

The Richlands Town Council held a regular monthly meeting in the Richlands Council Chambers on February 11, 2014 at 7:30 pm with the following present:

Mayor: Jannis White
Town Manager: Tim Taylor
Town Clerk: Susan Whitt
Town Attorney: Brad Ratliff
Council Members: Joe McCracken, Rod Cury, Larry Johnson,
Frances Meadows, Doug Ratliff, Mary Ann Strong

Mayor White called the meeting to order and gave the invocation.

Boy Scouts of America Troop #61 was on hand and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor White asks if there is anyone that would like to speak who is not on the agenda. She also asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda. There were none.

Rod Cury made the Motion to approve the Agenda as presented, seconded by Larry Johnson. All in favor 6/0. Motion carried.

Minutes for the Joint Public Hearing for a conditional use to be permitted in a B-2 Zone, on January 14, 2014 at 7:00 pm; the regular meeting of Council on January 14, 2014 at 7:30 and the Emergency Meeting on Saturday, January 18, 2014 at 10:00 am, had been previously distributed and Mayor White asks if there any amendments or corrections to the minutes.

Doug Ratliff offered three amendments to the regular meeting minutes: on page 3, fourth paragraph, "Corner Mart" should be changed to read "Richlands"; same page, fifth paragraph, "\$250,000 in retail" should be changed to read "\$500,000 in retail"; and page 7, first paragraph, "(Corner Mart)" should be removed.

Doug Ratliff made the motion to approve the Minutes as amended, seconded by Rod Cury. All in favor 6/0. Motion carried.

Scheduled Public Comments:

Martha Hurst-President of CART-thanked the Town for 25 years of continual support of the CART (Citizens for the Arts) program. Richlands is the oldest Municipality in the state of Virginia to utilize the Government Challenge Grant. For this we want to say thank you and present a plaque to you. After presenting the plaque and taking a photo with Council as it was presented, Mrs. Hurst returned to the podium to continue with a report of things done by CART this past year. Through the programs with Art and Education, we have tried to do more community outreach because we are aware that it is the community people that support us and fund us.

Through the cooperation of Peter Mulkey and Clinch Valley Medical Center, we offered free flu shots at our October meeting and had a good response.

For our three children's programs, audience members brought food for the Back Pack program. The Back Pack Ministries is sponsored through several churches in our area and provides food to local school children who don't have food for the weekends.

We used surveys this year in our programs, we wanted feed-back from our audiences and we have used these suggestions in planning programming for next year. We have some exciting programs for next year.

We partnered the Chamber and the Appalachian Arts Center with "Bringing 4 Authors", the third one is tonight, and Dr. Tal Stanley is speaking at the Appalachian Arts Center.

We are here to ask that we continue the next 25 years with the Town's support. We have a copy of the Government Challenge Grant that needs to be signed upon consideration of the Council.

Three wonderful CART programs left: one is this Friday night, on Valentine's Day, California Dreaming; in March is the Highlands Ballet and then Broadway Tonight is the last one of the season.

Rod Cury made a Motion to support this Grant for CART as has been done for the past 25 years, seconded by Joe McCracken. No discussion. Vote-all in favor, 6/0. Motion carried.

Dr. Melody Counts-Health Director for the Cumberland Plateau District of the Virginia Department of Health. She and other members of the VDH are here to speak tonight on the Public Health Assessments of the Simmons-Rand property. We would like to summarize the findings of that report and then be available to answer any questions that the Council or the Community may have. There are some colleagues of mine from the Central Office that will present the findings on Power Point.

Council members moved into the audience for the presentation.

Presentation given by Ayat Abdelbaki, MPH-Health Educator at the Virginia Department of Health in Richmond, Virginia. She introduced herself and said with me this evening is Rebecca LePrell, Dr. Dwight Flammia and Dr. Egbe Egiebor. There are also representatives from the Department of Environmental Quality present. In order to provide you with a little bit of background information, in 2011 the Cumberland Plateau Health District director requested VDH to evaluate the levels of environmental contaminants at the former Simmons-Rand property and determine if they would present a potential health hazard to the Community and VDH has fully completed this evaluation based on available data. This evening I will be presenting the basic health assessment and will be able to answer your questions.

Topics Covered: Public Health Assessment

- Identifies chemicals of concern
- Determines whether exposure to those chemicals result in human health hazards
- the process also involves addressing specific community concerns, health concerns associated with potential hazardous waste sites.
- Assessment also determines what actions should be taken to reduce exposure to those chemicals of concern.

- She then referred to a map of the Simmons Rand property. It is owned by Ingersoll-Rand Company. (map also included in the hand-out) The site is located in a mixed industrial, commercial and residential area. The population within one mile is 4,038. The industrial activity began in mid 1940s. The northern end is covered with asphalt and the southern end is covered with vegetation and gravel.

- The site is composed of four tracts: the VDH's main focus is Tracts 3 & 4, for several reasons: access to Tracts 3 & 4 is unrestricted; residential back yards are adjacent to Tracts 3 & 4; there are also sheds potentially used by residents on Tracts 3 & 4, which suggests that residents may come into contact with contaminants on these tracts.

- VDH did not focus on Tract 1 because it is covered with asphalt, which eliminates exposure to contaminants. VDH did not focus on Tract 2 because that tract is surrounded by a fence so no one has access to that tract and it is also covered with concrete foundations of demolished buildings. However, VDH will consider evaluating exposure to chemicals on Tracts 1 & 2 if tract conditions change in the future.

- Chemicals of concern are identified by looking at the respective health base, comparison value (CV) and this table shows the concentration of lead found in

soil and surface water. You can see the concentration of lead found in soil was 4000 milligrams per kilogram, which exceeds the comparison value of 400. That maximum concentration of lead in surface water was 34 kilograms per milligram, which is higher than the comparison value of 15. Based on these results, VDH has determined that exposure to lead on Tracts 3 & 4 may cause human concern. It may harm the health of children. VDH performed the evaluation of various other chemicals but it was determined that those chemicals do not pose human health hazard and that lead was the only contaminant of concern. So one's health can be affected by a chemical if they are exposed to it. Individuals can be exposed to chemicals through ingestion, inhalation and through dermal contact. Dermal means absorption of a chemical through the skin.

VDH considers five elements when determining if an exposure may have occurred in the past or if it is presently occurring or may occur in the future.

1-Source of contaminant (which is the place where hazardous material comes from, the Simmons-Rand property)

2-Environmental Transport-when a contaminant is released into the environment. It moves through and across different mediums such as surface waters, soil or sediment.

3-Point of Exposure-where people come into contact with the contaminant: through surface water, soil or sediment.

4-Route of Exposure-is the through inhalation, ingestion or dermal contact.

5-Potentially Exposed Population-Population that may have come into contact with the contaminants. Those would be residents on Jewell Street and trespassers into the Simmons-Rand property.

-Completed exposure pathway exists if you have all of these five elements present or if there is a strong likelihood that people have in the past or are presently coming into contact with contaminants on the site. In the analysis, Tracts 3 & 4 were identified as having complete exposure pathways because people have in the past or are presently coming into contact with lead in the soil. VDH has determined that residents and children may be exposed to contaminants in the soil through skin contact or inhalation or ingestion and may be exposed to sediment and surface water through skin contact if they play on either sediment or surface waters in backyards adjacent to these tracts. A potential exposure pathway exists if there is a potential or likelihood for the community to be exposed to a contaminant. In regards to the ground water, the ground water flows in the direction of some of the homes on Jewell Street and there substances known as volatile organic compounds which readily evaporate into the air and those compounds are identified on-site could move with the ground water and pelletize into homes. Residents can be potentially exposed to these organic compounds.

-Eliminating the exposure pathway is when the exposure to a contaminant is extremely unlikely and VDH has determined that residents or trespassers will not consume surface water or ground water near the Tracts 3 & 4 for two reasons: ground water is not used as potable or non-potable water because homes are connected to a public water system and in regards to surface water, the water in the drainage ditch fluctuates and it is not deep enough for anyone to swim in. VDH has determined that residents would not consume surface water or ground water.

EPA Lead Model is designed to predict the blood lead levels in young children exposed to lead. The model used factors like time outdoors, ventilation rate, diet in-take, and water consumption. Based on the results, the model predicted the blood levels were higher in children living near the property or at least at risk for elevated blood levels and this exposure may harm the health of children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention consider any level of lead in the body, especially for children to be harmful and there is no proven safe level of lead in blood. Children are also more sensitive to the toxic effects of lead. Lead may be harmful to children even at low levels and children can appear healthy despite having high levels of lead in blood. It is suggested that children under the age of 7 should have their blood tested for lead as a general

precaution, especially if they live in or near areas of known lead contamination. VDH's concern with lead exposure because it can potentially affect all organs of the body, causing a wide variety of side effects, with the nervous system most affected.

Doug Ratliff asked about the run-off from that area when it floods. He asked what effect the lead being in flood waters and washing down-stream.

Dr. Dwight Flammia of the State Public Health Dept-Toxologist-said that when the area floods and some of the contaminants get into the flood waters, you have such a large body of water; it would be diluted throughout the whole environment. I can't see that it would have any effect on the fish; there wouldn't be enough in the environment.

Larry Johnson asked specifically about basements flooding on Jewell Street during heavy rains. Dr. Flammia said you would be cleaning up the water anyway because you don't want to be exposed to mold. In cleaning your basement, removing any particular matter, you would also be removing any contaminants that you would be exposed to. But again, it would be so diluted. The other issue with a flooding event is that now DEQ and Arcadis are continuing to look at, is there any contaminant in the ground water that may migrate. I don't know how a flooding event would change that. DEQ would be better to answer that.

Councilman Doug Ratliff expressed his concern about any amount of lead in the body would have an effect. He asked about what the possible solution was, maybe to have the dirt hauled away if it poses a health threat. Dr. Flammia said that would reduce it to where it was considered background environment anyway, which is about 15 kilogram per kilogram with dirt. You would only be able to reduce it so much. Right now the Health Department and CDCP states there is no safe level of lead in the body, however a human walking around with no lead is nearly impossible so the best approach is to reduce it and to reduce the exposure as much as possible. There is no way to totally eliminate it. He said you could haul away that soil and replace it but you would expect to have background lead in soil. Based on the findings with DEQ and Arcadis since the first time we met a couple of years ago, they knew that would be one of our recommendations. They have already started sampling and the sample depth was really deep. What humans are exposed to is only going to be the top three, and they found much lower levels of lead that we would be exposed to just going out in the backyard. Between Arcadis and DEQ, they have determined with further remediation that part of that is based on future use of that land.

Dan Manweiler with DEQ-Abingdon Office-there are additional measures that the agency has been working with the landowner on with regards to lead and the removal of lead. I believe that it is going to be done (I have a sense of it, this is not the program that I am in charge) in targeted areas and I think it is also a recommendation from the health department that agencies certainly endorse us to isolate the properties so that a lot of ingress and egress into the area of Tract 3 & 4 can be eliminated.

Council members asked if the area could be rehabilitated. They didn't want the land to remain unusable. Mr. Manweiler replied: that question speaks to the heart of voluntary remediation program and the intent is to bring the property back into a useful purpose. I do feel we have exercised success in that regard throughout the stage. But at this stage, the objectives are to really review and understand what the health department has found and answer questions about the present state of contaminant is and what needs to be done with it.

Councilman Doug Ratliff compared this situation to strip-mining where the land has to be returned to the original state. He said he felt it should be the same for the property owner in this situation.

Mr. Manweiler said he thinks what has transpired at the property over many years of use, there are some latent contamination issues. In the scheme of things, we are beginning to get a handle on identifying the nature of the contaminant and lead seems to be, at least at this stage of the presentation, one of the key components in the health department study. Lead can be managed in a lot of ways, if it can be delineated and managed through excavation. I don't know what the plans are right now for excavation but I do see some of the work that is being done with what is being discussed. I think the idea is to gather a bit more information and data about the site and then talk about targeted removal of lead in soil in certain areas. He conferred with a staff environmental engineer from Arcadis, Monica Blair that was in attendance, who confirmed this. I would hope that what we will have soon is work plans to move ahead with further delineation of the lead such that we can address your concerns with the lead. So that we can "get the lead out".

Councilman Joe McCracken said they preferred that it not be fenced off, that makes the property unusable.

Councilman Larry Johnson asked what steps would be coming in the near future, after the discovery process is over. Mr. Manweiler said they are a long way on the investigation of the nature and extent of the problem. There will be some additional data collected, and usually at that stage, areas that require active cleanup, plans are developed to move into that. So the clean-up aspect comes shortly after this. The company has been, as far as voluntary remediation program, moving ahead in a timely fashion with these projects. Ultimately, it is their land and what they choose to do with it is, I can't speak to that. At this stage, the best thing to do is to go ahead and clean it up to levels that the DEQ and the Health Dept. feel are satisfactory and then if the company can be approached about what they wish to do with the land, you could probably find out more then.

An audience member asked if lead was the only concern. Mr. Manweiler said they may cover more of that in this study. He deferred to Ayat Abdelbaki, who continued with the presentation from the VDH. She said other chemicals were evaluated but it was determined that those chemicals do not pose a human health concern, so we just focused on lead as the only contaminant of concern.

Mr. Manweiler stated that the agency has worked on volatile organic compounds that are out there but we looked towards linkages for those chemicals' exposures, just as the health dept. does, and those exposure routes are not complete. With regards to lead, they appear to be in certain areas.

Michael Musick from the audience had a question concerning flooding in that area and if that would threaten the safety of wells in the area and how far the lead could travel through the bedrock to reach wells. Mr. Manweiler said lead does have one quality which is that is relatively stable and not very mobile in where it is deposited. Excavation is usually a good way to remove it. The way we understand it, there are no residential wells being used and public water is largely in play. If you know of areas or are concerned about wells in the vicinity, then certainly the DEQ would want to know where those are. We try to map all of that out but our present model is that it wouldn't be the likelihood of a well in that area.

Chad Quesenberry from DEQ addressed this issue as well. He said typically it is not a large concern of lead getting into ground water because it adheres to the soil quite well. Arcadis or Simmons-Rand are extending the monitoring network. One of the things with the VRT program that DEQ has required is to

check additional wells along Jewell Street to see what is really there as opposed to projecting what is there.

Monica Blair, with Arcadis spoke to the bedrock issue, said they had a few bedrock wells as well. Mr. Musick said his concern came from his experience working in the well industry, you can kick a well 6,000 to 7,000 feet down over a hill and his concern was it getting in the water while it's being excavated out and contaminating other wells because he does currently use a well. He wants to keep his well healthy. His fear is that once this is moved around, that it would interfere with his well. Mr. Manweiler said that more information on his well would be helpful to DEQ. Mr. Musick said he would provide that information.

Councilman Joe McCracken said the concern may be when there are flood waters over in that area, the waters do back up from the river and back onto residents' property and in their basements. When the water recedes, it goes back to the river, so therefore the contamination (possibly) could be in the river. I do understand that the volume of water vs. the volume of lead would be diminished due to so much water.

Dr. Abdelbaki continued with the presentation.

Soil contaminants identified on Tracts 1 & 2 are not expected to result in human health hazards. Ground water contaminants are not expected to harm health. The incidental ingestion and dermal contact to soil on Tracts 3 & 4 does result in a human health hazard. Soil sampling of 0-12 inches do not characterize public's exposure to soil.

Some of the recommendations from VDH:

- 1-Residents with backyards adjacent to Simmons-Rand should refrain from going on Tracts 3 & 4.
- 2-VDH recommends that lead contaminated soil be further characterized and remediated.
- 3-VDH initially recommended that additional soil sampling from 0-3 inches be done. This has been done by Arcadis.
- 4-VDH recommends additional ground water monitoring wells be put on Tracts 3 & 4 to determine if there is any volatile compounds in ground water running towards homes on Jewell Street.

She referred to the handouts available to the audience and asked for any further questions.

Dan Manweiler said that he had briefly looked at the Health Department's work and found that they did put a great deal of energy in the study, not only on the ground asking folks about specific health issues and their families and their opinions on the project but they did a lot work back in the office to assess the logical effects of each and every compound that was present. It was an extensive study.

Council thanked the VDH and DEQ and Arcadis for coming to the meeting tonight.

Doug Ratliff asked when the council can expect another update. Dr. Flammia said that DEQ and Arcadis are assessing the site; VDH has already put in their recommendations. They are discussing previous findings and will continue to share. If there are any changes, they could let you know. We could follow up in several months when they have additional data and let you know, either send something in writing or come back. Council agreed they would like them to come back. Dan Manweiler said he would follow up with Tim Taylor periodically keeping him informed. Mr. Taylor asked if the Power Point could be provided in digital format, requesting that it be emailed. VDH agreed to do that. Mayor White asked for any further comments. There were none.

Corbin Stone-Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates-His firm does the Audit for the Town Hall and has for the past few years. Referred to the report given to Council. Planned to go over that and at the end answer any questions.

1-The Audit went extremely well. Staff is very conscientious about their work and getting their work done. I told Sue that we audit places that have teams of CPAs and your staff is just as good if not better. They really do a great job.

2-Page 1, look at the General Fund Balance. We have some trend information in the handout to show you where you have been and to show you where you are heading. The General Fund balance for 2013 at the end of the year \$860,000.00 down about \$3,000.00 from last year, but down quite a bit from 2010. We always say that the minimum general fund balance you should have is about 10% of your budget, but the smaller you are, the more we want to see. So that threshold of 10% of your budget would be about \$550,000.00. But we would like to see a town this size closer to 25% of your budget. It gives you a nice reserve if you have something go wrong, and then you have money there to replace it. The Fund Balance for the General Fund is a little lower than we would like to see but when we talk a little later on, you will see that your cash balances if you look at the electric fund and water, are pretty strong.

3-Second line down, shows your water and sewer fund net assets, and as you can see from 2010 to 2013 that has grown from 10.7 million to 12.3 million. When we look at this, we are looking at the entire system. The original cost of putting the system in, this is the depreciated value of those assets. All of your assets minus all of your liabilities. In theory, we say this is what the system is worth. If you go out and sell it today, then this might be close to what it would be worth.

4-The electric fund you can see in 2010 has net assets of 1.1 million dollars, and then ended 2013 with 3.9 million dollars. That has been the driving force for the town. That is where we have seen the growth in cash value balances over the past couple of years. The next line down we have cash balances which ended 2013 with 5.6 million dollars as compared to 4.3 million in 2010. I can tell you that 2012 and 2013 had higher costs, about 4.2 to 4.3 million dollars. Back in 2011, it was 4.9 million dollars, is what you spent to purchase power, so you have been in a lull here with the cost of power. That is volatile, that changes so we can't count on that long term. But during that period, I am glad to see that cash balances (your reserve) went up; that is a good thing. Because when power costs go up, you have the reserves there and you don't have to have the immediate impact for your citizens in terms of a rate increase.

5-Total outstanding debt for the Town stood at \$4.2 million, that is for all funds in 2013, that includes all sorts of debt, including accrued leave, vacation time-we calculate how much the employees have earned in terms of dollars and we include that. As far as state averages, your debt-per-capita is about \$722.00. The last time we got a debt average for towns, it was about \$2,000.00 across the state. So \$722.00 is well below that state average for debt-per-capita. So overall, you get a pretty strong grade on finances. We would like to see the General Fund a little higher, but we are very pleased with the water and sewer fund and the electrical fund. Cash reserves are in good shape.

6-He referred to a graph in the handout. Once we have 10-12 years, then you will be able to see long term trends. We will also break down and show you the trends of state funding as well as local funding for your program.

7-On page 2 of the report, you can measure the health of the community, particularly in the past five or six years by looking at the assessment. You have real estate and the PSC (public service corporation) tax. What we have had is an annualized growth rate of 2% and really overall, these assessments are growing about 2% on an annualized basis, so that means we have the reassessment every 6 years. We are getting a little growth in between and then we get a little bump at the reassessment. I can tell you that a lot of places that we audit haven't seen growth in the past few years. Your overall assessment went up about 7%. A lot of places that we audit, their real estate values increased in 2005 and 2006 and then they went down in 2011, 2012 and 2013. So the fact that we are positive in the reassessment is good for the Town.

8-The next two pages are audit recommendations. Most of them are very minor. When we have a serious issue, you will see it in the Audit Report, it will be broadcast. When you have minor recommendations, you will just see this letter. The only thing that we as auditors would like to see is some separation of duties in the EMS billing. Right now you have a company that handles those billings and they collect the money and send it to you. We would like to, if possible, work with them and get those collections separated so that they send out the bills and the collections come to the Town. It may be that you can't do that. Ideally, you don't want to have the same person doing the billing and collections. We would like for the Town to see that cash coming in, just to protect yourselves.

9-The last two pages (5 & 6). This is where we would report any problems with the staff during the audit. We still have to do the letter whether or not we have any problems. I can tell you, we did not have any problems. They were very cooperative, if we asked for something, they got it immediately.

10-Overall, the audit went really well. We are pleased with how the Town is keeping their records. As an auditor, I don't give out praise very often.

11-He asked if there were any questions about the audit report. There were none. He said that council could contact him if they had any questions later.

Larry Worrell asked for a copy of the Audit Report. It will be emailed to him.

Mr. Taylor said he hoped to have the report on the website soon.

Randy Yost-Owner of Randy's Gateway Drug- He said that he was not here tonight to complain, he is blessed as a business man. He just had a few comments to make.

He got on the telephone and called almost every town from Roanoke and south west about their business license rate of local towns. The handout I gave you only has the towns that are in an hour's drive from here. Basically, there is not a single town in southwest Virginia that has a higher tax rate than Richlands. We are tied with Abingdon, Bristol, Roanoke, Salem and Blacksburg. Those are the only towns that I could see that I called that have the same tax rate that we have. I put down a few towns that I felt like were similar to us, for example: Tazewell, Lebanon, Honaker is kind of small, and Grundy.

1-He said he has had a great business over the years. He said he wasn't saying that he would have to close his doors. He said he does feel like that this particular tax is something he wants to address. He talked with Ed Pruett at Richlands Pharmacy and Ralph Dales at Scottie Pharmacy. He tried to approach CVS and had no success.

2-One of the problems with basing this on a drug store's total gross sales is that only 13% of my sales is from cash paying customers. 87% comes from prescription cards, Medicaid and that is fine but there is a set rate on that. I have no say-so in how much I can raise my prices. The reimbursement rates keep going lower and lower. I have no control what I get paid on 87% of my business. I am not free to raise my prices if I could. Net profit in 2006 of 22.8% is now 15.3%, had a 7% drop. But as you can see in the handout, my total sales are good. I went ahead and figured it up so you can see what my tax rate is going to be this month. I think that it is high. I feel like that over the past few years that the Town license tax has become a bigger part of my expense and a bigger part of any other drug store in the Town. Prices of some of the medicines have risen and as result of that, and inventory has risen and because you have 87% of your money that you are receiving from prescription cards, you have to wait on that money. So with all that said, I just have three suggestions:

- A) Lower the tax rate. I do realize that you have a budget and that may not be possible right now. To make it more competitive with the towns in the immediate area, be it Tazewell, Bluefield, Lebanon or Grundy. That would help me. It would make me more competitive. Let's face it, I look at K-mart and Wal-Mart, they pay zero. County does not have a tax. Only lower it for drugstores. We need a break.
- B) Make it a variable tax rate. Look at the handout at Big Stone Gap, for example: they do a variable rate in their town. I also put Bluefield, WV

on there. I think that is a business friendly move. There is no tax the first year and then it progressively goes up. But it is still .1% after 4 years.

C) Another solution may be to put a cap on this for us. So it wouldn't be so constraining for the drugstore business.

Thanked Council for letting him speak and asked them to consider his suggestions.

Marcie Estep-Executive Director-Teen Center Update-She was not able to show the presentation as she had planned, however the video will be on the Teen Center website. She gave a handout to the Council members and had a slide show on her computer as she gave her update on the Teen Center.

She thanked Council for allowing her to speak tonight. She came a few months ago asking to borrow the stage for the Battle of the Bands. She appreciated that. Has been in this position for about 15 months now. Although she is not a Richlands native, she loves it and loves the kids. She knows that the Town has supported Teen Venture with their efforts and she wanted to thank them for what they have done and to give an update.

She referred to the card that was included in the handout she gave to Council that shows statistics showing that a percentage of teens are exposed to drug/ alcohol use and physical abuse and how the teen center reaches out to them through a three pronged approach. 1-Community 2-Mentorship 3-Cultural, Social and Academic Programs. They also try to reach out to the community. Roughly 25% of our high school students have had someone offer, sell or give them illegal drugs in their school or community. What we are trying to do at Teen Venture is give them a place where it is safe and they are not being offered those things and they can come and spend time with us and know that they are in a positive environment. The data from this survey is Pride Survey 2012 courtesy of SATIRA.

Highlights from 2013

Community

-Created partnership with several organizations to allow free field trips to the center. Mountain Mission School, very positive role model, very well mannered kids.

-Held numerous community events to raise money for charitable causes. Battle of the Bands, large community event, it was free; we had fundraisers and some sponsors. We asked people to donate canned food and we donated those to food pantries. We are trying to instill this sense of community and giving back.

Mentorship

Mentorship is a big part of our program. We have teens that come in everyday that just don't want to be home. They are in a bad home situation and we are a safe haven for them. We have a lot of community support. There have been churches in the area that come in and feed the kids dinner for free. Some of our teens, lunch at school is their last meal of the day. We have a SATIRA volunteer there once a week. She is dedicated and comes down once a week and meets with them and talks to them about drug/ alcohol prevention. We have a lot of mentorship at the Teen Center.

Cultural, Social and Academic Programs

In order to reach and engage our teens in the center, we realized we had to reach out into the community outside of the town. We wrote a couple of grants and we were very fortunate to receive those from Enterprise Rent-a-Car and one from the Community Foundation of the Virginias, both of those are travel grants which allow us to take our teens on trips. Trips are based on a

reward system for good behavior, service, and things like that. We just went to a skate park in Greenville, SC and they competed in a skate competition and three of our students placed and they received trophies. It was an honor for us to go.

-Increased enrollment and usage of center. We were able to lower our age to middle school students so now we are having middle school all the way through high school. We are expanding; we are putting a small gym inside the teen center so they can have weight lifting and treadmills. We are constantly looking for ways to engage teens. We wanted to let you know the things we are doing at the teen center and to see if you have any suggestions about what we are doing. If there is anything that we can do to help our community or anything that you can do to help us.

Councilwoman Strong thanked Marcie Estep and said that she has a passion and really loves the children. She complimented the job she is doing and especially the travel program. It is a great opportunity for the kids and Ms. Estep said the kids don't have to pay anything, it is fully funded. Councilwoman Strong also complimented the community program, teaching the students to "give back". She said the Kiwanis Club also works closely with them and at Christmas time, the Kiwanis Club got a text message that she (Marcie) had extra money/ gifts and asking if anyone knows some needy families. Ms. Estep said they had a concert and raised over \$400 and gave it straight back to the community. We bought toys, gifts and diapers for those families in need. The teens got to do the shopping so they got that sense of giving back.

Councilman Rod Cury added his thanks and said that he hears positive comments from the students at the high school.

Ms. Estep invited everyone to come down and spend one evening with these teens and it will just tug at your heart.

Councilwoman Frances Meadows said she was glad they lowered the age limit to allow middle school students. Ms. Estep said it was an issue between them and Boy Scouts of America. We are very fortunate to have that partnership; they provide the liability insurance for us at the center for an extremely low cost and if we didn't have that we would not be in operation. Those middle school students are so excited and it is adorable to see the older ones mentoring the younger ones, teaching them skate tricks and drums, etc.

Mayor White asked how many students they now have. Ms. Estep said the total enrolled in the center right now is around 130/140. On any given night, depending on what is going on, we have between 25 and 45 kids.

Unscheduled Public Comments:

Michael Musick, 238 Vickey Drive-

1-wanted to address the snow removal. Feels like this year it has slacked off a lot. He suggested it be looked into to see what the problem is.

2-Problems on Vickey Drive-they have been addressed before, the abandoned properties. He says the abandoned houses need to be cleaned up. There are several. He said the town needs to take control of all of the abandoned houses.

3-Problems with vehicles parking in the street on Henderson Street. You have to stop if another car is coming because there is not enough room to pass. It is supposed to be two-lane traffic. It is also a problem on Vickey Drive. It makes it difficult for the snowplow to get around them.

Joe McCracken said he had brought up the abandoned houses on Vickey Drive as well and research was being done to see what could be done legally. Brad Ratliff asked for the identities of the houses. He said he knew the one below Mr. Musick but needs the other two. Mr. Musick said one was on Dot Street and someone told him that it has a septic with no cover on it. He also

said that the house is very unstable. He said there was another abandoned house out on Dot Street next to the end.

Tim Taylor said they can have the Police Department identify the abandon structures. Chief Dorton said the one at the top on Dot Street has been sold and has been cleaned up. They are working on it now, remodeling the house inside. Chief Dorton said as to the house on Vickey Drive, they had tracked the owner to Russell County and were able this week to hand deliver notice to the owner. The Ball property is in the process. They further discussed the house with the open septic; it is above him on Dot Street, sits down over the hill. Mr. Taylor said the town will check on that, it could be a public safety hazard.

Mr. Taylor said on the issues with the snow removal, it has been an extremely harsh winter, one of the harshest we have had in over a decade. The amount of salt we have put down this year has been a record amount, the amount of hours we have devoted to keeping these streets clear is an astronomical amount. He said Mr. Musick is one of only a few to complain. If the snow comes that fast, that harsh and that cold, the salt doesn't work. Resources are maxed out. We only have a limited amount of resources for the lane-miles that we have. People need to be a little tolerant, especially since we are always talking about not raising taxes, etc. Obviously if we had a lot of money to do that, we could probably do a better job. We will check on the vehicles on the streets, anyone who is improperly parked on the side of the road. Henderson is a two-way street, and there will be some encroachment because a lot of those folks don't have off-street parking. We look and see about the ones that do have off-street parking and make sure they try to utilize it. On some streets, such as Vickey Drive, there is just nowhere to go except on the side of the road.

Council Member Reports:

Rod Cury

1-Next Planning Commission meeting will be on March 4th at 7:30 pm at Town Hall.

2-Concerns about parking issue on Charles Street. I will try to get more information and get back to you.

3-By Motion of Council at our last meeting, we are to try to seek historic designation for the cemetery at Clinch Valley Memorial Cemetery. I have instituted that process and am working with the Department of Historic Resources and with Ms. Gaynelle Thompson.

Joe McCracken

1-Flora Lawson-Sagewood Drive-asked for an update on finding out how much of her property is in the Town and how much is in the County. Mr. Taylor said he needed to visit the property and talk with Brad Ratliff and the Commissioner of Revenue on that issue. The County has identified all of those sites that were split up under the annexation. We need to meet with them before we talk to her. Mr. Taylor explained that the County had divided the property in the Town and the County.

2-River Road- is still impassable. He asked just to make it passable until the weather clears and they can work on it with a grader. Jim Taylor said putting down stone would only be a two day cure. They would be gone in a couple of days. Tim Taylor said they could close the road if they desire to. We need to evaluate the impact of closing it.

3-There are some pot holes off of Franklin and Augusta Avenues.

Frances Meadows

1-VDOT-she noted that Tim will be addressing that under his comments. Mr. Taylor said that they met with VDOT on that and other matters. We looked at the sign and they understand fully what the problem is. They are not in a position to make those calls. That is the traffic division and has been referred to them. They will analyze it and get back with us. We seem to think that is a

good spot for rumble strips and maybe some bigger signage and maybe some painting.

2-She was given a paper from the Richlands High School softball team that will need to be discussed in budget work session. They are looking at re-developing the softball field at the high school and they are soliciting donations. They would appreciate either a \$500 or \$1000 donation. Frances said she explained to them about the money situation, that things are tight but that it would be discussed in the budget.

Doug Ratliff

1-would like to get meetings scheduled with BVU and AEP in the next couple of weeks.

2-PCA-none this month.

Larry Johnson

1-handed out a copy of the Technology Zone Draft Ordinance for Council to review. Brad and I had met and laid the ground work for this. We need to have another meeting and have Mr. Taylor involved just to make sure everything is ok.

2-East Second Street property-the identity of the owner was found and a letter was sent requesting clean-up.

3-Thanked Ginger and the Chamber for inviting Council to the meeting, it was very productive and went well. It is nice to see that everyone is working toward the same goals for the Town and the surrounding area.

4-Thanked the Police Department. He had a call from a person in Claypool Hill that had a theft and one of our investigators caught the person quickly. Paul Little was the one who apprehended the suspect.

5-Thanked staff for a good audit report.

6-He addressed the handout from Randy Yost. He said he went down the list and we do have one of the highest BPOL taxes but we don't have is personal property tax and a merchants capital tax. Mr. Taylor addressed the tax issue and said that it is really unfair to take a certain tax and just isolate it to use that in this form and fashion. Mainly because the community does hate taxation and all of us do but it is part of doing business for the community. It is actually a large task to do because you have to know the demographics of the people paying the taxes. You have to know what the business clientele and industrial mix and what it is. Each tax has to be evaluated on its own merit based on what the needs of that community are. It is not one individual tax as much as it is as the whole. If you look at the whole tax on these comparative studies we used in our budget work sessions. For instance, we don't have any personal property tax; we don't have merchant's capital tax. If you take away the personal property tax, which almost every town in the state has. I will have reports to show you for the entire state, for all of the particular taxes and why we are where we are. There may be a strong need from the business community, if you only have three or four businesses, then there is no need to have a BPOL tax. The demand on resources should follow what the taxes are being charged. If you have a business that demands a lot of a particular type of service, such as police protection or fire and rescue keeps the insurance rates low, then all of that should go into the mix of you do a portfolio of taxes. It is really a complicated mission for everyone. I understand Mr. Yost's concern because he is worried about drug stores, but you could argue for the car dealers, gas stations. All of those are based on gross receipts. We could not survive just to tax on gross profits. Then you have to look at who the taxes will affect. Personal property will affect landowners. Merchant's capital will hit the businesses at some point as well as personal property.

Doug Ratliff said that while comparing our BPOL rates to Abingdon, their property tax is 28% and ours is 16%. Joe McCracken also mentioned that county water rates are higher than town water rates.

Larry Johnson said he wished Randy Yost had stayed because with the the BPOL Project, there are actually tier based taxes for new businesses. It is a good idea and we have been working on it for about a year. Tim Taylor asked to be able to have a financial analysis on that prior to doing it because it may help here but hurt somewhere else in the long run.

Doug Ratliff said that at one of his businesses in Abingdon, his dumpster is \$140 per month. In Richlands, the same size dumpster is \$25 a month. He said the reason for the difference is that Abingdon has privatized their commercial trash pickup and the town can do it much cheaper.

Mary Ann Strong asked how long had the BPOL rate been what it is now. Mr. Taylor said it is uniform, there are some taxes that can be set by Council, however it cannot. It is governed by statute.

Larry Johnson added that on the real estate tax in these municipalities on Mr. Yost's handout are a lot higher. So they are charging more in other areas than the BPOL tax.

Joe McCracken suggested that in the proposed technology zone, there could be incentives for existing businesses as well. Larry Johnson said that if they want to invest in their business and grow it, there are incentives for that.

Mary Ann Strong

1-Also thanked Ginger and the Chamber for inviting council to the joint meeting. It was excellent, a lot was accomplished and we left with similar goals to work together towards achieving.

2-Since the donation about softball was brought up, I would like for us to look at some ways that we might be able to assist the Teen Center financially. It is getting harder and harder for them to raise funds. So when we get into the budget process, I would like to talk about that.

3-She complimented the Street Department on a fantastic job considering the amount of snow that we have had, how fast it comes and the temperatures. She also thanked Hobert with the Water Department. With the cold temperatures, people are not always taking precautions, and lines are freezing. They are very cooperative and willing to go out, sometimes after hours too.

4-She had wondered why the Tazewell County Free Press hadn't covered our meetings and then I saw a few weeks ago where they had the Cedar Bluff Town Council coverage. I called Lynna Mitchell and talked with her and she said it just the fact that they don't have enough reporters and they did not actually have a reporter at Cedar Bluff, they send a copy of their minutes to her and then she compiles an article for the paper. I didn't know if that is something we can consider doing, although I realize it wouldn't be fair to the other newspapers that send someone, like the Voice and the Richlands News Press.

Rod Cury stated that he was glad that she called. From the Council's viewpoint, dissemination of information is a good thing for our Council and if we could get the same thing out to all of the media.

Tim Taylor spoke about being careful about submitting draft minutes or unapproved minutes. Probably 99% of the time, it would be fine. You do run a risk with minutes. You can prepare a Press Release, which would be the responsibility of whoever did that. I would just be hesitant to give out un-approved minutes.

Department Heads

Fred Phillips

1-Gave out monthly report. Frances Meadows suggested everyone should see Fred Phillips in action as a Basketball Coach.

2-K-1 Basketball went well. All the basketball leagues will end this Saturday.

3-Joe McCracken asked how often the Rec Park was able to use Community Service Workers. Fred replied 5-7 per day.

4-Jeff Hurst is the President of the Richlands Youth Basketball League, after the leagues end and after he pays the Officials, he is going to donate the lump sum to the Richlands Recreation Park for the gym floor.

5-Mary Ann Strong asked if the lights had been replaced in the gym. Fred said that the ones on the side that were really outdated had been taken down. Making room for the scoreboards, Coca-Cola has donated two wireless scoreboards for each side. Mary Ann Strong asked about the registration for Richlands Little League, she hadn't seen the sign that is usually on the field for registration this year. Fred said that is was taking place every Saturday in February at the Rec Park. He said he thought they were also going through the schools and on the internet.

Chief Frank Dorton

- 1- Had 722 calls for service for the month of January. Down from the same time period last year.
- 2- Served 94 Criminal papers including Warrants.
- 3- Lot of cold weather, lot of snow. Thankfully not a lot of accidents.
- 4- The Senate passed a bill yesterday extending the Emergency Custody Order time period to 24 hours. Right now it is 4 hours with a 2 hour extension for a total of 6 hours. What that means is one of our officers has to stay with that person because they are technically in custody. We have to stay with that person for 6 hours. If they are committed to a mental institution, it could be in Fairfax, Virginia Beach or Staunton, which is a 10 hour drive. Tying up a police officer for that length of time. Now we will have to stay with them for up to 24 hours, plus make that trip and back. We do a lot of ECOs. Roughly 40 to 50 per year. We don't have a lot of extra manpower anyway, so we have to call people to come out, which is overtime for them plus you can't keep that person for 24 hours and not feed them so there is that expense. Plus you have to transport them, there is the fuel expense. Plus you will have to provide money to the officer for fuel to get back plus food expense for the officer. It will have a large financial impact on any police department. The Bill came out in the House today, not sure of the results. I would assume it will go back to the Senate. As a governing body, we are asking you to intervene to show the impact it will have on us as a town. Let your representative know how you feel on this. Probably too late to send a letter, unless you can email it or even call them.

Gordon Russ

1-Handed out monthly report to council.

2-He is putting a grant in for a new truck. We spent over \$26,000.00 last year on repairs. If the grant is approved, which is 80/20, they pay 80% and we pay 20%, then I am going to place an ad for the old truck on Ambulance trader.com and hopefully get the 20% out of that to cover that.

3-Have been working on other issues that will have to be brought up during the budget meetings about the fire collections, etc.

Tim Taylor spoke about the issue that Mr. Stone referred to in the Audit Report, we have been trying to work on a solution for that and we thought we had one, but we have run into some issues, such as the drop box issue. We have been trying to get something worked out with that. So that people can see that the invoice comes from the Town of Richlands and would have a place to pay the Town of Richlands, not a firm in Oceana, WV. Gordon said the gentleman he had been talking with had offered to come and explain the program.

4-Joe McCracken asked if there was an ambulance listed for sale now on the internet. Mr. Russ said not at this time. He said he planned to list the 1993 model this summer.

Larry Johnson asked about the Groundbreaking ceremony for the Burn Building. Frances Meadows said the date had been set for May 17th at 11:00 am.

Mary Ann Strong said that she noticed on the breakdown of Gordon's report showing where all the calls went, there were 25 in Claypool Hill. She asked if that was average. Gordon Russ says it varies.

Jim Taylor

1-Snow and ice removal-we have had 12 different occasions for calling people out to work snow. We put in 171 man hours to take care of these instances, 347 hours of truck/equipment hours and have put down 245 tons of salt and 225 tons of number 9 stone. This took up most of our schedule. Mr. Musick is the first that I have heard complain about our workers. They are doing a great job.

2-Cleaned ditches on Kents Ridge Road, Hunters Ridge Road, Farmer, Fifth and Shenandoah getting ready for the rainy seasons. Sometimes the ditches are frozen.

3-Picked up 46 bags of trash on Burnette, Veterans Drive, Edgewater Drive, Second Street.

4-Carpenters worked on a couple of projects at the Police Dept.

5-Scaled and painted about ½ of the sign posts up at the front of the sign on the East end of Town. Weather has us on hold again. Will need a bucket truck.

6-Cut the brush on right of ways at Edgewater Drive and Front Street intersection, trying to get ahead of the leaves.

7-With each snow, we clean grates and gutters to make sure the snow water gets off and then we sweep and salt all of the sidewalks on the bridges. Especially the bridge near Hardee's; there is a lot of foot traffic.

8-Set up a trailer box for PD storage, we have leveled the old trailer and are going to set another one beside of it.

9-Patched Pot holes on Farmer Street, Fourth Street, Fifth Street, Shenandoah, Front, Second used 28 bags of blacktop patching. The blacktop patch is just a temporary fix at best. We put some in on Front Street on Friday and by Monday it was gone again. Plants will be opening soon.

10-Made 67 extra stops for big junk, 157 so far this year. Cold weather makes trash pickup a little more difficult. If trash is frozen in the bottom of the can and you try to bang it loose, then you will break the can. Especially with trash that is not in bags. Remind customers that trash needs to be in bags even in if in a trash can with a lid. One place that was in question, there were 4 trashcans sitting there, all of them open and half full of trash, full of rain/ snow and frozen.

Mayor's Comments

Mayor White commended the staff on the work done during the snow removal and also the water department and the electric crew.

Mayor White also requested to meet with Tim Taylor on the Access Channel and also on some things that would be needed for the upcoming Freedom Festival. Mr. Taylor said he would check his calendar and let her know a date and time.

She agreed with Mary Ann Strong that she would like to discuss supporting the Teen Center in some way.

Brad Ratliff

1-He introduced an Ordinance with regard to Burnette Street property to clear up the boundary issue and prepare it for sale. This particular Ordinance must be read twice in granting a strip of property that is about 20 feet by 10 feet to resolve a boundary encroachment. This will clear up that title to the property for anyone interested in purchasing this property. He then read the Ordinance in its entirety.

2-The second reading is anticipated being done at the March 11, 2014 meeting.

3-The Ordinance on the Repeal of Local Cigarette tax was presented earlier this evening in the public hearing. The first reading has been done. I will do the second reading unless council chooses to waive the second reading.

Rod Cury asked it would be possible to have an addendum to the Ordinance or hold this and re-write the ordinance so that we can see that this money goes to Public Safety. Brad Ratliff said it is possible. Mr. Cury said that he thinks this tax would be a good thing overall and was trying to address Larry's concern. He said he has faith in Mr. Taylor when he says he guarantees that that it will go to Public Safety because that is where the need is but this way, it ensures it in writing that the money goes there. He recommended that Council consider that.

Doug Ratliff made a Motion to waive the second reading of the Ordinance, seconded by Larry Johnson. Vote 3 yes, 3 no, Mayor voted yes. Motion carried.

Doug Ratliff made a Motion to accept the Ordinance to Repeal the local tax on cigarettes, seconded by Larry Johnson.

Doug Ratliff said that the BPOL tax hits the merchants and the cigarette tax hits the merchants as well. He said it was a double-whammy to the merchants.

Frances Meadows expressed her understanding toward Mary Ann Strong's earlier comments in that this tax was a small tax but warned that taxes are coming. She said the Town would have to raise taxes somewhere. She said people would remember who caused the taxes to go up. Mary Ann Strong said that she had more people talk to her in favor of repealing the cigarette tax and Frances replied that she just didn't believe it. Mary Ann Strong replied that she did not lie and didn't appreciate any attacks on her character.

Joe McCracken reiterated that he felt Council did not need to rush into any decision on this issue. He said he thought council should have facts/ numbers to show where the money was definitely going before making a decision tonight.

Rod Cury said he would appreciate Council allowing the attorney to prepare an Ordinance to present to them to see if it pleases Council that would "ear-mark" the money for Public Safety.

Doug Ratliff had earlier made the Motion to repeal the Cigarette Tax, seconded by Larry Johnson. Vote 3 yes (Doug Ratliff, Larry Johnson, Mary Ann Strong), 3 no (Frances Meadows, Rod Cury, Joe McCracken), Mayor voted yes for tie-breaker. Motion carried.

Doug Ratliff asked about how the stamps that had already been sold would be handled. Mr. Taylor said that the stamps that haven't been applied to the cigarettes cannot be collected on by the merchants. They would have to be refunded by the Town. Sue Wade mentioned the floor stock tax. Chief Dorton had already gone around and got the totals on that. Mr. Taylor recommended to leave those alone. Mr. Taylor asked about the effective date on the Ordinance, if it was to be effective in 30 days. Attorney Brad Ratliff said that this particular Ordinance contained language that would allow it to become effective immediately. Mr. Taylor recommended to Council to allow the stamps that are already on the cigarettes to be left alone and let them deal with. The ones that are in the wholesaler and are intact, we can get those and put them in our safe.

We get some statement from the wholesaler as to what they have used out of the roll, I will sign it and certify it if that would be okay with Council. Rod Cury said he trusted Mr. Taylor's judgment on that as Town Manager. Council agreed.

Town Manager's Report

1-Mr. Taylor went over the check register which included bills for the month totaling \$801,569.74 including AMP Power Bill \$54,158.76, Anthem \$73,511.00 and VRS \$51,271.51.

Doug Ratliff made a Motion to authorize the Town Manager to pay the bills, seconded by Rod Cury. Vote, all in favor, 6/ 0. Motion carried.

Doug Ratliff said there was no way that the Town would have to raise taxes; there are many ways to raise revenue. Like things we are working on with BVU, AEP, there are several things we can do generate revenue without raising taxes. He again stated "there is no way we are going to raise taxes".

2-Memo concerning the meeting with Appalachian Gas Company with John Ebert. Mr. Ebert has a conflict on the 18th, however February 20 at 8:00 pm is still available. Ask Council if everyone could agree on that date and time. Council agreed to meet then.

3-Memorandum of Understanding with Town of Tazewell. We are trying to find ways to cut costs and take advantage of other entities' services. It is exactly the same as the MOU that Council approved with the Tazewell County PSA. He asked Council to consider authorizing him to sign the agreement which would give us an official agreement to do what we are doing. Todd Day with the Town of Tazewell was also an engineer in his former career. He is the former Town Manager of the Town of Bluefield and now is the Manager for the Town of Bluefield.

Larry Johnson made the Motion to authorize Mr. Taylor to sign the MOU with the Town of Tazewell, seconded by Mary Ann Strong. Vote, all in favor, 6/ 0.

4-The Dept. Heads went over the stress during the recent bad weather. There were a lot of people with water lines frozen, but with the distribution being as large as it is, overall it was good. As far as the electric utilities, a lot of things happened that the general public doesn't know but we were called on to reduce our load and to start our generation in order to help stabilize the national grid. We started our generator over at the Water Plant numerous times to offset peaks and to have a load reduction. The peak for the transmission system was set. That dictates our cost for our transmission fees beginning in February, 2015. Now if we don't peak in the summer to get above the peak that happened January 7th, 2014, we will be based on that peak, which is a record. 24 mega watts, which is the most I have ever seen in my 26 years. The results of that will be increased transmission costs and pretty dramatically, actually. We are a "winter-peaker" so this one CP usually occurs in the winter and there is another in the summer, almost always. Now it has occurred in the winter once before for us and it really raised our transmission fees. There is volatility, I think we heard Mr. Stone refer to the electrical industry. We did all we could do to reduce the load and keep the lights on. We have had a lot of issues with the generators and the stress on those too. Our issues were very minor. Very pleased with the performance of not only our equipment but also our personnel. Some of that required coming out at 5:00 am starting the generators, Mr. John Whitt and Mr. Dave Fields and some of the other folks that took care of those facilities.

5-Already reported on the VDOT meeting.

6-Request from American Electric Power is a request. Right now, it is a do-nothing request except to understand what they are looking at. We met with officials from AEP and their subsidiary, APCO, because there are engineers that represented AEP as well as APCO, they are a parent company to the distribution company and the separation from that. AEP actually owns the transmission. Years ago, there were improvements made to the Town on a transmission perspective that were never implemented at the time. These steel towers that you see transverse the power lines near Andy Altizer's Dominion Tire. They don't actually have wires on them but they are insulated to carry 138,000 volts. The improvements that were supposed to be made, were improvements from that line and on across the mountains and the coalfields to Whitewood and also to extend it to the northern part of the county where there are some weak areas. We recently had an instance on a Sunday morning where the power went out five times, it would go off and stay off for five seconds and

then back on. It did that on Sunday four or five times. That wasn't us, that was APCO dropping out because of problems. We are on the Jewell Ridge line most of the time and they had some trouble up in there and in operation, it cleared itself and came back on. It causes a lot of heartache for us because of the hospital generator, the sewer plant generator, the water pumps and all of that. We have talked to them about that and we have made adjustments on our equipment to help ease that. But the only thing I believe will help that particular situation is for these improvements AEP is proposing to do. Those will include power lines that will extend into 138 and across to Whitewood to the old substation over there and there are more improvements to the north area. That makes the loop more reliable. The voltages sag sometimes when it's cold and it causes us some misery. The reason APCO wants the Town to know about this is they are going to hold some public hearings at the schools and different parts of the county, they will announce those in the future. They will take inputs from the community. Obviously, it is not a new line except in our area, most of that area already has procurement on the right of way. Most of it is pretty much coal country. The impact of that will be power lines going through a forest. There will be people along the route that will see the lines, so they will have a chance to talk about it. As far as for us, there probably will not be any construction in the town but it will greatly increase our reliability. It will make the grid stronger for us and hopefully will take away those inadvertent little outages that we have from time to time. In the future, there will be correspondence from them and we will get it to you and let you look at it. You may even want to go to the public hearings, if you have anything that you want to say, either positive or negative. But I would hope that as Council you would eventually give a letter of support for that based on the discussion we just had. I fully support it knowing how important it is to us. Also if we are fortunate enough to get an industry that uses a large amount of power, that grid will be place. Not only for here but anywhere in the county. This has been about 30 years in the making. I will let them talk about how it will affect the rates, because it will affect rates. We don't pay APCO rates so it would be only on the side of the transmission side which is very minimal for us at all for those that are on town services. Those that are on AEP, will of course pay AEP rates.

6-The Codification Project Disc-you are welcome to make any type of comment to us that you like. We would like to tabulate them and send them on to the people of interest. Just don't change it. I had to sign that we would not change any of the wording until after the 60 day period. After it is in place, they will do all revisions there. They have to get the proper wording, legally and make sure they do not comprise anyone. Rod Cury added his thought on this process and said he was glad we are doing this and can hardly wait until it is finished.

7-He had talked to Supervisor White about this next issue. It hasn't been too long ago that we paved Hill Creek Road but due to the truck traffic, the road is in poor condition. We had delayed paving a little while because we thought the mining activity had ceased but with the long-wall miners that they have today and the never ending customer base they have today, that has been a really good job producer for this area. It has been an economic enhancement for us. We want the trucks to move but we don't want our communities to be affected by what has happened. If we don't pave soon, there is not going to be a road. I talked to Supervisor White because there are coal severance tax funds available in the county. We don't have access to those. But this is a perfect application for that because that is monies they have derived from the coal companies and that is one use for it. So I asked him to consider providing some money for this. We are working on some pricing and getting some figures together for him and he said he would support us on that. It would probably be up to council to ask him to officially support us. We have one curve down there that is very dangerous, we have looked at it from the Street Committee to Staff Committee. That curve needs something done. Ultra, the coal operator, had agreed to help us make some improvements there. They would provide the people if we could get the property and things like that. I would also like to include that in our request for Mr. White to help us with also and he agreed to it.

Joe McCracken made the Motion to direct the Town Manager to ask Supervisor White to help the Town with paving the Hill Creek area and to work on the dangerous curve, seconded by Rod Cury. Vote 6/0, yes. Motion carried.

7-Request from DEQ-Integrated Resources Plan-concerning all Virginia Armory National Guard facilities. DEQ has asked for comments for this. It has to do with historical resources, environmental issues, cultural properties within the state that are 50+ years old. We have pretty much a brand new facility located near the college and it is sound. There are no historical preservation issues. We really don't have any comments unless someone wants to make some. It has to be turned in tomorrow, so I just wanted to let you know about it.

8-His next two issues require going into closed session.

Mary Ann Strong referred to the Memo from Project Graduation from RHS to consider a donation. She said she knew that the Town provided the Recreation Department and wondered what amount the Town had given in the past. Mr. Taylor said we don't usually give a donation other than allowing them to use the Rec Park and providing staff, etc.

Joe McCracken made the Motion to provide the Rec Park for RHS Project Graduation, seconded by Rod Cury. All in favor, 6/0. Motion carried.

Mr. Taylor referred to the memo from Jerry McReynolds at the Tazewell County Airport to come and visit the facility. Mayor White said they had also requested the Town take out an ad in their Fly-In Event in August. Last year, when they asked it was already passed the time to bring it up before Council. Mr. Taylor said he thought that in the past, the Town had donated up to \$500.

Rod Cury confirmed with Mayor White that Mary Lawson had requested a donation to the Festival of the Arts, which the Town has done for many years, and the traditional donation has been \$500.

Doug Ratliff spoke about all of the requests for donations and said at some point, Council needs a set amount of maybe \$10,000.00 and not go over that. He said it was going to get out of hand, with the problems with the budget and we are dishing it out, we are going to have a big problem.

Rod Cury said he understood but this with the college is a yearly donation for several years. It is the Festival of the Arts at SWCC and part of the college foundation.

Rod Cury made the Motion to support the Festival of the Arts, as has been done for several years, seconded by Mary Ann Strong. All in favor, vote 6/0. Motion carried.

Larry Johnson made the Motion to go into closed session pursuant to Chapter 2.23711 a (6)-Contract negotiation and pursuant to Chapter 2.23711 a (7)-Consultation with legal counsel, seconded by Frances Meadows. All in favor, vote 6/0. Motion carried.

Council agreed to take a five minute break before going into closed session.

Council went into closed session at 10:30 pm and returned at 11:30 pm.

Larry Johnson made the Motion to return from closed session pursuant to Chapter 2.23711 a (6)-Contract negotiation and pursuant to Chapter 2.23711 a (7)-Consultation with legal counsel, seconded by Rod Cury. All in favor, vote 6/0. Motion carried.

The Mayor asked all Council members to affirm that nothing else was discussed other than those matters pursuant to Chapter 2.23711 a (6)-Contract negotiation and pursuant to Chapter 2.23711 a (7)-Consultation with legal counsel. Doug Ratliff, yes; Frances Meadows, yes; Joe McCracken, yes; Rod Cury, yes; Larry Johnson, yes; Mary Ann Strong, yes.

With no further business to discuss, Rod Cury made the Motion to recess until February 20, 2014 at 8:00 pm, seconded by Larry Johnson. All in favor, vote 6/0. Motion Carried.

Jan White, Mayor

Susan Whitt, Clerk