

The Richlands Town Council held a "Regular Meeting" on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in the Richlands Council Chambers at 6:00 pm with the following present:

Mayor: Rod D. Cury

Interim Town Manager: Heather Peery

Acting Town Clerk: Susan Whitt

Council Members: Doug Ratliff, Gary Jackson, Rick Wood, Jordan Bales, Jan White, and Laura Mollo.

Town Attorney: Michael Thomas

Mayor Cury opened the meeting.

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

Mayor Cury- we have before us our agenda and the first thing on the agenda is additions and deletions to the agenda, which includes the removal and transfer of consent items as needed and I'll start I have a few things I would like to suggest. First, I had sent an email to Heather and she's got it on here for the unscheduled public comments thank you and also adoption of Robert's Rules I would request if you'll please look at Roman numeral eight, lowercase k it says Adoption of Robert's Rules. I would appreciate it if Council would move those to, we'll call it Roman numeral four a, so that we're operating under Robert's Rules immediately. So, if we could move that to Roman numeral four and put 4A adoption of Robert's Rules on the agenda. We have unscheduled public comments thank you and then if you will please look at Roman numeral 11 council member reports non-voting and we sometimes we list the members sometimes we don't but what I have done is placed them in alphabetical order so when we come to council member reports which are non-voting items: it will be Jordan Bales, Gary Jackson, Laura Mollo, Doug Ratliff, Jan White and Rick Wood. Those are my requests, are there any other requests for additions or deletions to the agenda?

Doug-could we add power cost adjustment? Mayor Cury- where would you like it, under agenda items?

Doug-that's fine.

Mayor Cury-well can we just put it where K was at the end where it's Roman numeral eight, where K was Robert's Rules with PCA.

Doug-Also Executive Session for personnel. Mayor Cury- We will put that- where would you like it Doug? Oh, it doesn't it doesn't matter. Mayor Cury- how about let's finish these agenda items and then we can go into Executive Session for Personnel, would that be acceptable to be right before Roman numeral nine and I'll rely on the attorney to provide the proper code for that.

Mike- Mayor, that would be Code Section 2.2-3711 A1. Also, Mayor I have one request. I did get a call from Stephen Gooch regarding a request, and I believe Mr. Ribble is here. I would ask if we

could put him under scheduled public comments as D? I did get that request just earlier today, so under scheduled yes or unscheduled if it could be scheduled as D? We'll see if council approves that, had he called prior to this meeting? Mr. Gooch did call me today; I wasn't able to get with Heather prior to coming down here. I'll add him if Council so desires. we're adding Jim under scheduled public comments Roman numeral six ABCD-Jim Ribble and Mr. Ribble that's a five-minute time limit. Anyone else?

Laura- Mayor- I have two additions under the agenda items; the discussion of the mowing contract. Where would you like that, Laura? I would assume letter L is fine. Okay, so I'll put it here, l- mowing contract. I've got one more and I'm not sure how to word it, I guess a discussion about the credit card usage at the Rec Park. We could put that right after L, yes would be m. So, we're going to add M and it's credit card usage at the Rec Park. Thank you. Does everybody have those changes? L is going to be mowing contract and then m is credit card usage at the Rec Park. Does anybody else have any additions or deletions to the agenda?

Jordan- yes I want to see if we could add a one for a work from home policy? Mayor Cury- Would you like that as N? Sure. Alright, so to be clear Roman numeral eight we're going to follow up LMN and that is what work from home policy?

Jordan- yes and then I have one more, technology as it relates to the Recreation Department. So it would be O.

Mayor Cury-Thank you. Any other additions or deletions to this agenda? The floor remains open, anyone else?

Rick- I have one. It is dealing with the Zoning permits. Mayor Cury- we will add that as P. Ok, anything else. Hearing no further discussion or suggestions for the additions and deletions to the agenda I will entertain a motion to adopt the agenda as amended.

Laura- I'll make that motion. Laura makes the motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Rick seconds. Is there any further discussion on this motion there'd be no discussion I would ask a roll call vote please Susan thank you.

Doug-yes, Gary-yes, Rick-yes, Jordan-yes, Jan-yes, Laura-yes. The motion carries, it is unanimous.

Going to the next item on the agenda, Roman numeral four-a and that will be adoption of Robert's Rules of Order. Typically, we do that in January but we didn't do it so in order to keep the meeting orderly I would entertain motion to adopt Robert's Rules of Order as the procedure used with this Council.

Rick- I'll make the motion that we adopt Robert's Rules of Order to Operate used with the council. Rick makes the motion. Laura makes the second. Any further discussion?

Doug- if we adopt Robert's Rules, nothing overrules though the Charter?

Mayor Cury -the Charter stands.

Doug- I just wanted to make sure that the Charter took precedence.

Mayor Cury-any more discussion. If not, I will ask for a roll call vote: Doug-yes, Gary-yes, Rick-yes, Jordan-yes, Jan-yes, Laura-yes. The motion carries, it is unanimous.

Next, we have Roman numeral five, the consent agenda, which is the authorization to pay the bills for January and the minutes of our regular meeting and the public hearing of January the 10<sup>th</sup>. Is there any question on this before we accept a motion to adopt the consent agenda and bill payments?

Laura- I have one question. Check number 13331, the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads. Since we're not volunteer, should we be paying that?

Heather- I can answer that, they're not required to be there, so they don't have a set schedule, so it's still considered volunteer service even though they get paid.

Mayor Cury-any other questions regarding payment of bills?

Jan-I have one. It's number 13320 to Stephen Gooch. I realize that's an attorney but what fees for direct payments of what?

Heather-Those are collection fees, his firm still does the Rescue bad debt collections.

Mayor-if there is no further discussion, I will entertain a Motion to Authorization to pay the bills for January and to approve the minutes for the regular meeting and public hearing on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

Laura-I make the Motion. Jan seconds. With no further discussion, I will ask for a roll call vote.

Doug-yes, Gary-yes, Rick-yes, Jordan-yes, Jan-yes, Laura-yes. The motion carries, it is unanimous.

VI-Scheduled Comments:

a. Paul Crawford-Hidden Valley, Richlands, VA-congratulated all council members, new and re-elected -He is proud of our Police Department. We had a scary situation recently and he appreciated Chief Holt's write up on Facebook explaining the situation.

-He noted that the railroad crossings at Virginia Avenue and at Food Lion both need work.

-Says that Hidden Valley was annexed into Town and the agreement was that the drains would be kept up and street lights would be installed.

-says that the second curve on Cresswood Drive is not wide enough for two cars to pass and that there is a rock embedded right off the road there that will cause damage to tires.

-Noted that the new stage at the Greenway looks good, Honey Festival was very nice, and we have five new restaurants in town that are doing well.

-Ramp-up Richlands seemed like they were doing a good job organizing events, etc. but it seemed they had not much support for them from Council -Accreditation of Police Department is a good thing.

b-Ginger Branton-Citizens for the Arts (CART)-says that the Cart matching Grant is due April 1<sup>st</sup>. The Town has supported CART for many years. They do give free tickets to many organizations and participated in the Back- pack program with Chief Holt in the Fall. She wanted to invite Council and everyone to attend the Big Bubble Bonanza on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm at the Richlands Middle School. She had given an additional 25 tickets to the Town Council. Laura made the motion to participate in the CART Matching Grant for \$10,000.00, seconded by Jan. Motion passed unanimously.

c-Phillip Horton-was not in attendance.

d-Jim Ribble-Alpha Land Surveyors-representing Travis Hackworth's company- Appalachian Capital Investments. His company recently purchased the old Magic Mart building and he had us to survey it and when we did, we found out the East property line is right against his building, which is on the side that the Town owns, looks like a storage lot. The property line is right against the building, and they don't have enough room to get around the back of the building. I have sketches I can bring up for you all to look at. Mayor Cury reminded him of the five minute time limit.

Jim Ribble-Mr. Hackworth is requesting that you (the Town) would convey, sell or whatever your pleasure. This is a strip of land that would give them enough room to get around the side of the building.

He referred to an existing fence already built by the Town. What we would like to do is to have you all convey that little strip that is shaded in pink that would allow them room to get around the building and really wouldn't change anything as far as the use of the property as you are using it.

Mayor Cury-if it is the will of the Council, usually things like this go before the Planning Commission to study the land and the layout. If Council is amenable to that, my suggestion is that the Planning Commission look at this and they can report to us at the next meeting.

Mr. Ribble-if Council would be agreeable to conveying this upon the approval of the Planning Commission, I could go ahead and prepare the final plat with the actual metes and bounds and the actual area. It's a little less than a tenth of an acre. It's not very much.

Mayor Cury-I understand conveyance and buying and selling but I would suggest that you present that at the Planning Commission meeting, which will be the first Tuesday of March at 7:30 pm.

Doug-asked if they would consider an easement rather than a conveyance?

Mr. Ribble-the only problem with that is if Mr. Hackworth wants to sell the property, it makes it more difficult with the line against the building and I'm sure they would rather own it than have an easement. If Council wasn't inclined to convey that property then maybe that's an option.

Mike-When I got the call from Mr. Gooch, it was my understanding to have someone present that if you were to want me to look into this as to legal as well because obviously this isn't going to be a simple as conveying it over there. There are certain things that the Town has to do. It's Council's call.

Mayor Cury-I think the Commission would greatly appreciate your input as our attorney and our legal counsel. If you are so inclined, and I would also check with Heather on this, you might want to talk to the Commission and then you can relate to us and they can relate it to us as well. Consensus of Council. Mr. Ribble will give information to Heather to pass on the Chairman of the Planning Commission.

VII-Unscheduled Public Comments: None.

VIII-Kyle Laux-Davenport-Financial Review-I have a handout so if you will I will bring those around briefly. Mr. Mayor, members of the council nice to see everyone this evening and appreciate the opportunity to be before you this evening so a little bit of introduction. I don't know how much of this you have had especially knowing some of the council is relatively new after the last election so again Kyle Laux with Davenport. I'm out of our Richmond office but we work across the state and across the region and what we really do on behalf of local governments across the Commonwealth and a lot in your area is serve as what we'll sometimes call a financial advisor and so what that means is we are an independent outside entity. We are not Auditors, we're not a bank so we're not providing loans or anything of that variety what we're really doing is helping local governments like Richlands like others sort of think, plan, strategize about your financial

well-being as a local government and so I just make that little sort of introduction on the front end we work very closely with I think all of your neighboring counties and a number of your neighboring jurisdictions. I personally work closely with the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors over there which is sort of how I came to be introduced to your town. We were asked to at some point during the last calendar year to do what we call a financial review and that is to come in again as an independent outside entity and take a look at where you have been as a town in terms of finances get a sense of some of the critical variables and give some advice, some recommendations based on best practices, not just in terms of what happens you know in our neighborhood here but what happens across the country and so we call that financial review.

Again , what we have in front of you this evening and so we've been working on that over the last several months and certainly appreciate the opportunity to present this to you. I think the intent here is that there's no specific actions per se of council but we do a lot of this this time of year knowing that you as a public body in your fiscal year are in the budget planning process no different than any of your peers' counties, cities, etc. across the state so with that is a little bit of introduction. I'll go page by page here and try to move it relatively quickly, being mindful of time but certainly if there are there questions as we're walking through this, I'm happy to answer them. On page one I think that background there, I won't reiterate that but while that's a best practice in terms of how you think about Public Finance across the country. Your Auditors and our accountants will account for those things separately and so we kind of start with that as an underlying assumption that our general fund is going to be separate from our Enterprise funds, meaning our water, our sewer and our electric. So again, at the bottom here we really are seeking to give you some guidance, some advice on some recommendations on what we can tell again as outsiders. It's the first time we've been in front of you which we certainly appreciate and have been able to work with Heather to get a variety of the financial information from your Audits and different documents Etc. so with that we'll start with the general fund. We very purposely divided this up between the general fund and the Enterprise funds so we'll start with the general funds side of things. We've been able to look at over the last five years. Really your audited financials so what we've been provided is again FY 17 to FY 2021. So as the FY 2022 audit comes out, we'd be happy to kind of refresh what we see in here because it's going to be very important so it's a little bit old numbers in terms of 21 but it starts to paint a picture in terms of some trends we can point out to you over that time period. Your property taxes have remained flat for the period and we'll show you these some of these numbers. Your other local taxes have grown on average about five percent a year that tells us that from a local economy standpoint, some of those things are indeed growing, the meals tax the sales tax. We've seen that across the state we've seen that in your region in terms of some of those local discretionary taxes, people going out to eat, buying things. Some of the Amazon delivery tax that you get that's all been helpful to local governments and that's been your driver at least through the end of 2021 in terms of growth in your general fund Revenue base. The expenditures we'll talk a bit about in

more details we go through here but something we want to note here in the fourth bullet point down, is as we take all these revenues and expenditures together and kind of boil it up we have seen a trend in the general fund of deficits and so simply stated the revenues that the town is bringing in has not been fully covering the expenditures, whether those be capital or operating on the general fund side of things. So again using your audits to see that information it's a trend we're going to show you that to you visually, the last bullet point there FY 22 audit, that would be your numbers as of the end of last June as we understand it not complete yet. I think it'd be an important piece to the puzzle in terms of maybe fleshing some more of this out. You are not alone and having some of those audits working their way through the process. A lot of Auditors for the moment are relatively understaffed. There's a bunch of new Gatsby pronouncements they're working through so with that again I think we offered to the mayor and Council as some of that information comes out we can refresh some of this but wanted to provide you tonight what we have thus far. Page number 4- in terms of your assessed value, so this is your primary Revenue generating tax base within the town. We like to take a little history of where that's been, it gives us a little bit of picture where it's been to and maybe get a sense of where we're going and I think what you see there is we've been pretty flat, been pretty stable, not all the growth but certainly not much decline either. So I think I saw some things on the agenda maybe in terms of Economic Development, there's a lot of new federal dollars by virtue of these stimulus acts that have gone out and so we're seeing some of that get put to use but for the moment I think what we see is a relatively flat revenue producing tax base there and you see that on the table at the bottom, if you flip the page to page number five this again gets to our historical performance in the general fund in terms of finances. What we really mean by that is when we go take all the details that are in the back of this book and say what are our total revenues or total expenditures. Again just for the general fund we've been maybe break-even but really even sort of eating into our reserves over that time period and so we highlight that in red. We've had a surplus as per your audits through 2021 in one of those prior four years 2022 we understand there were some taxes that were adjusted increases, etc. So we would be curious to see what those look like as the 2022 numbers come out. I think our expectation is maybe it looks a little more favorable but for the moment, based on the information we have on the general fund side, we really have been eating into our reserves and our savings account over that past four or five years. So we take that and flip to page number six, our general fund balance- many of you may be familiar with this term or you may not be. I will give it a second for me introduce it. This is again not accountants or more finance people but this is kind of our savings and our checking account combined in the general fund. So we as individuals, you know you have your operating account whereby you're paying your bills and monthly bills etc. If you're fortunate enough to have some savings off to the side in addition to that, what we see here for the general fund is this fund balance concept is pretty much analogous to that checking account, savings account kind of concept. We know, to the top of the page here, the fund balance and we say this is arguably the most important finance related metric or measurement whatever you know term you want to use there but it's a very, very important measurement to outside entities, whether it's banks, whether it's rating agencies, whether it's lenders or the state entity in terms of what we look like in terms of a financial basis. So we note here in the second bullet point it's really a best practice nationally to certainly have some dollars in that general fund reserve and to have

something in the realm of maybe 16 -17 percent of your annual expenditures in reserve and the general fund and we note that the GFOA, that is the national Governmental Finance Officers Association, that's really their recommendation nationally is to have about 16-17 percent. It's really you know kind of a couple months' worth of reserves set aside for that. What we've seen by virtue of the town's audits, again through 2021, is that we in fact even have a negative balance in the general fund and so that was one of the first things that really in all fairness jumped out to us, that's unusual to see that. Granted we'll get to the enterprise funds and so there is some intermixing here between how the general fund and the enterprise fund maybe are kind of helping each other out in that instance but from a pure how would you typically think about running a local government, it's very unusual to see a negative general fund balance. Sort of running over multiple years, so we wanted to make sure we pointed that out to you as a council again with some of the changes that have been occurring in FY 2022 would be curious to see where that ended up. I think the hope is maybe that's more positive we don't know that right now just haven't seen those numbers. We thought that was important to point out to the council and I think obviously up to you as a town and a counsel for some ways to maybe think about rectifying that. We always like to be where we can bring some ideas and solutions to some of the problems we may find. So we'll talk about the next couple pages but this is arguably, from a general fund standpoint, unusual and something we would recommend that you pay a lot of attention to going forward as you think about your budget.

Page number 7- we list here why the fund balance is important. If you look in your audit there's a number of different classifications of fund balance. It's kind of getting down into the weeds so to speak but of primary importance tends to be what's called the unassigned fund balance. You need to really kind of think about that in simple terms as the rainy day reserve, if you will.

That's kind of your savings account in the general fund side of things so we list here some reasons that it's

important to have that unassigned fund balance. I think I'll talk about just a couple of those. Number one it's giving you good month-to-month cash flow. I think as you operate as a town you obviously have the

utility funds that are very large relative to what the general fund is doing on a relative basis and so you have some of the Utility Fund cash flow to help out with that first bullet point. But again in emergency situations you want to have some of those dollars set aside for those emergencies, unforeseen expenditures and certainly to help with the cash flow side of things. An interesting thing that we are finding with clients really nationally is having a strong unassigned fund balance nowadays, especially in the last year, is it ends up being a cost saver to the taxpayer and the reason I say that is a couple fold. So the first is from an interest rate perspective and many of you may have seen this in your personal life or the headlines. Within the last year interest rates have increased fairly substantially and what that has really meant is that if you have savings and a checking account or CDs etc. you can actually start earning some real dollars on those saved monies, whether it's a bank CD, etc. For you as a town it's the same, goes for the county or anybody else, what that allows you to do is spin off some income that helps take some pressure off of other operating costs that by virtue of inflation and other things that have happened. The last couple of years certainly is putting pressure on everybody's budget and so I think amongst even these topic



points that we note here I'd leave you with the takeaway that having a strong fund balance from a taxpayer perspective really ends up being a money saver for them. One other point I'll make there is that when it comes time to borrow money for a capital project, no different than if you've gone to get a mortgage or a car loan or anything else, the bank or the lender is going to want to go look and say okay what does the balance sheet look like of that entity that I'm going to give a loan to. So the stronger that fund balance the better you as a town look to potential lenders and thus the lower the interest rate you're able to garner when it comes time to have to borrow for needed capital projects. So if we leave you with one takeaway on the fund balance side of things it's very important in our perspective and it does end up being a money saver for the taxpayer versus the other way around.

Flipping over to page 8 in terms of the fund balance policy, we've made a recommendation here that

you think about putting in place a minimum general fund policy of 16 percent of your general fund revenues. It's about \$900,000 to a million dollars, plus or minus somewhere in that range maybe a little bit more as your 22 numbers come in. But that would basically be able to put you within again best practices, it would give you some reserves against some of those emergencies, it would also allow you to start sort of generating some of that that interest income to help offset other expenditure pressures in the budget.

If you flip the page to page 9- I mentioned that what we've tried to identify here and again we're doing this as outsiders for the moments, you may have other thoughts and ideas and

Etc. but ARPA funding for all of our clients across the state, the whole region, the country really has been a very interesting variable the last several years. I presume that you as council are

familiar with what those dollars are, all kinds of different restrictions on what they can be used for by virtue of the federal government. But I think what we've found is that with some of the newer sort of releases with the federal government there is some flexibility to use some of those dollars what they call revenue replacement. That's kind of a Federal Regulation term that I won't go into the exact details but it looked to us based on some of the information Heather shared with us that you'd have an opportunity to take some of these dollars in terms of the ARPA and so certainly have allocated certain portions of them to certain projects, but take the balance of it and use that to really help shore up the general fund to the extent that's possible. It would save you during the budget cycles from having to kind of work your way out of that negative fund balance by virtue of increasing other revenues, kind of give you a one-time shot in the arm and get the ship kind of leveled there in terms of the general fund balance so that's a thought, an idea, maybe a recommendation we have for you. Obviously up to the council to make that determination but again based on what we saw in terms of the negative general fund balances historically and knowing that these ARPA dollars are substantial for a town like Richlands that there's an opportunity there to kind of help right the ship while doing a variety of other projects that that you have identified. We tried to lay that out a little bit of a flow chart here- if there's about 5.4 million in total ARPA funding that Richlands received, as we understood it about 2.2 million of that is sort of already allocated towards other things and so if we were to take about a million two in that green sort of section in the middle use that to basically get our fund balance back up to zero and then

maybe get it back up to that recommended policy level that would still leave you about two million dollars at least from the information we saw to do other things with knowing you've got other capital projects. So again an idea, a recommendation we have for you, we know this time of year for everybody it's the budget cycle and sort of getting your hands around what really are the cash flows and the capacity to do different things that you as a town want to do. We know inflation is going to impact that and so using some of these ARPA dollars is kind of a one time shot in the arm to give you an opportunity to take care of that fund balance side of things but also be focused on what you're trying to accomplish going forward within the budget.

We'll flip the page here and again we're sticking with the general fund for the moment Mr. Mayor and I'll try and keep this moving to be mindful of time but on the debt side of the equation for the general fund what we saw is about \$730,000.00, really three different loans on the general fund side of things, interest rates are pretty reasonable there's not a lot of debt on the general fund so with an outside sort of entity taking a look at Richlands for the first time, the general fund does not have a lot of debt outstanding. It looks like it's all fixed rate. You can see the payments there on the right-hand side. In terms of the graph, it's paid off all within the next seven-eight years and you have some decline coming up between FY24 and FY25. So if you take a look at this and say where are pressure points in terms of the general fund balance, clearly we've talked about that, we don't see a big pressure point for the moment in terms of the existing debt on the general fund.

On the next couple pages I will give you just a snapshot staying with that. The general fund debt Theme, to give you a couple ratios that as you work your way through the budget process, we'd recommend thinking about adopting formally as policies. These are going to be very commonplace for local governments across the region, across the country to have these policies and what they help you do as a council, as a finance department, is to put in place some road markers if you will, some benchmarks so as things inevitably come up on the general fund that need to be done, maybe need to be financed, it helps give Council, the public and your staff a sense of what is reasonable what is responsible in terms of taking on new debt when it's required an authorized by Council. So, the first is debt versus assessed value. You can see your debt versus satisfied in the right-hand graph. It's not a mistake, it's so small that it's barely perceptible on that graphic there so again you have a low debt burden of the general fund side and that provides you some capacity. Page 12- if you flip the page there this is arguably the more important of those two. Debt metrics and debt policies-what we typically think about this is tax supported Debt Service versus expenditures so what this is really showing is how many pennies out of every dollar in the budget on the general fund side are going to make a Debt Service payment you can see on the left hand side there we've listed some typical industry criteria. Anything below eight percent or eight pennies on a dollar in the budget his viewed as very strong. You are less than three percent right now, so again as we kind of talk through on the general fund side where our pressure points, this is one of those examples that we use to say do we have an issue per se with the amount of debt/? The answer is no, not on the general fund side. You get about three percent that's a very low level relatively speaking, it's a responsible level. If the council were so inclined during your budget process, we would recommend you put in place some policies here maybe keep yourself below eight- ten percent in terms of an upward you know sort of ceiling on the amount of Debt Service you take on

as a proportion of the budget. So, with that Mr. Mayor, on page 13 some summary observations. In the general fund, again at the risk of repeating myself too many times, building that general fund balance, we again as outsiders, but we do this a lot of different places -we think it's very important using the ARPA monies gives you an opportunity to do that without having to look elsewhere in the budget. We know that there was revenue that was raised in FY 2022 . Again, once FY 22 audit is finalized, I think we'd like to see those numbers with your collective blessing and maybe refresh some of this, just to give us a little fresher sense of what those numbers look like and that'll be very interesting to see.

And then lastly, number four on the general fund side of things- your outstanding debt is modest, we're not over-leveraged at least as we see it. We gave you some of those benchmarks so with that I'll pause before we go to the next section. Any questions, Mayor or Council?

Mayor Cury- yes sir, thank you and I think I hope that when we get the 22 figures that the increase is in our real estate taxes will help things, which you don't have and we don't have it exactly yet. I do have a question, it's on page 9-the the flow chart there, it says 2.2 million previously allocated or spent. Now I would have to have my memory refreshed on how that's gone but I just want to draw my attention to that. Heather-I'll answer that for him. So basically he's going on from when we did the chart and that's what I sent him. Yes at the time and we don't have the numbers from this audit yet so it's anticipated that we will use some of that within that that year as well so basically that's what he's going off of he doesn't have anything else per se yet to really tie that to and that's why he can only put previously.

Mayor Cury- okay thank you

Doug- Heather I'm sorry, what type of debt is that?

Heather- Well it's not really debt, it's just what we used ARPA money for or what we are planning to use ARPA money for, so some of the things that we had initially planned, not necessarily have we made any action on yet he wouldn't know that because he can only see what we have in the anticipated spending for the ARPA money.

Rick-So we still have the 5.4 million?

Heather- I doubt we have 5.4 million but there's only certain things that you can go and use the ARPA money for. In the midst of all that, what we were going to use it for was some upgrades at the water plant and I don't have that information in front of me but it was a chart that came out with the budget at the same time and some of that money will be used to supplement some of the wages because it just frees up the money to use other ways. That way if we're going to use that that way I couldn't tell you exactly I mean we've obviously said it several times I've mentioned well we could use ARPA money for that, I mean but necessarily have we done that yet? I don't necessarily know until we get the final numbers back.

Doug-does that include the million from Thompson-Litton?

Heather- I can't remember what it said, I know it had water and sewer upgrades on it but I don't know if what you're speaking to with Thompson-Litton, the engineering, the study they did. I know what you're talking about I just don't know when it when it says water sewer upgrades if it's earmarked for that particular thing, it just says upgrades.

Doug-Gotcha.

Kyle Laux- To Heather's point, what we were going off of -we've got some detail in the back page 31. Right or wrong, there's some detail back there I don't know if you want to dive into all that but that's what we were working off of for the moment. One observation we'd make with the ARPA dollars and this is global, not just to Richlands, but those are those are grant dollars from the federal government and using those dollars towards one-time purposes is really kind of how we recommend you think about that and so putting them towards a purpose whether it's a capital purpose, or maybe upping the fund balance that's really in a best practice way, the way you would think about using those ARPA dollars because again it's grant dollars that have come in, they're one time they're not coming again and so making sure that those one-time dollars are matched up relative to one-time needs as opposed to maybe funding things that have a recurring nature to them and thus once you spend them the first year and you look and say all right what am I going to pay, where is that money coming from, the next year those dollars are already gone so if we can make that one global observation to council if that's helpful.

Mayor Cury-does anyone else have questions at this point?

Jordan- I do have a quick question in referencing page eight, how did you arrive at 16 percent?

Kyle Laux- The 16 percent, it's a kind of a long-standing call it nationally used benchmark. It really is designed to give you a couple months' worth of reserves and that's really the thought process behind it. A lot of local governments will have even a higher level than that, have a policy of maybe 20 percent plus and so the 16 percent is again kind of a tried and true Benchmark that's been used for a long time across the country. Thinking about kind of where you're starting from getting ourselves to that point seems to make some sense. You'll see maybe bigger entities might have a 10 or 15 percent type number but for something of Richlands specific that's really what our thought process was if that's helpful.

Jordan- so there's no recommended like multiplier for the small based population or anything like that?

Kyle- Not really no. You know I'll tell you higher is always better so of course you know if we're six or seven million in terms of the budget, you know getting yourself to about a million bucks for plus or minus, not necessarily a lot of science there per se but having that range and that's about what that 16 plus percent equates to.

Mayor Cury- Okay, thank you okay shall we move on?

Kyle-I would be happy to. So, I think we're on page 14 going into page 15. So, again purposely kind of put a little cover page in here shifting gears from the general fund to the enterprise funds and so enterprise funds and many of you Council and public may already know this but I'll just say it so it's out there. Enterprise funds we think about differently than we do the general fund. That term enterprise kind of relates to business. You think about running an enterprise fund for a government kind of like you run a business, it's not exact but that's sort of the terminology, enterprise fund and that's why we use that. What that really tends to mean is that for you, Richlands, between water sewer and electric those funds should really be paying for themselves in a perfect world by virtue of the users that are using the underlying system. So the water users, the sewer and the power, the idea is all of that is a commodity you know water, the sewer, the electric were all tied together in the commodity. And the amount you use you pay more, you use less you pay less but ultimately it is born within that system, that utility enterprise system, the cost

of running and operating the system and so we think about those separately, the general fund, the enterprise fund. That's again not just for Richlands but broadly, globally, industry-wide practice. Doug-a question. When you start mixing enterprise funds with the general budget that's kind of risky.

Kyle- It can be. there's so there's nuances there, I think. Broadly speaking it certainly can be because it can muddy the water there between what is supported by the general taxes and what is supported by those user rates of you know whether it's electric, water, it's sewer, etc. Now the nuance I'll point out especially in a town the size of Richlands and this is kind of broadly there's oftentimes shared costs within utility and so you and I suspect this is the case. I don't know this but you probably have folks that are doing a little bit of stuff for the general fund and a little bit of stuff for the water fund or the electric fund etc. so the nuance there is that you oftentimes see some of those costs accounted for and shared amongst the general fund and for you water sewer and electric but they need to be in a perfect world accounted for separately so for instance and we see this in lots of different, I happen to work with a bunch of towns, so you'll see maybe like a town manager who is overseeing the town broadly, they have a salary a portion of their day-to-day life is dealing with the general fund town matters, a portion may be dealing with their water and sewer fund and so you may see that that salary for a manager be distributed on a pro-rata basis between what is accounted for within the general fund and accounted for within the utility funds and so I point that out because that oftentimes is the case in towns across Virginia whereby you have some of this sort of cost sharing. It's really to account for the fact that for an entity your size and scale probably doesn't make any sense to have a totally separate person running water and sewer versus you know some other entities and so you kind of divvy some of those costs out across those funds but outside of some of that nuance it can certainly kind of muddy the water to start combining general fund, electric, water and sewer in your instance.

Doug- You've got to watch mixing those funds. Wouldn't you agree that it's going to drive your electric rates higher, much higher if you don't watch?

Kyle- It could. I don't want to answer that that too broadly because you can kind of go both ways depending upon how that's how that's allocated or accounted for but certainly it could.

Doug-do you have a percentage of-are there any set percentage or close average that you should be taking out of that enterprise fund as towards your budget?

Kyle-can you give me a little bit more in terms of what you're thinking about there?

Doug-I guess what percentage should you take out of those funds to shore up your general funds? Are there a certain, I mean a percentage you've got to watch out for? Now like I'm saying if you took, if you use like 20 percent to shore up that general budget I think you'd run into problems as far as rate increases.

Kyle- And I appreciate that the question, Councilman Ratliff. I wouldn't tie it just to a percentage. I would tie it to what are those transfers really going towards and is there an allocable, you know realistic expense and sort of reason for those transfers so I wouldn't tie it per se just to kind of a broad-brush percentage as a two percent, is it twenty percent, but are the underlying reasons meaning some allocation of staff time or supplies or whatever it is.

Doug- okay if your firm looks at it, it depends on what those funds are used for, so that's what you're telling me?

Kyle- that's correct.

Doug- does your company look at where those funds are going when you do the assessment?

As of say seven- eight hundred thousand dollars is taken out of the electric fund, does your company track those funds what they're used for, in your assessment?

Kyle- in terms of what they're used for, not really no. I mean I think what you're alluding to is here is if there's dollars going from the electric fund to the general fund then how are those dollars allocated?

Doug- yes.

Kyle- So, you see that oftentimes with cost allocations, you see that with pilot payments. It's a concept called the payment lieu of taxes, it's relatively commonplace in utilities whether it's water, sewer, electric and I think having those be, again repeating myself a little bit but, tied to a rationale and sort of trackable is more important than in terms of what are those dollars used for on the other side meaning once they make their way from the Utility Fund to the general fund, they tend to in a lot of instances, just kind of be revenues of the general fund that are used for a broadly general fund purpose. If you use shared funds like that implies that it's used for personnel or expenses of the electric fund.

Doug- If you say shared expenses, okay when you say that term that alludes to that it should only be used for expenses of the electric fund and shouldn't be used for other projects. If you did that I wish your firm would look at that. That's going to drive your electric rates sky high.

Kyle- I don't know if I can make that that sort of leap entirely there but I think what you're alluding to is if there are dollars that are that are coming out of the general fund excuse me out of the electric fund and going to the general fund, is that going to be an expense that is borne by the electric rate payers and that you know that the answer to that is yes.

Doug- and if they're going to any other uses that could be a problem as far as could be could be driving rates up.

Mayor Cury- go ahead Kyle.

Kyle- I think we've laid out on page 15 some of those other key considerations, use of the system, pay for the system. Sort of thinking about monitoring rate increases over a multi-year time period, that's something we end up doing a lot of this time of year is thinking about how do we put in place a multi-year plan that sort of limits the surprises to ratepayers so you can kind of think about a multi-year process to the extent, rate increases are required we know not often popular, but given the inflationary pressures that everybody is feeling right now within the operating budget it's just kind of been, right or wrong, not always popular kind of part of the process this time of year to be thinking about how do we adjust the revenues to take into account that things just cost more, whether it's utilities, chemicals etc. etc.

Similar concept in terms of maintaining reserves as well, also very, very important on the general fund side accounting for those reserves separately you have some of those dollars in both electric and water and sewer. We'll show that to you. It's a much better situation in the general fund in terms of the reserves on those two funds and so we'll point that on the front end. We'd still recommend you put in place some policies related to that kind of put some guide posts in place but again you start from a much better position in terms of water, sewer and electric.

So we start at the top of the page here again working through 2021 numbers, water and sewer funds has solid reserve levels through 21. I think something we're aware of, we've gotten some details and in fact even talked with the state about this, is some of the planned capital projects on water and sewer. Also as we think about what we've put in here for you, we have in the back of our heads that there are some major Capital Investments that you as a town are contemplating and so what we saw through 2021 is taking on a material amount of new debt, looks to us to just to require more revenue on the Water and Sewer side, just to be real blunt about it. And so again with some 22 numbers we'd have a clearer picture of that. We know through some of our homework so to speak in terms of last year the state has offered or provided the opportunity to have both low interest loans and grants. I think our recommendation to you, to the extent this is your decision to make, we're not engineers and that variety but to the extent those projects are going to move forward in the water and sewer side, we really would recommend that you as a town to get in touch with the state, that's usually through the folks of the Virginia Resources Authority, VRA, they kind of help funnel the dollars for DEQ and VDH. DEQ tends to be the sewer side of the equation, VDH is the water side of the equation. I think we would recommend to you as town connecting with those folks about the low interest loan/grant packages in order to move these projects forward. You have that note of \$1.2 million that is due July 15th of 2023. We saw that and we said wow that's going to come up pretty quick, I think as you work through your budget process and remember that our recommendation to you is really to reach out to the folks at the state. We can help with some of that we work with the state as well and kind of start some of those discussions and conversations about how that particular loan is going to fit in with what you're trying to do on the water and the sewer side in terms of capital projects and how that fits in with what the state is able to offer you in terms of a loan/grant package. I think the project itself came in much over cost last year and I think that probably led to some of the delay. You're certainly not alone in that, we're seeing that across the industry. A lot of construction projects whether it's water or sewer they're coming in much over. It's a challenge right now that you all face, local governments whether you're a town, a city or a county.

Not an easy solution in the short run but are they given where you are in Richlands and given the good conversations you apparently had with the state folks going back into last year would really recommend that you the extent you aren't already kind of re-up those conversations with the folks at the state because there are opportunities given the federal dollars that flow through the state to have low interest loans and grants that are going to be better than what you'll be able to find on the current market whether it be with a bank or somebody else.

Doug-question-how did we get saddled with a seven percent interest rate?

Heather-it hasn't always been that, and it was never intended for us to have the loan this long, it was going to be rolled over into the loan/grant package at a much lower rate.

Doug-can we refinance?

Kyle- it looked to us that it was pre-payable any time with no penalty. I think it's a National Bank loan if I'm not mistaken. We know National Bank very well, they're very active in the region they've helped the county and worked with the PSA, we did some things there last year, so I think that's certainly worth the discussion. If we had one recommendation on this side as we talk to you now it's really engage with the state. I would start there and then also engage with the National

Bank folks. I would probably start with the state though and see kind of where they stand in terms of how they're thinking about funding your project and getting them involved in some of those discussions getting their sense of things on timing. To Heather's point in terms of they've got certain requirements they can't get around because of course the money comes to them from the federal government that always comes with a bunch of boxes you have to check along the way, but I think starting that discussion and helping them make sure they're in the loop on kind of these kind of things is going to be helpful to you.

Kyle-Page 20-Enterprise Funds Policies

Again, these are things that we'd recommend putting in place and thinking about a similar theme here, thinking about those reserves, sort of making sure you have reserves for rainy days. Especially on utilities whereby electric, water and sewer. Pumps break, lines go down, storms come through -you want to make sure you've got good cash reserves. So that to the extent you have to go do some of those emergency repairs you're not having to go to the bank, you've got their own funds there.

Laura- excuse me, I don't mean to interrupt you I'm I just want to reiterate to people at home that I don't check my phone when I'm sitting here unless I'm getting multiple messages. Our sound is off again and people want to hear this.

Mayor Cury-Frank, how does it look like on your end ? looks like we should be working okay.

Well let's go ahead sir. Thank you very much, we're trying to be open to the public.

Kyle-So page 21-I think we can kind of really wrap up after this but in terms of thinking about policies, again thinking about those Capital Improvement programs, we saw some of the planning and information that was done especially on water and sewer I think in the last year. It's unclear to us if you know sort of that's been followed through. I think there's a rate study on water and sewer and electric sort of its own its own thing and so I think our other takeaway and recommendation would be especially as you're in this budget process right now revisiting some of that multi-year planning whether it's operations, whether it's Capital, understanding really not just what does next year's budget look like but what is a multi-year and we tend to like to think about like a five-year time period. What is a five-year time period look like?

You can go longer but five tends to be a good window of time thinking and planning for purposes of rates on electric and water and sewer taking into account certainly the operational side of things. I think globally we see the pressure on the operating costs there, the capital side as well. It seems like as we've evaluated this with as much information as we have. You've got some pressures on the capital side by virtue of some of these projects and really thinking about during your budget planning process here a multi-year strategy. I think the state will kind of help inform some of that especially on the on the water and sewer side, but getting into some of that discipline during the budget time period to think not just about what is next year's budget look like, but what does a five-year time period look like and so with that Mayor I'll pause. I realize that was probably a lot in it in a relatively short time, hopefully didn't go on too long for you or members of the public but wanted to give you a summary and synopsis. Again , once the 22 numbers are available we can update some of these things but wanted to share that with you all and we appreciate your time.

Mayor Cury- We thank you very much. Do we have your contact information.

Kyle-Heather has it. If you'll share it with everybody, I'd appreciate that.



Mayor Cury- are there any questions for Kyle at this time?

Thank you for your explanation and I will compliment you your presentation of this booklet. It is one of the best I've seen. You get it on level I can understand.

Heather- so he keeps explaining the end of the year for 2022 isn't complete, I would just like to go ahead and see if as soon as we get it, would you wish for me to share that with him? My opinion is yes.

Mayor-I thought it was clear that's we where we might be going. I feel like it'd be difficult to continue without being able to do that. What kind of expense are we talking about?

Heather- In terms of that we can go back and look at the original contract.

Mayor Cury- I appreciate that because obviously when you go over this, everything is a concern to us especially money and I really appreciate that.

Mr. Mayor -may we take a quick break.

Laura- but before we do just to clear up for at those at home, this was not the annual audit, this was basically just kind of a review, correct. Hopefully we will have this book maybe available on the website for everyone to see but basically we just we don't have as much coming in as we have going out is kind of to summarize and this was not the annual audit. We don't have the audit back yet and this gentleman will come back and complete a more updated study when we do have the audit completed and this is not the other audit either no this is not a forensic audit this was a financial review. Thank you.

Rick-the next time you come back can we do this like a workshop instead of in council meeting.

Heather- well it depends on when we start. I have started working on the calendar and everything today is for when we get into the budget session and we'll take it in the way how he laid it out, the general fund and then we'll do the water, sewer, electric that kind of thing and but before we get into the budget we probably would prefer his review as well.

Rick- if we have a workshop we can talk about more. I mean we've got a pretty big Agenda.

Mayor Cury- I think that's a good suggestion. I appreciate that because I'm looking, we've got the people who would like to speak so that's a good suggestion Rick and if your council is agreeable with that I think Heather can schedule that for us at an appropriate time in conjunction in tandem with Kyle.

Mayor-we will have a five-minute recess.

Council will now come back into order, and we are moving on to the next agenda item, moving on for people who've been waiting patiently.

Debbie Milton with Cumberland Plateau and also, we have joining us, Reed Muehlman. I want to introduce you just a little bit of what I know about Reed which is about not much but his wife is Christine and his wife has a broad introduction to Southwest Virginia through the Clinch River Valley initiative and to that end they have a more than a decent understanding and appreciation of our area and it's pretty deep and I'm grateful for their participation tonight there. I'm introducing you to Dialogue and Design, it's a firm from Charlottesville, Virginia. They are the ones we have we've been working with I didn't know it until recently for our planning Grant which is a fifty thousand dollar planning Grant which will hopefully lead to Rehabilitation, a CBD Community Block Development Grant. So without further ado, I would also want to welcome Debbie Milton with Cumberland Plateau and I know many of you remember Jim Baldwin, well

she has essentially assumed the role of Jim is that correct. So I talked briefly with Debbie about this Planning Grant and she wants to make a presentation tonight and along with Reed. Is Christine able to join us Reed? Not tonight. That's okay, thank you both for being very patient, it's the nature of governmental business. So, Debbie or Reed feel free.

Debbie Milton- well I'll just give a little background and then I'll let Reed chime in. He's going to need some dates from you guys. The story goes back in 2019, the town of Richlands approached Cumberland Plateau wondering about Downtown Revitalization Grant. Well DHCD, a lot of times they recommend you go through the planning Grant process and the whole purpose of that is to prepare you for when you get the opportunity to go in for a grant that you have all the documentation and everything you need in order in order to be able to apply for that Grant. So, in 2019, Connie Allen and I started talking, we did a letter of intent to DHCD they came back gave us some things we needed to do. Connie got right on it, she went downtown, she talked to a lot of businesses, took pictures, put it all together and Cumberland Plateau helped with some mapping. So, we were doing a lot of that and then guess what--covid, so all of the public meetings that we needed to hold and everything was just stopped and so the grant process stopped. Well so in 2020 we decided that you know after 2020 we'd pick it back up probably about 2021. So by that time it had been so long they asked that we go in and reapply well they come back with some conditions that we needed to do, then I was working with Ashley and John, mostly Ashley Harris. so we went back and reviewed some of the things we actually held public meetings a couple I think there were some folks here, Ginger and Lori was here and we talked about the grant going forward. What we did was we went out with an RFP for a consultant and the purpose of a consultant is to put together some planning documents it's a master plan and economic development plan and just a plan in general of how to approach the revitalization project. So we did have three firms apply, Dialogue and Design, who Reed is with and Hill Studios and Thrasher. They all applied, and we went through the process of ranking them. I am thinking Adrienne Cordle was on that little team of ours and we chose Dialogue and Design. Well after that happened, we need to start setting some dates to go with some of the town representatives or whoever would like to be involved and get public input and that sort of thing and Reed has got some dates in mind. I think his contract was about six months. We're a little lagging behind right now, I think we'll have to extend that time frame. So that's where we are right now with the planning process. So does anyone have any questions or anything I can answer about the grant or anything? What we hope to do is get these documents ready. The competitive round for block grant is generally in March or April we won't be able to make it this year, it'll have to be next year but by that time we should be through all the planning process and have those. So I'll just turn it over to Reed and he'll talk a little bit more.

Mayor Cury- I'm sorry, let's give it five minutes. Laura has to step out for an emergency.

Debbie-Reed is going to ask you guys to come up with some dates for public input. I think they're planning some different things; he'll explain to you a little bit about that and once he does that then they'll be able to start compiling all that data and that information. He will have people here working in the downtown and what they'll try to do is come up with a concept that suits everyone.

They'll look at a different options, they'll see what needs to be done. They'll have some recommendations after they look at everything about what they think is feasible. He'll also visit the budget how much things will cost and what we can do.

Mayor Cury-Laura, is your family okay, number one. Well, I actually put the gavel down for five minutes. I'll put this thing back into session. We just had an informal conversation, I don't want you to be lost in part of it. I always think of family first, everything good? Okay I'm sorry you had to run out and we pray for whatever it is.

Okay so back in session. We will just turn it over to Reed. To bring you up to speed, what Jan asked her if there was something we could do to move it along and I think we will have lots of good suggestions. Okay thank you go ahead Reed.

Reed Muehlman -Dialogue & Design-Council, it's good to be here. The Grant process has got off to a bit of a slow to start but we're ready to rock and roll here and tonight I'm going talk through how we can best serve you all. I'm going to propose a series of steps and key milestones for the process that we're and the work bound into it from the beginning has a very strong defense toward economic fidelity if you will.

So I'm going to share a little bit about our team, before I jump into that, this is some of the other work we're doing in the region so not far down the road. Dialogue and Design is involved with the City of Saint Paul and Three Rivers Destination Center. This is a pretty fantastic partnership where we work with Downstream Strategies so it's also our teammate on this project but we're also working with Appalachian Voices in Russell County and the Heart of Appalachia, the local tourism authority, to help develop new headquarters with them but also master plan site. I'm preoccupied by the meaningful way that will hopefully generate jobs for the community and local support that'll be showcasing the river itself. A lot of questions we can certainly have more to individual projects near the end. Also not far down the road from you all, in Troutdale, Dialogue and Design was the prime contract holder for some master planning, illustration and facilitation work. We did some preliminary architectural assessment, took a lot of public input from their stakeholders and various members of their community and put together a base master plan and of areas of professional work. We also prepared these drawings as a marketing strategy for them. So Dialogue and Design is using not only our facilitation skills but also my background as an architect and designer and illustrator to help explain some of the issues we're encountering in a couple of different places. This is a 20-acre development in Crozet, Virginia up here near Charlottesville which is where I'm based and this was a developer driven project. They hired Dialogue well because their interest was in engaging the community in meaningful development strategies and so we initially helped them identify three possible avenues for development of the 284 Coast Industrial person partnered with the county and eventually held multiple public meetings where there were 150 participants each, and were provided recommendations to both the county and the developer used to advance the zoning application.

So real quickly that gives you the pretty fair idea of what we do at Dialogue. We get the cool people together in big groups and then we ask a lot of questions and we looked on identifying these certain key nuggets that show up over and over again. We also like to make sure, we get arguments that have been open and we work for the solution over there and often this work results in design outcomes whether it's a building or master plan. This is kind of our ballot like we might show you

all what we do and we like it when you all can share the excitement about the stuff that you're involved with. So in terms of the project that Debbie introduced and from what Rod mentioned, Dialogue and Design is really going to be the in the workflow, it's going to go back and forth. On our side, we hired Downstream Strategies out of West Virginia and they are going to support the economic analysis of it, so they are going to help us create potential funding paths for fulfilling the designs we come up with, and they're also going to do some assessments in the front end to help us figure out what the low hanging fruit is. We also have on our team, Revised Strategies and that's in case the public meetings are larger than you can handle in-house. Revised Strategies is serving as extra facilitation help, especially when we get large groups subsidiary. But Downstream Strategies and Revised Strategies communicates through Dialogue and Design to the Town of Richlands and right now Mayor Cury is our contact.

And so as we move forward we are going to create a planning team that's made up of the members of Dialogue and Design, Cumberland Plateau and a member of the Town of Richlands Council representative and this group is going to be making the court decisions about how we shape our process and how we respond to certain issues that come up in the public meetings we're proposing. So the task at hand, this was a map we provided during our RFP response part of this and we augmented it a little bit to clarify but we've been asked to provide architectural assessment and with our partner Downstream Strategies economic assessment of two potentially very recent rituals in this map I'm calling it the East End and the West End and within each of those we're going to look at streetscape improvements and how to partner with local private landowners and really how to get the most bang for our buck here up here. Of course you know there's going to be some discussion about which end we choose, because that's part of the task here is to select an area of town that needs to be focused on and there's going to be some discussion about which improvements are most relevant whether the streetscapes or a private owned building, there could be a number of different you know things proposed here but we want to identify is that these proposals off the curve in the context directions. There are some key things going on about how the streets move and work around and we're going to be there on site to help get the best handle on the situation location. To do this we're proposing a process that has three public meetings and or planning team meetings. this is just the beginning we have certainly some flexibility, but the public meetings work on a cycle where we kind of open ourselves up, we ask a lot of questions and we try and get as much input as we can and then we refine that input and read it back in the next public meeting to advise it again based over here and treat it back in over and over until we get to the final report. So, in front of you can see this process in just kind of rough demographic and what it identifies. So with the planning team meetings and three public meetings for days and times, if I walk through them real quick the planning team meeting- the next one we will hold on March 14<sup>th</sup>, we'll discuss this but that is really in preparation for what we are proposing it's the first big public meeting that's March 30<sup>th</sup>. We would be on site with our facilitation team, tour the town and we would open the meeting up to all the members of Richlands who are interested in joining us. In conjunction with this meeting, we are also going to make an online survey available to citizens that hard copies be printed and left at the local library or the Town Hall so members of this community without internet can access the survey and we're going to gather as much information as we can. This is in that first meeting we're going to hear some of the issues and

present these and focus we're going to put different ideas about improvements out there and we're going to suggest some different avenues for funding improvements and really then we're going to listen. It's our goal to hear as much input as we can on that day.

So who is interested in being on the planning team meeting?

Mayor Cury- is there a member of council who would like to step forward and participate in the Planning Grant?

Laura-well I want to be understood I will always be glad to serve on any committee but the full disclosure this is probably not my wheelhouse. I will put one hundred percent into it if no one else wants to do it. Jan has a business on that street and she knows a lot of history of the town so if she would want to do it.

Mayor Cury- Jan would you like to do this. okay well I mean there's no reason we can't have another person if somebody else has a passion for this, anybody? Okay well let's suppose Jan and myself okay and we'll get her contact information to you Reed. Maybe we can contact you tomorrow via email. To make it simpler we can communicate through Debbie, and we'll include everybody in this email circle so it's a full circle and I will make sure you get that. We'll talk about dates hopefully tomorrow. There was something when I met with Debbie, she told me about a change in the way that people participate. It's a little more economically favorable to businesses who want a to have a building facade restructured or maybe make it presentable, so I'm going to ask Debbie to say something about that. Would you mind to come up Debbie and tell us how it worked in the first one and how it's going to work this time.

Debbie- it's better, sure, just we found out recently that instead of being a 50/50 match it used to be, if the business owner did work to their property and saved the receipts, say it was five thousand dollars then they could get five thousand dollars in work done on the façade. Just remember we're talking about façade but now DHCD has dropped that requirement. I think that this is a neat opportunity and I want to be there to help out for the best of my abilities but it really depends on working closely, working well with you all.

Doug has a question-what streets does that cover, how far it's to be decided? okay it's going to be part of the planning, is that correct Reed, the streets and the buildings?

Reed-all that's yet to be decided, so at meeting number one, the first public meeting will address all the streets there in the West End and that starts over near McDonald's and I guess that's where Veterans Drive comes through so that's the Western and then also it will include the East end so from Iron Street from-having trouble reading the map but starting on one end there near Grayson Avenue and working back to the West so the first meeting includes all of this area and then the second meeting we'll be focusing in on one of these. Another thing you have to keep in mind is when you choose a project area, every building, everything in that area will have to be addressed and like I explained to the Mayor when he and I met, we can't just say okay we're going to do this building, we're not doing this one, we'll skip this one for whatever size it is, and that's the reason we really need our consultant to kind of help us look at the worst part and see what we can do to make that part look best. We can put a bunch of different funding scenarios in place and try to get as much money as we can but you know that also has to be driven by project plan because you have to remember you know you can't do the hotel because we simply don't have enough money, so but we really need to identify the worst of the worst.

Mayor Cury-Thank you Debbie and Reed.

Mayor Cury-We've covered a b c we're down to Tazewell County Public Library-Regina Roberts has been so patient and I just want to thank you Regina come on up and view your presentation because at the last meeting, I asked her to come, and you have waited patiently thank you.

Regina -I am honored to be here. I've enjoyed it and learned a lot, it's inspiring and encouraging, So, Erica Hall, for you all who do not know her, she is the Executive Director of the Library and I'm Regina Roberts, I am an appointed trustee on the Trustee Board. I am also the Resident Chair of the Tazewell County Public Library Foundation Board. The Foundation Board is the one responsible for doing the Richlands Library Project where we're trying to remodel and revitalize that building. I have a trivia question it's Valentine's Day and members of council who remembers the day, the year, whenever that building became the Richlands Library, anyone? I want to know if anyone remembers from last time I spoke last month-any guesses what year?1984- sweet, you get a jar of honey!

Passing out sketches- this is the little history blurb about the library on the back is the QR code The update is that the windows have been ordered about a month ago, so we're looking at six to eight weeks before they're in because they gave us a 12-to-16-week time frame for those windows to be in. Hopefully last of March, first of April somewhere in there they will start putting those windows in. That will be Re-Max, Jamie Tuggle. She is Southwest Developing Inc, and that is who got the bid, so that is our contractor who is doing phase one. Phase one anticipated dates and things to be finished by the last day of May. That includes the siding, the guttering, the windows, sidewalk and some of that railing there.

On that point, Town Council had awarded or committed \$154,000 of the ARPA money for phase one project and our bid did come in slightly less than that, somewhere around \$125,000 to \$130,000, and I would like to ask the council to consider allowing us to take that remainder and keep that with the library project so when we get to phase three, which is the addition that that goes to the outside to match those windows, siding and guttering so it all ties in. So there may be about \$25,000 there of unused money and I would like to request that that is kept in the reserve with our installments to continue to come so that is used for that.

Mayor Cury-we've committed the money and when you've committed it we're not looking for it back but that is going to be a council decision and if that is the will of the council I would ask for a motion to keep the money that we have awarded you to be able to that so the library can continue to have the rest of that above bid for the outside for phase three. I think it's a reasonable question. When was this awarded in a previous council?

Regina-December 2021, we looked that up. Yes, that was \$154,000.00 given to the Richlands Foundation for the outside of that building.

Mayor Cury- what are Council's thoughts?

Doug-are you short that money like if we if we keep that money? I mean I hate saying it but we just sat we all sat through this presentation that we're setting in a negative budget here so anytime we can save money is obviously a good idea to me. If we don't dedicate that remainder of that money to you guys are you going to be short on the project?

Regina- the project has three phases and it is not at this point fully funded. The other entities like the Shott Foundation and the Thompson Foundation that donated monies, they have already

approved for us to roll it over to the next phase. Any monies that's there, so if we save on phase one then that money that's saved there begins phase two and then if there's any monies then that's rolled on into phase three. So at this point we are still short for the project as a whole. I will say that the windows have been ordered and we pulled money from our general fund and went ahead and paid for that because they would not order them until it was paid, so I gave Susan the first invoice because we have not received any of that money to date. We do have a MOU with the Town here for three installments and I think those three installments are something like \$51,333.33 if that's correct. And so I have given her that first invoice for that to help cover what we've already spent.

Jan- wondering if maybe we could hold off until the rest of us get kind of educated on you know what's going on.

Regina-the difference is around \$25,000.00, kind of estimating I know that phase one bid came in somewhere around \$125,000 that's the estimate so of course we don't have the final yet because materials, supplies, those things are going up.

Ginger Branton-in relation to this we don't know what they're going to encounter when they start taking those windows out. They have to leave it around the windows and also all of the wood planks that are going to be replaced ,we don't know what that future cost is going to be either, you know right now they're just looking at the estimates based on a visual, not when they start tearing into it so that was another thing that was a concern of ours as well .

Regina-correct and honestly I'm not sure Jan, that I even needed to bring up that because that money was awarded for the Richlands Library repairs and \$154,000 was given. But knowing that you know, this the public information and we're serving the public and I did not want the new Council or someone that might see the bid and say hey they were given \$154,000 for phase one and they only spent \$130,000. So I want to be proactive and to be very transparent to say there may be twenty five thousand dollars difference there and I'm requesting the same thing from you all as the other entities that gave on this project is to simply we would use that and probably more than that to bring phase three up to look like the rest of the building. I don't think that would even cover fixing the siding and the windows and guttering for that addition. I think it would just be a piece of it.

Mayor Cury- I get Jan's point and everybody's, if they could be up to speed, here is a thought, this money is promised to you and we have a MOU on it that said three phases, it's maybe if when you get your last invoice for phase one and you submit it to the town I'm assuming this is how it goes, and we give you that third installment we will still have money here that we could hold for you and the in the event you don't need it, we need to take it back we could and that's something I'm sure that we can look at when we get there. So I'm thinking do we have to decide this right now, we can wait, I'm just trying to do the right thing. I don't think we need a motion, we've already allocated that money.

Regina- the renderings that you have there in front of you, those were done by Huber Architect, that's William Huber and those show the three phases. Up here, that includes the addition on the back that includes a conference room and all that and then there should be I think four or five pages of line drawing so you can really see the fourth-floor plan. So this includes all three phases, mostly you'll see the biggest changes are on the second floor in the children's area and up in the attic area

where they've added some bathrooms and all that stuff. And then on the back side where there's a planned conference room which we currently do not have anywhere in that building. We want to say we are so grateful, we're grateful using the Section House to meet, thank you, it's been beautiful. Any questions on those renderings. Mr. Huber has a history of doing a lot of historical buildings so yes, the windows that were ordered they were specially ordered to stay in line with the ones that are there. Regina, on that siding, are they just replacing or repairing what's there? They will not be replacing, they will be repairing everything that is not rotted through and through and there may have to be a replacement of a board here and there. But we did look at both replacing all the siding with something that looks like wood or keeping the wood and it was financially better to repair what's there plus I like the history of keeping that wood too so the phase one bid is based on what they see and if they start tearing out they may see more damage. We want to make the outside look like the rest of the building so that it doesn't look like a modern addition so I would like for you all to consider that we are using whatever remain to put towards that because I don't think \$20,000 or \$25,000 will even cover bringing the outside of that third addition up to the rest of the building.

Doug- my understanding was that we did it by phases and I mean just my thinking, but because that when you all sent the original bid out it was like \$199,000 and so we had to redo the bid. All of that of course we had to pay for a new assessment and those things came out of our budget which was towards phase one as well so that's not even included in that bid. I mean we can look at it but my thinking and I'm all for the library but we're like half million dollars in the hole in the budget and I mean that's hard to make up for the town so I'm sure the Shott Foundation and some of those you know if you come a little bit short, surely they will help you out and sort of help the town with our budget, that's my thinking.

Regina- I think that's the point that Jan was bringing up and also remember this building does belong to the Town. I do have two more points to make, as far as the applications that we have talked that have to do with grants that the town applies for but that would benefit the library, Amanda was unable to be here tonight but she will be working with Heather and then Mike on helping us to bring and present those. Amanda Killen is willing to distribute those funds if there are grants that are granted for that building. I know that was a question, there was no one to distribute the funds but she is willing to do that, and she has done that for the Town of Tazewell as well making sure that it goes to where it's supposed to go. She will administer it, I'm sorry, I used the wrong word, administering is the correct word. So she's willing to do that and she has been hired as the grant writer and helped me manage this project by the Foundation. The Foundation Board did hire her to do that.

The final thing that I would like to say I know Winter Honey was mentioned but also the library is having an event on the 25<sup>th</sup>, on Saturday and that is called Bees, Books and Bargains. It will be at the police station as well and any vendor who rents a spot or table, all of the money is going to this project for the library so if you have friends, family or someone who has yard sale items, books maybe just a small business pop-up, whatever we would love for you all to get an application and those need to be in by Friday and support the Richlands Library Project.

Item E-Rec Park Signage No Tractor Trailers Signs



Jordan-so I was lifting weights one evening last week and got stuck down there because the tractor trailer's GPS took him down to the Rec Park and as you all can imagine by taking that turn right there.... I walked out and thankfully the Richlands PD got down there super-fast and handled it. They had basketball games down there and everything so you're talking parking lot full of people were stuck for a good hour while this guy made a 100 point turn. So to avoid that happening, I think we need to put signs up somewhere on Virginia Avenue saying GPS does not work here or no tractor trailers. I was going to touch base with Rick on that he seems like he would be knowledgeable on that topic.

Rick- probably not beside the water plant, they could probably go across Farmer Street.

Doug asked about getting the flag replaced at the water plant.

Jordan-so what is the resolution for this, what do how do we need to go about this to get this resolved because that was dangerous, if I would have dropped 315 pounds on my body I'd been done. There's no ambulance could have got down there.

Mayor Cury-I'm going to suggest this and I think you're talking about safety, so I'm thinking we should talk with Chief of Police. I do think that you probably could put the "no tractor trailer past this point" kind of sign and probably involve the Chief and someone from the street department to make sure that what we're putting up is correct.

Heather-We will check with them and let you know by email.

Laura- While we're on the Rec Park signage, I had someone reach out to me today actually and said that they live on that street past the softball field and that we might need a new sign for the turn spot. They just told me that people have started parking where the turn spot is there and that it would be kind of like what Jordan just said about emergency vehicles, that they're not able to get down there when people are parking there and asked if we could look into that. They live at the end of the softball fields.

Item f- 3150 Clinch Street Ordinance Re-Zoning Amendment, Second Reading and Approval Ordinance No. O-2023-01-01.

Mike- I believe we've had the first reading is that correct. Yes, that is correct. If Council would like you could suspend with the second reading.

Mayor Cury- What is council's pleasure about suspending with the second reading so that this can be dealt with?

Laura- May I ask a question really quick, the owner of this property reached out to me and said they want this reclassified now, they're going to go to the Planning Commission essentially because they want to put something else there I don't know if I can or should say but this is not it. Should we go ahead and do this and then let them go through the Planning Commission without revealing something that we shouldn't reveal here. I don't know Planning and Zoning, again not my wheelhouse, they just asked me how they go from this point to another point and I guided them to Heather and the Planning Commission.

Heather-so it would be my suggestion is if, and he can correct me if I am wrong, we read that and if that's not what they're actually wanting then they'll have to start the process again in case that would encumber what they're asking for.

Mike- of course, the way it's looking to me is they're asking to go from industrial to business expanded and I think that's what the Planning Commission had just recommended.

Laura-so we're okay to pass this and if at a later point they want to see something else. I'll make a motion that we dispense of the second reading. Laura makes the Motion that we dispense of the second reading. There is a motion on the floor that dispenses with the second reading. Is there a second, Gary makes the second. Any discussion on this motion. Roll call vote please, this is just to dispense with the second reading; Doug-yes, Gary-yes, Rick-yes, Jordan-yes, Jan-yes, Laura-yes. The motion carries.

We need a motion to pass ordinance number O-2023-01-01 Land Usage. Laura makes the motion, Gary seconds. There being no discussion, roll call vote please: Doug-yes, Gary-yes, Rick-yes, Jordan-yes, Jan yes, Laura-yes. Motion carries. This ordinance will go into effect in 30 days.

Next we have on our agenda, we have G -Rooftop Solar Zoning Ordinance Amendment, second reading and approval. And this ordinance, it's a two-phase ordinance. Roof Top solar panels in all the zones of Richlands. Ordinance number O-2023-01-02. We have had a first reading so does anyone want to dispense with a second reading. I have a question, it really goes after that suspense, and my question is this- I was reading this and installation of roof top solar panels and in all the zones says with the conditional use permit so people will be coming to council for conditional use, is that correct Mike?

Mike-they would go through the Planning Commission as for the conditional use and that would have to be approved before roof top solar panels, things like that.

Mayor Cury-so it would go in this instance through the commission and then they would give us a recommendation correct. I only ask because we have in the past we've used conditional use pretty liberally in the placement of mobile homes and while there are two different issues, conditional use is not a different issue because it's never spelled out what the conditions are, how long they are, is it transferable and in the past we've run into problems with that so I just wanted clarification. Mike-under a conditional use, they're subject to anything, that can be obvious conditions that the council or the commission would want to put on there. I was thinking that was something that they had to come back every so often and re-up, but I don't see that.

Mayor Cury- and I can share with you from experience, we have conditional uses in the town particularly in the mobile homes and once they're out there they're out there forever. That's my thought but I want to make it clear to everybody here in Council and in our audience and those listening, in no way am I opposed to solar power at all but I think how we do it is very important for trying to manage the town and make it beautiful, appealing and things of nature. This could work very well but the conditions have appeared to us as, may I say pick and choose, and it becomes very dangerous.

So, let's move on. We want to dispense with a second reading...

Mike- and just so council is aware, if you dispense with the second reading that doesn't mean you're in favor or anything like that it just means you jump to the vote essentially.

Laura- so if we dispense of the second reading, we go straight into the vote of the ordinance. Then I'll go ahead and make the motion to dispense of the second reading. Laura has made the motion to dispense with the second reading, is there a second to this motion. There being no discussion, I would appreciate the roll call of the votes: Doug yes, Gary Yes, Rick yes, Jordan yes, Jan yes, Laura yes. The motion carries.

Now is there a motion to accept Ordinance O-2023-01-02 regarding solar panels?

Rick- so they've got to go get another permit, the conditional permit to do this? Mayor Cury- that's how it's written. Rick-I don't think we are where we need to be to do this right now. Laura-I agree. Rick-because if the problem is you're going to have all of this new stuff that we're talking about going on then somebody's going to move in here and they can either get a permit and put a mobile home in front of it or they can get a permit and put solar panels on top of it so I mean I'm not good with that at this point. I don't know how to go about getting this done, if somebody will come up with the plan that we can all follow and go by, then I'm for it but till we have that plan, I'm not for it.

Doug- what's the county doing Gary, with solar panels?

Gary- The County don't have Zoning. There is not a lot that are doing this. We do a couple in a year maybe. This stuff is expensive.

Doug- I'm with you. I think we should wait and then as it comes, if someone wants to do it come to council.

Laura- so Mr. Thomas do we need to go ahead and make the motion to pass it and then let that motion fail or ....

Mike-you can do it either way but let me just say there's nothing restricting solar panels in the town right now. so I guess the original thought of doing it this way was that yes, it may be an added use, however they've got to come in and get a conditional use permit to do it if that makes sense, I mean there's no there's no restriction saying you cannot have it right now.

Mayor Cury- I follow and have a thought on that, it just bugs me because it can get to be pick and choose and all kinds of things and while you're saying that someone could just put up a solar panel because there's nothing that says it doesn't but there's nothing that says it does, so sometimes in the code it's what it doesn't say you can do, it's implied you can't.

Rick-there is something in the code because we had somebody that was wanting to do a hot water thing that was solar on top of their roof, and this was when I was on the council last time and Tim Taylor said there was something in the code about it. (Inaudible)

Further Council discussion.

#### Item f- Interconnection Requirements-Second Reading (R-2022-12-01)

Jordan- we've got that 30-page interconnection, we were going to read it last meeting but we ran out of time. It's completely separate on this panel , so it's that's what county had worked on, like I worked on.

Laura- Really the IDA should not be working on the solar setting stuff, it is a utility and that falls on the council to do. I've been going to the IDA meetings and I asked them do you guys really understand the role of an IDA everybody said no. I said maybe we could have a meeting with the council, the IDA and Mr. Thomas and kind of just sit down and so we're all on the same page of what the IDA should be doing because it really isn't, I know that there's people on the IDA who are interested in this then but this really isn't.....

Doug- I mean my thinking it's industrial development and they should be involved in the technical part of it and it up to council as far as that....

Laura-I see where you are coming from but I think we are going to run into some...

Doug-well all I know....

Rick- are we going to build the solar panels?

Doug- oh no, there's companies that will come in and guarantee that much savings and say a church is wanting to do it, they'll come in and do it for you and they guarantee that much savings. I think there's a lot of the community, a lot of people in town that would like to do that and if we don't....

Mayor Cury- Doug, I'll get to the point and try to help you if I may. You want it done fast and I think if we give it to the commission they can make recommendations on what we just did and as far as the interconnection we probably need to have people with counsel to talk about it.

Jordan- I would be glad to answer any questions. As far as I know, like I said I'm not saying the IDA can't do that going forward I'm not getting into that , I'm just saying that we did do the research I was involved with it.

Laura- and I would like to see an electrical engineer here, I'd like to see the somebody from the electrical department here because my questions with all of the solar is, this is going to impact us as a town, it's going to impact the rates, it's going to impact and I want to know the impact of our contractual agreements with the power we're buying. I've got personally a ton of questions prior to moving forward and I mean this to no offense anyone sitting here, I couldn't answer the questions, but I don't want to hear those answers from any of us sitting here. I want to hear legally and professionally.

Mayor Cury- and I respect that, thank you very much let me get back on this part and Doug I was trying to answer your question about the previous part.

We are now on this Ordinance O-2023-01-03 which is about the Disconnection for Payments so please refresh my memory, Susan did we dispense with the second reading. Alright, have we had a motion to adopt this okay is there a motion to adopt ordinance 2023 -01-03.

Laura- I just have a quick question before we make that motion. I don't like passing things as an emergency except in a situation like this because it's winter and everything else but are we still not

disconnecting due to weather right now? do we need to pass this as an emergency is what I'm asking you?

Heather-we haven't been.

Laura -okay so we're good not to pass as an emergency.

Heather- even though it was just a suggestion at the time we haven't done it since then because personally I like a date and that helps coordinate a little better.

Mayor Cury- it's a valid question and what I'm understanding is, this document makes what we are doing legal.

Heather- well we weren't illegal before it just says after....

So is there a motion to approve this amendment. Laura makes the motion, is there a second. Jan seconds. There's a motion by Laura and a second by Jan to approve ordinance number O- 2023-01-03, is there any further discussion. Roll call vote please Susan. Doug yes, Gary yes, Rick yes, Jordan yes, Jan yes, Laura yes. Motion passes unanimously.

The next ordinance that we are going to be considering is Ordinance O-2023-01-04 and this is for mailing and payment of bills and Discontinuance of Service consequent upon failure to pay. Is there a motion to dispense with a second reading. Laura made the motion, Jan seconds. There being no discussion, roll call vote please Susan- Doug-yes, Gary-Yes, Rick- yes, Jordan- yes Jan- yes, Laura yes. Motion passes unanimously.

Now is there a motion to accept Ordinance O-2023-01-04. Laura makes the motion, Rick seconds the motion. Is there any discussion on this motion? there being no discussion, roll call vote: Doug-yes, Gary-Yes, Rick- yes, Jordan- yes Jan- yes, Laura yes. The motion carries unanimously.

The next thing we have on the agenda is, it's under Roman numeral eight, lowercase I, Resolution Interconnection Requirements, second reading. I don't believe, I don't think it's in here, it was in the other packet, yeah it was it was it's okay. I think we need to talk about what to do right now. This interconnection thing, it has to do with some of these connections yes that is the actual solar, it has to do with the electrical system connecting to the Town of Richlands Power what that is all about. What does council think would they rather have it, I'm sorry it's in my previous package.

Jan-so do we need to do that since we haven't done the other one?

Jordan-they are inter-dependent.

Mayor Cury- I think we can wait but that's my opinion, what do you think?

Mike- Really looking at everything from the top, is probably better to do interconnectivity first because then there's still no restriction on putting rooftop somewhere in town but if you have all these requirements before then, you've already taken care of that and then you can add it to zoning however you want. Certain zones you may not want it in R-1 since it's limited, you may want it in R-3 instead.

Doug- does that have a fee or anything, any fees of what we buy back?

Council discussion.

Mayor Cury- Would it behoove us as members of council, since Heather has a copy, but should we all have copies in front of us for our first reading and a potential second reading.

Craig Earls, Hidden Valley, Richlands, VA from the IDA -said that he can answer some questions. Craig-this particular piece here is actually a resolution as a policy to be adopted by the town as opposed to an ordinance so when the IDA looked at this, there was kind of two pieces that John threw at both of our teams. The zoning piece was thrown to the Planning Commission to already look at which is the piece....

Mayor Cury- your wording is correct.

....but since this was dealing with the electrical system it was the implementation of how to interconnect it and all the technical details, he went to our electrical team with so we kind of worked on it with Rick. You had asked about the buyback, that was one of our concerns is how's it going to impact the budget if you are buying back that electricity when we already have contractual agreements to buy blocks of power and so on in that case where there are no Buy Backs. It's just the technical details on interconnecting, that but it's not an ordinance, it doesn't have to be read.

It's just a policy, it's the resolve of the council, which is what a resolution is and it's easy to modify. that is the big one and there were some details in there too that made it a little bit tricky, which is the maximum size of each of those system, the total allotment of solar power into our system. So there were some technical nuances in there that had to be flushed out and John did that with our

electrical team and brought that back to our meetings, and that's kind of where this came from, and it was also modeled against other areas that have these solar policies in place.

Mayor Cury- like Bedford. I'm aware and that I just put it out there and I appreciate the work, Craig. My concern is, first I haven't read it, okay yeah and it has to be read twice, resolutions need to be read twice, no just once but we don't have it in front of us. I think from a planning perspective like the zoning piece of this which gets a little tricky. Thank you, Craig.

Doug- could we put it on next month's agenda?

Mayor Cury-absolutely, we need that in place. Doug, I think that's an excellent suggestion that we include this on the March agenda.

Appointment of a FOIA officer:

Mayor Cury- Every local government has to have a FOIA officer and they must be identified on the web page with their contact information. My suggestion is it would be a staff member who would be at the Town Hall, of course it's council's decision of who that is.

Heather - if you were to do this, I would think when we do hire a town manager, maybe that person would take that responsibility over. I think it would be temporary for now.

Laura made the motion to appoint Heather as FIOA Officer, Doug seconds. Is there any discussion.

Mike- I would just point out there is a special training that she would have to take and get her certificate and if I could mention something after you take the vote on that.

Mayor Cury-We have a motion, and a second on the floor. Laura made the motion Doug seconded the motion. Is there any further discussion. Council discussion.

I will ask for a roll call though please: Doug-yes, Gary-yes, Rick-yes, Jordan-yes, Jan-yes, Laura-yes That's a unanimous decision.

Mike- I just want to piggyback off this, of course we know we have to have a FOIA officer however every council member still has to do a FOIA training. I've looked into this, there's actually an online webinar that's scheduled for February 28th at 10 AM, so I'll give you the website, I can email it to everybody.

Rick- I think we have all just done it-

Jordan-Be sure to get the certificate because there's a big fine if you don't get it by January.

Laura- I got the certificate from mine and I emailed that John. I've still got copies of them.

Mike-so that's been taken care of with everybody. As long as you as long email that certificate to the clerk and you keep a copy of it as well, and you have to do that at least once every couple of years so I just wanted to point that out just in case, but if everybody's done it then you all are okay.

Council -We need to let them know that the link is broken.

Laura-I have to see the head of the FOIA Council next month. I will tell them that on the website it says the link is broken. But going forward I would like to see, maybe next January, for you to do this with us as a group just because I'm not saying anyone up here did not do it and just said they did. But I think for me, I think everybody in town knows FOIA has been my baby for three years and I think it's a super important part of what we're doing up here so if we could take a day next January when we've got to do it again and for you to do because there's a link for if the town attorney wants to do it, so I would love to see us do that so we're all on the same page and everything.

Item K- PCA

Rick-I'd like to make a motion to move the PCA to zero for the power bill for this month.

Doug-I'll second it to zero.

Discussion about PCA and reserves.

Jordan-asked how much that would set us back by removing it. Mayor Cury asked how it affected our power bill last month when we had a million-dollar power bill. Doug said it was variable, 8 to 10 percent.

Heather-it was \$60-\$80,000 and I would strongly urge caution in considering this, because we are not bringing in what we are billing out. If we could have billed out the PCA during this period, we could have possibly broke even. We will have to take a loss on that.

Doug-AEP is way cheaper than we are now. It is and our Reserve, last month went up, we're at 2.2 million dollars in reserve as of last month. We can absorb the \$60,000 or \$80,000 that she's talking about.



Jordan- as long as I have the numbers, I'm leaning toward it. I voted for it last time I just want to know the actual number.

Doug-I'll give you an example, about two years ago we had a reserve of around 1.4 million. Okay since all these increases, we've got a reserve of 2.2 million so we're making money I don't care what anybody tells you.

Jan-is that restricted?

Doug-we have a reserve, we do have to keep a reserve of 1.5 million at least, we have 2.2 as of 30 days ago.

Doug requested a meeting with Heather and the Electric Committee in the next week to look at it.

Jordan -can we subsidize these peoples' power bills with our reserves?

Doug-there are two kinds, we have do have restricted of a little over 2 million and restricted we've got 2.2 million. All in we've got reserves of over 4 million....

Jordan- and in that we could slowly let that out and subsidize these high power bills until we get things under control.

Laura-we potentially could but remember we have put out an RFP for this generator and that's what we want to use this money for. I'm going to vote to take the PCA to zero this month.

Jordan- I just want to have the data. I think it's a good thing we have that meeting and have a figure of how much is being taken out of the electric fund and what capacity and tell me what that means.

Laura-I think we can absorb the PCA, it's not going to be fun and I don't know if the people at home can read the Council packet but this month we have the highest bill. I have been coming to the meetings three years and I have never seen a power bill this high. It is almost 1.1 million dollars, meaning that the citizens are going to have to make up that cost, so by taking that PCA down we are trying to alleviate the burden on the citizens for this power bill.

Jordan-I do think we need a meeting because I've had several people come up to me and ask me to explain their power bill to them, especially the ones that are on a budget. I think it's important that whether we put a small talk on YouTube or on our web page. I'm ok with the PCA, I just want to make sure we can absorb it.

Doug-when we have that meeting, we need figures on what is being taken out of the electric fund and what is it used for.

Jordan-there is a shared service model, that is how I interpret it.

Doug-if we are paying \$700-\$800,000 for an expense, I want out of it. We need to track that money, where it's going. If it's being used for something other than the electric fund, we need to know.

Heather-who is going to do all of that work?

Doug-you don't do \$700-\$800,000 of work, and the finance office doesn't.

Heather-shared services is not necessarily going out and hooking up the electricity, but you take the bills, you spend your time billing and doing reports, things like that for the electric service. It is already spelled out, it shows you what percentage goes to...

Laura-I think what he is asking is...I was in a meeting one time and he asked the previous town manager how much time he spent on electric, he did the math on it and based on that math, asked him if he spent the 3 or 4 hours every day on the electric and he said yes and Doug said that everyone in town that has a question on their bills should come into town hall to talk to him about it. So I think what he is saying is that he wants to see if these figures are accurate or to see if we can make them more accurate.

Heather- These figures and all of these percentages are based on these people's job duties by the accountant, I didn't set those, the previous town manager didn't set them. They are based on their job duties on what they are doing each day. When we get the new auditor, I do plan on mentioning some of that to them. Currently mine is at 70 percent governmental, but in reality, I spend hours on the phone on those conference calls with Blue Ridge and going over power bills.

Laura-so what is our solution here because I don't want to sit here for the next three and a half years arguing about shared costs.

Heather-my suggestion is that when we do get the new accountant, is to possibly re-evaluate that where we don't have a director of utilities, it does place a lot more time on the people here.

Doug- I was given a percentage of what each person makes and I did the math, I took their salaries and it did not add up.

Heather-if you just looked at their salary, then that's not accurate. You need to consider the benefits, insurance, etc. of that person as well. So you basically need to double it.

Mayor Cury- I appreciate the discussion. We have a motion and a second for the PCA, so at this point I consider we've discussed it and I would suggest that the electric committee, which is Doug, Jordan, Shea and Seth meet and hash that out and bring suggestions.

Jordan- Five percent is what I get PCA of the total, I did 1.1 million divided or 60, 000 divided by 1.1 million.

Mayor Cury- so can we move ahead with this measure. Let's go ahead and call for roll call vote:

Doug-yes, Gary-yes, Rick-yes, Jordan-yes, Jan-yes, Laura-yes. Motion carries unanimously.

Now Doug I get all your points and I think you're bringing up some good things and Jordan is also and that's what I would hope you can come to the Council next time, either one of you can enlighten us.

Doug- Heather could you come up with a date that you can meet with the electric committee.

Heather-it's going to be slim, I'll work with you, but I cannot come up with a date at this time, but I will be happy to share that information.

Doug-you can't meet with us an hour one day?

Heather-I don't think you understand, I 'm spending like 50 hours a week here sometimes. Susan has already been here 13 hours today.

Jordan-I do believe there is a problem with bandwidth at the town hall. But if I can have source data, that would be awesome. Can I have it in xlsx format?

Mayor Cury- I would suggest in order to proceed and facilitate the meeting, we should discuss this in your time what's available, you guys can get with her afterwards.

Doug-But all I'm saying we can't make a logical decision unless we know the electric fund, what's going on, where the money's going, how much Reserve you've got. We're flying blind and you owe the council that time.

Heather- I'm just doing the best I can, I don't know what else to tell you. I don't have time for that right now. I was going to suggest to the council to make a list of the top three things you

want to work on because I'm only one person, the people that work here are doing the best they can. We're without a town manager, we're without a clerk, we are without an engineer and we can't live here. So I suggest we pick two or three different things and work on those things collectively as a council and then we'll start narrowing it down until we get these positions.

Doug- What I'm looking at- I work 13-14 hours a day, and I'm looking at a restaurant that is not going to survive. Their electricity bill is twenty-eight hundred dollars a month. You are going to run every business....

Heather-even if I met with you tomorrow, the bill is already done, they've already read it again.

Doug-we need to make suggestions, because Council is empowered to make decisions, not you.

Heather-I don't want to make those decisions.

Doug-you've got to give us the information.

Heather-But you are going to have to get people in here to fill those positions.

Mayor Cury-Members of Council and management, let's move forward please. We are at a counterproductive point right now.

Next item-L mowing contracts

Laura-I believe it is time to put that out for bid, I don't want to see the town overrun with weeds so I'm going to make a motion that we put the mowing contract out for bid. There's a motion on the floor to put the Mowing contract out to bid. Jan seconds the motion. Any further discussion.

Gary-when does mowing season start? It's getting close.

Doug- do you want to put a thing in there for trash too? Who's going to do the trash pickup?

Laura- This is mowing, I think that might muddy the waters.

Heather -I think what Doug's talking about is trash pickup that that is done by the people that do the mowing. Not like actual trash.

Laura- I think we put it for mowing and hopefully maybe the mowers will pick it up while they're mowing so they don't just mow over it.

Doug-I just want to tell you when the trash starts building up in town, we're going to have complaints.

Laura-we already have complaints, poor Jan is overrun with trash complaints.

Doug-for the trash on the sides of the road, I don't think we've had anyone pick it up in 3-4 weeks, have we? I'm talking about litter on the highways.

Laura-we don't have a litter contract anyway.

Doug-I think the mowers do it.

Laura-then let's put it in the mowing contract, if that's what we want to do. I would defer to Heather on that, would you like the mowing contract to include trash?

Heather-I would have to review the current contract, I don't remember anything in there specifically about trash, but I will have to review that. As you know, we are trying to save money. I don't like how it is currently set up; how can we get a clean history. How do we know when we get an invoice and it's been 4 weeks ago, then we don't know what's been done.

Laura-now maybe that Covid restrictions are lifting, we could talk to the County or some Community Service Group, so I will keep my motion the way it is for now. The contract says they will pick up trash as they see it however as needed.

Heather-it wasn't really clear...

Laura-we have been getting some hefty trash bills.

Heather-In order for me to make sure it's getting done, and not me personally, but if they had a work order for say, XYZ Street has a bunch of trash, can you go check it out but then if that work order is checked off then I know it was done. But if there's just a contractor, then how are they deciding what's getting done. So I don't know that it got done, because by the time I get the invoice and try to verify it, and no one to my knowledge has told them to go do that street and no one went to follow up on it because we didn't know what they were doing.

Mayor Cury-Heather and Members of Council-there is a motion on the floor and you are leaving your motion as is? To the mowing contract, yes. And Jan, you seconded that motion. Any discussion.

Jordan-one quick question. We are going to put this out for bid and obviously we are going to pick a low bid or whatever the criteria is, do we want to in-tandem, have someone, I don't know who's qualified to do this, it's not me, to see how much it would be for us to get back into mowing just so we have numbers to say yes or no. I don't want it to be now we've got the bids, now let's go do it. A, B, yes, no-let's roll. Is that possible?

Laura-my goal, and I've been very vocal about bringing back our own town crew to mow, but I was told when I had asked Heather about it before we have equipment and things that need to be purchased, so I don't think that's going to be possible this year.

Mayor Cury-I can share with you a little experience, when I was on Council the first time, Jan, you were here, and we had our own crews and there is advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages that I saw was that they were under the direct control of the manager. So if the manager says you need to go here and do this, you can do it and it helps that way. But I would suggest that we have two things going on here.

Doug-It would take probably 8 people to keep all of the mowing done in town. If you multiply that per employee of around \$60,000 to \$70,000, that's what it will cost you, insurance and all of that. You are talking about an impossible thing for the budget, that would be like \$500,000.00.

Jordan-I'm for the cheaper one, just so we are clear.

Rick-I have seen a check for \$74,000 thousand for one month before. If you add that up by month, you are talking about \$750,000.00.

Jordan-I would just like to have those numbers.

Doug-what you are seeing, Rick and I'm not defending anyone.....(inaudible)

Mayor Cury-moving on to the next agenda item-M

M-Rec Park Credit Card usage-Laura suggested looking to if it would be more cost efficient for the Rec Park not to use credit cards and be on a cash only basis since we can't recoup the fees that we are charged each time someone swipes a card and to also check on installing an ATM. Heather will ask Jessica to compare costs and get those figures together.

N-Jordan-suggested a pilot work from home program one day per week to improve productivity and to attract job talent since with the budget we can't offer higher wages and benefits are often

what keeps an employee. Mayor Cury suggested he bring it back in a formatted form so they could see it. Heather suggested if anything, they could up with a policy for work from home. Council discussed and tabled it for now due to the fact that Covid restrictions are over and that it can't be offered to all employees and would not be a fair benefit to just offer it to some employees.

O-Jordan-Technology and the Rec Dept-Suggested running fiber to Critterville from the water plant (who already has it) for security cameras for safety and to deter vandalism and to see the possibility of running fiber over the Rec Dept so as to alleviate the cost of paying for internet, etc. Estimated the cost of running fiber to be around \$5,000 to \$7,000. Asked for comparison costs.

P-Rick-Zoning Permits-has had some issues, discussed with interim town manager and would like to see the Town mirror the State Zoning laws. He mentioned an issue on Purcell Road with a Carport, a mobile home in the Eagle Mobile Home Park and Corky Cox on North Street needing a driveway put in due to the Town's paving over the years taking up her property.

Heather-I feel like Rick is saying that he making a suggestion that we look at what we have versus what the state has and then obviously you would have to come back together and discuss that again.

Rick-it seems that our rules change every time someone different reads it. I think we it needs to be the Virginia Code and we need to honor it.

Laura-when I bought my home in Hidden Valley and we had the survey, the neighbor's garage was 10 feet on my property, we had to sell it to them.

Rick-what do we need to with this one? This mobile home hasn't moved since the permit was issued years ago but after having the survey, it was denied based on the footage from the line.

Mike-the initial thought of that is, you have a Zoning Administrator and they make a decision of whether or not somebody can do something then that's why we have the Board of Zoning Appeals. They have a certain formula to go by to decide whether they can get around the zoning or the permit.

Heather-we have these rules and we are going to have to go by them.

Rick-the mobile home was originally installed in 2011 but he has been since 2020 trying to get a building permit. The original permit was given in 2011 before the survey was done. The mobile home hasn't moved since 2011. So why are we not approving this?

Heather-as long as it follows the rules, it should be passed or denied based on those rules unless you all change them. I think he just wants to have somebody look at it to see how it was passed in 2011 and now it doesn't pass. I will call Paul Hackworth, but I can't guarantee that I will be able to fix it.

Mayor Cury-asked Heather if she could communicate with Rick after speaking with Paul.

Rick-Jacob Hess of Purcell Road-wanting to place a new building where an existing building is, again problems with the setbacks.

Mike-asked Rick if he is wanting him to look into mirroring the state for the zoning. Rick said that was what he wanted. Mike asked for a consensus of council. He said that he can't guarantee he would have the whole thing redone but that he would look into it. Even if we just adopt the state we will have to go through and change the code.

Rick-Cornelia Cox-Last Fall, me and Rod visited Mrs. Cox's house, (and John), she needs a driveway. We have talked about it and I feel like it has kind of got swept under the table, but she is walking probably 2,000 ft just to carry her groceries in. She has no place to park, she used to have a driveway in the water line and the Town pushed her driveway over through the years with paving. She's lost her driveway. My suggestion is to go over there, take a little dirt out, add a little gravel, having one car parking in front of her house.

Mayor Cury-did we vote on that. Heather-I feel like they did a long time ago but I can't remember what happened to it. Mayor Cury-a research of the minutes will show that we voted on it.

Laura-we did vote on it and we asked Mr. Thomas to look into whether there was an easement.

Mike-I do know that I have a file on that at the office. I did not find an easement with her name or the former 2 or 3 owners. Nathan or John had sent me at one point, a sub-division and when I looked, there was an intention of putting in a subdivision plat on file with the clerk's office. It said it would be recorded immediately after this deed, but I was not able to find that. So I don't know if it was ever a road for that where it went into her property or for the Town to be on her property.

Rick-Our road and our water line is on her property, about 6 foot. All she is asking is for us put gravel and take the hump out so she can pull up on it and park. It's no big deal.

Laura-legally could you draw up something for her to sign?



Mike-do you want a Hold Harmless or an Easement?

Rick-we need an easement for our water line. That's all we need.

Rick-when are we moving forward with Town Manager and all of that?

Mayor Cury-I think that will be under Heather's report.

Laura-I may be incorrect, but I think that we might need two for personnel, but two different situations and we do need to talk about advertising for the Clerk and the committee positions.

Mayor Cury-Town Manager will be in closed session and another personnel issue.

Laura-did we officially form the events committee at the last meeting? We might need to do that so we can advertise for those positions.

Mayor Cury-next on the list is Personnel Closed Session, Roman Numeral eight A, for Code Section 2.2-3711-A 1. Is there a motion to go into Closed Session for Personnel pursuant to this?

Mike-before there is a motion made, under Attorney Comments there is a contract review for the forensic audit, just to cover us, I may want to mention that while we are in closed session. That would be under Code Section 2.2-3711 A8 for contract negotiation.

Mayor Cury-is there a motion to go into executive session for personnel 2.2-3711 A1 and contract negotiations 2.2-3711-A-8. Rick makes the motion, Jan seconds. Any discussion. Roll call vote please:

Doug-yes, Gary-yes, Rick-yes, Jordan-yes, Jan-yes, Laura. Motion carries. We will move into closed session.

This meeting of the Council will reconvene.

The mayor is looking for a motion to come out of closed session. Rick makes the motion.

There's a motion and a second please, Jan makes the second. Any discussion.

Mike- yes, we have somebody missing.

Mayor Cury- yes Doug Ratliff had to be excused, he was sick, he's gone home. We need to put that in the minutes Susan.

At 12:15 am, Doug Ratliff left the meeting.

Mayor Cury-there's a motion on the floor in a second. Susan would you do a roll call vote this is just to come out of something certification. Gary-yes, Rick-yes, Jordan-yes, Jan- yes, Laura- yes. Motion carries. Now we need a motion and a second from the members of council that you're certifying that nothing was discussed other than Personnel for code number 2.2-3711 A1 and contract negotiations 2.2-3711-A8 by voting affirmatively you are saying that we did not discuss anything other than personnel and contract. Laura makes the motion, Gary seconds. Any discussion on this motion?

Mike -Mayor as far as, obviously we can't, I mean you all can take the vote certify but I think we do need to put in the minutes that we will need councilman Ratliff to certify as well so if we can make that note next meeting that he'll need to certify what we've discussed.

Mayor Cury- let's go ahead and do this and I will make a separate deal out of it. Roll call vote please. Gary-Yes, Rick-yes, Jordan-yes, Jan-yes, Laura yes. The motion carries.

Now I will seek a motion to require that Councilman Ratliff certify at our next meeting or as soon as possible, at our next meeting, under a vote that he nothing was discussed he will have to agree nothing was discussed other than personnel and contract negotiations pursuant to 2.2-3711-A1 and 2.2-3711-A8.

Is there a motion to that effect? Laura makes the motion, Jan seconds. Roll call vote please:

Gary Yes Rick yes Jordan yes Jan yes Laura yes. So by the motion of counsel, Councilman Ratliff will provide a certified vote at the next Council, I think it needs to be in public.

Now we're ready for attorney comments.

Laura- Mayor Cury, I would like to make a motion that we direct Heather to provide an RFP to seek the recruitment for the town manager.

Mayor Cury- there's a motion on the floor, is there a second. Rick seconds.

Any discussion. I will ask, we don't have to have a roll call vote, everyone clearly say aye if you're in favor of this motion say aye. There are no nays. The ayes have it, it is unanimous.

Next, t we have attorney comments, contract review.

Mike-inaudible....virtual meeting and participate in remotely and I'll just ask for you all to review that. If you have any questions let me know and we can maybe present that at the next meeting, I just wanted to get that in your all's hands.

Mayor Cury- thank you and we will take that up at the next meeting.

Town manager report-Heather- I just have a few things .....basically from the January meeting, I just want to just let you all know that I was unable to get the RFP out for the generator mainly because I was sick and the person that was going to help me was sick but I plan to follow up on that and I will let you all keep you posted on there and Seth has agreed to help me with that. Also, you'll have to forgive me because I didn't attend any of these meetings and I don't really know, but the Pop-up Richlands- where they get \$1500 or of a Max of \$5,000.

There've been a couple requests, the first one I had was under the \$1500 but

this one is actually and I don't, I'm just going to be quite honest, I don't have time to go

through and review these right now um and take that on, to go to those meetings and see what's going on and can't... (inaudible)..... that are there and bring me back information and it was there from the start that's still here now. So basically we had one business and I'm not going to say the name so I don't know and they have submitted to what I believe is an acceptable and qualifying receipts and this amount is over \$1500. All I'm asking is for this one time if the council would give me authority to write one check instead of keep coming back, because she's already submitted receipts up to \$5,000 as long as our review of it is approved and it does qualify as rent, utilities and I think the other one was internet. I think that's the only ones I have been given receipts for.

I would like have to have council's blessings to proceed with that but it is with my understanding from that would be done with that person's business.

Mayor Cury- Heather, would you like a motion to support that. Yes, that would be great. Is there a motion to support payment over fifteen hundred dollars by our town manager to make this payment, as she has the receipts to make it right.

Laura-this one would actually be up to six.

Heather-well the other is the VCC.-

Laura-so you are writing two separate checks? Yes, two separate meetings.

Mayor Cury-so who wants to make this motion? Jordan- I'll make that motion.

Mayor-would you mind clarifying.

Jordan- I make the motion to give the town manager to the authority to exceed fifteen hundred dollars for this one time up to five thousand.

Jan seconds. any discussion.

Roll call vote please: Gary-yes, Rick-yes, Jordan-yes, Jan-yes, Laura-yes

The motion carries, it is unanimous. Thank you, members of council.

Heather- I do want to mention and I don't really know how far in advance we need to put that out yet, but I do have a calendar for some budget work sessions that will go along and start hopefully March and how do you all wish that I put that out there?

Mike-I think last year we didn't have to be there.

So also before I send these out, it's super hard to be here at 12 o'clock and I'm sure for you all too, for those that have jobs tomorrow but do you all feel like and there are more meetings than usual and I did that just because I can't do this, but this is.....I know Gary, you and you all work but is there any way that we can do sometimes at 4:30? I just feel like this is a very long day to stay focused, it's just difficult. I feel like if we can do these work sessions earlier...

Gary-I just need to know advance I'll try my best to be here.

Jordan- I would like to be there....

Council discussion.

Mayor Cury- I want to say thank you for clarifying that, work sessions and they're more properly called work session sand not workshops. Picky, but it's true and I want to mention that because we don't vote at work sessions.

Laura- but we can, we can.

Mayor Cury- we can't.

Laura-according to FIOA we can, I know it's what you guys haven't done but if we are gathered together in a meeting, three or more, it's considered a meeting according to the law.

Mike-it's considered a meeting and that is why it has to be advertised but it is with the understanding that you all are just having a work session, that you all are not going to vote.

Laura-basically, yes, right it's a courtesy.

Mayor Cury- is everybody good with that consensus.

Jordan- I am okay with starting earlier, I just have to know ahead of time.

Laura-I'll make a motion that we allow Heather to advertise the position for the clerk. Gary seconds. Any discussion. No discussion, I will ask for a voice vote, make it very clear. All in favor say aye, any opposed, none. Motion carries.

Laura-Mayor Cury-I also make a motion that we advertise the positions for the open committee positions, not necessarily in the paper.

Mayor Cury- do you want to have some wording on that Laura, some help.

Laura-I don't mind to do that, I don't mind to collect them if people want. I don't mind waiting another month, so I'll withdraw that motion but I do want to make a motion that we formally form the events committee tonight so that when we do advertise we can include that. There's a motion on the floor to form an events committee. Rick seconds. Is there any discussion. There being no discussion, a voice vote, clearly say if you're in favor of this motion, say aye. Any opposed? None.

Motion carries unanimously.

Mayor Cury-so we're going to wait on that for a moment. So that's all committees, Laura?

Laura- and commissions and if that's ok. The motion was events committee that we were going to officially form it so that way when we do open it up for (inaudible) and we do the IDA, Rec, I think there's Planning Commission too, that we include the events committee and allow people to tell us in a formal way that they want to serve on these things.

Jordan- I can volunteer to do the IDA and the job description if that's what's needed. I just feel like they only have four people it's super hard for them to get together. I can't commit to doing all

of them, but I can gladly help with the IDA one. Writing an advertisement, sure that's fine as long as they're approved by someone.

Council discussion.

Jordan -I will send you something, if you like it you post it. Whoever has that power.

Mayor Cury- and then Laura you can do the same. All at one time, why don't you do

Planning and IDA and Rec.

Jordan- yes, I can, let me write that down. I will commit to doing those.

Mayor Cury- Laura, and you're doing events.

Council Member Reports- these are non-voting items.

Jordan- the only thing I want to bring up, I brought up the tractor trailer earlier. I just wanted to give a shout out to our officers, it was Charlie and TJ. They did an awesome job responding to that. They were there in minutes and helped that guy out a lot. Also I would like to say great job to the town. They have been, even though we did get a complaint earlier about the drains, which they needed some help in the Valley, I have seen them out there fixing and doing maintenance on them so I just want to say great job.

Gary- I probably should have had this brought up on the agenda change, but Rick had passed them out. After the meeting that we had with the Rec Park, all of us I went over and had Jordan to meet us there and this is sort of the priority things that I went through and looked at that need to be corrected that are pretty hazardous at this point.

That's what we were asked to do, look at it, you know to do an evaluation of the list that they had and then sort of break it down as to what's priority right now. So this is a list, here's some photos you can look. This price is material only. That one right there right in your left hand is just aluminum sign covering a big hole at the entrance of that gate. And that's the bridge and water erosion that's eating the foundation out from that catwalk due to that drainage right there. Not safe, leads to the gates at the pool. (inaudible) ... that's the tennis court, that's the garage door....

Rick-you know, I've got a different thought on the tennis court after I've been over there. I think we need to take the fence down and make a parking lot out of the tennis court because nobody uses it. They need parking.

Gary-or take it down and put ballards in front of the heat pump because it's hazardous and just eliminate the fence steel posts. But those are pretty much the priorities on the list.

Mayor Cury-this is something we'll have to take into consideration. So, totals of all this that you would call priorities, \$10,700 with no labor, just material. Thank you, Gary. We probably should discuss this in our next one.

Gary- right and I've got some more but they can wait till next week.

Laura- at the Public Safety Committee meeting, the fire chief needs to know how long the fire department needs to keep their paperwork. I don't know the answer to that but I would imagine you could find out for us if you could. You know the paperwork, remember how we were talking about the shredding and the police department went through papers from like 1952 and Chief

Reynolds was wondering how long he has to keep whatever he's got over there.

The next thing was around a year ago the council voted to put that RFP out for delinquent tax collection and it never got put out. I know that's not under you but I think collecting those delinquent taxes is going to really help. The council voted because at the time I was at the podium and the council voted to move forward with that, he came and gave a presentation but I believe they said they wanted to put it out for RFP and I think it might have been the first month that Seth White was here but they took a vote on it to move forward with that RFP but the RFP never went out. So whatever month Seth was appointed it would be in his first two months that he was here. Also I have had a ton of calls about code enforcement and I thought tonight we were going to have that Ordinance. Do you have an update on when we will have that?

Mike- I have talked to Adam, I had met with Adam and Chief Holt and John and had worked on codes that they had requested me work on and when I was sitting there John had told me oh yeah this has been updated. So what I've told Adam is I'm going to come down here okay and hopefully there is an updated one or maybe even have to go through all of the last meetings to make sure that the ordinances were getting updated. But ordinances that we've done here I've made a note, but obviously there was a lag from even before we were hired from probably 2018 to probably about when we got involved in about 2021, middle of 2021. Where it is we don't know if it's been updated.

Laura- but we are working on that. Ok, and the last thing. I have had a couple calls about wondering if we could update the signs and painted arrows right there on that strip like where Bad Axery and the CD Salon are, how it turns back up and goes straight. Some people were saying that I guess we need more notice maybe.

Heather-I don't know I mean I'll check on it. Are you talking about the painting on the Road? The calls that I had said that the arrows that say left lane is going to turn back up are too close to the turn so the people don't know until they get right up on the turn and it's causing stuff there so they were wondering if we could stick a sign or paint an arrow a little bit further back for advanced warning.

Rick- I'll loan them the Arrow if they need it to paint.

Heather- is there an arrow already there or is what you're saying is that it's too close?

Laura- I think there's one there. I'll be honest with you, I haven't paid attention but the people in those buildings have said to me that the arrow is too close to the turn so people don't know far enough in advance and then they get right up on it and have to wait to try to merge over into the right lane or whatever.

Heather -okay and my only other thing if you don't mind is, I understand that that got possibly left off and I don't know, I just vaguely remember that discussion. I'm not going to remember that and anyone who comes about is not going to remember that and I won't be able to do that either, but if you could say two months from now, remind us.

Laura- I always keep a list of what I talk about.

Heather and so if you don't mind like putting it you down. Thank you, I appreciate it, thank you  
Laura.

So Councilman Ratliff is not here he was sick and had to leave so we're moving on to Jan.

Jan- I have a big long list but I am going to forego some of it.

The Food Pantry wanted to know if we could forego their fee on the dumpster or put a locked lid on it because everybody in the community is using it. I said I don't believe we could forego the fee but maybe we could get a lock. If it has a lid, they can get a lock and put on it but we have to have a key in order to empty it.



Jan- what is the policy for using the stage?

Heather-I don't know that there is a policy. If there is one I don't know about it.

Jan- I had someone that asked about it that I referred to you.

Heather I did talk to him and let him know you have to fill out an event application and with that I went ahead and directed it down to Chief Holt and he'll bring it back up to me with his knowledge and I sign it or not.

Jan- okay well I didn't know what the policy was, or the fee. I don't know that there is a fee for the application and for the use of it.

Jan-the same sad story about the trash pickup. Is the street department doing any of that trash pick-up. I mean just the actual picking up of trash on the streets because I've had several complaints.

Heather -not to my knowledge, or not I mean that if you have something happen, I'm sure they will but as far as like just going around picking up trash, no they are not doing that.

Jan- the yard over there where you come out of Brooklyn Edition with all those vehicles. Does the town ever sell off some of that. It's trashy.

Heather- are you talking about behind the street department. Normally the chief does that and I've been tasked with this and I think they're going to have an auction but it's not I think we have more stuff. They're real visible now that they've cleaned the rest but we're going to have, they're going to auction a lot of that and me and Chief Holt working on getting everything together and I think he's going to give it out to somebody that's just with that because I think that's been over there for some time most of it anyway.

Jan- think they moved it from one place to the other. One more thing if you would check on this for me, you may not have the answer tonight, but is the town getting the gate fees at the Rec Park or is one of the organizations getting them?

Heather- when they have the kids games, like when I go to Alyssa's games, they collect the fee and they have somebody in the Rec Park, we keep the fee.

The only time that I know of recently and this is just recently, because if they have like something else that it's going to require a lot of people and instead of you normally either make them pay to rent the facility or and have the person, if they're going to charge a fee they have to provide the

person to collect the fee. I don't know about when like places rent that if that person then turns around and charges. I know that there was the wrestling tournament that went along those lines, they happen to do the staffing because they felt like that was the best option but as far as everything else yes there is somebody that works for us sitting there collecting the fee at the door.

Jan- I have another question, who gets the fees from where the kids play basketball?

Heather-that's to cover the cost to run that sport, we have t-shirts, we have refs, we have extra people that we pay you know to collect those fees to be there. We're open on Mondays that we're not normally open on to get those games in, it is an all in encumber some kind of fee. I mean that's normally always what that those fees like that a registration fee goes to pay for the cost to run that sport.

Mayor Cury-I think we're ready for the last topic, Mayor's Comments.

I'm sorry, Rick.

Rick- I've got one thing, well I've got a whole bunch but I'm ready to go to the house.

The Simmons Rand property, it's on Iron Street, they're going to give us the property, we don't have no property, they're cleaning up the thing so I'm ready to take it.

Mayor Cury- I think I will be able to provide more information at the next Council, I don't have specific things to disclose but I will be able to provide more information and I will include everybody. Did I leave anybody out and please pardon me for doing that.

Mayor's Comments -I had several things to talk about but I'm going to keep it to the Section House. I had talked months ago about us having Jefferson Scholars and they are coming, and their names are John Ragosta, Dr. Ragosta and Bill Barker. John Ragosta is a published author, he teaches law at the University of Virginia, he is a practice lawyer, he's a beekeeper and he also is a Monticello Scholar. He is a world-renowned scholar on Jefferson and while that might sound boring it absolutely is not, he talks about Jefferson and his influence on today's world such as an education and government, very interesting. He's a lighthearted guy and not an elitist snob. The next thing I want to mention is coming with him is Bill Barker. Bill Barker is known around the world as the most famous first-person interpreter of Thomas Jefferson and to substantiate that as you might know Jefferson was an ambassador to France so when they need someone to interpret Thomas

Jefferson at the Palace of Versailles they call for Bill Barker. They're coming here and I'm very proud of that and it's not me it's the Section House and so that end we have two events going on and this is the Section House and Town of Richlands working in conjunction with the University of Virginia, Monticello, Tazewell County Public Schools and the college. So we're reaching out to all the people that we need support from and we have the event on March the 28th is an event at the Section House. It's a catered dinner and John Abiel will be there and to that end we have limited space. It's fifty dollars a ticket, that money is being used to pay them. They don't come for free but they're wonderful people if a member of council is interested I must know by tomorrow if you want to so we can reserve space and the space is limited and to that end you should make your check payable to the Town of Richlands and stub it Section House or Jefferson tickets, whatever, so that it's clearly known to Lettie when she gets it what it's for. Then on Wednesday the 29th, they will be going to Southwest Virginia Community College and meeting in the Ratliff Commons for our students, there will be a good many college students there, Richlands High School will send a large contingent of students through the history club and possibly Graham and Tazewell, but I know definitely Richlands. So these are real opportunities to put our town on the map and put our best foot forward so you're all invited but I do need to know about tomorrow and then you make your own checks to town thank you.

Mayor-does anyone anybody have anything else to share.

Heather- I just have a little something and I know we talked about it earlier but just to just to retouch on what Ginger, what she was inviting you all to, I'm pretty sure is this weekend yes, so I won't be able to go as we have travel ball.

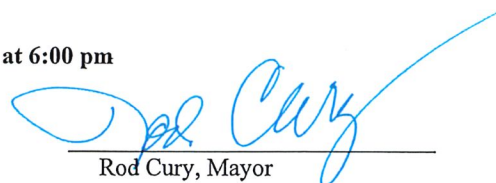
Mayor Cury- so put in mental note or write it on your palm of your hand and let's go. Be supportive.

Rick- I 'd like to make a motion that we adjourn, Jordan seconds. Motion carries unanimously

Adjourned at 12:53 am

**Next regular Council meeting March 14, 2023, at 6:00 pm**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Susan Whitt, Acting Clerk

  
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Rod Cury, Mayor