



MIDDLEBURG TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 11, 2024



PENDING APPROVAL

PRESENT: Mayor Trowbridge M. Littleton
Councilmember Chris W. Bernard
Councilmember Pamela Curran
Councilmember J. Kevin Daly
Councilmember C. Darlene Kirk
Councilmember Peter A. Leonard-Morgan
Councilmember Cindy C. Pearson

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

ABSENT: Councilmember Morris E. "Bud" Jacobs

The Town Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia held their regular monthly meeting on Thursday, January 11, 2024 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.

Special Recognitions by Mayor & Council

Council Approval – Resolution of Appreciation – Estee LaClare

Mayor Littleton noted that Estee LaClare had taken a position with Loudoun County and advised that she would be deeply missed. He noted that she instituted a new program to ensure people maintained their properties to code and did so in a respectful and courteous manner. Mr. Littleton advised that she was wonderful and made the workplace a better place to be. He read the resolution of appreciation aloud and, following its adoption, presented a signed copy to Ms. LaClare.

Ms. LaClare thanked the Council and noted that it had been an honor and pleasure to work with everyone. She advised that a piece of her heart would always remain in Middleburg and noted that the people here were like family.

Councilmember Daly moved, seconded by Councilmember Kirk, that Council adopt a resolution expressing its appreciation to Estee LaClare for her service as the Planning & Project Associate for the Town of Middleburg from June 24, 2019 through January 3, 2024.

Councilmember Daly noted that Ms. LaClare was like a member of the family.

Councilmember Pearson expressed appreciation for Ms. LaClare's assistance with regard to the Streetscape Committee.

Councilmember Kirk noted that Ms. LaClare lit up a room with her smile and brightened peoples' day.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmember Jacobs

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

Public Comment

Scott Little, the new Managing Director of the Salamander Resort & Spa, introduced himself to the Mayor and Council. He noted that he worked for eight years at Martha's Vineyard in a town that was very similar to Middleburg. Mr. Little advised that he would make himself available any time he was needed.

Jeb Benedict, 23349 Parsons Road, thanked the Mayor and Council for their leadership in ensuring the Mickie Gordon Park was kept rural. He reported that a small group of supporters had pledged \$88,250 thus far so American Legion Post 295 could return a youth team to the park for the first time in more than fifteen years. Mr. Benedict advised that they anticipated delivering \$10,000 of this amount to the Legion in February and noted that \$30,000 was needed to launch the program this year. He explained that this was a modest effort that aimed to provide a strong base to launch a community-wide fundraising effort for the team. Mr. Benedict opined that restoring a baseball program would be a big challenge and advised that this effort was even more difficult given that the supporters had no information from the County Parks Department on when the baseball diamond would be restored for use. He asked that the Council continue to serve as a key facilitator for efforts to increase public awareness of and the use of the park.

Megan Gallagher, 214 E. Marshall Street, thanked the Mayor and Council for their efforts to keep the Mickie Gordon Park rural and opined that the efforts represented an extraordinary model of effective community engagement. She asked that the Council consider adding the park issue to the agenda for its strategic planning retreat. Ms. Gallagher opined that there was much that needed to be known about the County Parks Department's plans for the park. She suggested Council adopt a goal of creating a communications model for the Mickie Gordon Park that linked the community stakeholders, the Town, and the County Parks Department. Ms. Gallagher opined that this system of communication would save time for everyone and would reassure the stakeholders that the parks planning would be more efficient and less costly and could serve as a model for other towns.

Eloise Repesky, Executive Director of the Windy Hill Foundation, noted that she was happy to see that Windy Hill was listed on the Council's strategic planning agenda for next month and advised that she was excited to learn more about how the Council planned to enhance connections and relationships with the residents. She reminded Council that Windy Hill's residents represented 16% of the town's population and advised that she had heard from them that they felt separated from the town and the community. Ms. Repesky explained that local events, including those not managed by the Town, were perceived as being cost prohibitive and that some spaces did not feel welcoming, even for the residents who had lived in Middleburg their entire lives. She reiterated that she was interested in learning more about how the Town planned to engage with the Windy Hill community. Ms. Repesky advised that during her tenure, she had focused on providing community events, such as potluck dinners, in spaces where the residents felt safe and comfortable and noted that they were well attended. She suggested that in order for the Town's strategic priority to be successful, she would encourage the Council to work with the Windy Hill Foundation to engage with their staff and residents to learn more about building a strong, sustainable environment for Middleburg.

Gary Nickleson, Commander of American Legion Post 295, reviewed their accomplishments over the past year. He reported that they funded their Vets Helping Vets Program, which allowed them to provide financial, educational and transportation assistance to veterans living within Loudoun County. Mr. Nickleson further reported that they organized multiple youth initiatives, including sending seventeen youth to the American Legion's Boys and Girls State Program. He noted that this was the first time they participated in the oratorical contest, with Helena Hosseini, a sophomore from Freedom High School, moving to the district competition. Mr. Nickleson reported that the Legion was working to develop a Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program and an American Legion Youth Baseball Team. He expressed appreciation for the fundraising efforts that have been undertaken with regard to the latter program and advised that he

would make sure the money was used properly to bring youth programs back to Middleburg. Mr. Nickelson reported that 2024 started off well and advised that General Petraeus and Micheale Morell, Deputy Commander of the CIA, were special guests at the American Legion

There being no further comments, Mayor Littleton closed the public comment period. He commended Commander Nickleson on the things the American Legion had done for the community. Mr. Littleton also thanked Mr. Benedict, Ms. Gallagher, and the entire community for coming together with regard to the Mickie Gordon Park. He reported that he did reach out to Steve Torpe, the County Parks Director, to get a status report and learned that the County was near the completion of the updates to the tennis court and had provided the information received during the community input sessions to a designer. Mr. Littleton further reported that Mr. Torpe anticipated it would take another two and a half months to develop a plan, at which point, they would reach back out to the community for further input. He opined that this would occur in March or April. Mr. Littleton advised that he would reach out to Mr. Torpe to ask that he put the baseball field back in a usable condition by May 1st. He noted that this would not include bleachers; however, it would include what was necessary to make the baseball diamond usable again. Mr. Littleton thanked Ms. Repesky for her comments and agreed they should get together before the Council held its strategic planning retreat in order to identify the resources that were needed and to learn what the residents were looking for from the town. He noted that this did not mean it could be done; however, he suggested the need to understand the requirements. Mr. Littleton recommended Ms. Repesky reach out to Town Manager Davis to schedule a meeting.

Councilmember Kirk asked that Ms. Repesky let the members of Council know when they had events so they could participate.

Councilmember Curran agreed that some form of formal communication with the County Parks Department was needed. She noted that had it not been for Mayor Littleton being proactive, the Town would not know what was happening with the Mickie Gordon Park. Ms. Curran suggested the need for a formal process so the County could be held accountable for what they planned to do at the park.

Mayor Littleton noted the size of the County Parks Department and the number of projects on which they were working. He suggested the Town should communicate through its new Supervisor and reminded Council that Mr. Torpe worked for the County. Mr. Littleton agreed the Town should receive feedback on a regular basis.

Organization of Council

Election of Vice Mayor

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted that it had been an honor and privilege to serve as the Vice Mayor for the past two years.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, to nominate Chris Bernard as Vice Mayor for the Town of Middleburg for a two-year period beginning January 1, 2024.

Councilmember Kirk moved, seconded by Councilmember Curran, to nominate Darlene Kirk as Vice Mayor for the Town of Middleburg for a two-year period beginning January 1, 2024.

Councilmember Kirk noted that she had been on the Council for twenty-three years, including fourteen years as the Vice Mayor. She reminded Council that she stepped down from the position due to medical issues; however, she never intended to go away completely. Ms. Kirk noted her service to the Town and opined that it would be good to have a woman and someone from the west end of town in this position. She explained that for those reasons, she was submitting her name for consideration.

There being no further nominations offered, Mayor Littleton closed the nomination process.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Attorney Crim explained that the Council would vote on the nominations in the order they were made, with the first person to receive a majority vote being elected as Vice Mayor.

Councilmember Bernard thanked Councilmember Leonard-Morgan for nominating him. He advised that he had learned a lot during his tenure on the Council. Mr. Bernard noted that the main role of the Vice Mayor was to support the Mayor and represent him during his absence. He advised that he felt he was up to the task and challenge. Mr. Bernard advised that he was excited about having the opportunity to take on more responsibilities for the entire town and to give back some more.

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

No – Councilmembers Curran and Kirk

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmember Jacobs

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

(on nomination of Chris Bernard) (by roll call vote)

Appointments of Council Representatives to Town boards/commissions/committees

Mayor Littleton announced that the following members would be appointed as the Council representatives on the following committees:

Personnel Committee: Councilmember Kirk

Public Safety Committee: Councilmember Daly

Utilities Committee: Councilmember Leonard-Morgan

Middleburg Charitable Foundation: Councilmembers Kirk and Curran

Planning Commission: Councilmember Jacobs

HDRC: Councilmember Pearson

Christmas in Middleburg: Vice Mayor Bernard

Route 50 Task Force: Mayor Littleton

EDAC: Vice Mayor Bernard

Cultural & Community Events Committee: Councilmembers Pearson and Kirk

Strategic Finance Committee: Mayor Littleton and Vice Mayor Bernard

Middleburg Sustainability Committee: Councilmember Leonard-Morgan

Middleburg Arts Council: Councilmember Curran

Streetscape Committee: Councilmember Pearson

Mayor Littleton reminded Council that once they identified their strategic priorities for the coming year, each member of Council would serve as the lead for one of the priorities.

Staff Reports

December 2023

Town Clerk North reminded Council that the Volunteer Appreciation Reception was normally held in October; however, it was not held due to the move into the new Town Hall. She advised that she would begin to plan that event. Ms. North further reminded Council of their strategic initiative to develop a citizens academy, which was put on hold due to the COVID pandemic and the construction of the new Town Hall. She advised that now that the staff had moved, she would begin work again on that and hoped to present a recommendation during the next Council meeting.

Business Development & Community Partnerships Director MacIntyre reported that the Cultural & Community Events Committee recommended the 2024 Farmers' Market be held in the Town Green and North Parking Lot. She noted the need to get the word out about the new location for the upcoming season and advised that there had been some concern expressed about it being moved again.

Councilmember Pearson opined that it would be helpful if the Town's eNewsletter was sent out on a weekly basis. She suggested a calendar be included, so it could serve as a reminder of upcoming events.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted that the Middleburg Sustainability Committee would be involved in the upcoming Wellness Day event. He further noted that in the past, there was an issue with getting the word out about the event early enough in order to get enough people to attend. Mr. Leonard-Morgan suggested the information about Wellness Day be included in the eNewsletter as soon as possible.

Business Development & Community Partnerships Director MacIntyre reported that the eNewsletter went out earlier in the week. She advised that information on the Wellness Day was already on Facebook and the Town's website. Ms. MacIntyre reported that she had already received applications due to the posts.

Council suggested there needed to be another form of communication, as many people did not look at Facebook or did not look at it often. They further suggested the Facebook feeds be boosted so they would appear on the top of people's feeds.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Police Chief Jones reported that he had spoken with his officers and local law enforcement leaders throughout the region to determine why the Town was having trouble recruiting officers. He noted that he also discussed some of the issues that Purcellville and Leesburg were having with their Chiefs. Chief Jones advised that he discussed the information he received with Town Manager Davis and noted that they were working on a strategic plan for recruitment, which they would present to the Council during its next meeting.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Chief Jones confirmed an explorer scout was in Middleburg for a police ride along and opined that it was a very positive experience.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Chief Jones confirmed he was working with the Commander of American Legion Post 295 to develop a cadet program or an explorer program for youth ages 14-18 or 14-21 respectively.

Councilmember Kirk noted that, in her role as the Personnel Committee representative, she met with the Town Manager to discuss how the Town could get more people to apply for the Town's vacant positions. She advised that she looked forward to implementing some of the ideas that were discussed.

In response to inquiries from the Council, Chief Jones reported that he was short one full-time officer due to promotions from within and one part-time officer. He noted that his focus was on filling the full-time position. Chief Jones advised that he was making sure his officers got time off if they requested it. He noted that Officer Nugent, one of the part-time officers, was assisting in that regard. Chief Jones advised that he also filled in as needed to assure the officers got the appropriate time off.

Town Manager Davis noted that Chief Jones was putting in a lot of extra time. He further noted that because he was down an officer, he had not been able to move the Lieutenant into a daytime shift; therefore, he continued to do patrol work. Mr. Davis confirmed the Town had 24/7 police coverage; however, there was no opportunity for the Lieutenant to develop and take things off the Chief's plate. He noted that one of the goals was to fill that position so the shifts could be reset. Mr. Davis acknowledged the Chief's efforts to address this issue.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Chief Jones noted that he was beginning to work on community outreach and giving back to the community. He advised that Special Olympics was a program that was very dear to him, in particular their Polar Plunge Program. Chief Jones reported that Vice Mayor Bernard was putting together a team to do a polar plunge in a lake in Prince William County on February 17th.

Councilmember Bernard advised that a satellite polar plunge was done in Prince William County, which included a big festival. He encouraged people to check it out and advised that they would be putting out information to raise awareness and solicit donations.

Chief Jones commended the Police Department staff, including Police Specialist Bryan and Corporal Davis, who assisted a resident who had a medical emergency recently.

Deputy Town Manager Moore reported that the Planning Commission would be reviewing the first applications related to short-term rentals in the Residences at Salamander subdivision. He further reported that two applications had been received and that he anticipated receiving a third one. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he explained that these were special use permit applications that were subject to a public hearing and recommendation from the Planning Commission and a public hearing and action by the Council.

Town Attorney Crim opined that Senate Bill 36 was a good first step toward undoing some of the damage the Virginia Supreme Court did to create uncertainty in the law related to the Freedom of Information Act. He opined that legislative clarity was needed. In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Attorney Crim opined that the bill that was submitted to return town elections to May did not have a chance of passing.

Town Treasurer Staples reported that for the first half of FY '24, the General Fund revenues were \$1,464,473, and the expenditures were \$2,175,130. She further reported that for this same period, the Utilities Fund revenues were \$752,753, and the expenditures were \$688,908. Ms. Staples advised that the meals tax revenues for November were \$109,489. She noted that the occupancy taxes were not due until next week. In response to an inquiry from the Council, Ms. Staples advised that the Town was seeing a softening of the meals tax revenues, as well as the occupancy tax revenues. She noted that the revenues were still at or above the budget and projected revenues. Ms. Staples suggested this was something she needed to keep an eye on.

Mayor Littleton asked that the Town Treasurer take the meals and lodging tax revenues for the calendar years 2021 and 2022 and compare them to the revenues in 2023, adjusting the numbers for inflation.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Water Levels in Town Wells

Town Manager Davis noted that Jilann Brunett had been a great advisor to the Town, offering her insight and experience. He reminded Council that the Town received its groundwater from wells. Mr. Davis noted that the town had experienced a fairly significant drought over the summer and fall; however, despite this, it had not experienced any drying of the wells or risk of them drying up as far as the staff knew. He noted that a number of things could impact well levels. Mr. Davis advised that the Town had point-in-time data for the levels of its wells over the past two months and acknowledged that it did not have good historical information. He advised that based on the encouragement of Ms. Brunett and the Utilities Committee, the Town was focusing on how to get long-term data so it could be tracked over multi-year cycles. Mr. Davis reported that the Town issued a request for proposals to do video inspections of the Town's wells to determine their condition and to install data loggers in them so information could be gathered on the water levels. He noted that this information would help determine how quickly a well recharged when the Town pumped water from it and whether the use of one well affected another. Mr. Davis reported that he would bring an award of a contract to the Council and advised that it would either be fully funded or mostly funded by a grant from the Virginia Department of Health.

Jilann Brunett reported that the Town was only using 50-60% of its authorized capacity; however, due to the drought, it had less water. She noted the need for long-term data. Ms. Brunett expressed appreciation for the work of the Utility Committee and Town Manager Davis and opined that getting information would be a huge step for the Town.

In response to an inquiry from the Committee, Town Manager Davis advised that while it had not yet been calculated, he anticipated 4,000-5,000 gallons of water was lost due to a recent water main break; however, he noted that it was possible the main had been leaking for a longer period of time but was simply not visible. He explained that for this reason, the Town wanted to invest in replacing as many of the older pipes in the Ridgeview area as possible.

Town Hall Project Report

Town Clerk North reported that the contractor continued to work on the punch and deficiencies list items associated with Phase I of the project. She further reported that Phase II was going well and noted that the grading work was completed, the base asphalt was down for the east drive aisle connection to Marshall Street, the sidewalk extension to Marshall Street was underway and the extension of the east arcade was underway. Ms. North reported that she was drafting a letter for inclusion in the time capsule that would be placed in the Marshall Street Park and advised that she would present it to the Council for their review during their next meeting, along with a list of items to include in the time capsule. She noted that the desire was to get the time capsule in the ground before the sod was laid. In response to inquiries from the Council, Ms. North advised that the staff was working with Quail Run Signs on some signage issues, including the need for a lighting system for the entrance signs. She further advised that the staff secured a sample drawer for the Council dais, which would be installed to see if it worked.

Consent Agenda

A. Council Approval – December 14, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmember Jacobs

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

Action Items

Council Approval – Resolution Adopting Policies Pertaining to Town Grants & Purchase of Sponsorships

Town Clerk North reviewed the history of this item. She reported that based on the Council’s last discussion, the sub-committee recommended revisions to the draft charitable donations policy to reference the one-time donation of \$300,000 to the Middleburg Charitable Foundation, which the Council expected would put the foundation in a strong financial position in perpetuity. Ms. North advised that the revisions would, however, leave the door open for future donations in the event of a special circumstance or unforeseen event. She reported that revisions were also proposed to the draft Special Events Grant and Infrastructure Grants policies to make it clear that a special circumstance would allow for the deviation from the policy.

Councilmember Kirk advised that as a member of the Middleburg Charitable Foundation, she did not intend to allow them to return to the Town to ask for more money. She noted that the Board consisted of individuals who had experience in seeking grants and fundraising.

Council agreed that the Foundation was in a position where it should be self-sustaining. It was noted that the goal was for the Foundation to fundraise and to grow the money that had been given to it by the Town.

Mayor Littleton expressed concern that the language in the draft special events sponsorship policy would require the Town to provide sponsorships in the amount of \$15,000 and \$10,000 respectively for the Middleburg Film Festival and Christmas in Middleburg in perpetuity.

Town Manager Davis reminded Council that this was memorialized in the policy that was adopted in 2018 because those dollar amounts were greater than the policy otherwise allowed. He further reminded them that this was not intended to simply be seed money, but rather was sponsorships at a higher amount because of the different level of those events.

Town Clerk North reminded Council that each of the policies specifically stated that any donation or sponsorship was subject to the availability of funding and the appropriation of money in the budget. She advised that there was no guarantee that organizations would get a certain amount of money.

Council expressed concern that the language was conflating. They also discussed the desire that these events become self-sustaining. After further discussion, the Council agreed to delay consideration of the draft policies in order to allow the sub-committee time to consider amendments to the special events sponsorship policy based on their discussions during this meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEMS (continued)

2024 Council Strategic Planning Retreat

Town Manager Davis reminded Council of their desire to establish their goals for a two-year period once a new Council took office, as well as to do some team building. He noted the importance of having such conversations when a new member joined the Council. Mr. Davis further noted the importance of talking about the roles and responsibilities of Council and the staff. He reiterated the need for the Council to discuss their top goals and priorities that they wanted to focus on for the next two years. Mr. Davis recommended the Council consider holding a day and a half long strategic planning session, with a facilitator. He noted that the staff would be listeners and would participate when appropriate. Mr. Davis questioned whether the Council wished to do this and, if so, whether they preferred to go offsite. He suggested the goal be to try to do this in February.

After some discussion, the Council agreed it would like to hold their retreat off-site and suggested it be held in Culpeper. They asked the staff to coordinate the selection of a date for the retreat. They also agreed with the need to hire a facilitator to lead the discussions.

Councilmember Kirk expressed concern that the Executive Director of the Windy Hill Foundation saw the list of potential initiatives and did not appear to understand that it was only notional. She agreed with the need to discuss Windy Hill and other things; however, she expressed concern about listing specific items.

Mayor Littleton suggested that from a topic perspective, the Council look at the current priorities to determine whether they were still a priority. He further suggested that each member identify their individual top five priorities so the entire Council could review them, find commonalities that may exist and identify its top ten strategic priorities for the next two years.

Town Manager Davis noted that the facilitator would help the members identify their individual goals for discussion during the strategic planning retreat. He further noted that the items listed in the memorandum were not intended to be issues for debate, but rather were simply a list of items that have been raised over the past year in an effort to help the members think about their potential goals.

2024 General Assembly Legislative Update

Town Attorney Crim reported that 1,300 plus bills have been submitted in the House. He recommended the Town support Senate Bill 36. In response to a previous comment, Mr. Crim reported that Delegate Green, of Williamsburg, sponsored a bill to move town elections back to May. He reminded Council that a third of the General Assembly

members were new to their positions and advised that there was a lack of experience as a result of the redistricting and retirements. Mr. Crim advised that he would continue to work closely with the Virginia Municipal League (VML) to track items of importance to the Town.

Town Manager Davis reported that there were two bills that the staff was suggesting the Town support – the first would clarify a definition in FOIA and the second was related to speed cameras. He reminded Council that speed cameras were currently only allowed in school or construction zones and advised that this bill would permit them anywhere a governing body determined they were necessary. Mr. Davis noted that they would provide an additional level of potential enforcement, as well as be visible to the public and reinforce the necessity of driving at the appropriate speed. He acknowledged the potential implications and concerns associated with speed cameras and advised that he would like the Council's input on whether they would like to take a formal position on the bill.

The Council held considerable discussion on whether it should take a position on the speed camera legislation. They agreed to continue to keep an eye on it and if the VML issued a call-to-action, the staff could then return to them to determine if they wished to take a position.

Town Manager Davis noted that there were many other bills that would be forthcoming and advised that there would be other opportunities for the staff to identify other potential issues that were of importance to the Town. He suggested that if the speed camera legislation came back up, it could be discussed at that time.

Mayor Littleton reported that a bill was introduced that would clarify the bill passed last year, which gave local authorities whose populations were under 3,500 and that did not control their roads, the ability to reduce the speed limits in their town by five miles an hour. He reminded Council that when the Town reached out to VDOT to say it planned to reduce the speed limit on Route 50, VDOT said it did not have the authority to do so; however, they agreed to work with the Town. Mr. Littleton reported that VDOT conducted a speed study, which showed there to be multiple points along Route 50 in town in which motorists drove at excessive speeds. He reported that VDOT offered several recommendations for addressing the concerns, including creating choke points to make motorists slow down, eliminating some on-street parking on Route 50, or moving the buildings on Route 50 closer to the street. In response to an inquiry from the Council about moving the buildings closer to the road, Mr. Littleton explained that they suggested this be done when buildings were rebuilt; however, he noted that in Middleburg, these buildings were two hundred years old. He advised that unless there was an objection from the Council, he planned to respond to VDOT and say that if those were their recommendations and if lowering the speed limit was not one of them, the Town was interested in seeing how much money VDOT would commit to implementing their recommendations. Mr. Littleton suggested the Council support the bill that would make it clear that every municipal government had the unfettered authority to reduce the speed limit by five miles per hour in their jurisdiction if they wanted.

Council asked that VDOT's recommendation be forwarded to them.

In response to an inquiry from the Council as to why VDOT pushed back on reducing the speed limit on Route 50, Mayor Littleton advised that they said it would impact the livability of the community. He opined that not getting killed when you got hit by a car was an issue of livability. Mr. Littleton advised that reducing the speed limit would only increase the amount of time it took to get through town by sixteen seconds. He opined that it would be cheaper than any of VDOT's suggestions.

Closed Session

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council go into closed session as authorized under Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, for (1) consultation with legal counsel retained 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 appointments to the BZA; and (3) for the performance review of the Town Manager, the last two items of which are allowed under Subsection (A)(1). Councilmember Leonard-Morgan further moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that the Council thereafter reconvene in open session for action as appropriate.

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

Mayor Littleton asked 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 (1) specifically identified in the motion to convene in closed session and (2) lawfully permitted to be discussed in a closed session under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act as cited in the motion, 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.

Council Appointments – Board of Zoning Appeals

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Pearson, that Council recommend to the Judges of the Loudoun County Circuit Court the re-appointment of Trowbridge Littleton and Dev Roszel to the Board of Zoning Appeals, said terms to expire December 31, 2028.

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

There being no further business, Mayor Littleton declared the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

APPROVED:

Trowbridge M. Littleton, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk

January 11, 2024 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. We will call the meeting to order. First item is Pledge of Allegiance.

All: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Bridge Littleton: All right. Next item is roll call.

Chris Bernard: Chris Bernard.

Darlene Kirk: Darlene Kirk.

Bridge Littleton: Bridge Littleton.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Peter Leonard-Morgan.

Cindy Pearson: Cindy Pearson.

John Kevin Daly: John Kevin Daly.

Pam Curran: Pam Curran.

Rhonda North: Rhonda North, Town Clerk.

Danny Davis: Danny Davis, Town Manager.

Martin Crim: Martin Crim, Town Attorney.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. First item. Excuse me. Tonight is a resolution of appreciation for Estee LaClare. As many of you probably know. Estee left us for darker, deeper, toxic filled, pastures known as Loudoun County. [laughter] But, no, we're going to miss Estee deeply. And all that she's done for the town of Middleburg. Not only, just being a wonderful, bright, soul in the office, but also instituting a lot of new programs to ensure that people kept up with code and maintained the things they're supposed to maintain in the way they're supposed to maintain them in a very thoughtful, respectful, and courteous manner, only hitting them, when it was absolutely necessary. But also running a lot of special projects. And Estee, you were just absolutely wonderful and fun. And you made the workplace a much better place to be. And I know I can speak for everybody that we will miss you deeply. So we have a resolution of appreciation for Estee. So first thing I would like to do is read that. All right. [inaudible] What's that?

Estee LaClare: Yeah, I know I did that at HDRC. [laughter]

Bridge Littleton: So now we're not going to do like Bill Turnure did when he retired and gave him a six pack of beer. [laughter] You know, because all we did was save him a trip to Safeway. Right. So first. Okay. Here we go. Resolution of appreciation for Estee LaClare serving as Planning and Project Associate. Whereas Estee LaClare was hired as the Planning and Project Associate for the Town of Middleburg effective June 24th, 2019. And Whereas during her tenure, Miss LaClare provided staff support to the HDRC, including overseeing the HDRC Guideline Update Project, the Annual HDRC Historic Preservation Awards, and the Annual Joint Architectural Review Board Awards, served as the

primary staff contact assisting residents with the disposal of the trash and recycling, instituted and regularly conducted town inspection programs for properties and sidewalks, researched the history of the town office and property upon which the new Town Hall is located as a part of the federal grant the town received for the project. Oversaw public engagement on the Stonewall Avenue Lincoln Road Septic Conversion Project, which was designed to help protect the town's source water from contamination due to faulty failing septic systems, and rarely accepted other special project assignments, always with a laser focus on success and completion. And whereas, Miss LaClare frequently volunteered to assist other members of the town staff on everything from managing the customer service counter to assisting with the decorations for the volunteer appreciation reception. And whereas, Miss LaClare left the town's employ effective January 3rd, 2024, to accept a position with the County of Loudoun. And Whereas, Ms. LaClare demonstrated extraordinary professional and personal dedication to the Town of Middleburg during her tenure and will be greatly missed by the residents, committee members, staff and Council. And Whereas the Town Council, the Middleburg Town Council deems it appropriate to express its earnest and heartfelt gratitude to Miss LaClare for her exceptional service to the town over the past four and a half years. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Mayor and Members of the Town Council hereby recognize and express our sincere appreciation to Estee LaClare for her exemplary service to the Town of Middleburg from June 24th, 2019 to January 3rd, 2024, as Middleburg Planning and Project Associate and express our profound thanks to her and hope for her continued success in life.

Estee LaClare: Thank [00:05:00] you very much. It truly has been an honor and a pleasure to work with all of you, and a little piece of my heart will always remain here in Middleburg. So please call me if you ever need anything, because we all truly became like family and friends. So it's been an honor and I wish you nothing but the best. And I was just telling Cindy, we've got to get some properties from Middleburg on the Heritage Register with the county that they just implemented. So that's some exciting things that we can hopefully work together with and pursue. So thank you all. It means a great deal.

Estee LaClare: Estee, thank you. Chris, did you tell Estee about your findings earlier today?

Estee LaClare: Oh.

Chris Bernard: Well, no, actually.

Bridge Littleton: I mean, you're not gone a week and guess what happened. [laughter] Your face.

Estee LaClare: Oh. The one we knew about. Okay.

Will Moore: Estee had already discovered.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, she had discovered that. Oh, okay. Okay. I guess Chris saw it today. Okay. Oh, I got it. Okay.

Estee LaClare: Actually, I put the file there.

Bridge Littleton: So, would anybody like to make a motion? Kevin.

John Kevin Daly: I move that Council adopt a resolution expressing its appreciation to Estee LaClare for her service as the Planning and Project Associate for the Town of Middleburg from June 24th, 2019 through January 3rd, 2024.

Darlene Kirk: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Any discussion. Kevin.

John Kevin Daly: You're not just a staff member, you're a friend. You are family. And this we said in the service, you're a crew member and we're going to miss you a lot. So try to come out and visit us periodically.

Estee LaClare: It's definitely going to happen because like I said [multiple speakers] always be here. So thank you.

John Kevin Daly: We'll even make a parking place for you at the Christmas in Middleburg Parade. [laughter]

Estee LaClare: Very good. I would love that.

Bridge Littleton: Cindy.

Cindy Pearson: Estee also helped on streetscape and the thing that I appreciate because I am not a tree person, a tree is a tree. A bush is a bush to me. And she helped with the tree list of the different trees and when they need service or care. So there's a lot that she did for the streetscape too.

Estee LaClare: Thank you very much.

Bridge Littleton: Darlene.

Darlene Kirk: I was just going to say that your smile lights up a room. I mean, when we come in and you see that, it just kind of brightens the day, no matter what, we're coming to complain about it really. It really does. Thank you for that.

Estee LaClare: Thank you very much.

Bridge Littleton: And the last comment I'll make and then we'll vote is, you know Estee did say earlier that any time the town of Middleburg has a request of Loudoun, she'll ensure it's approved. [laughter] So yeah.

Estee LaClare: I'm not that powerful.

Bridge Littleton: I appreciate that guarantee. [laughter] Okay. Yeah. Right. Exactly. Okay. All those in favor say aye.

All of Council: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed? Abstentions? Okay. Estee, thank you so much.

Estee LaClare: Thank you very much.

Bridge Littleton: All right, now we have, you know, you've never seen one of these.

John Kevin Daly: It's a humidior.

Bridge Littleton: Exactly, it's a humidior. [laughter] And we got this so. [off mic] There you go. [applause]. [off mic] Okay. Next item is, public comment. So, would any member of the community like to address the Council on any matter? If so, you may step up to the podium. You have three minutes. Remember, it is not a conversation. It is one way broadcast from you. And no restriction on anything you'd like to say. So would anybody like to address Council? Oh, wait. We had a.

Rhonda North: We do have a sign up list, Mr. Mayor. Scott Little is the first person who has signed up to speak. Okay. Megan, you got beat. [multiple speakers] [laughter]

Scott Little: No, no, no, not at all. Not at all. And I'm new, so, apologies for that. So, my name is Scott Little. Good evening, Mr. Mayor and Council Members and staff. I just wanted to take a moment and introduce myself. I was recently appointed as the New Managing Director at the Salamander here in town. And, [00:10:00] as a 35 or so year resident of Virginia, and raising our four kids, our adult kids here and my wife of 40 some years, we're just thrilled to be back in Virginia and, working with the team there. I've known Prem for about 20 or so years being in the industry. And I'm coming by way of Martha's Vineyard, where I've been for about eight years, in a very, similar town with, proclivities towards preservation and protection and, working with a company whose obligations were significant in town, very

similar to the way they are here. And so I'm delighted to be here. I look forward to taking an opportunity to meet each of you and, understand, those responsibilities and obligations even more so. And although Miss Johnson and the team have done a very good job so far, bringing me into the conversation and, yeah, I look forward to making myself available at any time. It's a way of life running these hotels. And, you can definitely count on me to answer the phone every time. So thank you, Mr. Mayor and Council. I appreciate the opportunity.

Bridge Littleton: Scott, thank you. Congratulations.

Scott Little: Thank you.

John Kevin Daly: Welcome aboard.

Scott Little: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Now I have a few comments about the pea soup.

Darlene Kirk: Oh no.

Bridge Littleton: Anybody else wish to address? Oh, wait. Who's next?

Rhonda North: Jeb Benedict.

Bridge Littleton: Who? Oh.

Jeb Benedict: Well, Jeb to my friends, technically, it's John Benedict and I live at 23349 Parsons Road. I wanted to come in and thank the town and Mayor and Town Council and the staff for the leadership last year that ensured the success of our community's efforts to keep Mickie Gordon Park rural. I thought the Council would like to know about local support for the American Legion Post 295 plan to return a youth team to the [inaudible] baseball diamond for the first time in more than 15 years. The new team would honor the legacy set by Mickie Gordon's brother Jack, both of whom were post commanders and both who coached the legion teams at what was then Mercer Park. You know, we're very excited to honor another baseball legacy too as a great grandson of a veteran and Middleburg Braves player, Asbury Lloyd will be eligible to participate in in this league with boys age 13 to 19. To that end, a small group of park supporters has pledged so far, \$88,250 toward the American Legion youth team. We anticipate delivering \$10,000 to the post by mid-February, as a good start toward the 25 or \$30,000 that may be needed to launch the program this year. This is a quiet, modest effort which aims to give the post a strong base to launch a community wide fundraising effort for the team, which would be playing during the summer months. Restoring baseball program, especially by the summer, is a big challenge. It's a lot of work and there's not much time to get it up and running for this season. But that's made all the more difficult when the post members. The community supporters have no information from County Parks Department about when and whether the diamond might be restored for baseball, even if it's a preliminary restoration or how the traditional local team can make it their own home base be anchor tenant. So again, the community would really appreciate your help. The town was key to learning about plans for the original oversize sports complex, and you made sure that community voices were heard by park staff and elected officials about a local park. So I'm hoping you can continue to serve as a key facilitator for efforts to increase public awareness of and use of the park, starting with the return of American Legion Youth Baseball, hopefully this summer. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you.

Rhonda North: Megan Gallagher.

Megan Gallagher: For the record, I'm following another speaker. Hi. Happy New Year, everyone. Megan Gallagher, 204 East Marshall Street. And like Jeb, I wanted to thank you all for everything you did last year to keep Mickie Gordon Park rural. It couldn't have happened, and it wouldn't have been such an extraordinary example of community engagement without town leadership, Mayor, Council, Town Manager, [00:15:00] all of you. Tonight, I'm here to ask

you to add Mickie Gordon Park issues to your agenda for your strategic planning retreat next month. And here's why. Jeb's good news about fundraising for a new Legion Youth Baseball team is worth celebrating. It's clear there's a whole lot of ongoing interest beyond the SPX that got pulled in greater use of the park, and in making sure the next park zoning reflects community priorities. But there is so much we need to know about the department's plans for the park and the petitions, emails to park officials, and turn out at community meetings are not the tools we need. They worked for pushing back against the park plan. They're not going to help people plan simple things like, how do we get the team back on the diamond? When is the new tennis court going to open? Is it possible for parks to improve the experience there with maybe benches and porta potties long before an SPPX is approved? And what's going to be in the SPPX? So tonight, as you set the agenda for the town's strategic planning retreat, I hope you'll consider adding Mickie Gordon Park as a focus under your action plan and initiatives and top ten goals for 2024-25 that you see in Danny's Memo and in the ones you approved for the past two years. Could you consider something like goal? Create a communications model for Mickie Gordon Park that links the community stakeholders, the Town of Middleburg and Loudoun County PRCS. I even think it might qualify for up to three things under your strategic plans and objectives that are consistent over the years, promote community well-being, protect our quality of life, and lead responsibly. The Town of Middleburg can link the community and the Parks Community Department by creating a new system for communicating with each other the town could save time for all parties, reassure stakeholders and hopefully make parks planning more efficient, less costly and less aggravating. It might even serve as a model for other towns in their relationships with PRCS. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you. Anybody else?

Rhonda North: And I have one more speaker. Eloise Repesky.

Eloise Repesky: Here goes nothing. Am I supposed to wait for the. Okay. So happy New Year, everyone. I'm Eloise Repesky 6 Meadowbrook Court, Middleburg, Virginia, here. I'm very excited to see that you have Windy Hill listed on your strategic planning agenda for the next month, and I'm very excited to learn more about how you plan to enhance connections and relationships with the residents that live here in town. Seeing this item listed, I also wanted to provide you some brief comments. Windy Hill residents represent 16% of the town's population, and since joining the foundation as Executive director, I have heard that they feel very separated from the town and from the local community. Town events and even those not managed by the town, but that are perceived to be are cost prohibitive for residents to attend. Some spaces also do not feel welcoming to our residents, even those that have lived here their entire lives. I'm also interested in learning more about how the town plans to engage with our residents and the Windy Hill community, and what metrics or priorities will be taken into consideration. Over the past 14 months in serving in my role, I've focused on providing community events that are properties, potlucks, cookouts, etc. spaces where they feel safe and comfortable. They have always been well attended by our residents and have done a lot for Windy Hill community for building, engagement and things like that. In order for the town strategic priority to be successful, I encourage you to work with our Windy Hill Foundation team and to engage with our staff and our residents for their input in this conversation and what community spaces and activities feel like for them. I think an information session with residents would allow us all to learn more about building a strong, sustainable environment for all of Middleburg and would prevent it from being top down. So thank you for all that you do and I'm looking forward to connecting.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you. Anybody else? Okay.

Gary Nickelson: I think I found a loophole in your three minutes here, but I have to coordinate with a few other people to speak on behalf of the Legion. So I've got a nine minutes almost this time, so that's pretty good. My [00:20:00] name is Gary Nickelson, the Commander of American Legion post 295, 111 The Plains Road. Yesterday evening we were having our first meeting of 2024, and we had a recap about kind of our year's accomplishments. And I was kind of humbled by some of the things we're able to accomplish. I mean, last year we had 40 vets helping vets that we were able to help fund so Vets Helping Vets program. That's any veteran within Loudoun County, no questions asked, we give them financial assistance or education assistance or transportation assistance for any issue that they're having. So us that, our organization and 17 other organizations within Loudoun County who are part of that, we help that out. That's led by Tom Grant. In addition, we had multiple youth initiatives that happened. We had our Boys and Girls state program. We sent 17 kids from the local Loudoun County High Schools to this program and took an addition, for the first time in many years, our girls state program, we had ten girls participating in that. And actually this last December, the first time that

I've been a part of was our oratorical contest. And so we had, our winner, Helena Hosseini from Freedom High School, Sophomore out of there who is now moving on to the district competition. So let's see, a speaking contest where they speak on any issue regarding the Constitution. And she has an opportunity to go on to nationals and win \$25,000 scholarships. So very honored to bring these programs to our youth. And as Jeb and Megan both mentioned, you know, there's two programs that I'm still working on for the American Legion. One is our Youth Cadet Law Enforcement program. And I'm going to be working with Chief here in the coming future and then American Legion Baseball. So, I was really humbled the other day when Jeb reached out and said he's already got the fundraising effort going on. I mean, \$8,000 is an incredible amount. I don't even know how to start with that one, but I do promise you that I will do whatever I can take to take that and make sure it goes to the use properly and to bring youth programs back to Middleburg. So I didn't think that last year could get any better than it did. But just last Wednesday, where I started off the year with two special guests, General Petraeus and his Deputy Commander for the CIA, Michael Morell. So I think that just goes to show the power of partnerships and collaborations that we've built upon Middleburg [inaudible] Virginia, Piedmont heritage, The Town of Middleburg. So I continue to work on that and let's see what 2024 brings. Thank you so much.

Bridge Littleton: Thanks, Gary. Does anybody else wish to address Town Council? Going once, going twice. Okay. We will close the public comment. I'm going to note for the record, Gary, I don't think it's possible that you don't know what to do with \$8,000. [laughter] So, I think, you know, two things I will say real quickly on what you guys have done in the last year. You guys did a great job. I mean, the legion hosted a lot of great events. You guys did a lot for the community. You guys put your heart and soul into it. Really appreciate it. And, you know, you've made a huge difference. So really, really, you know, I think we're all really proud of everything that's going on there, but mostly of you and Annie and your guys leadership. So thanks a lot. And then to Megan and to Jeb, I think more so to the whole broader community. How everybody came together last year around Mickie Gordon was really, really inspiring. I remember when we had that first sort of meeting that that, Parks and Recs put together I had called, Steve Torpy the day before and just said, hey, you know, just I don't like people getting surprised. So, you know, I think there's going to be a lot of folks there. So but it's a big room and there should be plenty, plenty. And, you know, we'll make sure everything's civilized and all that kind of stuff. He said, oh, no, no, no, I've done many, many things like this over my career. You know, we do a lot of public outreach meetings and, and so, you know, we're prepared. And I said, okay, well, I just I think you should be really prepared. He was like, oh no, there'll probably be 30, 40 people there. Most [inaudible] is, 50. And literally there was about 250 to 300 people in the room. I mean, and I think that set an entirely different tone for them when they realized, my God, this little small community really is connected together in a special way. So and if it weren't for you guys and everybody else who, you know, brought everything together, I don't think we would be where we are right now. I will say, and I think [00:25:00] I forwarded it to one of you all. I did reach out to Steve Torpy, right after the first of the year and just said, hey, you know, catching up first of the year. What's the plans? Where's everything? Just sort of a heads up. And his email back was, you know, they're nearing completion of updating the tennis courts. They've taken all the input from folks. They've got a designer helping translate all those lists of desires, hopes, dreams, aspirations into what does that look like at the park, both in terms of what people wanted and didn't want. His view was it was going to take probably another 2 to 2 and a half months to bring all that together, bring all that together, review it with their team, and then at that point, they would reach out to us and come back to say, hey, here's our first cut. What do you think? So my feeling is we'll probably see that from them March, April. But I think what I will do tomorrow is reach out to him and say, hey, that's great, it's government. It takes time, let's get it right. But can you put the field back into usable condition by the 1st of May? Put the bases back, put the lines back, mow it. You know, we're not asking for bleachers and all that stuff, but make it a usable diamond again. I don't think it's a big ask. I don't think it would take more than a couple of weeks, but I'll see what he says. And then, What's that? Windy Hill? Yes, Eloise thanks for that. Really appreciate it. I would recommend. It's a great point. We should probably get together with you before we have the off-site and just, you know, get from you, you know, the big things people are looking at, you know, where are our gaps? What are resources that are needed? What are, you know, things that are people are looking for from the town? Doesn't mean we can or can't do it but you want to start with requirements. So, you know, we'll definitely get with you and, you know, spend a couple hours and walk through that before we have the retreat. So I really appreciate you highlighting that.

Eloise Repesky: Should I reach out to Danny?

Bridge Littleton: Absolutely.

Darlene Kirk: Bridge? [off mic].

Bridge Littleton: Sure.

Darlene Kirk: You talked about having these, you know, you have group sessions with, I guess, food and that sort of thing. Let us know, because, I mean, I could walk over it's one block from my house, so I would like to come and I'm sure other Council Members would like to come down. Okay. [off mic] All right. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Unless anybody has any other feedback from the public. Yeah. Pam.

Pam Curran: You know I think unless you had reached out to Steve, he wouldn't have reported back to us. So I think, I agree with Megan. If we could set up some kind of a formal once a month, once every six months, whatever you decide that they report back to us because they promised to come back to us. And I think without you being proactive, we wouldn't know. So I do agree with some kind of a formal process where they're held accountable for what they'll do at Mickie Gordon, so we don't have to go back to 350 people. But I don't think you would have heard, I don't know, unless you had reached out.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. I mean, it's, you know, it's a bit. I mean, Danny, how many people work for Parks and Rec? It's a couple hundred.

Danny Davis: About 700.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. I mean, it's a big organization. We're one of dozens and dozens of projects. What I, and I was actually thinking about this. Do we want to do it directly or do we want to do it through our New Supervisor, Laura, since Steve actually has to report to Laura, and I don't know if that's right or wrong, you know, but I think we should talk to Laura's office. And because I don't want to step on her toes either. Because technically, it's the county, he's the county, she's the county. But it's a good point, right? We should have a feedback loop that on a regular basis, we're touching base. And even if the touch base is no update, then that's fine, right. But we make it a conscious, repetition, so. No, that's a great point. Okay. Next item we're going to go to is organizational meeting of Council. A couple quick notes. I have everybody's. Yeah. Now the fun work begins. Yeah. Yeah. [laughter] Look at Eloise. So I have everybody's committee assignments. I know everyone is so excited, Danny and I. [off mic] What's that? Oh, I just I used AI. It was pretty easy. Yeah. [laughter] They recommended 17 new committees, and Kathyjo got three of them. Yeah. [laughter] Anyway, no. So. But, no, I appreciate everybody's feedback. We'll go through these in a second. I know we've got to do, the election for Vice Mayor and all that stuff. So, at a. I know Bud's not here. Oh, for those of you who don't know, Bud has a new granddaughter. [off mic] Yep. Yeah. So I think that's three. [off mic] So. Yeah. Exactly. So okay, from a process perspective, we will do the election of Vice Mayor first, and then we'll go through the committee assignments. I know I emailed everybody about committee assignments and asked you guys to let me know what your preferences were. I have, I know I've talked to some of you about this. It was kind of funny. I asked folks, what would you like in terms of a committee assignment? And what I got back from, everybody was, I think so-and-so should be on this. [laughter] I think so-and-so should be on that. It wasn't a, I would like this, but no, I, so we're good to go. [off mic] What's that? [off mic]. You know, it was surprising how many things Pam was volunteered for.

Chris Bernard: She's so talented.

Bridge Littleton: Well, this is true, as my father would say Volun-told. [off mic] What's that?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Sure. Yeah. No. Yeah, that was it. So we'll start the.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: What I wanted to say was, first of all, fellow Council Members. Mr. Mayor, it's been an absolute pleasure and a privilege and an honor to be Vice Mayor of Middleburg for the last two years. And I it gives me

great enthusiasm and pleasure to nominate a fellow Council Member, Chris Bernard, to be, Vice Mayor from here on, I feel he has all the qualities of integrity and public service attitude that we love in Middleburg.

John Kevin Daly: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Well, that was quick.

Darlene Kirk: That wasn't [multiple speakers].

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Okay. So. All right. Oh, sorry. No, no, no, it's fine, it's fine. Martin, I know we only do this once every two years, so I'm going to look to you to make sure that we hold true to the process the right way. I remember last time.

Martin Crim: I'd ask for any other nominations.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, exactly. Well no, I know that, I know that, but I mean, I just I know voting is weird, so just make sure we do it right.

Martin Crim: Right.

Bridge Littleton: Are there any other nominations for Vice Mayor?

Darlene Kirk: Yes. I would like to put my name back in the hat. Okay. As you all know, I was I've been on Council for 23 years, and I was Vice Mayor for 14 years. And two years ago I stepped down because I was having some medical issues, and I knew that I wouldn't be able to spend the proper amount of time doing work for the town or helping the town, but I didn't intend to go away completely. And I've done a lot of things for the town that I think a lot of people here don't even know. I mean, I've helped hire people. I've fired people. I've promoted people. I've told people that they couldn't change jobs. And I know that the Vice Mayor's role has changed a lot, and we have Danny to do a lot of that. But at some point we're going to come back to needing a tough guy again. And I also wanted to say that I think it would be good to have a woman in that position, and I think it would be good to have someone from the West End of town, because truthfully, the Council for a long time has sort of been everybody's from that, the east end of town, not the west end of town. I just think that would be a little bit better. Anyway, so that's why I'm throwing my name in the hat.

Bridge Littleton: [off mic].

Bridge Littleton: So, Darlene.

Darlene Kirk: Yes, that's my name.

Bridge Littleton: Has put her name in for nomination. Is there a second?

Pam Curran: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Okay, so, Martin, is there anybody else who'd like to put their name in for, or are there any other nominations for Vice Mayor? That's the right way to say it. Okay. Oh, hell. I nominate my father. [laughter] No. I'm kidding. All right.

John Kevin Daly: [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, I think so. So, Martin. [off mic] No, I'm kidding. Okay. So Martin, if I have this right and correct me in the process. We vote in order of nominations.

Martin Crim: That's right.

Bridge Littleton: And then whichever and we keep going until there's a majority.

Martin Crim: The first person who gets a majority, that's when the voting stops.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. All right. So.

Martin Crim: And a majority is more than half of the people present and voting.

Bridge Littleton: Right. So I don't count.

Martin Crim: Correct.

Bridge Littleton: So we have six. So that would be four.

Martin Crim: If nobody abstains then that would [multiple speakers].

Bridge Littleton: Right. Yes I get you. I get it. Well. All right. Quick question. Can anyone abstain?

Martin Crim: Yes. You can always abstain.

Bridge Littleton: That just means it doesn't count for quorum.

Martin Crim: Doesn't count for the total.

Bridge Littleton: Or for the total. Okay. [multiple speakers]

Martin Crim: The total. Right.

Bridge Littleton: Got it, got it.

Martin Crim: The denominator.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. All right. I think I know what we're doing. Is this a roll call vote?

Martin Crim: Probably would be cleaner if you did that.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Kevin had a question. Go ahead. And then [inaudible] had a question.

John Kevin Daly: Well here's [00:35:00] the question. Geez, it's going to be awfully tough. We just heard all your background and that you want the position. Could we hear something from Chris?

Bridge Littleton: I'm sorry.

John Kevin Daly: Tell us his background and whether or not he wants to proceed.

Bridge Littleton: Absolutely, yeah, you know what? That's a good point. So now we have both nominations. Darlene, you've given your floor input.

Darlene Kirk: Thoughts.

Bridge Littleton: There you go. Chris, if you'd like to say anything?

Chris Bernard: Peter, thank you for the nomination I mean, it's nice just to be nominated, so. Thank you. I think, you know, I've had a chance to sit up here for not nearly as long as Darlene. But I've learned quite a bit. And I feel like, as Darlene mentioned, the role of the Vice Mayor has shifted a little bit from back in the day, and I think, you know, if the main role is to support, you know, the Mayor and the Council and to be the voice in the room if they're away, and to run the meetings and, you know, be a face with the town in the Mayor's absence, I certainly feel up to the task, and up to the challenge. And I'm excited about taking on some more responsibilities and giving back a little more, you know, not just to the east side of the town, but the entire town. So if you guys see fit, you know, I'm up to the challenge and I'm excited about it. If not, no hard feelings.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. So. Chris was nominated first. So, Rhonda, I guess you will call the roll.

Rhonda North: Council Member Bernard.

Chris Bernard: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Daly.

John Kevin Daly: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Kirk.

Darlene Kirk: No.

Rhonda North: Council Member Leonard-Morgan.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Yes.

Rhonda North: Council Member Curran.

Pam Curran: No.

Rhonda North: Council Member Pearson.

Cindy Pearson: Yes.

Bridge Littleton: [inaudible]. Okay, all right.

Darlene Kirk: Congratulations.

Bridge Littleton: That's it. Okay. Okay. I only do that once every two years. Okay. Well, Chris, Congratulations. Darlene, thanks for all you do and all you continue to do.

Darlene Kirk: Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: You're the best.

Bridge Littleton: All right. Next item is appointment.

John Kevin Daly: Bridge.

Bridge Littleton: Yes. Yeah. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

John Kevin Daly: This really was a tough decision to make, Darlene, we love you. I'm not going to say the same thing for the other guy. I like him. [laughter] But it does make it kind of tough. And, you know, in talking prior to coming in, the thought was because there's so much dynamics and change going on, nothing against your marvelous, tremendous background. I think, and probably because I'm also talking at I'm hitting the ripe old age of becoming a septuagenarian. And yeah, so I want yeah, it sounds bad. I think we do need some young thoughts, relatively, you know, and with experience. And I think this is a good time to make that transition.

Chris Bernard: Well I trust you guys to keep me in line.

Darlene Kirk: Trust me I will. [laughter]

John Kevin Daly: Darlene, feel free to slap him about periodically. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Got that right. As your nickname for me says. Okay. [inaudible] Exactly. All right, next item here is appointment of Council representatives to town boards and commissions. So here is the magic list.

Darlene Kirk: Grab it and run.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah.

Chris Bernard: There's no digital.

Bridge Littleton: No no no. This is all pen and paper. All right. So for and I'll just go through each one of them and read the name even if there was a change or not a change. So personnel is Darlene. Public safety is Kevin. Utility is Peter. The foundation or support to the Middleburg foundation is Darlene and Pam. Planning Commission is Bud. HDRC is Cindy. Good God, that's small.

Darlene Kirk: Need glasses?

Bridge Littleton: No. Christmas in Middleburg. Chris, that's a new one. The task force. Don't worry about that. It's going to meet, like, once a year, and I'll do it. Yeah, I'll do it. So. Yeah. [multiple speakers] Exactly. Yeah. It's the route 50 task force thing? So, EDAC will be Chris. Cultural community events is Cindy and Darlene. Finance will continue to be myself and Chris. Sustainability. [off mic] Well, [00:40:00] you know who else would really, no never mind? Would be Peter. Middleburg Arts Council Pam. And then streetscape still would be Cindy. I think that's everything. Yep. Okay. Any questions on those? Now I know when we do the strategic offsite we're going to have strategic priorities. And I think the goal would be to do like we did last year. Depending on the priority we'll all lead one. But that's, you know, totally separate from this. And we'll do that when we get together in February. So, Okay. Next up is staff reports. So, Miss North.

Rhonda North: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As, you know, we normally do the volunteer appreciation. Oops, sorry. We normally do the volunteer appreciation reception in October. We had a little bit on our plate this past October, so we didn't get to it. But I am starting to work on the planning, for that. In addition, one of the Council's strategic initiatives for the past several years has been to implement a citizens academy. And you all had agreed to put that on the back burner until we were in the new town hall. Now that we're in that, I'm starting to look at that again. And hope to come to you at the next meeting with some recommendations, to move forward with the Citizens Academy. So that's about all I have on, on that.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Rhonda? That's great. I totally yeah, the Citizens Academy, we had come up with that, like around right before Covid. Yeah. Okay. Next up is Ali. All right.

Ali MacIntyre: Good evening. You guys have my report.

Bridge Littleton: Can you pull the mic a little closer to you?

Ali MacIntyre: Oh, sure. I know I'm so quiet naturally. [laughter] Anyways, you guys have my report. I just wanted to, highlight a couple of the items. Do I only have three minutes as well? As you guys know, we are returning, the Middleburg Farmers Market is coming back, for 2024 season. As I've mentioned in previous meetings, Kim Shelby did a wonderful job. And, Council Member Daly as well. Last season, bringing it back post Covid, I did make mention of the location of the market and just some of the, you know, just addressing some of the concerns. Prior when I started here, we had talked about having the farmers market here, in the lot and kind of using the green space as well. Per the recommendation of the Culture and Community Events Committee they are in favor of having it here at the new town hall. But there has been some conversations with various stakeholders and just, you know, the, folks in the community about moving the location again. As you know, it was at the Middleburg Community Charter School last season. And they I mean, we're so kind to have it there. There's the playground, the green space. You know, the vendors seem to love it. You know, foot traffic was an issue, but I feel that that was more from a marketing standpoint on my end, just needing to get the word out there, which we are planning for this upcoming season. And then, someone else, in our MBPA meeting this week did mention South Madison. So I did want to just make it clear that, you know, while the Culture and Community Events Committee was in favor of this location and, you know, there were just some concerns about some, you know, some of the other ones. Yeah, that's what I have right now. Any questions?

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for [inaudible]? Yeah.

Cindy Pearson: Ali on the newsletter that we get in our email. And I know that it's, you know, taken a little bit of time to come back around some. If we could kind of get it every week or so would be helpful again. But on that with the calendar, you know, like you sent us out this week, invitations for upcoming events. Yeah. Sorry.

Cindy Pearson: Yeah, whatever. But it makes you think about it. So if you could make sure those were on the newsletter that people would see them all year going, oh, I forgot to put that on my calendar. I need to plan that now. I think that would help tremendously because we do forget about them. Okay. They just kind of float in the air.

Ali MacIntyre: Okay.

Cindy Pearson: Thank you.

Ali MacIntyre: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Any other questions for Ali? Yeah.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Ali, the wellness day we had our sustainability committee meeting last night, and we were talking, [00:45:00] with Laurie Salama about the, she's involved in that as well, of course. So we gave her some support and said whatever, you know, the committee needs from us to help with that event. So we will be involved with that as well. And we also explained that we found, you know, the band at the hard way that not getting the message out early enough was a real problem. You know, getting enough people to come and making them understand what it's all about. So if that could go into the obviously up to them, but if that could go into the newsletter as soon as possible, it may be in there already, but.

Ali MacIntyre: Yeah. So the newsletter did go out today. Just because I wasn't able to be here yesterday. But the Facebook event is up online. It's up on the website now, and we've already had a couple applications just from posting it today. So yeah.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Wonderful, that's great. Thank you.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Thank you.

Cindy Pearson: And to add to Peter's comment on that with the Facebook, coverage. You know yourself. If you don't look at it, it goes by you. So there needs I don't know how somehow we need to find another way of communicating that

I mean even Visit Middleburg's post. I don't see them that often now. Sometimes I never see what's going on with them. So I don't know if it's just the feed if I'm not on Facebook enough, which is possible. A lot of people don't look at Facebook that much anymore. So there's got to be some way we can get this to our community. More I don't know how.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: If they have a little bit of budget, maybe they could boost those because suddenly they do find their way into the top of people's feeds, especially if it's local.

Ali MacIntyre: Yes. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Any other questions for Ali? Okay, Ali thank you.

Ali MacIntyre: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: All right, next up is Estee. Oh, wait. I'm sorry. I was looking at last meeting's agenda. Right? Okay. Shaun.

Shaun Jones: Good evening. You have my report before you. Is there any questions that I can answer for anyone? Yes, ma'am. [off mic]. Final draft. Final copy. Yes ma'am. No, that's the final report. Final copy. Yes, ma'am. [off mic] Yes, ma'am. Any other questions?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Just looking at page three. Things look good.

Shaun Jones: Yeah I do. Nothing to report.

Bridge Littleton: Nothing to report.

Shaun Jones: Kevin, I'm trying to keep [inaudible] brief and short. I'm sorry. Yes, sir.

John Kevin Daly: I'm going to prolong it. How's the recruiting going?

Shaun Jones: So I've been meeting with. First of all, I spoke with my officers to see why we are having some trouble with recruiting. I've also spoken with local law enforcement leaders Chiefs and Sheriffs throughout the region at the Northern Virginia Chiefs and Sheriffs meeting, yesterday. And also spoke with the Chief of Purcellville and Leesburg today. And we discussed some of those issues that they are having. I've met with Mr. Davis, and we've come up with a discussion, and we discussed the issues that we are seeing, and we're actually working on a strategic plan to present to you guys at the next Council meeting in reference to recruitment issues.

John Kevin Daly: This past month, we had an explorer scout from Florida come up to visit Middleburg and actually went on a ride along with one of our officers. How did that go?

Shaun Jones: It went very well. The gentleman sent a positive email commending officer, I'm sorry, Corporal Davis, for taking the time to show him around the town. He also sent some pictures of their outing together. It was a very positive experience, and we appreciate the fact that he took the time to even send us an email, talking about his experience here in Middleburg and with the Middleburg Police Department.

John Kevin Daly: And then I understand from hearing something a little bit earlier today that you're going to be working in coordination with the American Legion, with a Cadet program.

Shaun Jones: That's a work in progress. I need to speak with Gary a little bit further with that to see what way we can go with that, program.

John Kevin Daly: A potential recruiting platform.

Shaun Jones: You know, those, Cadet programs are for kids, usually 14 to 18 or, I'm sorry, the explorer program, if it goes that route, is from 14 to 21. So it's something that we can take a look at.

John Kevin Daly: Terrific. Thank you very much.

Shaun Jones: Thank you sir.

Darlene Kirk: I was just going to say I'm as head of personnel. I met with Danny the other day, too, to talk about what we can do to get more people applying for the jobs. And of course, now we have Estee's to fill as well.

Shaun Jones: Yes.

Darlene Kirk: So we talked about a couple things, and I like the ideas that some of the ideas that you've come up with, and I look forward to implementing them.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Thank you. Sir Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Chief, can you remind me how [00:50:00] many officers we are short? What's your.

Shaun Jones: We're allotted at six full time officers at this point. We're allotted at six full time officers from three part time officers. Right now I'm down one full time officer due to their promotions within. And then also I'm down one part time officer. I want to focus on filling our full time officer before we take a look at the part time officer first.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Great. Thank you very much.

Shaun Jones: Yes, sir.

John Kevin Daly: One final question. Are we getting any potential burnout from our officers? We've just gone through a huge season of activities, and it was almost all hands on deck for some of them.

Shaun Jones: We are making sure that our officers, if they request time off, we are making sure they are getting those that time off. Officer Nugent was one of our part time officers. He had some issues earlier this year with his wife due to some medical issues. However, he is back with us now and able to assist. So officers have requested some leave and he's going to assist with making sure our officers have leave. If there's some times that we can, I can fill in. I also try to fill in to help, to make sure that our officers get the appropriate time off, that they're requested.

Danny Davis: Mr. Mayor. May I just add to that? And the one thing Chief probably wouldn't say about himself is that he's, burning the candle at both ends, and he's putting in a lot of extra time. And regrettably, because of being down one officer, unable to move the lieutenant into a daytime shift where he is doing lieutenant work, he is instead, the lieutenant's doing patrol work. So, for now, that fills the gap. And so we have 24/7 coverage, but it doesn't give the opportunity to help develop the lieutenant and also give the lieutenant the chance to take things off of the chief's plate. So that's one of our goals as well of filling that position is then we can reset those shifts and give the command staff the ability to then, hand off responsibilities as appropriate. So I think it's important to note that as well. As we are looking through this, just the efforts that Chief is putting in at this time.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you. Yes, ma'am.

Darlene Kirk: I just wanted to also thank you for sending the Lieutenant up to [inaudible] to handle the cars that are parking in the middle of the road.

Shaun Jones: Yes, ma'am.

Darlene Kirk: I greatly appreciate that. I haven't seen as much of it. Okay, so some of it's still on the back street, but not as much as we were seeing before.

Shaun Jones: Yes, ma'am. Thank you sir.

Bridge Littleton: No, it's anything else. [off mic]

Chris Bernard: Any fund volunteer or fundraising opportunities coming up in the near future?

Shaun Jones: Council Member Bernard has sat down with me multiple times. One of the things that I'm kind of beginning is community outreach, giving back to the community. One of the programs that was very big in before coming here was Special Olympics. It's a very, dear program to me. One of the things I've used to do in the past is do the polar plunge, where I would go down to Virginia Beach in February and jump into the ocean. You can't do that as much right now. So I've talked to Council Member Bernard, and he's putting together a team, Middleburg team, to actually do the polar plunge to jump in the lake in, Prince William County. So that's what we're going to be doing February the 17th.

Bridge Littleton: You can't find one in Loudoun County.

Shaun Jones: So special.

Chris Bernard: Virginia does a really huge thing. And it's [multiple speakers] they get like a thousand people and they go.

Bridge Littleton: I got you.

Chris Bernard: Yeah, yeah. What they've done is they've done a satellite one in, Prince William and they get a couple hundred people out. They do a big festival around it. So encourage people to come check it out. But we're going to be putting out more information on participating, either through donations if you want to come jump in or we're going to do a couple events between now and then to, raise awareness and money. So stay tuned.

Darlene Kirk: Is our Mayor going to be doing that?

Shaun Jones: I was about to ask. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. I'll come take pictures of you all. Okay Shaun thank you.

Shaun Jones: I do want to commend, our staff. Yesterday, we had a medical emergency for one of our residents. She was not in town at the time. However, the pastor reached out to me in reference to her, and she was on the phone for a little bit, and then we lost contact. But, our staff, Colleen took phone calls from the pastor. I was in the middle of meetings and trying to juggle getting to meetings and so forth. So I was, texting Corporal Davis, but we were able to work in conjunction with, Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, Leesburg Police Department, and Fire and Rescue and was able to locate the individual and get her the proper help that she needed. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you. Okay. Next is Mr. Moore.

Will Moore: Thank [00:55:00] you, Mr. Mayor, Members of Council, you have my report. Just one thing I wanted to highlight under Planning Commission, we will be reviewing, our first applications of related to short term rentals in the Residences at Salamander subdivision. So this would just be an initial review. It won't be the public hearing just due to the timing of the filing of the applications. We have two as of right now. I noted in my report that, there may be another application in a different area of town, coming in, but, the Town Manager and I met with a, another owner within the residences today, so we could potentially have three short term rental applications, from within the Residences at Salamander moving forward at the same time in the coming months. So I just wanted to alert you to that. Feel free to

tune in or attend the Planning Commission meeting to see this will be the first test cases within that development, obviously. So, just wanted to alert you to those applications.

Darlene Kirk: Does this have to come before Council too?

Will Moore: Oh, yes. This is a special use permit applications. So subject to hearing and recommendation by the Commission and then hearing and, final approval or denial by Council.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Will? Okay. Yeah. Let's definitely keep an eye on that. Okay. Yeah. No one has any questions for Will. Okay. Next up is County Attorney.

Martin Crim: Thank you. Mayor, you have my report. I do want to highlight, as I did in the report, a Senate bill 36, which would be a good step forward to undoing some of the damage that the Virginia Supreme Court did to the certainty in the law. We thought we understood what the law was and because the General Assembly was pretty clear about it. And of course, the three opinions last year from the Virginia Supreme Court gave us some doubt as to what exactly is legal and what isn't. And, you know, I'm pretty conservative, almost paranoid about FOIA violations. And so I thought I understood what was acceptable and not. And we need to have some more legislative clarity on this. And Senate Bill 36 is a good step in that way.

Bridge Littleton: So the other quick question, Martin, who put forward the bill to return town elections to May if people wanted?

Martin Crim: I will tell you in a second.

Bridge Littleton: Well, actually, it doesn't matter. Yeah. Who it was. Does it have any chance?

Martin Crim: No.

Bridge Littleton: All right. [laughter]

John Kevin Daly: It makes too much sense.

Bridge Littleton: Okay.

Danny Davis: We can discuss further in the legislative discussion, or now it's up to you.

Bridge Littleton: No, I was just curious. No, we'll cover it down then. Okay.

Danny Davis: Mr. Mayor I.

Bridge Littleton: I know, all right. Martin, was there anything else?

Martin Crim: No, sir. Unless there are any questions from Council.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Martin? Okay. We are going to move. We're just going to get me. Oh. Hold on. This is going to get me all confused up.

Danny Davis: Mr. Mayor, can I request one thing, please?

Bridge Littleton: I know what you're going to request. To review the water.

Danny Davis: I am not.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. All right.

Danny Davis: Miss Staples, we had a few items going on this week, and we weren't able to get the report.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah yeah.

Danny Davis: So I want to see if she could just verbally give a brief Finance.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you. Yep. No worries. Yeah. Hey, if it's not on the list, it doesn't exist.

Tina Staples: So, thank you, Mr. Mayor. I apologize for my report not making it into the agenda on time. So I just had some top level numbers to give you, and then I'm happy to answer any questions that you have. For the end of December. So the first half of the fiscal year, the general fund revenues are at \$1,464,473, and the expenses are at \$2,175,130. The utility fund revenues are at \$752,753, and with the expenses at \$688,908. And meals tax members paid in December for the month of November were \$109,489. Occupancy tax is due next week, so we'll see what that looks like for closing out the first half of the budget year. Can I answer any questions?

Bridge Littleton: When you say occupancy you mean T.O.T?

Tina Staples: Yes.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. You guys got that? [laughter]

Tina Staples: I can send you a reminder.

Bridge Littleton: Oh. She'll [01:00:00] take it right there. You can avoid the \$35 credit card processing.

Tina Staples: That's true.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Tina?

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Yeah. Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: The meals tax for December. How does that look year on year? Does it look okay? [inaudible]

Tina Staples: Overall, we're kind of seeing a softening of the meals tax. And it could be for a lot of reasons, but we same thing with the occupancy tax. We are seeing a little bit of a softening in those, but our revenues are still at or above the budgeted and the projected. And they're kind of running neck and neck right now. So it's definitely something to keep an eye on. But yeah we do see some softening. Yes.

Bridge Littleton: So. Question. Could you guys take all of calendar year 22 or calendar year 21, calendar year 22 and calendar year 23 since you have that now? Well, you'll have it next week. And just if you backed out what the inflation was. Right. So as an example, you know, I'm going to have it wrong. But 2022 was like 8% right. So if you look at 2022 and we had a million dollars and in 2023 there was 1 million and 70,000, you think oh you know things are up. No actually 80,000 of that was probably inflation for rising prices. And actually we had a softening of visitor-ship. You know and again it's I'm just very curious if there's a you know, so 2021 was 8%, 2022 was 8%, 2023 was probably like four. Right. So you compound that a little bit. In three years inflation is about 20%. So if we had a million, a million, and a million we're actually going down.

Tina Staples: Right.

Bridge Littleton: You know not up.

Tina Staples: That's correct.

Bridge Littleton: Because it's price adjustment. Not you know the same number of people were coming. So again it should be kind of easy. You can look up with the inflation on the price index and you know see it. Don't just for the whole year is fine. Don't need to make a big, analytical project out of it.

Tina Staples: Okay.

Bridge Littleton: I'm just curious if you if you adjust for inflation, if things were below at or generally above. Yeah.

Tina Staples: I would be curious too. It's a good question. Absolutely.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. And I think that's about right I think inflation was eight and then eight and then this for this year it's about I mean I think we've gotten down to like three and a half. But the beginning of 2023 was still about six and seven. So I think the average of the year is about four. Okay. That's great I appreciate it.

Tina Staples: Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Now what we'll do is we'll move to the water levels in the town wells. So I think we have a member of the audience who's keenly interested in this topic. Yeah. Mr. Davis.

Danny Davis: Thank you, Mr. Mayor and Council Members. And yes, if I could, I would just give the floor to Ms. Brunett to cover all these issues. But she has been a great adviser to us, with her experience and her insight and, pushing us to continue to improve upon in these areas. So just very briefly, as noted in the memo, you all know that we receive our groundwater from wells, and we have had, over the summer time and into the fall, a fairly significant drought. Thankfully, we did not have any significant impacts of that drought on our water supply. Our wells continue to run, and we did not experience any drying up of wells or risk of drying them up from as much as we know. And provided just, you know, information here about, how wells can be impacted in terms of their levels. It can be a number of things, from weather related to other factors around us. It could be related to nearby construction or blasting. And also just the fact that our, geology here is very fractured. And so you might have a really great stream at one point, and then someone else from far away might actually end up tapping into that, or it could run dry if the underlying geology changes for any particular reason. The real info here is that we have some point in time, data points about the levels of our wells, but we have not done a very, great job, tracking this on a historic manner and keeping those [01:05:00] records effectively. And so we know where we stand today, and maybe we know where we stand two months ago, but we don't know where we stand compared to 2, 3, 5 or 10 years ago or when the wells were first drilled. So the one encouragement and strong encouragement from Miss Brunett and through the utility committee has been to focus on how can we get long term data on our, well, levels, and then we can track that regularly and then create trends over a multi-year cycle. So we did submit for a source water protection grant last year and received it to assist us in the costs of some of this effort. We currently have an RFP on the street, to date. And the responses to that are due in about two weeks. And so we look forward to hopefully getting some responses and moving forward with that. The effort is twofold. One, to do video inspections of our wells to see if they are, if the casings are still structurally intact, but as well, to make sure that the overall well is looking, in good shape without any concerns that might require us to do maintenance or proactive work, and then to put data loggers on the wells so that we can get regular information on the levels of the water level and understand how when we began pumping a well, how quickly it recharges back. Does one well potentially affect another? There are other things that could affect the levels of our wells, so that's where we stand. I'm happy to answer questions as best as I am able to, but, we will be bringing back a contract or, funding request to approve this project, which will be either fully or mostly offset by the grant from DDH.

Bridge Littleton: Miss Brunett, any input?

Jilann Brunett: I think Danny did a real good job. [off mic] And yes, there has been. [off mic] We were rated to it back in 2004. We've not ever we only used about half of the rating as far as how much water we can produce, and we've not exceeded that maybe 60%. The downside and not to be Chicken Little because it isn't an issue. But the downside is with

the drought we have less water. So our rating is not necessarily solid, which is why we need the long term data. So I appreciate all the work the utility committee has done, and especially Danny getting all of the grant stuff. And I think this is a huge step forward for the town. And I appreciate my garden. And thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Well, thanks for your help and the committees as well. If we ever need to fill the wells up, I've got a hose at my house.

Jilann Brunett: No problem.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Yeah, Darlene.

Darlene Kirk: I have a question. How much water did we lose yesterday with the break that we had? Because my yard was flooded and that has never happened?

Danny Davis: Yes. That was a lot of water.

Chris Bernard: [off mic] rain too.

Danny Davis: I have not calculated it, as of yet, but it was probably in the range of 4 to 5000 gallons per hour. And it was running for, you know, a long part of the day and may have even been running the day before because, the rain, you wouldn't see it. And it's also possible that break had been there for a while, and it just now exhibited because the ground was much softer. And so, it actually, started to blow through more because it breaks can go in any direction. And we may not know that they're losing water, until they finally, you know, show up somewhere. So, it could have been, you know, 100,000 plus gallons of water.

Darlene Kirk: I can tell you that. It didn't seem to be water the day before all the rain, so it didn't look like there was a break.

Danny Davis: As much.

Darlene Kirk: We don't get water in that area usually.

Danny Davis: Okay. Good.

Darlene Kirk: But and the day that it broke, I mean, because I literally couldn't get to my trash can for anything, and that's really unusual. So. And they did work until, like, 10:30 at night. Yeah. Trust me, I heard them all day.

Danny Davis: Yeah. They completed the repairs around 8:00, for the water to be turned back on. And then, of course, they had to fill it back in and get it, back together. And as you recall, we had a break the Friday night before the Christmas Parade on at Stonewall and Locust. So that happens with old [01:10:00] pipes. You chase it? We do want to invest in replacing many of those older pipes that weren't part of the upgrade project in Ridgeview. And so, we're going to continue to look at that in the budget.

Darlene Kirk: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you, guys. All right. What? I'm sorry Cindy.

Cindy Pearson: Just wanted to say and I know a few people here will understand this, but I'm sure Mark Snyder is up there going [inaudible]. Well done. Because he used to give us rain totals and drought totals and his calculation of whatever.

Bridge Littleton: God only knows where that spreadsheet is. Okay. Next up is town hall project.

John Kevin Daly: Is that still going on?

Rhonda North: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. So, the contractor does continue to work on the punch and deficiency list in the phase one portion of the project. Phase two, seems to be going nicely. The grading is pretty much done. If you've seen the driveway extension to Marshall Street, they have the base asphalt done. The sidewalk work is underway to connect to the sidewalk to Marshall Street as well. And they're working to extend the arcade, which goes a little further past the building. The Council had, previously requested, that a time capsule be included as a part of the Marshall Street Park, which is part of section two. So I am starting to work on that and hopefully, at your next Council meeting, we'll be bringing a draft letter, that we will have everyone on the Council, as well as the town employees sign in order to go into the time capsule, as well as a list of items that could be included. So, we'll have to move fairly quickly on that one, because we want to get that in the ground before they lay the sod. So that's about all I have to report.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Rhonda?

Darlene Kirk: Yes, ma'am.

Darlene Kirk: Rhonda is putting a light out there by the sign on the second part of the list, because that really needs to be done. You can't see the sign, the Town of Middleburg. I mean the town office.

Rhonda North: Yes. So, we have been talking to John Ralph. We've asked him to come here and look at a few signage issues we have. And one of the things on the list is to talk about doing some type of light system for the for the entrance sign.

Darlene Kirk: Yeah, it really needs it. Yeah. And you can talk to them about the desk drawers, too.

Rhonda North: I do have a sample desk drawer that we're going to have Tim put up and see how that works. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Any other questions for Rhonda?

Rhonda North: Okay.

Bridge Littleton: Next. Wrong button. Next item is consent agenda. Anybody want to remove the one item from the consent agenda? Is there a motion?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I make a move. [laughter]

Bridge Littleton: I make a move.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I make a motion that the consent agenda is accepted as presented.

John Kevin Daly: Second.

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

All of Council: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed? Abstentions? Okay. Next up is the Council approval of the policy revisions for the town grant and sponsorship policies. And that will be, Rhonda.

Rhonda North: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I'll just give a quick briefing just to kind of bring, Council Member Curran up to speed. So, we have had, for several years now, a donations and sponsorship policy, one combined policy, now that it has been in place for a few years, and with the changeover to having the Middleburg Charitable Foundation, the Council did suggest that it was time to review that policy. So, the subcommittee, which consists of Council Members Pearson and

Jacobs, Town Manager Davis, myself, and Business Development, MacIntyre. We did take a look at that, and the recommendation came forward to separate that out into four separate policies. One policy related to special events grants, one policy related to infrastructure grants, one policy related to sponsorships, and then a policy related to charitable donations and the Middleburg Charitable Foundation. So, this item has come to the Council, on three previous occasions, suggestions have been made for, revising the drafts. Most recently, during the December Council meeting, [01:15:00] Council did make an additional donation to the Middleburg Charitable Foundation, and it was suggested that the charitable donation policy be revised to reflect, some of what occurred during that meeting. So, the subcommittee has met, and they have, recommended some tweaks to that policy, to specifically recognize the \$300,000 donation, and that it was anticipated that that donation would put the foundation, in a position on a long term basis to be fiscally sound. It does, however, still leave the door open should the foundation wish to come back to the town in a special or some type of extraordinary circumstance, to ask for a donation. It was also suggested that we do, just some minor tweaks to the infrastructure and special grants, draft policies to clarify, that that policy may not, apply in the case of a special circumstance, that there could be deviations from that policy. So, the latest revisions are now before the Council, and the Committee Members are ready to answer any questions you may have.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions about any of the updates or revisions?

Darlene Kirk: Not a question about that, but I just was going to say, as a member of the Middleburg Charitable Foundation, I don't intend to agree to let them come back to town and ask for more money. I think we now we have people who know how to work on grants and who have worked with same type of issues and raised money, and I think that's what we'll be going to do, I don't we? I really had a hard time with that. So. Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Any other questions? Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I would echo Darlene's thoughts on that because whilst it's wonderful to be able to support it, I felt it was a large sum of money for a one-time event. And, at this point they should be able to really be self-sustaining for the, not just the foreseeable future, but for the future. And if there is a reason to come back, then there's a bigger problem there, I'd say.

Darlene Kirk: But it wasn't a one-time event. I mean, it wasn't for a one-time event. It was for overall.

Bridge Littleton: One time grant.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I meant that one time 300.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, I think, Peter, you bring up a good point. If there's ever and I mean ever a need to come back and ask for more, it's got to be indicative of mismanagement, because that's a lot of money. And the goal of that foundation is to not just sit on the inner interest on the money that's there, but it is also to aggressively fundraise, grow it, you know, make it flourish and get bigger and bigger. And, you know, ideally 100 years from now, it's got \$50 million in it and it's generating \$2 million in income every year and doing a lot for folks. I had one quick question and I can't remember if we had this in the policy or not. But the question I had was we're memorializing in policy that I mean, Council can always undo it if we want to, but we're memorializing in policy that Christmas in Middleburg and the Middleburg Film Festival are being granted \$10,000 and \$15,000, respectively, every year in perpetuity until changed. And.

Danny Davis: Yes.

Bridge Littleton: I'm just.

Darlene Kirk: That wasn't ever meant to be like that.

Bridge Littleton: Well, no. Hold on, hold on, hold on. Let me finish. In the past, it was a budget line item that we would discuss every year.

Danny Davis: And it was part of the policy adopted in 2018-19, to simply state the Council's intention because those dollar amounts are greater than the dollar amounts, anticipated in the rest of the policy and they also were understood to be not simply seed money, like starting a concert series off, you know, and helping them for three years, and then it becomes self-sustaining. But there is a different level of these events. Right. And so both sides of the donation, as well as the ongoing nature of the town's contribution towards these, as you know, call it a [01:20:00] contribution, call it a sponsorship, whatever you wish. Is a higher level than anticipated in the rest of the policies.

Rhonda North: [multiple speakers] Mr. Mayor, as well, each of these policies very clearly states at the top that any donation or sponsorship is subject to the availability of funding and the appropriation of the money in the budget. So it's not a guarantee.

Bridge Littleton: Okay then that you need to, then let's make that clear in the policy. Because what it says here in the policy is and I get these two events are unique to themselves. Right. With the exception of sponsorships for Christmas in Middleburg and the Middleburg [inaudible], which shall be. Now you have a conflating of language because.

Chris Bernard: [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: What's that?

Chris Bernard: It needs to be [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Right. It's not shall because shall is not discretionary. Right. You now have a challenge of language in the same policy. Right. So it's either subjected to approval annually and appropriation or it shall be. Which is it? It's not clear. So what we could say is something along the lines of historically these amounts have been and the intention of Council or the intention of the town is that they continue to be, but it is subject to the needs appropriation, whatever, you know, each year at the discretion of Council. So whatever.

Danny Davis: I think most of that language is there, but the shall we can tweak and adjust to make it clear that it's not a guarantee. [off mic]

Darlene Kirk: We discussed maybe before everybody else was on Council, but I know you were on Council that we wanted to make the film festival self-sustaining. We didn't. We didn't want to every year, give them 10 to \$15,000 when they're making money. And so I don't like if it says May, that's fine. But I don't like the idea that we're just going to, keep funding something that is making money and doing very well on its own.

Bridge Littleton: Let's. [off mic] Well, no, I mean, I think the difference was that if I recall this correctly, the film festival is actually a nonprofit. Right. It's not like the other events that they host there, which are for profit events. So it's a nonprofit 501C3 Foundation. Oh it is.

Danny Davis: And it's unaffiliated with the resort. I mean, it's not a arm of the resort.

Bridge Littleton: Right, right, right. So. So where I'm going with that is it's a nonprofit. It doesn't make money, right? It has to spend. If it has profits, it has to spend that on educational things. It doesn't go into someone's pocket or it can roll into future stuff. Right? Yeah. So. [off mic] Right. If it was.

Darlene Kirk: Just like Christmas in Middleburg because she said.

Bridge Littleton: Correct.

Darlene Kirk: We didn't take the town's grant. We didn't use the town's grant. We're rolling it over into next year. Yeah, she was here.

Bridge Littleton: The one we gave them last year?

Darlene Kirk: Correct.

Bridge Littleton: Correct. But I share the concerns on an event that's a for profit event.

Darlene Kirk: Yeah I agree.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah I mean we've talked about that many times. I have a real concern that if it's a for profit event, you know that if that event operates in the black, they're basically putting the excess in the pockets. And that's not the right thing with tax dollars. But let's do this. Let's talk about it. I do want to go back and see because I remember the conversation in 2018. So we can follow up on that. Okay. [off mic] Yeah.

Chris Bernard: Is the purpose of that language adding Christmas in Middleburg and whatever to allow us to give them more than the rest of the policy? Is that what I'm hearing?

Danny Davis: I don't, yes, I mean, I don't know if allows the word I would have used, but it's to call it out because, otherwise.

Chris Bernard: Wouldn't be able to get that much.

Danny Davis: That's correct. Because we put a cap of \$2,000.

Bridge Littleton: Or it's going to be an Ad Hoc motion every single year.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. I just want to make sure.

Bridge Littleton: So why are we doing that?

Chris Bernard: It's one thing for them to come in and ask us for \$10,000. It's another thing for us to say, hey, we're planning on giving you ten grand. And then they come in and say, hey, are you giving us the ten grand? Because at that point, if we say no, it's. Wait a minute. Why didn't you? You know, why didn't you just approve it? So I think it's just shifting the balance point a little bit.

Bridge Littleton: I mean, I think maybe the meeting in the middle is this is that. It could be Christmas in Middleburg and the Middleburg Film Festival are unique events which that the town would like to consider funding requests on an annual basis, beyond the \$2,000 limitation for those foundations to come and say to us, this is our need, this is what we would like, this is how we'll support whatever. And I mean, the flip side of it too, is, you know, one year they may need more for something and we may [01:25:00] be okay with that, you know, so.

Darlene Kirk: We may not be.

Bridge Littleton: Or whatever.

Darlene Kirk: Right. When you said it just then it's perfect.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Yeah. I mean we've got to carve. Yeah. I think it is important to carve out the exception for the community that they know we are going you know, we our intent is to fund these events more than the standard \$2,000 because there's a unique component to it. But, you know, I just I'm. So Danny, did you capture that?

Danny Davis: I see where you're going. Yes.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. All right. Cool. So I with that, I think everything else is good to go except for that one on the special events. So if we do want to make a motion to approve this stuff tonight, whoever makes the motion, we just have to create an exception that that one is still in the works, but the other ones are good. Or if you guys don't care if we get it done, this meeting or the next meeting, then we can just do it all at the next meeting.

Rhonda North: There's no rush we can.

Bridge Littleton: Okay, we'll do it all at the next meeting.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. All right. And you guys will in two weeks okay?

Rhonda North: Continue. Yeah. We'll continue to revise.

Bridge Littleton: Great. Okay. All right, next item. Where am I? Yes. Strategic planning retreat. All right. Talk about fun.

Chris Bernard: We're going to talk about fun.

Bridge Littleton: Yes, exactly. Mr. Davis.

Danny Davis: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And, yes, we're going to talk about, a little bit of the actual nitty gritty of how you would like to, get together as a body to discuss your strategic priorities for the next two years. So just to kind of set the overview of this and this has been kind of in development over the past 2 or 3 years. So I think we're starting to actually hit a rhythm, which is helpful. So when a new Council takes office, which again, this is your first meeting as a technically a new Council, then, to establish your goals for the next two years and to set some time to talk about how, whether we call it team building or just how we interact as a body together. I think that's always important to have those conversations, especially as new members, join the Council. And to talk about roles and responsibilities to a degree between the Town Council and between staff and that relationship and partnership and how we work together. But then really to sit down and talk about what are the top goals and priorities that are in front of you that you see and have heard from the community, either in your time currently on a Council or perhaps even during running for office, and those goals and priorities that you want to focus on for the next two years. And so that takes some time and it takes some deliberate effort. And so for this first kind of kickoff of the two year strategic plan, we would recommend and believe it's important to do, if not at least a full day session, perhaps a day and a half type session or an evening and a full day session with a facilitator who can, take the reins, lead the conversations allow staff to be listeners, but then participants when appropriate. And so for those who are on the Council in 2020, just before Covid, recall that we went to Front Royal, for an overnight, we thought it was very effective. It led to some very good conversations of things that we hadn't really had a chance to talk about as a body together. And then it set the stage for really what's still our strategic plan, through the end of last year. So the question really is how, you know, does Council want to go through this? Do you like the idea of doing it overnight? Similar to what we did, in 2020? If so, are there particular dates that we can look forward to? Our goal would really be to try to do this in the next, 4 to 6 weeks, mid-February to the end of February kind of time frame just will give us time to prepare, to get a facilitator, to get a location, if we decide to go elsewhere. And then we can talk about the actual details of what we talk about, maybe in a couple minutes, but I know it sounds kind of in the weeds, but we do need to have some opportunity to talk about, how you would like to hold this retreat. And then we need to find some good dates that work for folks. And we can throw out maybe a number of dates and ping you afterwards to do some confirmation.

Bridge Littleton: We'll do all the dates by email, so we're not going to do them right now. We're not going to pull out everybody's calendar and mix and match. We'll do that after. But I mean, I think is everybody generally around mid-late February. And we've got to find the date. I know we all got stuff, but no one's like in Africa for three weeks or anything like that. [off mic] Oh. Well. Okay. What? [off mic] Well, [01:30:00] that'll make the meeting go quicker. Okay. Chris.

Chris Bernard: I've actually been thinking about this a little bit, and I'm kind of fortunate in my day job, I get to travel around and look at different towns around here and see who's doing interesting things. And I think we have a new

restaurant coming to town. So I thought Culpepper might be an interesting choice. We could check out the new steak or the original Piedmont Steakhouse, but, they've done a really good job revitalizing their downtown. Not that ours needs revitalizing, but there's a lot of really interesting things happening there. And so I thought it would be a good opportunity to even just walk around and see some of the things they're doing right, and maybe hear from I've got a relationship with their Economic Development Director down there and maybe even hear from them about just the different perspective on another small town.

Darlene Kirk: I really like that idea.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: It's great.

Bridge Littleton: Everybody okay with Culpepper?

John Kevin Daly: Yeah. Well, anything that gets us out of the day to day distractions that we would have if we held it here. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Okay, so everybody's fine with Culpepper?

Danny Davis: Yeah. Okay. Do you want me to see if Chief A.J. has room for all of us to bunk?

Bridge Littleton: His house is for sale. [off mic] Not unless you want to buy it. Well, maybe he I don't know is he airbnb'ing at the moment? So. Okay. That's great. So we'll play on that, you know, go down, do an over, you know, whatever. And then the thing I think having a facilitator is good. You know, the folks, you guys Danny, you were talking. Well, the other guy you were talking about earlier.

Danny Davis: Yeah. We have some consultants that are recently retired managers from very successful organizations, local government organizations. And I think if it's okay, I'd like to reach out just they bring not only the strong leadership perspective, but also a understanding the difficult issues that face a community and from a local government perspective, and to check and see if there's availability amidst everything else and go from there.

Bridge Littleton: No, I thought the one we had before was great. It just that the gap was not knowing local government. So we got into certain conversations and it was hard for her to facilitate. Yeah, exactly. No, I mean from a facilitator, she was great. But Yeah, whatever. Yeah. You guys take a look, see what's available, and then we'll figure it out. Yes, Darlene.

Darlene Kirk: I do have one comment. And I made this comment to Danny because I was when I saw that the list of items he had and that Windy Hill was the last item. I thought we didn't decide on that. That was not something Council chose.

Bridge Littleton: This is [inaudible]

Darlene Kirk: And I understand, I know, but I just have it out there and then she shows up and she's like, okay, I'm glad you put it on. So we decide what's on there, not staff. And I guess the notional part is was she didn't see it as notional. That's what I'm concerned about. Yes. We need to talk about Windy Hill and different things, but I didn't think it needed to be listed like that. That's all.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. So let's do this. From a topic area perspective, I think we can do nominal group voting is probably the best way to do it. So what we should do is take the current priors that we have any new things we think are relevant. Right. And just sort of pulse everybody on Council, you know, first round would be what are your top five? You know, we've got our existing ones. Do you think they are still priorities or not? So we can vote on that. And then what are your top five. And then we can collect that information. We can go through it and see where there's commonality on issues and then sort of take that to derive, you know, hey, we're going to have ten strategic priorities.

Here's the top 20 that are or top 25. And then we can rack and stack those as well and use that as the baseline for our conversation.

Danny Davis: Yeah, I think how we've done that sometimes in the past is when we get the facilitator on board, they would typically appreciate reaching out to you, and having a conversation individually with each of you and then ask you to provide as appropriate, whether in verbal conversation or by email, same thing of the existing list you have. Are there other items that you think and rank them? Here are my top 5 or 10 and allow that facilitator to collate those. And then when you come to the Strategic Planning Retreat at that is a foundation, but it's not already set in stone. That is merely leading towards the conversation. And of course, things change as you collaborate and discuss them all together. And that's why they're paid to facilitate, because they can really bring a sense of commonality [01:35:00] from a lot of different perspectives.

Bridge Littleton: Perfect. No, that's great.

Danny Davis: So so yeah, I apologize if this may sound like I wanted necessarily to debate these issues or anything. It was simply just saying these were topics that have been raised in the past year or so or six months, and one of them, at least for the record. But then also to help you start thinking as you identify other potential things for each of you individually.

Darlene Kirk: I just didn't want somebody to think like she seemed to think that, oh, I'm glad you guys are going to meet.

Bridge Littleton: We cleared it up. It's good. And Bud gets all the homework.

Darlene Kirk: Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. [off mic] Yeah. Oh, no. It was good. All right, next up is legislative updates. That's both of you guys. The dynamic duo.

Martin Crim: Okay. What do you want to know? There's a 1300 and some bills just from the House itself. I already mentioned in my report Senate Bill 36, which I think the town ought to support. I mentioned briefly there's that bill to remove the elections to May, and you ask the question, who's sponsoring that? And that is a delegate from the 69th House district, which is south and east of, Williamsburg. Chad Green, whom I don't know at all. So there's a lot going on. This is the greenest, General Assembly in a while. And green, I don't mean environmentally minded. I mean that they're inexperienced. The third of them are new to their seats, so some of those have moved from the House to the Senate. But it's, an astounding lack of experience due to a lot of redistricting and retirements. So that's kind of what we expect. We, you know, work very closely with Virginia Municipal League to track things of importance to us. I flagged a few for Danny's, perusal, and we'll continue to do that over the next few weeks.

Danny Davis: There are two that that we added on the agenda, before the last thousand bills were submitted. So this is before the session began. And there are two specifically that, as Mr. Crim mentioned, I think, if Council is supportive of, we could, write a letter of support from the Town Council for these bills. The first is the FOIA definition clarification, and then the other is speed cameras in other areas of streets. If you recall, to date, speed cameras have only been allowed in either school zones or construction zones. And there's a bill to suggest that speed cameras be permitted anywhere that the governing body determines that it would be necessary. There are a number of criteria that have to go along with how you implement that. It is a topic that cameras, speed cameras have been, a very political discussion for decades. And the appropriateness of them, from our perspective, we believe it's an additional level of, potential enforcement, but also potential just visibility to the public, the necessity of driving at an appropriate speed. But I also understand there are other potential implications or concerns that come when you have speed cameras. So before we made any assumptions on this, we wanted to bring it for your consideration. If you have input or would like to formally take a position on that.

Bridge Littleton: Anybody for or against? Having the ability to have speed cameras, not that you would have them having the authority to put them in?

Chris Bernard: Well, it's also do we want to as a body advocate for one side of that issue or not. Not whether we're all, you know, I mean, no, I mean, do we think it's appropriate for us to advocate for it?

Bridge Littleton: Well, the question is, do we want to have the authority to be able to do that in the future as a governing body?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I would say absolutely.

John Kevin Daly: Same, same, especially when you have the limitation on the number of personnel you can put out. And there are some areas that when I'm walking in the morning, I see people zipping along back roads and we don't have enough police and to check on that.

Chris Bernard: Personally, I see pros and cons to it. I would imagine that the folks. Oh, I can't believe I'm going to say this, imagine the folks at the state are going to investigate this much further than any of us are going to, and will analyze it to death and will make the decision. So I don't know that we need to stick our foot in that. I think we should stick to the stuff that we really, really care about [01:40:00] and make that a very loud message, rather than every time we want to support a random bill, we do it.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Anybody have any heartburn one way or the other? I mean, I, you know, on one level have you been doing lobbying the last five years. The more letters you get, the impact it does make. I don't think it lessens your impact anywhere else. Nobody goes well, Middleburg only sent one letter, so that's the one that matters. Or they send 100. None of them mean anything. But to that end. Right. I think if we opposed it, it would matter. I think we support it. [off mic] This is going to be a hotly contested. No no, we're not compelled to take a side. No. I guess the question is, do we feel, is there a strong desire to want to have this authority? If there is, then we should support it. And if we're ambivalent to it or I guess from going is I don't think we get brownie points or negative points if we support it one way or the other. But if we support it, it helps, you know, but if we're not that passionate about it, why waste a chip? You know? So I think me personally, I think it's a good tool to have in the toolbox doesn't mean we have to use the tool. You know, I am I'm going to in one second give an update on a detail with VDOT. So, anyway.

Darlene Kirk: I'm not for it. I, just we're a small town. It's sort of like speed cameras are sort of like spying, and it just seems to me. So I would just do it like Chris says, just let it do its thing. And if it happens, we can reap the benefits if we choose but.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, that's fine. Okay.

Danny Davis: And not to circle back around one more time, but sometimes we are asked, does the town support or oppose a bill? And if it's okay with Council, I think what I'm hearing is the town does not oppose the bill. The town does not object to the bill. We're just not really taking a position one way or the other. That's right. Okay.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: But what is the downside of supporting it and then potentially contributing to having the ability to have it, not necessarily having to have it?

Darlene Kirk: If it passes, we have the ability to use it. But what does that do? I mean, we're a tiny little town in Virginia, like a pimple to some of the bigger towns that would support something like that.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I wouldn't agree with that. I mean, we are a small town, but just the fact that we're a small town doesn't mean we shouldn't support or not support something. You know, I grew up in London where we had speed cameras everywhere, and I wasn't a big fan of it, but it did help to cut down on accidents and deaths. And we have a speeding problem in parts of the town. But I'm not saying we should install them, but the ability to say, you know what, we do support the idea because A, B and C reasons. I think is a positive.

Bridge Littleton: So here's the thing that concerns me about the future and not having this ability. Transportation and road transportation is changing dramatically very quickly, and it's going to change in the next couple of years in dynamic ways. We have no ability to really understand the impact and its self-driving cars, automated cars. We're a small town, but we're a small town, you know, that has tens of thousands of people that come here and visit all the time who aren't, who come here to visit, but they don't care about the town the way we do. And so I would like us to have the ability because as we get into the world of automated things, having the ability to have tools that can put lack of a better word, the brakes on unsafe driving is it's a good tool. It doesn't mean we're going to use the tool, but I would much rather have the tool to be able to try out if we're, you know, we're we just had VDOT just did this speed study for us and there's problems. There are speeding problems in this town. Speed cameras have proven to slow people down. Not the ticket piece, you know. I mean, it is the ticket piece, but it's also the, Oh, there's a speed camera. I better slow down, you know, when you see one. Yeah. You know when [01:45:00] you see one. Yeah. It's like seeing a cop. When you see a cop, you slow down. Except if they're showing.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Also, Waze, for example, will make a sound when you're in an area when you're driving through an area. [inaudible] So, you know, speed camera ahead. Yeah. That has an effect.

Bridge Littleton: It's it is if it is approved and if it was something we wanted to do, it would have a positive impact on safety, avoiding accidents, people getting hurt, people getting killed. Not that we have a huge issue with it, but as road travel changes in the next 10 to 15 years you know. So. So anyway, we're beating this to death. But I mean, yeah.

John Kevin Daly: One other point. We're it's not the visitors. We're a thoroughfare. People are commuting from West Virginia, Winchester and beyond, and they go through Middleburg. And as was pointed out, they don't live here. They have no vested interest. They just want to get through and.

Bridge Littleton: As quickly as possible.

John Kevin Daly: As quickly as possible. And I've seen them jump over it when it turns from 35 to 25, and they're still going 45. And this is in the early morning hours.

Darlene Kirk: And I've been in that mess so I know but.

John Kevin Daly: I think supporting it we're not committing to spending money to get cameras. But we are supporting something that would give us another benefit, another tool, if we have to use it to control the safety of our town.

Bridge Littleton: All right. Last comments anybody?

Chris Bernard: Yeah. I just I don't want us to get lost in the conversation of whether we should have speed cameras or not. I think it's more about do we want staff to take time to write a letter to the Assembly supporting. I mean, we could why don't we write a letter for I mean, there's probably 800 bills about safety. Like, should we write a letter about all of them? Well, this one's come up.

Bridge Littleton: This has been one that.

Chris Bernard: I just think we should pick the things that are really, really important to us and focus on those. And if that's this one, then great. You know, because there's seven of us, we get to vote on things. It's fun.

Bridge Littleton: All right.

Darlene Kirk: I don't think we need to do a letter in support of it. I think it's going to happen or not. And then we get we're going to get the benefit of it one way or the other or not.

Bridge Littleton: But with respect, if everyone has that opinion, then it's not going to happen because no one will write a letter and everyone will go and no one cares.

Darlene Kirk: Oh, somebody will write it.

Bridge Littleton: Well, no, it's like it is that classic, you know, somebody's getting beat up in the street and everyone thinks somebody else is calling the cops and no one calls the cops. So anyway. All right.

Danny Davis: I have a little bit of a maybe Solomon answer, which is, how about we, status quo where we are? We'll keep an eye on it. VML is really good at keeping us up to date on where things stand if something has a potential chance. And usually they do a call to action. And so we can raise our hand. We can always come back to Council at that point and say it's a real push or it's not.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah okay. Got it.

Danny Davis: And similarly, I was going to say, as Mr. Crim mentioned, there are many, many other bills that will probably end up bringing to you in the next one, two, three meetings. So we'll have another opportunity to identify other potential issues that are of importance. And also if this comes back up, we'll do that in the, in the proper way.

Bridge Littleton: No. You said.

Darlene Kirk: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. The one item I did want to mention was there's a bill that's gone up, which is clarifying the bill that was passed last year, which gives local authorities who have under 3,500 people who don't control their roads, the ability to reduce the speed in their town by five miles an hour. So there was a bill passed last year, which I think is pretty clear that says that. But VDOT disagrees and says, no, it may say that, but that's not what it says. So as you all remember at the beginning of 2023, you know, went out with an ask everybody, just like you were 17% less likely to be killed or seriously injured if you're hit by a car going 25 versus 20. So it's real. It's meaningful. 17. Yeah 17%. So we reached out and said, you know, this is what we plan to do. They reached back out several months later after multiple follow ups and said, oh no, you don't have that authority, but we want to work with you. So we're going to come out and we're going to talk to you, and we're going to see, you know, if we should do that because you don't have the authority. We have the authority, but what we'll talk to you. So they came out. We did a street walk. We gave a bunch of data. They assigned an engineer to it who went and did a speed study. And, you know, I will rudely say blah, blah, blah. You know, nine months later, they [01:50:00] give us their recommendation, and I will forward it to you all know.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: No. Yeah. So the speed study does show that along route 50, in town, in multiple points, there is an excessive, you know, outside the profile. I think it's the 85th percentile, points where it's not good. And it is unsafe. Right. So people are at, you know, it's a 25 and people are hitting 35 miles an hour. So, they also provided. And so the I think the takeaway from the speed study was, yes, our safety concerns at certain points along route 50 are valid. So they made several recommendations of what we should do to address the speed issue. The first one was to install choke points all throughout the town. So, you know, spend several hundred thousand or several million dollars creating choke points, you know, like they have in Aldi. Those choke points make people slow down. The second one was let's take away some of the on street parking on Route 50.

Darlene Kirk: It's worse.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. The other one was on Route 50. Let's move buildings closer to the road. [laughter] So. And I think there was 2 or 3 others I can't remember Will or Danny if you guys remember them. So, you know, needless to say, it was an unbelievable set of recommendations. [off mic] They did. Yeah. Yeah, it was like 5 or 6 different. You could do this. You should do this. You should do this. You should do this. So in speaking with this, member of leadership at, VDOT the recommendation was to take them up on their offers. So we're very excited and energetic about all of their

safety improvement ideas. So we will accept and look forward to them committing the several million dollars needed to make these safety improvements with their budget.

Chris Bernard: Proposal for moving the buildings closer to the road.

Bridge Littleton: Well, you know, we'll wait on that one. I mean, you know, the funny thing was, I think he said, if buildings get redeveloped, if you rebuild them, push them closer to the road. Well, because, you know, basically every building on Main Street is 200 years old. I don't think that's really viable. But, anyway, so, Yes. [off mic] So I am I plan unless anybody has an objection to respond back and basically say, well if those are your recommended and there was no recommendation for lowering the speed limit at the points that we wanted to, they did recommend moving the 25 out further on the east side of town, past the cider barn. That, you know, we basically say, okay, great. Choke points. Great. Rumble strips. Great. Moving the buildings. Whatever. Let's do it. So and you guys have billions of dollars for safety improvements. What portion of that budget are you going to of yours are you going to commit to doing this? And, you know, because these are the recommendations you made and see where that goes. The other item, though, is that bill that was passed last year there is a new bill in the Senate and the House of delegates, which clarifies unequivocally and clearly that every municipal government has the unfettered authority to reduce speed limits by five miles an hour in their jurisdiction, if they want. So I strongly recommend we approve we support that one. Okay.

Cindy Pearson: And don't bother sending that stuff back.

Bridge Littleton: No, no I'm [multiple speakers] going.

Chris Bernard: Hey question.

Bridge Littleton: Because I'm going to I want to see the response [multiple speakers]. What's that?

Chris Bernard: I want to see that slide deck.

Bridge Littleton: Oh yeah. I'll send it to you. That's a good one.

Chris Bernard: No. I want to see their proposal slide deck for what they're going to do.

Bridge Littleton: Oh no. I'll send it to you. It's a good one.

Chris Bernard: But the question I had is, was there pushback because it's Route 50? And they were like, because it's a main thoroughfare, you can't I mean, I'm just curious why they said we couldn't.

Bridge Littleton: So what was the word that they kept using the utterly subjective word that they can make up anything they want.

Danny Davis: In the prior discussion that was the quality of life factor.

Bridge Littleton: No, but they had a word. It was like livability.

Danny Davis: Yes. Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: That was so they said that the reason they denied our request is because it would impact the livability of the community. [laughter] And I said, well, what's the definition? [off mic] No, I know I said, what's the definition of livability? And it is, you know, VDOT lives by standards and everything. And then there's always this little bullet line that says unless it doesn't meet livability. And that's beauty is in the eye of the beholder. It is utterly subjective. And I actually made [01:55:00] the comment in the meeting. Well, I think not getting killed when you get hit by a car is an issue of livability. Yeah. And they actually did a measurement. If you reduce the speed limit from 25 to 20, going from one end of town to the other end of town, how much longer is it? Right. Because that was the one of his points was, well,

you're going to it's going to take longer for people to get through town. That affects the livability, you know, okay. It was something like 16 seconds. I mean, it was. It was.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Anyway. Look at Shaun. [laughter]

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I prefer Shaun's version.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, yeah.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Shouts slow down.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Right. Exactly.

Chris Bernard: [off mic].

Bridge Littleton: It'd be cheaper than their improvements. So anyway, it has been a saga and a story. It'll be an episode in the Netflix series, but I just wanted to let you guys know where everything is, and I will send you their PowerPoint deck. You will love it. You will absolutely love it. Okay. I don't think we have anything else on the agenda. Except for any information items from anybody. Going once, going twice. [off mic] Okay. Next we will move to closed session. Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I move that Council go into closed session as authorized under section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia for one consultation with legal counsel employed by the public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the legal advice of such Council related to the Town Hall Project Contract has allowed under subsection eight and two, for appointments to the BZA, and three the performance review of the Town Manager, the last two items of which are as allowed under subsection A 1. I further move that the Council thereafter reconvene in open session for action as appropriate.

John Kevin Daly: Second.

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

All of Council: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: All right. Opposed? Abstentions?

Bridge Littleton: Okay. We are in closed session. All right, let's see here. I asked the Council certify that in the closed session just concluded, to the best of each members 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 cited in the motion. I would like to remind those present of the closed session that any discussion that occurred within it should be treated as confidential.

Chris Bernard: Yes.

Darlene Kirk: Yes.

Bridge Littleton: Yes.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Yes.

Cindy Pearson: Yes.

John Kevin Daly: Yes.

Pam Curran: Yes.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Would anybody like to make a motion for appointment to BZA?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Yes. Mr. Mayor, I move that Council recommend to the judges that the Loudoun County Circuit Court the reappointment of Trowbridge Littleton and Dave Roszell to the Board of Zoning Appeals said terms to expire December the 31st, 2028.

Cindy Pearson: Second.

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

All of Council: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed? Abstentions? Okay. Any other items?

Darlene Kirk: Nope.

Bridge Littleton: Meeting adjourned.