

The Richlands Town Council held a regular monthly meeting in the Richlands Council Chambers (Zoom) on January 19, 2021 at 6:00pm with the following present:

Mayor:	Paul Crawford
Town Manager:	Tim Taylor
Town Clerk:	Connie Allen
Council Members:	Richard Brown, Mary Ann Strong, Doug Ratliff Rod Cury, Logan Plaster, Mike Street
Town Attorney :	K.W. McClanahan

Mayor Crawford opened the meeting.

Mary Ann Strong gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Crawford - I would like to take a few minutes and welcome our new Council members, Mike Street and Logan Plaster, good to have you here.

Mayor Crawford - Consideration of Adopting Robert's Rule of Order as the official rules for conducting Town business, we do this beginning of every year.

Rod - I make the motion to adopt Robert's Rule of Order as the official rules for conducting Town business, Logan seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford – Do we have any additions/deletions/corrections to the agenda?

Wayne – I forwarded additions to the agenda, Mayor will you please read.

Mayor Crawford - 2.2-3711(A7) – Legal Counsel regarding potential threatened litigation, 2.2-3711(A8), Consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provisions of legal advice: nuisance abatement procedure, procedure for sale/lease of public property, FOIA Procedures/Compliance. I entertain a motion to accept the agenda as amended.

Richard - I make a motion to accept the agenda as amended, Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford –Are there any corrections, additions or deletions to the minutes?

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

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford - Do we have anyone for "Unscheduled Public Comments"? Add Joe McCracken and Greg Comer.

Mayor Crawford – Organization structuring, we do this at the beginning of each year after the election.

Mayor Crawford – Any nomination for Vice-Mayor?

Mike - I would like to nominate Rod Cury as Vice-Mayor, Richard seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford - Any other nominations?

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford – Consideration of Confirmation of Town Manager

Rod - I make the motion to confirm Tim Taylor as our Town Manager, Mary Ann seconded the motion.

Doug - Is that until March 15?

Mayor Crawford - I don't think we need to put in the minutes until that time.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford - Tim, you found out invertedly, but we plan for you to stay until March 15, we knew that you needed a date.

Tim - We can continue to talk about that in "Closed Session".

Mayor Crawford - Consideration of Confirmation of Town Treasurer (currently the Town Manager). I would like to give you something to think about, Tim you can remark on this if you would. Since we know that you plan to retire should we ask Adrienne to take over those responsibilities? Can she take over those responsibilities?

Tim - You can choose the Town Treasurer to be whoever you like, often times the Director of Finance is the Town Treasurer if there are enough layers of separation. I would have to see if there are enough separation of duties if you want to defer. She should be here later tonight. I think it makes sense.

Mayor Crawford - Is it OK with Council to defer until we can get Adrienne involved?

Rod – It would be a good thing.

Wayne – I would echo Tim's remarks, but we need to ensure we have the appropriate separation as he termed it, it is going to be temporary, we might want to keep the "status quo" right now until we can get a long term plan, I was not prepared to speak to that tonight.

Mayor Crawford - Are you suggesting that we go ahead and keep Tim as Town Treasurer until his retirement date?

Wayne – That would respectfully be my recommendation, until we have time to research as Tim has stated, the separation of duties of Ms. Cordle just to make sure we don't run a foul or anything.

Tim - I agree with that, my name would have to be removed from all the bank accounts. You would have to do it again so it would probably be better to do it at the same time.

Mayor Crawford - We need a motion for Tim Taylor to continue as Town Treasurer.

Doug - I make the motion for Tim Taylor to continue as Town Treasurer, Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford - Consideration of Confirmation of Town Clerk

Mary Ann - I make the motion for Connie Allen to be the Town Clerk, Doug seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford - Consideration of Confirmation of Town Attorney

Richard - I would like to defer until we meet in "Closed Session" under personnel. I spoke to Wayne earlier.

Mayor Crawford – Is that OK with Council?

Council – Yes

Mayor Crawford – Appointment of Council Member Representation for the Planning Commission. Rod Cury has agreed to continue as our representative on the Planning Commission, I would like your support in that if I could entrain a motion.

Mike - I make the motion for Rod Cury to be the Representative for the Planning Commission, Doug seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford – Appointment of Council Member Representation for the Recreation Commission, I did not get Mary Ann's OK to do this, but I assume you would continue to represent us on the Recreation Commission.

Mary Ann - I would be honored to if it is the pleasure of Council.

Mayor Crawford - Thank you so much.

Rod – I make the motion for Mary Ann Strong to be the Council Member Representative for the Recreation Commission, Mike seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Abstained, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 5/1 (abstained).

Mayor Crawford - We don't have any "Public Scheduled Comments".

Mayor Crawford - "Unscheduled Public Comments – Joe McCracken

Joe McCracken – I am here to speak on the ditches, drains and the flooding. I just want to thank you all for being interested in our Town, it is a task in doing what you are doing. Flooding of the Town drains

and ditches, we still have problems. I plan on being here quite often over the flooding and the ditches/drains. It will be one (1) year next month since we had the big flood and to my knowledge nothing has been done since we had the big flood in February. We still have a problem where I live. We have drain/ditch problems. Right now, the big drain running across the bottom, the head of the drain collapsed (showed an example). We still need work over there, to my knowledge there is very little being done to correct anything over my way. I am talking about all over the Town of Richlands, Dalton Addition and all the way to Doran. As a Town we need to work on things to try to make things better for the taxpayers and the citizens of Richlands. As far as my knowledge the taxpayers pay for everything that goes on in this Town. I would like for you to continue trying to help do something to make the ditches /drains and the flooding better than it has been.

Doug - Has the ditch been dug on the Hackworth property?

Joe McCracken – There has been a little bit of ditching dug over there, it has not helped at all. The reason I say it has not helped, they dug a little ditch and it sloped toward the drainpipe that collapsed. I would not think that helped at all.

Richard - Is that the pipe on the railroad property?

Joe McCracken - It is going thru the bottom, it is the big one that carries the water from the railroad to the big one, it is now collapsed.

Rod - I can't see the pictures, but I think I know what you are talking about. We had acknowledged helping with some ditching over there, I think I am right but if I'm wrong, I stand to be corrected. Tim is there any progress on that?

Tim - I had spoken a little earlier with Mr. McCracken, the ditch he is talking about, we did a lot of cleaning out. That has nothing to do with what he is talking about. Mr. McCracken is correct that pipe has collapsed on the front end. We have camera it but can't get a good feel on how much is damaged. I think after I walked the property with Mr. Woods in December, there is a better solution and the pipe needs to be fixed. I talked to Mr. West about it, our Street Supervisor. He has gotten a price on the piping. The ditch, there is no drainage on the ditch, I think there is a better solution I really do, and I think it would help you. The ditch that they would dig really would not help. I think it is a better solution and it probably won't be any cost savings. If we have to replace the pipe, we probably will do some type of hydraulic analysis to help raise it, I think that would help too, if we do that may not have to have ditch like you are talking about. The railroad is a natural guide across the street if we could capture that drainage before it gets to you and gets to the other big pipe it would not be any difference in the hydrology for the river. If we dig a big ditch around the north side of the property will give another access point to move up the river, could be both depending on the depth. I think the money would be better spent to make use of the railroad and if it doesn't work go back to plan B. I think it is worth studying.

Joe McCracken - Time is of the essence, it has been a year, and nothing has been done since last February. If we keep putting it off, I am afraid I am not going to be there. I want to live here, I have lived here for 50 years and I want to continue living here, but if things get worse over there and they are getting worse people are going to start leaving this town.

Doug - Could you give us 30 days; would that be feasible?

Tim - If we have the ability to do that part of it, where you could see, the hydrology of it is so delicate, you have a natural water barrier thru the railroad but you have a pipe under it and artisans out behind it and get in some areas Mr. McCracken is talking about. I feel if you take advantage of that and get some drainage area you would be better served for everybody.

Doug - How can we do this in 30 days?

Tim - I don't know if you can do in 30 days but if you did, I wanted to introduce to the Task Force. The Task Force has not had a good turnout for the meetings.

Rod - I am going to address in my notes, go ahead Tim.

Tim – I think it is something to look at from an engineering standpoint because it is too delicate and the code requires it and the flood ordinance requires it, do a comprehensive study and not just a trial and error type thing. The expertise of Council and Mr. McCracken but It may take some professional help on it.

Doug - Can I ask the Town attorney something?

Mayor Crawford - Yes

Doug - Since we have been going on this for a year would the Town be liable? We have a drain that is collapsed, people have been here month after month. If something happens over there, is the Town liable? The problem has been pointed out to the Town and we still have not done anything; it has been five (5) years.

Wayne - No more liable than what the Town would be in any other situation, if someone's personal property was injured. Short Answer – Yes, the Town is always potentially liable for damage due to personal property.

Doug - Do you think it would be more liable since we have had it poured out time after time and nothing has been done.

Wayne - It is hard to say, speculating on a hypothetically lawsuit, I rather not.

Doug – To me, we have been going on a year and we don't get anything done, if we need professional help, we need to get some over there next week come up with a plan and let's do it. I don't know about the rest of the Council but if it rains for three (3) or four (4) days and those people are flooded out, I am going to have heart burn.

Tim - I had a quote from Thomson & Litton Engineering we can look at that, I presented to Council a couple of months ago to review. If you want to go back and revisit, I can get a copy, I have it on my desk.

Joe McCracken - The Council voted back in October to try to do something over there to help with the problem, everyone voted for it. I am just here to say nothing has been done. Matter of fact it has gotten worse since that time with this drain. The first step to me would to be replace the drain that is collapsed, a portion of it which probably comes in 20' lengths, to help immediately just in case of a three (3) or four (4) day rain.

Tim - I don't see a problem with going over there and exploring, we are already over there working on it. Let's go ahead and see how much damage is there, we need to get the camera in there, just got it repaired last week. If we can get the camera in to see where the places are, we can dig down and repair it. If it is damaged all the way we can get with Mr. Hackworth to get that dug up, there is a lot of underground utilities, sewer, electric, etc.

Joe McCracken – It is the Town's; it is damaged and that is why I am here; it is causing water back-up. I don't like coming here especially during COVID.

Richard - Replacing is nothing we need to vote here.

Tim - Replacing it is fine.

Mayor Crawford - Joe I think we have said enough in order to get that replaced within the next 30 days. We will follow up in the next meeting.

Mary Ann - It may have been the October meeting, you were here and the very next morning I thought the county was sending an engineer down, Doug, Rick and you all were meeting. What happened from there?

Joe McCracken – We discussed it and we come up with a plan. The plan was to ditch around Mr. Hackworth's property over to the river and let the overflow water the pipe could not handle go around his property and go into the river. That has not been done. The ditch that was dug a little way, ditched the water back into the drain not out of the drain, it hurt, and it did not help.

Mayor Crawford - Let's move on and get some action on that next month.

Joe McCracken - I appreciate and thank you very much. I don't want to go, and I don't want to leave but if something is not done, I may have to take steps to help this process along.

Rod - Thank you, Joe.

Mayor Crawford – "Unscheduled Public Comments" – Greg Comer

Greg Comer - I am an aerial photographer, I am trying to photograph every single town in Virginia and West Virginia, I just wanted to show the one I took here last fall.

Richard - What month was it?

Greg Comer – October

Greg Comer - I wanted to show it to you, to see if there are any interest in purchasing for your walls here.

Rod – Where do you live?

Greg Comer – Winchester Virginia, I have photographed 3000 places over 31 states. The primary goal is to photograph every town in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland, the three (3) states that I have lived in.

Mary Ann - I definitely think we need in our Town Hall.

Mike - Where do you purchase these?

Greg Comer – On the website I only have unframed versions, I sell in different sizes. The size I have here is 20X 20 for \$195, I have 16 X20 for \$95 up to 27X40 for \$295. Anything you purchase for additional \$50 you can purchase a digital file that you can use any way you want to except for resale.

Mayor Crawford - What is your website?

Greg Comer – gregcomer.com or easier to remember greg@virginia123.com, I am actually transitioning to americafromthesky.com.

Rod - Do you have other photographs?

Greg Comer – I have a 15-degree window, where the sun makes it look sparkly, this one was my favorite out of the bunch, the others were very similar, I do have some of Raven and Cedar Bluff.

Mayor Crawford - Are there other pictures on the website?

Greg Comer – Yes, you can see my entire collection. I have about three-fourths of Virginia done and about the same in West Virginia, total of 3200 across the country. I will leave the price information with you.

Logan - Thank you for capturing the beauty of Richlands I appreciate that.

Rod - Can you give Councilman Brown an extra one and he will give to me at school tomorrow.

Mayor Crawford – “Director of Community Development” – Connie Allen

Connie – We received three (3) bids for the stage at the Greenway, Rife Remodeling & Flooring \$95,326.74, Twin Enterprises \$98,500.70, Ken Construction \$97,425.00. This project has been turned over to the IDA, we have \$89,801 left in our CPROP Grant monies. We don't have enough money to finish the stage. On behalf of the IDA, they wanted me to present to Council to see if you would allocate up to \$10,000 to finish the project. If we go with the lowest bidder, we will only need \$5,500. No contractor has been awarded the project. If something happens, they can't use the lowest bidder they would go to the second lowest bidder. If we use Ken Construction, then we would need around \$7,000. They didn't want to come back and ask for additional money in case we could not use the lowest bidder.

Doug - What is this for?

Connie - It is for the stage at the Greenway.

Connie - We won't have enough money to finish the Greenway. We do have the Train PlayStation for the children at the Police Department. We still need the turf and other things. I talked to Jim Baldwin and asked him if I could submit a grant for Phase Two. We would have to wait until a second round of the grant money before we can apply again. I was going to see if I could get additional money to finish the Greenway. If we don't finish the stage, it will appear like we are not making any progress, it will be hard to get any money. Matter of fact if we don't do the stage by November, we could lose the money.

Tim - The three(3) bids were very close, it is good. The reason it is over budget it was pre-COVID type of numbers. The cost is three (3) times what it used to be. That is part of our dilemma. We thought we had enough money for it, but it didn't happen. They are all good bids.

Connie - Bids were very close, I was a little surprised.

Mary Ann – Tim, can we use any of the money we had for flood relief?

Tim – No, but you have a little money in special projects available. That is the only place I would know of having money. Connie, do you have any extra money in your budget?

Connie – I probably could use some out of my budget since I have had no events. I may be able to give at least \$1,000. I hope we get to have events soon.

Tim - If we could use her money to cover that, we can't really negotiate with the bidder because they were so close. If we rescope we may have to change the quality of what we are trying to do. That is something they didn't want to support, that is why we are here.

Richard - Can we convert the money from Connie's budget and if she gets to have events later on, we can reappropriate money later.

Tim - That is fine.

Mike - Connie's budget money and reappropriate money if she has events.

Connie - I don't have \$5000 maybe \$4500 not sure.

Mary Ann - Can we take the rest from special projects?

Tim - Yes

Richard - I make a motion to use the money out of Connie's budget and the special projects for the stage at the Greenway, Mary Ann seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford - Do we need to put a dollar amount on that?

Connie - Up to \$10,000, if we use the first bid, we only need \$5,500.

Doug - Can you go over the three (3) bids again?

Connie - Rife Remodeling & Flooring \$95,326.74, Twin Enterprises \$98,500.70, Ken Construction \$97,425.00.

Connie - We are requesting up to \$10,000 but we won't need that much money.

Tim - That is to cover contingencies and things like that or just in case something that we missed. We have not finalized the bid, looks like it will be more than \$5,000.

Mayor Crawford - Richard, you want to make the motion up to \$10,000.

Richard - I make the motion of up to \$10,000, take out of Connie's budget and special project fund, Mary Ann seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford - 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. Roll Call - Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries - 6/0.

Connie - We are working on the Community Development Block Grant; we had our second meeting. The people in attendance were Mayor Crawford, Mike Street, Adrienne Cordle, Ervin Davis, John Wills, Ginger Branton, Tim Taylor and Debbie Milton with Cumberland Plateau Planning District who attended by zoom. Debbie said I needed to have a good variation, that is why I had the Mayor, Councilmember, citizens and business owners. I went thru the Code book, but I could not find a definition of what the Town considered blighted. I thought I would write up a definition and send to each of you to see if that is what you consider blighted. Each property has to be listed as blighted or not blighted. We have a lot of work to do. Once we get Step No. 4 completed, we will have another management team meeting. That is when we will form the committee and find out who wants to be committed to the project if we are accepted. We have to bring all the facts to the table, all the properties in the scope of work and if everyone agrees this is what we want to do we will submit to Cumberland Plateau in Richmond. They will accept or come back and say this is not a good proposal. Tim is that correct?

Tim - The main goal of this is to see if there is enough interest in the target area so that we can get professional services here. You have \$3,500 to do the piece you are doing now.

Connie - We have a total of \$35,000, when I talked to Debbie, she said we could not get anyone to help us until we get thru all the steps.

Tim - Then an RFP can be issued and then you can hire an Engineer Firm to help do the hard things you are talking about. Develop cost estimates and talk to the people so they will know what they want for their structures and provide cost estimates for Façade Programs. Have the management team formulate a budget; that is the whole purpose of this, to formulate a million-dollar budget and then submit to DCHD.

Connie - We have to get the businesses on board, grant money up to \$1,000,000. They did say any remodeling that you have done on your building during a certain period you can take those funds and apply to the façade match funds.

Mike - It is a matching grant.

Rod - I think this is a good thing for Richlands and I hope it all works out perfectly for us. Is this the Revitalization Project from the Front Street Bridge to the West End?

Connie - West End of the bridge where Henry's garage is and down where Dr. Willis's property is located. That is included in the scope of work and all the way down to King Kone, correct Tim?

Tim - Yes, 1st and 2nd Street and where they merge into Second Street. The east end that was not targeted last time.

Rod - Will it be included in this project?

Tim - Yes, I think it is a positive step forward.

Rod - I remember when we had the first revitalization grant, there were people on the committee called sparkplugs and various levels of commitment and types of commitment. I think it is awesome, I hope it works.

Connie - I think we need to include as much as we can in the project. The only thing that concerns me some business have been hit so hard during COVID, not sure how much the commitment will be. I will start talking to the businesses on Thursday and hopefully next week know how people feel about it.

Mike - To add, talking about COVID which is important, if I am not mistaken, we are going to work on low interest loans potentially to get some of that money, is that correct?

Connie - Yes, I talked to Jim Baldwin today, right now but it could change (due to COVID) the interest rates are 0% to 1% if a business wants to borrow money. There is funding available if the storefront has apartments above it, there is a lot of potential. VDOT could step in and help us with the lights and sidewalks.

Tim - That would be included in the project, if funded, we may be able to get money for Front and Second Street, that is on the list to do. If the timing is right, if you get your sidewalks and street scapes with the inlands and all that and finally pave the entire area. It is like two (2) years out but that could very well happen, Second Street could be paved as early as next year.

Connie - In our next meeting we will have to get commitment from people to be on the committee, we can include additional people. What are your thoughts?

Mike - I think it is a very good idea.

Logan - I think it is a very good idea and I appreciate your effort, anything we can do to help the businesses is positive.

Mary Ann - The sections you named are very blighted.

Mike - I am a little bias but I am part of it. I was here with the conversation with Debbi and she was very good, she knew exactly what she was talking about and answered all our questions that we had, very detailed questions for her in regards how it is supposed to look and the structure. I was going to mention in my report, I wanted to say how much I appreciated Connie, Adrienne and Tim for the involvement in getting the initial project started. This is a major, major process and it is going to take a

lot of players; it is a lot of work and a lot of small committees. We are in the very beginning of this journey. It is an opportunity to really change the shape of downtown and what the streets look like and it's a wonderful opportunity. I think it is absolutely awesome; I can't wait to be more involved with it I am so happy, I am all aboard.

Connie - I will keep you updated as we go, I will need some additional help.

Connie - CARES ACT money was extended to the end of December 2021. That will give us more time to decide on the front window. Any questions?

Richard – Did you send out the memo for the economic interest? It said the forms were attached but they weren't.

Connie - I thought you already had the forms, but I can send to you.

Mary Ann - What is the deadline?

Richard - February 1

Connie - I thought Adrienne had sent the forms.

Adrienne – I sent to you to forward to Council after December 31.

Connie - I will send out to each of you.

Mayor Crawford - We need to do the training online to, correct?

Connie – Yes

Mayor Crawford – “Council Member Reports” – Rod Cury

Rod – I want to thank the members of Council for electing me to be Vice-Mayor. Basically, in the charter the Vice-Mayor only acts in the event the Mayor is not able to be at the meeting or perform the duties. That being said, Paul I hope you maintain excellent health; it is so important and happiness. Thank you very much and it is important to remember those things about people first, thank you. I also appreciate you appointing me to be the Representative for the Planning Commission; I have been doing this for some time. I really enjoy the Planning Commission; it has a special role; we can really be a research arm for Council. There are certain things by certain legal means must go thru the Planning Commission. Thank you for those things especially for Planning Commission means a lot. The Planning Commission did meet at its regular time. Mike/Logan, the Commission meets regularly on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm at the Town Hall that is a standing meeting. We always publicize it, just wanted you to know that in case you have anything that needs to be brought to the Commission or relay to me to bring to the Commission, I am happy to do that. The work of the Commission is zoning not just approving things or recommending things on zoning issues but comprehensive zoning. To that we are making an effort to look at areas that are unfinished from the annex. It really wasn't an annex but a boundary adjustment we had with Hidden Valley, Birmingham and those areas. We are working on that. To have comprehensive zoning in the whole area in our community and get it updated. At our last meeting we talked about different types of zones that we do not have here that would improve the way Richlands grows. It is really important when we get to that point in our study. We will come to Council for your thoughts in what we are doing. Of course, obviously it is always Council's decision. These are important matters we need to talk about. One area has a broad brush of business, but it is very complicated, but yet it is simple. It takes a lot of work and you also have to be very careful in the world of zoning, lawsuits are abounding. We want to avoid that if at all possible. Sometimes it is misspoken as the Zoning Commission, which they are not with the Planning Commission just to clarify that. We have extensively talked about the Walking Trail and everyone is on board with the idea. We have invited Rick Chitwood from Thompson and Litton to come and give us an update on it, particularly how it can be funded. I have

also invited Ricky Barton; I have not talked with Rick so that brings it to a little intersection here with the conversation. Tim how is Rick doing?

Tim - He is doing fine, he wanted me to rely to you and the Planning Commission he will be available for the February meeting.

Rod – It was also brought to my attention; it is great that we are going to try to receive funding, but it might be we don't want to get the cart before the horse. Quite a bit of the land that the trail will cross is not the Town's land and will require easements or other legal ways to cross the land and we will have to talk about this in the Commission. I just wanted to give you a thorough update on what we were doing. When we talk about funding, we are really excited about it, but you can't fund something that you don't have, particularly land that is another area we want to work on. If anyone has any ideas that have an interest in it, please let me know and we will take that into consideration in what we are doing to prepare for Town Council. The next meeting will be the first Tuesday in February which is February 2, which is Groundhog Day. We have been quite busy; we have been having excellent attendance. When it is snowy it is hard on people, but we do the best we can. At the last meeting because of the intensity of COVID all of the members did zoom. In conjunction with the Winter Honey Festival, which started with many dedicated citizens 8/10 years ago. We are not the first area to have a Honey Festival but is the Town that got the ball rolling. I read the resolution from the house. The General Assembly, we are the Town that got the ball rolling to declare February the official Winter Honey month. We are not the official festival we are the official Honey month. I thought that was notable. Events are limited this year, Logan, I know you have taken a lot of interest/participation in the events and really look for you for assistance; you are so good at it, thank you. The Section House will be having annual tea, we can't have it in the house because of COVID, it is not possible, we are going to do virtual tea. I hope everyone will support it. It is a fundraiser to help us raise money on our own, so we don't have to lean on Council any more than we need to, right now we are good, and we are really excited about it. It is going to be a mix of information, fun, humor and personal personality here at Richlands. I am working with Adrienne and Frank on zooming with anyone who joins for tea and we are working very hard. I have to work out having a link on the Facebook page so people can pay thru a link directed to the Town. We did not want to have money directly to ourselves, that is not what we want. Once that appears, I hope you will log on and support that it is for the Town of Richlands. It is Town property. We really thank you very much. Wayne, Mary Ann I know we talked a couple months ago on notifying people in various ways. I think that came about because Jeff had some concerns when he was here on the Council. Is there a time, I know everyone is busy; to get together maybe next week? Mary Ann/ Wayne do you have a time we could have a zoom meeting?

Wayne - Can we table this until I go over my comments, I had a conversation with Mr. Plaster as well, I have some comments about this.

Rod – Absolutely, I appreciate that.

Rod – I had a call from Laura Mollo, she talked to Mary Ann about recognizing Logan. She recommends that we recognize Logan Plaster for being the youngest member on the Richlands Town Council ever elected. I ask her if she had researched that so that she would know accurately, and she said thru Tazewell County. I don't know but I think she meant Tazewell County Historical Society, but I asked her to check with Gaynelle Thompson who is the Town Historian and she did. I have personally not talked to Gaynelle, but Ms. Mollo told me that she does not keep records of ages who I am all time grateful, which I am not the oldest person to be on there. That being said according to what Gaynelle thinks, Logan is the youngest Council member ever elected. I will put that out to Council for consideration, if Council feels it is proper to recognize him with a letter or whatever you think is appropriate, I will do that. I will lay out for conversation.

Mayor Crawford - Why don't you make a motion if you want to discuss it.

Rod - I make a motion to recognize Logan Plaster at the February meeting for being the youngest member elected on Richlands Town Council , Doug seconded the motion.

Mary Ann - Logan could you give us your certificate, I can't remember when you, Mike and Doug were sworn in, if you will get that to me, drop by my office I would like to get that framed.

Logan - OK, Thank you

Rod - What did you ask him?

Mary Ann – To have his certificate framed, he may have already done it.

Logan - Yes, Jan White is framing it for me. Thanks, I do appreciate that.

Rod - I will just make the motion that we recognize him in some way I don't know how to do it, I will just say we will recognize him and leave it at that.

Doug - You already have motion on the floor.

Mayor Crawford - That is right .

Mayor Crawford - We have a motion and second to recognize him at the next meeting.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Abstained, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 5/1 (abstained).

Mayor Crawford – “Council Member Reports” – Doug Ratliff

Doug – I have had a lot of calls and I am sure other members have about the electric rates rising. The next few months along with the Town, there is going to be some pressure outside which is going to raise the rates like the Green New Deal. In the next few months and years going to go rather high. A lot of the citizens are concerned. I would like to make a motion that we have a committee of three (3) citizens and three(3) Councilmembers to do a study and make recommendations on how to lower the rates so the citizens can pay them.

Mayor Crawford - Number one, I would like for it to go on record the rates didn't increase last month.

Doug - I didn't say last month, they have increased 30% last year or two. I assure you with the pressure the Town keeps raising the rates. With the administration that is taking over tomorrow there is going to be a lot of pressure from the Green New Deal and it is going to put pressure on the rates. We are going to have pressure from the Town, and they have risen in the last few years 30%. With the Green New Deal citizens already are having problem paying those rates. I would like to make a motion that they look at where the money goes, and if they could do a study to see how we can get the rates down so our citizens can pay them. Why shouldn't we have a committee made up of three (3) citizens and three (3) Councilmembers. It is just like Hidden Valley, I live in Hidden Valley we don't have to contend with those rates which is not fair the people in Town, I think in consideration of them we should have that committee to keep those rates low.

Mayor Crawford - Is there a second?

Logan - I seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford - A motion to have an Electric Committee with three (3) citizens and three (3) Councilmembers to evaluate and investigate the methodology to keep electric prices down.

Mike - Who is going to pay for the study?

Doug - It won't be any cost it will be three (3) citizens and three (3) Councilmembers to look at the budget and see how we can cut the rates and keep them low enough for the citizens to pay them, there will be no cost.

Mike - Who will we have on this committee?

Doug - I would recommend Shea Cook, which he knows more than anyone on the electric.

Mike - I was looking more toward experts in regard to actual electricity and how it works and the ins and outs of those numbers, not necessary a number from someone that lives down the street.

Tim - In this year's budget the Electrical Department did a cost of service study, part of the grading system where we buy our diversified portfolio group that guides us thru. Supposed to do a cost of rate, cost of service study is what they call it, a professional that does it every three (3) to four (4) years for us. It is time to do that again simply because of the skews of the PCA, we have that in the budget. It is on my list to talk to you about. There is money in the Electrical Department to get that started and get it done. That will give you a tool if you decide to have this committee. You will have a tool so you will understand better. The study we have now is three (3) or four (4) years old.

Adrienne - This year it will be four (4) years old.

Tim - It will give you something to use as guidance and helps you understand the details in the budget, and it should be done. If you are considering the motion you need this for a tool, it is a complicated matter and you need to know what you are doing, use for buying power in the future.

Doug - One of the problems, and that is what that committee would look, even before this, Richlands is the only Town that has an electric system. I think there are five (5) or six (6) in Virginia. Tazewell does not have one, Lebanon, Bluefield or none of the surrounding Towns have an electric system. What Richlands has done is using it as a piggybank or crutch. We take money which study is not going to reflect on that, we sort of take money out of the electric system. We are taking \$700,000 to \$800,000 right off the top to fund the budget and for other things, \$700,000/\$800,000 causes the rates to rise and puts under pressure on those rates for the citizens. I talked to a lady and she draws \$800 to live on and her electric is \$400, half of what she draws is for electric. What is causing them to rise unlike Lebanon and the surrounding cities they don't have it, Richlands has used that fund as a crutch. The committee could make recommendations on how we can wing off and take the pressure off of those rates. If we don't and I have said this five (5) to ten (10) years if we keep doing that the next two (2) or three (3) years it is going to rise out of sight if we don't get some recommendations and not use the money other than for the electric fund and cause the rates to go higher.

Mary Ann - I agree with Mike, Doug I served on the Electric Committee with you for years, total honesty it was very difficult for me to understand and we had a lot of meetings. It certainly is over my head, if we have a committee it must be made of people that have expertise. You understand it and I compliment you for that. The other thing is I did talk to some citizens as well and made some phone calls. Like you I live in Hidden Valley and my AEP doubled. I wish I had Town of Richlands, I would give anything to have electric and water. My AEP doubled and every single person I asked what their last bill was said their bill doubled.

Doug - If you talk to citizens and you live at Claypool Hill and out. I know several people who have moved out of Richlands because the rates are so high, and it is much lower in Claypool Hill which is on AEP and it is much lower. If I could give you a scenario, if you have a business such as yours and you came in everyday and took \$10,000 out of that business and the electric system is a business and it provides for the citizens and you come in and rob that piggy bank every day of \$10,000 your business won't survive and that is what is going to happen to electric system. We rob it every year of \$700,000/\$800,000 and as high as \$900,000 take it right off the top and use for little pet projects other than the electric system, that is going to put pressure on the rates. You understand that.

Mary Ann – I do understand, I am not clear if that is what we are doing. I would like for Mr. Taylor to answer that.

Tim - Council, we have had plenty of work sessions, but we have two (2) new members that don't understand the electric system. Before you start relying on citizens and other people who don't have the expertise to do this let the budget process educate you. You are talking about using funds that are allocated funds that share resources that is what we are talking about, Council needs to understand in the budget and how that fits, and they also need to understand and compare if they need rates of utilities. I know that APCO got turned down one rate increase, but they have another one in the que which would be around 3 ½ more percent, that is a moving target with AEP. We have not had a recent rate increase. The consumption and weather related is what has driven the rates. I think it is important that you understand the budget process and I think every Council Member needs to go thru the training of how to do that and how it affects the budget. Whatever the group decides to do you have ramifications of what you do in other departments, it is all part of the same problem. It sounds like we are wasting money and we are doing things with it, but I think that is what you will have to look at, that would be my recommendation.

Doug - We use to keep the power adjustment at "0, that is a big increase and over the last two (2) years. It has gone up 30% that is a large increase. How much money does Lebanon use out of their electric fund, I am asking you Mr. Taylor?

Tim – They don't have an electric fund.

Doug - What about Bluefield?

Tim - They don't have one.

Doug - What about Tazewell?

Tim – They have transferred half million.

Doug – We are transferring more than that

Tim - I don't think so.

Doug - If you look at the budget you transferred over a half million then you are taxing it another \$260,000, if you study the budget you are taking out around \$800,000 a year. All the other Towns can survive without doing that. What makes Richlands so different that we can't help the citizens and keep the rates low without raising the electric fund.

Mayor Crawford - Raising real estate is one way. Are those numbers correct?

Adrienne - What Mr. Ratliff is speaking about is the allocation, there is not really a transfer for projects. Basically, if you have more than one (1) business, say you own three (3) businesses you have to do payroll, administration work, accounts payable of all those businesses, all of those businesses pay for that. They pay your payroll clerk ,administration, accounts payable person. The finance office budget, that is cost allocated to all the governmental departments to the water, sewer and the electric based on time study.

Mike - What you are saying is to help explain and simplify, that person in administration is not working for Town of Richlands they are working for the Electrical.

Adrienne - Yes, if you don't do an allocation what would happen, all the girls out front, the meter reader, meter technician and all those people that you are paying to do billing for electric water and sewer turn on and turn offs you would pay out of your taxes instead of your electric. You cannot do that

transfer but then you are going to have to raise taxes to pay for the utility billing clerks and administration that works only for electric.

Doug - The other Towns have Clerical Departments and they get along without taking close to a million dollars out of their electric fund, it is coming to the point that we are higher than the AEP. Why do we have an electric system if we can't do a better job for the citizens and keep it lower.

Adrienne - The other towns don't have electric. They do have water and sewer. Call Town of Lebanon, Tazewell and Bluefield, look at your numbers, their water and sewer rates are quite a bit higher than ours. We allocate what it cost to run the Water Department out of the Finance Office. Their rates are higher, and they are not transferring money out, we are transferring money to pay for that, and our rates are lower. We have to be doing something right.

Doug - I disagree, it don't take a million dollars to bill for electric and lion share comes out of the electric system and you guys know it, it comes to a point the citizens are going to ask, people are going to move out of Town because our rates are so high. If we are running people and population out of Richlands, it is going to come to a point in the next year or two, why do we have an electric system and why can't do a better job in managing it. Adrienne, I ask you why we have an electric system that don't function to help the citizens. If we can't do a better job and give better rates than AEP why do we have it, just to brag on it or what I don't understand it.

Tim - That is a good question, the only way to find that answer and make a determination is for Council to sit in a setting and hear and see the details because it is kind of skewed, the way we are doing tonight. I think they need to hear and see some documents, I think they need to understand the cost of service study and need to give you the study of why public power is important to communities within the state, there is a lot more than four (4) or five (5). You are talking about several in the State of Virginia, Harrisonburg, Danville, Martinsville, Bedford. Just so they are educated and understand it like you do.

Doug - The bottom line is are we doing a good job for the citizen, why should we have our own system if is going to be higher rates, why don't we let AEP take it and keep our rates low and not fool with it then you would not have to make any allocations or any of that .

Mayor Crawford- I have ask the same questions ever since I got involved in this. I don't know the answer, but the discussion is getting a little broader than what the motion and second was. I wanted to let it get a little broader to kind of open up some. The motion is to form a committee with three (3) citizens and three (3) Councilmembers to look and make recommendations methods to improve electric rates for citizens.

Mike - I am interested in a work session on how the electrical works, I refuse to make decisions that I am not completely understand. What is the process for that?

Mayor Crawford - Let's get this motion and second off the floor.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, No, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-No, Richard-No, Rod-No- Motion declined – 2/4.

Mayor Crawford - Now let's talk to Mike, Tim what's the plans for the meetings?

Tim – That is always part of the budget. We can move that to the head of the class, it is part of the budget discussions. We can start preparing for that and get some current numbers. Before I leave for retirement, I will try to have a good educational session so you can ask those questions, like Mr. Ratliff asked, "Why do we have it? "and maybe your concerns. It would be a good time to talk about that. I can't give you a date, but I will try my best to work on that and give you a date probably after the second week of February.

Mayor Crawford - Let's try to do it in February.

Logan - Tim, can you keep us up to date by email .

Tim -- Absolutely, anything I can send to you as study materials I will get that to you.

Logan - Please send anything regarding the electric.

Doug - When you have a large amount of cash it is like a drug, you take that money and use it, if you will go back thru the minutes the last few months of the council meetings every time we hire someone the very first thing that is mention, oh we can take out of electric fund. I encourage you to go back thru the minutes, every time someone was hired we wanted to take out of the electric fund, it is like a drug we just keep drawing and drawing and drawing it is going to catch up with the Town.

Mayor Crawford - Don't remember ever seeing in the minutes.

Connie - If it was mentioned in closed session would not be in the minutes.

Doug - It was mentioned in closed session and in here also.

Mike - As far as the work session goes does that focus on the budget as a whole or is there an opportunity to focus strictly on electrical?

Tim - We are not ready for the budget; we have a lot of prep work to do. We have a lot to do with staff/department heads, but the concepts have to do with the Electrical Department's budget. The concepts are the same and we have plenty of slides we can go over with you. We can do that.

Mayor Crawford - An easy answer is just the electrical.

Mike -- That is my biggest concern.

Mayor Crawford -- "Council Member Reports" -- Richard Brown

Richard --I was going thru the general ledger and I have question on the meals tax, what is the status as far as collections on taxes, business license? Have they not paid because of COVID?

Tim - Right now still operating, business license comes due once a year and they are due. Applications will be mailed out this month. We had some people to donate money to help the small business keep current with their business licenses. I believe most everyone is current maybe a handful are not current as far as last year. Going forward there is no plan right now. I don't know how that will work out. They have until March 30 to pay.

Richard - What about meals tax?

Tim - We have people that are paying, I don't know the status of everyone, but we do have problems with a few.

Adrienne - Richard are you looking at the November report?

Richard - Yes

Adrienne - If you will look across there basically what we have collected this year July-November is more than we collected the past few years.

Richard - So COVID really didn't affect it.

Adrienne - It did prior to these months. When COVID first hit March, April, May and June we suffered pretty good. We had around \$100,000 lost, that was when the restaurants were closed. It started coming back when restaurants started opening back up. If you look at the numbers going all the way across, July – November they are doing pretty well. I will say this, it could be some past dues, they could have paid two (2) months at a time. Looking at a five (5) month period we collected more the last five (5) months than the last three (3) years due this period of time.

Tim - The ledger is a tool; it is comparing the same month in multiple years.

Doug - What effect does a new business have on that?

Adrienne – Should help if it is a restaurant.

Doug - Could it be higher because we had a new restaurant?

Adrienne - It could.

Doug - Like Italian Village.

Mary Ann – Coal Town Taps.

Richard - Is there a process that the town has as far as self-employed business. If you have a small business, do we have any way of knowing if that business is operating in town.

Tim - The ladies upfront know a lot about the business community, there are a lot of whistleblowers out there that will call. It is kind of hard to see but we do look around to see if there are any activities without a permit. As far as the business is concerned if they are doing anything in an illegal zone, we can deal with that usually their neighbors will call. The zoning administrators when they have time, they have a lot more hassle than they used to. Richard Vance use to keep up with all that when he was here. We are not back to where we use to be.

Richard – Wayne, did you say you were going to bring up the nuisances?

Wayne - Yes, will discuss in closed session.

Richard - Are you considering burnt structures?

Wayne - Yes, the particular thing that we were going to discuss, force of monetary reasons.

Richard - I have three (3) properties that I have identified I think Council as a whole need to move on. They are not inhabitable; they are burnt structures, nothing that can be rehabilitated.

Wayne - I had planned on giving Council a rundown on some of the things that we had talked about in September/October, just gives us different options on what we can do and different avenues. Need to discuss broadly what we want to do going forward and specifically about that particular issue.

Richard - October you said we received \$498; did you get an update on that?

Tim - I do have a document from the Commonwealth based on municipal customer accounts and the status of them. The streamline of the \$60 million Statewide was for water, sewer and electric. We could not count the ones that had already signed an agreement. I had an aggressive campaign to try to get people who were in arrears to commit to pay a certain amount of money that they could afford, that would keep them from being delinquent. The money was only applicable to the older accounts. They run out of money before they got to the 30-days. We didn't accept the \$498, there was no way to divide between the people. They ran out of money early.

Richard - Looks like Virginia is on the way to legalizing marijuana. They have already made it a civil penalty I think in our handbook it discusses marijuana as a controlled substance. Is that something we need to look at as a Council and prepare for down the road. If marijuana stays in their system for six (6) weeks and you have some in a car and you get sent for a drug test they will get punished for something that is not illegal, the way our handbook reads.

Tim – I think once that happens from a statewide level then it would be a modification of that, if it happens and it becomes law you will have to modify the handbook.

Richard - You want to leave it like it is now.

Tim - Just depends on what Council wants to do. Right now, you have the teeth to do what you want to with it. If the State law changes that, you will have to take out. We can go ahead and start doing research. Heather can start looking into that and get in touch with some people that we deal with at VML. That would be a good starting point.

Richard - I am not advocating or nothing it looks like that is the way it is going to go.

Tim - As far as the federal level may be other things we have to deal with too. I will get Heather to research for you.

Rod - Who are you going to get to research?

Tim – Heather Peery – HR employee, she is on zoom listening tonight.

Wayne - I think VML is the first place to start, they can offer some guidance and some forms and language to put in personnel handbooks.

Rod - I think Richard has a good point we always want to be in tandem with the state law.

Mayor Crawford – “Council Member Reports” – Mary Ann Strong

Mary Ann – As Rod said I would like to thank you for your confidence in trusting me to continue as the Council Representative for the Rec Commission. I am very passionate and very proud of the Rec Park, especially during these difficult times with COVID. We normally would have met this past Monday. Logan and Mike, we meet the third Monday of the month at 6:00pm upstairs at the Rec Park unless we do zoom because of COVID. We did not meet this past Monday due to being a holiday and we typically meet after Council. We will be meeting this Monday, January 25 at 6:00pm upstairs at the Rec Park. The Rec Commission does have two (2) vacant seats. As you probably remember when Jeff Hurst became an appointed Council Member, he had to come off the Rec Commission. We greatly appreciate Ronnie Cordle, he was appointed to come back on the Rec Commission. Ronnie has served many years and much appreciated; he came back as President. He has now resigned so I will make two (2) motions. The other person that has resigned is LaRhonda Lindsey. She has served on the Rec Commission for endless years and has done a great job, she is traveling a lot now, so she has decided to step down. I have two (2) nominations, I would like to nominate Jeff Hurst to take the seat of Ronnie Cordle and Debbie Lowe to take the seat of LaRhonda Lindsey. I am making that in form of a motion. Logan seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mary Ann - I do want to recognize Clinch Valley Medical Center they are doing an outstanding job with all the stress and pressure with COVID. A lot of the community may not realize but about 50% of the hospital staff has been out with COVID, which leaves the other 50% under tremendous stress and

pressure. I would like to recognize them and on a personal note and in my prayers. I am really proud how we have taken care of our own Gordon Russ. Gordon spent a month in the hospital and you probably seen the video there was another lady there over two (2) months and she has gone home. We are very fortunate and blessed to have a quality of hospital and staff that we have here.

Mary Ann - Another complicated matter, Heather is here on zoom, Human Resource is a very difficult position and we are very blessed to have Heather. I called on several occasions and she always seems to be knowledgeable quickly and she stays right on top. The laws change all the time, that is one thing I was going to bring up, Heather will you please come to the front. Pre January 1 when an employee was out due to reason of COVID they were eligible to get 80 hrs. of pay while they were off. Jan 1 the Consolidated Appropriation Act 2021 Relief Bill changed that; employers do not have to pay when employees are off due to COVID. I have talked to a couple of the Council members; it will cost the Town more money by not paying, you will have people come to work because they have to work. They can potentially expose; they will have people working overtime. Potentially worse than that, it could cost people their life if they catch COVID. Heather and I talked about a recommendation that I am fully ready to make the motion; I will refer to the expert and let her explain it.

Heather - Prior to January 1 we did not FFCRA leave, it is a requirement if you are a Town or anyone that has a business between 25 and 500 employees, they could receive up to 80 hrs. of pay, if they had to be off due COVID reasons. The concern that I have, people will continue to come to work when they don't have that leave, everyone was pretty honest before. We have been pretty fortunate so far with a few exceptions. Since the leave is gone the concern is for the people that are here, that someone is going to come in to work and potentially expose them and they will take home to their family members. The actual reality is before COVID you could not send them home, you could say you don't look good today we are going to send you home. Taking someone temperature is part of the medical exam, all those requirements are still available. You can still take their temperatures; you can ask them to leave if you feel that they are not well and showing signs of COVID, but they did take away the actual requirement. I feel like given everyone's different circumstances that if they had reinstated and reapply for leave it would, help them be more honest if they know they should not come to work. Anybody have any questions?

Logan - In an instance where someone was to display signs of COVID could we ask them to go to the Virginia Department of Health to get tested?

Heather - Yes, and they did that before.

Logan - That would be my concern.

Heather - If you miss three (3) days you are going to have to have a reason. You can't just come back to work and say I felt like I had COVID.

Logan - In the spirit of health, I would want to make sure of that, for other employees.

Heather - That is the main concern, you may have one (1) person do fine with it and one (1) person who don't. The way it was set up before if you had COVID the Health Department would send out a notice. They got overwhelmed and they weren't able to send out the letters. The letters were beneficial to me because they said what day that person could come back. They have started sending them again. The letter went into detail saying that person was in quarantine or in isolation difference between the two. Quarantined is no longer ten (10) days but could be seven (7) days. They had it out there if they needed it not necessarily give it to them.

Mike - Last year we provided 80 hrs.

Heather - Yes, to full-time employees if they needed it.

Mike - That is the maximum.

Heather - We do offer sick time; you would have to work here for entire year and never take a sick day in order to get two (2) weeks of sick time. Some people may not have it due to having small children or whatever else, the concern is they are going to keep showing up for work.

Mike - I could not live with myself if someone come to work with COVID and knew they were exposed just because they have to provide for their families.

Heather - Normally the way it works the Health Department will give you a letter, that letter may say 5/7 days depending on when their exposure was. Eighty (80) hrs. was what it was before, and it worked really well. I am not saying give them eighty (80) hrs. if they are out of quarantine that does not count anymore. You just can't keep using the leave.

Richard - I reached out to a representative for the Town of Tazewell and they have the same concern and their Council approved this. They did exactly what you are asking for and had a cut-off date of March 31.

Heather - In our area it is still a concern maybe we could revisit in March. We have some employees that have no time.

Rod - We need to address, and I appreciate your comments.

Mary Ann - Rod there is a form I will pass around that Heather shared with me; an employee would complete the request of 80 hrs. of emergency sick leave. If we adopt this now it is not like it is automatic. The form is simple and through. We have maybe five (5) or six (6) employees since Jan. 1.

Heather - That is just in the past two (2) weeks, I would say like ten (10) to twelve (12) this month.

Mary Ann - I have talked to a few, if there is no other discussion, I am prepared to make the motion.

Mary Ann - I would like to make the motion that we allot eighty (80) hrs. of emergency sick leave and we make retroactive to January 1 to compensate the employees who have been off since the first of the year. Qualified Reasons to include the following 1. Subject to Federal State, or Local Quarantine or isolation order related to Covid-19, 2. Been advised by health care professional to self-quarantine due to Covid-19 concerns, 3. Experiencing Covid-19 symptoms and seeking medical diagnosis. Effective until March 31, 2021, Mike seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford – “Council Member Reports” – Mike Street

Mike – I would first like to say “thanks” to the citizens of Richlands for their votes and confidence in November, I cannot tell the citizens how thankful I am for that, they allowed me to be part of this and relied on me to make decisions I think are best for the Town. I can't thank the citizens enough for that. I thank the current Council and the Town for an easy transition; I was involved even before the months leading up. It was an easy transition. I appreciate that, I am looking very much to what we have and what is going to happen in the future with Council as a whole. I think we can do some amazing things together and that is important to me. I have things I think are important and will be bringing forward in the coming months, I appreciate the opportunity. I would touch on the revitalization that Connie touched on briefly. Mayor, I appreciate the opportunity to serve on that, it is an important thing for me to be part of, I am a young guy that wants to see the Town look as good as it possibly can and there is an opportunity there. It is going to be a hefty task. I feel we have the right people in place to really do some wonderful things with the way the Town actually looks and money there that is going to help us. A testament to the type of Town we live in and what we can offer and that means a lot to me. I appreciate

the opportunity to be part of that. I want to recognize the Tazewell County of Commerce for the gift certificates. I think that was an amazing thing we were part of and for what they have done working hand and hand and providing those. There were all kinds of people using those and the deals you can get for that was awesome. I think they did a great job with that and I hope we can help with that in the future. I think it was an awesome opportunity. Lori does a great job and I want to recognize them for that it was a couple months back and I am still using those today. Those are nice to have in the back pocket. One concern for me, one thing I have taken in often is questions on internet for Richlands and things that we offer. That is important to me, I am tech savvy guy, I think there are a lot of room for improvement as far as what the scope of the internet looks like for the Town of Richlands and the competition things of that nature. Tim and I have talked recently, and we are going to be sitting down. I just wanted to mention because I have taken those phone calls often about different things as far as reliability, faster, different things like that. We live in 2021 we should not have to worry about that and things we can offer, places that have limited capacity. We don't want kids sitting in the Walmart parking lot having to do homework because of virtual meetings and virtual school. I think that is crazy. That is something that is going to be really important to me in the coming months. It is something I want to help with and be a part of and take advantage of some opportunities that I feel like we can. Lastly, I was approached by a potential business and I met with him a few times, Mayor I think you have as well. There were some concerns when it comes to how things are presented to potential businesses that may want to come to Richlands. I had a question, Tim; do we have a pitch pack for the Town of Richlands, something that we pitch the businesses in regard to what we have to offer?

Tim - That is something on Connie's plate to do that is something we were working on to get a package together of what is available. Part of that is hard to get because, we do have a few local incentives with DPOL based on job creation. I am getting a call every other day about potential business wanting to relocate here. Connie you need to push to the top to try to get us a package and have it ready, I think you are working on your website a little bit more too, I know a lot complain about the website obviously, we really need to do that.

Mike - It is an opportunity if a business has 25/30 employees and they want to relocate to Richlands, I am all onboard. If we have something prepared for them it says OK here is the schools in our area, here are educational opportunities and here is where you may hire people that may fit your job roles and here is what all the demographics look like. There are so many things we can put in the packet that answers all the questions. Here are our IDA members, here is what our Council looks like just a bunch of different things we could put together and have ready. I think that makes us look even better as a Town to be able to provide and say here is the information that you need check this out and use that as a reference. That would be awesome, and I will help anyway that I can. I will absolutely help.

Doug - I am addressing this to the Town attorney, we talked about the electric system a few minutes ago, Hidden Valley is not paying the same rates what I call old Town, what I call old town before we annexed Hidden Valley. Can you do some research to make sure that we don't have a legal issue that we are taking close to million dollars out of old Town and taking nothing out of Hidden Valley. We are using old Town to support Hidden Valley and the rest of the town. Is that legal and do we have a legal issue? Hidden Valley is getting benefits that one part of Town is only paying. Could you do research on that?

Wayne - Yes, get with me sometime this afternoon or tomorrow and we will talk about that, I don't mind looking at whatever you like.

Doug - One of the issues, if we take a million dollars, or close to a million dollars out of the electric fund and it is solely supporting the Finance Office. If you look at the budget almost 100% to support the Finance Office. I could see if it was different departments. Almost all the million dollars goes to support the Finance Office if you study the budget. If it takes this much to run the electric system, then it should not go 100% to support that one (1) department. We will talk more tomorrow.

Wayne - I know the Town just received a favorable audit from independent auditors regarding fiscal year 2020 and I imagine that those financial transactions are all reflected in the 2020 records. I think it would

have been brought to the Town's attention during the audit, but we can talk tomorrow. I don't care to look into it and advise on that and advise of anybody else.

Doug – One thing with your statement when they do an audit, they don't take into consideration legal issues. All they do is make sure the accounting is correct that would not ever enter their minds as an auditor to question what part of the Town is paying what and if they are getting shafted. That is not part of the audit.

Wayne - In terms of monetary transfers that is something they are going to look at, let's get together and I will look into to whatever.

Mayor Crawford – "Council Member Reports" – Logan Plaster

Logan – First of all I just want to thank all the citizens that supported me during the campaign, for everyone one that spoke all the words of kindness in encouragement. We all know that campaigns can be rather difficult at times and certain staples of our own selves, but it can be a little difficult to bear. Thank you for your support and your confidence in me I am very proud to be the youngest member of Richlands Town Council ever elected. I appreciate Council for recognizing me for that, Rod thank you for bringing that up. Since this is my first meeting, I would like to thank Council, Town Hall employees and the different departments. I would like to specifically thank Hobert Lester for his 39 years of service to the Town of Richlands and our Water Department. I would like to thank Public Works Department they are excellent they have picked up numerous amounts of trash for me for different things, I had hay bales and they never fussed about anything I am really grateful for them. I would like to thank Connie Allen for helping me transition into my seat, she has been the biggest help to me coming into Council. I appreciate you Connie more than you know. I do have a few things that have already been brought to my attention for Council's consideration. Some of them I don't know if we can do but I promised these citizens and business owners I would bring them forward. In the spirit of that I would like ask on behalf of the citizens and business on Front Street particularly at Fortune Realty and Tressia's Trends they came to me and they are asking for a crosswalk there if that would be possible they are saying their customers are practically jay walking across the street and they are afraid that someone may get hurt. I would like to bring that up I have spoken to two (2) business owners there and that is a concern that they have. They want to know if it is possible or not.

Tim - It should not be a big deal, painting may be a problem this time of year, we will see what we can do, it would be at the corner.

Logan - The one currently is closer to the railroad crossing they are not willing to walk all the way up and I understand that. Could we put one by National Bank?

Tim - We may be able to put one on the west side.

Logan - That would help them tremendously, I would like to do that for them. If you could follow up with me by email, I would appreciate it.

Tim - Does Council have a problem with that?

Mary Ann - I think that is a great idea, I know when I go across the street

Logan - You are not going to go all the way up to the Professional Building to go across no one is. I would like to do that for Fortune Realty and Tressia's Trends. Secondly, I would like to thank Chief Gilbert, back in the summer he helped me with a noncompliant yard on Farmer Street, he checked that out and the officers checked it out. I had more complaints in regard to Farmers Street, Second Street and North Street. I have had four (4) complaints since I have been elected from citizens on those streets. Noncompliance, I don't have address for you but can the officers just drive those streets and check. I would appreciate it; I wanted to bring that up for them. We have already spoken in depth about the electric rates, so I won't dip into that, but I have had 39 individual citizens come to me since I have

been elected with complaints regarding the electric. I feel like we have to do something and if we can't provide that study that Tim was referring to, I know is hard for someone who is not educated on that. I am not educated on the electric process. I would like for citizens to have a better understanding if we are not overcharging them as I am hearing, and they feel like we are overcharging them. Like I said I have had 39 complaints since I was elected in November and that is astronomical, that was the first complaint I received. Regarding some other things, I would like to see Council encourage community development. I have been active with Connie the last several years that is very important to me. I want to see Richlands thrive. I want to stress the importance of tax incentives, startup fees or whatever we have to do to help small business come to Richlands. Some feel we are not a business-friendly town and I want to prove to them that we are. I think it is in the best interest of Council and the entire Town and our citizens to have those businesses here, of course, any business that we have taken some of the pressure off our tax paying citizens. They are very important to me and I know they are very important to Council. The last thing I have is an issue regarding timing which was changed to 6:00pm. They feel like it is too close to the time the workday ends. They feel like they can't come to a Council meeting and are as involved as they would like to be because of that. I have asked why we could not do at 7:00pm. I personally have no objection to that. I will let Wayne expound on that, I meant to call you earlier, but my great aunt passed away I was at her funeral right before the meeting. Again, I thank everyone for your encouragement in the Town and appreciate the citizens that had messaged me and spoke words of confidence and thank everyone for their time.

Richard - Can I make a suggestion and it may not be feasible with the electrical can we do a rate comparison with AEP and publicize that?

Tim - I think we have enough information to do statewide one.

Richard - I have a Cedar Bluff address but I am in the Town of Richlands, I am not in Hidden Valley anymore I am like Mary Ann my rates doubled. I went from \$121 to \$242 exactly double. I would like to see kilowatt per hour and PCA.

Tim - I will get that for you and distribute by email.

Richard - Is that something we can publish out to the people since Mr. Plaster has had so many complaints?

Tim - Yes, if you would like.

Richard - I didn't know if there was something that would prohibit us from publishing AEP.

Tim - No, they are online too. They are hard to read. One thing about the people's rates, there has not been any rate increases it is probably consumption. If it is a reader error, we can correct that. We can go thru this in the work session but there is an opportunity to help those folks understand and make changes if you consider starting an Energy Audit Program. If we had a service tech that was dedicated to energy audits, then they could go in and help folks try to manage their consumptions a little bit better. We have no control over the meters, if it is consumption driven obviously it has something to do with rates, but it could get worse and worse if there are ways they can correct.

Doug - When we publish that it is a lot different when you compare kilowatt to kilowatt. We have different structure, it is complicated you would have to explain the structure like graduated structure, extra cost that AEP doesn't, you can't just compare kilowatt to kilowatt you have to include everything. When you include everything the structure the extra cost, you have to compare all of it not just one part of it.

Richard - I will support you if it is 30% above AEP.

Doug - I was in the meeting, Mary Ann was in the meeting, I forgot how long ago but we had a graduated increase of 30% and after that the Electric Committee was disbanded. Certain days it would go up automatically. I am not sure it is over a two (2) or three (3) year period.

Mayor Crawford - Let's just look forward to getting this information.

Mike - Tim when you do push this information can you send to us first so we can ask our questions. I feel like when we push that out, we as a Council are going to take questions from the public. I want to make sure that I am prepared to answer those.

Tim - This is not compiled by me but a third party, what I give you is what the state legislative sends with the State Corporation Commission. I will forward to you and you will have it. I will do the PR public type of announcement.

Mary Ann - We are going to meet in February you will probably have it and talk about it in our workshop.

Tim - I will email to you.

Mayor Crawford - "Mayor's Comments"

Mayor Crawford – Property at Dairy Queen, Wayne/Tim, you were going to do some investigation on that.

Tim - Wayne, I think you have that for discussion on your report.

Wayne – That is on the closed session agenda, I have options laid out for Council we can discuss now or in closed session.

Mayor Crawford - Which way should it be discussed?

Wayne - We will still have to come out of closed session to discuss if it is a good idea or not. The procedures and different ways we can accomplish that, I think it would be more suited in closed session.

Mayor Crawford – Fluoride in the water.

Tim - We have the wall/firewall put up, apparatus installed we have had a few COVID compliance issues, we had to have some members spread out, hope to have done before I leave office. It is going take a little of my expertise, it was Kevin project.

Mayor Crawford - The \$3,200 from the Cares Act, we talked if we could use toward the IT expenses, if not we could use toward the drive thru.

Connie - The \$32,000?

Mayor Crawford - Can we use it toward IT?

Connie - Tim, you were going to check with Eric on that is I correct.

Tim - Depends on who you ask, and Eric may not, we have a better solution for the drive thru that you may want to look at. I don't feel comfortable in spending the money on IT to be honest with you. There is not a whole lot of people doing that especially since IT needs were things we needed to do.

Mayor Crawford - If no one tells us we can't I say go ahead.

Tim - If Eric says it is Ok, we have not gotten a response from him.

Connie - He has been out with COVID, Tim do want me to check with him?

Mayor Crawford - We talked about a permit that Lori Stacey had asked for last time, she was going to meet with you Jerry.

Jerry - Mike, Blake Ray, Lori and I met. I have permission for road closure. We were going to do the first of May due to the COVID regulations Mike tells me the date has been changed to sometime in June, trying to move us away from COVID. We are progressing to that but with all the COVID regulations and the different things right now dictates how we proceed. I have talked to VDOT they have no issues with closing the road we have a few logistics about moving the stage nothing we can't overcome.

Mike - June 12

Mayor Crawford - As far as the permit goes, we are a done deal? The organizer has to make it match COVID regulations.

Jerry - Yes, sir

Mayor Crawford - Speeding Sign?

Jerry - Requires a new battery, we have not made that purchase yet.

Mayor Crawford - Are you planning to make it?

Jerry - Yes, we will utilize that sign and make the purchase, budget being a little tight just something we didn't necessary need right now put on the back burner.

Mayor Crawford - I have been whining about it for a year.

Jerry - We had a guy from Monster Sound, he installed solar panels in order to charge and he has come to the ultimate conclusion in the past three (3) weeks he said you all are going have to buy a new battery. We can go ahead and buy a new battery.

Mayor Crawford - "Attorney Comments"- Wayne McClanahan

Wayne - Logan, I don't know how much you knew about the situation, a couple of months ago we had to cancel and reschedule meeting, and Mr. Hurst in particular had brought up about the notice and the procedure. We didn't have any defined procedure of how to do that and who can do it and things like that. When we did get back together, he asked me to maybe develop a draft procedure that we may be able to look at regarding that issue, the meeting rescheduled. In taking that advice I talked to Mary Ann about some other side projects we had going on that were sort of under the same umbrella of procedure. I suggested to Mary Ann that we should sit down and try to come up with a comprehensive type plan to address multiple issues that Council could consider adopting in case something happened. Due to the holidays just had not had time to format, Mr. Cury mentioned earlier. Logan reached out to me about the meeting time and this is the type of question that I thought we needed a more comprehensive plan if we just piece mill this stuff every time a procedure related issue comes up we will have to keep going back. I think it would be most efficient to develop that type of thing. Rod and Mary Ann, we were going to initially try to get something together to present to Council. Logan if this is something you wanted to be involved in, we could go as far as forming a formal type committee and how any Council member that wants to be on that. We could iron out in a more informal fashion before we have on the floor for discussion. We can do that, or I can go to everyone individually get everyone's thoughts and comments on that then Rod, Mary Ann and myself can get together with the formation of a committee. If that is something Council wants to look into, I am more than happy to do either one.

Mayor Crawford - "Manager's Report" – Tim Taylor

Tim – You already approved the pay the bills, they had to go out prior to tonight’s meeting. If you want to revisit that I can answer and questions or concerns or you can entrain authorizing me to pay the bills.

Mary Ann - Do you need a motion since we have already responded?

Tim - I think so just for the record.

Mary Ann - I make a motion to authorize the Town Manager to pay the bills as presented, Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford - Did everyone get the opportunity to look thru those?

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Tim - Consideration of Appointment of Bond Counsel for Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Project Debt Requirements, we advertised for bond counsel which is the requirements for a municipality to use a legal advisor in expertise in financing and the state code as far as issuing bonds. We advertised and received bids on December 17 we received two (2) bids Sands Anderson and Hunton, Andrews, Kurth, LLP. Adrienne, Jimmy Keene and myself interviewed both firms; both firms were really good and very professional. Per our ranking process we ranked Hunton, Andrews, Kurth, LLP to be the number one candidate. One of the main reasons was they are very familiar with the other projects and when they same bond counsel that Tazewell County Public Authority used and a lot of the other agencies . They are very familiar with the project I think they are the bond counsel with the Town of Tazewell. We have to do that tonight we have some deadline and need bond counsel on board as soon as possible. I recommend based on the committee ranking that you would hire Hunton, Andrews, Kurth, LLP.

Mary Ann – I make the motion to hire Hunton, Andrews, Kurth, LLP, Richard seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Tim - I handed out the proposed schedule update on the Water Plant , we are on schedule with the Water Plant. We are already approved, which you talked about the rate study. Dates are a little off, but we got that accomplished by the end of the year. We sent letter to the Department of Health to look at, The Virginia Department of Health has a scheduled a conference call with us this Thursday to go thru the entire funding for the Town and talk about how we are proceeding with the engineering. We hired the firm Thompson and Litton to do the work. But we have not given them notice to proceed. By next council meeting, in order for them to start working on the funding offers we are on a tight schedule, we need to get Thompson and Litton to start the activity. We are not paying them anything right now for either services they will be part of the conference call If Council would go ahead and consider giving notice to Thompson and Litton to proceed to start the final design that will also include revisions to look at, at least the authority to. We will have to secure interterm financing for that, Adrienne is working on that with a local bank. I hope we can just get an extension on the interim financing that we already have if it is not purposeful on the intent of the original, we will have to do an RFP . You will not have to act on that until February. We will start spending some money soon and we sign the contract with Thompson and Litton. If Council would consider voting to proceed with Thompson and Litton Engineering Firm to begin the final design for the plant that would be great.

Rod - I make the motion to give note to proceed with Thompson and Litton Engineering firm, Mary Ann seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Tim - I did receive in the mail today the finance agreements and the official letter from VA Resource Authority concerning the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. There are some deadlines on that, final part of March 3rd week of March we have to have a loan closing that is why we have to get the bond counsel in order. We will forward all these documents to Chris Kulp with our bond counsel and he will start looking at the finance agreements. Wayne we will get you a copy of those too and we will relay your contact information so we can keep you in the loop for local Council purposes. Finance agreement is all we have been talking about in general, the bond counsel will make a resolution, public hearings and so forth will have to be interview, lots to do. We hope to get going pretty quick I don't see any problem with the timing. The only thing that can give us some worries is the cost of construction. All the numbers we have are based on pre- COVID type materials . We won't know what the final numbers are until it is bid out. We hope maybe the cost increases are mostly wood, housing and things like that maybe not as much steel and some of the equipment. We are not doing a lot of concrete construction and things like that mostly electrical. Hopefully, not affecting that part of the market. That is a concern and we are talking about it; we have not done any big projects to do any comparisons. We will have that discussion with Rick Chitwood, Rick will be here at the next Council meeting to give an update on all of that. If you want to look at the materials, I can forward digitally to you.

Tim - Cellular Tower Site Lease Agreement - We currently have history of the tower, several years ago. We have a piece of property and we were wanting to get cell service into our Town I think in 2007, the property is where our water tanks are now off Grayson that property came available, it was a good place for cell tower. We had quite a bit of discussion as far as the zoning prospective. The town leased that property to Alltel at that time, Alltel since then has been bought out by Verizon and Verizon has given the responsibility of towers to American Tower, they are the ones they are trying to get the deal to extend cellular tower lease agreement. Wayne and I talked about that today we need to defer until next month.

Wayne - I think we may need to do a public hearing on that because it is going to be modification of a lease of public property I will talk to Council in close session.

Tim - The reason they give me extension it was 2023/2028 because when Verizon borrows millions of dollars like to be able to get the best rate they can. I was told by the group the circular towers are becoming an important asset to that process. If they can get a better deal and we are lumped into some kind a debt package that Verizon has that has a longer-term lease. That would put us on a group of improvements for our citizens that would help get that done a little quicker than maybe if it was in another group. That property really has no use to us except for that. You could not get any money out of it and I don't think anyone would want to build a house there. That was thought out many years ago. It is an excellent site for coverage for the Town. Anything we can do to promote 5G and some of the other things, Mr. Street talked about it we really should try to do. Just wanted you to be thinking about it before next month. If you have any questions just send me an email.

Richard - I was on the Council in 2007 when we did the original agreement my question then is the same now if we took a one-time payment of \$10,000 from Alltel at the time is there any way we could negotiate that in payment in lieu of services We are spending \$8000/\$9000 a year with Verizon for cell services for the Town. If we take a one-time payment again of \$10,000.

Tim - We get a monthly fee now .

Adrienne - The last contract they paid was \$50,000 and that was for 15 years \$3,120 a year.

Tim - We are getting that now and put escalators in here of 15%, the \$10,000 is an incentive to do it , I image they are getting a commission to get it. It has nothing to do with the lease at all. We actually took an advance payment on that and we are amortizing that.

Richard - That will continue on this contract.

Tim - Yes, I think it is \$700 a month goes in 15% intervals as it goes and every five (5) year period.

Richard - It pretty much off sets what we are spending.

Tim - Yes

Tim - We are deferring to next month correct Wayne.

Wayne - Yes, I really think we need to do a public hearing on that.

Tim - TextMyGov Services, I will let Adrienne talk about that.

Adrienne - You should have gotten a flyer in your packet, those are samples from TextMyGov, we signed an agreement with TextMyGov end of December for notification and report texting. For those services we actually paid for the first annual fee and set up fee with Cares Act monies, which a lot of the communities were doing. They do a lot of services for communities, counties and municipals that is what they focus on. It should be live and going by the end of the month. If you will look at your flyer there is a phone number which is 276-598-0955, our citizens can text from their cell phone by doing so they can choose to report issues. The issues on the flyer are the type of issues they can report to Richlands. Instead of calling into the office, they can text that phone number and text "Pothole" and it will give them a series of questions, like what is the address, name and describe your issue. When they do that the services system will generate an email and we decide by what category those emails go to. It will provide a work order that can be tracked to that person. These are just examples that we have. The customer will get these flyers with their next utility bill so they will know what key words they can type how to get set up and response words. Not only can they report issues there are one response words there will be a list of those on our website. If they type the word agenda, it will take them straight to our website and show them a copy of the recent agenda. If they type events it will take them straight to the website with a calendar of events. They can sign up for notifications. Say you had a citizen that is interested in what is going on in Town and they want to be notified every time there is an event, I know it has been brought up we have a hard time getting the word out, we use Facebook we have banners we put things in the newspaper but it is still hard to make everyone aware. Not only citizens can sign up for this but someone who lives outside of Town, they may want to sign up for notifications for events They can go in and OPT their selves in notifications for public meetings ,events, works or power outage or we know there is going to be severe weather we can send out an alert and whoever has OPT into that group will be notify by text message. If Connie wants to send out a reminder of her Fall Festival or whatever is going on , whoever has OPT into that group will get a text message. In my opinion it is a great asset for our citizens and help keep them notified and on top of what we offer and what we have or anything that we want to try and get out there. Most everyone has a cell phone I think it will help us get notifications out to people and making them aware of events and giving them the ability to report, we don't want them reporting a power outage or a water leak. Obviously, they may report that, we consider that a semi emergency and someone don't get the email until after hours and they have no power. We also have made provision in here if they type power outage it will tell them they need to contact the Town Hall for after hour emergencies or any type of emergency. We think this will be a great product for our customers and hopefully the flyers being sent out with the utility's bills will give them so very good guidance. We have everything pretty much set up and ready to go.

Adrienne - You can test it out now.

Richard - In the past we had people complain they didn't get workorders complete, this way we can track.

Adrienne - It does keep a report, we can go back and look at the numbers. Say we have several citizens that is typing the word that we don't have a category set up for, we can go back and see what our people are requesting, we can monitor and set up. I think it is a good tool.

Mike - Can you tell me a little more how streamline it is? Where does the email go?

Adrienne - We set that up right now if it is a work order type report. We have that going to a department head; we can set up more than one (1) email. We have tried to set up two (2) emails so they work order will go to the department head and our office so there is a tracking system in place

Mike - So you are going to get an email and that is going to create a workorder and that workorder goes out.

Adrienne - It will not create a work order it will be an email. For instance, if it is a pothole, George West will get the email and we will also get the email. Say it is your dusk to dawn light you pay a rental for in your back yard if they report a light that they pay for that will create an email that will go to the Electric Department and us. When we look at the email, we are going to create a work order that is an issue based on persons account. A pothole that will be sufficient for the order because it is not attached to a person's residence, that email will basically be the workorder. It will tell the name and the address and the description of what they are reporting. They will just keep that on file. When it is complete the department head will turn back in. It wouldn't hurt for them to keep a file for themselves.

Mayor Crawford - Do they turn back into the office saying it is taken care of?

Adrienne - Normally that is what they do. They sign off on it and date when they took care of it.

Logan - If it is completed can we send them something that it was completed?

Adrienne - We can actually respond but to be honest I am a little concerned about doing responses. It is basically a one-way system; I am afraid if we start responding to people and more than one (1) person responding to them you are going to get into some issues.

Logan - There is no way to automatically send a completion.

Adrienne - It will tell you it has accepted the order. It will let you attach a picture. It won't give you anything saying the issues has been fixed.

Tim - Keith could you give us an update on the fire truck.

Keith - It is supposed to be finished next week; we will make a trip to Wisconsin to make sure it is as ordered. Will be bringing to Roanoke the first week of February for final inspection. We should have it here by the February 15.

Tim - I seen some pictures it looks really good.

Doug - By the way I think you need a new fire station, and you are in a bad location. Do you need to make any modifications to make sure that truck fits in there?

Keith - It will fit, we may have to extend the doors six (6) inches on side.

Doug - I just wanted to make sure you didn't need any help with modifications.

Mary Ann - I assume you will get some kind of media attention when you get it in.

Tim - I think you should everyone loves fire trucks. We could send out a press release.

Mary Ann – Something to celebrate.

Tim - One action I would like for Council to consider, I sat on the Board of Director for Blue Ridge Power, Municipal Power Association, with Kevin being gone he would have been the alternate Director. Until I retire I can still stay Director but I would like for you to consider appointing Adrienne Cordle as the alternate Director for right now in case I can't make the meeting, it may take a while to get a Utilities Director hired. She could fill that role to represent the Town. We do have to have a seat on that, for an official capacity that would take care of that at one time. Once you get the permanent Town Manager you can decide who that is going to be the Manager or Utilities Director or whatever. It would take care of itself legally right now. I will send a letter to the General Manager of Power Agency and that will take care of it

Mary Ann - I make a motion to appoint Adrienne Cordle as alternate Director of Blue Ridge Power Agency and be representative on the Municipality Electric Power of Virginia Association, Mike seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford - We will go ahead and make the motion to get into “Closed Session” and then we will break.

Mayor Crawford - At this time we will entertain a motion that the Mayor and Members of Council convene in executive closed session as permitted by the Code of Virginia Section, 2.2-3711(A29) Contract Negotiations to Discuss Amending the Intermunicipal Agreement with Tazewell County Public Service Authority, 2.2-3711(A1) Personnel, Legal counsel regarding potential threatened litigation and 2.2-3711(A8), consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provisions of legal advice nuisance abatement procedure, procedure for sale/lease of public property/FOIA Procedures/Compliance.

Logan – I make the motion to go into “Closed Session”, Mike seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford - We need to entertain a motion that the Members of Council reconvene in “Open Session.

Rod- I make the motion to come back into “Open Session”, Doug seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Wayne – Motion to certify that the topics and subject discussed while in executive session were those both lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements.

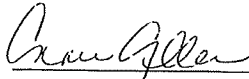
Mary Ann - I make the motion, Mike seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

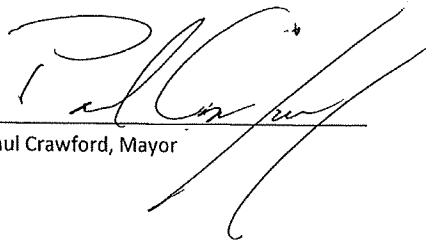
Doug - I make a motion to adjourn, Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor Crawford- 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. Roll Call – Logan- Yes, Mike, Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann-Yes, Richard-Yes, Rod-Yes - Motion carries – 6/0.

Mayor Crawford - We will adjourn until February 9, 2021 at 6:00pm.



Connie Allen, Town Clerk



Paul Crawford, Mayor