



MIDDLEBURG TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 23, 2023



PENDING APPROVAL

PRESENT: Mayor Trowbridge M. Littleton
Vice Mayor Peter A. Leonard-Morgan
Councilmember J. Kevin Daly
Councilmember Morris E. “Bud” Jacobs
Councilmember C. Darlene Kirk
Councilmember Philip M. Miller

STAFF: Danny Davis, Town Manager
Martin Crim, Town Attorney
Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk
William M. Moore, Deputy Town Manager
A.J. Panebianco, Chief of Police
Tina Staples, Town Treasurer/Director of Finance
Ali MacIntyre, Business Development & Community Partnerships Director

ABSENT: Councilmember Chris W. Bernard
Councilmember Cindy C. Pearson

The Town Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia held their regular monthly meeting on Thursday, February 23, 2023 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.

Staff Reports

January Utilities Report

Stuart Will, of IES, advised that he was available to answer any questions Council may have. No questions were raised.

Special Recognition by Mayor & Council

Council Approval – Resolution of Appreciation – *Middleburg Eccentric* & DeeDee Hubbard

Mayor Littleton advised that DeeDee Hubbard was one of the co-founders of the *Middleburg Eccentric*, a position from which she recently retired, and noted that he already missed the newspaper. He advised that Ms. Hubbard had a huge impact on the community, having supported events and businesses for many years. Mr. Littleton noted that the mark she left on the town would be felt forever. He expressed appreciation to Ms. Hubbard for her willingness to run articles supporting the community and advised that it owed her a huge debt of gratitude.

Ms. Hubbard advised Council that she was not finished yet – she would just be working in a smaller window.

Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan advised that the *Middleburg Eccentric* epitomized a community newspaper and noted that he missed it. He expressed his appreciation for all that Ms. Hubbard had done for the community.

Councilmember Kirk advised that a lot of people read the *Middleburg Eccentric* and noted that she sent it to former residents after they moved away. She advised that Ms. Hubbard was an asset to the community and noted that she helped to start Christmas in Middleburg.

Ms. Hubbard advised that it said a lot for the community that people from outside of it read its newspaper.

Mayor Littleton read the resolution aloud. After the vote of the Council, he presented a signed copy to Ms. Hubbard.

Councilmember Kirk moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council adopt a resolution expressing its appreciation to the Middleburg Eccentric and Deanne D. "DeeDee" Hubbard for her service to the Middleburg Community.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmembers Bernard and Pearson

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

Ms. Hubbard suggested that everyone should put in extra time for the community.

Public Comment

Gary Nicholson, Commander of American Legion Post 295, noted that the Legion recently hosted the Town's grant writing workshop. He advised that he received a letter from the County asking that it host the primary elections in June. Mr. Nicholson reported that their Boys and Girls State Program fundraising was going well and advised that they may have twenty delegates ready to attend. He advised that the Legion experienced an uptick in financial requests associated with their Veterans in Need Program, particularly for assistance with electric bills. Mr. Nicholson reported that he was partnering with the Middleburg Community Center on their Veterans' Appreciation Picnic. He further reported that the Legion had reached their goal for the year with regard to their membership drive. Mr. Nicholson advised that they may have a buyer, which was another veterans service organization, for the lot behind the American Legion building and noted that this would require the approval of the membership.

Dave Marrs, General Manager of the Salamander Resort, reminded Council of the resort's partnership with Visit Loudoun and noted that he served on their Board of Directors. He opined that Visit Loudoun was a critical partner with the community and the resort. Mr. Marrs advised that in addition to providing the hotel with leads, they also offered sponsorship and marketing opportunities.

Jess Silman, the new General Manager of the Goodstone Inn, reported that a business mixer would be held at the Inn on March 9th. He further reported that they would hold an Easter Egg Hunt on the Saturday before Easter. Mr. Silman reviewed his background with the Council.

Public Hearing & Action Item

Acceptance of Bids & Adoption of Ordinance Awarding Cell Tower Lease/Franchise

No one spoke and the public hearing was closed.

Mayor Littleton announced that the Town had received a bid from AT&T for \$1, plus the fees listed in their franchise. He questioned whether anyone else would like to submit a bid for a franchise. None were presented.

Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council adopt AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AWARD OF BID FOR LEASING SPACE FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS ANTENNAS AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES ON TOWN WATER TANK PROPERTY.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmembers Bernard and Pearson

(Mayor Littleton only votes in the case of a tie.) (by roll call vote)

Public Presentations

Annual Report – Middleburg Business & Professional Association

Punkin Lee, President of the Middleburg Business & Professional Association (MBPA), and Katie Carter, who handles their public relations, appeared before Council to offer their annual report. Ms. Lee thanked the Council for their support. She reviewed the activities the MBPA had undertaken since July 1st and those that were forthcoming, one of which included helping shop owners identify ways to deter shoplifting, as the town experienced an uptick in it during the Christmas season and, in particular, during Christmas in Middleburg. Ms. Lee also reviewed their marketing activities. She reported that the MBPA had spent \$13,000 since July 1st and noted that Business Development & Community Partnerships Director MacIntyre had a breakdown of their expenses.

Ms. Carter reviewed the MBPA's social media activities and noted that they had a growing social media presence that was driving people to their website and visitors to Middleburg. She reported that they were trying to target those who already lived in the area by promoting what Middleburg had to offer.

In response to an inquiry from the Council as to the estimated value of the losses due to shoplifting, Ms. Lee reported that the incidents involved the theft of an expensive piece of jewelry and two articles of clothing.

Chief Panebianco advised Council that the Police Department had not received any formal shoplifting complaints and noted that they only learned of them after the fact. He reported that the department worked with one retailer on the installation of cameras. Chief Panebianco reported that one of the police officers was getting re-certified in assessing for security and a second was getting certified. He advised that the officers would help businesses get cameras installed and improve the layout of their stores in order to deter theft.

Council noted that it would be helpful to have data. They suggested the Police Department offer a worksheet to help the businesses identify what information was needed when they reported an incident.

Chief Panebianco advised that it would be easier for the Police Department to respond to this if it was reported as it was happening. He reiterated that they would help the stores prevent theft in the future by helping them with their store layout and providing staff training. In response to a suggestion from Council that additional police officers be hired to monitor for shoplifters during Christmas in Middleburg, Chief Panebianco advised that the Town was already hiring all available police officers in the region. He reiterated that timely calls were important and noted that they succeeded in catching the individuals when they received calls as the shoplifting occurred. In response to an inquiry as to whether this was just an issue last year, Chief Panebianco advised that the severity varied and reiterated that a store's layout and their staffing affected whether it occurred. He suggested that more expensive items be left behind the counter.

Discussion Items

Program to Support the Replacement of Trees in Historic District

Deputy Town Manager Moore noted that a couple of years ago, a lot of trees were lost during a bad storm, in particular a huge Elm tree that was located in front of the Methodist Church. He reported that at that time, Mayor Littleton suggested a grant program be established to help with the removal and/or replacement of downed trees in extraordinary situations. Mr. Moore advised that this had been discussed with the Town's Streetscape Committee, as well as the Middleburg Beautification Committee, which was a non-profit organization that supported the Town's street trees. He reminded Council that if the Town ran the grant program, people and a lot of organizations would be ineligible to receive a grant; therefore, he talked to the Beautification Committee, who agreed to administer the grants. Mr. Moore suggested that if the Council was amenable, the Town could make an annual donation to them for this purpose. He advised that the details had not been developed and explained that he wanted to come to the Council first to determine whether there was any support for such a program. Mr. Moore noted that there would be limits as the Beautification Committee's charter limited their work to the Historic District, so only those properties located within that District would be eligible to apply for a grant.

Punkin Lee, Chair of the Middleburg Beautification Committee, advised that they would be happy to administer the grant program and noted that it would be similar to what the MBPA did for tents and heaters during the COVID pandemic. She advised that there would be an application process that an individual must go through to obtain a grant.

After some discussion, the Council agreed they were interested in pursuing such a program. They asked that the Beautification Committee consider expanding its charter to allow for grants for any street trees.

Town Manager Davis advised Council that there was room in the draft FY '24 Budget to incorporate a donation should Council desire.

Ms. Lee reported that the Beautification Committee recently planted three trees in honor of Mary Kay Garwood and Eura Lewis.

Public Presentations (continued)

Annual Report – Visit Loudoun

Beth Erickson, President of Visit Loudoun, reminded Council that she provided them with an annual report card on Visit Loudoun's activities. She reported that with regard to their social and digital data, Visit Loudoun had experienced a significant spike in 2022. Ms. Erickson noted that they received ARPA funding, which allowed them to increase their spending in the area of advertising. She reported that their social media engagements increased by 51% and noted that this was driven by doing a lot of blogs. Ms. Erickson advised that their goal was to drive clicks to their website. She reported that of the 777 posts Visit Loudoun created in 2022, 44% contained Middleburg content. Ms. Erickson advised that their posts reached over three million people. She reported that their Love Loudoun Like A Local video generated 89,000 views and was a powerful tool. Ms. Erickson advised that 17% of those who saw it, engaged with the post.

Ms. Erickson reported that people were beginning to block the ability to follow them using their cell phones; therefore, Visit Loudoun was now tracking their cars. She advised that based on that data, there was a 15.5% increase in visitation to Middleburg in 2022, when compared to 2021. Ms. Erickson advised that Saturdays and Sundays were when most visitors were in town; although, she noted that mid-week traffic was increasing. She reported that there was an anomaly in the length of stay data that Visit Loudoun was watching, and advised that it showed that 32.5% of people stayed in Middleburg for six or more days this year. Ms. Erickson opined that this was due to short-term rentals. In response to an inquiry from Council, she confirmed the data was related to Middleburg only, not the entire county. Ms. Erickson opined that this was something that needed further investigation. In response to an inquiry from the Council, she confirmed that she had the data on the devices that were being tracked and cross-referenced it with their geotagging. Ms. Erickson offered to provide it to the Council.

Mayor Littleton challenged the six day a week data and opined that there was no way 32% of the visitors were staying in Middleburg for six or more days when 80% of the visitors stayed at the Salamander Resort. He noted that Middleburg only had one legal short-term rental. He advised that he believed in data; however, the only thing worse than no data was bad data. Mr. Littleton further advised that there was no way that people were staying in Middleburg six or more days if they were not staying at the Salamander Resort. He noted that Middleburg only had two lodging establishments.

Ms. Erickson reiterated that she was watching this anomaly and advised that they could make adjustments if needed.

Mayor Littleton suggested Ms. Erickson amend her report to indicate the data was wrong or that she not display it as if it was the truth.

Ms. Erickson opined that there was something to this data and that people were staying in Middleburg for six or more days. She suggested that Visit Loudoun track the data on a quarterly basis to determine if it was an anomaly. In response to inquiries from the Council, she reported that the data was based on individuals who came from a distance of more than fifty miles. Ms. Erickson opined that the filter was not catching employees. She advised that she identified a geo-fence around the town limits to define the parameters of the individual's stay.

Council suggested that Ms. Erickson have Salamander confirm their average length of stay for a period of time to determine whether the geolocating data was accurate.

Ms. Erickson reviewed Visit Loudoun's demographic data and reported that they identified that the average visitor was a woman, aged 45-64, with an income of \$100,000+/year. She reviewed the "media wins" they experienced and noted that they were pushing more toward television advertisements. Ms. Erickson advised that Canada was an important market for Middleburg and noted that they were doing a media push there, targeting the "snow birds" who came to the United States. She reported that Virginia was mobilizing for its 250th anniversary celebration next year and noted that she would update the Council on those efforts during her next report. Ms. Erickson advised that the State was ending their celebration on July 4, 2026; however, Loudoun County would continue it beyond that date. She reported that the Millie Miglia was a hot topic and that their marketing of it received a great response. Ms. Erickson reported that Middleburg was named one of thirty most charming downtowns in America by HGTV. She noted that the meetings market was slow to return and opined that the trends were shifting.

Ms. Erickson reported that Visit Loudoun's Board of Directors had updated their strategic plan and noted that she would leave copies of it for the Council.

Ms. Erickson reviewed their upcoming events, which included focusing on people with disabilities and their annual meeting to be held April 28th.

Ms. Erickson requested the Council increase its budget allocation to Visit Loudoun in the FY '24 Budget. She opined that their relationship with the Town was an important one and advised that when they worked together, impactful things happened.

Town Manager Davis noted that Ms. Erickson's letter regarding her funding request was not included in the Council's agenda packet. He advised that he would forward it to the Council.

In response to a comment from the Council that, based on the demographic information, it appeared that younger people were coming to Middleburg, Ms. Erickson advised that Visit Loudoun was working with influencers. She noted that they brought two into Middleburg and more were coming, including a couple, both of whom were hearing impaired, who would share their experience. Ms. Erickson reported that she was working on media FAM and corporation/media FAM.

Mayor Littleton expressed appreciation for the partnership with Visit Loudoun and opined that Ms. Erickson did a phenomenal job. He questioned, however, the point at which Middleburg was being over promoted. Mr. Littleton noted that Middleburg only had eight hundred residents and a limited number of lodging rooms. He opined that given its

limited capacity, once it hit a certain point, it would detract from the visitor experience. Mr. Littleton noted that prices were driven by demand and opined that higher prices would make Middleburg unacceptable, which could lead to a long-term negative reputation. He advised that residents no longer felt welcome in town on the weekends and noted that not all economic development was good. Mr. Littleton advised that he was not saying this was a problem; however, always growing tourism would not be an option, as the Town did not have the ability to serve a large number of visitors.

Ms. Erickson agreed this could be a challenge; however, their strategic planning survey did not raise an alarm. She opined that with the development of Salamander's housing development, there would be availability opening up. Ms. Erickson opined that the tipping point would be when the mid-week visitors' numbers were off the chart. She advised that currently, visitation was mostly occurring on Saturdays. Ms. Erickson suggested that data would help with communications and the understanding of the Town's goals. She reported that Visit Loudoun was always watching this to make sure that Middleburg continued to be unique.

In response to a comment from Council that the Town was suffering due to spikes in tourism, Ms. Erickson confirmed this was something they considered. She explained that the challenge was making sure there was availability when making pitches to groups. Ms. Erickson noted that October was the largest tourism month. She suggested the Council watch the short-term rental market and opined this could provide capacity of which the Council was not aware.

Staff Reports (continued)

Special Projects Report

Town Manager Davis reported that the design was complete for the Septic Conversion Project and advised that this would soon be put out to bid. He advised Council that it was determined that there was a property on Stonewall Avenue that was still on septic and noted that the Town refunded five years' worth of sewer charges to the property owner. Mr. Davis advised that this property would be placed on public sewer with this project.

Town Manager Davis reported that he and the Deputy Town Manager were working with the contractor on the painting of the Marshall Street Water Tower. He advised that he would present information during the Middleburg Community Charter School's next meeting on the temporary cell tower that would be constructed during the project. Mr. Davis reported that the cellular antennas would be removed from the tower in April, so the painting could begin as soon as school let out.

Mayor Littleton asked that the residents be notified in the next utility bill of possible cell coverage issues as a result of the antennas being moved to the temporary cell tower.

Town Manager Davis reported that the temporary tower would be one hundred feet tall; therefore, cell service should not be affected.

Town Manager Davis reported that VDOT (Virginia Department of Transportation) would inspect Chinn Court so it could be accepted into the State's road maintenance system.

Consent Agenda

A. Council Approval – Adoption of Northern Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan

Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council approve the consent agenda as presented.

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

Action Items

Council Approval – Contract for Performance of Annual Audit

Town Manager Davis reminded Council that Mitchell & Company would no longer perform municipal audits. He reported that the staff reached out to two firms who performed them, with one declining to submit a proposal. Mr. Davis reported that Robinson, Farmer & Cox supported dozens of municipalities in Virginia and advised that he had worked with them previously. He reported that the proposed contract with them was based on a cooperative procurement contract with Fauquier County and advised that the cost would be more than the Town was previously paying. Mr. Davis recommended the award of the contract to Robinson, Farmer & Cox.

Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council award a contract with Robinson Farmer Cox Associates for Professional Audit Services in the amount of \$30,000, under cooperative procurement with the existing Fauquier County contract.

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

Mayor Littleton called for a brief break at 7:40 p.m. He called the meeting back to order at 7:45 p.m.

Discussion Items

Presentation of Draft FY '24 Budget

Town Manager Davis represented the draft FY '24 Budget to the Mayor and Council. He reported on the status of their strategic goals for 2022 and 2023, which included protecting existing neighborhoods, ensuring fiscal responsibility, and partnering with the MBPA in supporting local businesses. Mr. Davis further reminded Council of their upcoming strategic planning retreat and advised that there was flexibility in the proposed budget to pursue their 2024 goals.

Town Manager Davis reported that the FY '23 revenues were strong and noted that they were projected to be 12.2% higher in FY '24. He further reported that the Town would continue to see growth of the meals and lodging tax revenues and noted that they comprised 56% of the General Fund revenues. Mr. Davis reminded Council of the 12% increase in real property tax assessments and noted that they agreed to advertise a maximum real property tax rate of \$.1276 for public hearing; although, the Council may look at lowering it even more. He advised that the interest income was projected to increase to \$200,000, which was a significant increase over the \$20,000 included in the FY '23 Budget. Mr. Davis reviewed the real property assessment and tax billing charts. He also reviewed a chart of the General Fund's revenues over the past three fiscal years, as well as those proposed for FY '24. Mr. Davis noted that the meals tax revenues were projected to increase by \$124,000, or 7%, and the lodging tax revenues were projected in increase by 3%.

Town Manager Davis reported that the General Fund expenditures were proposed to increase by 10.5% over FY '23, some of which would be offset by reimbursements, such as retiree's health insurance premiums. He noted that these costs were not previously accounted for in the budget. Mr. Davis reiterated that the proposed budget included funding

for Council's strategic initiatives. He advised that the increase also accounted for limited increases due to inflation and enhancements in the operations & maintenance line items in the police budget and administration technology budget. Mr. Davis reported that funding was included for major Town events, including the addition of community focused events, such as the Fourth of July Celebration, Middleburg/Founder's Day, and the Wellness Fair. He noted that the Town's debt service costs increased due to the Town Hall Project bond debt. Mr. Davis further noted the increased operating costs for the new Town Hall for things such as the cleaning and maintenance contracts. He reported that the salaries line items were adjusted to account for holiday, overtime and part-time pay. Mr. Davis noted that the proposed budget also included investments in Town employees. He advised that a 10% increase in health insurance costs was included; however, he noted that the rates had not yet been received. Mr. Davis reported that the proposed budget included a 4% cost-of-living adjustment and 2% for merit increases for top performers. He reported that there would be limited market adjustments in pay for those positions that were not aligned with the market, as determined based on a recent compensation study. Mr. Davis reminded Council of the need for the Town to be competitive in order to retain employees. He reviewed a chart of the General Fund expenditures since FY '21 and noted that there continued to be a healthy amount of unallocated revenues that provided a cushion. He reminded Council that any unused revenues would be moved into the Unassigned Fund Balance at the end of the fiscal year.

Town Manager Davis reviewed other General Fund expenditures and noted that \$1 million in funding was included in the CIP for the restoration of the Asbury Church. He advised that funding was also being proposed for streetscape and infrastructure enhancements in the downtown area; although, a specific amount was not included in the draft budget. Mr. Davis suggested this be discussed during the Council's upcoming retreat.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the proposed Utilities Fund budget. He reported that water consumption was up and opined that this was due to more accurate usage readings that were being received due to the new water meters. Mr. Davis reported that the proposed budget included a 3% increase in user charges that was in line with the rate model that was updated last year. He reminded Council of the remaining ARPA funds that must be used for capital projects. Mr. Davis reviewed a chart of the Utilities Fund revenues since FY '21. He noted that the receipt of availability fees was not included in the budget and advised that any such revenues were used for capital expenditures. Mr. Davis reported that IES was able to reduce the cost for the chemicals used at the treatment plants. He further reported that the proposed budget included an increase due to inflation in the equipment and maintenance line items. Mr. Davis reminded Council that the Utilities Master Plan update was almost complete. He reviewed the major capital projects that were included in the proposed Utilities Fund budget. Mr. Davis also reviewed a chart of the Utilities Fund expenditures since FY '21.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the budget schedule and reminded Council that the budget must be approved by June 30, 2023. He reviewed the opportunities for public comment on the budget.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Manager Davis reported that he looked at the budget in granular detail; however, he did not prepare it as a zero based budget, as he had done over the past couple of years. He reminded Council that inflation was an unknown factor. Mr. Davis advised that the cost of some line items were known, as they were contract costs.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Manager Davis reported that there would be some unknown costs associated with the new Town Hall. He reported that the Town recently received the bids for the janitorial services contract, which were under review, and reported that a suitable amount of money was included in the proposed budget for it.

Mayor Littleton noted that the Strategic Finance Committee recommended the budget be prepared as a zero based one. He suggested this be discussed during the strategic planning retreat. Mr. Littleton opined that the staff should look at what the Town was getting when it contracted for services.

Town Manager Davis advised Council that the staff scrubbed every line item annually. He noted that the staff did not have the resources to do a comprehensive program review.

Mayor Littleton noted that he had received comments from the citizens that Middleburg’s water rates were the most expensive in the county. He suggested the need to look at that and asked that a rate comparison be available during the next Council meeting. Mr. Littleton acknowledged that the Town had programmed in 3% rate increases; however, he opined that if Middleburg’s rates were 25% higher than those of other jurisdictions, something was off. He suggested the need to look at and understand the rates. At the request of Town Manager Davis, Mayor Littleton agreed this discussion could be postponed until the Utilities Fund discussion was held.

Town Treasurer Staples noted that she already had the rate comparison information. Council asked that she email them the information.

Town Manager Davis reminded Council that the utility rate model was updated last year. He further reminded them that Middleburg’s system was small and that its fixed costs were divided among a limited number of customers.

Mayor Littleton suggested Council consider using General Fund money to help those utility customers who were in need.

Town Treasurer Staples noted that many towns imposed surcharges and suggested the need to look at all the costs.

Closed Session

Councilmember Miller moved, seconded by Councilmember Kirk, that Council go into closed session as authorized under Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, for (1) consultation with legal counsel employed by the public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the legal advice of such counsel related to the Town Hall Project contract as allowed under Subsection (A)(8); (2) for the discussion of the disposition of publicly held property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, related to requests for the vacation of Town right-of-way as allowed under Subsection (A)(3); and (3) for the discussion of appointments to the Streetscape Committee, Middleburg Sustainability Committee and the Middleburg Strategic Finance Committee, as allowed under Subsection (A)(1). Councilmember Miller further moved, seconded by Councilmember Kirk, that the Council thereafter reconvene in open session for action as appropriate.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmembers Bernard and Pearson

(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 Town Committees

Mayor Littleton moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council approve Pam Curran to serve on the Middleburg Strategic Finance Committee to fill a vacancy.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmembers Bernard and Pearson

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

Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council appoint Laurie Salama to the Middleburg Sustainability Committee to fill a vacancy, said term to expire May 12, 2024.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmembers Bernard and Pearson

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

Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council appoint Bonnie Burns to the Streetscape Committee to fill a vacancy.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmembers Bernard and Pearson

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

There being no further business, Mayor Littleton declared the meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

APPROVED:

Trowbridge M. Littleton, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk

February 23, 2023 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: All right. Knock it off. No more fun. We will call the month of February meeting to order. First item. Pledge of allegiance.

Everyone: [Pledge of Allegiance]

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

Bud Jacobs: Bud Jacobs.

Philip Miller: Philip Miller.

Darlene Kirk: Darlene Kirk.

Bridge Littleton: Bridge Littleton.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Peter Leonard Morgan.

J. Kevin Daly: John Kevin Daly.

Rhonda North: Rhonda North, Town Clerk.

Danny Davis: Excuse me. Danny Davis, Town Manager.

Martin Crim: Can you hear me now?

Danny Davis: Why don't you try again? Yeah, you're here. I just got to get you on the right speaker. It's really soft talk again. All right, Try one more time.

Martin Crim: How about now. Can you hear me?

Bridge Littleton: Ok first item. We're going to move a couple of things around. But the first thing we want to do is go right to Stuart for the utility report. Stuart are you on the line. I say again? Can you hear me? We can now. There you go. Yay!

Stuart Will: Yes, I am.

Bridge Littleton: All right. It's over to you.

Stuart Will: Yes, sir. Do you guys have any questions about the report?

Bridge Littleton: Anyone. Going once? Going twice.

Darlene Kirk: Great job, as always.

J. Kevin Daly: Good report, thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Stuart. We're good. Thank you.

Stuart Will: Awesome. You guys have a good evening.

Bridge Littleton: You too. Bye. Bye. Ok. Next item is council approval for a resolution of appreciation. And this is for the one and only Dee Dee Hubbard. [applause] So I think I'll say something real quickly. And then if any member of council would like to say anything, by all means, jump in. But as many of you probably know, Dee Dee, who was the founder, I guess co-founder of the Middleburg Eccentric and a longtime resident of the town of Middleburg, has retired with the Eccentric. And I can tell you we already miss it deeply and desperately. But Dee Dee is not only been, you know, a huge had not only a huge impact on our community by providing a local newspaper to tens of thousands of people over the 20 years in which she ran and managed the Middleburg Eccentric. Dee Dee means so much more than that to this community, whether it's helping out with the events, supporting the Hill School and the charter school, being a member of the Economic Development Advisory Committee and just always being a constant presence to support the businesses and the citizens of the town in the most positive, thoughtful and meaningful way. And I know I miss the Eccentric deeply and you know, the mark that you have left on us all will be deeply felt forever. So it is with a huge sense of thank you and gratitude. And I know it was worth millions of dollars to you all the ad revenue. Yeah, but really, you mean you specifically and Jay as well, You know, did it out of a sense of love and devotion to the community and ensuring people had good, thoughtful coverage of what was going on in our community. And I know personally, I really appreciate your all's willingness to always, you know, run an article or run an op ed If somebody had an issue or a concern and you wanted to bring it to the broader community. Everybody here owes you a huge debt of gratitude for all you've done. So I just want to say thank you.

Dee Dee Hubbard: I appreciate it. Okay. Go ahead. What can I say? And I'm not finished. It'll be a smaller window.

Bridge Littleton: But so perfect as this chapter closes the next chapter open, so that'll be great. But, you know, in recognition of that, we want to take an opportunity to present you with a resolution of appreciation. So before I read it, would anybody else like to say anything?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Dee Dee. Oh, sorry. Thank you. The Eccentric really epitomizes the community newspaper, and I miss it deeply. But thank you for everything you've done. I used to love picking it up and read it cover to cover. There's always such interesting stuff in it. And great adverts and. And always, you know, items about what we were doing in town. Articles on the sustainability committee, which used to be the Go Green committee. And we really appreciate all you've done for the town.

Bridge Littleton: Darlene go ahead.

Darlene Kirk: Oh, yeah. I'm just going to tell you that a lot of people really do read the Eccentric. They really did. And I actually send I pick up extra because I send them to people who moved away, like Pat Rose. I take it to Nancy Locke and a lot of people looked forward to your newspaper. And I had to tell them that it wasn't coming around anymore. So I'm very sorry about that. And you just have been great, a big asset to the community overall. I mean, you pretty much started, it seems like Christmas in Middleburg. I mean, it was you running around like a crazy woman. And anyway, thank you for all you've done.

Dee Dee Hubbard: [inaudible] but I did a lot.

Bridge Littleton: That reminds me, too. Mr. and Mrs. Allen used to send the Eccentric to my mother every month. Down to [inaudible] Point where she was living.

Philip Miller: I still get questions from my mom about articles in The Eccentric. Al the way from Massachusetts.

Dee Dee Hubbard: It says a lot for communities, for the community. That's that is probably as impressive as anything.

Bridge Littleton: That's absolutely correct. So let me take in read the resolution. So resolution of appreciation Middleburg Eccentric and Deanne Dee Dee Hubbard. Whereas in March of 2005 Deanna Dee Dee Hubbard and her son J founded the Middleburg Eccentric, a locally owned and operated community print and online news organization that covered news and important events in and around Middleburg. And. Whereas, Since that time, Dee Dee Hubbard has served as the editor in Chief for the Middleburg Eccentric. And. Whereas, the Middleburg eccentric, led by Dee Dee and J serve not only as a news source, but also as an economic development asset for the community through their support of local businesses, nonprofits, events and activities throughout activities through news articles and advertising, much of which they provided at no or reduced charge. And. Whereas, in addition to serving as the Editor in chief of the Middleburg Eccentric Dee Dee Hubbard also served on the Board of Directors for the Middleburg Business and Professional Association, helping to rejuvenate the organization in the late eighties and helping to organize the Christmas in Middleburg event, as well as serving on the town's Economic Development Advisory Committee from February 13th, 2020 to the present. And. Whereas, in December of 2022, the Middleburg Eccentric published its last edition. And whereas, the Mayor and members of Town Council would like to recognize the Middleburg Eccentrics role in the Middleburg community success, and thank Dee Dee Hubbard for her hard work over the years and operating the Middleburg Eccentric and promoting Middleburg and its businesses and organizations. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Mayor and members of the Town Council of Middleburg, Virginia, recognize the Middleburg Eccentric for its role in Middleburg success. Be it further resolved that the mayor and members of the Town Council recognize and express our sincere appreciation to Deanne Dee Dee Hubbard for her support to the town of Middleburg for enhancing the business climate and for her service to the greater Middleburg community. [applause] Yeah. Who'd like to?

Darlene Kirk: I move the council, adopt a resolution expressing its appreciation to Middleburg Eccentric and Dee Dee Hubbard for her service to the Middleburg community.

Bud Jacobs: Second.

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

Everyone: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Any opposed, abstentions. Ok motion is approved. Thank you very much.

Dee Dee Hubbard: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Now, somebody's got a picture. [off mic] Awesome. Dee Dee, thank you so much. You're welcome to say anything if you like.

Dee Dee Hubbard: I don't. I don't know what to say. [inaudible] All of us, especially the business people in town to put in that extra time, it makes a difference. And it's everybody. Everybody's earning something out of it. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: No, thank you. [applause]

Philip Miller: And of course, we left off the part about you are responsible for the flashing lights that make sure that [inaudible]

Bridge Littleton: The Do not enter signs on Route 50 [multiple speakers]

Dee Dee Hubbard: Oh, yeah, I would actually like some of those, but they did put the lights up for me.

Bridge Littleton: You know, I remember when you had Kevin and I and AJ. Out there looking at the road with trucks flying by 1000 miles an hour.

Dee Dee Hubbard: It's like suicide hill over there. [multiple speakers] Thank you all. I want to be there when the groundbreaking for the new [inaudible]. Thank you for everything. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Okay, next item here is public comment. What any. So we'll open the public comment period where anybody from the community may address the town council for 3 minutes on any topic. So we will open public comment when anybody like to speak to during public comment. Gary. Sorry. Dave he beat you. Give your name, Address. Name, address. And then you have 3 minutes.

Gary Nicholson: Sure. Good evening, Mr. Mayor. Council. My name is Gary Nicholson, the commander of the American Legion at 111 The Plains Road here in Middleburg. I just wanted to give you a quick update on happenings at the American Legion. So yesterday we're happy to host Ali and the Great Writing Workshop yesterday. A little small turnout, but I think she did a great job and we had some good representation of local nonprofits the Boy Scouts, Royal British Legion, Arts in Middleburg and there was another VSO out there, so it's nice to connect with them and get in contact with her as well. So some good things for that. I did get a letter in the mail regarding the primary elections coming up and that the town council may still be under construction so that they're looking to us to host that again. Sure. More than happy to do so. I'm prepared to do that for you guys as well should that be. Our boys and girls State fundraising is going great. Our finance officer, Gary McClure, has been walking around the town and the town's been very helpful with fundraising. I think he's up to \$5,500 now. And originally we're shooting to send about 14 boys and girls to the Boys and Girls State program. But District came to us and said they have seven more delegates ready to go, so we might hit 20, which is incredible since we started with only two, three years ago. And yeah, it's amazing. Our Vets in Need program is still we are seeing an uptick in that each month, mainly due to electrical costs coming up. So really just helping out with electrical bills. And then I've reached out or Olivia from the community center has reached out to me regarding the Veterans Appreciation picnic. We may be moving that forward and doing a partnership with the summer kickoff, which I think will help out both of ours because with Veterans Appreciation Picnic really kind of don't get too much of a turnout. So I think partnering with the summer kick off will increase the turnout, which will be good for us because I really for the last one I connect with a lot of veterans that that will help drive membership, which I can now say that we've reached 100% of our goal for this year. And so that goal ended in July. So I think we'll we should meet that standard by about 5 to 10 members, I think. But the big one I want to bring up, and it's still early, so maybe a little too early to tell, but we might have a potential buyer for our back lot there for the land, but that would be our Royal British Legion partnerships. We started this partnership about three years ago and they're another veteran service organization who's really been great for us, and I think it aligns with your vision, Mr. Mayor, as long as the tax board about driving traffic down to Federal Street because it kind of opened up a footpath from Federal Street to the Plains Road and back to those those offices back there. So we'll be presenting that vote to the membership. The membership, of course, has to approve the sale or anything, but it's really going to be a great asset for the community, I believe, and for us as well. So thank you for your time. And just a quick update.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you. Thank you, Gary. And right on time. Would anybody else like to address town council, Mr. Marris?

Dave Marris: Please. 3 minutes and 15 seconds would be great. Very good. Good evening, Mayor. Town council. Wonderful to be here. My name is David Marris. I'm the general manager for Salamander Resort and Spa, and I'm here just to speak on behalf of our exceptional partnership with Visit Loudoun. And I hope that you've received by now a letter from Mr. David [inaudible], who's out of town, but also supporting, supporting the cause. But you know a little bit about how I became, you know, a board member for Visit Loudoun. I moved here what it's been almost 14 months ago now, and it's been a great year. And I will tell you that one of my first meetings that I had when I came here in January was with Beth and her team with Visit Loudoun. And it immediately impressed upon me how critical our partnership is as a community and as a hotel with Loudoun, and whether that be the numerous group leads that they provide us on a regular basis, whether it's the sponsorship and support for local community efforts that also include the Salamander Resort and Spa and also the multiple PR and marketing efforts that certainly benefit us as a community and as a hotel. And so I want to be here to support Beth today and to let you know how much we appreciate and continue to see the momentum grow with Visit Loudoun. And and I'm honored to be a part of it. I really am. So it's been it's been a great, great initiative. So thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you.

Dave Marrs: Also, if I can say I only dress like this when we're closed, so you can dress me, dress better than me. Only when the hotel is closed. Once the hotel reopens. I'm terribly sorry.

Bridge Littleton: It's been noted. Okay. And the details will be forwarded to management. Would anybody else like to dress down? Council. Yes, sir.

Jess Silman: I just want to introduce myself to everyone. My name is Jess Silman. It's 36205 Snake Hill Road, Good Stone, the new general manager, and offer some apologies to those who I haven't had a chance to meet yet. But as I've been saying, I've had my hands full a little bit just building a team of directors to kind of put get us a float well. And we're in that position now. A couple upcoming things. We have March 9th. Is there a town council meeting? March 9th. Okay. Well, sorry about that. We didn't take that into account. We're doing a business mixer. So for those of you who want to attend. It's going to be from 6 p.m. to 7:30 on. March 9th. Come in for cocktails and snacks and wine and a lot of fun. We're also going to be doing on Easter Saturday, the day before Sunday, Easter Sunday, we're going to do an Easter egg hunt out on the field there. So we're inviting families to come out with kids. We'll offer picnic items, games for the kids, the egg hunts, egg dyeing station. So a lot of things like that. But other than that, just Hello, It's nice to meet all of you. Just a brief background about myself. For the past ten years, I was with Chef Patrick O'Connell at the inn at Little Washington, running his restaurant for him. And after ten years, I found that things got a little bit easy for me. I wasn't being challenged as much as I was, at least in the beginning. And lo and behold, I happened to just happenstance meet Mark Batts, the owner of Good Stone and him and I sat down. We had lunch, we discussed one thing after another and that he had a spot for me there, and the rest is a fairy tale story. So I've had my hands full. The good news is human beings are happier when they're challenged the most, when when we're really stretched to use everything we have just to stay alive and stay afloat. I haven't been this happy in a while.

Darlene Kirk: Glad to have you.

Bridge Littleton: Would anybody else like to address Town council? No Ok. We will close the public comment session and go right on to the public hearing and related action items.

Danny Davis: It's the worst remote ever.

Rhonda North: You practically have to be straight in front.

Bridge Littleton: All right, Ok. So, Rhonda, let me make sure I got what we're doing here. Yep, I do. So just need to go through this. Okay. All right, So the next item on the agenda is the public hearing and receipt of bids for the first reading of uncodified ordinance number 23-01, granting a nonexclusive franchise for telecommunication equipment. The town has duly advertised this franchise as required by law for all franchises with a duration of more than five years. I will now open the public hearing. Is there anyone here who wishes to be heard concerning the grant of this franchise? If so, please step forward. Rhonda, is there anybody on line? Okay. We will close the public hearing. The town has received one bid from AT&T for \$1 in addition to the fees listed in the franchise. Anyone wishing to submit a bid for this franchise will bring it forward at this time. There are no more bids for this franchise. I will now mark the bids for identification as required by state law. There are none. So we've got the one, though, right? And I guess that's it. Correct, Rhonda. Okay. That's it. Next action item.

Rhonda North: No, you have to make the motion.

Bridge Littleton: Well, who's going to make the motion? Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: The right one. I move that the town council adopt an ordinance. Is that right?

Danny Davis: Yes.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Authorizing award of bid for leasing space for telecommunications antennas and associate facilities on the town water tank property.

J. Kevin Daly: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Any discussion, Rhonda does this have to be roll call?

Rhonda North: We can do it by roll call just to be on the safe side.

Bridge Littleton: Okay.

Bridge Littleton: Because I want him to. I want him to think we take him seriously. Okay, Rhonda, let's do a roll call.

Rhonda North: Vice Mayor Leonard Morgan.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Yes.

Rhonda North: Council Member Daly.

J. Kevin Daly: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Jacobs.

Bud Jacobs: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Kirk.

Darlene Kirk: Yes.

Rhonda North: Council Member Miller.

Philip Miller: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Motion passes. All right. That is completed. Next item is public presentation from the Middleburg Business Professional Association. Punkin Lee.

Punkin Lee: Dee Dee is a hard act to follow. So, I'm Punkin Lee Middleburg, Business Association. But. And you introduce yourself.

Katie Carter: I'm Katie Carter. I do all the public relations for MBPA and Visit Middleburg.

Punkin Lee: So thank you, mayor and council members, for having us this evening. And thank you for your continued support of the MBPA. And to follow that, I had to write it all down, all the good things that we've done. So this is cases from July one, right through this evening. So starting in the summer, these are things we have done. The summer sidewalk sale continued with the Middleburg gift cards. We do the monthly event cards, which always includes members and nonmembers events, things that are open to the public. Sure, you've all seen these around town and in the post office. We did the ten day countdown for the film festival this year. Around Thanksgiving, we promoted Black Friday Small Business Saturday for Shopping Local Tuesday, giving for all our local nonprofits. And then we got to Christmas. We did the tree lighting. We figured the merchant parking areas for parade day. We did the town decorations, the live trees and shrubs at the east and West End entrances, as well as along the streets. We did the three weekends of Dickens. We did the Christmas Day community free lunch. We partnered with the police department for a Seven Loaves food drive and stuffed the trunk at the Safeway, collecting over 1,000 pounds of food for Christmas dinners for Seven Loaves. We also partnered with the police department for a toy drive. We selected one family, delivered the toys. This one family,

this a bit of a sidebar, but it's warm and fuzzy. It was a lovely family lady had just been given guardianship of five small children that went from a K to five. They're all at the charter school. So we drove up. Sean was driving the police car. Santa was Mark Putnam, full Santa regalia and I'm in the back seat with three big bags of gifts for the kids. They come out, I'm locked in the back of the police car. [multiple speakers] I'm like, How do I get out of here? They're going off to meet the children. So that was a lovely.

Bridge Littleton: Hey, Punkin, don't do the crime if you can't do the time.

Punkin Lee: This is true. It'll be better next year. So that was really a nice ending for the toy drive. Since September, we have started for our members Monday member Spotlight, which promotes two different businesses in town. Opposites like a retail and a service or a church and a school, all of which will bring business back to town and show people that we have a lot more than just shopping and dining. We just completed the highly successful winter sidewalk sale, which was last weekend. We participated in Black History Month with a special post each Wednesday featuring our own black history and businesses in town. It's the first year we've done that and we plan to be better prepared and have much more for next year. I think it was great. We sent out a member survey and putting that information together now, which will help all of us in town to know what people want, what they expect, how we can better serve them going forward. We met with the Stroll Willowsford publisher got all that info because those parents have kids at Charter and at Hill. They're using it and we always feel that we are their town. And how do we get them to come to their town and do things like go to the dentist, get their car fix, get their taxes done, that kind of thing. So we opted to create a quarterly mailer and actually Willowsford has two zip codes. So we're going to target the one that empties on the Route 50 versus the one that probably goes to Leesburg over us. And it'll be definitely a piece that'll stick on your refrigerator, you know, it'll show us off to our best just to get them to use their town and know what our town offers. We also want to do something with the businesses this year for the [inaudible] Horse Show, because it is 170th anniversary of the horse show. So they all exhibitors all wear wristband all week. So they get into here and there so trying to do a partnership with businesses. So when they come in after the show or during the course of the day, you know, they're welcomed and either some kind of fringe benefit, which I think could be very good because that's a ten day period captive audience. I know the Safeway does well because last year we had over 70 campers in camper land, right. And they were here for two full weeks. So we need to get a little bit of that coming this way. We're also picking up the 4th of July kids parade and adding dogs and costumes, which will be fun, I think, and try to partner with Middleburg Humane with that, back to our police department partnership going forward for Seven Loaves, we'll do a summer snack drive as well as a school supply drive in August. We're also going to help with Juneteenth National Night Out. And I know there's talk of this to have a just a community event, something for those of you who lived here before it stopped happening, the great firehouse dinners, because that brought everybody. Were great. Some like that. That's just for us, you know. And then we're back at the summer sidewalk sale. But we had one very serious matter that we're dealing with. Many shops were hit hard during the Christmas season with shoplifting and especially on the parade day. You all look a little surprised to hear that there was a lot of it on the parade day. So businesses came to us and like, what are we going to do? So working with the police department, we we had Sean come for one of our January board meetings and kind of figured a three phase presentation. Years ago, the police department passed out a information sheet that had the duty officer on it. So if you had an emergency, you had it right there by your phone. Well, I looked at mine and it's like 12 years old on a piece of paper that was kind of tired sitting by the phone. So working on a card that that will go that'll be the first phase. And then the next will be to work for us to work with the businesses. And it'll probably be over several meetings to talk to them on as their shop secure. How can they better have better visibility? You know, you open the door and all you see is clutter. Well, it's like, you know, so just helping them that and how to recognize shoplifters. And the hardest one is how to recognize and deal with juvenile shoplifters. You know, and then going to the schools and doing a presentation to help the kids so the kids know what to do if they're caught in a situation where a group is in a store and somebody wants to, you know, shoplift. How do you deal with that? And how do they how does a child know to go to the staff person and all that? So I think it can be a very good know, not too invasive, not too hard core, but something we all need to deal with for sure. Let's see. Hold on. We also collaborate with the town all the time for town events like Art in the Burg, the Mille Miglia Octoberfest, the Christmas Parade, business workshops, focus groups, job Fair, and of course, the new Rural Preservation Day that you all are will be pushing that to. We post, share and promote all of this on our social media, the events calendar and the MBPA online newsletter. We also had two very lucky town promotions come our way. First one was the summer sidewalk sale, last first part of August through Bender Communications, WTOP put out a call for us to go to the TV station, bring some props and promote the sale. Katie and Ali went loaded with lots of sale items as well as

Veronica from the Tack Box. Veronica would be there Mannequin, who was dressed from head to toe in the proper riding attire since we're a horse town. Of course, she lost her head getting out of the car, but you know that that was a pretty special push for the town. And then again through Bender for the last week's winter sidewalk sale, we were included on NBC's best bets for the weekend activities. Yeah, our 2022 membership was well over 100 and to date we were up to just over 80 now, and it's just February 23rd. So our financials for the money that you very generously gave us, we have spent just over 13,000 and Allie has that whole breakdown if, if that needs to be explained further. But and then Katie's got the social media updates for you for numbers.

Katie Carter: Yes. So in August, we submitted a very detailed report with graphs and pictures, and it was very fancy looking. Since then, we have a total visit. Middleburg has a total of 7263 Facebook likes. We have 5156 Instagram followers. And since August 1st to today we have that includes an additional 377 new Facebook followers and 628 new Instagram followers. And let's see our Facebook page reach. Since August the second through today has been 29,044. Our Instagram page is 13,260 since August the first. And then going forward with more statistics, 78% of our Facebook followers are women, 21% are men. And the breakdown on Instagram is virtually the same. Our greatest following on both platforms, Facebook and Instagram are from the greater Washington DC area. So you know, that encompasses Leesburg, Winchester, South Riding, Fairfax, Ashburn, Warrenton, Purcellville, etc.. We do have some interesting stats as far as where people around the world look at us on social media. Obviously, the US is the number one source of our followers, but we also have followers in the UK, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Mexico and Spain. And as far as our website goes, regarding search traffic over the last 28 days, visit Middleburg. Viacom has 122,000 total impressions and just under 3000 direct clicks. And what folks are using to search for the search Middleburg Va, Middleburg, Things to do in Middleburg, visit Middleburg, Middleburg Events, The MBPA. Been out here sticking and the Upper Crust. But we are growing. Visit Middleburg. Social media presence is growing and it is driving traffic to our website and visitors to our town. And like Pumpkin said, we're going to kick up the drive to get folks who live near here, maybe not in town or in its immediate environs, but folks who live in Willowsford, for example, to understand that it's so much easier to turn right and go west than it is to turn left and go east for, you know, everyday services like going to the dentist or like Punkin said, getting your car fixed or having your taxes done, things like that. So we want to continue to promote what we have been very successful with in the past as far as shopping and dining and horses and tourism, but also the fact that we have everything we could ever need here and that we believe that we have such high quality services available to us here that everyone else should take advantage of.

Bridge Littleton: Awesome. Thank you. And the other is that. Okay. We're good. Any questions from council? Mr. Jacobs?

Bud Jacobs: Punkin, you may not be the person to ask what I'm going to ask you anyway. Do we have a dollar value of loss associated with shoplifting during the parade? Even a back of the envelope loss estimate. Maybe any any quantifiable data at all on that?

Punkin Lee: I would say probably semi. I mean I know they got hit. One was quite large. Jewelry. Two others were clothing. But I mean, more than a pair of socks and a sweater.

Bud Jacobs: Oh, I'll have a couple questions for Chief, A.J., about this. Are you going to speak tonight, Chief?

A.J. Panebianco : No, but I can speak if you want to real quickly.

Bud Jacobs: Would you, please?

Katie Carter: We'll get out here.

A.J. Panebianco : We didn't get any formal written complaints on this. Much of it came in after the fact. We have worked with one retail organization that said they had some issues. They now have cameras in their facility, and that's always a good idea. We're working to get one or two of the officers. One of our officers used to be certified as an assessor for security, and so we had him work with that location and we're trying to get him re certified and we're looking to get one more officer certified so that we'll have the available tools. Even though he's not certified, he still has an

understanding. Yeah. So we're going to we're going to try and get at least one more certified so that we can have the available staff to help get get these cameras installed if they so desire or just to lay out of their store sometimes can be improved and that can give you a better idea of what's happening.

Bud Jacobs: Great. Thank you. I will talk offline to some people, but seems to me, Having data like that might be useful for discussions more broadly in the county.

A.J Panebianco : And we would encourage that when they happen actually report it as opposed to making us aware of it at a later date that we had something but not really quantifiable. Often it wasn't. We had one, two or three items stolen. It was we had stuff stolen.

Bud Jacobs: Yeah, it would be useful to have that for sure. Thanks.

Philip Miller: Be great if we could provide them with a worksheet of here's what was taken, here's the date, potential time frame. Whatever data points we need. Value.

A.J Panebianco : We have 40 police officers in town. So it would help.

Philip Miller: 40 versus 5 to 8000 is not going to work.

A.J Panebianco : And so but it would have been easier to respond and maybe see what was going on, maybe get descriptions if they saw them. But those are all after the fact. It's always easy to Monday morning quarterback. So we're just trying to figure out what we can do to prevent it in the future. And so we're giving some ideas out and often the store layout can be the first thing.

Danny Davis: And staff training.

Punkin Lee: I think it's also getting the stores and getting everybody back on the same page and.

Darlene Kirk: I know that we are maxed out on police on that day, but maybe it's worth hiring maybe two extra to go, like be plainclothes and just be around in these stores.

A.J Panebianco : We can look at all of that. Not sure if we have anybody else we can hire. We've got everything in the region. We we literally go all the way down to Lexington. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. [inaudible] But yeah, we're, we're, we're not opposed to looking at any and all ideas. So, yeah, that's something that I think we can look at all the things we're doing. And one of the things we want to do is make them aware that timely calling is important and it's really great. On normal days. I don't know how many times when we've had somebody who shoplifted the store didn't call us that was being shoplifted in another store called us because they were alerted by the other store and they were being told where the person went. And then we get a call from because there's a chain that they kind of have a phone chain and they say, Hey, they just walked into our store. And so we go down there and catch them. And we've been pretty successful almost 100% of the time that we get a call like that, we catch the person. Yeah. And they do a great job with it and it's something to MBPA does. We'd always prefer to be the first call, but it works the way they do it. They say, Hey, you know, you're looking for somebody wearing a plaid blue shirt and they just walked into Chloes. And then we go into Chloes and we usually are able to.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Did we have this issue last year, Do you know?

A.J Panebianco : We always have an issue with shoplifting and we always and it varies in the severity, but when you have as many people as we have as many people in a store, unfortunately, somebody usually tries to take advantage of that situation. And and it's it's it makes it easy sometimes with how the stores are laid out and the number of staff that they have in the store also limits their ability to to respond. So in the past, we've told them the stuff you want to keep put behind the counter, but you can't put everything behind the counter.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. I mean, the only thing I think to to Bud's point, data is really important. Right. So if, you know, if the thing is, oh there's \$15,000 worth stolen in Middleburg and you're going, oh my God, it's a lot of money. Well, it's one thing if it's \$1,500 items, that's a crime spree. But if it's one bracelet, that's \$15,000. Well, that's one issue of one instance in a store. So that's a big number. But it's not like stores were getting hit. Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. And so I'd imagine the response to both is very different. So it's it's important to.

A.J Panebianco : [inaudible] data we've encouraged that when it happens, call us and give us specifics. And some do, some don't. And I've literally had people who say, hey, last year during 4th of July, I had somebody walk in and steal something. What can what can you all do to make that not happen again? Well, being that as January, we'll tell you what to do in July. But yeah I mean it's the it's the community is very is very self-patrolled in the in the business association and then they let us know what's happening which works. But it works better when we know the day of.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions for Punkin? Yeah. Okay, cool. Now, as I understand it, we want to do the streetscape item as well.

Punkin Lee: Thank you from the MBPA.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you, Punkin. Now, don't go anywhere. Tree hat.

Will Moore: Thanks for hanging around, Punkin. So you have the memo in the packet. So a couple of years ago, 2021, there was a really bad storm that came through. And one of the most trees were downed everywhere, but most notably or most visibly, maybe the huge elm tree in front of the Methodist church came down. And at that time, the mayor floated the idea of maybe investigating a grant program that could help community members, whether it's a business or a nonprofit, maybe a church or residents, to to help them in extreme situations like that, where there's a specimen tree to whether it's helping with removal or replacement and things like that. So we started talking with the Streetscape Committee about that Streetscape being the the town committee. There's also Middleburg Beautification, which Punkin is also the chair of that. Surprise, surprise. But that's kind of a separate nonprofit that works hand in hand with Streetscape and the Town. They've supported the Town for years and years with maintenance of of street trees, as opposed to having VDOT maintain the trees and rely on them. So so we started having discussions with Streetscape and with Beautification. One of the issues that kind of arose and it was highlighted by the tree that was downed at the Methodist Church was if it were a program, were established and run through the Town, there would be certain entities, religious organizations being one that would be ineligible to receive funds. So we talked with Punkin, and she did discussions with with her folks in Beautification. And they have agreed that if there's a program established that they they would administer the program so we could make an annual budget allocation to them for the purpose of of administering the program. The program has not been fully baked yet. As far as you know, how much would we allocate? Would there be limits on the amount that any one person could request? Would there be matching funds required? We'd have to do a little more discussion about that. But we wanted to come to you first because it is budget season and just to get the feel of Council as a whole on your support or if you have questions about how a program like that would work. I did note in the memo that there would be one limitation because Beautification has a specific mission statement which is limited to the historic district, that if they were to administer the program, it would only be available to those who were within the district. So if you were a residential or non residential property outside of the historic district, you you could be eligible if Beautification administrative program. Any further?

Punkin Lee: No, we were happy to do it. It would be similar to what the Business Association did when we had the tents and the heaters in town because you all couldn't do it. The bills came to us. We paid them. So it'd be the same thing just to go through a nonprofit to do it. And I think there would be an application and a regular process. You just couldn't say, I want a tree.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. No. And I think the you know, the whole idea came when I was talking to Will about this. God, it's been a while since we talked about it was when we lost that big tree in front of the Methodist church. It was. That was an iconic tree. I mean, you come down that street and it's just it it covered half the street and it was great. And then I thought, well, you know, they're always strapped for money. Boy, be great to find a great replacement and how can we help them? And then it was, oh, wait, they're a religious organization. We can't give them any money. So can we fund a

nonprofit to be able to support, you know, under their guidelines and rules, treat everybody fair, all that kind of stuff. So that was kind of the idea. Does, you know, any thoughts I mean, do you feel this is the right I guess the question is, does everybody feel this is the right direction? I know more it needs more meat on the bone, but yeah, go ahead.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Expand again on, Will, the fact that it's only limited. It's limited to the historic district.

Will Moore: Yes.

Punkin Lee: So that's because our funds are limited to the historic district. So someone in, say, Ridgeview who lost a pretty tree could not go through this. There may be something else they can go through that we can figure out too.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Beautification's charter is to only support the historic district.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: But Streetscape isn't involved in at all.

Bridge Littleton: No, that's a Town committee.

Punkin Lee: So Beautification kind of funds, whatever Streetscape.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: On the Sustainability Committee, we've been talking about trees in general. You know, the issue outside of town, even on Snake Hill Road, for example, one of our members is. And so they'll be very happy to hear this for the Town of Middleburg. Very supportive of it. Yeah.

Bud Jacobs: I think it's a great initiative. Certainly support it. I understand details to follow. I would like you to think about or give some thought to how we might broaden it beyond supporting people or institutions, whatever, in the historic district. And I don't know what the solution is, obviously, but there ought to be one.

Bridge Littleton: Any other questions? Yeah.

Darlene Kirk: I have a question for you. Are you talking about private homes or are you just talking like [inaudible].

Bud Jacobs: How I'm I guess I'm saying we ought to think about or study how to expand the eligibility for our grant for grant support beyond what's located in the historic district.

Bridge Littleton: I think that would probably be for you guys. You could update your charter and your operating agreement and all that stuff. I mean, that's sort of a legal question, but now, now you're taking on more stuff. So you got to think about that, right? Well, that was easy.

Punkin Lee: The street trees go beyond. So, I mean, if we could even expand to the street trees that take, you know, that would be a start. That would keep it kind of within reason. Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: And I think that was actually the idea, you know, the things that are iconic to the streets and. Yeah, okay, Danny, you guys aren't asking for us for a like a plug number for the budget or anything at this point.

Danny Davis: We have not as of yet. And there's room that we can incorporate that in.

Bridge Littleton: If we need to in the future through a budget amendment. Okay.

Danny Davis: Just down the road.

Bridge Littleton: Okay, I think we're good.

Punkin Lee: So I'll ask if anyone noticed that we planted three new trees last week? Thank you. In front of the Safeway we put a redbud and a dogwood for Mary Kay and Eura.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, awesome. That is awesome.

Will Moore: And the other was [inaudible].

Bridge Littleton: Okay, awesome. Thank you.

Punkin Lee: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: All. All right, Moving right along, we have back up to the top of the agenda is Beth Erickson with Visit Loudoun.

Beth Erickson: Good evening, everybody. How are you? All right. Seat is nice and warmed up. Rhonda. How do you want to do the presentation? Oh, I'm so sorry, Danny. How would you like to do the presentation?

Danny Davis: Just give me one.

Beth Erickson: I know. I'm ill prepared. I will say, as we're getting ready on that, the chief and I had a brief conversation, I think getting ready to possibly look at maybe doing a training or something on shoplifting could be a really great idea. And so we had a very brief sidebar conversation, and we're really happy to help with that in any way that we can. So thank you very much for your time this evening. And I've got not a lot of data and it's not as thick as it has been, but I think I've got some great information to share with you. So if you may, please, sir. I know I don't know how we're going to do this. Yeah. There we go. Okay. You can start. Okay. I think what's important, as you know, we have a quote unquote, report card that we provide to the town annually on our activities. Danny, Ali and I met to go over all of that. You have that in your board packet with everything that has been initialed and confirmed. So if you have any questions on that, I'm happy to take that at the end. So I'm going to go through some social and digital content information for you because I know that that is always of chief interest. One of the things I want to draw to your attention on this slide is the Color Purple is 2022 and you'll see some significant spikes. And I want to kind of explain that a little bit. We received ARPA funding through the county and through the state, through Virginia Tourism Corporation. So we increased our spend strategically on a couple of key timelines. You're going to see that spike in Q2, and that is calendar year Q2 that we put forward. We also the Middleburg video that we produced, I think it was a two year last year, year and a half ago we ran another promotion and I'm going to give you some of those numbers here in a moment. But when we ran the video campaign again through Instagram, all across all of our social and digital channels, we saw another spike. But overall, we saw nearly a 51% increase in social media engagement over the previous year. Part of what's driving that, if you would, please, sir. Oh, look at that. Part of what is driving that is and I think that you heard a little bit about that earlier. It's always about the content and what you are promoting. So we do a lot through our blogs where there is discussion that is driven back to our website. Then we repurpose that content, we use it across all of our social channels. I pulled out a few key and you're going to see when we talk a little bit more about social in a moment, you're going to see some of those top posts. But really the goal on this is to drive all of the clicks back to the website so that they can understand what's here, what they're looking for. But some of the ones that really drew very, very well was, again, looking at seven black owned businesses to discover in Loudoun. Of course, the holidays are always key when we are running promotions and blogs on holidays. And then I love the the happy hour talking about King Street Oyster Bar. The next is when we're talking about what are some of the key components of what makes a successful social media post. Anything with a puppy will go very, very high. This is user generated content. So we using hashtag love Loudoun, which at this point I think is close to 30,000 people using hashtag love Loudoun. We watch that very closely and we have the opportunity to engage with those users who have tagged us to use their content. So everything that we're showing you is actually content on the right hand side from users. So again, when you're looking at loss barrel and the puppy and then of course I don't think Middleburg looks any more beautiful than when it does at the holidays. And so I love the retail shot that was also put forward on the lower left hand side is from the family reunion. So when you take a look at this, you're seeing love, you're seeing shopping and you are seeing puppies overall, Visit Loudoun did 777 posts of those last year. So that was over a course of 365 days. 44% of those contained Middleburg content. So again, when we talk about the

importance of what we're seeing, the reach was over 3 million in engagement was about 336 for 64. So again, those are people that are commenting on it, clicking or sharing what the next is. The continuation of the love Loudoun like a local video that we produced. I know that you have seen it and when we did the Post we saw an additional boost to that. And so far that is tracking at close to 89,000 views. It continues to be a powerful tool. This is one of a series that we did of 12. We also have a wonderful partnership with Loudoun now and get out Loudoun, where they also push out the video content to get out Loudoun readers. So we continue to see really tremendous engagement of that of the reach. We had about 17% of people that commented, clicked, forwarded, liked. So that is a really strong number of people who are engaged with any social media content. Go ahead. So when we take a look at geolocation data, there's going to be a few things that I'm going to kind of explain a little bit about this. When we talk about geolocation data, it really is cell phones, everybody that has apps on. Their phones. You will know from reading any form of media Over the past year, some of that has changed a little bit on people that are blocking the ability to have those apps being followed. So one of the things that I think is important on this is the company that we partner with, Datafy now tracking cars because everybody has computers in their cars. And when they're coming in, in terms of looking at GPS, I know I see Danny just going. It's amazing technology, but it really does allow us to kind of track where people are coming from. In 2022, visitation increased nearly 10% over 2019 levels, which for us is the baseline of before the world fell apart. So we like to see that we are there and exceeding it. And not only are we exceeding it, we exceeded it by 15.5% over the previous year. And again, those are people that are coming into Middleburg. We are tracking how long they are here and you'll see annual volume by days in terms of seeing where some of those key spikes are. And in 2023, just to keep everybody guessing, the colors have shifted a little bit. But when we talk about next year, when we talk about average trip length, some of this is consistent year over year on the right hand side is really taking a look that we do see a lot of demand Saturdays and Sundays. That's not a surprise. I love what I'm hearing about Willowsford to help drive some of that information coming in, but we're also seeing mid-week traffic beginning to start really pushing. I had a chance to speak with David just briefly. On the left hand side, you're going to see visitor visitor days by length of stay. Day trip is still at about 25% are coming in on day trips. But there's an anomaly in this data this year and it's interesting and I think it's going to bear continued watchful. Yes, sir. And that is the six plus days we had a conversation taking a look at what we're seeing at Salamander. And they're tracking what we've seen in the past, which is two, three, maybe four days. I believe this is being driven a lot, and that's what we just discussed on short term residential rentals in the area. So, again, I think that it is it could be an anomaly, but I think it's something that we need to keep a look at. I know that we've spoken about short term residential rentals within the area and in terms of what you're also seeing. So I think it's something to keep an eye on and I'll continue to do so. Yes, sir.

Bridge Littleton: So is that data that you're showing here, this is for Loudoun?

Beth Erickson: No, sir, it's Middleburg.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Yeah. I mean, we only have one approved short term rental.

Beth Erickson: That's part of the point.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah.

Beth Erickson: So, again, data is data can answer as many questions as sometimes they will throw you a curveball. And this to me is a curveball. I'm sorry. [off mic] Yeah. So I think it's we're going to continue we've reached out to Datafy we're going to really start taking a look at watching some of these data points and confirming again, some of it could have also been some of the shifts that were happening within the technology, moving possibly from cell phones to cars coming in and out. But I think it's something that we need to investigate further. And just to continue watching. My hope is that when we come back, we say that that was a blip or we have a better explanation as to why.

Philip Miller: So on that point. Do you have a breakdown of what device you're you're getting traffic from on your website?

Beth Erickson: We do, and I can get that for you.

Philip Miller: You cross reference that at all?

Beth Erickson: We do.

Philip Miller: With your geotagging.

Beth Erickson: We do.

Philip Miller: That would be interesting. That would be like tracking leads basically.

Beth Erickson: Exactly. So I can pull that information for you and make sure I can follow up with you on that.

Philip Miller: Yeah, that'd be great. [inaudible]

Beth Erickson: And again, it's you know, I think that it's and the beautiful thing about data is that it kind of is like pulling a thread and it begins to start puzzle pieces begin to start falling together. And I think this is the one.

Philip Miller: It's fuzzy, but it's [inaudible]

Beth Erickson: Puzzle that we need to try to figure out, but we'll continue to do that. And so the other thing I also think would be important, and I'll work with with Danny and Ali is taking a look at where we are seeing short term residential rentals that are happening within the area through Air DNA and through some of the other resources.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, I mean, because, you know, I'm a big believer in data, but the only thing worse than no data is bad data because it tells you the wrong story. And then you start to make decisions based on the wrong information. I mean, there's and if this is just for Middleburg, there is no way that 32% of the visitors here stayed for six days or more because he's got 80% of them.

Beth Erickson: But that's. But that is within traditional lodging.

Bridge Littleton: What's that?

Beth Erickson: That's within traditional lodging. So I don't I don't disagree.

Bridge Littleton: No, I agree with I understand that if you're in Virginia Beach. But I mean, we literally have two places to stay in town. And, you know, we've got Red Fox. And again, if this data is for Middleburg town only, not the zip code, because the zip code is way bigger.

Beth Erickson: I totally agree. Totally agree.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. So if you're if you're saying is this is the town limit of Middleburg, this is wrong.

Beth Erickson: Yeah. So we are again we're, we're looking at it and trying to understand why. But I think it's important for us to flag with you when there is something that is an anomaly because I think it allows us to really keep a watchful eye and make any necessary adjustments afterwards.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. So then I would what I would recommend is on this slide, especially since it's now public information, you should update it to say this data is likely wrong.

Beth Erickson: I don't know if I would say it that way, sir, but I will.

Bridge Littleton: We shouldn't display it as truth, because if we are all looking at 32.5% as being six day visits or more in the town of Middleburg, and we all feel that's likely not right.

Beth Erickson: But I think it could be showing you that there may be something there. So please allow us just to take a deep dive and then we'll come back and make sure that it is something that we can further define. Okay, because we've asked them to pull.

Danny Davis: Visits, not stays.

Bridge Littleton: Right.

Beth Erickson: So we have polled.

Bridge Littleton: Visitor days.

Beth Erickson: It's by days. Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: What is six plus? So then I don't understand what this actually means.

Beth Erickson: So we have been pulling and we've run this data multiple times and it comes out to be the same. So that's again the thing we need to understand. So it's people who are staying within the geographic subset for more than six days for six or more days. And I will tell you that some of it could also be you do have and again, let me before I begin to theorize, let me go through and continue to dive down on that and then we'll provide updates. And what I'd like to do is at least track it for another few quarters for us to kind of see it and understand.

Bridge Littleton: So okay, so let me make sure I understand this, right? So if somebody stays at Salamander for two days, that's one visit of two days. If somebody stays at Salamander for two weeks, that's one visit of two weeks. So on this data, that's one and one, not six days, 14 days versus two days, which is a difference of 12. So it's one versus one.

Beth Erickson: So they should all be tracking individual codes coming in and out. Okay.

Bridge Littleton: Got it. Yeah. So okay, so. So I get that. So. So what this is saying is, is the highest percentage.

Beth Erickson: Are staying for an inordinately along a surprisingly long amount of time.

Bridge Littleton: Right. Now this would not be if somebody was renting a house for six months.

Beth Erickson: Correct.

Bridge Littleton: So this is like short term visit. And if somebody who doesn't live here.

Beth Erickson: And they track it and the it's the the geographic fencing is more than 50 miles.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, okay. Never mind that's not Middleburg, then.

Beth Erickson: No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Let me. They're coming from a distance of more than 50 miles.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, that ok. Got it, Got it, got it, got it.

Beth Erickson: Okay, so the geo fence is 50 miles right before you are considered a visitor, Right?

Bridge Littleton: 50 miles you're not.

Beth Erickson: So you think about it. So let's say that I work at that. I work at Salamander, and I come in and I park my car and I have a long shift or whatever it might be. What we try to do is to make sure that that is not included as a visitor.

So again, there's just different filters that are put into the process. So again, let us please track this and just see. But I also think it's important just when we do have the data, even if it seems a little odd to kind of tease it out. So we'll continue to take a look at that. Yes sir.

Bud Jacobs: The visitors. Excuse me. The visitors are staying within the town limits of Middleburg.

Beth Erickson: Within the geo fencing area that we put forward. Yes.

Bud Jacobs: Okay. What? I got that. But how do you define where they're visiting?

Beth Erickson: We worked when we entered into the contract with Datafy, we actually work with Danny on putting in the Geofence area around it. So it has been a consistent geofencing since I think it's been about two years, two and a half, three years that we've been using it. So it is we you can get very, very exact by putting an area around. And so that is what we're using.

Bridge Littleton: You put the areas of the town.

Danny Davis: Can we just look into. Yeah, we'll double check.

Beth Erickson: Absolutely.

Danny Davis: And my suggestion would be rather rudimentary, but perhaps we know somebody at Salamander who could confirm, like the average length of stay for said time period that we could then just cross-reference to understand whether or not the data is.

Beth Erickson: Absolutely.

Danny Davis: Leaning towards accurate or inaccurate.

Beth Erickson: Absolutely. And we will make those updates accordingly. Okay. So continuing with the geofencing or geolocation data, what we are seeing the the column on your left is the trips that occurred from January 1st through December 31st of 2022. And you're seeing the change, the center is the change over the previous year. So if you look on the far right, you're going to see all red with arrows going down. That was where we were seeing drops in visitation. So when you come back into where we are currently, you are seeing those numbers coming up. So we are seeing when you go from a swing of -11.5 to a positive 4.2, that's a cumulative bump in visitation coming in. And, you know, echoing what you heard earlier, really that Washington, DC regional, the larger DMV, continues to be a very important market. And but you're seeing increased engagement from Richmond, New York, Baltimore, and not surprisingly, a little bit of what you heard of, I was just turning to see if Punkin was back there. But a little bit of what you heard, it's consistency between some of those. Just the numbers are a little bit more finite. Danny. When we talk about demographics, you know, we certainly are seeing the the age your largest age group is 45 to 64. Again, I would agree with women being, you know, again, they are across the board, the driving force in tourism in terms of determining where they're going to go. But not a surprise, a higher income bracket of those visitors. Again, 50, nearly 59% at 100,000 or more. So let's talk a little bit about media wins. So I will say and I was very pleased and very touched when you all acknowledged both Vicki Bendor and Visit Loudoun with the Cy Young Award because of great pitches. And I was there to accept the the, the trophy which I brought back of the Tumbler which I brought back to Jen because it really is because of Jen Segal and her team and what they do. So we had 47 media placements in 2022 an average of 3.9 articles or media hits, including Middleburg per month. I think Danny and Ali get a flood from Jen every single time there are hits, so that is important. So we broke that down because this year we did a specific push towards television as well. So from a digital perspective, those are the publications that have Digital forward and that was more than 42 million print circulations, 6 million TV getting up towards 17 million viewers. And I've got a couple of examples here. In a few moments, your highlights were really, I think, important for the Middleburg market. You're looking at travel and leisure, [inaudible], Southern Living, Garden and Gun, Reader's Digest, USA Today and a couple of local news affiliates, if you would, go to the next. So these are some of those. So Garden and Gun was really talking about cidereys. And they they did a feature on Mount

Defiance. And the one on the right is the points guy. And I don't know if you guys have ever followed him. His following is huge. And why I pulled this one is while the image is looking at Bluemont. But what it talks about is while you were here for Virginia, wine events stay at the Salamander. So you'll see that is right in the third paragraph where it says where to stay. And then it goes on to talk about what else is within any, of course, loyalty points programs, which is very important to the points guy. Next, please. The World Atlas. I will say I got a chuckle when they were talking about visitors to visit Middleburg coming from Canada. Canada is a very interesting and important market, believe it or not, for Loudoun County. And we partner with the Northern Virginia Regional Tourism Authority, which are the five regions of Fairfax, Arlington, Alexandria, Prince William County, Fairfax and Loudoun. But we do a media push in in Canada because of the snowbirds coming down. It's a great way for us to pull them in. So the World Atlas is one of those publications that we work with. And so that was a really great thing to do. But one of the things I wanted to highlight, it's hard for you to see on the screen, but you're going to see here when you look at it, is there as a hyperlink for the American Revolution. We are moving forward on getting ready to take a look. Makes us all feel a little old on. Yes, that is true. So for those of us who remember the bicentennial, it's coming back around. So you're going to be seeing information about the 250th of our country, and there's going to be a big push from Virginia. We're going to bring information to the town, all the towns, talking about what we're going to be doing for. And there's a new there's a word and I, by the end of it, I will be able to say it. I admire you for trying. I do. I've heard it. I cannot say it. Do you know. [off mic] It is. It is the 250th. No, the sesquicentennial is the 150th. [off mic] And that I knew from the 150th of the American Civil War. So it is there is a particular word. Do you think that's it? That's. There we go. So again.

Bridge Littleton: Put on a sign.

Beth Erickson: 250th. But Virginia is already kind of mobilizing. And I would what I'd like to do is probably at my next presentation, give you an update on what we're going to be looking at. Loudoun County is going to extend beyond the time frame because the state is having it end at 2026 on July 4th. So but there was a lot that happened in Loudoun County beyond that. So it is going to be a really exciting time and I'm excited to tell you more about that as we go next. Of course, what was new and hot continues to be the Miglia, which again, I am having trouble also saying. Yes, sir.

Bridge Littleton: Anybody recognize that logo at the top?

Beth Erickson: The World Atlas? It's Pan Am. Pan Am. Absolutely. Oh, but also if you if you also want to take a look just for a moment, see the pop up ad that also comes along with it is Salamander. So again, there is a lot of strategy that occurs through all of this, but it also is part of when we we put forward a pitch idea. Please, sir. Miglia continues to be a very hot topic and one that we enjoy pitching very much because it gets great response. Oh, see, I'm trying. The car race. The car race.

Bridge Littleton: The Italian dudes.

Beth Erickson: The Italian dudes. Yeah. And that was so much fun. So next one that I can say HGTV, the 30 most charming small town downtowns in America, Middleburg, Virginia, next. And then when we talk about meetings, because one of the things that I shared with you and my deep dive of of data the last time I presented the meetings market is the slowest to come back. We do have an ace in the hole when we talk about meetings and really what we are seeing in the shift and the trends of meetings. So the ability to talk about both the efforts of what's happening at Salamander within Loudoun County, within the town as we look at DEI initiatives, really was an important hit. This was a very good media hit for us. When we again talk about what's happening within the meeting market because it is becoming more and more important of diversity of sustainability. So that was a huge hit. We are almost done. I brought for you because I know you're all very excited and updated at a glance of our strategic plan, which I will leave for you again, just to remind you, because we use this, but it is updated. These are our five pillars. These are what has happened out of our strategic plan, which you saw the last time I presented. And then these are our key actionable items for this fiscal. I will leave that for your review and if you have any questions, please let me know. Upcoming events. We've got some really exciting upcoming events. We've got our social media forum that is. Happening. I know that Ali is talking with members of our team on a whole bunch of different opportunities. They've already identified them. And then on the lower right hand side through our DEIA, we are putting the A in accessibility into diversity, equity and inclusion. Melissa Majors, who you may remember, she was one of our when we kicked off our d d i a initiative here at Salamander. She was really our

facilitator, but I'm very excited. We have a woman named Rosemarie Rossetti. She is a PhD that is focused specifically on building communities from a visitor perspective for those who are using wheelchairs, either temporarily or permanently. And then Courtney Fish is with the Thompson Center for Neurological Research. We partnered with them several years ago on doing an autism awareness training. We're going to bring that back. So again, we are focusing on people with disabilities that are both visible and non visible. And so at our annual meeting, we are going to be unveiling some really exciting information. And here is our annual meeting. And I know that many of you find time to come to our annual meeting, and we're very, very pleased with that. As one of our top award winners, Punkin Lee is a recipient of. Yes.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Do you charge for those events?

Beth Erickson: No, they're free. And I will make sure that you I know that we've sent them out, but I will send them out again. The the accessibility is virtual, so we'll make sure. And that is tracking up to be one of our most engaged at this point. We've got about 70 people that have signed up for it so far from a virtual perspective. We'd love to continue to push that out. And then we have very excited to have Beth Sieber, who is the Smithsonian's head diversity officer, but also is the one who created Access Smithsonian, and that she came to us through Udvar-hazy and really, really excited about it. When you talk about adaptive reuse of historic structures, I think she is going to be a great, great asset. She's also an incredible speaker. And I will tell you that I've had some wonderful conversations with a delightful woman named Laurie Daly, which I am looking forward to working with closely. Very excited about some of those connections. But she didn't tell me anything. She didn't make the connection until the end of the conversation after we had already planned to go out for a glass of wine. And she goes, Perhaps, you know, my husband and I went, Oh, I did not know that. Didn't put two and two together. But again, as we continue to look at ensuring she's the power hitter, as we continue to really take a look at making sure that Loudoun is as welcoming as the community, as as diverse as the community we serve and as welcoming as the visitors we want to attract. I know in closing that I'll take any questions you may have. I know that you have information that has been included within your packet on just a request for consideration. When you look at your budgeting and the allocation to Visit Loudoun within, it is a historical look at where we are in terms of both TOT generation, but as well what the funding level has been. And I just want to reiterate how incredibly important and powerful the relationship is between Visit Loudoun, our properties and the town, because I think the ability to drive revenue is always going to be a team effort. It's not just visit loud and it's not just the town, it's not just Salamander. But when we work in aggregate, I think really important and impact things happen. So we continue to look forward to working very closely with the town council and we will continue to. I'm sorry, Councilmember Jacobs, what did you just say? Swing above. You made a comment about the heavy hitter. I will try to I will try to butcher my baseball analogy sense of the Cy Young Award. We will continue to swing for the fences. That's all I have. That's the only one I have. Yeah. I will tell you, I think I misspelled Cy Young as a reminder. That should be enough to tell you that that is not my wheelhouse.

Danny Davis: And I will say I did not actually get that letter into the packet for council. So we will forward that on to them just so they have that if you'd like.

Rhonda North: I forwarded it to council.

Danny Davis: I'm not saying not the one from Salamander. She had a separate memo with information.

Beth Erickson: Because I know that you're beginning to start looking at the budgeting process, so it's something for your consideration. Are there any questions?

Bridge Littleton: Questions for Beth.

Philip Miller: I have a comment.

Beth Erickson: Yes, sir.

Philip Miller: Besides a thank you. I think it's interesting to see that our demographic age, if you combine 16 to 44. It's 34%, which is just a few below the highest demographic.

Beth Erickson: You've got a diverse group coming. [inaudible] Well, and I think and I appreciate you saying that one of the things we're seeing that as well you're going to we have we're really stepping into the world of influencers this year, which we've never done before, which is a bit of a challenge and an exciting opportunity. It's just a different world. And one of the things is that we do have and I know that that we have brought at least two influencers through Middleburg. We had one during the family reunion that had amazing response skews younger. We also have a couple that are going to be coming through, I think, in February. No, it's February now March. And it is. They are a couple that are both hearing impaired, so they've got a huge following. And again, what they are doing is they're sharing their experiences with where they go. So I think that again, using Tik Tok, which is not my not my forte, but we're seeing a lot of engagement on Tik Tok. But the Influencers has been really interesting and it's I'm excited to watch that as we evolve. And then we also have I did want to mention we will be working on a media fam bringing media in and then Ann Hayes on our team. If you've never met her, which you may not have, which is a shame. She's a powerhouse. She's going to be working and is working with our properties on a corporate and high end meeting planner FAM. That will be happening I believe in May.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Beth. So just first to echo what Philip said. Thank you very much. You guys do a great job. You work really, really hard. Thank you. And we really appreciate the partnership with Visit Loudoun and honestly, Beth, with you, you are Visit Loudoun. You do a you do a phenomenal job. And this is just a sort of like Philip, this is just a comment. And Danny and I have been having this conversation now for probably about a year. And, you know, at what point do we overcook the cake? Right. This is a town of 800 residents and three blocks of commercial and a fixed number of rooms. And that's it. Right. It does not scale like the county can scale. Right. The county can do, you know, more wineries and more breweries and have more events centers. So there's a there's a capacity limit whereby once we hit a certain point, it starts to detract from the experience that somebody has here. When every restaurant is a two hour wait, every store is a 15 minute wait to check out, you know, and it's really on the high traffic times, right? It's on the weekends.

Beth Erickson: It's the weekends.

Bridge Littleton: It's the weekends. Right. And look, I mean, not giving David a hard time, but, you know, prices are driven by demand. And when those curves make Middleburg unacceptable for certain times and for certain folks, and, you know, that can actually lead to a long term negative reputation. You know where it is. Oh, God. Don't go there anymore. The lines are forever. Right. So I'm not saying we've reached that yet, but we really you know, that's it's a continual question that I've been asking, Danny, is to how do we make sure we don't hit that break point? And there is another element to it. Whereas, you know, we represent the businesses, but we represent the community. And the residents who live here have continual comments that they're not welcome in their town on the weekends. So we have to figure out, you know, a balance, right, I think is a balance that real quickly. Yep, all economic development is not good economic development. You know, there's a point at which you say, actually, I don't want to grow visitorship anymore. I don't want to grow clicks anymore. I want to maintain the level we're at, right. So if we're doing 20 clicks a month. And for however we figure it out, 25 actually starts to create some real negative impacts. Ok How do we maintain 20? How do we keep the number of people but improve the quality of people? So I just I put that out there that I'm not saying it's a problem. I'm not saying it's a something we have to, but always growing is not an option. There is a point at which from a town perspective, we reach a limit that we shouldn't go past. We don't have the facilities, we don't have the parking, we don't have the staff, we don't have the police. So, you know, and I throw that out there that we that we want to be thoughtful of that.

Beth Erickson: I think it's I think it's a fair question. And I know that there are destinations that are facing some of those challenges. I will tell you from the data that we saw during our strategic planning, which was just last year, and I shared with you the data that was specific to the residents of Middleburg who responded, There was nothing that was showing an alarm at that point. And again, I think that that's part of why that outreach and that constant surveying and checking in I think is always important. I think I can tell you well, I would imagine that when you're looking at some of the new product and the availability that will be coming on from Middleburg, from Salamander's perspective in terms of some of the new development that they have, I think that you will see that there is going to be availability that will open up. And

so there is again, that that is expanding as much as it can. I think that to me your you would start to see things tipping when you go back to I'm not going to ask Danny to go backwards, but I'm going to come back over here. When you start to see these numbers that are mid-week really also kind of going off the charts right now, you're seeing the majority of your visitation on a Saturday. And I don't think that that is unusual for and it's something that we're seeing in Leesburg. It's something that we're seeing in Middleburg. I think it is always one of those interesting discussions. So I think data helps us as we look at it, to understand what we should be doing and what we can be doing. I think it helps with communication so that we understand what your goals are. But I think that it also helps to talk about what are some of those opportunities. And I think we're just going to continue to look forward to having those conversations with you. But it is certainly something that we will always watch. Middleburg is a very special and unique place that we want to make sure. And again, I think that that's why it's so important that we've got such a great relationship with the town and with the council because we have pulled back. If you recall, I think it was two years ago at Christmas, we pull back on marketing, so it was intentional. So we are always working.

Bridge Littleton: And that's a good example.

Beth Erickson: Yeah. So we are always working very closely with the town. And when you raise a, you know, a little bit of a warning flag, we will be responsive. And that is one of again, the magic a little bit of Jen and the rest of the team is they will also call ahead and they'll say we have a media opportunity. What do you think? And I think that that is a conversation that does happen on a very regular basis. There are going to be times that media will come through or things that have been pitched two years before will then hit the will then hit a media hit. And that's just the reality of it. So somebody may have been here two years ago at the at the Christmas parade and then wrote about it. So that's not always something that you can control. Sure. But I think that the relationship that we have with Middleburg, I think is one of our best using belts and suspenders data is one of those. The other is that relationship and really working very closely to understand that we have our finger on the pulse.

Bridge Littleton: No, I appreciate it. Any other questions for Beth? Well.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Just to your point, I think what we've been suffering from has been really spikes and maybe you're probably always doing this to try and even those out so that we get more during those weekdays.

Beth Erickson: We love those months of February and March, and those are all very good months for us. But no, we do and we do look at shoulder season on when we can really start to turn up the volume, you know, And one of the challenges that we will certainly have is when we are also pitching groups coming in is making sure that there is availability to receive those. So often we will have opportunities where there's not availability. So that's also another safeguard because we will know that information well in advance to kind of understand what's happening within the lodging properties. And when we're seeing our maximum capacity, not a surprise. I will tell you October has become our largest month, especially for weddings. So there's continuation. And then my last thing I will say is again, watching the short term residential rental market, I think there may be capacity that we may not be aware of. So we will continue to watch for that and we'll see what we can do from data.

Bridge Littleton: Awesome.

Beth Erickson: Thank you. Oh, it's my pleasure. And thank you all so much and enjoy your light reading Ok.

Bridge Littleton: Next item here is Staff Report, Project Status updates. Who is it?

Danny Davis: I'll take it real quickly. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. In terms of our updates, very briefly, we have completed the design of the septic conversion project and we are getting close to getting those documents ready to bid out. Again, this is for Stonewall Avenue and Lincoln Road. Of note, we did find that one of the properties on Stonewall Avenue actually is still in septic that we thought had already connected to our sewer system. And so we actually went back and refunded sewer fees for five years, which was the extent to which the extent to which we we believe we had the authority to. Yes. And so they'll be part of this, obviously getting off septic and into a grinder pump. So we're still moving forward with that. I am working with and Will and I are working with our water tank contractor, the Temporary Tower Company,

and I will be at the charter school board meeting on Monday evening to talk through the temporary tower. Location and timing of all that. And then we're getting an updated schedule for the actual blasting and painting tab. Our goal would be that all the antennas are off the tower in April so that as soon as children are out of school, the actual work can begin on the blasting and painting. So we don't face the issues we had last year. And then the final update.

Bridge Littleton: Hold right there. I think we should in our next water bill, if you haven't done it, I didn't see it. But let's notify everybody that there may be an interruption with cell service or degradation of service. If those antennas are going to come down to the ground level, they're going to be people at their farther edge of that coverage that won't get coverage anymore.

Danny Davis: Right. So my understanding is the temporary tower could be 100 feet tall. And so it might be slightly lower than where we are, but it will be much better than the issues we had last year. But we can update.

Bridge Littleton: Just let people know that, you know.

Danny Davis: And the final update is on Chinn Court that we're working with VDOT to get an inspection of the improvements so it can be accepted. It's a process, but hopefully all goes well. So that's our updates on the projects for now.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Danny on the projects? Go once. Going twice. Okay. Next item here. Oh, by the way, I forgot to mention this. I meant to do it before when I was here. For those of you who are may or may not be aware, Jim Wolford passed away a couple of weeks ago. His funeral tomorrow is tomorrow at 11 a.m. at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Upperville. That movie that they did with Robert Redford was like the horse whisperer. It was based on Jim. So he was a really nice guy. Okay. Next items here are consent agenda. And would anybody like anything removed from the consent agenda? All right. Is there a motion?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I move we accept the consent agenda as as presented.

J. Kevin Daly: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Any discussion? all the favor say aye.

Everyone: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed abstentions. Okay. Next item is council approval for contract for performance of annual audit.

Danny Davis: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As you're aware, Mitchell and Company informed us that they are no longer providing audit services for municipalities and we appreciated all their hard work with us over the past was at 20-21 years. So we did reach out to.

Bridge Littleton: Well, that's just lack of loyalty.

Danny Davis: We did reach out to two audit firms, firms that provide audit services for localities, other towns here in Loudoun County. One of them at this point declined to offer a proposal and said they could help in a pinch but really didn't have the capacity. The other firm is one that supports dozens and dozens of jurisdictions throughout Virginia. They come highly recommended by our financial advisors as well as I did work with them at a previous town government and believe they do really good and solid work. So they have an existing contract with Fauquier County that can be cooperatively procured. We can ride that contract. The cost is more than what we've been paying Mitchell and Company. But with you know, I'm not sure that amount for Mitchell has changed probably in a number of years. So we believe it's adequate and appropriate and would recommend council moving forward with Robinson Farmer Cox Associates.

Bridge Littleton: Anyone have any questions for Danny? Seeing as we only got one bid. We're kind of stuck. Ok. No, I think it's great. And the fact they do a lot of municipal work. It should be very efficient. There's no learning curve. Is there a motion?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I move that the Town Council award a contract with Robinson Farmer Cox Associates for Professional Audit Services in the amount of \$30,000 under cooperative procurement with the existing Fauquier County contract.

J. Kevin Daly: Second.

Darlene Kirk: I like that.

Bridge Littleton: Is there a second?

J. Kevin Daly: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Well, you're lucky you're not on the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors. Okay. I think it has to be a roll call vote. Under the Martin procedure.

Rhonda North: Vice Mayor Leonard Morgan.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Yes.

Rhonda North: Council Member Daly.

J. Kevin Daly: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Jacobs.

Bud Jacobs: Aye.

Punkin Lee: Council Member Kirk.

Darlene Kirk: Yes.

Rhonda North: Council Member Miller.

Philip Miller: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Ok. Next item here is we're on proposed budget for 2024. [off mic] Well, if we keep it to 5 minutes. Yes. Will. Good point.

Danny Davis: Five minute recess?

Bridge Littleton: Five minute recess. All right. Meetings reconvened. 10 minutes. You're up.

Danny Davis: Thank you, Mr. Mayor appreciate the opportunity to present to you and to the Middleburg citizens the fiscal Year 2024 proposed budget. As part of this presentation, we will look briefly at our current year highlights. We'll look forward to our goals and outlook for 2024, and then we'll go through the general fund overview as well as the Utility Fund overview and then our budget review schedule. This current year has seen the Town Council take strides in completing many of its strategic initiatives. Particularly the Council has spent significant time working on protecting existing communities, as exemplified by updating the two zoning ordinance twice with the goal of limiting large scale homes in the town's established communities. We also know the Town Council anticipates continuing this discussion in

the coming months. The town has seen a strong economy in the current year, with meals tax receipts up approximately 13% over our budget and with the transient occupancy tax continuing right on with projections. We were blessed to have a full complement of events this year with the return of Octoberfest, Mille Miglia and of course the Christmas and Middleburg parades and activities. We've also had a number of new business openings, filling vacant storefronts quickly, bringing in business owners who are energized to be part of the town. And we've also seen businesses expand or relocate within town to enhance their successes. And finally, I would note that the council's goal of holding a Rural Preservation summit is coming to fruition with a great event that we have planned for April 11th. Also this year, we've seen significant progress on the town hall. Although the project is delayed by a few months, there continues to be a lot of momentum and the building is coming together. Well, this is consumed a lot of time and energy, as you know, but it will serve the community very well for decades to come. The town staff have dedicated themselves to key initiatives in innovation and bringing new technology to our operations. This includes the Water Meter radio read program that we introduced this past year, as well as online bill pay for both meals, tax and now business licenses, which came together just before business license renewals and has been a, I believe, a really great success working with our businesses. And we're continuing to use digital resources also in supporting our work efforts. This year we maintain full employment of our staff and have developed work programs to help our staff improve their skills and develop capabilities for continued professional growth. Now looking on to 2024, we know that the town council intends to continue reviewing ordinances and regulations to protect our existing communities, specifically in the areas of R-2 Zoning and short term rentals. This will be a topic of discussion at the March 6th Strategic Plan meeting at the Hill School. And so those will be important to include as we go through the budget process. We are working daily and as a key goal to get the town hall project continuing on track with at least three formal progress meetings a week, ongoing coordination with the architect, construction manager and contractor, and continuing to problem solve those big and small issues that still arise. And we know this continues to be a key goal for council. [off mic] We keep pressing, pressing as hard as we can. We also know the town will continue its efforts to strategically support our business in town, from marketing and business resources to, again, partnerships just like we had with MBPA, Visit Loudoun and Economic Development. Another key goal that we have is to remain fiscally prepared for a possible recession. While economic economists all have their own kind of perspective on this matter. We do know that various indicators point to the potential of a recession, even if it might be just a soft recession and short lived. So we must stay vigilant as it relates to our revenue streams and our trends as we see them here in the community. And then in order to continue maintaining a high performing organization, we continue focusing on staff development, cross training, team building and collaborative efforts to ensure that we can reach our highest potential in serving the town. And these are some of the examples of conferences or trainings that our staff have either done in the past or are planning for the upcoming year. So now I'd like to go through our FY 24 General fund first revenues as discussed with you at the last meeting. We continue to see revenues be very strong for the town with latest actual revisions to our meals tax projections. We are now projecting an overall increase of 12.2% of revenues over our fiscal 23 budget. We are seeing continued growth in the meals and TOT, which comprises 56% of our general fund revenues despite despite seeing inflation and these possible indicators of recession. As discussed in the last meeting, real property assessments increased 12% overall year over year and council gave direction to advertise a tax rate that is a lower tax rate than the current tax rate, and that it will be no higher than 12.76 cents knowing that council may even look at potentially decreasing. We are accounting for a significant increase in our interest earnings. You'll see in the revenue lines that we're anticipating annual revenues of \$200,000 on our interest, which is a significant change from the 20,000 that we had budgeted in our current year and past year. And then we do have some miscellaneous reimbursements and revenues. These are actually offset by similar expenditures. And so it's really more of an accounting change, but it has to be reflected on both sides of the ledger. This slide here summarizes the change in residential assessments. This is the average home rate for single family townhouse and condo. You'll see the average at 13.65%. And then the red line is showing how the tax rate has changed from last year was 15.3 cents. Current years 13.69 cents, and the maximum rate is for the upcoming year would be 12.76 cents. This is a similar slide just showing broken down by single family townhouse and condo. You'll see this year that single family homes saw a much more significant increase year over year than townhomes and have once again outpaced townhomes in average value by about 4000. This slide is kind of hard to read. It's a similar one that we showed at the last meeting, just simply showing the potential effect of the average tax bill for homeowners. The line is current year tax bill and the bars graphs are the potential at either the equalized rate on the far right or the advertised rate on the far left. You'll see, in either case, single family homes. The average single family home would see a slight increase.

Bridge Littleton: Go ahead.

Danny Davis: Due to the fact that their assessments were up 16% year over year.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. So I want to stop right here. That is not to scale. That is not relative to total value. Right? Because when you look at that bar graph, the average person will look at it and say, you're doubling. If you do the max you proposed, you're doubling the tax because the bar is double the size. Does that make sense?

Danny Davis: It doesn't. I don't see it that way. I guess.

Bridge Littleton: I get I get it when I'm.

Danny Davis: So the the line, the orange line is what a a townhouse would pay this year in taxes. The average townhouse in their tax bill. So on the far right, the equalized rate, you see the bar is lower than the line. That means the average tax bill will decrease on the left at the advertised rate. It's like \$6 higher.

Bridge Littleton: So. Oh, I got it. Okay. I got it. I was looking at a different way. It was my mistake. My mistake. Sorry. Go ahead.

Danny Davis: This chart shows our general fund revenues over the past three years and then including the proposed for fiscal 24. You'll continue to see the increase. The one in the middle is grayed out because that's our FY 23 budget. While we haven't formally amended the revenues yet, meals taxes up, as noted, currently we're estimating about \$124,000 increase over the budget for meals tax. So you'll see that we've built our current 24 budget based on 23 projections. That's again about a 7% increase in meals, tax revenues and a 3% increase in TOT. And then some of those other revenue sources that we discussed. Okay. Those are revenues. Now, looking at general fund expenditures, we are proposing and again, I'll go through this overall it's approximately 10.5% increase over the fiscal 23 amended budget. As mentioned, some of these are offset by reimbursement. So one example is retirees with certain years of service are eligible to stay on our health care. However, they pay the entire freight of that health care. We have not actually put that in a budget, even though we pay the dollars to Anthem and get reimbursed by the retiree. So that's about \$47,000 that was never accounted for in the budget. So something like that looks like it's skewing revenues and expenditures and it's really just putting it there so that we can receive the funds and expend the funds.

Bridge Littleton: So does your 10% account or not account for that?

Danny Davis: It does now. Yes, it does. So revenues were up 12.2%, Expenditures are up 10.5%. We do have funding for council initiatives, as we've talked about, if there are either planning studies, zoning efforts, other planning efforts, or anything else that might come up during the council's retreat. There is flexibility in funding for those in the budget. We do account for some limited, limited inflationary costs that we're not seeing it across all lines of business. We do have that accounted for in some of our budgets and then we do have some limited enhancements in our operations and maintenance in the areas of our police department budget and then some technology replacements in the administration budget. And we'll go through those in more detail during the budget deliberations. We continue our major events as we've had great success over the past year, and we're also adding in funding for community focused events. As you recall, the town will be taking over responsibility for Independence Day activities. So that's included in the budget as well as the desire to hold a new event called Middleburg Day or Founder's Day that we're going to aim for in March of 2024. And then also bringing back the wellness fair that was previously run by Go Green and Sustainability. So hoping to do more focus on community level events that are less about bringing in visitors from outside and more about bringing our community together. We also in the 24 budget increase the debt service in line with our general obligation debt for the town hall project. And this uses the scaled approach that we developed in concert with the Strategic Finance Committee. And then we've also included operational costs for the new town hall, such as cleaning contracts and maintenance contracts. Continuing on in expenditures. We did. You'll see when you look through the budget, the salary lines look significantly higher in a jump. That's accounting for certain things behind the scenes, such as holiday hours that were just not properly calculated or accounted for in their budget. We're also worked closely with them to get our overtime budget and our other wages budget, such as part time staff, what we believe to be a more accurate projection for the upcoming year. In the fiscal 24 budget. We do continue investing in our employees. We expect health insurance

premiums to increase. We actually have not received that information yet. So we have plugged in a 10% increase in health premiums. We don't know where that might end up and we'll keep you updated as soon as we hear from them. I am proposing a cost of living increase for employees of 4% and once again a 2% average merit increase for the top performers based on performance assessments. These amounts taken together are in line with our neighbors and our competitors and help us to remain competitive in the marketplace, especially for retention of our employees. Also, over the last few months, I have worked with our human resources consultant to conduct a compensation study for our employees, and I'll be forwarding this on to you separately for your input. However, in response, I have put a set aside in the budget that will account for some limited market adjustments for those employees whose salaries are not properly aligned with the market. And then I would note that even if we are not matching other jurisdictions raise for raise percent by percent, we just need to stay aware of the market and what others are doing around us. And so we will stay on top of that during the process. This slide here shows four years' worth of budget from fiscal 21 to current year. You'll see the fiscal 23 amended budget second from the right and then the fiscal 24 proposed budget on the far right. These are the numbers. Again, these are broken down in more detail in the budget document itself. The top line, the dark green, is you could call it contingency unallocated revenues and for prior years would be the dollars that go into unassigned fund balance at the end of the fiscal year. And so you'll see that that number continues to be a healthy unallocated revenues, which is important to have in terms of knowing that if there are inflationary pressures, if there are recessionary trends, that there is still some cushion there at this time. And then any of that that's obviously not used for the year would just go into unassigned fund balance at the end of the year. Just a couple of quick other items in the general fund. I have placed a set aside in the CIP for Asbury Church of \$1,000,000. Knowing that the council's goal of restoring that building and getting it back into use in the community and so we know that that number may fluctuate depending on final design and community outreach. But that's an expectation for the coming year. And then also a topic that just came up a little bit in the discussion of accessibility in our streets, as well as the brick sidewalks. And also EDAC is considering additional capital funding for streetscape and infrastructure enhancements throughout, especially our downtown corridor. This could be focused on South Madison Street, where there's issues with some trees and sidewalks. It could be focused on other trees on Washington Street that have issues with roots causing the bricks to heave. So we don't have we don't have a dollar sign with that. We don't have a dollar amount at this point plugged in the budget for that. But I think that's another important topic of discussion at the strategic planning retreat about perhaps focusing on some strategic streetscape and infrastructure enhancements. So that's a brief overview of the general fund. Now, Utility Fund, we continue to see actual consumption increasing, which is good. We had seen a bit of a dip and we're concerned what that would do to revenues. But consumption is back and we think part of that also comes from more accurate readings with the updated meter system and the radio reads. We are recommending a continued 3% rate increase in line with the rate model that you updated last year during the budget process. And the this allows us to continue investing in our repairs and operations. And then we also, as a reminder, still have ARPA funding that's going towards capital projects that we'll talk about in just a minute. This slide here on the far right, you see our FY 24 proposed revenues for the utility fund. You'll see 90% of our revenues come from user fees. So that is the vast majority of our revenues. If we do receive any connection fees or availability fees, we don't budget those, we just use those for either one time capital uses or those go to our unassigned fund balance that allows us to either offset debt or to again pursue other capital projects in the future. In our expenditures. We work closely with Vice Mayor Leonard Morgan, as well as with Mark and Stuart from IES. We were able to reduce some of our chemical costs by understanding more accurately our chemical needs for the year and get the current levels of pricing. I actually was concerned we'd see increases in our chemicals due to supply chain, but as of now, we'll actually recognize some decreases there. We do see some inflationary costs on things such as equipment, pumps and motors, as well as other materials that go into operations. So we're trying to account for that as best as possible. We have nearly completed our utility system master plan, and in that we've identified a number of improvements to our system. Some are simple maintenance items that just need to be addressed and are relatively minor. Others are larger, such as replacing water lines. If you recall, we've had at least five water breaks on Stonewall and Chestnut Street over the last few years. And so beginning the process of replacing those water lines that were not part of the original Ridgeview Water Water main upgrade project, that will go a long way in protecting the longevity of our system. And then, of course, we have our other major projects underway. The well for clear well the septic conversion project we talked about and then the tank recoding that should be completed this year. These are the expenditures in bar graphs. And again, you'll see in the light blue, here is our debt service line item. And then this is our cash to capital for waterline improvements and other capital efforts. And then briefly, as brought up to you at the last meeting, budget review schedule, we would expect to have a budget discussion at the next council meeting. We do have a public hearing on the 23rd on the real property tax. At that night we would also plan to have a budget discussion on the general fund and

then ask you to adopt a real property tax rate If the council is comfortable with that. If you wish to push that off to another date, then you would need to call a special meeting, which I would recommend for March 30th, but I'm not sure if that would be necessary at this time. And then we'll continue the budget meetings in April or May with the goal of adoption, most likely the second meeting in May. As a reminder, the budget must be approved by June 30th, so there's still time to have plenty of these discussions. For public input, we can receive public input at any council meeting, at the public hearings. The public can always call and leave a message either on the voicemail or talk with Rhonda or someone here at the office, or to go online at Middleburg via slash input. And with that, Mr. Mayor, thank you for the time. I'm sure that was probably 20 minutes. That was a lot to say in 10 minutes.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Danny? Good. Go ahead.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Danny, I'm curious, do we do any zero based budgeting this time around?

Danny Davis: So we did look through some of our budgets from a very granular detail in terms of where the expenditures have been. I will say we didn't zero them out and start from scratch as we have in the past years on a couple of those budgets. But each year there they're fairly refined as best as possible. Some of them remain uncertain when you get into what is inflation going to do to us, right? So we have to account for what we've seen either affecting our dollars, but also what what may be coming down the line. Certain light items. Of course we do. So, for instance, software equipment, we know what our annual contractual costs are, right? So those are fairly easy to roll out as a zero based exercise. Right. Because we know each of our software products that have monthly maintenance fees on them.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I suppose with the new town hall coming online, you know, that's been a bit of a zero based thing because it's a new.

Danny Davis: It is. And it's also a little bit but it's a it's a bit of a unknown in an uncertainty as well. For instance, we just opened bids on the town hall cleaning contract. We really didn't know what to expect. And we're not haven't been prepared to issue a recommendation on that yet. We have to review the proposals. But I think our budget line item we put in for fiscal 24 will be right on track. It'll be sufficient, in fact suitable to be able to ensure that we can clean the new town hall in an appropriate manner.

Bridge Littleton: Anybody else. Okay. Now, I'm going to hit back on something that Peter just said. I know the Strategic Finance Committee has recommended several times that we do a zero based budgeting exercise, top to bottom, everything. Nothing gets left out, everything gets relooked at. And just because we might plug the same number back in doesn't mean we don't question it. I mean, I have gone back to my own credit card bill and lo and behold, found four subscriptions for things. I was paying a total of \$200 a month for that I didn't even know I still had. And I look back and been there for three years. So I think we're going to we need to discuss this at the [inaudible] site, because I agree with the Finance Committee. We should do it and not put it off any more and holistically top to bottom. And if we need to do it over a number of years, that's fine. But, you know, like the IT contract. Well, do we really know what we're getting? Do we really know what we want? Do we really need to change? You know, that's what the zero based budgeting comes from. It's not just how much are we paying, but do we know what we're getting? Maybe we need something more. It forces those questions to always to be asked. And yeah, you don't do it, but once every ten years. But I don't think we've I've never seen it done and I can run it. Rhonda, you've seen us do a zero based budgeting since you've been here.

Rhonda North: Just what we've tried to do over the last couple years.

Danny Davis: I think you're asking a couple of different things. So I think maybe at the strategic planning retreat, we can talk through that because over the last three budgets, we did scrub every line item from from top to bottom. And every single year we do scrub every line item because it's finite enough where we are able to know every single line item. And so if you're talking about a programmatic review.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah.

Danny Davis: That's a whole different ballgame.

Bridge Littleton: That's what I'm talking about.

Danny Davis: [multiple speakers] To do that.

Bridge Littleton: Well, then we can we can, we can get to the resources to do.

Danny Davis: That and we'll be happy to do that.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Real quick, I have one other question. This is so a couple of folks and actually in the last couple of weeks have brought up to me concern about water utility rates. And one person made the comment, I haven't gone back to check that we are the most expensive in the county. Okay. We need to look at that. We need to have an examination of the rates. We need to have an examination of what we're spending and what we're doing. Because if we're more than Hillsborough. I don't know how that's possible.

Danny Davis: Well, I'm not sure what their rates are because they literally just got [inaudible].

Bridge Littleton: No, I know. I know. I know, I know. I know all that. So again, like I said, I didn't go validate it. But the person who said, you know, you're the highest in the county, I thought, well, that person would actually know. So for the next budget, for the next budget review in two weeks, let's have a slide of every single town's water rates for water and sewer compared to us and see where we are on a. [off mic] Let's actually talk about in the budget because that's really important information. If we're going to be setting our budget and we want to actually have a look at the water rates and maybe we don't, but we need to we need to look at that and not I know we've programmed in 3%. I'm totally on board with that. But if we look at it and we're 25% higher than everybody else, something's off and we need to maybe dive into that. And if we do the dive in, there's nothing off, then that's fine. Right? But. It's a it's an interesting data point, and it's one that, if nothing else, we need to be able to say that we've looked at, we've understood it, we know why, and we can explain it because right now I can't explain it.

Danny Davis: So and more than happy to have that discussion, too. Two quick questions. One, I'd intended for us to focus on the general fund in our budget discussions over the next couple of meetings. So are you okay if I bring that information to our first discussion on the utility fund or do you want to go ahead and have it at the next meeting?

Bridge Littleton: Don't we have to have all this done by the end of March? Oh, that's just the tax rate. I'm sorry. That's fine. Whenever you're going to do utilities, that's fine. But let's let's have that comparative between Loudoun water and the other seven other six towns.

Danny Davis: And again, just if I can remind you and the council that we did update our rate model last year and it was a deep dive into our rates, our operations, capital needs and replacement costs. And so being a very, very small system, replacing 1000 feet of pipe, it's the same cost for us as it is for Loudoun Water that has 180,000 customers. And so. We will more than happy to have this conversation.

Bridge Littleton: Totally get it and Lovettsville is a small system. Round Hill's a small system and Hamilton's a small system. [inaudible] So it's 2000 versus 800. So I think we have a responsibility to look at the information. So and again for Hillsborough was a big one, right? We're seven times their size.

Darlene Kirk: Why don't we just have [inaudible] email it to us?

Bridge Littleton: Well, that's fine. Yeah, no, absolutely. But but let's take a look at it. And if we need to look at some of our contingencies, the contingency we have in the general fund, I don't know if there's a grant program or something like that to help people out who are in need. And I'm specifically thinking of folks at Windy Hill. I mean, those are the folks who are mentioning it, you know, and I get it. It's all based on how much you use. If you have a leaky toilets, your responsibility to check those types of things. But, you know, if we're 25% higher than everybody else, that is that's a real

number. You know, it's a real, real number. And I just, you know, not saying we do anything about it, but I absolutely want to know where we are relative to other folks.

Danny Davis: We'll do it.

Darlene Kirk: [inaudible] Okay. And I'll put I was going to say when I was going to raise my hand previously, as we've been talking about that retreat, we've named like three other things that we're going to do at this retreat. And unless we're planning on spending the night, we've got to kind of focus on what we're going to do during the retreat.

Bridge Littleton: No, no. Danny and I reviewed it the other day, and we'll have something to you guys next week, early next week. [inaudible]

Tina Staples: Sorry. A brief comment about the utility rates. It's important to keep in mind that a lot of towns and other municipalities also charge surcharges. So while their rates may be less, they tack on surcharges with every bill for water and sewer.

Bridge Littleton: So have that data too. Have all the data. Average bill? Yeah. Let's look at rates and average bill. Right? Exactly. Perfect. That's perfect. Okay, Thanks. Anybody have any other questions for Danny on the budget? Once. Twice. Thank you.

Danny Davis: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Any information items before we go to closed session? Nope. All right. Who would like to read the memo?

Philip Miller: I move the council go into closed session as authorized under section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia for one consultation with legal counsel employed by the public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the legal advice of such counsel related to the Town Hall project contract as allowed under subsection eight two for the discussion of the disposition of publicly held property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body related to requests for vacation of the town right of ways allowed under subsection A3 and three for the discussion of appointments to the Streetscape committee. Middleburg Sustainability Committee and the Middleburg Strategic Finance Committee is allowed Under subsection A1. I further move that the Council thereafter reconvene in open session as for action as appropriate.

Darlene Kirk: Second.

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

Everyone: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Ok. We are in closed session. I ask that Council certify that in the closed session just concluded. To the best of each member's knowledge, nothing was discussed except the matter or matters one specifically identified in the motion to convene in closed session and two lawfully permitted to be discussed in a closed session under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act as set out in the motion. I would like to remind those present for the closed session and any discussion that occur within it should be treated as confidential. Bud.

Bud Jacobs: Yes.

Philip Miller: Yes.

Darlene Kirk: Yes.

Bridge Littleton: Yes.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Yes.

J. Kevin Daly: Yes.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. I move that the town council approve Pam Curran to serve on the Middleburg Strategic Finance Committee.

J. Kevin Daly: Second.

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

Everyone: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed. Abstentions Ok.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I move that council appoint Laurie Salama to the Middleburg Sustainability Committee to fill a vacancy. Said term to expire May 12, 2024.

J. Kevin Daly: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Discussion. All favor say aye.

Everyone: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed, abstentions Ok. And who will do the one four streetscape?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I'll do it. I move that council appoint Bonnie Burns to the Streetscape Committee to fill a vacancy.

J. Kevin Daly: Second.

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

Everyone: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed abstentions. Okay. Meeting adjourned.