers was the only single-family dwelling on the street, with all the other units being owned by the Windy Hill Foundation. She questioned whether this affected her assessed value.

No one else spoke and the public hearing was closed.

In response to Ms. Coleman's inquiry, Town Manager Davis advised that her assessed value increased by 12%, which was in line with the increases for the other homes in the Ridgeview area.

Mayor Littleton reminded the citizenry of the Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled Program, under which a property owner could qualify for up to 100% real property tax relief depending on their net worth. He encouraged those in the audience to take a copy of the program brochure.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Mayor Littleton noted that residents who questioned their assessment could appeal it through the Commissioner of the Revenue's office. He opined that when this occurred, the County often adjusted the value.

Town Manager Davis reported that the Strategic Finance Committee recommended a balance between the impact of increased real estate taxes on the property owner and having the appropriate balance of revenues for the Town. He noted that 60-70% of the Town's revenues were tourism dependent. Mr. Davis advised that while the expectation was that those revenues would continue to be strong, the Strategic Finance Committee recommended the real estate tax revenue be an appropriate amount so the revenue sources would not become imbalanced. He explained that as such, they supported equalizing the real property tax rate and adding a factor for inflation. Mr. Davis reported that based on a 7.5% inflation rate, the tax rate would be \$.1429, which would allow for a \$.01 reduction over the current tax rate.

Mayor Littleton noted that the Town's expenditures increased annually. He further noted that inflation, which was currently 7-10%, was also experienced by the Town. Mr. Littleton suggested the Council review the four proposed options that were on the table.

The members of Council agreed they were not in favor of leaving the tax rate at \$.153. Some members of Council expressed a desire to equalize the tax rate, while others expressed a desire to equalize it plus include a factor for inflation. The Council expressed concern that if the rate was equalized this year, it could result in a need for a larger increase next year, which would be harder on the citizenry. They noted that the residents not only paid Town taxes, but also County ones. After some discussion, the majority of the Council expressed a desire to adopt a tax rate that was in the middle, and which was as small as possible.

It was noted that the Council would not vote on the tax rate until their special meeting on March 31st. They asked for the information on what equalizing the tax rate plus adding in a factor for inflation, beginning at 1% and going up to 7.5%, would do to the average tax bill for each category. The Council also asked that the impact of the County's real property tax be included.

In response to inquiries from the audience, Mayor Littleton explained that the County's real property taxes were independent of the Town's. He reviewed the Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled Program and noted that anyone who qualified for it would be partially or fully exempt from both Town and County real property taxes, depending on what they qualified for. Mr. Littleton acknowledged that a large percentage of Middleburg's population was retired.

Mayor Littleton advised that the Council would make a decision on the real property tax rate during a special meeting on March 31st. He noted that public comment would be accepted that evening.

Public Presentations

2021 Christmas in Middleburg

Michelle Myers, Organizer of the Christmas in Middleburg event, reported that the 2021 event was a safe and lovely one. She noted that she received positive feedback regarding its size, as it was easier for people to move about. Ms. Myers reported that the only negative feedback she received was regarding the messaging, which she would like to change, once the parking was sold out. She opined that separating the food trucks into two areas worked well. Ms. Myers noted the need to relocate the public seating area for the next event, as the past location was no longer available. She acknowledged that Santa was late in arriving for the parade and advised that they would work out those logistics for the future. Ms. Myers reminded Council that they have lost the Salamander parking and were looking at alternative locations, such as the Mickey Gordon Park and Lost Barrel. She noted the need to address those visitors who needed access to “easy” parking and opined that this would be a challenge.

Mayor Littleton advised Ms. Myers that the feedback he received from both residents and business owners was that they felt the size of the event was just right. He reported that the businesses said they did great, were able to serve their customers, and that theft was down. Mr. Littleton advised that parade watchers said they had room to walk and could see the parade. He opined that as long as the event did not lose money, this number of attendees was the sweet spot. Mr. Littleton advised that the only complaints he received were related to cars parking down Landmark School and Foxcroft Roads.

Ms. Myers advised that the no parking signs in town pushed motorists further out into the county. She requested that some of the in-town parking be returned for the event.

Mayor Littleton asked that Ms. Myers figure out the number of cars that were here for the 2021 event and advised that the Town would accommodate those and sign the rest as “no parking”.

Ms. Myers reiterated that with the elimination of the Salamander parking, they had lost half of the event’s parking. She expressed a preference to solve it through the use of the Mickey Gordon Park and noted that she had a good bus vendor who could assist with getting visitors from the parking areas into town.

Council opined that the event was well done and reiterated that they were happy with the size of the crowd. It was noted that the live feed of the parade froze and needed to be addressed in the future.

Ms. Myers explained that people had trouble getting Internet service and advised that she may bring in a tower next year to provide wi-fi service.

Council suggested Ms. Myers explore the creation of a bag check station so people could check their shopping bags during the parades.

Staff Reports

Project Status Report

Deputy Town Manager Moore reported that he received an updated cost estimate for the Chinn Court paving and advised that it was less than expected. He noted that he was conferring with VDOT to confirm they would still accept the design they approved two years ago. Mr. Moore reminded Council that the construction of a maintenance building was on hold until after the completion of the Town Hall Project. He reported that the Town would see some modest cost savings on the Wayfinding Signage Project, as the vendor would be able to re-use a number of the existing sign bases.

Consent Agenda

- A. Council Approval – March 10, 2022 Council Meeting Minutes
- B. Council Approval – Proclamation – Local Government Education Week
- C. Council Approval – Proclamation – Arbor Day
- D. Council Approval – Resolution of Appreciation – Valerie Peacock

Councilmember Bernard moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council approve the consent agenda as proposed.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Leonard-Morgan, Bernard, Daly, Jacobs, Kirk, and Pearson

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmember Miller

(Mayor Littleton only votes in the case of a tie.)

Action items

Council Approval – Improvements to Pinkney Street

Deputy Town Manager Moore reminded Council that during their March 10th meeting, they expressed a preference to go with Option 2, which would allow the Town to make improvements to Pinkney Street without seeking VDOT acceptance of the street. He reported that J-2 Engineering confirmed the base was stable. Mr. Moore advised that he obtained a revised cost estimate of \$17,000 to repave the street; however, he believed additional items may be necessary that would increase it to \$20,000. He recommended the Council approve the project up to a cost of \$30,000, in the event costs increased further before the work was done. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he confirmed it would take approximately a week to complete the project.

Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council direct staff to pursue improvements to Pinckney Street as outlined in Option 2 and authorize an expenditure not to exceed \$30,000 for said improvements.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Leonard-Morgan, Bernard, Daly, Jacobs, Kirk, and Pearson

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmember Miller

(Mayor Littleton only votes in the case of a tie.)

Discussion Items

Painting of Water Tower

Town Manager Davis reported that the Town needed to repaint the Marshall Street water tower, which contained lead-based paint on the outside of the tower and was in need of repairs on both the inside and outside. He reported that the tower would be stripped and repainted with a product that would last for fifty to sixty years; and, noted that doing this project would extend the life of the tower. Mr. Davis advised that the contractor asked whether the Town was interested in putting Middleburg’s name or brand on the tower. He noted that Council had some design options, including one that included the Middleburg Community Charter School’s suggestion to put their logo on the north side of the tower, for their consideration.

Mayor Littleton noted that the contractor also asked about adding a crown in order to move the wireless antennas to the top of the tower. After some discussion, the Council agreed they did not wish to pursue this. They further agreed they did not wish to paint Middleburg's name or place a logo on the tower, as this would only draw attention to it.

In response to inquiries from the Council, Town Manager Davis advised that the tower would be fully curtained and contained when the lead paint was stripped from it. He further advised that the company would perform testing before, during and after the work to ensure it was done safely. Mr. Davis noted that they would not work if the wind exceeded 20 MPH. He advised that the staff would do public outreach with the neighbors prior to the project. Mr. Davis noted that the work would not be performed when school was in session. He advised that the paint would be thicker than normal and advised that it would take ten to twelve weeks to complete the work. Mr. Davis noted that the cost would be approximately \$500,000.

Ownership & Maintenance of Christmas Signs

Mayor Littleton reported that he met with Treavor Lord and Lisa Patterson, of The Hill School, to discuss the Em Sharp Christmas signs. He reminded Council that they were made of plywood and that six of them could no longer be displayed due to their deterioration. Mr. Littleton reported that the idea was for the Town to manage the display of the signs on the lamp posts each year. He opined that five to six would need to be replaced annually and suggested that the Town contract with Quail Run Signs to create a duplicate sign made of composite materials, with the originals then being returned to The Hill School. Mr. Littleton suggested that in ten to fifteen years, all the signs would be replicated. He advised that The Hill School was also fine with allowing Quail Run Signs to create an image of each sign that could be used for things such as the creation of postcards and ornaments.

In response to inquiries from the Council, Town Manager Davis advised that the goal was that the signs would be replicated during the year, which would then allow all of them to be hung during the holidays. He reported that the staff recently met with John Ralph, of Quail Run Signs, who suggested the replicas not be made of composite material, as it was not good in instances in which the signs must be handled. Mr. Davis advised that Mr. Ralph suggested the replicas be made of plywood; however, no decision had been made on the materials. He noted that as to their storage, the staff recommended that lined holders be created, with each sign being slid into a holder. Mr. Davis advised that as to the location of the storage, this was yet to be determined. He suggested it may be possible to add this to the maintenance shed or the wastewater treatment plant.

Council noted the need to plan for their storage so the signs would not be disturbed during the year. It was suggested the storage be climate controlled.

Mayor Littleton advised Council that each replica sign would cost thousands of dollars. He noted that the signs were, however, important to the community.

Council suggested that at least one of the original signs be displayed in the museum.

Mayor Littleton suggested the need for a Memorandum of Understanding with The Hill School to memorialize these discussions.

FY '23 Draft Budget (continued)

Town Manager Davis reported that the FY '22 business license receipts totaled \$720,000 to date. He advised that as a result, he increased the proposed receipts in the FY '23 Budget to \$675,000. Mr. Davis reported that the Town Hall Project debt service was also decreased as a result of the lower interest rates. He noted that at the request of Council, these changes were included on a tracking sheet and notes were added to some of the line items to clarify them. Mr. Davis reminded Council that they must hold a public hearing on the budget, with the schedule calling for this to occur in late April or early May. He advised that they could not adopt the budget until the meeting following the public hearing. Mr. Davis reported that he would change the real estate tax revenues to reflect whatever rate the Council set during their special meeting.

Information Items

Town Manager Davis advised Council that the Governor announced the top winery award winner for the State, with the award going to Cana Vineyards.

Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan reminded Council that the Town-wide Clean-up Event would be held on April 30th, along with the drug take back, and battery and used razor recycling collections.

Town Manager Davis reminded Council that the Middleburg American Legion would hold their 75th Jubilee Celebration on March 26th.

Closed Session

Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council go into closed session as authorized under Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, for the discussion or consideration of (1) appointments to public bodies related to the Middleburg Sustainability Committee and Middleburg Arts Council as allowed under Subsection (A)(1); and (2) the potential sale of Town-owned property located within the Town limits, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating position of the public body as allowed under Subsection (A)(3). Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan further moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that the Council thereafter reconvene in open session for action as appropriate.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Leonard-Morgan, Bernard, Daly, Jacobs, Kirk, and Pearson

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmember Miller

(Mayor Littleton only votes in the case of a tie.)

Mayor Littleton asked that Council certify that to the best of each member’s knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting, which each member so did. He reminded those present for the closed session that any discussion that occurred within it should be treated as confidential.

Appointments to Middleburg Sustainability Committee

Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Kirk, that Council re-appoint Alfred Pollard and Pam Jones to the Middleburg Sustainability Committee for two-year terms, said terms to expire May 12, 2024.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Leonard-Morgan, Bernard, Daly, Jacobs, Kirk, and Pearson

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmember Miller

(Mayor Littleton only votes in the case of a tie.)

Appointments to Middleburg Arts Council

Councilmember Pearson moved, seconded by Councilmember Kirk, that Council appoint Erin Coulter to fill a vacancy on the Middleburg Arts Council, said term to expire June 14, 2024. Councilmember Pearson further moved, seconded by Councilmember Kirk, that Council appoint Raven Orlikoff to fill a second vacancy effective March 31, 2022, said term to expire June 14, 2023.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Leonard-Morgan, Bernard, Daly, Jacobs, Kirk, and Pearson
No – N/A
Abstain: N/A
Absent: Councilmember Miller
(Mayor Littleton only votes in the case of a tie.)

There being no further business, Mayor Littleton declared the meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

APPROVED:

Trowbridge M. Littleton, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk

March 24, 2022 Middleburg Town Council Meeting

(Note: This is a transcript prepared by a Town contractor based on the video of the meeting. It may not be entirely accurate. For greater accuracy, we encourage you to review the video of the meeting that is on the Town's website – www.middleburgva.gov)

Bridge Littleton: Call the council meeting to order. First item is Pledge of Allegiance.

Everyone: [Pledge of Allegiance]

Bridge Littleton: All right. Next item is Roll Call. Chris.

Chris Bernard: Chris Bernard.

Bud Jacobs: Bud Jacobs.

Darlene Kirk: Darlene Kirk.

Bridge Littleton: Bridge Littleton.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Peter Leonard-Morgan.

Cindy Pearson: Cindy Pearson.

J. Kevin Daly: John Kevin Daly.

Rhonda North: Rhonda North, Town Clerk.

Danny Davis: Danny Davis, Town Manager.

Bridge Littleton: All right. Next item. So we've got I see members of the public are here tonight. So we've got two public items on the agenda. Number one is our normal public comment session. And so the public comment session is an opportunity for the public to address the town council for up to 3 minutes on any topic you like it. You know how green the grass is. Doesn't matter. And then the second session we have is the public hearing, which is related to the real property tax rates. So if you're here tonight to speak about the real property tax rates, it would be best to wait for the public hearing to talk about that. But if you're here for any other reason, by all means, use the public comment session to talk about any other topic. So we'll have the public comment session first. And so the way it works is every member, any member of the public can address the town council on any issue they like simply come up. You can either stand or sit at the microphone there, give us your name, your address, and then the floor is yours for 3 minutes. Council can't talk back and forth, so it's your 3 minutes to say anything you like. And so we will now open the public comment session for anybody who would like to address council on any topic. And Rhonda, we're not doing by phone anymore right?

Rhonda North: We are. But we don't have anyone.

Bridge Littleton: No one on the phone. Okay. All right. We will now close the public comment session and we will move on to the public hearing related to the real property tax rate. So, Danny, if you want to give us a quick opening on that in the background and then we'll go to the public hearing.

Danny Davis: I will, thank you, Mr. Mayor, and council members. And as just a brief overview and to highlight some of the items in your agenda packet for this evening. As you all are aware, property values that are assessed by Loudoun

County, the property values here in Middleburg increased 19.77% for this calendar year. And again, those assessments are done by the county. For properties that were existing as of last year. So not counting construction or growth. The equalized assessment increase was 15.13% and again, that's on average across all properties. We have provided for the public both here in the room as well as on the agenda packet that you have with you. Some charts just indicating some history of property value changes by category that would be by single family, detached by townhouse and then also by condo, which would be some of the smaller units here in town, such as Stonewall Court and Hunt Court. Those are considered condos in the county system. As you all know, the tax bill, the real property tax bill, is a factor of two different pieces of information. First is the assessments as we discussed. The second piece is the tax rate. And the tax rate is the the piece that the town council has the ability to set each year at this time, the tax rate for 2021 last year it was 15.3 cents per \$100 of assessed value. There is no proposal on the table to increase that rate at all, but we had to advertise a public hearing and hold a public hearing because it will result in additional tax levies being received by the town due to the increase in assessed values. The Town Council has had a number of discussions both here in council meetings as well as at the Strategic Finance Committee, about finding or discussing what would be an appropriate balance of tax rate. And also holding the public hearing is very important to hear from the public on these matters. The town council, because it's been advertised at the current rate, that's the maximum rate that the council could adopt, which is the current rate tax rate at 15.3 cents. However, the town council has the ability to select or designate a lower tax rate, and that would be at the council's discretion. We've provided a few options as well for you, and at the appropriate time, if you'd like, we can go through those in more detail. So with that, Mr. Mayor, and Council members, I'm happy to answer any questions you might have or go over any charts. Or we can do that either at this time or if you'd like to do that after the public hearing, it's as council wishes.

Bridge Littleton: So before we open the public hearing, does anybody have any questions for Danny or. Yeah, Bud.

Bud Jacobs: Danny, for members of the public, particularly, who may not understand this, would you please briefly define equalized tax rate? Second question. I believe Loudoun County has set their tax rate. If you could remind me what that is.

Danny Davis: Yes, sir. I'll answer that piece first. So the county has has finished their budget work sessions and the final vote will occur on April 5th. So it's not set in stone. But basically the way they're developing their appropriations ordinance, their rate will be \$0.89 per \$100 of assessed value. So that's a decrease of, I believe, nine and a half cents over the current rate.

Bridge Littleton: Was that equalized?

Danny Davis: It was not equalized. It was more than the equalized rate. The equalized was approximately 84 and a half cents. So there are about four and a half cents above the equalized rate. And for. Thank you for the question about equalized. We use that term kind of in a broad, average sense, if you will, for the average property owner. If your tax bill equalized, rate is the rate required for the average property owner to have the same tax bill this year that you had last year. And so that would be a factor of looking at what are average property values and then what rate would be required to create essentially the same tax bill for the average person. That does get a little complicated because in our scenario, commercial and residential are approximately 50/50 in our portfolio. But they they vary a different values commercial went up higher than residential or some sectors of residential went up higher than than others. And so when we give that term, I realize not everyone's going to be treated the same way. Even if you were to equalize the tax rate, some people would still see tax bills go up. Actually, most of the residential, if we equalize the tax rate, would actually see a decrease in their tax bill again because of that kind of balance between commercial and residential.

Bridge Littleton: And so the last question I've got here is, and again, relative to the county, so what was the county rate at?

Danny Davis: I believe it was 98.5. I can look.

Bridge Littleton: It was 98. And I'm going to use a broad number here. So the average Loudoun County tax bill was around, let's just say 5000 for sake of argument. So the county was at \$0.98. They've lowered it to \$0.89, I got that right.

So I'm bad at math. 98 to 89 is a nine cent decrease. But in order to keep that tax bill at 5000, they would have had to lower it to \$0.84.

Danny Davis: Four and a half.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. So they lowered the rate. But all of our Loudoun County property tax, the dollar cost of the bill is actually going to go up.

Danny Davis: It is.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. So and that's you know, it's the hard thing, you know, and I'll just say this generally, it's very hard to understand because unlike income tax, where, you know, you make \$10,000, you pay 20% and it's you make \$11,000 next year, you still pay 20%. It's still relative the same. What throws the real property taxes into a different way of thinking about it in Virginia is it's two things. It's the rate that's charged, but the value assessed goes up and that is independent of what we all might make or right. I don't think anybody I think the average in Middleburg went up, what? Danny 19%.

Danny Davis: 19.77% total.

Bridge Littleton: So the average house value in Middleburg went up 19%. I hope somebody got a 19% pay raise this year. I know I didn't. So that's what makes this a confusing and hard to work with. So that's very helpful. I appreciate it. Does anyone have any questions? Yeah. Before we go.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Just following on from the \$0.98 to \$0.89, any idea on what that represents in terms of percentage over equalized by any chance? I'm not sure if you work that out.

Danny Davis: In rough figures, you're still around a 5% [off mic] yeah increase over the equalized tax rate.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: [inaudible] on the inflation rate.

Danny Davis: Around that. Yeah, I could, I could do some quick math there, but. Yeah, no, no, no, absolutely.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Any other questions, Danny? And we're going to open up for we're going to open up the public hearing here in a second, once, twice. And, you know, we did for any member of the public who would like to look at it over there. We put up some charts that show.

Danny Davis: Want me to walk through it real quick?

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Yeah.

Danny Davis: Yeah, yeah. So the chart on the right hand side is basically showing the difference in the average home value broken down by single family homes. That'd be just a, you know, a regular detached house that's on the left hand side. The middle chart there is townhomes, and then the right hand side would be condos. You'll see that the average single family house was up over 16%. The average townhouse was over 24%. And then condos were, I believe, just over 5% or so. So that's the significant jump in property values that we saw. Again, because of the demand, primarily the demand of property throughout the county. The assessor's office noted that they could not consider sales of homes early in 2021 towards market value because the market stayed so active throughout the summer fall and into December that they really had to count sales between August and December because they have to give a value as their best estimate of market value as of January 1st. And so that's why we've seen these these increases. The charts on the left, I realize, are a lot of information and we can go over them in more detail. The top is showing for the single family detached homes. The orange line that's a horizontal line is the average current tax bill for 2021. For this current past year, I guess, and it was \$852. That's a Middleburg real property tax bill, not counting the Loudoun County bill. We have four kind of four potential tax rate options that we've been discussing with the council. So on those blue bar charts, you'll see the far left

would be if we did if the council did not change the tax rate, that would be the average single family tax bill and that would be nearly \$970. So that's \$120 increase year over year. And then there are other tax options at taking the equalized rate, which is the far right and you'll see is actually on average is actually a bill is a tax bill decrease for single family homes because dropping the rate to the equalized rate actually is lower than what the average single family house went up. And then there are a couple of options in the middle that take into account either inflation or just one option that's a 10% over the equalized rate. So the top the top blue lines are charts are for single family homes. The green in the middle is townhomes, in the bottom is for condos. So you'll see that again. Townhouses had the highest value increase, so the average owner of a townhouse will see potentially a tax bill increase at various levels, even at those different tax rates, again, just depending on each person's individual situation.

Bridge Littleton: And the last thing I'll mention too is, and I checked this with Danny earlier, we can only adopt one rate that apply. So we can't we will now have the flexibility to have a rate for townhomes, a rate for a single family, and it's one rate for everybody. So we will now open the public hearing. So just like the public comment, if I have, I'd like to address council on the tax rate component by all means, come up, join the at the table, sit or stand. You have 3 minutes and and that's the way it works. Anybody would like to address council?

Leonard Caldwell: Yes. My name is Leonard Caldwell. I live at 100 Sycamore Street. The thing I'm curious about is, is the budget for the coming year, is that going up a lot or is that staying stable or what? That would be a question that I would ask because otherwise I would say be keeping it the same. However, if we're if the budget is being increased, obviously money needs to be paid for that. So I would think that I would either say equalize it, that would be my recommendation or if we need more money based on the fact of a budget, I presume that's already in existence, then I would say we probably need to make it go up a little bit.

Bridge Littleton: Anybody else. Oh, yes, ma'am.

Earline Coleman: Good evening. I'll stand right here, if that's okay. My name is Earline [Inaudible] Coleman. I live at 205 Windy Hill Road. Just wondering if living on Windy Hill around the, everything else that's owned by the foundation, does that have any effect on my property value? I meant to bring my statement with me, but the assessment went up like 50, 60,000. And I was just curious as to is it possible it could be less because of where the property is right now, we are the only single family home, private home there. Everything else is owned by the foundation. And I have the only property there. But it's it still is going up, up, up. And I was just curious if that made a difference as to where it's located.

Danny Davis: So I'll let you finish the public hearing.

Bridge Littleton: Public comment or the public hearing? Anybody else wish to address council for the public hearing? We will close the public hearing. So it's a great question. And I think the the easiest way to say it is, if it's owned privately by you all, depending on what rate we set, that assessment does flow down so it doesn't make a difference that around you is owned by Windy Hill.

Danny Davis: And real quickly, just looked up your values from last year compared to this year. And it's it's about a 12% increase, which is pretty much right in line with kind of what we saw for other homes and especially in the Ridgeview area. So we know that some single family houses went up 15 or 16%. Others were in the nine, ten, 11, 12%. So I think it's kind of right around what we saw was averages for homes like yours. And really, I think the mayor's correct, probably. I don't see any effect necessarily of it being nearby Windy Hill.

Bridge Littleton: The other thing is, and we wanted to mention this and there's a pamphlet set up front, Loudoun County and the town have a real property and personal. So real estate, property tax relief program for the elderly and the disabled. And so it has net worth. And, you know, you can depending on where you fall, you can get up to 100% tax relief. So it's definitely a program to take a look at. And, you know, there's a bunch up there, but that would be both county and the town. So and we can if that's something that any member of the public is interested in figuring out how to make it work. We can help you guys. We can help anybody do that the right way with the county, because forms are forms. And if you don't get them right, it's can only be troublesome.

Bud Jacobs: But Mr. Mayer, is there any sort of appeals process for the county on their real property assessments?

Bridge Littleton: There is. If you would like to appeal your assessed value, you can do that through the commissioner of the revenue's office. And I mean, plenty of people do that. I mean, thousands of people do that every year and they will go back and review it, because if you think about it, they sort of look at the whole and they and they make sort of, you know, big picture views of areas. And if you like them and there's evidence to show that the increased assessed value of your home appears to be unfair given what's sold next to you and stuff like that. And they will fairly take that into consideration and oftentimes they do adjust the value. So that's another thing, another opportunity to take a look at. Okay. So I guess the next question for council is what are everybody's thoughts on how we want to address the tax rate? Or Danny, do you want to give the download real quickly of the recommendation from the Strategic Finance Committee?

Danny Davis: Sure. Sure. So as noted, I believe previously, but also a little bit in this item, one of the conversations with the Strategic Finance Committee was how to have this appropriate balance of recognizing values have gone up significantly. And so we need to be cognizant of the impact on property tax payers, but also making sure that we have an appropriate balance of revenues across the board for for the town. As you know, 60 to 70% of our general fund revenues are tourism dependent and they are dependent upon the meals tax, occupancy, tax, business license, tax. And while those are great revenue sources and we have at this point confidence they'll continue to be strong, we also want to make sure that the real property revenues continue to remain as a as a an appropriate percentage of our revenue stream because we don't want to be too imbalanced one direction or another. The Finance Committee did make a number of recommendations previously regarding preparations in the budget for inflation, understanding that we're in a very tumultuous and uncertain economic time as well. When we brought the the real property tax rate discussion, essentially they seem to indicate support for the idea of taking the equalized rate and adding an inflationary factor to the equalized rate. That inflationary factor kind of waffles every month. And there's you can you can take one metric and it can be one number, a different metric. We used a generic seven and a half percent inflationary rate because we saw CPI was about 7% one month, it was about 8% another month. And so if we took the equalized rate and added a seven and one half percent factor to that, it would result in a proposed tax rate of 14.29 cents. So essentially that's a \$0.01 decrease off of the current town of Middleburg tax rate. So that was kind of the general thinking. And I think consensus without a formal vote of the committee is kind of a balancing act to make sure that we recognize the impact on taxpayers, but also keep an appropriate balance amidst our other revenue streams.

Bridge Littleton: So and to answer the one question from the. The one question from the public. Turn my mic on. From a budgetary perspective, I mean, yes, our expenses are increasing year over year. I mean, you know, the the increase in expenses to run the town, whether it's, you know, the wastewater treatment plant, I mean, the chemicals are going up ten and 20%. I think the inflation you see of seven and a half to 10% on all the stuff that we all are having to buy is what we're seeing in the town government. And, you know, in order to keep salaries competitive, we're having to make sure that we level set that with what with the price the price pressures that we're all feeling in terms of what we got to buy, in terms of daily goods. So is there anything in the budget that is we added 30% to the budget because we're doing some big new activity or exercise? No, everything in there is planned and everything was always budgeted. But what we what we were planning on doing and planning on buying the prices of those things have gone up more than expected because of the supply chain, COVID, you know, just general global inflation that's happening. So it's not because of any one particular thing that happened. I think it's just, you know, if you go back a year ago, inflation was two and a half percent. I think this conversation would be a two and a half percent conversation. So. All right. So let me ask just a quick straw poll from a council perspective. I mean, we've got four options on the table. Keep the rate the same, do the equalize, plus 10%, do the equalize plus seven and one half percent of the equalized all the way down is maybe we just do this by a process of elimination. Does anybody favor keeping it at the current rate at 15.3? Okay. So let's just take that one off the table. Is anybody thinking that it should be equalized= plus 10%?

Cindy Pearson: I think it might be worth a conversation. And. I'm just going to make a comment. I'll come back to it.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Well, no, I mean, so let's. Okay. So if it's so, you know, the keeping the rate, the same is off the table. So let's not worry about that one. So let's focus on should we equalize it all the way down to to no change or should we have an inflationary factor? Right. We've we've we've modeled seven and one half and ten is do any of those feel about right or is it a different number or just kind of trying to understand where people feel? Yeah, Chris, maybe.

Chris Bernard: We do it this way, I think. Do we all kind of agree that it should be equalized with some inflationary factor, right? No.

Bud Jacobs: I'm just in favor of fully equalized.

Bridge Littleton: Okay.

Bridge Littleton: Anybody else?

J. Kevin Daly: Just a general comment. I always get a kick out of the how inflations are rated. I'm a government pensioner and the government says inflation was only 5.9%. We've just gone through for the town looking at salaries and I can tell you that they weren't equalized for inflation. They didn't come to 5.9%. And then I'm looking at this and the government says our property is 7.5% inflation. I'm just tossing it out there as things that make you go, huh? I believe there should be an equalized rate and inflation is how do they come up with the number CPI I understand how the government comes up with 5.9%? And then who is on health care? Have you noticed health care has gone up beyond 5.9%. Things to make you go hmm.

Bridge Littleton: So, Kevin, are you saying that it should be we should equalize all the way down to 13.29 or so basically keeping having no inflationary factor. Yes. Okay.

Cindy Pearson: But my one concern is that we need to be careful with the rate as we don't have to raise it next year. And I think that's where the equalization somewhere in the middle would be a little bit better because we take it all the way down to 13.29 with our budget and stuff and it will go up again next year if we come back to people next year and say, Oh, we've got to raise it. That's going to be harder because that'll be a huge raise then. So it's just kind of balancing the balls in the air somehow.

J. Kevin Daly: I'll caveat that. They're looking at the economists, which is a neat magazine to read. They're already predicting inflation is going to go up to double digits, probably 10% next year. So something to keep in mind.

Bridge Littleton: Peter, your thoughts?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Yeah. Thanks. Well, great comments. So, first of all, we've talked about there is a confusion until you get into the weeds about the difference between the percentage rate and the actual dollar rate. And so once we've got over that and understood that Mr. Caldwell, thank you very much for your comment earlier. The fact of the matter is that costs to the town are going up. It's not like we're trying to make a profit or the town is trying to make a profit, an extra profit and. If you look at the history of tax changes, I asked for something from Tina earlier on. It seems like the tax is constantly the rate is is generally coming down, the actual percentage rate just to keep the tax amount roughly the same. So, you know, at seven and a half percent, it is a little bit more to every homeowner in terms of the annual tax that's due for their real estate. But I think we have to try and keep up somehow with what is going on in the market. So I would have to say seven and a half percent would probably be my suggestion, my vote.

Bridge Littleton: Darlene. And you can say no comment and we don't have to vote tonight. We've got the special meeting.

Darlene Kirk: [off mic] Anyway, I would like to be able to do the equalize rate. But I think that next year having it have to go up so much is going to be a shock. I kind of agree with the 14.29.

Bridge Littleton: Chris, how about you?

Chris Bernard: Yeah. I mean, I think we we have kind of two duties. And one is to the citizens and the people that are homeowners and pay the taxes. And then we also have a duty to the town budget and operating expenses. So I think that middle ground of equalizing it and whether it's five, somewhere between five and 8%, you know, the exact number is

you could argue about all day. But I think somewhere that creates a middle ground and it smooths out so that like they said, we don't have to go down this year and up next year. It really kind of smooths it out for everybody and keeps it relatively static.

Bridge Littleton: Danny is there. And again, I'm not you know, this is not like planning anything, but I'm just curious, in state code, is there a limit? I mean, all the public notices are in the right way and all that stuff. Is there a limit in any year in how much you can raise the rate?

Danny Davis: With that caveat of proper advertisement I'm not aware of any limit of how much it could go up in a particular year.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. I mean, like, we advertise we weren't going to raise it. It was going to be either the same or lower. So I was just curious. And again, it's not that I'm. So the thing I'm thinking about is, you know, fiscally, the town is in a good spot. We've done a good job of trying to manage expenses and we've been fortunate with the tourism revenues that have come in. We do have the new town hall project, which is, you know, totally affordable. We're not you know, nothing needs to be changed because of that. We put ourselves in a good position. And even if we had a hiccup, that'll be okay. But as. And I think. We don't have the flexibility of the county has you know, the county has a huge residential and commercial real estate tax base and they have, you know, aggressively been lowering the rate for a decade and a half and supplanting that income loss with data centers. So and they've been that's been a conscious choice. And now, you know, and I know a lot of us have been saying this. I know I've been saying it. They have actually come to the realization that they have unbalanced their revenues to a point where data centers are now a liability. I mean, it's a great they're making hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars a year on tax revenues, on data centers. But now they realize, I think it's something like 35 to 38% of the county revenue is based off of data centers. And now they realize, oh, no, we have put ourselves in a position where we are so reliant on this one income source, which is a technology that can and we all know how fast technology can change if something happens in that world, you know, and technology changes happen in a year, you know, have we put ourselves in such a squeeze that if something happens, we may have to raise real estate taxes on people 10%, one year, 10% the next year and 10% the next year, because we've got to recoup those monies or else we're laying people off. What I think is interesting about our town is we're actually way more exposed than that, not because we consciously chose to do that, but we have and it's the great benefit of Salamander. Right has drawn a lot of tourism, has drawn a lot of revenue, and we're now reliant on it. And so we've built up a very healthy reserve that the county hasn't done. But but it's also created a vulnerability. So our real estate so the county real estate taxes used to be around 65 to 70% of their revenues. Now it's about 50%. When we look at the dollar bill over there on the left, our real estate taxes only make up about 14% of our revenue. Everything else is really coming from food tax and hotel tax. And we all know this. What happens if Salamander has a fire and they go, they're shut for a year and a half or two years? You know, we're and I guess, you know, maybe this is a broader question for the council. If we do lower equalize the rate, totally fine. We just have to do it acknowledging the possibility, even though it's small, that you could have something like a fire or, I don't know, a pandemic that causes things to close. It never happened. Never happened. And the next year, real estate tax rates might have to go up 10 to 20%. Very unlikely, but certainly possible. You know, once in a century, things do happen every century. And so that's what I'm wrestling with in my mind. I think if we were voting tonight and I don't vote, but I think equalized plus something. You know, and I know we're not talking huge dollar values, but I mean, this is a town whose entire annual budget is three and a half million dollars. The county spends that every 15 minutes. So just trying to wrestle with that in my mind and you know, the last thing last comment i will make is there's no right answers. Right. These are these are choices and, you know, elements of risk and how we want to balance those risks. You know doing the best we can for the citizens, but also making sure that if something bad does happen where we're prepared, we don't have to really sock it to people when when times are bad and we don't have to lay off staff, we don't have to reduce services and things like that. So anyway, again, no right answers. We're all struggling with this. So anyway, you know, and again, we're not planning to have a vote tonight. The vote is next Thursday. Yes, 31st. I mean, we could have a vote tonight if we wanted to. I think this has all been really good commentary and a lot to think about. Bud.

Bud Jacobs: Just a couple of quick comments, Mr. Mayor. The it's important, I think, to remember that in the case of data centers in Loudoun County, the revenue stream that matters to the county is not real estate taxes from those data centers. It is the personal property tax imposed on the equipment in those data centers. And it's worth pointing out that

Loudoun County, I believe, also is planning to or has lowered their personal property tax rate for the year. The reason that I'm reluctant to impose too much of an inflation factor for our real estate property tax is that, as we all know, in a sense, our residents face a double whammy. They have to pay the Loudoun County real estate property tax. And even with the county's efforts to reduce the tax rate, I think most people are going to face some incremental increase in the dollar amount of their tax bill. And similarly, if we just went with the equalized tax rate, I believe our residents would also still face some minimal increase in the dollar amount of their tax bill because of the assessment increases. I'm not hard over on the equalized tax rate, but I would I would urge us to figure out a way to, if we apply an inflation factor, make it as small as we possibly can. And the point about not facing or forcing people to face property tax shock next year is certainly a valid point. But I am worried about the the double impact caused by the increased assessments on our residents. So that's. Yeah, the net whammy. I love it.

J. Kevin Daly: If I may piggyback on that. We're talking about property taxes of people living in Middleburg and it's been mentioned before in the past, the median income of residents in Middleburg is \$54,000, 54,000. Okay. So and it's not getting any higher because I'm sure there's a lot of other pensioners that are living in Middleburg.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Danny So come the 31st of this month when we have to vote on it. Give us an idea of, you know, what are we are we stuck at either this or that or the other, or can we come up with some? To Bud's point, something any arbitrary but a number?

Danny Davis: Yeah, absolutely. That's completely within your discretion. We were setting some just kind of markers of options for you. But if you'd like and if you'd either like to ask me now or even over the next coming days, I can put a few different scenarios together at a variety of tax rates between the equalized rate 13.29 and the seven and a half percent rate, which 14.29. We could give you every ten every 10th of a cent difference just to let you see what that looks like.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Really helpful, because the sense I'm getting is that seven and a half would probably be the well, it might be the top end. The top end of what we think. And equalizes the lower ends. [off mic]

Cindy Pearson: Danny. Just for general information, if my house is went up to 500,000 this year, could you tell me quickly how much the equalized rate and the inflation rate would be and the difference of what I'm going to pay? You're better with math than I am.

Danny Davis: [off mic] Yes. [off mic] So on the average for single family house now again, this is at 633,000 average assessed. Let me make sure I'm on the right chart here. Your your current year's tax bill was \$852 at the equalized rate, 13.29 cents it would actually go down by \$10 at the seven and a half percent inflationary rate, 14.29. It would go up by \$53. 852. [off mic] Right. And that's correct. Yeah. That's if I can pull that. [multiple speakers] 920. Yeah. 920. I'm sorry. 905.77 would be the average tax bill at that point. I also can provide you for the 31st some quick some math, but some quick math right now about Loudoun County. At the rate that they adopted it, it appears single family homes would see about \$180 increase in their tax bill.

Cindy Pearson: That's equalized rate. [off mic]

Danny Davis: Yeah, they did equalize plus. Yeah. So I'll do some math, make sure that I have those numbers correct, but that's just some quick excel back of the spreadsheet.

Bridge Littleton: So wait a minute. What's the average value of a of a home in Loudoun County?

Danny Davis: It's I believe it's less than here.

Bridge Littleton: I was going to say it's less than here. [off mic]

Danny Davis: Well, again, supply and demand. Right. [multiple speakers]

Bridge Littleton: That just I mean, that that just doesn't. Yeah, I mean. Well, and I think for the thing that's hurting Middleburg the most is our percentage of townhomes and the townhomes went up in Middleburg 24% or whatever. I mean, that's incredible.

Danny Davis: So actually I take that back. It's almost exactly now this is average. This is all Loudoun County units. So I don't have the exact breakdown in front of me all residential and Loudoun County average value is 636. \$636,000. So if you take our singles and our townhouses together, yeah, it's pretty much exactly the same if you add in a few others, that's a slight difference there.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. So at our at what we're so if we did the equalize plus seven and a half that plus the county, what the county is doing, then the average Middleburg resident would see their overall real estate or average real estate tax bill go up about 200 bucks.

Danny Davis: 230 give or take.

Bridge Littleton: Oh it was 160. Right. Okay.

Danny Davis: Now, now that's for a single family.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, I got it, I got it. I'm working with rough.

Danny Davis: Townhouses. Obviously more significant.

Bridge Littleton: Right, right, right, right. Okay. All right. No, it's hard stuff. You know what, Danny? I would say this and this is just this. Just and I apologize. I hate doing it on the number of cents because that just does not, you know. Oh, \$0.03. \$0.04. No, no, no. If you wouldn't mind sending to everybody tomorrow, what does it look like at equalize plus 1% plus 2% plus 3% all the way to seven and a half. Let's just see what the and then, you know what the average bill on each one of those three single family, townhome and condo and let's see what 1% increase each at each step looks like.

Danny Davis: That's easy enough and then I'll provide you the county just for clarity sake. The impact of the county's.

Bridge Littleton: Three categories. Yeah. Now, that would be really, really helpful. Yeah. We were talking about this earlier. Peter and I. I hate the way Virginia does it. It's just such a such a pain. Okay. Any other thoughts, inputs. Questions?

Cindy Pearson: I just want to encourage anyone, though, to please pick up the pink folder and take it home and look at it and go ahead and fill it out. Even if because it has got some really good it's a really good benefit to use.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, I'll. So as an example here, real quickly, if. If your. No, I'm fine. I don't need glasses yet. I don't need glasses yet. I'm fine. [laughter] So if if your net if your. If your net worth is now you got there are certain qualifying factors, right? Age it's for the elderly and disabled. Right. So if you're qualified disabled you're or over a certain age limit, if your net worth is 800,000 and 920,000, you can get exempt up to 50% of the tax. If if your net worth is below 440,000, it's 100%. You pay no taxes. You pay no real estate tax. And that is, again, Loudoun County and the town. So it's a really it's a really good program.

J. Kevin Daly: I just hope when they check out the value of my house, it doesn't go over 900,000.

Bridge Littleton: Any other last minute input or. Yes, ma'am. [off mic] Sure. Sure.

Earline Coleman: You mentioned if your house roughly 500,000 in your tax bill is goes up to 900 for the year. Is that based on some of the exemption that you have?

Bridge Littleton: No, that's based on full, free. full free.

Earline Coleman: The reason I ask because my property only I think it's assessed this year over 4 something, I don't remember. I meant to bring it with me 4 or whatever. But my tax bill for the year is \$4200.

Bridge Littleton: [off mic] County is independent from the town.

Earline Coleman: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. So we have our rate and they have theirs. [off mic] No, no, no, no. And but this program is for both. Yes. So, yeah. [off mic] Yeah. Unfortunately, it was not county error in your favor, like monopoly. Okay. Anybody else do anything from Danny. Yeah.

Danny Davis: I don't know if you want.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, I'm sorry.

Leonard Caldwell: One comment I'd like to make. You said that the average income here. Median. [off mic]

Bud Jacobs: Not average, median.

Leonard Caldwell: But that means half the people living here are making less than that. All I can say is, you know, that's a real burden on people at that level because it's not just Loudoun County as well as what Middleburg has to get. But, you know, they have all these other additional costs that's putting a lot of pressure [off mic]. So I think we could get that down below seven and a half percent that'd probably be helpful for a lot of people because that's not easy to live on.

Cindy Pearson: Yeah, that's why I encourage folks that can to go ahead and apply for this because we do in that meeting, we have a lot of retirees here or single income families. So that's what brings it down to and of course we have Windy Hill and Levis Hill House, which that also brings it down. So there's a lot of things that put that together. But I can't say enough about that. Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. I mean, you know, and we all know this, but, you know, Middleburg does have a very much a much larger percentage of our population is retired. I mean, much larger. And you can you can look at it. So the average age in the county is 36, you know, and ours is 50 now. Right. So we do have a lot of folks who were firefighters and teachers and county workers and locals, and they're retired and on fixed income, which is what drives a lot of that. Yeah. Unless just anything else, we'll move to the next one. And so the vote on this will be we'll have a special meeting for that and there will be a public comment session there as well, will be next Thursday at 6:00. Is will be the actual vote. So well and again, you all are more than welcome to stay for the rest of the excitement of the town council meeting. Or if you're here for a different if you're here for a different purpose, that's great. But we're going to move on from the public presentation to staff reports. Oh, wait, I'm sorry. Christmas and Middleburg. Michelle Myers. You're up.

Michelle Myers: Thank you for having me.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you for coming.

Michelle Myers: Hi. How's everybody? It's not quite April yet, but here we are. The first quarter is already spun by. We did. We did. And we're going to do it again. [off mic] So I'm not sure what we want to cover. Do you just want a high level overview of what we did, what we accomplished?

Bridge Littleton: I think the other thing, too, is, you know, what went right? What went wrong? And what do we think about in terms of planning for next year? And I don't you know, not like we need barricades and stuff like that, but, you know, what do we want to change? What do we want to replicate and stuff like that?

Michelle Myers: What went right. I think I'll start with that. I think we we had a really safe event. We had a lovely event. We had no injuries. We had no car issues. We had no people being towed. So we had a lot of good stuff in that regard. I think that we got really good feedback from everyone that I spoke with about the size of the event. They felt like town was not super congested. They felt like it was a little easier. So those were the good pieces of feedback. I did get a few pieces of negative feedback on our messaging. It could have been a little bit nicer or a little bit more, not quite as strongly worded possibly. [off mic] And the messaging about parking when we sold out of parking and basically please join us next year I think was kind of the overriding sentiment. And that felt a little exclusionary or a little, you know, don't come sort of is what I heard from a lot of people, which it was, which I thought was the point.

Bridge Littleton: No. And we talked about it. Right.

Michelle Myers: Took it on the chin a little bit.

Bridge Littleton: It was the big red ink stamp of don't come. You know, it was. We're full.

Chris Bernard: Anxiety about overcrowding.

Michelle Myers: Were trying to balance everybody's needs and desires on that day so that that I would love to be able to change. I think we did a little we did ourselves a very good service by separating the food trucks and having the food trucks separated on both sides of town. So I think that alleviated a little bit of pressure. We did put some public seating over here, here, over. And and I think that that got utilized a little bit, although our host that we put the public seating on has asked us not to do it again next year. So we won't be doing that again. But I think that if we could maybe close off a couple more of the streets, maybe put some seating down one of the streets on that side of town, I think that might be helpful so that we have some places for people to sit and eat. So I think that's about it. Santa was a little late coming around the corner. There was a little bit of consternation about Santa being late to his own parade. So we will work all of that out. He is very busy and the folks that take care of Santa's sleigh are very, very, very particular about where they get ready. And so we may actually request or ask that it be possible that they get that Santa's sleigh ready, maybe at the at the sporting library, maybe back there, because the busses and the the kids with all the loud instruments will be long since gone. And then Santa can just ease around the corner, and maybe that might make it a little bit easier so that we're not bringing Santa all the way from the Hill School barn, which is where he or she likes to get ready back there. So we're going to try that. But other than that, we're going to lose our parking here at Salamander because of the lovely new building. So we're actively looking for additional parking spaces. We have spoken with the folks that run Mickey Gordon Park and then the ancillary sort of ball fields that are owned separately by the county. And they've offered to bush hog that section and let us have additional parking on that west side of town or that east side of town. So we're looking at that. And then I would have some great feedback from the folks that Lost Barrel. They are actually putting in additional parking this summer for their own use and they've offered to not only have us use part of their parking, but expand it around the back side of the property as they can get that ready for us. And then we'll talk to several landowners on this side of town as well and see what we can do. So I think all in all, it was a success. I think once we lose this really easy parking for folks that have a hard time with the in and out of the busses, I think that might be a bit of a challenge. So we might have to be a little bit more strongly worded about handicapped parking and accessible parking in town. We may have to come up with a plan together on that to serve those those customers. But other than that, I think it was ok. We did okay. Any feedback for me?

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. The first thing I would say is number one, I mean, yeah, we got great weather. So that was that always helps. I the feedback I've gotten from people who live in town and especially all the businesses, everybody felt that the size was just right. I mean, just right. That number of people in town was and all the businesses again that I've spoken to ah spoken to me have said, you know, I was busy, I did great business, but it wasn't jammed that I couldn't serve my customers and they had to wait for hours. Yeah, theft was down, you know, and everybody felt like, you know, you go into a clothing store, right? And it was full. But it wasn't so jammed that you couldn't serve everybody. And people felt like they were unattended and were sort of gruff and like, oh, well, I'm out of here. Right. So and then on the sidewalks, everybody had room to breathe. And and when the parade came by, everybody was able to get a good spot and kids could see. So, I mean, I don't know what the numbers were, but I think, you know, again, you guys have got to run this to where it's it makes sense. And the the juice is worth the squeeze and all that kind of stuff. But if that number is

and everything was, you know, in the black instead of being in the red was then that felt to me like a sweet spot. Okay. So the only concern that I had that I heard was complaints about people parking down Landmark School Road and then Foxcroft Road and you'll figure that out.

Michelle Myers: So I think we're just.

Bridge Littleton: And Windy Hill.

Michelle Myers: Yeah, yeah. And I think the excessive signage throughout town pushed those cars that direction because usually we can accommodate some of those cars in town. But you know, that decision was made that there was going to be no in town parking at all. So we didn't have any buffer and that's where they ended up. So I think if we can have town parking back next year, that's my request if that's possible.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Our street Chinn Lane. Packed with cars on both sides. No, that's okay. But it's like, you know, now I've got to replant, reseed all that. And I'm just kidding.

Michelle Myers: Sorry.

Bridge Littleton: You'll be getting the bill in May. [off mic]

Michelle Myers: I didn't know. I thought there was signage literally on every street.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I think that our street and a few others weren't signed and obviously folks found, you know, that's fine. You know, they're allowed to. It's a public street.

Michelle Myers: I didn't know that. Where's AJ.

AJ Panebianco: Everywhere where there was not a sign, there was an overload of cars. All [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Well, I mean, so, you know, whatever you need us to do to work with you guys to figure out, okay, what was the number of cars that we think, you know, all the ones who are parked on the road. All right. So and now I'm gonna make up numbers. There was 1000 cars out there.

Michelle Myers: We did 1000 paid parking spots.

Bridge Littleton: And there was 200 sort of where you didn't expect them. Okay. How do we figure out how to accommodate those 200 out there and then we can sign all those and keep the same number.

Michelle Myers: And that's 450 of our 1000. So that's almost 50% of our parking is gone now. So it's going to be a big burden for us to try to find a new spot. So I'm working with, like I said, a couple of landowners, but the majority of our visitors come from that side of town. So if I can solve it at Mickey Gordon, that's what I'd prefer to do.

Cindy Pearson: But then you have the problem also. If it's raining before you have got a mess.

Michelle Myers: It's a huge mess.

Bridge Littleton: But then a lot of people don't come.

Michelle Myers: But then a lot of people don't come. So there's that. We had a really good bus vendor that was really great and we had a manager on site that was actually timing them and I gave them all colored three by five cards and every single bus had a different color and they had to leave at that time, whether they were full or not. So it was like a dance and the bus guy told me at the end he's like, I've never done anything like that before, but it was so smart. We're going to do it every time.

Bridge Littleton: That's great.

Michelle Myers: It was every 15 minutes there was like two on the road, two parked and two in town, 2 2 2. And they just kept going around. They just kept going like a dance. So that helped a lot. We didn't have any backup, so do that again.

Bridge Littleton: Well, that just, you know, now your wait 15 minutes at worst, you wait 15 minutes. Yeah, yeah. Okay, great. Well, any questions for Michelle? Any thought, other thoughts or input? Yeah, Bud.

Bud Jacobs: Just one comment. You said you thought you did okay. Yeah, I think you did a whole lot better than okay. It was it was well done.

Bridge Littleton: Despite Jim still being there.

Michelle Myers: Thank you. Thank you. Big, big shoes to.

Unknown: Everybody thought that he got drunk, or he wasn't coming.

Michelle Myers: No, he was there.

Unknown: People were like saying well is it over? People were starting to leave. [off mic] I tell you.

Bud Jacobs: One of the metrics that I use for evaluating this event is an unnamed merchant in town who in the past has not been a fan of the Middleburg Christmas parade. And this year, after the event, when I asked them, they were thrilled, they were happy. They thought you guys had pretty much nailed it. And of course, what they were talking about was crowd size.

Michelle Myers: Thank you.

Bud Jacobs: So well done.

Michelle Myers: Thank you so much.

Cindy Pearson: Thank you. One other. I was not able to be here, so I was watching the live feed. It did freeze up. It did. So maybe whoever. I don't know how we could improve on that.

Michelle Myers: Oh. Oh, sorry. So one of the challenges I think I [multiple speakers]

J. Kevin Daly: There goes your pay raise. [laughter]

Michelle Myers: And the town has been so generous in helping us with subsidizing the the traffic and all of the busses. What I did hear from a lot of folks is that they had a really hard time getting Internet service while they were here. So I'm going to propose when we come back, getting like a private tower or something where we can actually have a tower for the event so that we have wi fi for the event for people to not just use cell phone data. So if I can get a tower that just rolls into town and like parks at the Hill School or something, I might do something like that so that we can actually stream it live. Because I believe that if we could stream it live, it would not only bring just love and joy and all the things. I think it would help a lot for those folks that can't be here. So that's my intention, is to try to fix that this year. [off mic]

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Michelle, I was with with a resident recently who made a great suggestion. I just mentioned it. Now, apparently, a lot of people, when they come to Middleburg for the Christmas parade, they go shopping, but they don't buy a lot because they can't carry their bags all over the place. So an idea was that maybe a one of the charities in

town wants to do like have a station where you can take your bags and they wrap up stuff it. You pay the charitable organization for it and then they come back at the end of the day and pick it, take their bags, and.

Bridge Littleton: They donate it to a worthy family.

Michelle Myers: Well, it's a lovely idea. I've actually posed it to the Foxcroft girls because the face painting didn't seem to be beloved as it was. And I think carrying packages and doing a table and maybe that could be part of what their service is. They could maybe do that.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: And I think. You know, some of it's predicated on the weather. Of course So. No, but yeah. So that's great. Thanks.

Bridge Littleton: The only thing I would say with that is be careful for wild success. Don't have two kids there.

Danny Davis: In a long line.

Bridge Littleton: And then all of a sudden everybody goes, Oh, there's a wrapping service. Oh, really? Yeah. And 900 people line up.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Well, Funny enough, the when you go to the Fun Shop, they do this amazing wrapping of your. Yeah. Gifts that you buy, you know, for lazy husbands. It's really helpful. But maybe they could be like mentors, you know, to maybe I don't know.

Darlene Kirk: Just at least just accepting the packages.

Michelle Myers: And just holding them.

Darlene Kirk: Check in. [off mic] that's really what's needed.

Bridge Littleton: Michelle, I'll let you figure that out. You negotiate that with the owner. Best of Luck.

Michelle Myers: Best of luck to you.

Bud Jacobs: You go, girl. Yeah.

Michelle Myers: Thank you.

J. Kevin Daly: This is this is larger than a village, which means there's more than one church, and there's a lot of churches that are available with their own halls that would be more than happy to help [inaudible]. [off mic] I may have a couple.

Michelle Myers: Yeah, terrific.

Bridge Littleton: Sort of perishing around, just. Okay. Any other questions for Michelle?

Michelle Myers: Thank you. Thank you all so much.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for us?

Michelle Myers: Thank you. It's a big ship. We'll just keep it going. Just keep going. straight.

Bridge Littleton: Well, thanks for all your hard work. It was awesome.

Michelle Myers: Thank you very much.

J. Kevin Daly: Just don't be like the Titanic. Watch out for the icebergs.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you. Blame Danny. Okay. Next item. Deputy Town Manager Will Moore. Staff reports.

Will Moore: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. [off mic] So I'll skip over Pinckney Street because we have that as a separate item later on. As far as Chinn Court, we still have that program. We do have an updated estimate. We're actually that budget amount is a little lower now. We're just in the process of confirming with VDOT that the design that they previously approved will still be acceptable because that's been a couple of years ago. So working through that. And again, the maintenance building, that's a topic that we plan to revisit after the town hall project. On wayfinding. That is progressing fine. We're actually seeing a potential for some probably modest but cost savings. What we've discovered and what their field folks have discovered is there are a lot of sign bases throughout town that we will be able to reuse because there are two spec and won't have to be dug up new concrete boards. So we're still waiting. We're going through that process with them to identify that. But cost savings.

Bridge Littleton: I was waiting for the it's now going to be delayed two months.

Will Moore: No, sir.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Will? Thank you. All righty. Next item is consent agenda. Is there anything anybody would like remove from the consent agenda? All right. Is there a motion?

Chris Bernard: I move that we adopt the consent agenda as proposed.

J. Kevin Daly: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Any discussion. All those in favor, say aye.

Everyone: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed. Abstentions. Okay. Next item here is Will Moore. Pinckney Street.

Will Moore: So as we discussed at your March 10 meeting, it seemed to be council's consensus based on the couple of options we presented to go the route of us doing the improvements but not seeking VDOT acceptance for Pinkney Street. The question was asked. The Mayor brought up the viability of the substructure. So for future years, if we get 15 to 20 years down down the road and we need to do a mill and overlay, would it still be acceptable? And Jim Bischoff from J2 Engineers is 100% confident in that. We did receive a revised estimate from one particular company, so we had previously had an estimate for roughly 15,000. That estimate, fortunately, did not go up as much as we thought it might in the neighborhood of 17,000 now. I do need the town engineer to look over that estimate. He may spec a few more preparatory items just to ensure we get a good topcoat on the existing surface before we were to overlay it. But I think we're probably going to be somewhere in the 20,000 range. But I did structure a motion for not to exceed 30,000 if if that would be acceptable to you because unless we get it done here in the next month, this cost might spike a little more.

Bridge Littleton: How long will it take?

Will Moore: We're looking at probably a couple of days work, but we'd have to confirm with them.

Bridge Littleton: All right. Well, any questions?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I move that council direct staff to pursue improvements to Pinkney Street as outlined in option two and authorize an expenditure not to exceed 30,000 for said improvements.

J. Kevin Daly: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Any discussion? All those in favor say aye.

Everyone: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed. Abstentions. Okay. Well, thank you. Next item.

Danny Davis: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As as noted in your agenda packet, we are undertaking design and planning for a project on our Marshall Street water tank right here on the charter school property. It is in dire need. Yes. [off mic] No, it's in dire need. Yeah, well, it's in dire need of repair. From a paint perspective in a number of fashions, it's old paint. It is lead based paint. It is needing. [off mic] It is.

Chris Bernard: Outside.

Danny Davis: Outside, yes.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. No, inside. That's why we're all so mindful. [laughter]

Danny Davis: And so the process essentially involves stripping it down completely to the bare steel, making repairs to any of the joints, rivets. It would also be stripping the interior down to bare steel as well, making improvements there. And then a complete coat of the water tower with a probably 50 to 60 year coating product that would be much more technologically advanced than what's currently on there today. We'll continue to extend the life of the tower as part of this process. Our contractor approached us as management and said, Does the town have any desire to consider any branding, naming or logos on the water tower. And some of us felt that it's at least worth a conversation with council.

Bridge Littleton: You felt more than that.

Danny Davis: There are obviously any number of options you see across the country and across the region. Some places, simply put, the name of the locality. Some people use their branding, other places highlight the local high schools or other schools. I will note that in some informal discussions we heard feedback that maybe not including the logo but just including lettering. However, we do have renderings that would include the town's new branding logo if that were of interest. In addition, I provided another alternative, which is that the charter school that the ground for the for the water tower sits obviously is almost surrounded by the charter school and I believe was given to the town by the school system at one point they suggested having their logo on the north side. Not certain it's the most.

Bridge Littleton: Who suggested that?

Danny Davis: The charter school's principal.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, okay. Well, we'll be discussing at the board meeting.

Danny Davis: So it was it was just simply a discussion point. So the conversation.

Bridge Littleton: Well, I mean, in all seriousness, then let's not project it as though the school has.

Danny Davis: Sure, it was school. It was school administration. So the question for council is, do you have any desire for any kind of town of Middleburg naming, branding, lettering on the water tower?

Bridge Littleton: So let me let me throw one thing in first. Before we get to that, let's dispose of the easy issue. If you all look at these pictures, the last two has a change of where the wireless infrastructure is to put it on the top of the tower as opposed to around the hand railing. So that is a choice. You know, we don't we can keep it where it is, where that handrail is, or we can install it on the top. The reason to install it on the top is, well, number one, to get a little more

height, so maybe a little better reception. But it's also around making that walkway a little more accessible for people when they have to go up there. Yeah, not really. It's a little. Really, it's.

Danny Davis: A little bit. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, it's not. I mean, there's not people up there to the amount and degree that.

Chris Bernard: And they're all harnessed in.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, exactly. So it just makes it a little easier to do the work. So the question is, do we want to have it all move to the top or do we want to keep it at the hand railing?

Cindy Pearson: Can I ask the question?

Bridge Littleton: And you do have to then run that black line up the side to get the connectivity.

Cindy Pearson: When they're working around the handrail at least they got the handrail to hold them up there. When you're working around the top, there's nothing.

Bridge Littleton: Oh yeah. They have to climb up there and scale it and. Harness on and all that.

Danny Davis: Oh yeah. There's the structure. The structure would be there to, to hook into its, you know, for from a pure operational standpoint, the contractors would say it's better to have it up top, but there's no real reason that the town needs to make a significant change unless the council just really wanted to go that route.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I say we leave it. [off mic]

Danny Davis: So. So that's actually not 100% clear right now. T-Mobile Mobile has not asked for any change. They're the only carrier on it. We'd have to go back to them and essentially say, You're going to do it, but I'm not sure they would necessarily agree to that. So we just wanted to know if there was any interest in even doing that before we start going down.

Bud Jacobs: Is there an option for I don't care. [laughter]

Bridge Littleton: You just did. No. I mean. Yeah. So, I mean, again, I think it looks bad on the top, so just leave it where it is, especially why create effort that we don't need to create.

Danny Davis: Okay.

Bridge Littleton: Very good. Cool. Now, the logo.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: So I've done some thinking about this because it makes me feel that your eyes are drawn to the water tank. If there's a logo on it, like right now, it's. It's there, but you get used to it and it sort of blends in with, you know, the sky is gray sometimes. And so I think that might have a personally I would think that has a detrimental effect to have the logo on it. [multiple speakers] Yeah, I think I don't think having anything on there would be helpful. I agree. My humble opinion.

Cindy Pearson: I don't care for it on there either. It's you know, when you're going down 81, I think it's you know, you see Staunton and you know, you're in somewhere but you're coming up 50. [off mic] And don't want it noticed.

Darlene Kirk: And I think that's what people one of the reasons people like to come out here because it isn't all logos and signs and all that sort of stuff.

J. Kevin Daly: And we have signs on both the East and the West End identifying the town of Middleburg.

Bud Jacobs: You got a big red arrow, pointing down that says Cindy's house. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Free beer. [laughter] Oh, that's too good. Well, I will say one member of staff wanted it in neon, but, you know.

Chris Bernard: Hey. You guys know how I feel. I think it should be painted like a big foxes head. But aside from that.

Bridge Littleton: All right, I think we're okay. Yeah. Yeah.

Cindy Pearson: I have a question on the paint. [off mic] That's right. The paint. You said there's lead. So when they are taking that lead off, where does it go?

Danny Davis: Absolutely. [off mic] Yeah. No, no, no, not at all. So if you a few points about that, thank you for asking. This company is well experienced in dealing with these types of situations. It will be fully curtained and contained. So they'll have extender rods that go out from the top and a few feet out from basically to the legs, the end of the legs all the way down, and it will be tightly contained. So anything that they sand blast will stay within essentially whatever burlap or containment they use. They will be doing environmental testing prior to the event, during the event and then after the event to ensure that there is no impact of this or any of these items as a part of the project. They also have restrictions on they have to stop work after if wind gets above 20 or 25 miles per hour because it it shakes the containment units. So all of it will be very much under control. We also intend to once we actually finalize the dates, which are becoming a little bit more clear right now, we're going to do.

Cindy Pearson: I make my reservations.

Danny Davis: Yeah, we're going to do outreach to all the residents around. Obviously, we've been working with the school because we're doing as much as possible while the children are on summer break. So all the sandblasting will take place when there are no children there outside playing. But we need we'll be outreaching to obviously Red Fox, all the neighbors along that side of Chinn. And we'll do a we'll do a public session here at the community center just so people can ask questions as they need to.

Cindy Pearson: When they are then spray painting. Yes. Does that spray paint? I'm sure cars and things. Right. Right. Charter school too on Chinn.

Danny Davis: Absolutely. And I haven't asked specifically about whether they'll still have the drapes up during the painting process. It is more of a, I believe in my layman's terms, more thicky thick, kind of tacky coat coating type system, more so than just a spray paint. But will.

Bridge Littleton: It's less.

Danny Davis: Yes. Aerosol. Yes. Correct. So we'll make sure that that they take those appropriate measures and if there are any kind of issues that they're responsible for that. Councilmember Bernard asked about the length of the process overall, we're we're planning the entirety disruption to be between ten and 12 weeks. We believe we believe the actual work itself is probably in the 6 to 8 week range, maybe 8 to 10. It is a lot.

Bridge Littleton: It's a big structure. You've got the nooks and crannies.

Danny Davis: All the lattice work. It's one of the most it's a half million dollar project, if you recall, from our budget. So it's significant. I actually asked them.

Bridge Littleton: How long will this coat last?

Danny Davis: 40, 50, 60 years. I actually asked the question about whether it'd just be cheaper to build a new water tower just knowing the impact of all this, that would have been about a million and a half. So I think the answer was no, but and then you end up with a golf ball or something like that. That's just different.

Bridge Littleton: How far can you hit it? No. Then you paint dimples on it. Yeah, exactly. [off mic] Okay. Any questions? Other questions pertaining on the water tower. Okay. Next item here is. Oh, Hill School signs. Okay. So I met with. So this is about the the Hill School signs that Em Sharp did in town. So I talked to Trever and Lisa Patterson about how they want to handle it. So John Ralph. Has he gotten you guys any numbers back?

Danny Davis: He did not give us specifics, no.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. So the ones that Em Sharp painted, right, they're painted on plywood and they are going to reach an end of life. And and so far, 6 to 8 of them are already beyond. They're going to be we'll be able to preserve them. But they can't be put they cannot be put back out in the weather again because they're the plywood is coming apart and stuff like that. So the the school has a very deep connection to the signs. And so the idea would be to do this, we will continue to manage the use of the signs for the lampposts and every year they'll probably be five or six that need to actually be physically replaced. And what they'll do is that we will and the town will be responsible for the cost of this. We will have the sign remade of that composite material that lasts 100 years and painted and then fired and it's like baked on and they will look exactly the same. And then the original Em Sharp sign will go to the Hill School and they'll keep them indoors for for historical, they'll put them on the wall as art or something like that. And then so slowly over a ten, 15 year period, all 27 will have been replaced with ones that we will own and we will put up and we will maintain it all that the school will have the older ones that Em, the originals, and then those will be theirs, the new ones will be ours and we'll commit to continue to hang them, you know, each and every year. And then also the imagery of the signs making ornaments out of them or postcards or something like that. The school is all on board for us doing that and you know, which I think would be great. And then, you know, we'll we can donate the profits or whatever we want to, to the school or the alumni association or something. Right. Or have them to go back into a fund to continue to preserve the signs. I will say I don't think it's going to be cheap to replace. I mean, so some will be repaired to keep going back out and some so I think John said there's 6 to 8 of them that just have to be replaced. So we might at any given year have six or eight of them not in circulation. Others need some touch up but then can go back out for a couple of more years. And so he'll always judge that. But then in 10 to 15 years, they should have all cycled through and have replacements with those really good, hard materials. Yeah.

Darlene Kirk: My question is, you're saying six may not be up this year?

Bridge Littleton: Correct. So we have 27. Yeah.

Darlene Kirk: So, yeah, where are we going to store them. I think about storing them when we get those.

Will Moore: We have 26.

Bridge Littleton: 26. Yeah. So and so at any given time there may be 6 to 8 that won't be out in the rotation. So what we maybe as we're doing this, maybe what we don't do is we don't put any on Marshall or Federal, but we have enough to do Main Street.

Danny Davis: And the goal would actually be as much as possible that the repairs take place between January and November. And so, you know, and unless, you know, for some reason he's not able to accomplish it between now and December, we believe those we pulled aside, I think five or six this year that were the most egregious. We believe they can all go back up and we just make sure that the repairs take place, you know, outside of that six week time frame that they're normally up six or seven weeks.

Bridge Littleton: Part of the issue, you know, John only has so much capacity with his regular business. And so if at any given year, right, there's eight that need to be redone, we may need to work with an additional partner to do them to get back in circulation so we don't have gaps on Main Street.

Chris Bernard: We take them down and that leaves ten months or however long.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. He may have a full workload. So it's hard. Yeah.

Danny Davis: Two quick items. One we did Mr. Ralph was in here talking to us about some items related to the town hall and we went through this a little bit more with him. I will say I think it still remains to be seen the actual final materials that are used for the product, the the type of composite that is kind of lasts forever. It lasts forever in a scenario where it's static and isn't being manhandled and taken up and down and potentially subject to a lot of sleet storms or banging or, you know, things like that. Plywood really is is good for that. And we even saw that these ornaments by Sharp lasted us a good 40-50 years as plywood. So I would just say that that we haven't decided for certain what that end product would be. We would just know it would be what is the best to last the longest as much as possible and then repaint them. [off mic] And that's correct. And then the question about storage, that actually is a great question. The most ideal situation, I think, would be worth the investment if we're going to invest in repair and replacement is essentially creating. My best comparison is if you have leaves in the dining room table that you pull out and you slide into, you slide it right into your kind of wooden holder. Very much a similar thing where you create a shelving system. You have it lined with felt or carpet or something soft, and you slide this one and slide this one in. Then the question is where? And that does remain to be seen. I don't think the Hill School barn is going to always be available or is the best place because of everything going around it. A potential is if we build off of the current maintenance shed and add a capacity there. A potential is that we look at again where we had been looking at the wastewater plant for some storage down there. Again, we're introducing structures as well to go into this. We really have no other storage throughout the town facilities at this time.

Darlene Kirk: So we really should, you know, think about that plan, a place where they're not going to be disturbed. We can't count on the Hill School to keep the ones that were redoing. So we need to figure out a place where they're not disturbed where all 26 can go when the time comes.

Bridge Littleton: And I think the so I totally agree and that's sort of a long term figure it out kind of thing. I think the other thing is and you know, we don't know the numbers now, but just from a council perspective. I mean, each one of these signs is potentially thousands of dollars. Right. So if you're talking 26 over a 15 year period, it will add up to be a lot of money. But, you know, there are an important piece of what we have for Christmas and it's an important piece of a legacy and all that kind of stuff. So, I mean, John will give us the numbers eventually, but it won't be a hit all at once. But, you know, we just have to make sure that we know that we're going to be accepting that responsibility. Yeah. Chris.

Chris Bernard: Is it worth asking if at least one of them, one of the originals can be on rotation at the museum from this. I think that would be.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, absolutely.

Chris Bernard: And I don't want them all. But like we have 24. And you could keep one.

Bridge Littleton: I don't. And, you know, I don't think Trever or the school would have any issue with that. I think it's a great idea. So again and then the other thing was in terms of using the likenesses of the sign, right those. Let's be fair. Right now, that likeness is owned by the school. But if we were going to create these new signs and then want to do ornaments or whatever. [off mic] right. You know that what I told Trever, I said, well, let's do this. It's not about what everybody here at the table today knows, understands. It's about what happens 25 years from now when it's all different people. So we will memorialize it in a memorandum of understanding or whatever and just line it all out. Who's responsible for what? How things get shared and all that kind of stuff. And I think the other thing too, is we want to put bounds around it. We want we don't want to cheapen them. I think cards are nice, ornaments are nice. And maybe we just leave it at that. You know, the more you sort of whatever. The cheaper you make it.

Cindy Pearson: And there are already some cards and ornaments that were done in the past.

Darlene Kirk: One more thing, Danny. I'm sorry. I thought of this because of what they're made of and they're painted and all. We've got to look at a room or area that has certain air flow. [multiple speakers]

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Any other questions on the ornaments or the signs? Next item, general fund budget follow up. Danny.

Danny Davis: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Just a couple of quick updates and then I'm happy to take any questions. As indicated here, the business license revenues do continue to grow. As of today, our revenues for fiscal 22 were 720,000 in the business license line, significantly more than we anticipated. As such, I've recommended and suggested we increase our fiscal 23 line item for business license up to 675,000. It gives the little wiggle room in case we see some softening of our business economy. In addition, debt service will be lower than we initially budgeted because of the most recent financing that we received. We close on that officially. Actually, we get wired the funds tomorrow. So technically the closing is tomorrow morning around 10 a.m. [off mic] 2.5%. 15 year fixed. Yep. And the two and a half million dollars. Yes. So those are the two major changes at this point. I show those and one of the questions from the last time was how we track these kind of in a quick, easy to find manner. So I've provided what I'm calling a tracking sheet, but it's basically any time we make a change to the budget from what we propose to you, we will give you a change log and it'll show, you know, the date we made the change, what line item it is from [inaudible]. And so you can see the net impact of changes as of now the net impact, it shows a red that's actually in this case, a savings. So a savings of over 150,000 from our draft budget. The final thing is, as requested, we also provided you the budget, the general fund budget with notes in the margins, hopefully to help provide better clarity for some of those either confusing line items, ones that may be a little more complex or ones that we can explain why the changes occurred year over year. So with that, if there have been any questions that have arisen as you've reviewed through this, happy to discuss that, but I don't have anything specific to cover at this point.

Bridge Littleton: Any other questions for Danny on the budget changes? [off mic]

Danny Davis: We'll keep that for the future. It makes the page a little bit longer, but I think it all it'll work out. [off mic]

Chris Bernard: When are we planning on adopting this?

Danny Davis: So we have to do a public hearing first. So we intend to hold a public hearing. We could do it in late March or late April. I was anticipating the first meeting in May. And then you could either adopt that night if you wanted, or adopt the second meeting in May. There's no real rush in terms of this.

Rhonda North: And we can't adopt the budget the same night.

Danny Davis: The same night as a public hearing. I always forget the rules. That's right.

Bridge Littleton: Any other questions for Danny?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: So, I mean, all just silly question maybe about the property tax. That'll change once we decide.

Danny Davis: Absolutely. Not a silly question at all. No. So we will identify, obviously, what that change is and we'll indicate, you know, some additional notes in there once council decides on the tax rate.

Bridge Littleton: Anything else? All right. Any information items?

Danny Davis: Can note one thing. Do I count towards information items?

Bridge Littleton: That's all you are.

Danny Davis: I just. I think it's good. Good news publicity. The governor just announced their top award winner for wine in the governor's case, and it came from Cana Vineyards. And while they're not technically in the town limits,

Middleburg, Virginia is plastered all over this press release. So I think it's great for the town, great for Cana. And so I think it's continued, you know, showing that we're a great place for people to visit.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Thank you very much. Yes, the town cleanup will take place on the 30th of April and it will be at the Middleburg Community Center, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m., and that will be followed by the drug takeback and battery recycling and razorblade recycling, which will be here out front, because, of course, we can't do the drive thru anymore. So thank you very much, Darlene, for that. Reminding me.

Danny Davis: The American Legion is holding their 75th Jubilee event on Saturday evening at 6:30 at the American Legion. And I believe it's open to the entire community, from what I understand.

Bridge Littleton: What's the attire?

J. Kevin Daly: Snow tires. We're going to be wearing blazers, ties, nice slacks. No, no, Bermudas. Hey, this is this says Middleburg. That's this Middleburg.

Bridge Littleton: It says a lot of things. Ok. Anything else before we go to closed session?

Chris Bernard: Sure. I got something. It's my understanding that the Visit Loudoun has some new board members and one of them is in the local. [off mic] No, I don't know anything. Never mind.

Danny Davis: I guess it's embargoed.

Bridge Littleton: All right, guys. Way to go, Chris. Jump the gun on that one. Well, they're going to change they're going to change that composition now. [off mic] All right. Anything else?

Danny Davis: General discussions.

Bridge Littleton: Exactly. Garbled. All right, let's go. We'll go to close session now. Okay. So this is council needs to go to a closed session. Thank you guys for coming. Thank you. Appreciate it. [multiple speakers] Who wants to read the motion? Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I move that council, go into closed session as authorized under section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia for the discussion or consideration of one appointments to the public bodies related to the Middleburg Sustainability Committee and Middleburg Arts Council as allowed under Subsection A1. And 2 the potential sale of town owned property located within the town limits, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating position of the public body as allowed under subsection A3. I further move that the Council thereafter reconvene in open session for action as appropriate.

J. Kevin Daly: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Any discussion. All those in favor say aye.

Everyone: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: We are in closed session.