



MIDDLEBURG TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 14, 2024



PENDING APPROVAL

PRESENT: Mayor Trowbridge M. Littleton
Vice Mayor Chris W. Bernard
Councilmember Pamela Curran
Councilmember J. Kevin Daly
Councilmember Morris E. “Bud” Jacobs
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
Deputy Town Manager William M. Moore
Ali MacIntyre, Business Development & Community Partnership Director
Police Chief Shaun Jones

The Town Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia held their regular monthly meeting on Thursday, March 14, 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 Recognition by Mayor & Council

Council Approval – Resolution of Appreciation – Colleen Bryan

Mayor Littleton noted that Ms. Bryan took another position in Tappahannock to be closer to family. He advised that she had served the Town and the Middleburg Police Department faithfully for a number of years. Mr. Littleton noted that her contributions to the health and safety of the community would be missed, as would her good demeanor. He read the resolution of appreciation aloud and, following its adoption, presented a signed copy to Ms. Bryan.

Councilmember Daly moved, seconded by Councilmember Leonard-Morgan, that Council adopt a resolution expressing its appreciation to Colleen Bryan for her service as Police Administrative Specialist from January 22, 2015 through March 6, 2024.

Council advised Ms. Bryan that she would be missed. They noted that she was an incredible asset to the Police Department and that her elegance and professionalism would be hard to replace. Council wished her the best of luck and invited her back for Christmas in Middleburg.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: N/A

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

Colleen Bryan expressed her gratitude to the Mayor and Council. She noted that it had been an honor and privilege to serve the community over the past nine years and advised that she would miss everyone.

Public Comment

Mark Thompson advised that the Town Hall building was stunning and complimented everyone who was involved in the planning process.

Public Hearing & Action Item

CY 2024 Real Property Tax Rate

Town Manager Davis reported that real property assessed values increased once again. He reminded Council that if the tax rate was more than what was defined in the State Code as being the “equalized rate” plus 1%, a public hearing was required. Mr. Davis advised that the tax rate in the proposed FY '25 Budget was \$.1236 per \$100 assessed value, which equated to the equalized rate plus 3%. He noted that the equalized rate would be \$.12. Mr. Davis advised that while the Council could vote on the tax rate during this meeting, they were not obligated to do so. He further advised that the tax rate must be set during the next Council meeting at the latest so it could be transmitted to Loudoun County.

No one spoke and the public hearing was closed.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan suggested the increased values for condominiums, when compared to townhouses and single-family dwellings, seemed skewed. He noted the difference in the taxes at \$.1236 and \$.12 and asked the Town Manager to comment on this.

Town Manager Davis noted that the value of condominiums was inherently less; therefore, a similar increase in value seemed much larger when compared to a townhouse or single-family dwelling. He advised that the average value of a condo continued to increase from \$340,000 to \$440,00, which was a fairly sizable increase percentage wise. Mr. Davis noted that it was probably not much different from a dollar standpoint when compared to the other categories. He reported that Loudoun County was proposing to keep their tax rate the same, which was not the equalized rate, recognizing that they had continued demands. Mr. Davis opined that the board members were realizing this rate would be a financial burden on their residents; however, they acknowledged that if they equalized it, they would not have the resources available to provide the services that were expected.

Mayor Littleton reminded Council that a couple of years ago, the value of townhouses was going up by 20%; however, the value of condos was not. He opined that a lot of people were renovating their condos, which affected their assessed values.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Manager Davis opined that the Town would not see housing values increase by the same percentages that have been experienced over the last four years. He reminded Council that property values varied depending on their location within the county. Mr. Davis opined that the 5-6% changes that were now being seen were probably not uncommon and could be less in the future. He noted that the current challenge was supply, which was lacking and was still putting pressure on values.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted that the inventory was low because people who had 2%-3% interest rates on their mortgages did not want to sell their homes. He advised that because of this, prices were increasing slightly. Mr. Leonard-Morgan opined that prices would not increase at the same rate in the future.

Town Manager Davis advised Council that he would keep them updated as information was received from the County.

Councilmember Pearson noted that even though the tax rate was being reduced, the tax bills could increase on some individual properties because of the higher assessed values.

Councilmember Kirk moved, seconded by Councilmember Leonard-Morgan, that the Town Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia adopt a Real Property Tax Rate of \$.1236 per \$100 of assessed value for Calendar Year 2024/Fiscal Year 2025.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: N/A

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

Public Presentation

Visit Loudoun Annual Report

Beth Erickson, President of Visit Loudoun, reported that Loudoun County led among localities in visitor’s spending in the Commonwealth of Virginia. She opined that a huge part of the economic driver was Dulles International Airport, as well as the Town of Middleburg. Ms. Erickson advised that Visit Loudoun recognized the importance of the Town and noted the relationship between the two entities. She advised that she wanted to discuss that relationship during this meeting. Ms. Erickson reviewed the assets that made Loudoun County unique, as well as the key markets that were luring people here. She reported that Visit Loudoun has had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Loudoun County for decades and one with the Town of Middleburg since 2014. Ms. Erickson opined that this MOU defined that there was a partnership, which was important. She advised that Visit Loudoun partnered with Middleburg on many different levels, including: having individuals from Middleburg serve on its Board of Directors; offering their Certified Tourism Ambassador Program once or twice a year; working with the Middleburg Business & Professional Association; and, serving on the Town’s Cultural & Community Events Committee, as well as other on other private organizations.

Ms. Erickson reviewed their “report card,” which was based on the MOA with the Town. She reported that Business Development & Community Partnerships Director MacIntyre verified that Visit Loudoun met the actionable measures as identified in the MOA. Ms. Erickson reviewed some of those key measures, which included their social media engagements, which was the biggest driver of the visitor economy, and their print marketing of Middleburg. She advised that Northern Virginia had led the recovery from a visitor perspective. Ms. Erickson reported that while it was starting to see a flattening of leisure travel, it was also seeing an increase in business group travel. She noted that this travel occurred mid-week and advised that it was beginning to approach the same levels as weekend visitation. Ms. Erickson reported that Visit Loudoun had a robust sales team, who were putting a lot of sales time behind this sector to position Middleburg for more business during the mid-week. She advised that a lot of people organically booked a room as a result of business that had Visit Loudoun’s fingerprints on it and opined that Visit Loudoun generated \$1.8 million in revenue in Middleburg last year, which equated to \$88,000 in transient occupancy tax (TOT) revenues. Ms. Erickson reviewed their upcoming events, which included their annual meeting and a Fox Five Zip Trip in Middleburg.

Ms. Erickson noted the letter from Visit Loudoun to the Council, in which they asked to change the MOA from a one-year one to a three-year one and asked for an increase in their appropriation from the Town. She noted that their appropriation had been flat since 2018 and asked that they receive a \$20,000/year increase over the course of the next three years, which would increase the amount from \$35,000 to \$95,000 annually. Ms. Erickson opined that the TOT revenues they generated would cover this cost. She advised that Visit Loudoun was proud to have Middleburg as a key partner.

In response to an inquiry from the Council as to whether Visit Loudoun would be a stakeholder in the working group associated with the County’s review of rural zoning, Ms. Erickson advised that this was their request. She noted that their MOU with the County called for Visit Loudoun to be an advisory group to the board and any seated commissions; therefore, it was her expectation that they would be a stakeholder.

Mayor Littleton noted that the Coalition of Loudoun Towns (COLT) weighed in on that this week and opined that it was important that Visit Loudoun have a seat at the table. He questioned Visit Loudoun's views on advocating for controls around wineries and breweries in order to increase public safety and make sure there was a balance between preserving rural Loudoun and these types of businesses.

Ms. Erickson noted that she was waiting to see the timeline and advised that it would return to the TLUC on May 23rd. She further advised that Visit Loudoun would help facilitate an industry response by working directly with the businesses. Ms. Erickson noted that they made recommendations during the Supervisors' most recent meeting that included: asking that Visit Loudoun serve as a key advisor and stakeholder; asking to divide farm wineries and limited breweries and distilleries; and, asking for a representative from a pick-your-own farm. She explained that their goal was to look at agritourism in its totality and, in doing so, would put together working groups. Ms. Erickson advised that she wanted to understand the concerns from both sides and look at how to address them from an industry perspective.

Mayor Littleton noted that some of the towns in Loudoun County had MOUs with Visit Loudoun and provided them with funding. He opined that those towns should be a stakeholder.

Ms. Erickson agreed and noted that Visit Loudoun had MOUs with Middleburg and Leesburg.

Mayor Littleton opined that Middleburg and Leesburg should be more than just a community of businesses. He noted the broader conversation of how agritourism was looked at, especially those businesses that were near and around towns, as they had a direct impact on the quality of life of their residents. Mr. Littleton explained that he was not just talking about this from a strictly economic development perspective and was also talking about balance. He noted that the zoning effort would be focused on uses, which was more than an economic development conversation. Mr. Littleton opined that there needed to be an interaction related to quality of life for residents. He suggested the need to temper the discussion around economic development. Mr. Littleton noted that the Council would be discussing the question of "when there was too much economic development" and whether Middleburg was "overcooking the cake" to the point it was detracting from the quality of life. He suggested the need to address this in a way that did not harm businesses and allowed everyone to be successful, by bringing business interests and community interests to the table. Mr. Littleton encouraged Visit Loudoun to add Leesburg, Middleburg, and the other towns, which were also assets to the County, as stakeholders. He suggested the need to have a meeting of the minds before the County meetings.

Ms. Erickson advised that she looked forward to discussing this with the Mayor so she could understand how Visit Loudoun could deliver on it.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted that Ms. Erickson identified \$88,250 as being TOT revenues that were generated by Visit Loudoun. He questioned whether this included meals tax or other revenues related to shopping. Mr. Leonard-Morgan suggested the Town should have implemented a tiered increase in its donation to Visit Loudoun. He expressed concern about the massive jump in funding that was being requested and advised that he would prefer to do something smaller over a longer period of time. Mr. Leonard-Morgan expressed appreciation for what Visit Loudoun did.

Vice Mayor Bernard noted that the Town gave Visit Loudoun \$35,000 in 2018, during which time the Town received \$756,00 in TOT revenues. He advised that this equated to a 4.6% return on investment. Mr. Bernard noted that if he extrapolated that to \$95,000, it would equate to over \$2 million in TOT revenues in FY '26, which was a 57% increase from FY '22. He advised that the Town did not have the hotel space to support those kinds of revenues. Mr. Bernard noted that this assumed Visit Loudoun was saying the Town would get the same return, otherwise, it would be asking the Town to accept a smaller return on its investment.

Ms. Erickson advised that the rate of return was reduced to 2.6% in FY '22 based on the \$35,000 funding amount. She noted that they were not basing their request 100% on TOT revenues and advised that it was just a base starting point. Ms. Erickson explained that what she brought forward was an example of what Visit Loudoun brought in terms of cash; however, she noted the need to look at everything it brought the Town through its partnership. She expressed hope that their value would be viewed in its entirety. Ms. Erickson advised that this was the first time they had requested an increase since 2014.

Vice Mayor Bernard agreed with Councilmember Leonard-Morgan regarding increasing the funding that much that quickly. He noted that Middleburg may not be ready for as much business as Ms. Erickson indicated would be thrown its way for the investment.

Mayor Littleton noted that Visit Loudoun's funding from Loudoun County was based on their TOT revenues. He further noted that Middleburg was not like Loudoun in that it did not have the ability to increase the number of rooms, nor would it ever do that. Mr. Littleton questioned whether Ms. Erickson was saying that Visit Loudoun was going to drive three times as much activity to Middleburg because they were asking for three times as much funding.

Ms. Erickson confirmed she was not. She opined that what was driving TOT revenues was not the number of rooms but rather was the nightly rates. Ms. Erickson advised that Middleburg was outpacing other towns in terms of TOT revenues and opined that from an equity standpoint, something was not balanced. She advised that she was bringing this to Middleburg's attention and asking for some consideration. In response to an inquiry as to whether there was no intent to increase the level of service for the increased funding, Ms. Erickson confirmed that would not be the case. She opined that the service Middleburg received from Visit Loudoun was top level. Ms. Erickson noted that by asking for equal funding, she would make sure Middleburg received the exact same benefits. She advised that her letter contained recommendations that should be considered, such as setting aside 10% of the allocation for marketing campaigns.

Mayor Littleton expressed an understanding of the need for Visit Loudoun to look at the totality of everything it did; however, he noted that how Leesburg did or did not benefit was not Middleburg's problem. He expressed an understanding of the need for Visit Loudoun to have balance.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted that the Town recently heard a presentation that indicated the nightly room rates in Middleburg were lower and that the TOT revenues were decreasing.

Ms. Erickson agreed with this from a leisure traveler perspective; however, she advised that they were trying to drive mid-week business group traffic to Middleburg in order to recover some of the lost revenues. She noted that this sector tended to pay a higher price point.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan reiterated that an increase in funding from \$35,000 to \$55,000 to \$75,000 to \$95,000 was hard. He suggested the need to think more conservatively.

Councilmember Pearson inquired as to how much funding Visit Loudoun received from Middleburg in 2014, to which Ms. Erickson responded that it was \$10,000.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Mayor Littleton noted that the amount of funding would be subject to an approved annual budget by the Council. He noted that the Council planned to discuss tourism during its strategic planning retreat, including whether it was overdoing it and what the right balance was for the quality of life of the residents. Mr. Littleton opined that this would be the perfect time to discuss this request. He advised Ms. Erickson that the Council could probably provide her with its thoughts on next steps a few weeks after the retreat.

Staff Reports

February 2024

Town Clerk North reported that an optional pre-proposal meeting/tour of the Asbury Church was held earlier in the week, with four potential vendors attending. She noted that she had received inquiries regarding the RFP for community engagement services for another vendor. Ms. North advised that proposals were due on March 25th. She reminded Council of the Volunteer Appreciation Reception scheduled for March 18th in the Town Hall Council Chambers. Ms. North noted that she and the Town Manager were scheduled to meet with Senator Mark Warner's staff later in the week to prepare for his Business Community Forum in the Town Hall Council Chambers on March 25th. She reminded Council of the Town Hall Ribbon Cutting/Open House on Friday, May 31st at 4:00 p.m., which would be held in conjunction with Middleburg Day. Ms. North asked that the Council notify her of anyone they wished to invite.

Vice Mayor Bernard asked that Bill Turnure be sent an invitation. Mayor Littleton asked that all federal, state, and local elected officials be sent invitations.

Mayor Littleton noted that Senator Warner's forum was announced during the recent Bizz Buzz event. He asked that the members of Council attend and that they reach out to local business owners to ask them to attend. Mr. Littleton noted that there was a link to register to attend and noted that there was a maximum capacity in the meeting room. He advised that some of the topics that would be covered would include rural preservation and keeping a dynamic rural economy.

Business Development & Community Partnerships Director MacIntyre reported that she recently participated in a LED Program, during which she was able to connect with other local government professionals and was given tools to help her in her day-to-day activities. She advised that she planned to share those with the committees and vendors she worked with. Ms. MacIntyre noted the ribbon cutting ceremony held earlier in the day for the Museum of Hounds & Hunting. She reported that she and the Mayor discussed how to handle ribbon cutting ceremonies moving forward and advised that they would be scheduled to occur at 4:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month so the members of Council could attend. Ms. MacIntyre noted that she was preparing for Wellness Day on March 23rd at the Middleburg Community Center and reported that she had twenty-six vendors and five presenters signed up thus far. She advised that two members of Council and Kim Shelly would also offer walking tours of Middleburg. Ms. MacIntyre reported that the Middleburg Farmers Market would kick off on May 4th; Art in the Burg would be held on May 11th; and Middleburg Day would occur on May 31st. In response to an inquiry from the Council, she explained that LED stood for Leading, Educating & Development.

Police Chief Jones reported that the Police Department recently deployed AEDs in the patrol vehicles, as well as scattered them throughout the Town Hall building. He further reported that the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) held a threat assessments for large events class at the Town Hall last week. Chief Jones noted that they have reached out to him about holding more classes and bringing more police departments to Middleburg to see small town policing. He reported that he recently met with the DCJS to ensure the Police Department was taking all the training and meeting required standards and noted that the official was amazed at the amount of online training the officers had taken. Chief Jones reported that he was working with Business Development & Community Partnerships Director MacIntyre to prepare for the upcoming events. He advised Council that interviews would be held next week with candidates for the Police Administrative Specialist position. In response to an inquiry from the Council, Chief Jones advised that he had four applicants.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted that Drug Take Back Day would be held on April 27th, in conjunction with the Spring Clean-Up event. He thanked the Police Department for partnering with the Middleburg Sustainability Committee on this. Mr. Leonard-Morgan noted that this was the first time the drug takeback event would be held at the new Town Hall.

In response to an inquiry from Council, Chief Jones advised that he was awaiting a response from Union Bank as to whether they would sponsor a paper shred event that same day.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted that he may have a local business who would like to sponsor an e-shred event that day.

In response to inquiries from the Council, Chief Jones reported that he had an applicant for the police officer position. He advised that he had some people approach him during training events who said they would be interested in applying for a position with Middleburg once they got closer to retirement. Chief Jones noted that he was working on some creative ideas for recruitment, was reposting the vacancy on the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP) website and was looking to advertise the position in the Shenandoah Valley. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he advised that when a police officer was looking for a new position, how they found out about vacancies was by word-of-mouth or through the VACP. He advised that other agencies were coming up with creative social media campaigns. Chief Jones opined that younger police officers were chasing the dollar and advised that he wanted someone who would be dedicated to Middleburg and would not leave every time someone offered them more money. He noted that he had

some Police Chiefs in Middleburg earlier in the day and advised that the Chief for Purcellville told him they were about to offer a five-year veteran officer a starting salary of \$80,000. Chief Jones questioned how Middleburg could compete with that.

General Assembly Legislative Updates

Town Manager Davis reminded Council of SB 304, and its companion house bill, related to accessory dwelling units and reported that they were continued until 2025. He further reported that SB 544, which would limit localities ability to adopt new ordinances related to short-term rentals, was passed by the Senate and House after an amendment by the Senate. Mr. Davis noted that the Governor's deadline to sign it was April 8th. He reported that the bill standardizing local governments' notice provisions was also awaiting the Governor's signature, as was HB 1071 related to speed limits. Mr. Davis noted SB 35 related to the definition of a public meeting, which was intended to clear up the confusion caused by the court ruling in the Prince William County case, and advised that it passed and was also awaiting the Governor's signature. He noted that Town Attorney Crim had a hand in writing that bill and was able to craft it in such a way that it was able to get through. Mr. Davis opined that this would be better for the Councilmembers when they interacted outside of public meetings and would reduce confusion as to what was considered to be a "public meeting".

Town Attorney Crim reminded Council of the confusion following the Virginia Supreme Court's decision in *Gloss vs. Wheeler*, which made it very unclear as to what a meeting was and jeopardized a lot of routine activities of local government officials. He advised that the Senate Bill and companion House Bill, which were reconciled in committee, clarified that if members happened to bump into each other someplace, like the gathering of another body, and they were not discussing public business amongst themselves, it was not considered to be a public meeting. Mr. Crim advised that sending a text to someone, which was a key piece of evidence in the *Gloss vs. Wheeler* case, was also not a meeting under the legislation. He noted that once the Governor signed the bill, additional guidance would be put out as to what was and was not permissible. Mr. Crim reported that the main difference between SB 36 and what was proposed by the FOIA Advisory Council was that the definition of public business was narrowly confined to meetings and did not include public records. He reminded Council that public business was one of the issues in *Gloss vs. Wheeler* because the Virginia Supreme Court said it could mean anything that might conceivably come before the public body at any time. Mr. Crim advised that the definition of "public business" would track with the dissenting opinion in *Gloss vs. Wheeler* and was associated with things that are either on the Council's agenda or were being considered for action by the Council. He opined that this was a big improvement and reduced the uncertainty that had occurred since the court decision came out.

Town Manager Davis noted that it was uncertain as to what the Governor would do about the retail sales of cannabis bill and opined that it sounded like he would veto it. He noted that it was also unclear as to what he would do about the budget bills and opined that it was likely they would go through.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Manager Davis reiterated that SB 544 related to short-term rentals prohibited a jurisdiction from passing an ordinance requiring a special exception permit if the property was the property owner's primary legal residence if the jurisdiction did not already have an ordinance in place by December 31, 2023. He explained that it would be a by-right use in that case, as the government would not be allowed to impose conditions or a legislative process. Mr. Davis suggested the Council discuss how this would impact the Town's current ordinance in closed session in the future. He noted that as written, there would be no impact on the applicability of the Town's current ordinance.

Mayor Littleton noted that the one difficulty was there was no definition for "primary residence." He advised that there was talk of the Governor vetoing a number of different VDOT (Virginia Department of Transportation) oriented bills, which could affect HB 1071, which would allow the Town to reduce the speed limit by five miles per hour in town. Mr. Littleton advised that he was working with the Virginia Municipal League to make sure it did not get caught up in the battle related to VDOT oriented bills. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he advised that the 25 MPH speed limit was moved on the east end of town.

Town Manager Davis explained that one of the ongoing dialogs with VDOT involved pushing the lower speed limit further east to slow eastbound traffic. He noted that the speed limit for westbound traffic would reduce from 50 MPH to 35 MPH at this same location. Mr. Davis advised that the Town advocated to change the speed limit further east as well; however, VDOT was being less accommodating of that request.

Mayor Littleton reminded Council that VDOT recommended moving new buildings closer to Washington Street, removing some on-street parking and installing more bump-outs/chicanes.

Town Manager Davis welcomed Deputy Town Manager Moore back from medical leave and reported that he intended to work full time as much as possible beginning next week. He introduced Erick Moore, the Town's new Planning & Project Associate. Mr. Davis noted that Mr. Moore previously worked for the Counties of Franklin and Warren, the Town of Mount Jackson and the City of Winchester and was a Certified Zoning Administrator. He advised that Mr. Moore was familiarizing himself with the Town's zoning ordinance and Historic District Guidelines. Mr. Davis expressed gratitude that Mr. Moore had joined the Town team. He noted that with the return of Deputy Town Manager Moore, he would start handing off some of his duties to the Planning & Project Associate.

Mayor Littleton welcomed Messrs. Moore to the team and back to the Town, respectively.

Town Hall Project Report

Town Clerk North reported that the Commissioning Agent for Downey & Scott was working with the contractor to commission the HVAC system this week. She further reported that a simulated power failure would be performed in the morning to test the generator. Ms. North reported that work continued on Phase II of the project, with the plumbing, landscaping, trim work and final coat of asphalt all scheduled to be done next week. She advised that Quail Run Signs was scheduled to install the Marshall Street entrance sign, the directory signage, and other miscellaneous signs later this week. Ms. North reported that the installation of the EV fast charger was underway and that it should be online next week.

Consent Agenda

- A. Council Approval – February 8, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes; February 22, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

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

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: N/A

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

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Proposed FY '25 General Fund Budget

Town Manager Davis reviewed the items that have changed since the draft budget was first proposed to the Council, including the correction of a figure in the Economic Development budget and the request for funding from Christmas in Middleburg. He also reviewed the proposed revenues for the General Fund. Mr. Davis opined that the business license revenues were on track for the current fiscal year and could be slightly over budget once the late payments were received.

Town Manager Davis reported that the draft budget was reviewed by the Strategic Finance Committee, who recommended the Town not get too dependent on interest income as a revenue source. He noted that the Town would not continue to see 5.5% returns on its investments on an ongoing basis. Mr. Davis advised that the amount he included in the budget was conservative and a number he was comfortable with. He noted that as to the transient occupancy taxes (TOT), there was some growth as business travel was starting to increase. Mr. Davis advised that the Finance Committee recommended keeping a close eye on this, however, as changes to the economy and inflation could affect it.

Town Manager Davis advised that overall, General Fund revenues were proposed to increase by 1.8%, to \$5.082 million, over the adopted FY '24 Budget. He noted that the main change was from real property tax revenues, which were projected to increase by \$42,000. Mr. Davis reminded Council that this was mainly due to \$18 million in new construction. He advised that he was not projecting an increase in meals tax revenues due to the softening that had been experienced over the past few months. Mr. Davis reiterated that the proposed budget called for the meals tax and TOT tax revenues to remain flat. He reminded Council that the TOT revenues for FY '24 were probably over-projected and advised that he used the FY '23 actuals, with an increase for inflation, as the basis for the projected FY '25 revenues. Mr. Davis reiterated that the other major change in General Fund revenues was for the interest income and that \$300,000 was a conservative number based on the 5.5% returns on investment the Town was experiencing.

Town Manager Davis reported that the proposed FY '25 Administration Budget included a 4% market adjustment for general employees and a 7% market adjustment for sworn police officers. He noted that these adjustments were based on what was happening around Middleburg in other jurisdictions. Mr. Davis advised that, in addition, the budget included an average 2% merit increase that would be based on performance evaluations, which would result in an average 6% increase for the staff. He noted that this was behind that proposed by the County and in line with that proposed in other towns. Mr. Davis reported that the Town would see an 8% increase in health insurance costs. He reminded Council that those costs were divided into two separate departments – Administration and the Police Department – at the recommendation of the Strategic Finance Committee. Mr. Davis reported that the Town would see a decrease in its Virginia Retirement System (VRS) contributions. He reviewed the remainder of the expenditures in the Administration budget. Mr. Davis noted that he decreased the expenditures for the Town Attorney based on current patterns. He advised that he increased them for consulting services and noted that the Town now used a firm to support its human resources efforts. Mr. Davis advised that he also increased the expenditures for professional development based on increased activities of the leadership team. He reminded Council of the plan to replace the six-year-old Surface devices with iPads in the current fiscal year and noted that he was waiting for the release of the new iPads. Mr. Davis reminded Council of the fire department pass-through grant and noted that it was strictly a fund balance item. He reported that the charitable contributions line item was proposed as \$0 for FY '25. Mr. Davis advised that the Town's software maintenance costs were increasing by 5-8%, which was reflected in that line item. He reminded the Council that the debt service payments for the Town Hall Project would hit their peak in FY '25 and noted that this was the amount it would generally be for the next eighteen years, unless the Council decided to pre-pay a portion of that debt. Mr. Davis reported that he removed the transfer to the CIP for fleet acquisition due to the early purchase of a police vehicle. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he advised that the interest on the Town's debt service was 2.6-2.7%, which were incredible rates.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the proposed expenditures in the Building & Grounds Budget for FY '25. He noted that this continued to be a best guess based on the information available and noted that the staff had only been in the new building since October 30th. Mr. Davis advised that adjustments would be made as the staff continued to get a better understanding of the utility demands. He reminded Council that for the past five months, the Town had run the heat off the boiler, which was not intended to be the primary heating source for the building; therefore, the costs for natural gas may not be an exact reflection of future costs. Mr. Davis advised that the other costs included janitorial and landscaping maintenance services. He noted the need for a contract for HVAC maintenance services.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the proposed FY '25 Police Budget. He reiterated that salaries were proposed to increase more than those for the general workforce and explained that this was so the Town could compete with the surrounding market. Mr. Davis noted that Loudoun County was proposing a 12.7% increase, while Leesburg enacted a 10% one last year. He reported that other jurisdictions were proposing double digit increases. Mr. Davis advised that while he was not proposing that level, he believed the amount being proposed was comparable to other jurisdictions with which the

Town competed. He noted the continuing need for overtime and part-time officers and expressed hope that this could be reduced once the Police Department was fully staffed. Mr. Davis reminded Council that some of the overtime costs were for events that were reimbursable by third parties and some were for Town events. He advised that the staff was looking at how to strategically reduce overtime and the dependence on part-time officers. Mr. Davis reported that the benefits expenditures were fairly standard. He reiterated that health insurance costs were increasing by 8%. Mr. Davis noted the reduced expenditures for equipment and reminded Council of the AEDs and ballistic vests that were purchased in the current fiscal year. He advised that they would likely be repurchased in five years based on their general lifespans.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Chief Jones confirmed the officers were trained to use the AEDs.

Town Manager Davis noted that Chief Jones went through his budget line-by-line and reviewed actual usage and departmental needs since this was his first budget. He expressed appreciation for his diligence. Mr. Davis noted that the Police budget was experiencing some increased costs for software maintenance, including an upgrade in the parking ticket system.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Manager Davis advised that the Town did not know what the electricity costs would be for the EV (electric vehicle) charging station. He reminded Council that the Town would receive all the revenue from it. Mr. Davis advised that the staff would watch the usage and determine the trends. He reiterated that once the Town's HVAC system was balanced, there may be a decrease in electricity costs for the building. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he confirmed there was not a separate meter for the EV charging station. Mr. Davis explained that the Town would estimate the costs based on the kilowatt hour usage.

Mayor Littleton suggested the staff notify the Town's insurance carrier of the installation of the EV charger in order to ensure it was covered in the event someone backed into it and knocked it over.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the proposed FY '25 expenditures for the Maintenance Department. He noted that there were not any changes of significance, other than the cost for refuse collection. Mr. Davis reported that the Town received a request from American Disposal for an 8% increase in their rates. He noted the need to look into this in concert with the current contract. Mr. Davis advised that this would return to the Council for their consideration and noted that the budget may need to be increased. He reminded Council of the snow removal line item, which was a place holder and was based on the costs for a few medium sized storms.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the proposed FY '25 expenditures for the Planning & Zoning Department. He reported that there were no significant changes being proposed. Mr. Davis noted that the consulting line item was still at \$50,000.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the proposed FY '25 expenditures for the Economic Development Department. He advised that he was proposing to increase the line item for the social media contract so the Town could pursue opportunities with its contractor, Red Thinking, for particular events.

Mayor Littleton recommended this line item not be increased. He reminded Council that one of the things they would discuss during their strategic planning retreat was whether the Town was doing too much.

Town Manager Davis advised that he would remove the increase for the time being. He reminded Council that the Strategic Finance Committee recommended the community-based events be moved out of economic development and into their own subsection. Mr. Davis noted that this would allow the citizens to see what the Town was spending to benefit them. He advised that this would include Middleburg Day and the Independence Day Celebration. Mr. Davis agreed there was value to separating the visitor-focused events and the community focused ones. He noted that even if the community focus event costs were removed from the economic development budget, Business Development & Community Partnerships Director MacIntyre would continue to support them.

The Council agreed it supported separating the events into two categories in the budget.

Town Manager Davis reported that the events budgets have been increased based on actual expenditures and continuing needs. He opined that an increase was needed to support Wellness Day. Mr. Davis reported that he was proposing \$25,000 for Middleburg Day and noted that this may need to be adjusted as that event was still being developed for this year.

Mayor Littleton asked that an item be added to the next Council meeting agenda on the proposed marketing campaign for Middleburg Day. He noted that it was only two months away and suggested the need to get it on people's calendars.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan suggested the Town spend money on a bus to pick up residents from Windy Hill and transport them to/from the event.

Town Manager Davis reported that the other two large changes in the economic development budget were based on the Council's recent approval of the grants and sponsorships policies. He advised that \$30,000 was included for the infrastructure grants line item. Mr. Davis reported that an increase in funding for the farmers market was also proposed, as the Town was trying to increase attendance and keep the vendors. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he reported that \$10,000 was added to the proposed budget for Christmas in Middleburg.

In response to an inquiry from the Council as to who would service the AEDs after they were used, Chief Jones reported that he set up a schedule to ensure the batteries were replaced and the units were tested every six months. He further reported that the company they were purchased from would service them as needed.

In response to an inquiry from the Council in terms of whether there was any money in the budget for ADA compliance, Town Manager Davis advised that from a community engagement focus, the Town would facilitate and encourage property owners, business owners and landlords to play a part on that role. He advised that as to the Town's responsibilities, these included buildings and streets/sidewalks. Mr. Davis noted that the new Town Hall was fully accessible and advised that if additional enhancements were necessary, the staff would look into them. He noted that the challenge was the streets and sidewalks and advised that the historic brick sidewalks were difficult to navigate. Mr. Davis reminded Council that this was one of the needs that was identified as a part of the South Madison Street Project. He noted that tree roots were also causing a challenge and noted that there was money in the capital budget as a placeholder to start working on the sidewalks and streetscape to make it as accessible as possible.

Councilmember Curran noted the need to make sure the buildings in town were fire compliant. She suggested an ADA committee be appointed to take an inventory and be proactive.

Councilmember Curran expressed concern that more money was not included in the budget to get ahead of overtime in the Police Department and to be innovative and creative in its hiring practices. She opined that otherwise, the Town would never get ahead of the need for more officers.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Manager Davis advised that the Town advertised a starting salary of \$61,000, depending on qualifications and experience.

Councilmember Curran reiterated her suggestion that the Town needed to be creative and noted that a resident in town offered an apartment after she heard the Council was talking about allowing take-home vehicles.

In response to a suggestion from Council that the Town staff have its human resource consultant help with the job description, Town Manager Davis confirmed he would work with her. He noted that the Vice Mayor assisted in the development of a robust recruitment brochure, which had been posted on various websites and other places. Mr. Davis advised that the Chief was also looking at newspaper and other online resources in the Shenandoah Valley. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he advised that the job description was just that and that a recruitment brochure had been developed for the recruitment.

Mayor Littleton reiterated his suggestion that the staff work with the Town's human resource consultant to gain her viewpoints on what was important. He expressed concern about listing only the starting salary range.

Town Manager Davis advised that pay/pay scales/pay plans was a philosophical discussion that he would like to have with the Council. He noted that he could not post a pay range because the Town traditionally did not recruit in that manner. Mr. Davis expressed concern about internal equity in terms of respecting the existing officers' time here. He noted that a pay step program recognized an individual's experience. Mr. Davis advised that he and the Chief have had some strategic conversations, which they have not yet had a chance to discuss with the Council. He agreed the Mayor had a valid point and suggested that if there was a pay scale, he could show someone where they would fit within it.

In response to an inquiry as to whether this was something that would be discussed during the retreat, Mayor Littleton confirmed it would not. He reminded Council that human resource management was on the list of top-level priorities for the retreat. Mr. Littleton further reminded the members that specifically how the Town recruited police officers was not a priority that required a strategic conversation and suggested the Council reserve an hour during a Council meeting to discuss those details. He opined the staff was not prepared for that discussion during this meeting.

Town Manager Davis advised Council that he informed the retreat facilitator that one of his goals, and that of at least a few members of Council, was to discuss the Police Department, which was one of the biggest challenges in terms of human resource management. He suggested the need for an hour and a half strategic review of the department, including a strategic analysis and recommendations that could address some of the current challenges. Mr. Davis advised that the facilitator's response was that this did not fit yet. He suggested that during the retreat, the baseline question was how the Council wished to have the conversation when the staff had suggestions/recommendations/ideas for a strategic review of a department. Mr. Davis advised that he and Chief Jones had a presentation ready and questioned whether the Council wanted to receive it during a regular or a special Council meeting.

Mayor Littleton suggested that if this was a strategic question, it was not about pay but rather was about everything. He further suggested it would be about how the Town looked at the department. Mr. Littleton opined that it was a more complex question than just pay. He suggested the conversation during the retreat, if this got to the top of the list, was how the Council had those strategic conversations. Mr. Littleton noted that human resource conversations were difficult because they were personal and noted the need to be careful about how they were done.

In response to the suggestion that there needed to be space in the budget in case it was needed, Mayor Littleton noted that a portion of the unassigned revenues could be used for this purpose. Town Manager Davis noted that the proposed FY '25 Budget currently contained \$431,000 in unallocated revenues.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Manager Davis confirmed the staff had spoken with police departments who had pay plans. He advised that a former colleague of Chief Jones' spent the day in Middleburg helping to develop a draft plan.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Councilmember Pearson announced that there was now an EV charging station at the Middleburg Library.

Mayor Littleton noted that the Town Clean-Up Day would be held on the same day as the Arbor Day celebration.

Mayor Littleton noted that Windy Hill was celebrating the 20th anniversary of Virginia Lane on April 25th at the Salamander Resort. He noted that this conflicted with the Council meeting and asked whether the Council would like to move the start time of the meeting that evening to 7:00 p.m.

Town Manager Davis noted that the intention was to schedule the public hearings on the special use permit applications for short-term rental uses for that evening.

Council questioned whether it would be better to change the night of the Council meeting. After some discussion, they asked that this be placed on the March 28th agenda for further discussion.

There being no further business, Mayor Littleton declared the meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

APPROVED:

Trowbridge M. Littleton, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk

March 14, 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: We will call the meeting to order. First item is Pledge of Allegiance.

All: [Pledge of Allegiance]

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

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Peter Leonard-Morgan.

Bud Jacobs: Bud Jacobs.

Darlene Kirk: Darlene Kirk.

Bridge Littleton: Bridge Littleton.

Chris Bernard: Chris Bernard.

Cindy Pearson: Cindy Pearson.

J. 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. Next item is public comment. If any member of the public would like to address the Town Council, you may do so. Now you have up to three minutes. And we will open for public comment. Anyone. Going once, going twice. Okay, we will close public comment and now move to special recognition. And the first item is a resolution. Excuse me? A resolution of appreciation for Colleen Bryan. So we have a resolution here. As probably many of you know, and probably some of you don't know Colleen Bryan is moving on to I'm not going to say greener pastures. I'm going to say just as green, but other pastures to move down to the Tappahannock region, to be near family and take the next step in her career. She has served the town government and the police department faithfully and with excellence and dedication for. I don't want to say many years because it makes it seem that we're all getting old. But for a number of years and we are going to deeply miss her, not only miss her contribution to the health, not health and safety, but public safety, but just her general good demeanor, smile and wonderful care and joy that it's been working with her. So I know probably Kevin has something he'd like to say. But before we do that, I'm going to read the resolution. And then if anybody wishes to add additional comments, they may. Okay. So this is a resolution of appreciation. I did not know your name was Suzanne. For Suzanne Colleen Bryan for service as the Police Administrative Specialist. Whereas on January 22nd, 2015, Colleen Bryan was hired as the part time Administrative Assistant for the Middleburg Police Department, and whereas this position was later reclassified first to a full time position and later as the police administrative assistant to coincide with the increased duties Miss Bryan had assumed. And whereas during her tenure, Miss Bryan worked for the police chief in 2017 to implement the new United Public Safety System, the town's electronic parking electronic

parking ticket management system, and was responsible for the daily operations of the system, was responsible for placing and lifting stop record orders to suspend a driver's privileges to renew their vehicle registration through the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles when an individual failed to pay their past due parking tickets, was responsible for tracking the metrics of traffic stops performed by Middleburg Police Officers, provided support to the police department during Christmas in Middleburg, including issuing press passes, and provided support for the Police Department's National Night Out event. And Whereas, Miss Bryan also provided front counter support for the town's administrative staff during times of need as the result of staff absences due to vacation, sick leave or meetings. And whereas Miss Bryan left the town's employ effective March 6th, 2024, to accept a position with another locality so she could be closer to her family. And Whereas Miss Bryan demonstrated professional and personal dedication to the Town of Middleburg during her tenure and will be greatly missed by the residents, members of the police department, other town staff and Council. And Whereas, the Middleburg Town Council deem it appropriate to express its earnest and heartfelt gratitude to Miss Bryan for her years of service to the town over the past nine years. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the mayor and members of the Town Council hereby recognize and express our sincere appreciation to Colleen Bryan for her service to the town of Middleburg from January 22nd, 2015 through March 6th, 2024, as Middleburg Police Administrative Specialist and express our profound thanks to her and hope for her continued success in life. [applause] Would anybody like to?

J. Kevin Daly: Mr. Mayor, I would like to make a motion, if I may. No keep your hands down, Peter. It's mine.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Hold on.

J. Kevin Daly: Let me make the motion, then you can say.

Bridge Littleton: You make the motion. Go ahead.

J. Kevin Daly: Thank you. Peter. As the Chairman of PEPSI Middleburg Police Enforcement and Public Safety Integration, I move that Council adopt a resolution expressing its appreciation to Colleen Bryan for her service as Police Administrative Specialist from January 22nd, 2015 through March 6th, 2024.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Any further discussion? Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Colleen, I just want to say we're going to miss you so much. And your elegance and professionalism in the police department will be very hard to get close to or certainly replace. Thank you.

J. Kevin Daly: No, no. You can. You want to be next?

Bridge Littleton: Kevin you're up.

J. Kevin Daly: All right. Thank you for this is my third enlistment. So for the first eight years Colleen was really the face of the police department before we moved into the new quarters here. When you entered into the office back at Federal Street, it was Colleen that greeted you and she had all the information. I thought she ran the show and the guys.

Bridge Littleton: And you thought, right?

J. Kevin Daly: And it was. It was true. She kept them together and you're going to be missed. And you also were you would come out into the town common grounds. You even hang around at Mark Metzger's place. I don't as I don't know why you're bothered to go there, as you can see what his clothing is like. But you're going to be missed. And as we say in Middleburg, if we don't see you in the future, we'll see you in the pasture.

Chris Bernard: So to echo everything else you were an incredible asset to the police department. But it was also just really great to see around town and see you in the office. And thank you for all your help.

Bridge Littleton: Ms. Kirk.

Darlene Kirk: Colleen you're just you've been really a star, and your tenure here at the state at police department and your smile and just everything about you is really going to be missed. And I wish you all the very best in the world. And you can always come back and visit us, especially on Christmas in Middleburg now since you don't have to work. Look forward to seeing you.

Bridge Littleton: Wait a minute if she's not coming back to work, why is she coming back?

Darlene Kirk: Christmas in Middleburg.

Bridge Littleton: That's what I mean.

Darlene Kirk: Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Anyone else? Okay, so now we get to vote. All those in favor say aye.

All of Council: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed? Abstentions. All right. Motion passes. Colleen, thank you very much. And if you want to come up. And if you'd like to say something you're more than welcome.

Colleen Bryan: Thank you so much.

Bridge Littleton: And you might want to pull it down towards you. There you go.

Colleen Bryan: I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Mayor and Town Council. I feel incredibly blessed to have been a part of your team, and it's been an honor and a privilege to serve this community for the last nine years. I'm going to deeply miss everyone and this amazing community. And thank you to everyone who came tonight. It means the world to me. Thank you. [applause]

Bridge Littleton: Here you go.

Darlene Kirk: I'm gonna cry. I know she's such a sweetheart.

Bridge Littleton: Thanks Colleen take care.

Colleen Bryan: Thank you so much.

Bridge Littleton: Don't spend all your time [inaudible]. Are they really? What? Wow. That's an institution.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. All right. Next item is property tax rate. So public hearing. Let me pull this up here.

Bridge Littleton: All right, Danny do you want to give a quick overview?

Danny Davis: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. [inaudible] I'm sorry.

Bridge Littleton: Go ahead.

Danny Davis: Briefly as you are aware. [multiple speakers]

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Sorry.

Bridge Littleton: That's all right. Mark.

Mark Thompson: I missed the chance to make a public comment. I just want to say that this room and this building is absolutely lovely and stunning. And I just want to compliment you and everybody that was involved in the planning. It is really, really lovely. Thank you.

Rhonda North: Mr. Mayor. I need him to give his name for the record.

Bridge Littleton: Mark.

Mark Thompson: Oh, I'm so sorry. My name is Mark Thompson. Thanks.

Bridge Littleton: Thanks Mark. Okay, Danny go ahead.

Danny Davis: Sure thing. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As we've discussed the last couple of meetings and residents and property owners are aware property rates have increased again. Property values have increased again. And the Town Council is responsible for setting a tax rate each year. And if that tax rate is more than what is defined as the equalized rate plus 1%, then a public hearing is required, as proposed in the budget that was brought forward to you at the last meeting the tax rate being proposed is the equalized rate plus 3%, which would be a reduction in the tax rate to 12.36 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The equalized rate, if you were to reduce it further, is 12.00 cents. The purpose of this is to hold a public hearing as required by state code. You have the opportunity to vote on this tonight if you wish. But you also are not obligated to. We do need Council to vote by or at your next meeting at the latest so that we can have this to Loudoun County for collections. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you. So we will open the public hearing if anybody would like to address Council on the matter of the proposed real property tax rate. You may do so now. All right. Yeah. We will close the public hearing. And move on to discussion. So any discussion on the, I mean, I know we talked about this at the last meeting. Any other discussion on the proposed tax rate that we put together? Yeah. Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Really? Just a couple of questions. And I probably know the answer, but I think it's important just to ask the question. So the condo rates seem so skewed compared to townhouses and single family dwellings and also, the difference between the 12.36 cent rate and the 12 cent rate isn't very much for condos, but it seems much more for townhouses and detached houses. And I just wondered whether you might be able to comment, Danny, on that. Just I don't know, it's obviously numbers and it's statistics and facts, but and I'd also like to know if you know what the county is doing out of interest. And maybe I've missed that.

Danny Davis: Absolutely. So to the first question about condos, they are inherently just lesser value to begin with. So when you see perhaps a similar increase in gross value or raw number value, it will be a much higher percentage on a condo versus a townhouse or single family because you started with a lower number to begin with. And so when we look at the chart on page it might actually be in the budget. So I would refer back to there and we can cover this a little bit later. But condos in their values have [inaudible]. No. Correct. And so that's, the difference there. For condos, the average value has continued to increase from what was, I think 340 or 350 to now, 440 or so or, or 400. So it's a fairly sizable increase percentage wise. Again probably not different from an actual dollar standpoint compared to the others categories. And so that would also be why the dollar difference for single families and townhomes is a larger spread because of the actual values of those properties. In terms of the county, they are still having their budget deliberations. I have not been watching them. But I do know that they started with a proposed what I believe was keeping the tax rate the same, which is not an equalized rate. It is actually recognizing that they have continued demands. But I know that there's ongoing realization from some board members that not equalizing the rate will be a financial burden on their residents. But then on the other side, if you equalize the rate, you may not have the resources to provide the services expected from your residents. And that's the ongoing and constant challenge. And at their level of pinning on the tax rate is between probably six and 7 million. So it's significant differences when you're looking at that.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Peter, I think part of it too is remember two years ago, or maybe it was a year ago, townhouses were going up by 18 and 20%, but they're not now and condos weren't. So you know there's always that different. And yeah. And I mean a lot of people have been renovating condos in town. And I'm sure that that gets taken into account when Bob Wurtz does his assessment.

Danny Davis: The majority of condos are Stonewall Court by the water tower. There. Oh, Fox Run that's right. Because of the way, are they stacked or? [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: It's actually a condo association.

Danny Davis: An actual condo? That's right. Yeah. That's right.

Bridge Littleton: You don't own your townhouse. You own a percentage of the whole.

Danny Davis: Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Any other questions or discussion? Would someone like to make a motion? Bud.

Bud Jacobs: I had a quick question.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, Bud.

Bud Jacobs: I don't want to put you on the spot, Danny, but back of the envelope view are is Loudoun County done with its fairly strong assessment increases over the last 2 or 3 years? What's your sense of that?

Danny Davis: Yeah, it's as you look through the assessor's kind of forecasts as well as their economists forecasts, I think we all make some assumptions that housing values will not be increasing at the significant percentage that we have seen over the last, really four years since Covid began, ironically. What that is does vary fairly significantly area by area of the county as well. They have seen increases in property values. But I think you're probably what we're seeing here in terms of the 5 to 6% change is probably not uncommon if we see that again. But it could even be less. It could be 2 to 3% we're seeing. I think the challenge right now is the supply. And Mr. Leonard-Morgan might know better than me, but the supply seems to be much lacking while the demand continues to be there, putting some pressure still on values that at one point we thought we would see values decreasing and we're not seeing really.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Yeah, the irony is that inventory is really low because a lot of people do not want to sell their homes because they've got two and a half, 3% mortgages. And right now it's around 7% ish. And because of the low inventory, we're seeing prices really not just maintain but actually slightly increase. So I do think probably they're going to come down not come down, but they're not going to increase at that same rate.

Danny Davis: And we can keep Council updated as we get more info from the county. They do provide quarterly financial updates with pretty hefty economic forecasting really good solid information. So we're happy to keep you updated as we review that further.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah.

Cindy Pearson: I'd just like to say on page four number three, just to reiterate this for the public, that even though the tax rate is being lowered, the individual property taxes may, however, increase at a percentage greater or less than the above percentage, meaning that because of the higher. [off mic]. Thank you, assessed value. And that's not because of our tax rate, but it's from the assessed value.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Any other questions? Would someone like to make a motion? Yeah, Darlene.

Darlene Kirk: I move that the Town Council of Middleburg, Virginia adopt a real property tax rate of 12.36 cents per \$100 of assessed value for calendar year 2024 and fiscal year 2025.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Any discussion? Rhonda, you want to call the roll?

Rhonda North: Vice Mayor Bernard.

Chris Bernard: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Curran.

Pam Curran: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Daly.

J. Kevin Daly: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Jacobs.

Bud Jacobs: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Kirk.

Darlene Kirk: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Leonard-Morgan.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Pearson.

Cindy Pearson: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Thank you all very much. Next up is presentation from. Well, you know, let's move this to the end. Yeah. [laughter] Presentation from Visit Loudoun. And Miss Beth Erickson.

Beth Erickson: Thank you. We tested this out earlier. We feel very confident.

Bridge Littleton: It's guaranteed not to work now.

Beth Erickson: Rhonda was outstanding in helping me. Hi. Good to see you coming back in. Absolutely. So it is a pleasure to be with you this evening Mr. Mayor, Mr. Vice Mayor, and Council Members. So my purpose this evening is to give you, as we do every year, come in and give you a brief update on really the happenings of tourism, both within Loudoun County but most specifically within our beloved Middleburg. So I think it's important, as we only kind of have these opportunities to have these conversations once a year. I do want to start with a little bit of a level set, which is, excuse me, that visitor spending in Loudoun County, we lead the Commonwealth of Virginia in Loudoun County. We generate the most visitor spending within the Commonwealth, more than, say, Williamsburg or Virginia Beach. And without a doubt, a huge part of that economic driver is Dulles International Airport. And Dulles International Airport is an economic driver for the entire region. But what the entire region does not have is western Loudoun County. What the entire region does not have is the Town of Middleburg. So it's within that that as we move forward through the

conversation that we recognize at Visit Loudoun, the importance of the Town of Middleburg, we have a wonderful relationship. And that's what we're going to talk about this evening. So, as you know, Loudoun is really diverse in our quality of our offerings to visitors. We have everything from equestrian to fine dining to recreational assets that really make us very unique. And our key markets are people coming to the county either for weddings, for meetings, for special events, or for sporting events. So from the structure of Visit Loudoun, we have an MOU with the county that has been in place for decades. I was joking with Council Member Pearson that I was going through files today and found an email correspondence when the Councilwoman was on our board back in 2014 when we first started taking a look at the need to my desire to put in an MOA with the town, and that is what we are going to be discussing this evening, because I think that the MOA and our relationship with the town truly helps to define that that it is a partnership and I think that's really important. So when we talk about partnering with Middleburg, we do it on many different levels. From a board engagement, we always have board members from Middleburg that are on our board. We have currently Michelle McNaughton, who serves on our board, and she is on our executive leadership, and she Chairs our Marketing Leverage Grant Committee. We have, of course, Ali serves on our board as Ex-Officio. We have our certified Tourism Ambassador program, of which several are view our members, and we do at least one, maybe two CTA trainings every single year in the Town of Middleburg. We work very closely with Punkin and actually had a great opportunity to meet with her recently with the MBPA. I serve on the Cultural Events Committee, but it gets down to this is a lot of alphabet soup, but our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, we have Kayse Small that serves on it, the Loudoun Wineries Wine Growers Association surround Middleburg. We serve with them as well. The Loudoun Craft Brewers. The Burns family was a huge part of putting that together, and we have just launched a committee on museums to have our museums begin to start working together more and more. So we have Suzanne from the Middleburg Museum Yvonne from the National Sporting Library and from the Biz Buzz this past week introductions with the Museum of the Hounds and Hunting North America and Katrina. We'll be coming on to that board. So we have outlined in our MOA what we call affectionately a report card, where we have actionable measures that we go through. I meet with the Town Manager, I meet with Ali. She has verified that we have met those, and those are in your packet for further enjoyment. At some point when you want to pick it up and read. But I'm going to hit on a couple of the key ones coming out. I have a little bit of data, but not a huge amount of data, but I'm very excited to share with you a couple of really important things. So without a doubt, one of the biggest drivers for the visitor economy is the really high impact of things like Instagram even TikTok, Facebook. So really it is a very visual medium. So social media is really important. And on any given day we communicate with 100,000 followers across our social media channels. So Middleburg or Middleburg Business was posted 167 times on our social channels in 2023. That equates to Middleburg being posted roughly a quarter of all Visit Loudoun Social media. In 2023, these posts reached 727,000 people. So again, you see impressions above you impressions are we served it up to somebody. That doesn't mean necessarily that they saw it, but through analytics, we can tell that it was 727,000 that did. But what's most important those are eyeballs was engagement. So engagement means that somebody liked it. They commented on it, they forwarded it to their friends and family. And we saw a total of nearly 61,000 engagements on our Middleburg content. So that equates to 8.36% engagement. Our average is 1 to 7. So the content that we are putting out on Middleburg resonates, and they are an engaged audience. And I know that from what Punkin and I have talked about, she sees the results of that as well translating to feet on the street, which is really, really important. So a few highlights on earned media. We have a secret force in the Visit Loudoun team and her name is Jen Siegel. And she's incredible in what she does and how she pitches, along with Douglas Rogers and the rest of her team. So I've hit on a couple of things in terms of her positioning. But when you look at it from hemisphere and I love, love that headline Don't Hold Your Horses, where it talks specifically about Middleburg. Looking at, of course, wine infused spa treatments, because why not? I would say, but also looking at things from an international standpoint, Canada is a really big market for us, and we market Middleburg and its assets very hard to the Canadian market. It's a good drive market as they're coming through snowbirds up and down. And Canadian visitors are very important to the Commonwealth of Virginia. And they work really well here in Loudoun. So Toronto Star, as we focus on really taking a look at the family run vineyards, of which of course surround and are engaged with Middleburg. Boxwood being a great one and that is one of the features, Love, love, love. The 18 best Hallmark Christmas towns in USA with Middleburg being in the top ten. Travel and leisure you cannot ask for a better placement when you look at the Leisure Traveler. So when you have How to Plan the Perfect Trip to Middleburg, what I wanted to call out on this is look at the copy block on the left where it goes to not only where do you stay, the best things to do, where do you shop? Where do you dine? So where you're seeing just kind of the front part of that article. It dives deep down in terms of what really makes from a very granular standpoint, Middleburg so special. Southern Living the 11 best weekend getaways in Virginia for every type of traveler. And Middleburg was number one on the right hand side, you'll see how we called out some of the

businesses that we pitch when we go through and looking at again everything from where to stay, where to dine, where to shop, again, really a phenomenally comprehensive hit. One of the other things that Jen has done and will continue to do, working very closely with Ali is really looking at we're pushing a lot of local media because we look at the DMV region being a really phenomenal place for us to attract for day trippers. So Virginia Wine Month, we were able to focus on Cana. And of course, Melanie Natoli, who is the first female winemaker to win the Governor's Cup. And so we were focusing on her. And of course there is if you did not know, there is a Virginia Cider Week. So there is something for everybody. So we make sure that we are pitching it. So my last bit of data really gets into some of the things that I think are of great importance to you. From a state standpoint, Northern Virginia has led the recovery from a visitor perspective. What we are seeing now in the trends that leisure is kind of flattening out. We saw that spiked very high during the pandemic coming out of the pandemic. We're seeing that leveling off. We are seeing group demand, which, again, are going to be those meetings and associations, those businesses that are going to come in midweek. We are seeing that as our growth engine. That's where we are putting a lot of our sales time behind. And we are really taking a look at that as to help push us and move us even further forward from the pandemic. So this is a bit of an eye chart, but what's important is the red line is mid-week occupancy. So this I wanted to make sure that I brought to you. What we are seeing is that midweek is beginning to approach in many levels, hitting what we see from a weekend standpoint. So when you're looking at dispersing visitors coming into the town, that is a really good strong indicator. So we have a very robust sales team. There's a woman on our team named Ann Hayes and her team work very closely in positioning Middleburg for business. And one of the things at the very top is the number of leads that we send out, right. Resulting in if all of them had booked nearly 28,000 room nights. But what's important is on the bottom part. So on your left, the 2022 numbers you're going to see the largest part of that is the acronym SMURF, which is a really odd acronym, but it really is leisure. So it's social groups, it's leisure. The one on the right, which is now becoming more blue, is mid-week business. So that is a key focus of Ann. And that is where she is really looking to drive a lot of that demand because we know that that is important. It's important to us. It's important to you. So I wanted to make sure that I had an opportunity to share that with you. Out of the business that has our fingerprints on it as you can imagine, when you have a hospitality engine, as you have here in Middleburg, there are a lot of people that organically will book and go in. So those that are from our fingertips is nearly \$1.8 million in revenue that Visit Loudoun team has brought forward. So if you break that down further, in terms of TOT generation, it's about \$88,000 in this past year alone. So I know that we have a few things coming up I want to make sure that you knew about, one of which is our annual meeting and tourism awards. In case you did not know, you have in your midst one of our Judy Patterson Award Winners in Punkin. Oh, when did you win that award? That's fair. But we always enjoy highlighting and spotlighting Middleburg businesses, and we're always thrilled to have you there. And then I, Jen, on our team is working very closely with Ali that the Fox Five zip trip, which was here I think four years ago, is coming back this on May 31st. So Jen is working very closely with Ali, her team and the businesses here in Middleburg to make sure we are ready. So I will open up for questions. But one of the things that you have before you as you go through your budget deliberations and thought process is a letter to from Visit Loudoun to the Town Council. And we are looking for a couple of modifications, one of which is to move the MOA from a single year to a three year MOA, but it has the exact same checkpoints that we come back every year as we go through. It's just administratively I think that is something that would be helpful for the town staff and for Visit Loudoun, because I think that all of a sudden we all have the same panic moment where we're like, we've got to get in and get this done. So the three years would be great. The other thing is there is a request in the letter that Visit Loudoun is looking for and asking for consideration on an increase of the appropriation that the town gives to Visit Loudoun. We have been at a flat rate I believe, since 2018. And there is a rationale in, in terms of looking at it over the three years and a recommendation of how that could be handled, and that is certainly at your discretion. And one of the things that again you'll see under the recommendations is we're looking to move that number forward by about 20,000 over the course of the next three years. So it will tap out at the end of that MOA moving it from 35,000 up to 95,000. So that is a request that we have to you for consideration. And I think that it was part of why I put forward looking at the sales activities. If you look at from TOT alone, we are somewhat paying for ourselves. And so I will end and take any questions, but I will tell you without any doubt. We are very, very proud to have Middleburg as a key partner. And I am very proud to see the relationship with the Town Council really, really strengthen and continue to be an incredibly strong partnership. So with that, I am delighted to take any questions you may have.

Bridge Littleton: Beth, thank you very much as always.

Beth Erickson: It's my pleasure.

Bridge Littleton: Any initial questions? Gotta be somebody. Bud.

Bud Jacobs: This is a little bit off subject, Beth, but as the county moves forward with its review of rural zoning, are you going to be represented as a stakeholder in the working groups or public groups associated with that effort?

Beth Erickson: That has been our request. Our MOU and the town's MOA mirrors it closely, which is we are called out in our MOU as an advisory group to the board, to any of the seated commissions, so that would be my expectation and my request.

Bud Jacobs: If there's an issue with that, I think we should consider weighing in on behalf of, Visit Loudoun.

Bridge Littleton: So COLT weighed in earlier this week. Good. And so it's a good question, right? So let me ask if I can ask Beth a couple questions. On that actually not on since Bud brought it up. So you know how these this use committee gets put together and the things they go through. And I do think it's appropriate that you guys, you know, have a seat at that table and all that because it's very, very important. What is Visit Loudoun's view? And how will you guys be advocating for putting controls around wineries and breweries so that we can increase public safety? You know, make sure that we don't overcook the cake, you know, and actually ensure a balanced approach to preserving rural Loudoun and all that kind of stuff what is your guys view point on that?

Beth Erickson: So the way that we will approach it and that's been we are waiting to see what the timeline will be. It's coming back to TLUC on, I think, May 22nd, 23rd, somewhere around there. So the way that we approach it is we it's going to be Visit Loudoun will help to facilitate an industry response working directly with businesses. We did make recommendations at the Board of Supervisors most recent meeting asking for three things, one of which is to ensure that Visit Loudoun is one of those key advisors and stakeholders. The second is to divide was for their consideration to divide farm wineries and limited breweries and distilleries because from their licensing standpoint, they are very different. So while they both I think people lump them together, they have very different uses and different needs. So to divide them, I thought was important. The other is to ensure that we have a representative from a pick your own farm or something that interacts because we have there's a marked difference between a farm that is open to the public and a farm that is not. So. Our goal really is looking at agritourism in its totality. So in doing that, we will put together work groups. We're going to be really taking a look at understanding some of the needs, some of the concerns, some of the opportunities. So over the course of that next, however long it's going to be, that is going to be where our focus is going to land, which is really making sure that we understand concerns from both sides and take a look at how we can address it from an industry standpoint.

Bridge Littleton: Got it. I would add a couple of things to that. Then I think since you have MOUs with the number of towns and some towns actually provide you guys money, we should actually be a stakeholder that you consider.

Beth Erickson: We have, if I may make one correction, we have two MOAs. We have an MOA with Leesburg.

Bridge Littleton: Yep.

Beth Erickson: And we have an MOA with Middleburg because those are the only two towns that have hotels.

Bridge Littleton: Got it. Understood.

Beth Erickson: And TOT.

Bridge Littleton: So but as paying stakeholders, I think it would be fair if Visit Loudoun included us and Leesburg in more than just your community of businesses. So because there is a much broader conversation there on how we look at agritourism, winery breweries, especially ones that are near and around towns because they have a direct impact on the quality of life.

Beth Erickson: And I'll say the best part about that is Middleburg is already at the table because you have Ali who is involved in those discussions from the board level?

Bridge Littleton: Yes, but.

Beth Erickson: As you have Leesburg as well.

Bridge Littleton: But I'm not talking about strictly economic development. I'm also talking about balance. Right. And this zoning effort is going to be focused around uses. And that is more than just you know, an economic development conversation. Right? I think there needs to be an interaction on quality of life for residents and locals and things like that. As we temper the discussion around economic development and economic growth and things like that. I mean, one of the conversations that Council has been having for a while, and we're going to talk about at our strategic retreat is in the Town of Middleburg are we overcooking the cake? When is too much, too much, where you're actually, you know, you're the business is great and all that kind of stuff, but you're actually detracting from the quality of life. And how do you do that in a way which doesn't hurt businesses, allows everybody to be successful, but the business interest and the community interest have to be at the table together. So Ali is great, but I think it's a broader conversation than just economic development. So I would strongly implore you guys to add Leesburg, ourselves, and quite honestly, the other towns, I mean, they don't have MOUs with you. You don't you know, they don't provide funding.

Beth Erickson: We meet with them on a regular basis.

Bridge Littleton: But you meet with them, you promote them. I mean, they're a great economic asset to the county, Hillsborough, things like that. So I know for my sake I think that would be really great that before this activity gets kicked off with the county, there is a meeting of the minds. And if there isn't a meeting of the minds, it's fine. But at least everybody knows where everybody is. And we're all cognizant and sensitive to the different concerns we have.

Beth Erickson: So I look forward to speaking with you about that, to kind of understand a little bit more about how we can deliver on that.

Bridge Littleton: Sure. Absolutely. Okay. But Peter had a question.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Beth, as always, thanks for a great presentation. Just a couple of questions, actually. In on page. I don't know what page it is, but the \$88,250 TOT generated that presumably, is what you mark as the direct TOT impact from Visit Loudoun. So it doesn't include indirect, you know, meals. No indirect other shopping because people come. And just turning to your memo, I guess what I would say, and I have no idea what other colleagues here think, but it's a shame that we hadn't had a tiered increase since, what, 2018, when it was \$35,000, because I think that the jump is big. It's a huge for me anyway it feels like a massive jump. I would prefer something smaller but keep going over the years and that would be my observation. But other than that, I mean, what you guys do is fantastic. We really obviously appreciate it greatly.

Beth Erickson: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Chris. Yeah.

Chris Bernard: Yeah, I know, to echo what Peter said thank you for coming in. You always have so much information, which we appreciate. If you look at that, step up. I did some quick math and in 2018 Fiscal year 2018 if we gave you 35 grand and we got \$756,000 in TOT, right, that's a 4.6% returnish. If you extrapolate that to \$95,000, it's to over \$2 million in TOT in fiscal year 26, potentially, which is a 57% increase from fiscal year 22. I don't know that we have the hotel space or space in general to support that.

Beth Erickson: Can you run that past me again?

Chris Bernard: Yeah. Okay. So, like, we gave you 35 grand and we got 756 TOT. That's 4.6% return just on the direct TOT, right? Okay. So if we step up to \$95,000. And you use that same return on investment. We're at over or at \$2,065,000 in TOT.

Beth Erickson: So what I can.

Chris Bernard: Assuming we get the same return, or you're asking us to take a much smaller return.

Beth Erickson: So what I can tell you is in 2018, the \$35,000 represented 4.6% of the TOT. So when you look at FY 22, we had dropped down to 2.6%. So again looking at similar to a discussion you had earlier, which is looking at that from an actualized standpoint, I think that not having any kind of a step up over the course of the last few years, we have fallen behind in terms of looking at that from a percentage. So we've dropped from 4.6 to 2.6. So where I will also say if we're basing at 100% on TOT, which we're not.

Chris Bernard: This is a base starting point.

Beth Erickson: Right. And the TOT, the way that I brought that forward was an example to say what we bring in terms of cash. But when you also look at it from everything else that Visit Loudoun does through its partnership, I want to be very aware that our partnership is not transactional. And I think that's a really important part of the discussion. So I hope that it's viewed in its entirety. And I know that the Council any time, and this is the first time since we put it in place in 2014 that we've come forward really looking for and asking for an increase. So I'm happy to answer anything on that and to help with the thought process. But I know that that sits with the Council.

Chris Bernard: Yeah, I've been really I guess my kind of broader point was just along with Peter as far as stepping it up that much that quick, I don't know that we're ready for as much business as you are going to throw at us for our investment, that's all. And whether it's direct or indirect.

Bridge Littleton: Bud yeah.

Bud Jacobs: I'd like the record to show that Beth answered that question without using the word holistic.

Beth Erickson: There you go.

Bridge Littleton: So yeah. And that was kind of the question I had. So. And I know again the number and your all's MOU with the county is based on a percentage of TOT.

Beth Erickson: Correct.

Bridge Littleton: So that's what you're used to. But we're not the county, right. And we don't have the ability to increase more beds and things like that like the county does. Right. So and that might be part of their economic development goals. Right. We want to have more hotels we want to do. And they can do that through zoning. We are never going to do that right. We're fixed. And the number of hotel rooms we have period. I mean, there may be a little, you know, 2 or 3 a B&B or something like that comes along. So I guess the question I'm asking is if you're asking for three times as much money, are you trying to drive three times as much activity?

Beth Erickson: No. And I think what's important is so one of the things when you're talking about hotel rooms, what is driving TOT right now is rate. Right. So I don't think it's an equitable discussion to say that the county has more hotel rooms than Middleburg, and they can build more, therefore there's more opportunity. I think when you from my perspective, there are a couple of things when I look at it. So one of which is that the town is in terms of that TOT generation is outpacing the other town that we have an MOA with. And you have lapped them and have lapped them years ago in terms of what you are generating. And I will tell you from an equality standpoint that MOA is at 95. So when I'm looking at it, I'm trying to figure out, as I look at two MOAs, what we're bringing to each. And just that is from

my standpoint as the leader of the organization, taking a look at this, saying there's something that just is not balanced. So that's what I'm bringing it to your attention and I'm asking for your consideration.

Bridge Littleton: So is it fair to say that you're that there's no intent to increase the level of service for the dollars requested from the town.

Beth Erickson: That is not the case at all, sir.

Bridge Littleton: Okay.

Beth Erickson: Okay. So I'll be very clear about that. And I think that without a doubt, the level of service that the town receives from Visit Loudoun is at a pretty top level. So there is consideration within the letter on things that will bring that up again, looking at comparing towns, looking at ensuring that if I'm asking for equal, I'm making sure that you have the exact same benefits. So within the letter, there are recommendations of some opportunities that I would recommend that we take a look at. One of which is looking sitting down with the town, sitting down with Middleburg Business Association to take a look at, perhaps during the course of that year, to put aside 10% of the allocation for specific marketing campaigns. So it's something that we do and roll up our sleeves directly with you. So looking at that number, if we're in that stepped up phase that we're at 6000, we would put aside no more than 6000 to work together. So that actually comes back into the town. So I will say, Mr. Mayor we have stepped up and we will continue to do so because it's our pleasure to do so.

Bridge Littleton: No, I appreciate it. And I totally understand the component about Leesburg. You know, and that's very important for you guys because you guys have to look at the totality of everything you do and everywhere you go. I think and I mean, I will say from my perspective, I don't want to speak for other Council Members, but you know, how Leesburg does and how they benefit is not my problem.

Beth Erickson: I totally understand that.

Bridge Littleton: So it's I mean, you have to have a balance and I totally understand that. So. Okay. No, I mean, that's all the questions I had. Peter, did you have a question?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Just to add on, we had a I wouldn't say a presentation, but some numbers recently where actually I think the nightly rate is probably lower lately. And the prediction of TOT actually is coming down a bit.

Beth Erickson: There's a bit of from a leisure market standpoint, and that's what we also saw in the trends. So there's from a leisure standpoint, there could be they're predicting around a 2%. But again, that's why I think excuse me, my apologies. That's why I think that when we're really taking a look at that high touch business that is important in making sure that we're driving those into midweek, that is going to be the recovery of some of that lost rate, because again, we're looking at businesses, we're looking at groups, association and meetings. They tend to come in at a higher price point than leisure.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Thanks, Beth, and I would say I am supportive of increasing it. I just personally right now I think a lower tiered increase, but every year would be much more favorable from my perspective representing the town and the taxes that, you know.

Beth Erickson: Certainly.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I absolutely think you do a great job. [multiple speakers].

Beth Erickson: Thank you.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I just think seeing jump from 55, 75 to 95 is hard. We had something recently which was a similar but different, and it was really hard to get my head around that as well, you know. So I think we just need to look at it more conservatively.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Cindy.

Cindy Pearson: I just want to say thank you for that presentation. And do you remember what in 2014, we did pay you all?

Beth Erickson: Do I remember in 2014 what the payment was?

Cindy Pearson: Yes.

Beth Erickson: \$10,000.

Cindy Pearson: 10,000. Wow. So they have started off really low and worked up. And I do have one more question with this going to a three year. I believe that's what you wanted it to do. Can we?

Bridge Littleton: I think you'd always have to say subject to appropriation.

Cindy Pearson: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: You can't find [multiple speakers].

Beth Erickson: Subject to an annual review. Absolutely.

Bridge Littleton: Well, not review. Not review. Subject to approved budget.

Beth Erickson: Correct.

Bridge Littleton: Exactly.

Cindy Pearson: Okay. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Yep. Absolutely. So let me recommend this I know that there are off site. One of the things we're going to talk about is tourism. Right. And are we over baking the cake. You know. What's the right balance for quality of life. I think it's a perfect time to have the conversation about this at the same time, to sort of take a holistic view.
[laughter]

Beth Erickson: This must be a good buzz word.

Bridge Littleton: It's great to have it. Yeah so and we're doing.

Beth Erickson: If there's anything else you need, please let me know.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, absolutely. And we're doing that on April 2nd and third. So you know, probably out of that within a couple of weeks we'll be able to get back to you sort of what the thinking is. And maybe, you know, if because we know you love driving over here.

Beth Erickson: You know, I do. Actually it was a fabulous drive.

Bridge Littleton: It was a good day. Yeah. Open the windows.

Beth Erickson: Oh, it was a good day. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Oh the top. Oh that's your oh I forgot. Yeah.

Beth Erickson: Yeah it was a beautiful drive.

Bridge Littleton: Was it the first time this year? Yeah.

Beth Erickson: Oh what. You know I think you're softening the blow on the discussion of the MOA. [laughter] So appreciate that. No I think it's great. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: But no. So Beth, I think in like, probably mid-April, we can get back to you on, you know what next steps look like.

Beth Erickson: Certainly. And if there's anything I can do to answer any questions or give you additional data, please know that I am at your disposal.

Bridge Littleton: Awesome. Okay.

Beth Erickson: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you so much.

Beth Erickson: My pleasure. Have a great day. Make sure I have all my stuff.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. And again, you know, please pass on to your entire organization they do a fabulous job.

Beth Erickson: Thank you. Yeah, I'm really proud of them. I think they're the best in the business.

Bridge Littleton: Absolute top notch professionals. All right, next item up is staff reports. So the Town Clerk. Oh, boy.

Rhonda North: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As you're aware, we do have an RFP on the street for community engagement services related to the Asbury Church project. We did have an optional pre proposal meeting earlier this week and our we did have four attendees. In addition, I've been receiving questions from a fifth individual. The proposals related to that are due March the 25th. As a reminder, we have our volunteer appreciation reception this coming Monday, the 18th, starting at 5 p.m. it will be held here in the town hall. Town Manager Davis and I will be meeting tomorrow morning with Senator Warner's staff to prepare for his business community forum on the 25th. And we are working to schedule the Town Hall Ribbon Cutting Ceremony/Open House on May the 31st at 4:00, just ahead of Middleburg Day. Once we get past the volunteer reception, I'll start working on invitations for that ribbon cutting. If there's anyone specific that you would like to be invited, if you would, please let me know I'd appreciate it.

Chris Bernard: Bill Turnure.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, God. Yes. Yes. I love it, that's great. I will absolutely say every federal, state and local elected official who represent us. I mean, yeah. So just for those of you who may or may not be aware, we announce the Biz Buzz on Tuesday. Senator Mark Warner is going to be here on March 25th at 4 p.m. to do a business community engagement session, talk about some of the things going on in Congress, and also hear from members of the community. So, you know, everybody on Council, obviously, if you can attend, that would be great. Reach out to your local business owners and ask them to come. I think we can probably accommodate 70 people in the room or something, but we do have a link. We do ask that people sign up with the link because we certainly don't want to overdo it and reach the maximum capacity on the room. But I talked to one of his staff folks, and, you know, she asked for topics. I said, you know, rural preservation is a big thing. How do we make sure we, you know, create, you know, keep a dynamic rural economy? And so he's going to be prepared to talk about that. And just, you know, different types of things that are going

on. So, but it's great that he's coming to visit. So, yeah, if you can make it, please, definitely make it. Okay. Next up is Ali.

Ali MacIntyre: All right. Good evening everybody. You have my staff report, but I just wanted to highlight a few things. As you may or may not know, I did participate in professional development program last week. It was a LED program. Mr. Moore and Mr. Davis have also participated in it. I was able to collect, collect, connect with other local government professionals from all over the United States and was given tools that I have already begun to implement into my day to day and have plans to bring some of those things back to my committees as well as my marketing and events teams. Thank you to everybody who is able to attend the Museum of Hounds and Hunting Ribbon Cutting today was a great turnout. The weather certainly helped. And in that Mayor Littleton and I were actually able to discuss how to go forward with ribbon cutting. So he had a great idea of scheduling them just so there's higher chance of Council attendance on the second and fourth Thursdays Council days at 4 p.m.. We do have a few coming down the pipeline with some of our new businesses in town. So I think that's a great idea. I would love to implement that. And Yeah. And just so we can have a better turnout at our ribbon cuttings. Right now I'm preparing for Middleburg Wellness Day. It is next Saturday, March 23rd, from 11 to 3 at the Middleburg Community Center. So I hope to see you guys there. We have right now we have 26 vendors, five presentations and then Walk Middleburg. We're actually two of our Council members will be doing little walking tours, one at 11 and one at 1:00. Kim Shelly as well. And just doing a walking tour of the town, promoting health, but also just giving some fun, historic facts about our town and getting that heart pumping. Last but not least, I am busy planning for the Middleburg Farmers Market, which kicks off on May 4th, Art in the Burg, which is May 11th, and the Middleburg Day, which is May 31st. So we just have nothing going on here in town, obviously. Yeah, that's all for now. Any questions?

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Ali? Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Excuse my ignorance, I'm very old. What does lead mean, stand for?

Ali MacIntyre: LED is Leading, Educating and Development. I believe. It's a long week. [laughter] Yeah, but, yeah, it was really great. Yes. Oh, yeah. It wasn't the L E E D with sustainability. I know what you're talking about.

Chris Bernard: I was like, why were you going to a LEED Conference?

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Next up is Chief Jones.

Shaun Jones: Good evening everyone. You have my report before you. Just to cover a few quick things. We just recently deployed AEDs on the street and our patrol vehicles, and we also.

Bridge Littleton: Deployed what?

Shaun Jones: AEDs. Automatic.

Bridge Littleton: AEDs.

Shaun Jones: Yes. I'm sorry AEDs. We just purchased new ones and deployed them on the street. So they're in all of our patrol vehicles and so forth. They're our regular officers. They're in their patrol vehicles. We also scattered some throughout the building, one at the main entrance, one at the gym, and also one on the administrative side as well, just outside of their kitchen door. Last week we had the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. DCJS. They came to town. We had a class here at the town hall. It talks about the legalities and the purpose of having threat assessment teams within your community, working with the community to do threat assessments on large events. Mrs. Daly attended we have the new manager, Mr. Little, from the Salamander, and some of the Salamander staff attended as well. We also had Gary Nickelson from the American Legion. He was there and we had Virginia State Police was there. And also police officers from Richmond City Police Department attended the class as well. They've also reached out to me about hosting more classes, bringing more police departments to our town to see small town policing. So they're willing to work and build a relationship with us? We recently met with DCJS also to make sure that we're doing all the training and

required standards that we need with DCJS. And he was amazed at the amount of online training and how up to date we are on some of our training as well. We're working with Ms. MacIntyre, just getting ready for all of the events that are coming up, doing our security plans and so forth. And then next week we are prepared for interviews for the Police Administrative Specialist position. Any questions anyone?

Bridge Littleton: Anything for Shaun.

Cindy Pearson: How's your response on that?

Shaun Jones: I have four applicants.

Bridge Littleton: Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Chief, I know it's a way off, but because we don't have many people here, but people are watching on TV as well. We have the joint Drug Take Back on the 27th of April and the Spring Cleanup. Want to thank you for partnering up with us on that as well. And it'd be great to do it here for the first time at the town hall. I just wanted whether you'd had any joy with any sponsors for, like, a Shred. I think you spoke to a bank. So because I've got something as well that might help.

Shaun Jones: Okay. So on that day, I think it's good opportunity to show off the new town hall and also do a lot to benefit our community. Like you said, starting off with the Cleanup and Drug Take Back. I am waiting on a response while I land at Union Bank to see whether or not they have approval for us to host a Shred event here.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: That's great, because we can talk later because there is a business in town, construction and remodeling company that really keen to get involved and sponsor maybe a e-shred that day. So perhaps we can talk about that. Okay, great. Great. Thanks.

Shaun Jones: Yes, sir. I should have an answer, hopefully by Monday whether or not they're going to partner.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Sounds good. Thank you, Chief.

Shaun Jones: Thank you sir. Yes, sir.

Chris Bernard: Recruitment?

Shaun Jones: Yes.

Chris Bernard: Other than the administrative, any luck, any responses, any movement?

Shaun Jones: We've had an applicant apply. And we're and we conducted a background and going from there.

Chris Bernard: Is there any value? It's like we you know, we had a class here with a bunch of people last week and we're trying you know, you're saying there are a lot of people from across the state are going to be coming. Is there an opportunity there to get brochures and stuff? Maybe just that they can share with people that they might know. I know they're not going to take it back to their office and give it to their people. But, you know.

Shaun Jones: It's something that we could take a look at. One of the things that we try to do whenever we go somewhere. Last week I was actually, I'm sorry, either last week or two weeks ago, I was down at the Virginia State Police Academy. I taught a class there. It was filled with troopers. You actually had troopers coming up to me. He's like, hey, how come we didn't get an invite back to Christmas in Middleburg? They worked at a different area. They liked the area, they liked the town, and they were selling the point that we were small town policing. So I had a few folks come up to me and say, hey man, I love your idea. I love small town policing. You guys are doing good things up there, but when I get close to retirement, that's when I'm going to come out and talk to you. So. [off mic] Hey, what? But we are trying to,

you know, come up with different creative ideas we're working on reposting again with the VACP to see what we can get from there and also talk to Mr. Davis. And he's also going to look at recruiting and advertising out in like the Shenandoah Valley area.

Chris Bernard: Again, this this may be a stupid question. If you're a police officer.

Shaun Jones: Yes.

Chris Bernard: It's like, I don't know, I guess in the middle of your career or somewhere along the way, and you're thinking about switching it up. Where do you look? I mean, I you know, I get on LinkedIn, but that's different.

Shaun Jones: Word of mouth and word of mouth VACP is where they list a lot of jobs. And then other agencies are coming up with creative social media campaigns to get folks out there. One of the things that if you want to be a police officer, you do it for the right reasons. But these younger kids and this younger generation that are current police officers, they're chasing the dollar. You know, this place is this place is offering a 5 to \$10,000 bonus. So maybe apply there or they're about to get a raise here. Let me apply there. So to me, I want somebody who's going to be dedicated to us. And that's not going to jump every time somebody is given a pay raise [inaudible]. And so.

Chris Bernard: I just want to make sure that we're meeting people where they're at. Right.

Shaun Jones: Yeah. Well, I mean, I just we had a few chiefs in town early this evening. I talked to local chief not too far from us, and she's telling me what they're telling me. They have a five year veteran that they're looking at, and they're going to start that person off at \$80,000. How do we compete with that? So those are some things that we need to take a look at.

Bridge Littleton: Where was that, Chief?

Shaun Jones: I'm sorry.

Bridge Littleton: Where was that Chief from?

Shaun Jones: Right next door in Purcellville.

Bridge Littleton: What's that?

Shaun Jones: Purcellville.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. Any other questions for Shaun? Okay. Thank you. Thank you sir. Next up is Martin Crim.

Martin Crim: Thank you. Mayor. You have my report. I sent a few comments on some pending bills to the General Assembly to Mr. Davis. And if he wants to cover those a little later in the meeting, we could do that or we could do that now. But I am ready to answer any questions you may have.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Martin?

Bud Jacobs: I didn't see the memo or Martin's notes about what's going on in Richmond. Could we delve into that a little bit?

Bridge Littleton: Martin, up to you.

Martin Crim: Sure.

Danny Davis: Would you like to do that now, Mr. Mayor or later on the agenda?

Bridge Littleton: Oh, let's do it now.

Danny Davis: Okay. So let me kick it off real quickly, and then Mr. Crim can respond to any others there. There are a few bills that we've been watching in particular we've covered some of these previously. But just as a reminder, SB 304 related to accessory dwelling units it and its companion house bill were both continued to 2025. That's the accessory dwelling units. SB 544, which is related to short term rentals and limiting our ability to adopt new ordinances related to certain short term rentals was passed by the Senate and then again by the House after amendment at the Senate. The governor has not signed that yet. His deadline to sign that is April 8th. Similarly there's a bill about local government notice provisions just trying to standardize those that is awaiting the governor's signature. And then HB, I'm going to get it wrong, 1071 on the speed limits was also passed and is awaiting the governor's signature as well. So those were the primary ones we've been tracking. The other one that Mr. Crim could probably speak to better is SB 36, related to the definition of a meeting, public meeting, and clearing up the confusion caused by the Prince William County case. And that was passed by the Senate in the House, still awaiting action by the governor. We're not quite sure when his deadline is to sign that, but that is one that that Mr. Crim thankfully had a hand in and was able to help craft it in a way that got through and I think will be much better for us as Council may be interacting outside of public meetings, and it reduces the confusion or concern about that being considered a public meeting.

Martin Crim: That's right. Mayor if I might add to that, that we had a great deal of concern after reading the Gloss versus Wheeler decision because we didn't know we thought we knew before the decision came out what a meeting was and what was acceptable behavior by elected officials. But it became very unclear and it jeopardized a lot of very routine activities of local government officials to have that case out there. So this Senate Bill 36 and the companion House bill, which were reconciled in a conference committee addressed that by saying that by clearly making it not a meeting if you are happen to bump into each other at someplace like a gathering of another body or, you know, if you deliberately go to a Planning Commission meeting, but you're not discussing public business amongst yourselves. But you might be sending a text message to somebody because the text messages were a key piece of evidence in the Gloss Vs Wheeler case that that's not a meeting. So as soon as the governor signs this thing, we will we'll put out some additional guidance on what's permissible and what's not permissible. The main difference between SB 36, as it passed the two houses of General Assembly and what was originally proposed by the FOIA Advisory Council, is that the definition of public business is narrowly confined to just meetings and not public records, which is fine. I'm not happy about that, but it's not terrible. So the term public business was one of the issues in Gloss Vs Wheeler, because the Virginia Supreme Court said that it meant anything that might conceivably come before the public body at any time. And that's almost a direct quote. And so the definition of public business tracks what the dissenting opinion said in Gloss Vs Wheeler and is more associated with things that either are on the Council's agenda or are you know, being considered for action by the Town Council. So I think that'll be a big improvement and reduce a lot of uncertainty that we had since the Gloss Vs Wheeler decision came out.

Danny Davis: And Mr. Mayor. The other two major items, the one uncertain at this point, is what the governor will do with the cannabis retail sales of cannabis. It sounds like he will veto or veto that, but it's unclear what will happen at this point. And then the budget bills are out there. I think there's likelihood they're going to get them all through. I don't think they're passed yet, but they're getting close from what we understand.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Martin or Danny? Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Danny. Sorry just could you clarify SB 544 when you say passed by Senate House what was passed? [inaudible]

Danny Davis: No, not a problem at all. So SB 544 is the one that that short term rentals and the language is such. And I'll pull it up just so we can be clear essentially that if [off mic]. If the property owner has the property as their primary legal residence, then the jurisdiction cannot pass an ordinance to require it to be a special use, special exception conditional use. In other words, it would be by right it'd be a de facto thing where the government would not be permitted to impose conditions or have a legislative process. [multiple speakers]

Bridge Littleton: But you can't deny it. You can impose zoning conditions.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: And that's only in like after December 23rd, is it or something?

Danny Davis: It was if an ordinances were not in place already by December 31, 2023. So it does not directly impact our existing ordinance. We can speak perhaps in consultation with the town attorney in closed session, if need be, about impact on our existing ordinances in the future. But as of the way it's written, there would be no impact on the applicability of our current ordinances.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Thank you. Appreciate that.

Bridge Littleton: I will say, the one thing that makes it very difficult is there's no definition around what does primary residence mean? You know. So fine. Okay. And the local authority will define what primary residence means. So. Okay. So the one thing I was going to mention was, and I don't really understand the nature of the squabble, but there is a squabble. And there's been talk around vetoing a number of different VDOT oriented bills different things, different, you know, whatever it is from the governor's office. There's an article about it in the Richmond Times dispatch or something last week. So what's it Danny 1071. Yeah, the one about allowing us to reduce by five miles an hour and stuff like that. I hope that Bill doesn't get caught up in that. But anything's possible. So we're definitely trying to work with Michelle and VML and others to try to make sure that one doesn't get caught up in whatever the Kerfuffle is.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Talk about that. Am I right in thinking that we or not we but the speed limit coming into town was reduced to 25?

Bridge Littleton: It was moved.

Danny Davis: Correct.

Bridge Littleton: 25 mile an hour and 35 mile an hour was moved on the east end of town.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: But that was outside of town or?

Bridge Littleton: No, it's in town.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: So we got that moved?

Bridge Littleton: VDOT moved it. We didn't move it VDOT moved it.

Danny Davis: One of the outcomes of the ongoing dialogs with VDOT was a review of pushing that further east could keep speeds going eastbound slower. Once you hit Jay Street people, I mean right by where the Mayor lives, they hit the gas. So if and as they can watch the signage, hopefully will stay 25 until the bottom of the hill. And then coming from the east, going westbound the change from 50 to 35 at the same location, but they've moved the transition to 25 at the bottom of the hill. We have actually also advocated very strongly to move the transition from 50 to 35 further east as well. When you're it's a drop in a relatively short period on a downhill grade from 50 to 35, 25, and expect people to actually be at the speed limit. They are less than accommodating of our request.

Bridge Littleton: They've said no. But in order to reduce speeds in town instead of reducing speed, they did recommend we move the buildings closer to route 50.

Darlene Kirk: Yeah.

Chris Bernard: Well, not old buildings, but all the new [off mic].

Bridge Littleton: All the new ones we're going to build and remove on street parking and put in bump outs and chicanes.

Chris Bernard: Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: Okay. We've killed that.

Danny Davis: Hey, Mr. Mayor.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah.

Danny Davis: I did not have the opportunity to create a Deputy Town Manager staff report. But I would like just a brief moment to say we are glad to have Mr. Moore back. And he will be off tomorrow, but then intends to be back as much as full time as possible beginning Monday. And so we're very grateful for him here. And just as a quick recovery. Also wanted to take the opportunity to introduce Mr. Eric Moore to the Town Council. So we have the law firm of Moore and Moore over in the Planning division. And Mr.. Eric Moore comes to us with experience from Franklin County, Warren County, City of Winchester, and Town of Mount Jackson. And so he has great experience in the areas of zoning. He's a Certified Zoning Administrator, and he has been diving deep into our zoning ordinance, our historic district guidelines, and starting to learn the town very quickly. So we are very grateful to have him join us. He started last Thursday. And now that Will is back be able to have them work together and learn how we can start handing off some of those duties and have a great, balanced team there. So we're glad to have him on board.

Bud Jacobs: Where did you say Will's report is?

Danny Davis: Somewhere in my brain.

Bridge Littleton: Mr. Moore, welcome to the team. Mr. Moore, welcome back. Yeah, well, there's nothing more to say about that. All right, next item up is town hall project. Rhonda.

Rhonda North: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I am very happy to report that the commissioning agent for Downey and Scott has been working on the commissioning of our HVAC system this week. Hopefully that will finish up tomorrow. Early tomorrow morning they're going to do a simulated power failure here in the building, in order to test the generator. As far as phase two is concerned next week we expect to see the plumber on site. The landscaper on site. We expect the trim work to continue, and hopefully the asphalt will be laid as well. We expect tomorrow morning to see Quail Run Signs here installing the entrance sign on Marshall Street. We also have a few directory signs and just miscellaneous signs that will be installed around the building. And then EV charging station is underway. The electrician Beckstrom is scheduled to meet with X-charge on Monday. So hopefully we'll be bringing that DC fast charger online here very shortly.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Rhonda? Rhonda, thank you. Okay. Consent agenda. Would anyone like anything removed from the consent agenda? There was only one item on it.

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

Bud Jacobs: Second.

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

All of Council: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed? Abstentions. Okay. The consent agenda is approved. Next is discussion items. Mr. Davis, FY Budget Discussion.

Danny Davis: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. [multiple speakers] Our goal here would be just to begin working through the general fund. We would start with revenues. I know we've looked at that once before already, but happy to discuss any items or concerns. And then, as you wish, we can begin going department by department. Would it be helpful if I bring

this up on the screen so we're looking at the same information together? All right. Yeah. Oh, boy. That didn't do what I expected it to do. I guess I didn't really have to share that because Martin doesn't. Well, whatever. That's okay. So, Mr. Mayor, a couple quick updates. These are items that we're tracking just as we have regular things that change more on the administrative side, I did have an incorrect figure in economic development. So there was a slight change in the core budget line for that. Also at your last meeting Christmas in Middleburg did make a formal request for funding. So whereas that had not been in the draft budget that has been added at this time for your consideration as we go through the next review. I was hoping to have a formal number for you for business licenses. Unfortunately, our financial software has been giving me a little bit of a hiccup, but it's fair enough to say that we are on budget for our business licenses, which were due March 1st. Once we receive some of our late payments, we might end up actually being slightly over budget, but that's right on track, which is good. It is important to note we did present this to the Strategic Finance Committee I thought had a very useful and helpful discussion with them, appreciated their questions and their feedback. Of importance is not to get too dependent on the interest income as a revenue source, because interest does vary, and we don't expect to see a 5.5% returns in our very secure investments on an ongoing basis. However, even that number that I've put in the budget, I think is, is actually a little bit conservative. So I'm comfortable with it as is. We did discuss TOT, and I think tonight's presentation from Miss Erickson reiterates much of what we had heard from Mr. Devadas at Salamander, as well as in discussions with the Strategic Finance Committee, that there is a growth sector there. Leisure is going to soften a bit. But the group markets, the business travel is seeing an increase in an uptick and that will be beneficial overall to the TOT. And ultimately, the recommendation of the Strategic Finance Committee was keep a close eye because with, you know, the changes in economy and what inflation may or may not do, and of course, world events, we just need to keep an eye on everything around us. With that, Mr. Mayor, I'm just going to jump forward to the revenue page of the budget unless someone a Council Member would prefer to talk any other particular piece of it. But looking again at our revenues the bottom line number in the general fund is really just a 1.8% revenue increase year over year. So adopted budget is 4.990. And the proposed budget is 5.082. The main changes in the current revenue line items you have now adopted your real property tax rate. So there is about a \$42,000 increase. Majority of that comes from new construction, as a reminder, not from existing homes because you reduce the tax rate. But that is taking advantage of new construction, over \$18 million dollars' worth. The other major changes that you see really, as we get down to meals tax, we know that that's fluctuating with changes. We have a restaurant that's closed. We also have a restaurant that we know is gearing up to open this year. We also know that demand continues to be strong in meals and in eating out. So based on a little bit of softening that we've seen over the last few months, we did not propose an increase in the meals tax, but are keeping it at a flat projection year over year and then occupancy taxes discussed. I think in the current budget year, we probably overshot what we thought the projections of TOT would do in current fiscal year. So we've brought that back a bit and have built that with an inflationary factor off of fiscal 23. So looking kind of two years backwards and putting a factor on that to get to our 1.33 million projection. And then, as noted, the other major change we're seeing is in interest income. Year to date you'll note here where my cursor is, we've already seen almost \$200,000 in interest income, and that's through seven months out of the year. And so I think a \$300,000 number is, again, fairly conservative. And we're continuing to see about 5.5% in our investment returns. Those are highlights on revenues. I'm happy to stop here or if you feel like we've covered this enough, we can move forward to our expenditure side.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions on revenue? All right, Danny, go ahead.

Danny Davis: Very good. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. So jumping right into administration as noted in the budget presentation my proposed budget for you includes a 4% market adjustment, cost of living adjustment for general employees and a 7% market adjustment for sworn officers. That's partly due to what we're seeing in our market and competitors, specifically in public safety, as noted by the Chief. But also understanding what's happening around us with other jurisdictions related to the general workforce, as Council has always encouraged and supported merit increases. In addition, there's also, as in prior years, a proposed, on average 2% merit increase across the board. So that would be based on performance evaluations. And so the two of those combined between the market adjustment and the merit increase would be on average, a 6% increase for staff. That's again, tracking a little bit behind the county's proposal, and pretty much in line with the other towns, which are between, 5.5% and 7% depending on the town. Also in administration, we are seeing approximately 8% increase in our health insurance costs. As a reminder, we now show health insurance in two separate departments. Administration covers all staff except for police and the Council or the strategic Finance Committee's recommendation and the Council's concurrence was to pull the police department's health insurance into their departmental budget. We prefer to not show individual departments in their line items, because if you

have one employee, you could essentially extrapolate what they choose for their health insurance, which we prefer not to show. We did see a decrease, thankfully, in our VRS required contributions. That's due to our continued good efforts and funding that fully. So you will see across each department line items where VRS is actually a reduction year over year. That also varies at times depending on who is in the role at that time and their current salaries. Overall, you'll see relatively minimal changes in many of these expenditure line items. Council Expenditures for your salaries and other meetings. For instance, the offsite coming up for travel to VML, other citizen engagement, COLT activities, the Citizens Academy, and other things that recognize our great volunteers. I have dialed back slightly our attorney's line item just based on current patterns of requirements for that, but that's one that is flexible. If there are particular issues that do pop up and require additional time of Mr. Crim. I have increased just slightly the consulting services, as you all I believe, are aware, we do now use a firm to support the human resources effort of the town, which I appreciate the Council's support of that, because those are tricky issues and it's always good to have third parties advising us. So this would be HR consulting. And then if we need to bring other consultants in for work that may not fall within a particular department. Professional development we have increased just looking at the activities from our leadership team, particularly in administration, but also from the one offs that we might send an employee to a training that is more than what might be in their departmental budget. This allows us to be able to support that. I will also say we've been very supported by our insurance carrier, versa, who is offset training for both Ms. MacIntyre and Mr. Moore when they went through the LED program, which was helpful. Continuing in administration, just to show a few things. Equipment, software purchased, this number was increased in current fiscal year for replacement of your surface devices. I will be honest, I am waiting on Apple to finally release their new iPads. And once that happens, we intend to replace Surfaces with more consumer friendly, easy to use iPads that we won't face all the challenges we've had as of late with the Surfaces. There are also pushing six years old, which for a tablet is actually pretty impressive. I'm sorry. [off mic] You must have the one lucky Surface.

Bridge Littleton: User error.

Danny Davis: Yes.

Bud Jacobs: Yeah, right. [off mic]

Danny Davis: So the fire department is a pass through. We receive that from the state. That's right. Yes, ma'am. And now they don't always request the money. So we have to show that as a liability on the books. That's a restricted fund balance. And then we will whenever they spend the dollars that are applicable, we will then remit that to the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue. But this is not the Middleburg volunteer company is no more. So this is all a pass through from the state to Loudoun County. You'll see in the charitable contributions the one time gift to the charitable foundation. But that line item is now proposed as \$0 for fiscal 25. And then as we going back up real quickly, software maintenance. We're always reviewing our software costs, as you have probably seen in other areas, continues to increase between 5 and 8% in most of our services. If we have a cap in our contract, they always ask for the cap. So we are doing some of those increases, as you would see in other places. But reflecting that in our line items here. Finally looking down at the bottom kind of I call it non-departmental, it's really not administration or anything else. Our debt service payment for fiscal 25 will hit its kind of peak, if you will. It'll vary by \$1,000 here or there. But for the most part, excuse me, this will be a set amount over the next 18 years or so for the debt on this on the town hall. But again, that is a fixed rate and that will be steady unless the Council determines at some point to pay down a portion of that debt. So that is the increase here in the debt service. I did remove the transfer to CIP for fleet out of the proposed budget, because Council did approve it in current year as an early purchase. And we appreciate that. So this is administration at a snapshot. Happy to answer any questions you might have or I'll move on to buildings and grounds. Yes, sir.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: The debt service remind me that's basically the 2.5% or 2.8% to the [off mic] bill. Yeah it's 2.8.

Danny Davis: Between 2.6 and 2.7.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Okay.

Danny Davis: Yes, sir. Incredible great rates. Moving to buildings and grounds. I will tell you, this continues to be a little bit of a best guess based on the best information we have. Partly because we've only been in the building since October 30th. So as we continue to understand what our electrical demands, our natural gas demands and things like that, these items may be adjusted as we go along or if we need amendments to the budget, we'll approach you with that. This is based on our best kind of estimate, working with Downey and Scott on their knowledge of our building design and also our systems. For the last 4 or 5 months, we have been running the heat primarily off of our boiler which is not the not intended to be the primary heating source of the building. So that may be not an exact reflection of what our costs would actually be for that natural gas. But other than that, the rest of it is based on our expected cost for janitorial services here in the building grounds and landscape maintenance for the portions that we're responsible for. And then, of course, regular things like electrical services. We will need a service contract for the HVAC system. Once you build a system like this, which is efficient and top notch and very effective, we also want to make sure we're maintaining that. So some dollars are built into the budget to plan for that as well. So this is buildings and grounds again, much of this focus on the town hall here and not general maintenance throughout the rest of the town.

Danny Davis: So I'll move along to police. Again, as noted police salaries will or proposed increase slightly more than general workforce. Again trying to compete with the market around us. As noted in in my budget presentation, Loudoun is proposing a 12.7% increase in salaries for sworn officers. Leesburg last year did a 10%. Other jurisdictions are doing double digits. And so while I've not proposed to that level, I do believe that the amount being proposed is comparable for looking at all of the various jurisdictions that we are competing with North, south, east and west. And so I do believe it's an appropriate proposal, at least for now. But happy to talk further if Council would like more information related to salaries in the police department. We are continuing to see needing to fill in overtime and part time officers, as we have are recruiting for our current position and the vacancy that we have. So we hope that we can dial back the overtime and other wages line items in actuality. But that does depend on us being fully staffed. And so that is why when we look at year to date through January 31st, we were already at \$30,000 for current fiscal year. In our overtime requirements. Now, some of these dollars in overtime are reimbursable. They're reimbursed by third parties. If we provide security and safety for 5K races special events where they will pay for that. Some of this also is just built in overtime. That is due to our own events where we have Oktoberfest and we ask all of our officers to be here. It's a public safety thing, and it's a service to the community. So there will be a baseline of overtime required. Ultimately, we would like to look strategically at how we can reduce overtime and dependence on part time officers. Benefits again as noted those are fairly standard and insurance you will see. Just for those who may not recall, even though the cost of insurance is only going up 8%. The actual increase year to year may change depending on elections each year. And I'm sorry, I don't mean voting elections. I mean employees personal elections for health insurance. So each year, there's an open enrollment period where employees may choose to add a person to their health insurance or drop a person from their health insurance. And when we recruit, we build in and assumed use of health insurance. But you never know what that person might use until they actually come on board and sign up. So you may see variations that seem out of whack, but it is likely due to just changes in employment or choices. Looking generally across the board at the operations of the police department, the equipment and supplies reduced this year due to the purchase and current year, as chief mentioned, of AEDs as well as ballistic vests. So those were one time purchases that would then be likely needed to be repurchased in about five years or so, based on general kind of lifespan of both of those.

Bridge Littleton: I have a question about that. Is every officer trained on those?

Danny Davis: On the AEDs? I'll let the Chief answer that from his mic. [off mic]

Shaun Jones: Officer training needs. And also, once we got the new ones in place, we also had Officer [off mic].

Bridge Littleton: Okay, so. The answer's yes. Yes, sir. Great. Thank you.

Danny Davis: Thank you and the rest of the Office Budget Chief Jones went through line by line, reviewing his actual usage, his needs in each particular area and this being his first budget. Appreciate his diligence in focusing on that. We do have a few increases in software maintenance. We do have to upgrade and the Chief can answer it if you have any questions. Our handheld parking ticket system needs an upgrade as well as a requirement when there's an accident.

There's a system where you sketch out kind of what happened, and that needs to be upgraded as well. So those are the slight increases in our equipment and software maintenance.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Sorry, this is the previous page and the question about the electrical services. With the EV charger, we really don't know what we're going to. It's going to cost us.

Danny Davis: Sure.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: And we're going to get all the revenue.

Danny Davis: That's correct.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: So is that reflected in here or are we going to just learn this year?

Danny Davis: That's really what it is. We're not quite sure. And even as I was putting this together, you know, we were right at the point of were we going to do this or not? So yes, we will watch and see how that may affect our usage here. And it'll be interesting to watch the trends. We also might see this decrease a bit once the system gets balanced and is actually running at a more efficient level. So what I've seen, what I've assumed to be an average month may be average, may be high, may be low. So we'll kind of keep an eye on it. And to your point, it'll be interesting to watch once the charging is available to the public.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Do we have a separate meter for that? I can't remember how that's approached.

Danny Davis: I don't believe it's separately metered. It's all based off the core meter here in the building.

Bridge Littleton: But you could estimate that by kilowatt hour and stuff like that, that we.

Danny Davis: That we charge.

Bridge Littleton: Correct. The quick question, I had somebody brought up in a COLT meeting, which I thought was a really good point. Have we noticed? And this is yes or no? Have we notified our insurance company that we are installing EV chargers? And we want that covered because one of the people pointed out that in their oversight it's not included in your insurance. And they literally had someone back into one and knock it over. They called the insurance, and the insurance company said, you didn't tell us you had EV. So the costs are on you. So I just, I you know what? Don't need a yes or no. I would just make sure you double check the insurance policy that it covers it.

Danny Davis: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Yep. It was a good point. I was like, wow, I never thought about that. Yeah, we're installing something new.

Danny Davis: We do have bollards.

Bridge Littleton: [laughter] What?

Danny Davis: We do. Yeah, yeah. That's my insurance. No. Very good point. And thank you. Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you [multiple speakers] vandalism, of course.

Danny Davis: Yeah, yeah. Any questions on police department? Chief be happy to answer. And again, you know, just for Council's sake, you know, this is not your only one shot at the budget as well as we review through it, if there are questions that come up, we're more than happy to take those you know, outside of the meeting and then follow up at the next meeting with answers, if we can. Next department is maintenance. You'll see not too many significant changes

except in refuse. I will note I have not spoken with Mr. Moore yet, but we did receive a letter from American requesting an 8% increase in their rates. And I think we'll just need to look at that in concert with our current contract. And perhaps bring that back to Council for consideration and approval. But we may need to increase this number slightly based on their renewal letter that they have sent to us.

Chris Bernard: If they can promise to land 8% more trash cans back on the sidewalk when they're done. I'm in.

Cindy Pearson: Or not halfway down the next [inaudible].

Danny Davis: I'll do my best.

Danny Davis: If only I could get like three toters just to keep at the maintenance shop. But even that is. [off mic] Yeah. Traffic calming.

Bridge Littleton: They do dump and then just push them and it lands where it lands. Yeah.

Chris Bernard: [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: All right, keep going.

Danny Davis: No other significant changes here in the maintenance. And as you know, I'll just point out here the snow removal line, that's a placeholder in case we get a few snows. We'll use a little bit this year because we had 1 or 2 snows where we called out, Jesus. But if we get a really big dumping of snow, we may blow through \$20,000 in, you know, two days' worth of hauling. So it's really kind of a placeholder for when we get a few medium sized ones. I'm just waiting for the year when we get another big snow. So we'll see when that is.

Cindy Pearson: The data centers maybe never.

Bridge Littleton: Hey they voted down one last night.

Cindy Pearson: They did. [off mic].

Bridge Littleton: Five, four, but they voted it down. [off mic] There's only a million square feet.

Danny Davis: Planning and Zoning. This again, no significant changes in the proposed budget here. Year over year. So consulting is still at \$50,000. That gives us kind of that flexibility to work with.

Chris Bernard: Thank you.

Danny Davis: Yes, sir. [off mic] It's in there. I think.

Danny Davis: And then Economic Development. Would you like to explain your

Bridge Littleton: Get up here let's go. [off mic]

Danny Davis: That's why I sent her to LED so she can come run pivot tables. We have made a couple suggested enhancements to the Economic Development Budget. So I'll go through those briefly. One is to increase the social media contract dollars. We have our base contract with Red Thinking and they continue to do a great job. But we do know there are continued opportunities to utilize their services a little bit more for either particular events. Seasons of the year even marketing off site things that are bringing people to and around the town. So it might be Virginia Fall Races or Spring Races, but this would give opportunity to they essentially are under contract to do 2 to 3 posts per week. And so this might give us a chance to add a post, you know, an additional post a month or additional two posts a month just to be able to highlight a few of those key things that might pop up from time to time.

Bridge Littleton: So I'm going to recommend that we don't put that increase in.

Danny Davis: Okay.

Bridge Littleton: Because we're going to have a strategic discussion of are we doing too much? So let's not budget in before we've had that discussion that we're going to start doing more.

Danny Davis: Fair enough. Okay.

Bridge Littleton: I mean, we may.

Danny Davis: Sure.

Bridge Littleton: But we I think I mean, we're going to have that conversation in April. [off mic] Correct.

Danny Davis: Got it. I'll take that as a recommendation to remove it for the time being. Very good. Looking at our events this is the next page down. We did split out last year, I believe all of our events individually. The Strategic Finance Committee actually suggested that perhaps we take the community based events and all of the things that are in economic development that really are not business development, and that we either put them in their own subsection like we have a community development subsection, or possibly even create a separate department, if you will. It's kind of a pseudo department called community engagement or community something where it pulls those dollars and allows the town to be able to demonstrate to the community, this is what we are spending just to benefit our residents. And that's Middleburg Day and Independence Day and the events that are not intended to be the large five, 10,000 people draws. I've not done that as of yet. And we can talk about the best mechanism, but I do think there could be some value in maybe pulling visitor tourism focused events and then community focused events in its own area. We do. [off mic] And if we even pull it out of the Economic Development Department, then it's actually its own department. And it because at the end of the day, while Ali supports events and she will continue to support those events. It really is not a business development effort. So. We'll look at maybe some creative ways to do that.

Bridge Littleton: So let me stop you right there. I think it's a good idea. Does everybody support doing that?

Chris Bernard: Yes. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: You guys figure it out. But I mean, let's do it for this year's budget.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. Because if you were to say we.

Darlene Kirk: [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Oh it's so, Darlene, it's just creating a separate section in the budget. It's not like a new department. Yeah, yeah. You guys figure out the right way.

Danny Davis: We won't be structurally having a new department. There's no [multiple speakers] staff or anything.

Bridge Littleton: Right. Yeah.

Chris Bernard: Yeah, yeah. But it is valuable because I think saying that we spend x x x dollars on economic development is misleading.

Danny Davis: Yes. Yeah. Correct. Correct. [off mic]

Danny Davis: Great. Thank you sir. We have increased some of our event budgets. Just looking at actual expenditures or what we see are going to continue to be, you know, needs. Wellness day for current year we just put a very low base level of 5,000. That's really I'm not sure quite going to get us there. So looking at for next year, having that be a more reasonable number for an event that's large in size, the rental of the community center and the support that goes into that. Middleburg Day we have currently again at \$10,000. We referenced to the Council was it last meeting or meeting before that, that number might need to be increased for current year, just based on how Middleburg Day is being developed out. As we get more specifics, we'll bring that to you. But proposing that that be \$20,000 in fiscal 25, as we look at what that event really how we are bringing the community together, the various activities food that we're bringing in for the community and things like that.

Bridge Littleton: So on that at the next meeting I would really like to see, how we're going to get everybody there. I really want to see what the marketing campaign is because it's two months away. Right? Or two and a half. But I mean. That's Labor Day weekend, right? Or coming up either right before or right after it.

Danny Davis: It's the Friday after Memorial Day.

Bridge Littleton: Or Memorial. Not Labor Day. Memorial Day. Right? Right. So, you know, colleges are out. People start planning vacations. How do we make sure we get this on everybody's calendar two months in advance so that they're going to be there? So like you guys are hitting the ground running heavy hard April 1st. And we are what's today the 14th. So yeah, the next meeting. And please, I would love to see a very detailed walkthrough of what you're going to do. Cool.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: And I think that's exactly right. I think with this increased budget, you know, we can actually spend money on sending, you know, a little bus up to pick folks up from Windy Hill who wouldn't? That sort of thing.

Bridge Littleton: That'd be great.

Chris Bernard: [off mic].

Bridge Littleton: Yep. Yeah. Oh, great.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I love the trolley.

Bridge Littleton: Okay.

Danny Davis: The other large two large changes based on the policies that the Council just recently approved on grants and sponsorships. We have the two line items, one for being the events grants and sponsorships. And then also, I'm circling the wrong thing. And then also for infrastructure grants that was to budget at \$30,000 per year. Each request, as you may recall, could request up to \$10,000. So the idea that we might hear from nonprofits looking for support in that area. Similarly, the farmers market we kind of squeaked by this past year with a pretty shoestring budget, but this year, trying to draw more people, keep vendors, make it more exciting. We want to be able to pay some musicians more regularly, support activities that will draw families and others in the community. And so a little bit of investment to hopefully help the farmer's market really be strong this year. And that is our general fund operating budget.

Cindy Pearson: Excuse me, did you say the Christmas in Middleburg you were going to add?

Danny Davis: I did, so this is the static PDF that I presented to you in my working budget. This line item is now \$10,000.

Bridge Littleton: Any questions for Danny on any of those general fund items? [off mic]

Danny Davis: Yeah, they're kind of tight.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Pam, go ahead.

Pam Curran: Actually, I have three they're kind of latent questions. But back to the AED and the defibrillator. Who services it after we use it? That's, where am I asking? Chief?

Danny Davis: I'm going to turn that over to the Chief. Yes.

Shaun Jones: Because [off mic] batteries need to be updated for a certain period of time. So what we're doing. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Shaun we can't hear you.

Shaun Jones: I apologize. We have set a schedule so we can make sure that the proper batteries and everything is updated in a timely manner. So they're going to be tested every six months, and then also the company which we purchase them from will service them if we need service.

Pam Curran: Yeah. Where I know there have been problems with the ADA is after they're used that somebody has to come out and make sure that, you know for one it really functioned and for two, it's service. So.

Shaun Jones: Yes.

Pam Curran: Sounds like you've got that. Okay. That was one. And then the other is in terms of accessibility, ADA, inventory of the town. I've heard from a lot of people that they're wondering if we'll participate in looking at ADA compliance, because we're all getting older, throughout the town. Is there any money in the budget to take a look at that?

Danny Davis: So our.

Pam Curran: You are getting younger, but we're not, I'm not. Yeah.

Danny Davis: I see that we kind of have a dual well we have a dual budgeting focus. And then perhaps we have a separate community engagement focus. So I'll start with that last one first. Our goal would be to encourage our businesses and our public places to be as accessible as possible. And so whatever we can do to facilitate and encourage that and encourage our property owners, our business owners, landlords to do that definitely will play a part in that particular role. As it relates to our own responsibilities and direct responsibilities there are really two areas. One is buildings. Thankfully, this building, as we designed and we're able to move out of the old building, is fully accessible and we know we can always make improvements. And so if there's something we didn't do well, we'll look to enhance and improve as necessary. But I think we demonstrated our commitment to that by ensuring that our building here is fully accessible. The other challenge that we face is in our streets and sidewalks. When we have brick sidewalks that are difficult to navigate they are historic. And there are you know, needs that we have identified South Madison Street, of course, being one other areas of tree roots causing some challenges that we have been looking in. So there are dollars in our capital budget as placeholders. And maybe we talk capital budget, another meeting. But to look at ways that we can start working on our sidewalks and streetscape to help them be more as accessible as possible.

Pam Curran: Yeah, it was along the lines of, I think what the Mayor had suggested related to or it might have been you, Danny, related to making sure the buildings were fire compliant. So we didn't have fires. So it was more maybe an ADA Accessibility Committee that would take a look at the inventory and us just be proactive. So I hear you on that. And then the last thing is, you know, back to the police department. It worries me that we don't have more money in the budget to get out ahead of the overtime and also be innovative and creative, because we still haven't been able to hire anybody. Right. And if Bladen County is going to ten and we're only going to eight, you know what? It just seems as though we're never going to get ahead of needing more officers. And with the special exceptions related to Salamander and the discussion and everything else, it seems as though even the reduction in the speed limit that we want to make sure that we get the force so that, you know, we can recruit officers so.

Bridge Littleton: So let me ask you a quick question on I don't think we do on the notice we don't publish the salary. Right? Do we publish the salary on the job notice.

Danny Davis: Some places we do and typically we'll say starting at and then DOQ DOE. So it's not. So we'll say depending on qualifications depending on experience. So we'll say a starting number of I think we said 61.

Bud Jacobs: 61.

Pam Curran: But I think it's also being creative. I think one of our residents in town even offered she has an apartment, and I don't know I heard us talking about taking the cars back and forth, but just being, you know, there is a website that you can go to if you're looking for a job in the, you know, the police department. With all the, you know, competing positions. And I think we do have to be a little more innovative if we're going. [multiple speakers]

Bridge Littleton: Could you guys have Margaret help you out with the job description?

Danny Davis: I can work with her. So I will say the Vice Mayor assisted us in developing a more robust appealing, more recruitment brochure which I think is catchy. We've put that up on our various website and other places, and now we're looking at how we can get that as the Chief mentioned. People still read newspapers, you know, online resources out in the valley to the south of us, where we might be able to, that starting salary is not on that brochure. But we're communicating the community that we have and the difference that we are in terms of if you're a certified officer and perhaps you're facing challenges where you are. We offer a different kind of experience here. So. Yes, I mean, I can work with.

Bridge Littleton: So the answer is no? No, No. And it was.

Danny Davis: The job description for a police officer is a job description. The recruitment brochure is something that needs to be a recruitment.

Bridge Littleton: No, that's exactly what I'm saying. I mean it's selling the sizzle.

Danny Davis: Yes.

Bridge Littleton: Right. So and my only question was if you guys have worked with Margaret or not. So like. It would be good to have her viewpoint on the nuggets of information that are important because, I mean, I do know that whenever I see job postings from companies and things they don't say starting at, they say a range, right. It says from 61 to 85, depending on experience. When you say starting at 61, the person you know the first thought out of the door is, well, maybe it's 61 to 65, but it's certainly not up to 85, which I'm looking for. But if we are willing to go up to 85, then that person automatic or whatever the number is, right. That person now comes into the view of, oh, if my experience meets, they're willing to pay me. So let me give it a try.

Danny Davis: So that.

Bridge Littleton: I think ideas like that would be like.

Danny Davis: I'm happy to talk with Margaret about that. I will say that begs the question. And you're opening up the one of the philosophical discussions that I would like to have with Council perhaps sooner rather than later, related to pay and pay scales and pay plans, because I cannot tell someone that our scale is 61 to 85 because we have not traditionally recruited that way. We've been very concerned about internal equity, meaning respecting those who are here in the time that they've put here. When you have a step program where I can say, I know for certain my current officers belong on step 12, and if you come in with this experience, you belong on step 15. No one's going to get upset with each other because it's a program and it's literally plug and play. We don't have that at this time. I'm not saying it's a panacea, but I'm saying those are a lot of those strategic conversations Chief and I have had and we've not had a chance yet to bring those to Council. But I think you make a very valid point. If we can say your range is 61 to 85, and then when they come

in and say, okay, I've got 12 years' experience at Loudoun County, where would I fit on this scale? We can say you'd fit right here. And guess what in three years you would be here and they say maybe it's worth it.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, exactly. I mean, I know it was before your time. We hired that consultant to put together, like, quartiles and all that. I don't know if you're still using that or not, but we did categorize people by years of experience. And there was a step function.

Danny Davis: Kind of.

Bridge Littleton: Kind of. No, no, I got it.

Danny Davis: Different than what?

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Yeah. It wasn't perfect. So anyway, it's.

Pam Curran: Mr. Mayor.

Bridge Littleton: Go ahead. Yeah.

Pam Curran: Are we going to discuss this at the retreat? Do we?

Bridge Littleton: I don't think so. No.

Pam Curran: Well, something was on the retreat.

Danny Davis: It goes back to that conversation we were just having [multiple speakers] about Human Resource Management.

Bridge Littleton: Well, so we've got the list from what's his name?

Danny Davis: Jack.

Bridge Littleton: Jack. That was the consolidation of everybody's, you know, top level of priorities. How we do human resources and how we do as a big picture thing. Yes, it was on his list, but how we specifically recruit police officers? No, it was not a priority of everybody that needed to be a strategic conversation. That doesn't mean that we don't reserve time at a Council meeting to go into the details for an hour or more, but I think what it sounds like, you, and you are not prepared to do that right now, because this is a strategic conversation of how we categorize and strategize. So the police departments, stuff like that, and you guys want the ability to look at the best way forward. And then we can have that discussion.

Danny Davis: So here's where we started. In speaking with Mr. Tuttle, I informed him or let him know that one of my goals and what I think I'd heard from at least a few Council Members was particularly on the police department, but also in terms of Human Resource Management addressing some of our biggest challenges. And right now that is in the police department. And I was suggesting an hour or so hour and a half session to talk about strategic review of our police department, strategic analysis and also recommendations that could address some of our current challenges. His response after talking to all of Council was to your point, I don't think that fits yet. At the retreat, the baseline question is when we have suggestions, recommendations and ideas on a strategic review of the department like this. Perhaps some structural changes in the department as you're looking at number of officers and how we, you know, fill our gaps and make sure we're limiting over time and reliance on others. The real question per Council whether at the retreat or another session is how best do you wish to have that conversation? So that when Chief and I have a presentation we're ready to approach you with is that in a Council meeting where you might have 15 other items on the agenda? Is that at a special meeting that we call just to talk about police department, or is it two on two meetings and then we come together and have further discussions. So if I answered your question, I'm not sure if I have, but is to say.

Bridge Littleton: No no no no you answered it exactly right. It's to your point and to Pam's point if it's a strategic question, it's not about pay. It's about everything. And it's about how we fundamentally look at the department. Are people categorized and align the right way with what our needs are. So it's a much bigger, more complex conversation than just pay. So that and I think the way you phrased it this afternoon and the way Jack put it together was exactly right. The conversation that is, we should have at the strategic retreat, if it gets to the top of the list, is pretty much right now around the police department we have to have a big strategic conversation. And how do we have those strategic conversations? Because, you know, I mean, human resources and pay and descriptions and promotions and money. It's hard. It's personal. It's the most kind of elemental thing, you know, that's for an individual. So we have to be careful about it. But then more broadly, when we want to have those conversations about staff and different departments, how do we create the right dynamic that we can have at these conversations? Because the thing I would say is over the last eight months we've talked around it a lot. But, you know, it's it's hard to charge into it because you're, you know, you're trying to be delicate, you're trying to be balanced. And so I think we got to get that part first, that part right first, and then we can go in, like Danny said, having a special two hour meeting around you know how we revamped what we look at the police department. Right so.

Pam Curran: I just Mr. Mayor wanted to make sure he didn't have space in the budget in case we did, you know, decide to be innovative and recruiting or offer bonuses or something that he's got the space in the budget.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. I think we have the unassigned fund balance is expected to be.

Danny Davis: Correct. And I'm sorry for the sliding of the screen. But the unallocated revenues currently in the budget is \$431,000. So we are basically building in already and over \$400,000 buffer, which would give the Council flexibility if we look at potentially pay changes or structural changes or other things that might take some dollars as well. Thank you.

Darlene Kirk: Have we talked to any police departments that do have step system because that would be really hard to create?

Danny Davis: We have, in fact.

Darlene Kirk: Do you have copies that you can work off of and that sort of thing?

Danny Davis: In fact Chief has a former colleague and friend of his that came up and spent a whole day here developing out because really, it's just a spreadsheet, but it's taking that and looking at and there are a number of variable inputs but building out what that could look like for our police department as a kind of straw man to work off of. So there again, there are variables and how you choose to implement that with some differentiating decisions. But yes, we actually have a, shall I say, a draft kind of that we've been playing with.

Bridge Littleton: Were there any other questions for Danny on the budget? Going once, going twice. Okay. Any other action items or information items people would like to provide Council. Yes.

Cindy Pearson: I'd just like to remind folks that there is one of the charge stations now at the library here in town.

Bridge Littleton: The county beat us to it.

Cindy Pearson: County beat us to it. Two of the towns, there's another one.

Bridge Littleton: One quick thing I did want to mention to Peter now that he's gone. And so I guess, Shaun, I'll mention it to you and to Ali, on the Town Cleanup Day is also Arbor Day. So let's try to make sure they don't conflict if we can.

Danny Davis: They kind of always overlap. But at times the cleanup folks can kind of make their way there for the celebration. And then if there's any cleanup left continuing on.

Cindy Pearson: And it's at the community center this year. So it kind of [multiple speakers].

Bridge Littleton: Arbor Day?

Cindy Pearson: Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Okay. Any other items? Bud. You, Danny.

Danny Davis: You had asked to bring this up related to the April 25th meeting. Do you want to talk about that tonight or another time? The Windy Hill event is the same evening.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah. Forethought to everybody else. Windy Hill is having their annual sort of community event at the salamander where the residents actually come up. Everybody's invited. It's a total community event, free. But if you want to donate, it's great. It's the 20 year Anniversary of Virginia Lane. It's at 6:00 on our April 25th meeting. Do we want to move the meeting back an hour? Just so if folks wanted to be able to go attend, we could attend. It's 6 to 8, so we'd leave an hour early. But I think it would be good if we show support and go from the first hour so.

Danny Davis: Just.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah.

Danny Davis: For full awareness that's the night we had intended to set the public hearing on the short term rentals. So which is fine.

Bridge Littleton: Which is fine. [multiple speakers] Want to go to both too.

Danny Davis: Just be aware that that's. [multiple speakers] 6 to 8. So you're suggesting start the Council meeting at 7 p.m..

Bridge Littleton: Start at 7 p.m.. Yeah.

Darlene Kirk: Do we want to change nights for the Council meeting?

Bridge Littleton: I don't think.

Danny Davis: It's not advertised yet, but.

Bridge Littleton: We could do it. But I mean, everyone's just so used to it always being Thursdays. Yeah. I mean, look, we don't have to decide it right now. If you got any ideas, send them to Danny. But the recommendation being, we just start the meeting an hour late.

Danny Davis: Yeah, definitely. [off mic] Rhonda. Mr. Mayor, if we may, let's put on the next agenda. And that way we can just confirm it.

Bridge Littleton: No problem.

Danny Davis: Because we'll then need to know for all of our public hearing advertisements.

Bridge Littleton: And again. [off mic]

Chris Bernard: Yeah. Before and after meeting.

Danny Davis: Sure. Yeah. [off mic] That's right. Very good.

Bridge Littleton: Okay, cool. Any other items? All right. Thank you all. Meeting adjourned.

Danny Davis: Thank you Martin.