

The Richlands Town Council held a regular monthly meeting in the Richlands Council Chambers on January 9, 2018 at 7:30pm with the following present:

Mayor:	Jannis White
Town Manager:	Tim Taylor
Town Clerk:	Connie Allen
Council Members:	Mary Ann Strong, Vickie England Rick Wood, Rod Cury, Larry Johnson, Doug Ratliff
Town Attorney:	Brad Ratliff

Mayor White opened the meeting.

Mayor White gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor White - Do we have anyone who would like to speak that is not on the agenda? Please add your name to the agenda. We don't want anyone speaking from the floor. We welcome you to express your opinion.

Mayor White - Please add to "Unscheduled Public Comments" - Phillip Lowe, Mark Gillespie, Jonathan Redmond, and Justin Case.

Mayor White - Do we have any other additions/deletions to the agenda?

Tim - XIII Manager's Report - Item "C" please delete from agenda. XIV Closed Session - Delete "A" and "B" I don't have any additional information at this time to discuss.

Mayor White - Do we have a motion to approve the agenda as amended? Larry made the motion, Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 6/0.

Mayor White - We have four (4) sets of minutes, November 2017 Regular Council Meeting, November 16th Work Session, December 12th - Two Public Hearings, December 12th Regular Council Meeting. Are there any corrections, additions or deletions to the minutes?

Connie - Correction on Page 4 - Andrew Cox should be Andrew Cocke.

Mayor White - Do I have a motion to approve all four (4) sets of the minutes as presented?

Mary Ann - I make a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries - 6/0.

Mayor White - "Scheduled Public Comments" - Sylvia Boyd- Speaking on behalf of Ginger Branton.

Sylvia Boyd - I am the President of the CART Board. I would like to introduce several of our CART Board Members that are here tonight to show their support for our request. Pat Reynolds and husband Jim Reynolds, Cathy Harris, Elaine Holmes, Debbie Teets, and Doug Branton. Our Executive Director, Ginger Branton, was unable to be present tonight so I am speaking on her behalf. I hope you will look at the sheet handed out. Ginger has stated why we are asking for the grant. For thirty-seven years CART has provided quality professional entertainment for our community to enjoy. Examples are Chet Atkins, Big River Musical and this season Seven Eagles Tribute Band. The Barter players - The Night before Christmas and the Baby Boomers Comedy Show. The attendance was great at all these performances.

Yes, CART brings these professional performances to our community but we offer so much more. Our performances are community affairs. Neighbor visiting neighbor and retired people bringing people they once worked with. On a personal note, retired teachers seeing former students, who are members of the community and sometimes bring their children to the performances. Our performances bring a sense of community to our audience. All the performers that come to our community leave with a positive opinion of our community. Our audience makes them feel so welcome because they enjoy the performances. Recently one of the Barter players told the other Barter players, coming to Richlands is like going home. He had been here two (2) years previously. The audience had made him feel so welcome. The next day after the performance the stage manager didn't text or email, she called Ginger to express how much their group of seven (7) actors enjoyed being in Richlands and how much they appreciated the audience. This same group is touring the United States at the present time with a new play. They will let everyone know how they were treated in our community. The comedy that we had in November the players had not eaten before their performance. After the performance Ginger took them to a local restaurant to eat. The restaurant stayed open past their closing time so they could enjoy their meal. One of the comedians commented to Ginger, this would never happen in the larger cities. He was so touched with the reception he received in our community, he sent Ginger a check saying he hoped we could continue to provide Arts for the community. That is unheard of. Yes, we provide quality entertainment for our community but we provide so much more. We are requesting that you budget \$4500 for CART in Government Challenge Grant. The \$4500 becomes \$9000. Richlands should be proud of their participation in this grant. Richlands was one of the first Towns to submit for the Government Challenge Grant. We are also the longest continual government that has applied for this grant. This money is given back to the community every time we have a performance. This money provides an enjoyment for our citizens to receive in our performances and our audience is so receptive of the performers which indicate they enjoy the breaks from their everyday affairs. CART says, Thank You and appreciates your consideration in this matter. I know you don't want to see the demise of CART and neither do the citizens of our community. This Government Challenge Grant is needed to keep our presence in our community. Thank you for listening to my thoughts and consideration for our request. I don't have the grant to present to you this afternoon; will be sent electronically at a later date. CART just needs your approval for our request at this time.

Doug - Is it a matching grant from the Government?

Sylvia – Yes, it was for \$5000 but the State reduced the amount to \$4500. The \$9000 means a lot to CART.

Vickie - I have seen CART go into our schools. This program has touched children that never get the opportunity to go to the Barter, Paramount or the Lincoln Center. I hope the Council will agree to give the \$4500.

Rod - Thank you very much for coming and making the presentation on behalf of CART. I am very supportive of CART and we can't place a money value on what good CART does.

Rod - I make a motion that we award CART with \$4500 as part of a matching grant. Larry seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion?

Rick - Will you keep us updated on what you are doing? Where are the performances?

Sylvia - We try to advertise in the newspaper and let everyone know of the performances. We had eight (8) performances this year and we have two (2) more. We normally have them at the Richlands Middle School. We had one (1) at the Community College this year. If we have a large enough audience we have them at the Richlands High School.

Vickie - We all get membership, correct?

Sylvia - Yes

Mary Ann – I would like to say to Rick, they really do a nice job publicizing and there is always a thank you letter in the paper. The organization is very professional. Being on the Hospital Board for a number of years, we use CART as a tool when we are recruiting positions. Most of the time they don't want to come to a small town; their wives are always worried about entertainment. We are always proud and quick to tell them about CART.

Mayor White - You normally do a mailing of all the performance, correct?

Sylvia - Yes, we do to members and some non-members.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 5/1 –Doug abstained.

Tim - On your agenda Ginger wants consideration to use the Police Department facility during the Greater Richlands Area Festive June 15-24. She also sent us a letter regarding the request. (Tim read the letter).

Mayor White - Is this a request to use the facility, and do they use the inside of the Police Department?

Tim - No, they don't use the inside of the Police Department.

Mayor White - Do we have a motion to grant the request from Ginger?

Vickie - I make a motion to allow the Greater Richlands Area Festive June 15-24 to be at the Richlands Police Department. Mary Ann seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 6/0.

Mayor White - I would like to make a brief statement. I have a feeling that some of you come to speak on the rumor that Council was going to close the Rec Park. Council has never stated they were going to close the Rec Park or any intention of closing the Rec Park.

Doug - No one on Council has ever contemplated on closing the Rec Park. Council just wants to make it better and run more efficiently.

Mayor White – “Unscheduled Public Comments” - Phillip Lowe & Mark Gillespie

Phillip Lowe - Thank you for having us again tonight. We were here at the last meeting and have been before the Rec Board. We want to build an indoor batting facility located behind the Rescue Squad. It is going to be approximately 70'X79'. It is going to have several different cages in it. The kids can use year-round. I think other communities like Honaker, Tazewell and Lebanon will want to come and use the facilities. I think we have a lot of potential by building this facility.

Mark Gillespie- We had donations and we raised money. We want to upgrade this facility, maybe the sheds, and the batting cage at Critterville. It would bring kids in all the time if we had an indoor facility. We would like to get the Town's approval to start with the project. We have met with the Rec Commission.

Mary Ann – They have met with us. They have been to three (3) consecutive meetings. The Rec Commission recommends that the Council support the indoor facility at the Flanary Field complex as well as upgrades at Critterville.

Mark Gillespie- We will advise the Rec Commission and Mr. Taylor with anything we do with the facility to make sure that we have approval from the Town.

Mary Ann – A lot of our kids travel out of town to the Bristol /Johnson City area to use their cages. This will keep our kids here and a lot of families that travel in that direction would be much closer to Richlands. They would use our facility and afterwards possibly eat and buy gas in our area. It would be an economic impact for our community.

Rick - So you are going to come 16ft out into the road? - Are you doing a metal building?

Mark Gillespie- To the road, the road way will still be 20ft coming by the Rescue Squad. Yes, it would be metal enclosed.

Phillip Lowe - If we need to make adjustments to move over further, we can. We have a layout of the design, 16' would go toward the road, and 21' will go toward the field.

Rick - Is it going to match whatever we have now?

Mark Gillespie - If there is a specific color that the Town wants to recommend, that is fine with us. The roofing will come off of the same thing. Critterville will be smaller than what is down here.

Phillip Lowe - It is smaller, approx. 6 'X 6'

Rick - How many lanes will you have?

Mark Gillespie- Critterville? At least one maybe two, according to the funds we get. They won't be as big as the one at the Flanary Field.

Vickie - How much money have you invested in the project so far?

Mark Gillespie - We have not invested any money in the project, but we do have money for the project. Depends on the quotes we get and how far we can go. We may have to cut back on things for budget purposes. We have good donors in the Town.

Phillip Lowe - We didn't come to the Town to ask for money. We will try to get money from other organizations outside.

Larry - I make the motion that we grant the request. Rick seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 6/0.

Mayor White - "Unscheduled Public Comments" - Jonathan Redmond

Jonathan Redmond -143 Ravine Street, Pounding Mill - I am a long time resident and I am an Iraq & Afghanistan veteran. I am a war hero. The reason I am here today I feel the Town's police integrity is in jeopardy of being questionable. On December 18, around 2:30 an altercation occurs with my baby's mother. I ask her not to have a gentleman in her vehicle and I warned her. I left to avoid the complications; I was there to pick up my infant and my six-year-old. The police arrived at the scene and they asked what was going on. Officer McGhee came behind me and asks what was going on and I told him I just wanted my kids. He told me to go to Critterville. I went over there and he said he would meet me there, don't say a word just get your kids. I said OK. I went and got my kids and got back to the vehicle. I was bringing my son out, I said, sir I need to get my vehicle back, I don't trust that gentlemen in it. Office McGhee said shut your mouth. I told you to shut your mouth. I got back into the vehicle, he came over to the window and I said I need to talk to you about my vehicle. I said I told you to shut your mouth. He said you got the most important thing, you got your kids. I agreed. The most important thing

don't raise them the way we were raised. We were raised together we knew each other. Two (2) hours later my baby's mom gets pulled over. She got charged with public intoxication and the gentlemen with some kind of drugs. The gentlemen I didn't want in my vehicle and I ask for it back. Officer McGhee towed my vehicle. I called Officer McGhee to see what was going on with it. He said I would only have to pay the tow bill. He put a hold on it for 30 days. In two (2) weeks I went to get my baby's mom's purse to give back to her. She had no ride. I am going to release your vehicle today. I said OK. I called Indian Tow; they said it would be \$1050 to get my vehicle out. Officer McGhee said I would only have to pay the tow bill. I said no that is not how it works. There is also a 30 day hold on the vehicle. I called back and I just ask, did Officer McGhee release my vehicle? I don't have \$1050 to pay. I ask for the vehicle back, I only loaned it to her. I called the Chief to talk to him. The Chief advised me he didn't know what was going on and he would get back to me after he spoke with Officer McGhee. He spoke with Officer McGhee, he told me there is no legal reason why Officer McGhee would hold my vehicle and he never had a hold on my vehicle. I am not lying, this is what Officer McGhee told me. I called the tow guy and I said, sir did Officer McGhee release my vehicle. I told you yesterday he did. I just wanted to check and make sure. I called the Chief back and told him the tow guy told me that Officer McGhee did hold my vehicle for 30 days and now has released it. I have it recorded would you like to hear it? He said he would talk to the tow truck driver. I have not heard anything back. I feel like if Officer McGhee had taken the time to ask me what was going on or least let me have my first amendment that I fought for overseas. No raising voices, just wanted to get my vehicle back. I just loaned it to her so she could go to the doctor. I didn't want the guy in my vehicle; I didn't know or trust him. I don't know what can be done about it, but I don't have \$1050. I feel I should not be charged with this bill. I legally asked for the vehicle back. This happened one other time and I had to get the police to get it back and they did.

Mayor White - I believe this is an issue that Chief Dorton will need to deal with. Can you talk with him outside on the issue?

Brad - Was your vehicle stolen?

Jonathan Redmond – No, sir

Brad - You have two separate issues – One is a civil issue and the other is a criminal issue. If you owned that vehicle and you loaned it and being used by significant other. You were bringing a police officer into a civil issue between you and she and the recovery vehicle. They had no responsibility to intervene. There was not a criminal action going on, they didn't have to do anything. They had no authorization or responsibility too. The next thing that occurred was a stop that was criminal nature and seizes the vehicle based on a criminal stop. I think what has happened here there was a misunderstanding in two separate issues that were existing.

Mayor White - Chief Dorton will talk to you about it, I am sure you can come to some resolution.

Johnathan Redmond - I agreed to pay the \$250. The police were called because we got into an argument over the vehicle.

Mary Ann- When did this happen?

Johnathan Redmond – Happened fifteen (15) days ago. I was advised by my attorney to speak to the Town Council to get resolved. I tried the chain of command at the Police Department, I don't know where else to go. I was basically called a liar, and then he found out his officer lied to him. I think there is an issue with the integrity of the Police Department. I proved I was not a liar, but officer lied to him.

Mayor White - Please step outside with Chief Dorton to discuss this issue.

Chief Dorton - I have talked to Mr. Redmond on the phone three (3) or four (4) times. Nobody has been called a liar. I did not tell him Officer McGhee said that he put a hold on the vehicle. The vehicle was towed. I have informed Mr. Redmond if he wants to file a complaint, go through the proper channels. I

would then investigate and see what took place at the incident. Once he told me he had spoken to an attorney, I would not speak with him any more until he came to file a written complaint. I have not lied to Mr. Redmond in any shape or form.

Mayor White - Thank You

Mayor White - "Unscheduled Public Comments" – Scott Diperna

Scott – I have worked at the Richlands Rec Park for approximately five (5) years. One of the reasons I am here is something Mr. Ratliff said, "That at no time has the Rec Park ever been mentioned to be closed by a Council Member". I believe that is true. Mr. Woods, if you remember when you were running for Town Council you said in your campaign promises you wanted to close the Rec Park because it was a money pit.

Rick - It was never a promise or a campaign for me to close the Rec Park.

Scott - You never made that statement.

Rick – No

Scott - Three (3) of us heard you say that.

Rick - I said we need to fix the Rec Park.

Scott - You said you would close it. I would like to reference an article that was in the newspaper. When I went to work two (2) weeks ago, Mr. Phillips was sitting on the counter and had his head down. I ask him what was going on. He gives me the paper to read. Only part I got to was about the Chief. I didn't finish reading the rest of the article because questioning a man's integrity after 30 years of service crawls under my skin. He told me to read the rest of the article. The article stated "If Mr. Phillips can't manage a concession, how can he manage the Rec Park. Am I close on that? Did anyone else see that? Doug, you said earlier we need to run it more efficiently.

Doug - Yes and you do.

Scott - When I moved here in 1997 I went to the Rec Park with my buddies. We could not even get someone to come and get the rim down for us; that is how bad it was. Jamie Hurt and I sit there for an hour to get the rim put down. Over the last three (3) years we have made leaps and bounds at the Rec Park all due to Mr. Phillips.

Doug - I disagree. We spend \$356,000 over there every year. Last year in concessions you spent \$14,900 you took in \$9100. You should have taken in \$30,000. You took a loss. I don't think that is efficient. The payroll runs \$700 a day, you are averaging taking in \$56 a day. All expenses are costing \$1000 a day. No one wants to close the Rec Park; we want a Director that will run it more efficiently. There is no participation. From 8 am to 4pm, three (3) people going into the Rec Park. If you go to Coomes Center in Abingdon, they are running 300 a day.

Scott - What year did the Rec Park open?

Rod - Late 60's

Scott - I have seen where Richlands was a booming Town. In the last 20 years, I think there were three (3) people coming in back then too.

Rick - Times have changed, kids don't do what kids use to do. They play games now and do other things. It is not like it was in the 60's; Rec Park is all you had to do.

Scott - I'm talking about the last 20 years I have lived here.

Doug - Are you talking about participation? Most Rec Park has a 50/50 basis or 40/60. That means 50% or 40% tax money and the Rec makes up the difference. An example the Coomes Center has a budget of 1.2 million. The Town gives them \$500,000. They take in \$700,000. If you go to the mall you will see all kinds of senior citizens walking around. They would not go to the Rec Park. Why I don't know. We need a Director that is going to pull in participation from the community and make it more active and have programs. We don't have programs like we should in the day for senior citizens or the community. Eighty-percent of the people who take part in the Rec are out of town. There should be a little bit more expense for out of town people than in town people to make up some of the difference. All we are asking for is more efficiency.

Scott - I agree we need to go to a monthly membership. We need to finish remodeling first. You don't give Mr. Phillips credit.

Doug - I can't find Mr. Phillips there at any time. I have asked the Town Manager for a schedule. I can't even get a schedule for Mr. Phillips. Everybody in Town knows he is never there and he is someplace else.

Scott - I'm not trying to start a war with you or Mr. Woods. I am just going by what you said. Remember when the pool was enclosed and the fans went out. Town Council at that time would not pay to have the fans fixed to get the chloride out. That crumbled to the ground. Seven (7) years ago there was a two (2) year fix on the pool. The pool is in such bad shape now, due to the two (2) year fix, I would not even want to swim in the pool. I clean it every year to get it ready to open for the season. Fred got the floor and the roof fixed. At one time we had four (4) full-time employees, now we only have one (1). Everyone else is part time. He has done away with four (4) benefit packages.

Doug - Do you know what your payroll is running a year, \$250,000?

Scott - I make \$8.00 an hour, it is not my fault. That is what all the kids and life guards make.

Doug - I am just asking that we get more participation; we hire a Director that is going to be there and put his hours in and not go and coach basketball.

Vickie - Is there a time clock?

Doug - I had someone sit and watch.

Vickie - We know all about that. She was paid \$300 by you to go and count the people from 7am to 4pm.

Doug - All I am saying is that Mr. Phillips is not there and he does not put his time in.

Vickie - I suggest we put a time clock in. Is he not a salary employee?

Doug - He has been there six (6) years and the budget has only gotten worse. We have workers in Town that make \$19,000 and we are spending that much and see no results at all.

Scott - I agree we need to straighten some stuff up, no question. We can't plan with our bathrooms under construction. We need to get the bathrooms finished first. Come and check out what we are doing. We are not just sitting there on our hands. Where do you think Fred gets all the money from? He gets out and hustles it.

Doug - If he would run the Rec Park efficiently.

Scott - If you have ideas you need to get with us.

Doug - My idea is if we have a Director that stays there and the main priority is the Rec Park. Fred Phillips is a great basketball coach, but he is not a good Director. We need someone who thinks Rec and lives Rec and turn that place around.

Scott - Would you have accomplished what he has today if you were there? Give him some credit.

Doug - How can you maintain a facility making \$56 and you are paying \$700 payroll. The expenses are \$1000 a day and it keeps getting worse. It is his job to draw people to the Rec Park to participate.

Scott - You know who is coming between 8am – 4pm, people who are on the check. Everyone else is working.

Doug - Why didn't you cut hours? You can't keep it open for three (3) people.

Mayor White - I think it is something the Rec Commission needs to look at and get a group together and put together some ideas.

Scott - Every year at basketball season we take up \$2.00 at the door. Mr. Hurst takes care of that. I heard a comment wanting to know where that money was going. Well if you go in the gym you will see six (6) sets of bleachers. That cost was \$1800 a set paid for by Mr. Hurst. If you go to the gym this year you will see four (4) portable easy adjustable 8 ft. rims for the kindergartens to play on, paid \$1100 each by Mr. Hurst. As a whole, the Town Council, other than our budget has put no money into the Rec. People brag on how the Town has the Rec Park looking better, I tell them the Town has nothing to do with this. We have kids coming in from Bluefield now; their Rec Park has been closed. Grown men said this place is the "bomb". Our gym is legit.

Mary Ann - As the Council Representative for Rec Commission, I would like to possibly clear up a few things. I know that Mr. Phillips has said his hours are 7am to 3pm. After talking to Mr. Taylor, I have learned that he is on salary and he is not there from 7am to 3pm due to low activity. I learned he turns in a time sheet; it is the number of hours he puts in each day. Almost every Saturday and Sunday he spends time there. I understand when people were looking for him to be there from 7 am to 3 pm and he is not there, I see how that became a problem. That is not his required hours. The Rec Commission is considering membership. Memberships would be higher for out of town people. I had a meeting with our supervisors, Mr. Hackworth and Mr. Lester, requesting some funds from them for all outside people that use our Rec Department. It is true, Mr. Phillips has personally raised \$250,000 plus. I have been very active in athletics my entire life not as much in the last eight (8) years because my sons are not involved. If we had not had a tournament every week we would have not raised \$250,000 over this time. I would say we do need more programming, but the Rec Commission is working on that. We don't want to bring people in from out of town until our facility is complete, which is very close. They had a wrestling tournament a couple Saturdays ago; pictures on face book, people see that the place was packed. Cars were seen at various restaurants, brings money into our Town. We have a part-time employee Jessica Reynolds who will be starting exercise classes in January. The Rec Commission is busy; we meet the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:30pm. We meet and we are working on programming and better ways on concession. We are taking measures to be more efficient. In closing I am very proud of the facility. I have spent a lot of time there growing up and it has deteriorated badly over time. When I played tennis at the Rec Park, sometimes I came out and felt like I had been in the coal mines. It was dirty, roof leaking and falling. Locker rooms were not clean. I was afraid to touch anything. It is now a clean bright facility, we are working on ways to make improvements.

Mayor White - Consideration of Conditional Use Permit Request for Body Piercing from Jason Mosley

Rod - The Planning Commission does have a recommendation. I will read the recommendation; everyone should have a copy in their packet. (Approved the conditional use permit). I will put this in form of a motion. Larry seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 6/0.

Tim - Mr. Mosley, stop by the office to see Mr. Blankenship.

Mayor White - "Council Member Reports" - Rod Cury

Rod - We do have a vacancy on the Planning Commission as I mentioned in our previous meeting since Richard Brown resigned. I ask on behalf of the Commission, former Council Member Gaynelle Thompson to be appointed to the Planning Commission to fill the unexpired term of Richard Brown. I would like to make a motion that Gaynelle Thompson fulfill the unexpired term of Richard Brown. Mary Ann seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 6/0.

Rod - Under Mr. Taylor's agenda, XIII item number (d), I will leave that item to him to discuss. We did meet but did not have a quorum. We are intending to meet again.

Rod - I am a firm believer in the right to free speech which is protected by the first amendment. That being said, as an elected official of this community, you are representing the community. I think it is incumbent to speak carefully and responsibly. I would like to bring to your attention an article that appeared in the Voice on December 27, 2017 written by reporter Warren Hinkle. I want to draw a quote from that article, "I have asked that Police Chief Frank Dorton resign," Ratliff said. "He is putting people's lives at risk just so he can keep control of dispatch. I don't understand it. It is a waste of the taxpayer's money when the sheriff has volunteered to take over dispatch. Our citizens deserve better". "When the new Text 911 starts, our citizens won't be able to use the service unless we put in a lot of new equipment. Dorton needs to go". I think that is a very serious allegation. I think it needs to be carefully considered, to my knowledge it has never been brought to the Council about Chief Dorton or 911. I would like to verify that it has never been brought to the Council. Chief Dorton would you care to address how you have put people's life at danger, I would like to know.

Doug - I was speaking as a Council Vice-Mayor. I was not speaking for the whole Council. I have an opinion and I can speak it.

Rod - What I am saying Vice-Mayor, it is incumbent to be very careful.

Doug - I am very careful.

Rod - You have your first amendment rights, I made that very clear. I think this is a very serious allegation that our Chief of Police is endangering citizens for apparently selfish reasons. Chief Dorton, can you address please?

Chief Dorton - I was not going to address this situation. It just hurts the people in Richlands and makes us look bad. I have never been asked to resign from Mr. Ratliff or any other Council Member. The article is completely false. The citizens of Richlands are not in any danger due to our dispatch. There is nothing out there that proves to the contrary. Has our dispatch made mistakes - Yes, has 911 made mistakes - Yes, because we are human. Unfortunately, the mistakes that dispatch and 911 make can be life threatening. That is the nature of what we do. As far as the people in the Town of Richlands are just as safe today as they were six (6) months ago, nothing has changed. Again, I have never been as to resign personally.

Doug - What I meant by that, people are in danger when they call 911, you have to explain everything to them then, after that they put you in touch with dispatch. Sometimes it could be two (2) or three (3) minutes in between that time, which is vital. If we went straight to 911, there would be no delay, no miscommunication. It would be a lot safer for the citizens. That is my opinion.

Chief Dorton - You made that analogy, and I understand that, but you made that analogy without coming and seeing what we do. You have not asked me one question about dispatch. You have not talked to the Fire Chief or the Captain of the Rescue Squad. Do you want 911 to dispatch them? We have tried this twice before in the past. It did not work. That is why we have it now. Before you say we need to do away with our dispatch, you need to at least come and find out what are the issues, what are the problems, what can we do to fix it. Just because one person says we can do this, does not mean they are right. There are always two sides. You can play tapes and listen to recordings, but if you don't listen to the recorders on the other side, you don't get the full picture.

Doug - There are certain instances that citizens have complained many times due to the delay.

Chief Dorton - I don't doubt that. The man earlier said he didn't trust our integrity, but he didn't tell you the whole story of what went on. I could have told you about that story, but this was not the place to do that. Just because someone complains does not mean it is legitimate complaint.

Doug - I have talked to several 911 sections. How many dispatches are left in Virginia?

Chief Dorton - I have no idea.

Doug - There are three (3). All the other communities have done away with them because they have gone to 911. It is better for the community.

Chief Dorton - Have you talked to Chief Sullivan in Abingdon about our dispatch, he is dispatched from Washington County 911, what did he tell you?

Doug - Every police chief would love to keep it. Every community in VA is doing away with them.

Chief Dorton - There are five (5) towns in the State of Virginia that does not have a cigarette tax. Does that mean we need to go and do it now because five (5) towns don't do it? Before you make that determine what we do is bad and I am endangering people's lives, come and ask. I have no control over Fire and Rescue; it is not up to me. The article says I am. Before you make that decision, you need to come and ask.

Vickie - Chief Dorton so many people are not aware of what goes on at the Richlands Police Department. If we lose dispatch, can you explain what is going on in the Richlands Police Department and how it will affect everyone in this room?

Chief Dorton - Our Police Department is fully functional. We have a dispatch center that we can pull criminal history, tag numbers and all kinds of things. If you take that away, I will have to go through Tazewell 911 but there is nobody there. I have a live scan machine that we can send finger prints directly to the State Police. We have a video magistrate which belongs to Supreme Court. If we arrest somebody, we go in and they see a magistrate. If that is not there, are you going leave the building open? If it is not open, I am sure the Supreme Court will not leave it there. That means we have to go to Tazewell and book everybody we arrest just to get a magistrate. This past weekend the county activated us as a warming shelter from Friday to Sunday. We must have a dispatcher there so people can come and go. If we don't have a dispatcher what are we going to do with the warming shelter? Are we going to hire an employee to go and stay with them or are you just going to open the building and say here it is?

Doug - In a case like that we could send a town employee, that doesn't happen frequently.

Chief Dorton - We have the Honey Festival scheduled for February, if we don't have a dispatcher are you going to send a town employee while that event is going on?

Doug - It cost \$150,000 a year for dispatch, we are already paying for 911, so we are getting double taxed. If we went to 911, which would be much more efficient with the new things coming, we would have to buy more equipment.

Chief Dorton - We would not have to buy anything to text 911. If 911 receives a text, they pick up the phone and lets us know of the emergency, same way it happens now. There are no differences. You need to find out the whole picture not just one side.

Vickie - One more question, can you explain your relationship with Sheriff Hieatt. I have been told you are arch enemies which causes rival with the Sheriff Department and the Town of Richlands Police Department.

Chief Dorton - Sheriff Hieatt and I get along excellent. The day after the article hit the paper he came in my office and wanted to know what was going on. We have never had an issue we could not work out. This past weekend we did a mass casualty group between the Sheriff's office and Richlands. There were some issues, but issues we expected to happen. We went to the Catholic Church last week, their people and our people unloaded a truck load of food, we had no problems. We have never had problems. I am willing to work with the Sheriff in any way that he needs. I send people to back up his officers and he sends people to back up my officers. There has never been an issue.

Rod - Thank you for answering those questions; may have a few more later.

Rod – Scott, in your talk you asked about an article, is it the same article about Chief Dorton? I have the article if you want to look at it; up to the Mayor. I would like to submit this article to the Clerk as a matter of record to be included in the minutes.

Vickie – Rick and I on the Street Committee. The roads this weekend were really bad. I want to say how much I appreciate our Town employees. Every single one of you was out in the bitter cold. We had a power outage between Grayson and Lee Street; they were out there getting the power back on. I think you from the bottom of my heart. You guys don't get paid enough, but hopefully, we can get some taxes in place where everyone can get some raises.

Vickie - Mayor White do you mind if I stand up?

Mayor White - If you feel you need too.

Vickie - I do. First, I have prayed about this for a long time and what I am about to say is probably going to tick people off but it won't be the first time I have ticked people off. I have friends in a lot of places and they say what in the "Sam Jill" is going on in the Town of Richlands. What is wrong with your Town Council? Well I think it is time to stop this. In our town charter, page 11 item 3.9, line 1, -"The Council and its members shall deal with the administrative service solely through the Town Manager, and neither the Council nor any member, thereof, shall give orders to any subordinates of the Town Manager, either publicly or privately". I go to the Voice on 11/29; yes, we have Freedom of Speech. We all do that is why I am standing up here with my mouth. On 11/29 on Friday, Doug Ratliff told the Voice that he believes that Chief Dorton should resign his position. We need a chief willing to work with the Sheriff and one who is willing to work for the good of the town and the community. I am very disappointed how the whole thing was handled, he goes on, I can read the rest but I am not the greatest reader out loud. The Voice dated 12/27, I have asked that Chief Dorton resign, Ratliff said. Ratliff also said changes need to take place in the Town's Recreation Department; Fred Phillips also needs to go. People who live in town need to come to the Council meetings and get involved and they need to ask questions. That is very true. In saying what I just said, there is a lot of gossip, he said, I said, they said, no one has called me; I can only read what is in the paper. Page 10 of the Charter, Number 8 – Compel the attendance of its members and punish its members for disorderly behavior by an affirmative vote of five (5) members of the Council, and expel a member. I would like to make the motion that Mr. Ratliff be censured on his behavior in the newspaper and how he has hurt the Town of Richlands and what we are trying to do, our Town Council and Town Employees. I would like to make a motion that a censure of Mr.

Ratliff and his mouth toward the Town Council and the citizens of Richlands and our Police Department. I just wanted to put on record that Vickie England stands here and reads it and this is what Vickie England's faced because she has had it up to her eye balls. Thank you.

Rod - Mayor White I second the motion.

Brad - Censure is a form of disapproval that is a made motion, so it is up to debate. To my knowledge in the charter, that is no actionable steps that can be taken just essentially a form of expression of disapproval.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no.

Doug - All I can say is I can have my beliefs. Everything I did was for Richlands.

Vickie - You can have your beliefs but you need to talk to the Town Manager.

Larry - First, I am not supposed to be Frank's replacement; that is what I heard this week. I don't approve of what was in the paper; I don't handle things that way. People are a little different. I think everybody up here and out there have a right to say what they want to say. This week since this came out in the paper, I have been accused of being on drugs is why I wanted to change jobs. I have been accused of a bunch of stuff, but that is beside the point. There is more than one victim in the whole thing I still stand I think everybody has a right to say what they want to say. I think they need to be responsible, I don't think the articles were responsible, but again everybody has a different opinion. However, my belief is you can say whatever you want to say, don't lead my support in the motion.

Rod - I am in support of the motion for this reason. I think the real victim is the Town of Richlands and the ability to function. It has come apparent to me that in my opinion we are hurting our Town when it is constant negatives. Building up the positive is a much better way to go. I think there is a better way to do it than just going to the newspaper. There is a right of free speech, I respect the first amendment. I understand it pretty well. If you refer to the charter as Council England did, there is a procedure for resolution of any issue and that is to go to the Manager than to the Council. I don't think that has been followed, matter of fact I don't believe it or I would have not second the motion.

Mayor White - Any further discussion?

Mary Ann - Vickie, first of all I respect and appreciate your courage in expressing your opinion which we all have the right and privilege to do. I also appreciate the fact that I know you have prayed greatly. Many people in this room and the ones that are watching, pray for our Town and all towns need that. There is so much more power in prayer than any other source that we can get. Doug, I admire your passion, I like people who have passion in anything they believe in. When I was speaking about Mr. Phillips many people think he works certain hours. I went to Mr. Taylor to discuss this issue. I think all of us should learn before we form our opinions, make judgements or talk to the media. I have talked to Frank about dispatch but have not had the opportunity to talk to Gordon and Keith. I am not knowledgeable at all on Fire and Rescue dispatch. My encouragement would be for all of us before we form opinions and statements, that we talk to the knowledgeable people in those particular departments.

Vickie - I do think Mr. Taylor needs to be involved in all actions of the Town Council when there is a compliant.

Mary Ann - If I am correct all department heads report to Mr. Taylor. As the Council we have the responsibility of Town Manager, Attorney and our Clerk. The other department heads are his responsibility.

Mayor White - I too, like Larry, have been attacked this week, but the only problem people don't sign their name. To my knowledge I have not gone out and deliberately tried to hurt anybody, yet people will do things to all of us and not sign their name. If you are going to say something about me, have the courage to put your name out there; that is all I ask and let me defend it. I believe in free speech but I believe that everyone has to be responsible for that free speech and sign their name to it.

Rick – I want everyone to know I don't want to close the Rec Park, but I just want it to be efficient for everybody. I want us to have programs. When kids don't go to school, they can go to the Rec Park. I used to play ball at the Rec Park when I was growing up. We are having problems financially and a few things need to be worked out. Everybody goes at each other when we start this, we need to draw together and work together. There are some smart people here, we need to put that all together and come up with solutions instead of going at each other's throat all the time.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. 2- Yes (Vickie, Rod) 3-No (Mary Ann, Larry, Rick) Motion does not carry for censure.

Vickie - It will be on record, Correct.

Audience - Mr. Taylor do you have an issue with Mr. Phillips and his performance. Has he been reprimanded? Are you satisfied with his job?

Tim – There is order in which to handle this type of issue. If there is a concern of any Council Member on any issue of any problem or personnel, that is under my authority. It should be brought to me and I will investigate the complaints or allegations. With personnel there is a lot to look at. I am in the process of looking at the Rec Park. I have talked to Mary Ann about it because she is the Representative of the Rec Commission. As far as performance on different things, Mr. Phillips has done a good job. He has done an excellent job on raising money. The difference is what level of services we can afford to have and what the community is willing to pay for. It is a little bigger than Mr. Phillips, a bigger concept. I think the Council is facing the most challenging budget this year and not just this, those things need to tie along that basis. As of right now, I don't have any concerns and have not looked at all items. We do have issues with the concession and we will be looking at it. Everyone wants more resources for our community, balancing the money is a big challenge.

Audience – If private donations have come into the Rec Park in last few years near \$250,000, that is a lot of private donations. If Fred is the reason they gave the money, and they said yes, it would be embarrassing to suggest some of things that were suggested and to take someone's livelihood. We all know the bathrooms and the pool is cleaner. There were around 200 kindergartens through fifth grade using the gym tonight. Nobody in this room could come up with a way to put new floor down in last 36 months. It goes along with Mr. Cury, Vickie and Mary Ann. That kind of narrative makes community look bad.

Mayor White – “Council Member Report” Rick Wood

Rick - I would like to thank Hobert, George and the Police Department, everyone did a good job. We have had a lot going on and the cold weather.

Mayor White - I would also like to add in zero weather you all did an outstanding job. I appreciate you keeping the power on, the water going and keep things in order. We do appreciate it.

Mayor White - “Council Member Report” – Larry Johnson

Larry - I would like to thank the Street Department, you did an awesome job this weekend. Several people come to me and told me how quick their streets were cleaned up and they appreciated it. One gentlemen just moved here from PA, of course they have more snow, he said he never seen it removed that fast. One street on Saint Clair Ln, a gentlemen just moved into home that had been empty for 1 ½

years. Said no one probably realized that someone was living there and could someone scrape the road? He said they would not deliver mail due approximately 20 ft. that was not cleared.

Tim - We didn't know anybody was there.

Larry - On February 3rd between 10am and 4pm there will be a Vendor Event at the Richlands Police Department for all the vendors in the area. They had a good turn out last year, so they thought they would try again before Valentine's Day. They could keep several men from being in trouble, go by and pick up something for your wife or daughter.

Mayor White - What will the proceeds go toward?

Larry - Tazewell County Humane Society, last year it went to White Christmas. I spoke to a couple of Council Members, it seems like the only time anyone hears about things in Richlands is bad; that is the only thing ever in the paper. If something good is going on in Tazewell, something bad is going on in Richlands. With the expertise sitting at this table, there is no reason we should not be able to figure out a marketing plan for our Town. We have every aspect of business sitting here and that may be something we can all sit down and have a work session and come up with a strategy to market our Town. I would like to request that we have a meeting in two (2) weeks. It doesn't have to be a long meeting, maybe an hour. We can figure out which direction we want to go, what we want to promote, get it ready for our next meeting and figure out how we are going to do it. If you guys are in favor I would love to have a meeting. We need to start now, if we don't we are not going to do it.

Mayor White - Kind of ties in with One Stop and what they are doing on the 15th.

Larry - We can go ahead and get our ideas together.

Rick - Could we get some of them to come to our meeting?

Larry - It may get to complicated.

Rick - We don't want to contradict what they are doing.

Larry - No one walks around with a newspaper in their face. People use phones.

Vickie - If we ever get a Downtown Coordinator it will really help our Town. It will help get Richlands going in the same directions.

Larry - When we hire a Downtown Coordinator, they can pick up where we leave off. A meeting in two (2) weeks would be great.

Rod - I think that is an excellent idea and I do think we need an agenda for the meeting.

Mayor White - We can have a work session. I personally don't think we do a good job of welcoming businesses to our town. It is as much my fault as anyone else's. We need to do a welcome letter to encourage people when they do have a business in Town.

Larry - We had a meeting and developed a strategy for raises for the Police Department. I think we need to get the ball rolling on that so we can work on our new budget, plus we are only funding part of the year and not the entire year.

Tim - When we left the work session, the directive of Council was to implement these initiatives to work on the Police Department and then work on the rest of the Town. We have a possibly way of funding through taxes. In order to solve the problem, I need an official approval to appropriate the funding tonight in order to achieve those directives with the adjustments to the salaries. As far as the legality of it, Chief Dorton has his budget to work with. When the money gets to be an issue and we get out of plus

or minus percentage for that department, council will have to do something officially to transfer the money. You may have a plan in place to do that. You will have your time to work on it, it takes care of the problems today.

Doug - I don't think it is fair to give one department a raise and not the others.

Vickie - Can you explain how police gets their funding and other departments get their funding?

Tim - Every department has a funding system. Governmental side includes streets, roads, sanitation, police, fire, rescue, rec and administration which are funded through taxes and fees. We have a lot of folks in the enterprise funds, which are fee based revenue strength through utilities rates. There are two different issues to deal with here. Everyone in here is at a different level because they are all from different funding. The appropriation that we really focused on was dealing with the Police Department. We have similar issues in every department, but all are not as bad as the Police Department. We must look at the departments in depth. We must look at the electrical, water and sewage with the rate structures with utility rates different from what I am talking about here. Appropriation to this should not be done until a cost of service studies is complete. The governmental side is funded through the tax base and any other fees we may receive. VDOT funds 85% that is strictly obligated by law to go toward certified and illegible streets we have in our Town. Approximately 15% are funded locally. We have a funding source for that, if we agree we can use that money to make adjustments.

Doug - The Council controls all salaries. It is not fair to give one group a raise and not the others.

Tim - I don't like to either and I like cost of living raise when we can do it, but today we have a problem. We have other competitive Police Departments around us that are paying their officers more money and providing the same level of benefits. If you chose not to do it, I won't do it; we must vote before I can get the salaries in place. What will happen with the Police Department, will be what it is. We will continue to operate and keep everyone safe even if we have to work how we are now. We are short two (2) positions right now, just waiting on this decision, without that I don't know how we are going to manage it.

Mayor White - Did you say we need to vote? Where is the money coming from? Is it already in the budget?

Tim – The money is already in the budget as a line item. We can start using that money like it is already there because it is. There will be a time in March, April or May we are going to be triggered because that department ran out of money. Then will have to come to Council and officially do something. If you don't have a plan in place to do that, I would not recommend taking from utilities but if you must do it for short time, then we can put it back. We would not want to borrow from the bank when we can get it from utilities. Those things we can work out while we work on other sources.

Doug - If you take it out of utilities, it is not fair because Hidden Valley is not part of utility services.

Tim - Problem with that you can't just take out and not put back.

Doug - We had this problem two (2) years ago, we have been asking for studies for the water and the other departments. You don't have the studies, you have people making \$19,000 and they can barely survive.

Tim - Every year we have addressed utilities. Whether you follow the guidelines as a Council what we recommend is on record. The water is just now where we are losing money. You don't want me to raise rates if there is no reason to raise the rates. Issue is not that, its taxes. That is why we are in trouble with the governmental we don't have enough taxes paid for the level of services that everyone is a custom to.

Doug - We are in trouble because the budget is not managed. There is a lot of extra money in that budget if we made the right decisions then we would have enough money for raises for the whole town.

Tim - We can have a budgetary work session.

Rick - How much money do we have?

Tim - \$80,000

Larry - I make a motion to allow Mr. Taylor to appropriate the funds for the raises. Vickie seconded the motion.

Tim – Appropriate funds to use for specific purpose. You can do this later, but I feel uncomfortable, we have had a lot of discussion on this. I'm not going to give raises, then Council comes back and not understand what we were doing. That is why I wanted it to be clear and transparent, money used strictly for raises. I wanted Council to be clear and understand, appropriate for raises only. If we need money we will have to come to Council later.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 5/1 Doug No.

Larry - Everyone else that is a Town employee will get a raise, this is just an emergency band aid. We are getting our butts kicked from others and losing people daily. We feel the other departments will be the same if we don't give you raises. We won't leave you empty handed, I promise you.

Mayor White - Dr. Willis would you like to speak on the Winter Honey Festival

Dr. Willis – We are having Winter Honey Festival - February 3 – 10. The festival started in 2012. We will begin with “Beginning Beekeeping” on February 3rd at SWCC. Painted Peak Brewery will be on February 3rd. They are very anxious to work with us. Pizza Plus, Trust Point Insurance and Brown Chiropractic Office is our sponsors. We will have different things involved. Sip and Paint at the Appalachian Arts Center, production “In Front Door and Out the Back Window” that will be on Thursday. On Saturday, we are going to try something that has been recommended by a number of people, “Food Truck Rodeo” a number of people bring in food trucks outside and sell food. We are going to do that at the Farmers Market this year. It will be very romantic, just before Valentine's Day; you will have a good chance of freezing your fanny off. We will have heaters around. Saturday, February 10th is the Grand Exposition. We will have a lot of vendors, not just bee items but many other things. We also worked with Tazewell County Tourism. A lady from Bland County takes bees and makes jewelry out of them. Charlie Lawson will be there with his wood work. This is for our community; this is a small thing now but it can grow. What dollar event happens when we have things like this? The honey organization saved very little this month. It will all be in the community and a financial report will be available. The cut off is February 1st to sign up as a vendor. Hope you all will come.

Mayor White - “Council Member Reports “– Mary Ann Strong

Mary Ann - Thank you Dr. Willis for your efforts with that. I would like to say I appreciate all the Town employees and all their hard work through the freezing temperatures. We are very blessed.

Also, as Larry said all of you deserve raises and I am confident that if we are successful in introducing new taxes that should be an easy way to do that. If that does not work, you have a commitment from everyone up here we will make that happen. We do have an emergency at the Police Department as mentioned, they have two (2) officers down now and in the next couple months we have two (2) having surgery. I think that constitutes an emergency action to keep up as full staff. I am proud of Council passing the raises. I would like to recognize Lynna Mitchell at the Free Press. She has decided to stop publishing the Free Press. I think she deserves recognition, for so many years of great publication

covering Richlands and Tazewell County, the last many years basically by herself. Thank you Lynna, we will miss the Free Press and wish you much success in your future endeavors.

I appreciate how our town employees, churches and the community came together to help St. Mary's unload the huge trucks donated by the United Way for food for the back packs. It is positive step how our community unites, especially when it comes to youth, elderly and needy type projects.

There were comments on the Rec Department that I failed to mention. If you go there during the early morning or early afternoon, you are not going to see much activity. I encourage everybody to go on a Tuesday or Thursday night during basketball. That is one of the reason the flow of traffic had to be changed with 200 kids and cars going in both directions. In the spring you will find the same number with soccer. It is just the timing the season of the year and the time of day when you visit the Rec Park.

On a sad note, our community lost an incredible young lady the last day or so with the passing of Amy Lambert. She had an amazing ministry she helped countless young women. She was fearless; had a ministry in Charlotte and worked the streets in very dangerous places. I asked everyone to keep Amy Lambert's family and all the ladies she ministered to in your prayers.

Rick, did you share the great news about the funding of Spear Head Trails from the Shott Foundation?

Rick – I was going to tell everyone about the Shott Foundation and Spear Head Trails. Tim, on the Rec Park road we had discussed taking it in. That is going to happen, correct?

Tim – Yes, trying to work out with the VDOT people. Do you have some issues with it? We may have to do some construction.

Rick – Shawn Lindsey, Spearhead Trail, called me and the Shott Foundation has funded it. They have funded \$400,000 for the Spearhead Trail to be built. They said the Rec Commission needed to come up with a name.

Vickie - I thought it was going to be the Tornado, did they change it?

Rick - It can, we all know what the Richlands Tornado is, but if you are in Charlotte or Texas they won't know what the Richlands Tornado is. Larry had a suggestion, it would be fun to ride tornado. Has anyone ever ridden a tornado?

Brad - If you think about spear trails and different trail heads throughout Southwest Virginia. An example, Haysi has Ridgeview, Grundy has Coal Canyon. There is 150 miles of trail to ride. O.P. named after O.P. coal seam that was over there. VA Tourism just recognized the spearhead trails. Spearhead trails is on the cover of Tourism magazine and should bring a lot of attention to Southwest Virginia.

Rick - We need to come up with a name. They said they would come and sit down with you at the Rec Commission. This is totally recreation. By the end of the year our trail should be open from Coal Canyon all the way to Pocahontas. Then they will go back to the Shott foundation to put more money up. They will ask for more money and I hope they get it. They want to do things off the trail which will give you 300 miles. At first we will just have a straight shot through. SWCC is teaching people how to take trails and do guide business.

Larry – One thing we will have to talk about between now and then is public safety; the roads in town. We will have to figure out ordinances so people can get to restaurants. VDOT talked about doing weekends and holidays to start with and see how it goes. They will be coming out of 67. Other places have done it so we have something to go by.

Brad - All those under 35 mph.

Rick - They can't cross the four lanes they can go under the four lanes. VDOT will help us with that. They will do the permit. Spearhead will apply for it and we will be involved in it but VDOT will help us with that.

Larry - They went over the whole program with me. It is going to be great for the area.

Brad- All people who are residents of these counties, the area permit is \$25 dollars a year. That is to ride all of the trails throughout Southwest Virginia, Pennington Gap, St. Paul, Coeburn, Pocahontas, Grundy and Haysi. We are working on organization relationship.

Mary Ann - The Rec Commission will meet Monday on January 15th at 7:30pm at the Rec Park. Is there someone I could contact that I could invite from the Spearhead Trails?

Rick - I will call Shawn and give you that information.

Mary Ann - Ginger Branton is coming and has a lot of ideas for senior citizens. We still have some Rec Commission members here, you all come ready. Ginger is full of energy and enthusiasm. It will be a fun meeting with new ideas. In closing, I have to say, "Roll Tide".

York Lindsey - It is tough getting out at Norfolk coming out toward the Post Office taking a left. I don't know if there is any solution for it. B & L and Maytag are there and I love to see their trucks because they are probably doing really well. Rick has suggested installing a mirror. I don't know if it would work.

Rick - Tim you were not here that night. George said he would check on that. Do we have a pole across the road?

Tim - I have looked at that area; a lot of people are concerned. We left a couple of parking spaces so it would be easier to see

York Lindsey - I pull out and can't see then you have to go back. It is a problem even if their trucks are not there.

Rick - I know they will be facing the wrong side of the street, but can we give them permission to do that.

Tim - The reason that is a two-way street, the bank strongly thought they would need it. Council thought that it was important to do at that time. I have often thought maybe the Council needs to revisit the situation. The best thing would be to change it back to a one-way street which would be the safest way. We can put the mirror but I really don't trust them.

Rod - I was in business there for several years. When it was a one-way street, it was a lot easier for my employees and people coming from the alley. After it was made two-way street it became more dangerous. The mirrors are an idea. There is one coming from Tazewell onto Front Street; those mirrors are tricky. It is real hard to get your brain to think like that mirror tells you. You almost have to pull out in the traffic and hope no one is coming.

Rick - I think that one is adjusted wrong.

Mayor White - Can you get someone to look at that?

Tim - Yes, I will see what their thoughts are. I will report back to Council to see what it takes to do that. You must have public awareness when you change the lanes back.

York Lindsey - I would like to make one comment on the Rec Park. I heard talk, big things, little things and personnel. This is an aging population, we need to try to keep all the youth here. Some of the kids

around here have had lots of opportunities. Pretty neat to see these kids that don't have as many advantages and getting involved, getting squared away and staying squared away. You have to think sometimes, you say Fred has raised \$250,000 or so. You have people that make small contribution and you have Big Corporate America out there as well. You have N & W, Natural gas Companies and you have the smaller companies that donate money. When someone is hired to come into this area and they have a selection to make their job might be in Oakwood. Whether they want to live in Richlands, Tazewell or Abingdon, people have to work if they can. What do they care most about, their kids? I live in Cedar Bluff so I shouldn't say anything.

Rod - I think Rec Park opened in the 70's. I think there was a campaign to get a lot of contribution for the Rec Park. There are plaques on the wall that honor them, but not all that made contributions. This has been a community project since the beginning, a community interest.

York – I don't know if the issues with Fred are valid or not. I didn't know if when he was employed if he was asked to help raise money. If that money had not been raised I don't think you could have the facility opened. No reflection on the Town.

Mayor White – “Department Head Reports” – Any questions?

David Ascue - I put in 38 years and 4 months at the Rec Park. Sitting here tonight hearing some of the comments, it really hits home and it hits my heart. Out of the 38 years, I have worked under several Town Managers and I have seen a lot of Town Council come and go. The thing is it has always worked out. My dad always said right will right itself. We have always been dedicated and worked hard at that Rec Park to make it what it is today. My father and I help build the Rec Park. Eugene Ringstaff come to me and asks me to be a life guard. My father became a supervisor, retired in the late 70's and then I was given his job. I was a supervisor until September and now I have retired. I have agreed to come back and work part-time. I love the Rec Park and the children and I must admit I like Fred a lot. I have seen Fred do a lot of good at the Rec Park. When you see Fred around children you see his face light up. That man has a passion and a way with kids. Kids like and respect him too. When he is coaching boys' basketball they see him as our Rec Director. I was going to say more but everything has already been said and I don't need to repeat it. I would like to say Mr. Ratliff has a passion and I can appreciate the passion but I may not appreciate the method. Social media or newspapers is not the place to fight battles. I have always considered this town like a family. What I would like to see is the Town Council have more trust in Mary Ann, the Rec Commission and Fred. I have already seen a lot of improvement. The building and I have grown old together. Sad to say the building is better shape than I am. Fred has done a lot, he is a doer and can get things done. I would appreciate if the Council would just be careful what you say. You are honorable representatives of our government. What you say and report in the paper carries a lot of weight. If you have problem with me or the Rec Park come to me. Don't go to the newspaper, don't put it on Facebook. Like Mary Ann said, basketball will be playing every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 6pm to 8:30pm and Saturday mornings. You come over there and you see all those little kids, it really does you good. The activity is picking up and I must admit that over the years the kids are not as active as they once were. Let's put more trust in the Commission and Fred and let's move forward.

Mayor White - Any other questions on the other departments? Would any of the Department Heads like to speak?

Gordon Russ- In talking about 911, we had issues with it. If there has been a problem, we need to find out and sit down and have a meeting. We do have a lot of issues.

Keith Reynolds- We probably need to have a public safety meeting.

Mayor White – “Attorney Comments”

Brad - In the December meeting we scheduled a Public Hearing on two (2) separate ordinances. Proposed ordinance for Local Tax on Cigarettes and proposed ordinance for Consumer Utility Tax. These

ordinances were advertised for the required 30 days according to VA Code 15.2-1427. The first reading was not done due to my absence, I have ordinances tonight and they are very lengthy. I will read the introduction – Ordinance Local Tax on Cigarettes. (Read ordinance) - This is the first reading I will put on the floor for Council for consideration.

Mayor White - We can't vote on this because we can't dispense of the second reading.

Brad - It is possible to dispense the second reading. I talked to Mr. Taylor earlier today and we can dispense the second reading on the tax if it is the Council's pleasure.

Vickie - I would like to make a motion to adopt the ordinance on the Local Tax on Cigarettes.

Mayor White - We will have to make a motion first to dispense of the second reading.

Vickie - I make motion to dispense of the second reading of the Cigarette Tax. Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 6/0.

Vickie – Cigarette & Utilities – Page 11- 3.8:4 – Every member, when present, when a question is put, shall vote unless excused by the Council. But no member who has any personal or financial interest in the result of any ordinance or resolution before the Council shall vote thereon.

Mayor White - No one has any sales that I am aware of.

Vickie – I was concerned with Rick's comment to me concerning his job if he voted for the Cigarette Tax. I don't want you to lose your income because of the vote.

Doug - I don't think that would have any bearing.

Rick - No, it's not, but I work for the two (2) companies.

Rod - At our work session you expressed to me that you were for, it but could not vote for it. If Food Lion closed you would lose x amount of money.

Mary Ann - Seems like it is a protection for you.

Rick – Yes

Mayor White - Brad, would you please clarify.

Brad - I think it is a conflict of interest if there is a possibility you could lose employment. I recommend he abstain.

Mayor White - We will need the motion to adopt the tax.

Vickie - I make a motion to adopt the Ordinance on Local Tax on Cigarettes. Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion?

Doug - I will like to say that none of my properties sell cigarettes. What is the estimate we are going to do on cigarette tax?

Tim - I don't know Doug. Communities have experienced a down turn in cigarette tax. I think if it does anything it will help toward what the cause is.

Vickie - I was told that Tazewell got \$81,000 last year.

Doug - I think it will be a lot less than what you estimate. I am sure it will pass but we have six (6) or seven (7) merchants that it will hurt. You can drive half mile and get them cheaper.

Mary Ann - I talked to Donnie Mitchum at Corner Mart and he is opposed to the tax. I understand his reasoning but we made a commitment to give all our town employees raises. We have equipment that is worn out. I don't know any other fast ways to get revenue or funds and fix some of our problems. I want to put on record that I respect Donnie Mitcham's opinion, but due to circumstances our Town is in I would have to be in favor of the tax.

Doug - There is plenty of money in the budget if the Town made the correct decisions. When politicians make hard decisions, first thing that comes to their mind is tax.

Rod - I would ask Tim or Adrienne to comment, when did we have the cigarette repealed? What length of time was it in force and how much did you gain?

Tim - Six Weeks

Doug - How much would you guess in years' time?

Sue - Maybe \$80,000

Tim - I think it is a different era; communities are suffering due to less cigarette tax. They are adjusting due to less to tax coming in.

Doug - You are putting on the backs of poor people. Most people that smoke are poor.

Mary Ann - Are we not one of the few communities that don't have a cigarette tax?

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 4/ 2- Doug- No Rick- Abstained

Brad - The second ordinance proposed and advertised for a period of 30 days - Consumer Utility Tax. A Public Hearing held on December 12. Read the Consumer Utility Tax introduction and subsection (a), (c), Page 2 Natural Gas consumer Use Tax levied; Amount - I put this before the Council for consideration.

Mayor White - We need to have a motion to dispense the second reading.

Mary Ann - I would like to make the motion to dispense the second reading of Consumer Utility Tax Ordinance. Larry seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 6/0.

Rod - I make a motion to adopt the Consumer Utility Tax Ordinance. Mary Ann seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 4/2 (Doug- No, Rick- No).

Mayor White - "Manager's Report" - Tim Taylor

Tim - You have a copy of the Check Register, please review and let me know if you have any questions.

Vickie - What did you put in the Voice for \$5.00?

Tim – Advertisement

Mayor White – Check 57339 payment to Teen Venture.

Tim – It is about the same every month.

Vickie – 57282 Card Services – VISA \$1420.16 - Is that where our citizens are using debit cards?

Tim - Items that we must order with a credit card.

Vickie – It is nothing to do with the credit card system or utilities?

Tim –No, it is easier to use credit card on certain things. We only have two credit cards for the Town.

Mayor White - Check 47320

Tim - Waste Water Treatment Plant – testing

Mary Ann - Check 57332 – Richlands High School Band - Was that for participation in the parade?

Tim - Yes

Mayor White – It was paid for out of funds.

Mary Ann - I make a motion to allow Mr. Taylor to pay the bills. Larry seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 6/0.

Tim - Included in your packet is the Monthly Power Cost Report for you to review. It gives you an annual up-to-date basis. Information is provided by GDS Associates that analyze our monthly power cost. (Reference hand out from GDS Associates and made comments).

Tim - Impact of Federal Legislation in regard to Build America Bonds - We got a Christmas gift, they did put language into the current legislation at Congress to sign and will protect us with the Build America Bonds. The impact is not going happen.

Tim - Letter from Mark Mullins and Doug Kitts included in your packet. Request to add Fortune Teller/Palmists to B-2 business district as a permitted use. The Planning Commission, as Mr. Cury stated, didn't have quorum to meet with them. They are trying to get it rescheduled. We can do nothing on this tonight. Brad, I will have to get with you on advertising.

Brad - We can prepare the notices for you. Recommendation will be controversial.

Tim - The Planning Commission has not decided if they will have their own Public Hearing or Joint Public Hearing.

Rod - We were unable to meet since we didn't have a quorum. I think a Joint Public Hearing will be just as well. I can't speak for the Commission. Do they pay for the advertising?

Tim - Yes.

Brad - It would be more efficient.

Tim - Yes, that way the same people would be at both Public Hearings and get a clearer picture. We need to get the ad in the paper so we could do it in February. We have a fee schedule, we can take care of that. We can plan on 7:00pm.

Brad - I will have the notice ready for you by Friday.

Tim - Section House Project Update – Request #7 Twin Enterprises for \$45,493.14. It was not included in the check register. Can you authorize me to pay as a separate line item?

Rod - I make a motion that we allow Tim to pay Twin Enterprises \$45,493.14. Mary Ann seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 6/0.

Mayor White - When is the expected completion date?

Tim - I think mid-February, will get an update next week.

Rod – I talked to Jason, foreman, for Twin Enterprises yesterday. He called me to make some decisions he had to have that day. I called Chairman Mitchell; I didn't think I was authorized to make an individual decision. The issue today was the man was there to sand the floors. The front rooms are southern pine and they managed to salvage enough of the original flooring to floor the entire back part of the house. His question was, do you want us to try and tint the front part to look like the back part. Advised no change orders, just put down the polyurethane and keep it natural. Project will be completed mid-February unless we have delays. Some of the delays are where we are required to buy all American made products. I really like for the Council to go see the upgrades made.

Vickie - My grandson is really into trains and travel to all different places. It was suggested once the train section gets finished, we start reaching out to our train enthusiast in the area. We need to try to get a train show scheduled not only of the railroad house, but maybe we set up something like they have in Bluefield. You would not believe the people that it draws in. We have a doctor in town that has a fantastic train display. This is a big plus for our town and we can utilize it also as tourism. It was recommended that we do a train video cam on the railroad and the railroad house. We do have an economic piece in the railroad house and trains.

Rod - I would like to give an update on what we are doing. Programming, the cam idea has been discussed and considering on how to do that. I never had an interest in railroad as what I have developed in the past eight (8) years. It is exciting and it is amazing how many people are into it. We had someone step forth and volunteer to give us a model railroad. He is going to be at our meeting this coming Thursday at the Restoration Meeting at 3:30 if anyone wants to attend. He will be there to present a drawing. It has to be in modules because that is how you have to move around so easily. He will also present ideas to us for the cost to purchase Norfolk and Western Locomotive, Rolling stock and the Powhatan which was Norfolk & Western premier passenger train. When we have our opening, we will be able to switch around very fast in showing anybody that comes several aspects of the railroad and the history importance it has played. We are really focusing our mission on education. We are adding a formal mission of the house. Not just Section House or Section Foreman House, but foreman house educational heritage center. That is what it is about educating people about our local heritage. The role of the railroad and its marriage to coal is inseparable. Young people are so interested in railroads. I see it all time at school, students on phones, etc.

Vickie - People stand at the tracks and video all the trains carrying passengers. They go from one stop to another from Roanoke to Christiansburg.

Rod - When I have more information I will bring it to Council. This is a Town project and so glad you are supporting it. I thank you.

Mayor White - Does anyone else have anything to add? If not, do I hear a motion to adjourn?

Larry - I make a motion to adjourn, Rick seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries- 6/0.

Jannis White, Mayor

Connie Allen, Town Clerk