



MIDDLEBURG TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 13, 2025



PENDING APPROVAL

PRESENT: Vice Mayor Chris W. Bernard
Councilmember Pamela Curran
Councilmember J. Kevin Daly
Councilmember Morris E. “Bud” Jacobs
Councilmember C. Darlene Kirk
Councilmember Peter A. Leonard-Morgan
Councilmember Cindy C. Pearson

STAFF: Danny Davis, Town Manager
Martin Crim, Town Attorney
Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk
William M. Moore, Deputy Town Manager
Shaun Jones, Chief of Police
Angela Fletcher, Town Treasurer/Finance Director

ABSENT: Mayor Trowbridge M. Littleton

The Town Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia held their regular monthly meeting on Thursday, March 13, 2025 in the Town Hall Council Chambers, located at 10 West Marshall Street. Vice Mayor Bernard led Council and those attending in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. The roll was called at 6:00 p.m.

Public Hearing & Approval

FY '25 Real Property Tax Rate

Town Manager Davis reminded Council that due to the increase in average home values, the proposed tax rate would result in an increase in revenues of more than one percent over last year, which necessitated the need for a public hearing. He further reminded the members that based on their previous discussions, they were proposing a tax rate of \$.12 per \$100 assessed value, which would result in an increase of three percent (3%) in the real property tax bill for the average property owner. Mr. Davis noted that the increase was in anticipation of inflationary costs. He advised that the Council could vote on the tax rate following the public hearing if desired or it could discuss it further; however, a vote was needed at the next Council meeting so the rate could be transmitted to Loudoun County for billing purposes.

No one spoke and the public hearing was closed.

In response to inquiries from the Council, Town Manager Davis confirmed the proposal was for a decrease in the tax rate. He confirmed that because the assessed real property values were increasing, the bills would increase even with the decreased tax rate.

Councilmember Pearson moved, seconded by Councilmember Kirk, that Council adopt a Real Property Tax Rate of 12.00 cents per \$100 of assessed value for the Calendar Year 2025/Fiscal Year 2026.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Mayor Littleton (by roll call vote)

Special Recognitions by Council

Vice Mayor Bernard recognized Town Clerk North for organizing Middleburg's first Annual Citizens Academy and the staff for preparing their presentations. He reported that there were eight participants and advised that all of the attendees had nothing but great things to say. Mr. Bernard thanked the citizens who participated in the Academy. He noted that they all said they learned a lot and advised that they had no idea what went into running a small town. Mr. Bernard noted that he was excited to see what the Town did with next year's event. He acknowledged all of the moving parts associated with the Academy and noted that the participants even took a field trip.

Staff Reports

February 2025

Town Clerk North thanked the Mayor, Council, and staff for their participation in the Citizens Academy. She noted that while she received the recognition for it, it was a true team effort. Ms. North reported that the Marshall Street end of the east arcade for the Town Hall would be closed on March 17th-18th so a contractor could complete the installation of the lightning protection system for the Phase II portion of the project and certify the entire lightning protection system for the building.

Town Manager Davis reported on behalf of Business Development & Community Partnerships Director MacIntyre, who was out ill. He reminded Council of Wellness Day schedule for April 12th at the Middleburg Community Center. He encouraged the members to sign up for the 5K and Fun Race that would be held. Mr. Davis reported that the Middleburg Arts Council and Cultural & Community Events Committee would hold a joint meeting to discuss the merging of the two committees. He further reported that the Market Salamander building had been purchased, which the new owner intended to use as a restaurant. Mr. Davis advised that the Mount Defiance building was also sold and opined that it would have a retail and café component. He advised that the former Moda space at the corner of Liberty and Washington Streets had been leased. Mr. Davis noted that there were a few vacant storefronts remaining and reported that Business Development & Community Partnerships Director MacIntyre continued to work with the property managers and/or owners to send them any potential clients. He advised that otherwise, she was continuing to work on the Town's other events. In response to an inquiry from the Council, Mr. Davis advised that he had heard that the new steakhouse's goal was to open in the mid to fall of this year; however, he had not received an update since their last communication a couple of months ago.

Vice Mayor Bernard noted that one of the issues that arose during the Citizens Academy was the appearance of the vacant storefronts. He further noted that people assumed the Town could make the property owners clean up their facades; however, the Town was very limited in what it could control. Mr. Bernard suggested the staff look into whether there was a way to incentivize the property owners to keep their storefronts tidy, as that did impact the neighbors.

Town Manager Davis advised that in cases in which the building was in disrepair, the Town could take a proactive approach with the property owners. He noted that another approach would be to work with the Arts Council or local artists to add some artwork to the windows to provide a visual, so the buildings did not appear to be vacant. He opined that the property owners were amenable to this, as the idea was raised during Christmas in Middleburg; however, the timing did not work out. Mr. Davis suggested this could be a valuable effort by the arts community and noted that it could be coordinated by Ms. MacIntyre.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted that the property owners would have a better chance of renting their spaces if they were maintained better.

Vice Mayor Bernard opined that some people would volunteer to pull weeds in front of the buildings. He suggested they just needed to be kept from looking like they were dilapidated.

Town Manager Davis reported that the antique store that used to be on Washington Street had moved to South Madison Street and had been renamed Roger on Madison. He noted that they would reopen in their new location shortly.

Chief Jones reported that he hosted a police chief's roundtable discussion in February, with approximately twenty chiefs participating, the majority of which were from small towns. He noted that they also had representatives present from the Attorney General's Office and the Virginia State Police, as well as the Dean and Assistant Dean from Liberty University's Criminal Justice Program. Chief Jones reported that the department was working to prepare for the upcoming special Town events. He advised that a conditional employment offer had been extended to a police officer and noted that, assuming he passed his physical and drug testing, this would put the department at full employment. Chief Jones advised that the officer's start date would be March 31st. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he advised that the roundtable discussion topics included police officer recruitment and retention; issues and challenges facing small agencies; and, training, including how they could work together on it. Chief Jones noted that they also started an email group so they could stay in communication with one another and advised that they were looking into a monthly Zoom meeting to discuss what was occurring and to support one another.

Vice Mayor Bernard thanked Chief Jones for the recruitment chart he included in his monthly report and opined that it would be helpful to see the trends. He suggested the need for some context on where things ended and why. Mr. Bernard questioned what being fully staffed meant and how the Town would deal with recruitment going forward with regard to job postings and networking.

Chief Jones advised that the Town was getting more applications than in the past and noted that he received one a week for the past two weeks. He suggested the applications be kept on file so the Town could reach out to the applicants when it had a position to fill. Chief Jones advised that a lot of agencies were watching Middleburg and what it was doing.

Vice Mayor Bernard noted that keeping a roster of applicants was a good idea.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Chief Jones confirmed that the new things the Council put in place helped with recruitment. He noted that he finally got all the police vehicles outfitted and went over the policies and procedures with the officers and advised that they were filling out their applications to make sure their vehicles would be parked in a safe location. Chief Jones reported that the vehicle take home program was being put into effect now and thanked the Council for their support. He advised that the other chiefs were watching Middleburg's pay scale and taking the information back to their town managers.

Town Manager Davis advised Council that the new pay scale allowed Middleburg to put a definitive number in its offer letters, which made the process more definite, which was what people were looking for.

In response to inquiries from the Council as to whether being fully staffed would allow the department to do things it couldn't do before and what this meant for the residents, Chief Jones advised that it would allow Lieutenant Putnam to come off the patrol shift and to get trained in his position. He noted that he (Chief Jones) had been wearing both the Chief and Lieutenant's hats. Chief Jones advised that being fully staffed meant more opportunities for him and the officers to get out in the public's view. He noted that sometimes people would not come to the Police Department; however, they would tell an officer something when they saw them.

Town Manager Davis advised that this would free up the Chief and give the Lieutenant the opportunity to work with the patrol officers to re-emphasize many of the things that were heard from the Council and community, such as making sure they were visible and continuing traffic enforcement. He noted that spreading those responsibilities between the Chief and Lieutenant would allow them to be more effective in their daily work so they would not be consumed by day-to-day administrative tasks.

In response to a comment from the Council about National Night Out, Chief Jones noted that Middleburg's National Night Out ranked twelfth in the nation last year for departments its size, which was unacceptable. He advised that the goal was to move up each year.

Deputy Town Manager Moore reported that the Planning Commission would begin the process of outlining their upcoming review of the Comprehensive Plan during their March meeting. He reminded Council that the current plan was adopted in October of 2019 and had had one update on short-term rentals. Mr. Moore noted that it was time for a review. He reported that from a maintenance perspective, a lot of work had been done on South Madison Street, including sidewalk repairs and the removal of two large trees. Mr. Moore reminded Council that flexi-pave would be installed at the base of those and the five remaining trees. He reported that Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Cole would be on medical leave beginning next week and advised that he would work with one of the Town's contractors to handle some of his daily routine duties.

Town Attorney Crim reported that a lot of the bills the Town tracked during the recent General Assembly session were on the Governor's desk awaiting his action. He noted that his deadline for acting was March 24th, at which time, the Town would know what legislation would take effect on July 1st. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he advised that there was nothing that was alarming at this time.

Status Report – Asbury Church Project

Town Clerk North reported that proposals in response to the Requests For Proposals for architectural/engineering and construction management services were due the end of the week. She further reported that the contract was signed with Caandor Ventures for the Oral Histories Project and noted that the project kick-off meeting would be held next week.

Reports of Town Council Representatives

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan announced that the Middleburg Sustainability Committee would host the annual Spring Clean-Up on April 26th. He noted that it would be held in conjunction with Arbor Day. Mr. Leonard-Morgan advised that they were looking for volunteers to assist with the clean-up efforts. He noted that they would begin at the Town Hall and that the clean-up activities would involve Washington, Federal and Marshall Streets.

Consent Agenda

- A. Council Approval – February 27, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes
- B. Council Approval – Arbor Day Proclamation

Councilmember Jacobs moved, seconded by Councilmember Pearson, that Council approve the consent agenda as presented.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Mayor Littleton

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Proposed FY '26 Budget - General Fund Discussion

Town Manager Davis reviewed the questions and responses to them based on the last budget discussion. He advised that in response to the question regarding interest earnings, there was a 20% increase in revenues from FY '25 to FY '26 and noted that he was conservatively budgeting for a 4% interest rate. Mr. Davis advised that the Town was currently seeing a 4.5% rate; however, he proposed some flexibility in the event of a rate decrease. He reported that in response to the request for a programmatic review of the Police Department, the staff was working on this and would present it during Council's next meeting. Mr. Davis opined that it would be an effective tool in looking at the activities in the Police Department. He advised that he provided some clarifying data with regard to average home values and sizes. Mr. Davis noted that homes built prior to 2005 had an average home value of \$750,000; those built between 2006 and 2019 had a value of \$1.2 million; and those built after 2020 had a value of \$2.2 million.

Vice Mayor Bernard suggested a third chart be provided that tied the home values to the square footage.

Town Manager Davis advised that the last question related to the development of scenarios based on the potential impacts of tariffs, inflation and the lowering of discretionary spending and noted that he provided information from both the revenue and expenditure side. He reminded Council that the Town had been experiencing a 10% increase in meals and occupancy tax revenues year-over-year and noted that the proposed budget assumed a 3.5% and 4% increase respectively. Mr. Davis reported that his first scenario involved reducing the meals, occupancy and business license tax revenues by 5% and the second scenario reduced them by 10%. He further reported that the third scenario reduced them to the FY '25 budgeted amounts, not the actuals. Mr. Davis advised that the last revenue scenario would reduce them to FY '24 actuals. He noted that these scenarios would result in a revenue reduction of between \$400,000-\$130,000, or 7.5%-2.5%. Mr. Davis reminded Council that prior year's budgets included a comfortable cushion (contingency reserve), with last year's being \$430,00 and the year before being \$750,000. He noted that this was due to a combination of preparing for the increase in the Town's annual debt service and the unknown of whether the FY '23 and FY '24 revenue trends would continue. Mr. Davis noted that not only have the trends continued, but they exceeded the budget. He advised that the Town was in a different financial situation this coming year due to the uncertainty of the economy and the proposal to spend more tax dollars and have less of a cushion, which meant there would be less flexibility if revenues were to decrease more than expected. Mr. Davis noted that things continued to do well for many of the Town's revenue sources; however, the Town did not know the long-term effects of the economic changes, if any, that were taking place. He advised that on the expenditure side, he recognized that there could be changes due to tariffs, inflation and general cost pressures. Mr. Davis reported that he proposed scenarios that would include an increase in expenditures by 5% and 10% for those line items that would be most sensitive to tariffs, inflation and other increases, such as equipment and supplies. He noted that even with a 10% increase, this amounted to an increase in total expenditures of only 1.25%. Mr. Davis reminded Council that the Town's primary expenditures were related to salaries and benefits, which accounted for almost half the budget. He noted that the staff anticipated the professional services costs would increase by 3-5-7%, which was already built into the budget. Mr. Davis advised that those two costs accounted for three-quarters of the Town's budget, which was why changes to the economy would not have a significant impact on the budget. He noted that he had provided a better potential expenditure scenario and a worst potential expenditure scenario, which would result in shortfalls of between \$118,000-\$123,000. Mr. Davis advised that if the unspent revenues (contingency reserve) were included in the calculations, this would result in revenue shortfalls of between \$40,000 and \$350,000. He summarized that if the revenues really tanked and expenditures increased by 10%, the Town would experience a sizable structural issue in the budget. Mr. Davis noted the challenge of projecting the revenues and expenditures at this time given the uncertainty of what was occurring on the federal level. He further noted the need to be responsive to that and advised that the Council had some flexibility in that the budget did not have to be adopted until June 30th. Mr. Davis reminded Council and the public that the Town was in a positive fiscal position, with a fiscal reserve that was equal to fifteen months of operating expenses plus an additional \$4 million on top of that. He noted that some of that \$4 million was committed to projects; however, it was not directly obligated at this time. Mr. Davis reiterated that the Town was in a strong fiscal position and advised that there were options before the Council should changes occur in the economy. He advised that the Town could always freeze discretionary spending and analyze what it needed to do should there be a serious situation. Mr. Davis noted that the Town currently had vacant positions and advised that it could always freeze filling them. He further noted the proposed new police officer positions in the budget and advised that, should the Council decide it was appropriate to pursue them, they could defer filling them until mid-year. Mr. Davis suggested the Council could also use unallocated fund balance monies to cover one-time expenses should that become necessary.

Councilmember Curran noted that the retaliatory tariffs were supposed to affect tourism more than normal tariffs. She advised that she appreciated the scenarios that were not as aggressive in the revenue projections. Ms. Curran questioned whether there was anything related to the expenditures that the tariffs could affect that should be procured before they were imposed.

Town Manager Davis noted that the staff had not spent a significant amount of time looking at that; however, it could do so, particularly with regard to utilities and the replacement of the main computer server. He agreed that doing those items sooner rather than later may be advantageous for the Town.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the individual General Fund revenue line items. In response to an inquiry from the Council regarding the annotation on the right-of-way franchise fee revenues, he reminded Council that five years ago, they entered into a franchise agreement with Lumos Networks, dba Segra, who was under contract with the Loudoun County Public School System and the County of Loudoun to provide a dark fiber closed network to connect all of their properties. Mr. Davis further reminded them that Lumos agreed to pay a conduit fee for the use of the Town's rights-of-way at the time, which was valued at \$14,000 annually; however, after paying four installments, they refused to pay the fifth one stating that they were not obligated to do so. He advised that after many conversations, he received an email from them saying they had authorized payment of the outstanding fee. Mr. Davis noted that their franchise expired in two months and advised that he had had discussions with them about that. He explained that he suggested they submit a proposal to the Town for its review and consideration of whether it would meet the Town's expectations; therefore, this revenue stream could be something other than what was shown in the proposed budget.

In response to an inquiry, Town Manager Davis reminded Council that because they reduced the motor vehicle license fee to \$0, there would be no revenue in that line-item next year.

In response to an inquiry from the Council regarding the high increase proposed in meals tax revenues, Town Manager Davis advised that the Town anticipated getting some new restaurants in the fall, which would be great for FY '26. He noted that revenues for FY '25 were on budget through January. Mr. Davis opined that the Town would not start seeing impacts from the economic changes until March or April. He advised that as to the TOT (transient occupancy tax) revenues, he felt that number was okay; however, he acknowledged that group and corporate travel could soften and not grow year-over-year.

Councilmember Pearson noted the price increases at the restaurants and expressed concern that people could reduce how many times they ate out in a week.

Town Manager Davis acknowledged that this was a concern. He noted that not only were government jobs being cut, but contractors and educators were also cutting positions. Mr. Davis advised Council that John Hopkins just laid off 2,000 people due to the loss of federal grants/funding. He noted the number of federal government employees who lived in Loudoun County. Mr. Davis agreed with the need to be cognizant of the impacts to the economy.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan advised that he was in favor of being more conservative.

Vice Mayor Bernard agreed the Council would not know the real impacts of what was occurring with the economy until it got closer to the deadline for adoption of the budget. He suggested the need for the Council to be flexible enough going into the budget so it could massage the numbers as needed.

Councilmember Curran agreed with Councilmember Pearson and noted that the number of employees in Northern Virginia who had already been laid off was more than 30,000. She reported that the number of youth signed up for YMCA camps was already down by 1,500 because people were hesitant to spend money. Ms. Curran opined that between price increases and job losses, the Council needed to have different budget scenarios.

Councilmember Kirk agreed with Councilmembers Pearson and Leonard-Morgan on the need to be more conservative in the budget numbers.

Town Manager Davis advised Council that he would work on this further. He noted that the Strategic Finance Committee would meet on March 24th and reported that they were already suggesting caution and the need to not over project revenues. Mr. Davis agreed with Vice Mayor Bernard about the need to be flexible as the Council went through the budget process. He advised that the Council would discuss the Police Department and their budget request during their next meeting and noted that he would provide potential scenarios for how to approach their request.

Vice Mayor Bernard noted the need to look at expenditures and acknowledged that the Police Department was looking for a substantial increase. He advised that he wanted to make sure the projected revenues did not paint a different picture than the Council should be looking at.

Town Manager Davis agreed and noted that in terms of the remaining revenues, they were much less impactful than the meals and TOT tax revenues. He noted the revenues from interest earnings and advised that he believed the proposed budget included an appropriate number. Mr. Davis acknowledged that these revenues could decrease if interest rates decreased and/or if the Council continued to move forward with capital projects, which would reduce the money on which interest was earned from \$9 million to \$7.5 million. He noted that in the future, as capital money was spent, the interest earnings would decrease.

Town Manager Davis noted that the General Fund included a line item for donations and sponsorship revenues and advised that the staff was trying to obtain sponsorships to cover the costs of events.

Councilmember Kirk noted that \$15,000 was proposed for the new Burns Day event and opined that this was high.

Town Manager Davis advised that this number was based on the Town's other events and what it took to do them well. He noted that much of the cost was related to the rental of the Community Center, with the remainder being for music, food and other things. Mr. Davis suggested this could be a ticketed event, which would recover some of the cost. He explained that because the Town's other events required more money than expected, he did not want to underestimate the cost.

In response to an inquiry from the Council as to whether a decision had been officially made to move forward with this new event, Town Manager Davis advised that the money in the budget was a placeholder. He opined that the Council expressed positivity toward the idea of the new event, just not the timing of it. Mr. Davis suggested now would be an appropriate time for the Council to say whether it was the right time to start a new event. He further suggested this be a topic of discussion when the Council reviewed the Economic Development budget.

In response to inquiries from the Council, Town Manager Davis advised that the donations revenue was only \$12,600 because of how it was staggered and because some of those dollars may have been accounted for in a different line item, specifically reimbursements for the Millie Miglia, which was approximately \$40,000. He opined that the sponsorship revenue had not achieved the goals the staff had for it in terms of number of sponsors and the breadth of the sponsorships for the Town's events. Mr. Davis agreed the proposed \$75,000 in revenues could be looked at further and suggested the staff return with a breakdown of what was included so the Council could determine whether it was realistic. He suggested this also be paired with the conversation on economic development. Mr. Davis opined that Council may end up deciding the Town needed to pause or change an event. He suggested he bring the Council a holistic approach to revenues and expenditures related to the Town's events. Mr. Davis advised that the Town had put money into the Juneteenth celebration the last couple of years, without it being a specific line item. He explained that he wanted to call it out in the budget, as it was a small-scale event that was important. Mr. Davis noted that Chief Jones had organized it over the past couple of years and was already planning this year's event.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the proposed expenditures that fell under Administration. He reminded Council that he was proposing a 2.5% cost-of-living market adjustment and an average of a 2% merit increase for non-law enforcement employees, which tracked with what Loudoun County and other towns were proposing. Mr. Davis noted that a major cost was health insurance and advised that those costs were only proposed to increase by 1.6% this year, whereas over the past couple of years, it had increased by 8% annually. He advised that the Council's expenditures changed depending on the year and noted that next year, it would have an offsite strategic planning meeting, as November was an election year. Mr. Davis reported that funding was included for citizen engagement and to support COLT. He reminded Council that at one time, there was an idea that the Town would allocate money to repair the Em Sharp Christmas signs; however, The Hill School had not asked for money for that. Mr. Davis suggested that if there was a desire on the part of Council, he and Deputy Town Manager Moore could reach out to The Hill School to determine whether they needed support from the Town for the signs. He noted that the Council could also trim this from the budget until such time as funding was needed. Mr. Davis advised that the remaining expenditures in this budget were basically the same as last year. In response to an inquiry from the Council on attorneys fees, he advised that if the Town was using an attorney on a specific item, such as the Town Hall Project, those expenditures were tracked in a separate line item. He advised that there were also attorney line items in the Planning & Zoning, Police Department, and Utilities budgets. Mr. Davis explained that he generally attributed Mr. Crim's costs to the Administration budget. He advised that the line item for Consulting Services could change and reminded

Council that they asked him to look at alternatives for HR support. Mr. Davis reported that he had a good conversation with Herndon's HR Director and would put together some potential opportunities that the Council could consider. He continued the line-item review for the Administration budget. Mr. Davis reminded Council that the Town would be using Davenport's financial advisor services this year and noted that sometimes this involved an advisory fee and other times, their fees were rolled into a debt issuance. He reported that the Town currently had two employees who were using the tuition reimbursement program, with \$3,000 being used in that line item in the last fiscal year. Mr. Davis reminded Council that the Town reimbursed up to \$2,500 per employee per budget year for tuition assistance. He advised that the remaining line items were pretty straightforward. Mr. Davis noted that the replacement of the Town's server would likely exceed this year's budget; therefore, he would look at what other dollars may be available in this fiscal year to cover the difference. He noted the Committee Support line item and advised that he reduced that from \$10,000 to \$2,000.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the proposed Buildings & Grounds budget. He noted that the staff was still figuring out the cost to operate the Town Hall building due to items that were still not fully completed, such as the HVAC system. Mr. Davis advised that the numbers in the proposed budget provided flexibility to ensure the appropriate maintenance contracts were in place, as well as pay for the operations of the building. In response to a comment from the Council, he explained that \$11,800 was for expenditures to date, which was just the cleaning contract. Mr. Davis further explained that other items, such as the costs related to the HVAC system, were still being attributed to the Town Hall Project. He noted the need to get the system installed as designed before the Town could determine the maintenance contract needs. Mr. Davis reminded Council of the normal maintenance items, such as landscaping, electrical services and snow removal. He explained that the snow removal line item typically covered the clearing of the parking spaces on Route 50.

In response to inquiries from the Council as to whether an analysis had been conducted to determine the cost of a cleaning contractor versus an employee, Town Manager Davis confirmed it had not. He noted that the current cleaning contract was just under \$20,000 for the Town Hall and the Liberty Street Restrooms, and included all the equipment that was needed. Mr. Davis opined that given the needs of the buildings, the hiring of a staff person could not be justified.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Manager Davis confirmed the Town was a member of VEPGA, which negotiated electric rates for municipalities with Dominion Power. He advised that the Town did not use a significant amount of natural gas so that it could lock in rates. Mr. Davis noted that the staff looked at the options on an ongoing basis.

Councilmember Jacobs opined that given the small size of Middleburg, it was not worth the trouble of analyzing the question of a cleaning contractor versus an employee. He advised that studies were done at the federal level and noted that it was a wash in terms of money.

Vice Mayor Bernard opined that given the volume of work to be done, it would not warrant a full-time employee.

Town Manager Davis reported that the budget review during the next meeting would focus on the Police Department and possibly economic development and events, if there was time. He advised that during the first meeting in April, the discussions would begin related to the Utilities Fund. Mr. Davis reported that the Town's financial advisors and utility rate consultant would present to the Strategic Finance Committee on March 24th, with part of the conversation being focused on the utility line-of-credit that was due June 30th. He noted that there were options on the table and advised that the staff would seek input from the Finance Committee. Mr. Davis explained that if their recommendation was to term out the line of credit and issue it as a permanent debt, the Council would need to move quickly to complete that process before June 30th. He advised that should Council be agreeable, Davenport would begin the debt issuance process, which would take a couple of months to complete. Mr. Davis reported that revenue updates would be provided during the April 24th meeting and noted that there would be further discussions on items in both the General and Utilities Funds. He advised that he anticipated talking about the Town's capital improvement program during the first meeting in May. Mr. Davis noted that any topics could be brought back at any of the meetings if more details were needed. He reminded Council that a special meeting could always be held if needed.

Vice Mayor Bernard asked that updated revenue numbers be provided at the beginning of the budget discussions once a month.

Status Report – Middleburg Day Planning

Vice Mayor Bernard reported that Middleburg Day would be held on Friday, May 30th from 5:00-9:00 p.m. He advised that a tent would be placed over the entire North Parking Lot at the Town Hall to protect participants from any inclement weather and to provide some shade. Mr. Bernard reported that the American Legion would grill the meats this year, Backstreet Catering would provide the side dishes and Scruffy's would return with ice cream. He further reported that Robinson Refuse would handle the waste management and head up the band. Mr. Bernard advised that invitations would be sent out on April 1st and would also include information on the Farmers' Market. He noted that not many people used the shuttle last year; therefore, they were reducing it down to one, as opposed to two. In response to inquiries from the Council, he confirmed the shuttle would make stops throughout the Town, including at Windy Hill. Mr. Bernard opined that there was a good turnout from the Windy Hill community last year; however, almost no one used the shuttle.

Middleburg Community Farmers' Market

Vice Mayor Bernard reported that he, Councilmember Curran and Business Development & Community Partnerships Director MacIntyre were holding standing weekly meetings and had identified several ideas that would be easy to implement and that would provide the most bang for the Town's buck. He advised that they were trying to boost the number of vendors in order to get people access to produce, meats, flowers and vegetables. Mr. Bernard further advised that they planned to add some craft vendors as well, so people could purchase gifts. He explained that they were trying to turn the Farmers Market into an opportunity for people to get together to engage with each other on the weekend and to make it family friendly. Mr. Bernard reported that they were adding wellness activities, incorporating car and pet events, bringing back the young entrepreneurs and trying to involve all the local schools. He noted that they also planned to have opportunities to engage with members of the Council and the Police Department so people could ask questions about what was going on. Mr. Bernard advised that Ms. MacIntyre could provide an update on the vendor activity and noted that a schedule would be included on the Middleburg Day invitation.

Vice Mayor Bernard noted that Quail Run Signs developed a design for a paddle sign that could be attached to the Town's entrance signs to alert motorists on Route 50 of the Farmers' Market.

Town Manager Davis advised that the staff felt the design would fit the look and feel of the entrance signs and would provide enough of a difference to catch people's attention. He noted that the Mayor asked him to share his thoughts on this matter. Mr. Davis reported that the Mayor strongly opposed the idea of signage, as it would be an advertisement. He noted that the Mayor stated that the Town did not allow other businesses to do similar things, whether on the Town's entrance sign or by installing their own banner signs on the sides of the road. Mr. Davis explained that the Mayor felt it was not fair or appropriate for the Town to put up something when other businesses could not. He noted that a decision was not needed immediately on the signs and advised that the cost would be just under \$1,000. Mr. Davis explained that the signs would be removed when the Farmers' Market was not in operation; therefore, they would only be up April through October of each year. He suggested that if the Council wished to give the staff direction, they could proceed; otherwise, a decision could be delayed until the next meeting. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he noted that the Town used to allow entities to install paddle signs on the Town's entrance sign; however, that was eliminated when the new signs were installed.

Councilmember Kirk suggested that light pole banners be designed to advertise the Farmers' Market.

Councilmember Pearson noted that the businesses put up signage on their buildings. She further noted that the Town limits were where the Town advertised. Ms. Pearson advised that the Farmers' Market was the Town's business. She suggested the paddle sign design include a colorful fox running across it.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted that he liked the idea of making pole banners. He further noted that while the paddle sign was great looking, the Town said it was not going to do those again. Mr. Leonard-Morgan agreed there was a distinction between a Town community event and business advertising. He reiterated that he liked the design; however, he needed to get his head around doing something the Town said it was no longer going to do.

Councilmember Kirk noted that the Town did not install signage for Middleburg Day last year.

Vice Mayor Bernard agreed with Councilmember Pearson that there was a distinction between advertising a business and a Town event series. He noted that the sign would not be permanent and opined that this was simply a matter of aesthetics. Mr. Bernard suggested that if the Council wanted to be serious about driving traffic to the Farmers' Market, it needed to look at the different opportunities that were available. He agreed that banners would be great and suggested information be included on the Town's wayfinding signage.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan agreed with the idea of banners.

Deputy Town Manager Moore reminded Council that there was a lot of competition for the banner space at certain times of the year. He suggested the Town could set the expectations with the Farmers' Market vendors that the banners would not be up every week for the duration of the market. Mr. Moore noted that the Town had placeholder banners that were displayed when the pole spaces were not reserved and suggested the Farmers' Market banners could become the placeholders.

Vice Mayor Bernard advised that the Town was not beholden to doing this for the vendors, but rather was promoting this as an opportunity for the community members to do something positive. He further advised that it was not about driving traffic for the vendors; although, he acknowledged that if the vendors were successful, this would be a means to an end. Mr. Bernard opined that it was about having something good for the citizens.

Councilmember Curran advised that the focus was on making sure this was a community event and a place where people wanted to come to connect and meet with the Council to talk about things.

Councilmember Pearson noted the picnic tables in the Marshall Street Park and suggested they could be used during the Farmers' Market.

Vice Mayor Bernard noted the new proposed location for the Farmers' Market, which would involve placing the vendor tents in the Town Hall driveway against the retaining wall, with the picnic tables and green space being open for the public to congregate. He advised that this would allow the spaces in the parking lot to be available for parking.

Councilmember Daly noted that it would also make the Farmers' Market more visible.

Vice Mayor Bernard advised that there would be barricades, with signage, to direct people to the parking; whereas, pedestrian access would be encouraged off Marshall Street.

Town Manager Davis opined that the picnic tables, combined with the music and vendors, would enhance the experience.

Vice Mayor Bernard explained that the idea was to set up music at the flagpoles, with the musicians playing toward the street to attract attention to the market. He advised that a food truck would be located on the other end of the drive aisle. Mr. Bernard reported that the hours of the market would also be extended so it would be open from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., which would give the vendors an extra hour to do business.

Councilmember Pearson asked that the Farmers' Market be promoted on Middleburg's Facebook page, as opposed to on the Middleburg Farmers' Market page.

Vice Mayor Bernard advised that the Middleburg Farmers' Market Facebook page and Instagram accounts would be used in conjunction with the Town's.

There was some discussion about the ability to post to Middleburg Uncensored, as these were not an individual's account. It was noted that someone could share the posts from their account.

Vice Mayor Bernard advised that they were going to target some of the more substantial Facebook groups in Loudoun County.

Town Manager Davis noted that the Town’s social media followers had increased tenfold over the last four years and announced that the Town now had 50,000 followers on Facebook and almost 16,000 on Instagram.

Vice Mayor Bernard noted that the committee also discussed how to define success. He advised that they had not fully defined it; however, they would have a meeting next week with PlacerAI, which would allow them to track the visitors. Mr. Bernard noted that they also planned to conduct some exit surveys to determine how the market was doing. He questioned whether the Council wished to make a decision on the signs during this meeting, to which the members agreed they did.

Councilmember Daly moved, seconded by Councilmember Kirk, that Council approve the signage at the entrance to Middleburg.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Mayor Littleton

Information Items

Route 50 Safety & Operational Study Meeting

Councilmember Kirk reminded the audience of the County Department of Transportation’s Route 50 Safety & Operational Study meeting scheduled to be held on March 26th at the Middleburg Community Charter School. She urged the Town’s residents to attend and to share their displeasure with the proposed plan.

Vice Mayor Bernard reported that a group of stakeholders in the community held a conference call last week to strategize on how to interface with the County on their proposed Route 50 updates. He noted that the County was looking to push a lot of big changes, 99% of which were not great. Mr. Bernard opined that there would be a large turnout for the meeting and noted that it was important to let the County know how much the community opposed the plan.

Closed Session

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Kirk, that Council go into closed session as authorized under Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, for consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual litigation involving (1) Cooper Building Services, LLC vs. the Town of Middleburg and (2) Salamander Farms LLC vs. the Town of Middleburg, both as allowed under Subsection (A)(7). Councilmember Leonard-Morgan further moved, seconded by Councilmember Kirk, that Council thereafter reconvene in open session for action as appropriate.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Mayor Littleton

Vice Mayor Bernard asked that Council certify that, in the closed session just concluded, to the best of each member’s knowledge nothing was discussed except the matter or matters (1) specifically identified in the motion to convene in closed session and (2) lawfully permitted to be discussed in a closed session under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act as cited in the motion, which each member so did. He reminded those present for the closed session that any discussion that occurred within it should be treated as confidential.

There being no further business, Vice Mayor Bernard declared the meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Chris W. Bernard, VICE MAYOR

Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk

March 13, 2025 Middleburg Town Council Meeting

(Note: This is a transcript prepared by a Town contractor based on the video of the meeting. It may not be entirely accurate. For greater accuracy, we encourage you to review the video of the meeting that is on the Town's website – www.middleburgva.gov)

Chris Bernard: The first thing is the Pledge of Allegiance.

All: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Chris Bernard: All right. Next up is roll call.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Peter Leonard-Morgan.

Bud Jacobs: Bud Jacobs.

Darlene Kirk: Darlene Kirk.

Chris Bernard: Chris Bernard.

Cindy Pearson: Cindy Pearson.

J. Kevin Daly: J. Kevin Daly.

Pam Curran: Pam Curran.

Rhonda North: Rhonda North, Town Clerk.

Danny Davis: Danny Davis, Town Manager.

Martin Crim: Martin Crim, Town Attorney.

Chris Bernard: Great. Next up, I guess we will do public comment. Is there anyone from the public who would like to speak? Going once, going twice. Okey doke. I guess public comment is over. First real thing on the agenda is the public hearing for the real property tax rates. Do I open the hearing and then?

Danny Davis: I'll give just a slight, brief opening, if you'd like.

Chris Bernard: Do you want to do the brief first?

Danny Davis: Sure.

Chris Bernard: Okay. I will open the public hearing for the 2025 Real Property Assessments.

Danny Davis: Sure. So, thank you, Mr. Vice Mayor. This public hearing is required by state law. The Town Council is intending to reduce the tax rate. However, due to the percentage increase of average home values, it will increase greater than 1% over revenues from last year, which necessitates a public hearing. We've discussed this at your last couple of meetings, but the information is provided in the memo. In short, based on average assessments at the proposed tax rate of 12.00 cents. The average property owner would see approximately a 3% increase in their tax bill, just due to our anticipation of inflationary costs, and to be able to provide revenues for ongoing services. So that is where things stand currently. And ultimately Town Council can take a vote tonight, if you wish, on the tax rate or if you wish to discuss any

further, we would ask it would need to be voted on at your next meeting to distribute that to Loudoun County for tax bills. Happy to answer any questions.

Chris Bernard: I guess let's hold questions and do the public hearing first. So, is there any member of the public who has a comment on the tax rates? No. Okay. Any discussion from Council? Anybody have questions or comments?

Chris Bernard: I guess we will close the public hearing. Any questions or comments from Council? Is there? Oh, Pam.

Pam Curran: Just a question. So, this is a decrease that we're proposing?

Danny Davis: It is a decrease in the rate. That is correct.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. Because if you understand correctly the assessments go up. So, the payment will go up. But the decrease in the rate.

Danny Davis: Yes.

Chris Bernard: Anybody have any heartburn with voting on this? I know we don't have to, but we will have to at the next meeting. And I know we've got a long meeting, so if there's a motion. Cindy.

Cindy Pearson: I make a motion. I move that the Town Council of Middleburg, Virginia adopt a real property tax rate of \$0.12 per \$100 of assessed value for calendar year 2025, fiscal year 2026.

Darlene Kirk: Second.

Chris Bernard: Any discussion? All right, Rhonda.

Rhonda North: Vice Mayor Bernard.

Chris Bernard: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Curran.

Pam Curran: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Daly.

J. Kevin Daly: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Jacobs.

Bud Jacobs: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Kirk.

Darlene Kirk: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Leonard-Morgan.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Aye.

Rhonda North: Council Member Pearson.

Cindy Pearson: Aye.

Chris Bernard: Okay. Motion passes. Thank you guys. There is we don't have anything on special recognition tonight, but I do want to really quickly say something about the Citizens Academy yesterday. So, we had our first ever Citizens Academy, and I think, Rhonda, what did we have at the end of the day we had 10, 11?

Rhonda North: We had eight participants.

Chris Bernard: Eight participants. Okay. I was here. I was in and out. Unfortunately, I had some stuff to deal with, but I know there were a couple of members of Council that were here most of the day. All of the attendees had nothing but great things to say. So, thank you Rhonda. It was a lot to pull off, but hopefully next year will be easier. And then the rest of the staff that put together presentations and all that stuff, that was really great. And then thank you to the citizens who participated. It's a really great way. All of them said they learned a lot that they didn't know, or they thought that they knew most of the things coming in. And it turned out that they were like, oh my goodness, we had no idea what goes into running, you know, even such a small town. So great thing. And I'm excited to see what we do with it next year.

Darlene Kirk: Yeah. Great job by Rhonda. She really had it under control.

Chris Bernard: Yes.

Darlene Kirk: Moving along.

Chris Bernard: Very scheduled out. A lot of moving parts. They did a field trip, so it all it all seemed to go off without a hitch. So good job everyone. No public presentation. So, I guess we will get into staff reports. And we'll start with the aforementioned Rhonda.

Rhonda North: Well, thank you, Mr. Mayor. And you kind of stole my thunder there a little bit. I was going to announce that we did have a very successful Citizen Academy yesterday, and I do want to thank the Mayor of the Council and the town staff. I know I've gotten a lot of accolades, but it was truly a team effort.

Chris Bernard: I actually think the only scheduling hiccup was that Bridge ran over his time. If I'm not mistaken. [laughter]

Rhonda North: We will be adjusting the schedule next year. [laughter] The only other thing I have is next week, Monday and Tuesday the east arcade on the Marshall Street end here at the building will be closed. We will have some contractors in installing the rest of the lightning protection system for the phase two portion of the project. So, we can get our certification of the lightning protection system. So, walking on that end will be blocked off. The walking area will be blocked off for two days next week.

Chris Bernard: What is next? So, I believe Ali is not here today. So, do you want, Danny, to run through some of her quick updates? I think I have the other two.

Danny Davis: Yeah, I will just briefly and thank you. Just a reminder for the Council and the public about Wellness Day coming up on Saturday, April 12th. Great event. A lot of vendors will be at the community center from 10 to 2. There will be presentations, demonstrations, a lot of good times. The 5K and Fun Run begins at 8:30. I encourage you to sign up ahead of time if you want one of the fancy dancy t-shirts. Otherwise, you can still register on the day of prior to the event. Show up early for that, but it should be a lot of fun. Great day for the Wellness Day and kudos to the team who has brought that together. Also, the Arts Council and Community Events Committee meeting to join together their committees. So that will be coming up shortly. And I think there's a good, good energy behind that effort. So, there is some business activity going in throughout town, some new purchases of buildings, the Market Salamander building was purchased. And our understanding is the owner intends it to be a restaurant. And the Mount Defiance Distillery building has sold. And that is also, I think, not fully disclosed yet, but I think they will have a retail and maybe a slight cafe component to it. So those two will be going forward. I do believe there is also someone who has leased the former Moda

or Les Jardins building at the corner of Liberty and Washington, so that's good. Another storefront filling up, and then there's still a few vacant storefronts that that I know Ali continues to work with the either the property managers or property owners to try to send forward any potential clients. So, we keep working through that and appreciate all the input and we'll keep working together through that. So other than that, we're continuing just to get ready for all the other events under the other two are on the agenda, so I'll leave it at that unless you have questions.

Chris Bernard: Anybody have questions for Danny? Darlene.

Darlene Kirk: I have to talk into it too. Yeah. Do you have any idea when the steak place is going to open lunch up? Have we heard anything?

Danny Davis: Not specifically. We have heard that their goal was going to be mid this year or maybe mid to fall of this year, but I don't have any latest update. We communicated with them a couple months ago but haven't had any updates since that time.

Chris Bernard: Any other questions on that? I just had one thing, and it's actually kind of in line with what you asked. And with the Citizens Academy, one thing that came up yesterday, it was a good question that I've heard outside, you know, from other people in town is vacant spaces on Main Street. And, you know, people assume that we can make everyone clean up their facades or whatever. And I know we're very limited in what we can actually control, but I do think it would be worth looking into maybe some ways that we can either not force people to clean up but just incentivize people to want to keep everything tidy because it does impact the neighbors.

Danny Davis: And it does. And I think there's two approaches there. One is do we have any statutory authority where we can ensure that it's looking appropriate, especially, you know, ones that are in disrepair and very visibly so. And I think Mr. Moore and I can look at that further and also take some proactive conversations with property owners. The secondary side is one which we had had a great goal to accomplish for Christmas in Middleburg, but timing did not pan out and that is working with potentially the Arts Council or just local artists to say, can we add some artwork? Or whether it's poster size artwork or paint the windows or whatever it might be, just to provide a little visual there so that it doesn't feel so vacant? I think the property owners were amenable to that idea during Christmas in Middleburg at least. So, it would take some further conversations, but I think could be a valuable effort of our arts community. And maybe that's partly coordinated through Miss MacIntyre.

Chris Bernard: Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I think you're spot on about that. And I think if the property owners, the landlords do maintain better, there's a better chance of them being rented out to great new owners. So, it would seem sensible. Yeah.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. No. And I think, you know, there were some people that even said, hey, we would volunteer to go over and pull weeds in front of, you know. And so, and they don't need to do anything fancy, but it's really just keeping it from looking dilapidated because there aren't really any dilapidated buildings in town. They can just get a little overgrown.

Danny Davis: So that's a great point. And I did fail to mention one business has moved from Washington Street to South Madison Street, and that is the antique shop. Used to be Antiques on Washington. They're now on South Madison, where the Middleburg Bride was called Roger on Madison in honor of her dad. And it's a I think they're opening up shortly. I'm not sure if they have a date, but, yeah, it looks really good.

Chris Bernard: Okay. I think that is it. Unless anyone has anything else. So, we will move on to Angela. Do you have anything for us?

Angela Fletcher: Thank you, Vice Mayor and Council. I have nothing new to add to the report, but I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

Chris Bernard: Anybody have anything? All right. You're in the clear. Thank you.

Angela Fletcher: Thank you. [off mic]

Chris Bernard: Wanted to go right to Will. No, come on Shaun. All right, let's get the police update.

Shaun Jones: Good evening everyone. A few couple things real fast. You have my report there. I guess around February 26th, we hosted a small Chiefs Roundtable Discussion here in the Town of Middleburg. So, we had about 20 participants come. Majority of them were chiefs of police from small towns. We had folks as far as Tappahannock and Warsaw and also Vinton, Virginia as well. We also had representatives from the Attorney General's office, the state police. A captain from the State Police Fusion Center, he was here, and we also had presentations from Liberty University's Dean and Assistant Dean of their Criminal Justice program. And they actually set in on our discussions and gave some advice as well. So, it was a good time to help have it all. They're asking, when are we doing another one. Another thing is we're working on our special events coming up. We're getting ready to get into our business season, so we're starting to plan for events as we speak. Finally. Fingers crossed. I'm happy to say that we do have a signed conditional offer for a police officer. So, he was in town yesterday to get his physical and drug screen. So hopefully everything is right with that. And I'm happy to say we will be fully staffed. Start date will be March the. I believe it was March the 31st. So almost two weeks from now.

Pam Curran: That's great.

Shaun Jones: That's all I have.

Chris Bernard: Anybody have any questions for Shaun?

Pam Curran: I do.

Chris Bernard: Nobody? I'm kidding. I know, Pam, I saw you.

Pam Curran: Pickleball. What was on the agenda for the roundtable that was held? I think that's. [off mic]

Shaun Jones: Okay, some of the topics that we talked about is one Officer [inaudible]. We talked about what type of incentives or what type of programs you have within your agency with Officer [off mic]. We also talked about recruitment and retention. How do you recruit? What are some things that we can do to improve our recruitment? What are you doing to keep your officers there? We also talked about the incentives that each agency has. We also talked about the pay scales. We also, they were kind of jealous because we have a good Town Manager. They were all, you know, hey, your Town Manager interacts and so forth. So, a lot of them were jealous, and a lot of them were also trying to steal my administrative assistant. So, [laughter] But I told them they can't come back. But no, we talked about issues that and challenges that are facing small agencies. We also talked about training, how we can work together to, you know, help offset some training. So, we have folks from the Valley as well, Woodstock, Dumfries Police Department, the new Chief of Winchester came for a little bit. We had Strasburg Police Department as well. So, we had a wide variety of people from across the state, and we just talked about the challenges that we are facing. We started an email group so that we can keep in communication with one another. And we're looking at possibly doing maybe a monthly hour zoom meeting just to see what's going on with each other and how we can support each other as small-town chiefs.

Pam Curran: That is amazing. That's amazing. It's great.

Shaun Jones: Thank you. That's all I have.

Chris Bernard: Anyone else? All right. I just had a couple things. First thing, the report. The chart you guys put at the end is awesome. Yes, sir. I think it's very helpful to go back and I don't know if anyone else looked at it, but going back and just looking at the trends. And so, I think maybe the next step is like going through this and each month and just having like a little context to like maybe where things shook out, why they are the way they are. And we can do specific

stuff offline. And I had something else, but now I can't remember what it is. Oh, with recruiting, now that we're fully staffed, what does that mean? So, like, how do we deal with recruiting going forward as far as, you know, job postings or networking and all that stuff? Just, you know, because you never know. You could lose somebody at any time. I'm just curious.

Shaun Jones: Well, I mean, we're getting more applicants than we have before in the past. Last week alone, last between the two weeks, we've had one applicant each week. So, you know, those are the things that we need to take a look at our applicants. Send them, now I'm coming up with a way, you know, to possibly send an email saying, hey, we're fully staffed at this time, but we will take your keep your application on file if anything happens. But we still need to keep our name out there and just keep popping up. And, you know, anytime we have an opportunity to showcase the Middleburg Police Department, we need to take advantage of that to get people wanting to come here. So, we're working on it.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. No, I would say it's a fine line. You don't want to like push it out there like, hey, we need people, but you do want to stay in the game. [multiple speakers] Yes. That's great.

Shaun Jones: So, I just want to keep us on, you know, for the forefront. We're getting a lot of notice from other agencies right now. They're watching what we're doing here.

Chris Bernard: Well, I think keeping a roster of applicants is a great idea.

Shaun Jones: Yes. Yes.

Chris Bernard: Because they're looking.

Shaun Jones: Yeah. And, you know, I just had a phone call yesterday from a chief next door. Hey, what are you guys doing? I'm losing people. So, what advice can you give us? So.

Chris Bernard: All right. Well, let's go, Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Chief, I just want to say, did any of the new things we've been putting in place help to recruit?

Shaun Jones: Yes, sir. Those are the centers. Those are the centers as far as the take home program that we finally got all the vehicles outfitted, and we went over the policies and procedures with the guys yesterday. They are filling out their applications to make sure that their parking their vehicles in safe places. And that's rolling in effect right now as we speak. So, thank you for all the support on that as well. People are watching our pay scale. So, a few of the chiefs at the small table, round table, they went back to their Town Managers to say, look what Middleburg is doing so.

Danny Davis: And that allowed us in the recruitment process and also the most recent one with Officer Varlan, to be able to just put a definitive number on that offer letter and not have to say, where do I think they fit amongst other people? You just say experience, education, boom, you're right here. And it just makes that process more definite and that's what many people are looking for.

Chris Bernard: Oh, Pam.

Pam Curran: So, Chief having one person and being fully staffed, what will that allow us to do now that we couldn't do before?

Shaun Jones: Right now, it gives us the opportunity to get Lieutenant Putnam off the patrol shift. Since I've taken over as Chief, I've kind of been wearing both hats as the chief and the lieutenant. So that gives Lieutenant Putnam off the rotation of working a month of days and month of nights. And it gives them the opportunity to get trained in his position. Finally, get the opportunity to focus on his position as lieutenant, as opposed to being a lieutenant and work in patrol.

Pam Curran: So, what does that mean for the residents of Middleburg?

Shaun Jones: What does that mean for the residents of Middleburg? It means more opportunities for us to get out in the public view. And it's just, you know, it's hard for me to get out. A lot of people always, Hey, Chief, we don't see you anymore. Can we come out? You know, we don't see you walking around and don't see you in the morning, so that gives me a little bit of ability to get out and be seen by the public as well. And a lot of times people don't want to come to a police department to answer questions, or if they have concerns, they might voice it to you as a Town Council. But a lot of times people like to come up to you, to see you in public, pull you aside, have a conversation and tell you, tell us, give us some suggestions or tell us what we're doing right or what we're doing wrong, or hey, I have an issue here, you know, to see what we can do to help people as well.

Danny Davis: And if I can add to that, I think Chief is exactly right on what he just said. But it also, I think frees him up and gives the lieutenant the opportunity to work with the patrol officers to reemphasize many of the things we hear from the community and also from the Council, just to make sure, in their staff meeting yesterday, Chief, I know reiterated, you know, the various things that we've heard about making sure you try to stay visible also continuing traffic enforcement. And this gives the lieutenant the ability to stay on top of that with the patrol officers and so being able to spread those responsibilities across Chief and Lieutenant Putnam will allow I think them each to be more effective in their daily work and not fully overwhelmed and consumed by all the kind of day-to-day administrative tasks.

Chris Bernard: And we better have, like, the most amazing National Night Out ever now, because Mark's going to have so much time to plan it.

Shaun Jones: Hey, you know, last year we ranked number 12th in the nation for our size, that's unacceptable. We need to move up. So, our goal each year is to move up. So yeah. Top ten in the stat. Here we come.

Chris Bernard: Thanks, Shaun. [inaudible] All right. We will move on to Mr. Moore, Deputy Town Manager.

Will Moore: Thank you, Mr. Vice Mayor. You have my report. Just a couple of things to highlight. The Planning Commission took off in February, but they will reconvene this month, and they will begin their process of outlining their upcoming review of the Comprehensive Plan. So, our current plan was adopted in October of 2019, with one update since regarding short term rentals. But it's time for just a fresh set of eyes to see if the vision and the goals within still stand true. So that will begin again this month. It's been a fairly busy month for maintenance activities. In particular, if you've been down South Madison Street this week, you'll see a lot of the work going on with sidewalk repairs. So, we took down the two large two mature trees that Council approved for removal previously. And we will be installing Flexi-Pave at the base of those trees, but we already have Flexi-Pave going in at the base of the five remaining mature trees. As it stands right now. So that's in process. And just finally, just a heads up, with Tim's permission, just to let you know that he'll be out on medical leave beginning next week. He's having one of those bionic knees installed. So, he tells me he'll be able to kick a 50-yard field goal when he's done so. But he'll be out for a duration. Obviously, that takes some recovery time, but we'll be working with Jesus Sandoval, who does a lot of contract work for us to take care of some of those routine duties while he's out.

Chris Bernard: Excellent. Thanks, Will. And last but not least, Mr. Crim.

Martin Crim: Thank you, Mr. Vice Mayor. I wanted to add on to the report that I presented in writing to let you know that a lot of the bills that we track this year and all of the bills, for that matter, are awaiting the governor's action. The governor's action deadline is March 24th. So, in another ten days, we will. 11 days we will know what is what in terms of the legislation that will take effect in the next fiscal year, starting July 1st. Then new bills, new laws will take effect. And if something comes up that we haven't been tracking before, I will bring it to the Council's attention.

Chris Bernard: Anything particularly alarming at the moment?

Martin Crim: No.

Chris Bernard: That's not a wood table, sir. [laughter]

Martin Crim: Well knock on some substance that looks like wood.

Chris Bernard: Okay. I think that'll do it for staff reports. Unless I missed anything. Next up is status report on Asbury Church. Miss North.

Rhonda North: Thank you, Mr. Vice Mayor. So, as you know, we issued requests for proposals for architect engineering services as well as construction management services. Those proposals are due at 4:00 pm tomorrow afternoon. With regard to the oral history's project. We did sign the contract with Candor Ventures, and we do have a kickoff meeting scheduled for next week. So, things are moving along.

Chris Bernard: Excellent. Does anyone have any questions on Asbury? [inaudible] Okay. Next up, I guess we will. Does anyone have any reports from town committees? Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Just a quick one. We have our Spring Cleanup on Saturday, April 26th, which is also Arbor Day between 8 and 10, which I started to put on our sustainability committee, social media. And it would be great if we could go into a wonderful newspaper in Loudon County. Thank you. Basically, just [inaudible]. And we're looking for volunteers, as always, to come along and help spruce up the streets. So, I can send out some more information to anyone who needs it. Thank you very much.

Chris Bernard: Is it going to be just one location this year or?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: We'll start.

Chris Bernard: What's the overall plan?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: The overall plan is start off here at Town Hall and then do basically the three parallel streets Washington Street, Federal Street and Marshall Street.

Chris Bernard: Excellent. Anybody else? Town committees? Nope. Okay. Consent agenda. Anybody? Anyone want anything removed from the consent agenda? No. Do I have a motion?

Bud Jacobs: I move that we, that Council approved the consent agenda as presented.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Second.

Chris Bernard: Any discussion? All those in favor?

All of Council: Aye.

Chris Bernard: Any opposed? All right. Motion carries. And the consent agenda is approved. I don't believe we have any specific action items. So, we can move on to the proposed fiscal year 26 budget discussion. Danny.

Danny Davis: Thank you, Mr. Vice Mayor. If it's acceptable to you and the Council, what I'd like to do is briefly walk through the questions and answers that were provided. And I apologize. My header did not get updated. It's fiscal 26, but that's okay. That's what happens when you copy and paste from last year's documents. [laughter] But what I'd like to do is walk through the questions and answers that came up during the presentation two weeks ago, and then maybe start with an overall discussion with Council about revenues. As I know, that's a topic of great interest. And then if we have time where you feel it's appropriate, we can start talking through some of the departmental budgets specifically administration buildings, ground maintenance and perhaps Planning and Zoning if we get that far. In terms of the questions and answers, there was a question about interest earnings. I've provided that information there. It's about 20% of the increase in revenue from 25 to fiscal 26 that's we still are conservatively budgeting that at a 4% interest rate. We're seeing right now still about 4.5% interest rate. So, there is some flexibility there if we were to see rates decrease or if there were to be a rate cut

of any type. So even at the increased budget revenue amounts, it is still a relatively conservative number there. In terms of the second item question, and I appreciate Council Member Jacobs and the Mayor specifically bringing this up, a programmatic review of the police department. We have a draft of that together. I appreciate Chief Jones and is really hard work on that and Deputy Town Manager Moore working with me. We've reviewed it with Council Member Daly. I've also briefly reviewed it with Council Member Jacobs, just to make sure we're going down the right pathway to give them the information or give you all the information you're looking for. So, we will have that in the packet for your next meeting. But we think that will be an effective tool at looking at the activities in the police department and various aspects of that. We did provide some clarifying data regarding average home values and home sizes. We specifically called out 2006 to 2019 homes and then 2020 to present, and that has changed the figures pretty drastically, at least on the value side, if you look at that compared to the presentation. So, homes built prior to 2005, average home value \$750,000 plus or minus those built between 2006-2019, 1.2 million. Those built from 2020 to the present 2.2 million. So, you can see just the extreme difference in the value of those homes that correlates directly with the chart right next to it, which is not only, but much of it attributed to the size of the home as well. And so, if you'd like to, we can talk more about that data. But just wanted to clarify that as that came up as a question through the presentation, the next item.

Chris Bernard: Really quick, I'll just say it might be interesting to do a third little one because which would really tie the two together, which is dollars per square foot.

Danny Davis: Sure. I almost did that. Yeah.

Chris Bernard: I would say it would paint a picture.

Danny Davis: Yeah, it would absolutely. So, the next question that was asked and is the final question of this report, actually gets into a portion of this relates to the discussion of revenues. And so, the question was to develop scenarios for the potential impacts of tariffs, inflation and or the lowering of discretionary spending. And so, we took this approach from both the revenue side as well as the expenditure side. I'll start with the revenue side, since that's what's first in the memo here. And then we can come back to this when we get overall to discuss revenues. So, what I first started with, as a reminder of how the fiscal 26 budget was developed. Essentially we are seeing in current fiscal year a sizable increase year over year, on average, 10% in both meals tax and occupancy tax. And that's actual dollars received versus actual dollars last year received. So that's a sizable jump from fiscal 24 to fiscal 25. What I have assumed in the proposed budget is that 3.5% increase in the meals tax and a 4% increase in TOT. So that's not a massive jump year over year but taking in concert with what we are seeing in current year as a 10%, what that leaves us is that compared to fiscal 24, we're looking at 13-14% plus in potential revenue increases. That assumes a lot of things with recent events happening around our area that impacts not just our local economy, but regionally and globally. And so, one of the ideas I took off of this was to reduce our potential revenues and meals tax, TOT and business license by 5% and then another scenario to reduce by 10%. And that's a reduction on my proposed numbers, not on actuals. A third scenario was to budget at the fiscal 25 budgeted amounts. Not actual amounts, but budgeted amounts. And again, we're coming in over budget in our current year. And then finally would be to take fiscal 24 actuals. And instead of a 14 or 15% increase, just give it a total 10% increase, which would capture essentially actuals in our current year and assume that things are just going to stay status quo. This is a variety of kind of potential scenarios that could take effect. You can see the impact on the table below. That's anywhere from a reduction of \$400,000 plus to \$130,000, give or take. And so, there are, in a percentage wise, that's anywhere from nearly 2.5% to over 7.5% reduction in our project or potential revenues for fiscal year 26. Those are sizable numbers as noted in many times in front of you in budget discussions as well as in the budget presentation. Prior years budgets have had a fairly comfortable cushion of revenues. Last year's was about \$430,000. Excuse me, the year before was about \$750,000. And we built those in for a couple of reasons. One is we knew debt service was going to increase, so we wanted to be ready for that. And we are at that level now with debt service. Another was not knowing if the revenue trends that we were seeing from 23 to 24 were going to keep continuing. Not only have they continued, they've exceeded our budget, but we're in a different boat now where two things at play. One is the economic situations that we know we are seeing around us. And second of all, the proposal to spend more of those dollars and have less of a cushion in that revenue stream means there's less flexibility if revenues were to decrease more than expected. So, the point of this exercise on the revenue side is to say there's a variety of things that could happen. We obviously don't know. We understand that things continue to seem going well at many of our major revenue sources and revenue locations. But also, we're early into this kind of change, and attitude and atmosphere and consumer confidence. And so, we don't really know

right now what, what long term effects, if any, there might be. So, I'll come back to that in a second. On the expenditure side we understand and recognize there could be changes due to a number of things also could be tariffs, could be inflation, could just be again general cost pressures that we see increasing. So similarly, I scenario either an increase in 5% or an increase in 10% not of total expenditures, but of those line items that would be most sensitive to tariffs, inflation or other increases, specifically things like equipment, supplies a little bit of contractual costs, gas, electricity, things like that. So not huge line items. And you'll see here that even in putting a scenario of 10% increase on those particular expenditures is only a one and quarter percent increase in overall expenditures. Again, making a lot of assumptions here. But our primary expenditure item is salary and benefits almost half of our budget. We have a lot of people. And then other items are contractual items. And also, professional services that we already have anticipated costs because we have a contract with 3 or 5 or 7% escalators year by year. So that's already built into the budget. So, when you take those in totality, that's already three quarters of our budget between just those two particular areas. That's why again, inflationary or tariff impacted costs don't have a significant, and I say significant in terms of by dollar value change in the potential budget. Again, that's based on best guesses at this time. So, if we take those scenarios and kind of combine them what you have is again, not saying this will happen, could happen. It's just a what if kind of exercise. There's a better potential scenario and a worse potential scenario showing anything from a potential shortfall of and let me clarify. The proposed budget had, and I will have to look at the number about \$118,000, \$123,000, in unallocated revenues, unspent revenues already built in. So, this table and the responses assumes use of those dollars. So, scenario one would be a shortfall of about \$40,000 all the way up to potentially a shortfall of just over \$350,000. So, you can see that if revenues really tank as, as they could and expenditures go up 10% in those particular areas, then we do end up with a pretty sizable structural issue in our budget. I think one of the challenges here is the timing of all this and the expectation of making decisions at some point without having all the data, because we're still in a constant state of flux and uncertainty around even how long some of these decisions are going to last, judicial decisions coming down daily, executive orders coming down feels like daily. So, we have to just be responsive to that. The good news for Council, compared to perhaps other localities, is that you have flexibility in your timing as well, in terms of when and ultimately the budget needs to be adopted. We try to adopt a budget in May at the end of May, but that's also not required. We if we need more data or more time to see how this plays out, we have until June 30th for the Council to adopt a budget. I do want to reiterate a couple of things that's in the memo, but I think it's important for the public and for just discussion as well. One, we are in a very, extremely positive fiscal position, so I don't want anyone to get the idea that we're at the brink of any kind of catastrophe. We have an extremely strong fiscal reserve, 125% of our annual expenditures. That's 15 months of operating expenses that is in a bucket that we hope to never have to touch. On top of that, we have another 4 million plus. Now, some of that is committed to projects, but is not out like directly obligated by contracts so we can the Council always has the ability to put a pause on projects if necessary in response to economic changes. So just for the public's confidence, we continue to be very strong fiscally in that position. As we look at changes in the economy and in changes in things that could occur. There are always options that are before the Council. Sometimes that is, if there were a serious incident, whether it's Covid type situation, a massive, you know, loss of revenues that we see coming, we have the opportunity to freeze spending, discretionary spending and immediately take stock of where we are and analyze what we need to do in the coming month, three months, 12 months, and put a plan together. And so, we do have options on the table should that become necessary. We also want an option we have on the table is if we have vacant positions, we can always freeze those or defer hiring those. Alternatives are that you can have positions if Council and again, this is a long-term conversation in the next few months, if Council decides it's appropriate to pursue additional positions, we could even defer hiring those until mid-year. And that saves you dollars. And so, or you could do the opportunity of using fund balance to cover one-time expenses. Again, not operating expenses, not ongoing dollars. We don't want to build our operating budget on use of one-time expenses because that's structurally imbalanced. But we can use fund balance on one-time expenditures to relieve pressure as well should that become necessary. So, I know that's a lot to start with those are but maybe we'll talk through this first and then get to the rest of the revenues.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. I was going to say let's try to bite this part off. And Does anyone have any questions?

Pam Curran: You know, I think with the retaliatory tariffs that we're hearing about that is supposed to affect tourism more than just normal tariffs. So, I do appreciate how you've put down three different scenarios or four for us to consider where it's not so aggressive in our projections of growth, that's one. And then two, I wondered if there was anything related to expenditures and tariffs that we could be looking at, you know, related to I, you know, I don't know, I mean, not

wood, not aluminum, not water, but I mean, what are the types of things we could look at that might get us out ahead of some of the tariffs that are going to be imposed.

Danny Davis: In terms of go ahead and try to procure things sooner rather than later. Yeah, that's a great thought. We haven't spent any significant time looking at that yet, but I think that's something we can walk through Mr. Moore, and I can look at some of that as well as with our utility side, we are looking at some certain things like replacing our main server in the computer IT room. Getting that done sooner rather than later might be advantageous. But we'll take a look at that and see if there are things in current fiscal year that need to be moved up to avoid potential impacts of cost down the road.

Pam Curran: I know you will. Thank you.

Danny Davis: Yeah. Thank you.

Chris Bernard: Any other questions on just kind of this first high-level overview? Okay. We can move forward.

Danny Davis: All right. Well, what then I'd like to draw your attention to is in the budget. If you have the budget document. It is page 12 of the budget and that is our general fund revenues page. It's got a bunch of numbers on it. Fiscal 23 Actual all the way through Fiscal 26 Proposed. This is really kind of where the rubber meets the road for our revenues in the general fund. We can we can walk through them. You've just now adopted the real property tax rate, which makes us able to kind of lock in the top number here, which is real estate taxes. This is based on current values of homes. And so again, that number is relatively stable and steady because it's based on assessments that won't change through the calendar year. And then we'll see what happens in the next calendar year. Personal property has been relatively steady. It's actually come in higher than budgeted the last few years. The challenge with personal property this is business personal property is that there's a depreciation schedule in these items that runs rather rapidly from the first year of 100% down to 0% over, I think, just five years. And so, it's a pretty quick depreciation. And I'm always cautious to over budget on this line item in case large areas don't refresh their business personal property in a quick manner. I did a little bit of review of our sales tax looking at the next line item. The county sales tax has been very strong. No surprise they actually, in their proposed budget, proposed a reduction in the sales tax year over year. But our biggest challenge is not necessarily the county's receipts of the sales tax. It's the fact that our school age population is 0.08% of the county's school age population. And the formula is that we receive half of our proportionate share of school age children vis a vis the county's collections. In other words, anywhere from 45 to \$50,000. So, it's basically a formula of state code. We have, by estimates, I think, 72 school age children in the town limits and the county has 101,000. So, it's a very, very, very small percentage of the county. And it's just nothing we can do, even though we generate significant sales tax from our town through the businesses that are here in our town. Oh, wait. We'll talk about that. I'm not sure if maybe now is appropriate if you want to talk through meals tax and occupancy tax and get if there's any kind of feel from the Council, I see Mr. Jacobs.

Chris Bernard: Go for it Bud.

Bud Jacobs: I see an entry here about under Planning and Zoning about a right of way Franchise Fee.

Danny Davis: Yes, sir.

Bud Jacobs: And there's an annotation that the franchisee has refused to pay this fee. Can you walk us through that?

Danny Davis: I can carefully. Five years ago, the Council entered into a franchise agreement with Lumos Networks, or otherwise known as goes by the name SEGRA, who is under contract from Loudoun County Public Schools first and then Loudoun County government second, to provide essentially a dark fiber closed fiber network to connect all county properties together. As part of that the company agreed to what is referred to as a conduit fee, which is a per linear foot for use of our right of way, and the value of that at the time was just over \$14,000 for running their fiber through the town. They paid the first four installments of that, and when it was not paid for the fifth installment, I sent an invoice and got a response back that they didn't feel like they were obligated to pay it. We've had a lot of conversations over the past 4 to 6 months. Mr. Crim and I have had many conversations. So, I have to be careful what I say. But the good news is I have an

email from them that indicated they authorized the payment of the outstanding fee. So that should be on its way to us shortly. The second piece of that is their franchise expires in two months. They know that. They understand potential implications of that. And we have had discussions about what that looks like. My comment to them in our last meeting is that I think it would be, instead of us kind of standing in each corner, how about they take a stab at what they want to propose to the town, and we will take a look at that and consult with both our legal attorney as well as with the Town Council to identify whether that meets the town's expectations. So, it is possible that that revenue stream could be something other than what is listed in the budget.

Chris Bernard: Thank you.

Danny Davis: Yes.

Chris Bernard: Cool. I think we jumped ahead a little bit, though. So, does anyone have anything on the meals tax or any of that? I have one question. So, the motor vehicle license fee, I know we dropped that to zero. Does that mean we're going to get it back from the county? Does that positive 15 show up somewhere?

Danny Davis: So that's for fiscal 25. So current fiscal year that the county did that because they made the change mid-year. Yep so. Yeah.

Chris Bernard: I guess we keep going.

Danny Davis: I'll keep going. And if thoughts pop in about these.

Cindy Pearson: So, with the meals tax, are we there? I mean, is it okay to.

Danny Davis: Yeah.

Cindy Pearson: So, do you think that's a bit high to go to for next year? Just give me your explanation on that, please.

Danny Davis: I think so we're.

Cindy Pearson: Getting a few new places that might.

Danny Davis: That's right. That's one of the goals. Now, you know, even those new places likely were not going to see open until fall timeframe. Now that's great for fiscal 26. Currently fiscal 25, we are right on budget. Not saying I'm a great prognosticator; I'm just saying that thankfully so far we're on budget. However, that's on budget through January and we won't get February numbers until next week on the 20th and really probably won't start seeing impacts potentially until March figures, which would be and maybe even April sales, which means we're not going to get those until almost the end of May. It's hard, it's always hard to guess because you walk down the street and you go into, you know, not to call them out, but you go into King Street, and it feels as busy as ever. But that's a snapshot in time. You don't know what that's looking like in the constant turnover. And are they seeing that? So, I think is it high? My gut is starting to tell me it's probably high. Is TOT high. I want to say it's okay where it is, but I also know that with the groups, the group travel, corporate travel, potential impact on some of those ads that they were hoping to see over the next year. I'm not saying that that they've told me anything, you know, earth shattering, but I think we just need to be aware that that could soften back down to maybe where we are today and not grow year over year.

Cindy Pearson: And the reason I say that is I went to one of the restaurants in the county that everybody has probably visited, and the prices have increased tremendously. I mean, it was like, really?

Danny Davis: Yeah.

Cindy Pearson: So, you know, that's going to make people step back and go out, maybe however many times a week instead of as many as they did before.

Danny Davis: Yeah it is. And it's a challenging proposition, I know for the restaurants because they are feeling that pressure of the cost. So, they're raising it which in a different world we would reap the benefits of that because the meals tax is just off the top. In today's world, I think you're absolutely right. It may cause those who would normally go out to eat, maybe they go out to eat 10% less or 15% less because they just they're not sure what that means for their family there. It's not just the government jobs, it's the contractors. It's the educators. Higher education. Johns Hopkins just notified 2,000 people they're being laid off because of their loss of federal grants or federal funding. And so kind of the trickle down of all of this. It's one thing to look at the data of how many federal government employees live in Loudoun County, but it's the secondary is that it really is. And so, again, I'm not pretending to know any answers. Just saying I think we all do have to be cognizant of that, right.

Chris Bernard: Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I think, Cindy, your point is really well taken. And I think the fact that the meals, the cost of going out is going up so much is possibly going to counteract some of that, fewer people going. But I would be very much in favor of being a bit more conservative. I don't know what the number is, but something a bit lower than the 8.4 and the 8.9, because we just don't know what's going to happen behind us.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. And I think to piggyback on that, I think, well, not piggyback on it, but, you know, so he's given us that that first page where we asked them to come up with the different scenarios. And so, I think we have that in this hands. And then we have, you know, the proposed budget in this hand. I think to your point, Danny, the real impacts of what's been going on, you know, the past several weeks, we're not going to really see on paper until we get much closer to the finish line. So, I think we just need to make sure we're flexible enough going into our budget, public hearings and all that stuff to adopt the budget that we can start to massage a couple of these numbers. Absolutely. I think, Miss Curran.

Pam Curran: I just want to say I also agree with Council Member Pearson. I mean, the number of employees in Northern Virginia that have already been let go is 30,000 up, and we use at the Y as an indicator the number of kids that are being signed up for camp. That's down 1500 campers already because people are so hesitant to spend. So, I think, you know, with prices going up, as Council Member Pearson said, plus a loss of jobs, I think you're on it to have different scenarios. Darlene.

Darlene Kirk: Yeah, I agree with Cindy and Peter that we need to be a little bit more conservative in our numbers, especially for the budget.

Danny Davis: Thank you. And I'll work on some thoughts. We also do have our Strategic Finance Committee on the 24th. And they were, I think already suggesting some caution and not over jumping too far on projections. So, I think as we talk with them as well, that will be instructive. I do also agree with Vice Mayor Bernard that again, as noted, the timing of our decisions gives us that flexibility to take granular data or regular data and continue to be flexible in this process. And when we come to you next week to talk about the police department and the request from the police department. Part of my goal in that is not just to talk through what we do in the police department, but what are potential scenarios of how we approach this request alternatives. And that could be, you know, it can span a whole wide gamut of options before you. So that also may give you flexibility as we look at this and how we want to approach the revenue side, but also what that means in terms of making sure that our expenditures stay in line with reality.

Chris Bernard: Sure. Well, I think that's a good point, because as we're going into when we look at the expenditure side and the police department, there's a substantial increase. And I want to make sure that our projected revenues don't paint a different picture than we should be looking at.

Danny Davis: That's right. Absolutely right. So good. Well in terms of the rest of the revenues, I don't mean to make them sound inconsequential, but they are much less impactful than the ones that we just talked about. We do have our kind of regular recurring fees, from zoning fees to court fees, Farmers Market fees, parking space, rentals, the interest earnings as discussed. I'm happy if there's any concern with that, but I think it's still a valid and relatively appropriate number. That number could, in the future, trail off for 1 or 2 reasons one if interest rates do decrease. Also, if Council and

if we continue to move forward in capital projects and spending those dollars, the 9 million will of course drop down to closer to somewhere like seven and a half, give or take. And so that will in future fiscal years, not likely directly in this fiscal year, have an impact on what that baseline number is. And then the rest are either small grants or pass through dollars. And we always have a line for donations and sponsorships that's vis a vis our events, getting sponsorships to help offset some of those costs. Some of that is dependent on how certain events pan out this year as well. And so, we'll have continued discussion about that.

Chris Bernard: Darlene.

Darlene Kirk: Hi. You have a new event down here that's proposed new event and \$15,000 that seems like a lot for a brand new. I mean, I know we have to do it and do it, right? Yeah. But is that?

Danny Davis: I think it's looking at our other events and what it takes to put it on well. Some of that is fully honest with you. It's the fee to rent the space because it'd be the community center. It's, yeah, we need the bigger space there. Some of that is music that meets kind of that style. And then of course then it's food and other things. Now it's possible that it could be a ticketed type event that recovers a fair amount of that cost. But I would just venture to say I have not delved deeply into the specifics of that event. I think looking at how other events have required more money than expected, I didn't want to underestimate what that might need to do it well.

Darlene Kirk: One other question. I know Bud and I both think of Burns when we think of burning something.

Danny Davis: Yes. [multiple speakers] Should I call it Robert Burns Day? Just to make it clear. [laughter]

Chris Bernard: Question, have we, like, officially decided to move forward with that? Or are we just place marking money in case we decide to?

Danny Davis: Yeah, it's a placeholder. I think the Council's.

Chris Bernard: Remember.

Danny Davis: There's no official vote. I think the Council's expressed positivity towards the idea, just not of the timing. But now would be an appropriate time for Council to say, you know, maybe it's not the right time to start a new event or it fits a need. It's a great time of year. Let's do it. And so, we can talk about that when we get to Economic Development next meeting or the following meeting. So that's. Oh sorry.

Chris Bernard: Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Sorry. Just going back to the donations, you mentioned. Yeah. So that line so far we're only at 12 six. Is that because of how it staggers to get such?

Danny Davis: It is.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: It does.

Danny Davis: And so, some of that is also potentially that our accounting for some of those dollars may have gone into a different line item. I'm thinking specifically reimbursements from the Mille Miglia, that's around 40,000. So that should be reflected. If not in that number, it ended up potentially in a different line item somewhere. So but yes, it also to be fair, our sponsorship revenue has not yet achieved the goals that we had for that line item in terms of locking down the number of sponsors and the breadth of sponsors for all of the events, not just Mille Miglia, but everything from Oktoberfest to you know Art in the Burg and others. So, it's partly a lofty number, but also a goal that we have to help really offset the event costs.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: But do you think we should look at that \$75,000? Looks a bit heavy.

Danny Davis: It's possible. And what I might do is, for your next meeting, come back to you with kind of the breakdown of what was built into that to let you know how realistic that is or not. I think it'd be good to pair that with our conversation of economic development and events. So, we kind of look at those simultaneously because, for instance, if we end up deciding we need to pause an event or do an event differently, maybe those numbers change, or they go in a different bucket. So, if what I might do is bring that to you, kind of as a holistic approach of revenues and expenditures when we look at all of the events together. Yes.

Darlene Kirk: [off mic] Juneteenth and Burns Day?

Danny Davis: Right. And Juneteenth is one where we have put dollars into it last couple of years without it being a specific line item. And we want to make sure go ahead and call that out as it's a smaller scale event, but one we think is important. And Chief is the one who kind of helps put that together and has done a great job the last few years, and we're already planning that out for this current year and trying to see what that looks like into the future. Yeah. Any other revenue? I leave it up to you. If you're good, we'll walk through at least administration.

Chris Bernard: [off mic]

Danny Davis: Buildings and maintenance. [inaudible] Okay, great. Perfect. So, administration. Just a reminder overall, I'm proposing for staff 2.5% cost of living market adjustment, as well as then for non-law enforcement, a on average 2% merit. And that tracks with Leesburg, Loudoun County, some of the other towns and their proposals. The breakdown might be slightly different, but it's generally in line. You might see individual salary line items change more than that 2.5% because of just changes in the past year, new hires or things like that. So don't let the budget percentage number throw you off there. Another one of our major costs is health care in the administration that is, all departments except law enforcement. Health insurance, we actually were given a little bit of a reprieve this year. Our costs only went up 1.6%. The last couple of years, we had 8 or 8 plus percent year by year. And so, we finally have a little bit of a break on the growth in the health costs. And then VRS costs are fixed by actuarial review so that salary and benefits and administration. Council expenditures I've proposed no change there. You'll see that there are some dollar line items sometimes you spend a lot of it, sometimes not it depends on kind of the year. The Council expenditures is for attending conferences, or if you have your strategic planning offsite meeting. We would anticipate having a strategic planning retreat in fiscal 26 because this would be subsequent to an election this November. So, there would be probably more dollars spent in 26 than in 25. And then you have some in the citizen engagement we have some dollars in there that go towards a variety of activities. There's at one point we agreed that we'd put some dollars into supporting COLT if there were joint efforts from COLT or Citizens Academy like yesterday volunteer reception. At one point, there was an idea that we would have some dollars allocated to help repair the ornament signs that are put up every Christmas. I'll be fully honest with you, I haven't had a conversation with anyone at the Hill School in probably 18 months about that, nor have they actually come to us and said we need money for this. That could be something that if Council says, you know what, it's one of two things I'm happy for Mr. Moore and myself to reach out and see where those signs stand. And do they need support from the town? I'm also happy if Council says, you know, they haven't needed it yet maybe we just trim this from the budget at this time until needed. We can come back to this if you'd like more information, so. The rest of the expenditures, for better or worse, I've left basically no change year over year. Mr. Crim agreed to not change his rates, so just kidding, he actually did. But we had built in a little buffer into the line item there for current year. So based on anticipated use of his time, which hopefully is less than this year we should yeah, we should be okay in the attorney line item we also. Yes.

Chris Bernard: Quick question on the attorney line item. Is that just Martin. Like if we have if we're using attorneys for other things or do those go to project accounts?

Danny Davis: It depends on the particular item specifically right now for Town Hall that's being tracked in a separate line item. If it's other things. So, we do have line items in both planning and zoning as well as in police department and utility for attorney's fees.

Chris Bernard: Okay.

Danny Davis: So, we have not my general practice is we have a set number of hours for Mr. Crim each month. And generally, I attribute all that to administration. If we go over that amount, then I may dole it out department by department as appropriate. So yes, we do have some other flexibility in there.

Chris Bernard: Yeah, I was just curious if that number should be the same this coming year or?

Danny Davis: Sure.

Chris Bernard: Right. But I get I get what you're saying.

Danny Davis: Yep. Consulting services and this, you know, potentially could change. I know Council has asked me to go look at other options and alternatives for our HR support in terms of whether we should have someone here potentially, you know, part of a day, a week or other type services. I did have a good conversation with the Town of Herndon's HR Director on some ideas and some contacts that she has. I've not had a chance to follow up with that yet, but we'll put together some more potential opportunities for what that could look like. And then if there's other consulting services that the Town Council might identify, we can use that in here. And that could that's kind of a broad based could be anything from additional financial support, organizational support other consulting type services. We have our audits, general advertising dollars for regular ads and things like that. I do have a line item for our financial advisor. We are using them in current fiscal year, and we'll see what that looks like for the next fiscal year. Sometimes that's a just an advisory fee, and we pay that sometimes if it's related to a debt issuance, their fee gets rolled into that debt issuance. And so it may be that we don't actually need to pull those dollars specifically out of this line item, but it gets paid for through potential debt, specifically in the utility fund. Professional development is a line item that is used for the this is just for administration that's our conferences, the things that you allow me to attend as well. And then also, I do have some flexibility in that line item. If a particular staff member wants to attend a professional development course, that might be more than what's in their departmental budget it allows us to be able to invest in that staff member. Sometimes those costs 2 or \$3000 if it's a high-level course. So, there's a little bit of flexibility there. Our tuition reimbursement program, we have two staff currently using that. And we used about \$3,000 of it in the last fiscal year in fiscal 24. So, we encourage all of our employees who don't have their even associate's degree to spend the time if they can, and the town will cover up to \$2,500 per employee per year budget; assuming there's the budget to pay for that. And then the rest of it is pretty straightforward on that page. The second page of administration is things like office supplies, printing, postage, most of these are all pretty are either built upon actual costs. We lease our printers from a company that gives us reports monthly on the cost per page. And so, it's easy to generally put together an assumption of what those printing costs will be. Postage still used for various mailings. Utility bills are budgeted separately in the utility budget. Our equipment software purchases for either PCs minor equipment or, as discussed, potentially server. I had money previously for some of those purchases. The server is likely going to exceed this budget amount, so I'm going to look and see where it may be able to find some other dollars in current year to get that taken care of but will likely come back to Council for that just so you're aware of that. The equipment and software maintenance line is one we carefully break down and buy about 8 to 12 different providers. This is everything from our live streaming to our agenda management software, our new IT contract and other subscription services. So, this is built on our actual contractual dollar amounts with maybe a slight just buffer in case we need to add a software or two, but that'd be maybe \$500 or so. Other than that, those are pretty much on exact dollar figures. And then same with the office equipment rental, our folding machine and Xerox machine. We have our insurance dollars and then town committee support. The committee support had been budgeted each year at \$10,000. I'm thinking there might be committee needs for some of these dollars. And really what's happened is those dollars have been more allocated to specific events. So, Art in the Burg, Sustainability used to do Wellness Day that's now a wellness day event. So, I've actually reduced this from a 10,000 to a \$2,000 line item. This covers things like finance committee gets lunch because it's a lunch meeting. Or if I know sustainability committee had a request to print some things or it was a, oh, it was to cover the cost of electronics recycling under \$1000 or \$500 or something like that. I mean, those are appropriate town committee type expenditures, so far has not been used in prior years, so no need to keep it too high. And then finally here in administration is debt service. And that's a set number based on our current debt profile. Miss North did remind me we will have the elections coming up this year. But since it's co-combined with county elections, I don't think we have additional costs related to that. So, I think we should be good. But if we find out otherwise we'll if it isn't covered in our other or contingency line item then we'll make sure to bring that back to you.

Chris Bernard: Does anybody have questions on the administrative budget? Not many changes. That's great. Okay. Let's do the short one.

Danny Davis: Short one, buildings and grounds. You would think. [off mic] Yeah. You would think we would have exact figures on some of these. And because, you know, the situation with us still figuring out certain aspects of the operations of this building and not honestly being fully complete with things like the HVAC system. We don't know exactly what some of these costs will be. However, I think the numbers built in give us flexibility to make sure that we can have the appropriate maintenance contracts, ongoing service contracts, as well as pay for the operations of the building. So, you'll see a variety of numbers here. This the repairs and maintenance line item includes cleaning contract for our cleaners when we finally enter into an HVAC contract, and any other small maintenance contracts that might be needed. For instance, our video surveillance system, our cameras, our access control system, our badges, we need a firm on board, even if it's not significant dollars, just to be able to do regular software updates repairs if necessary.

Darlene Kirk: Last year I guess we paid \$11,008. And we're predicting 45 [off mic].

Danny Davis: Yeah. So, this is pretty much the 11 eight is the current year to date. That's really just all our cleaning contract. Right now, any costs related to the HVAC system are still being attributed to the Town Hall project. We have not entered into a maintenance contract yet. We had a proposal from them that was significant. I think we're going to try our best to reduce that down. I think we can in certain ways, but we have to get the system completed to the way it was designed before we can really get a.

Chris Bernard: To maintain it at this level that we're at currently. [laughter]

Danny Davis: That's right. We have our normal grounds and landscaping around the building here, and that's regular grass cutting and landscaping. The electrical services [off mic]. What's that? Snow removal could fall under here, though typically we've been charging that under the maintenance budget, which is kind of a broad category to include our properties as well as if we need them to clear on Route 50 the parking spaces. So oftentimes VDOT will do the travel lanes, and we'll ask Jesus and his team to push the parking spaces. So, for the building, typically, I think we charge that just broadly under snow removal under maintenance. Electrical services were again one of these weird aspects of the system not being fully dialed in. We're not quite sure where it's going to end up, but I think it's a fair number to budget. All right. I'll stop there. [laughter Yes, ma'am.

Darlene Kirk: Occasionally you hear, like, a banging or something. Is that part of the electrical system? A little knock or something. [multiple speakers]

Danny Davis: It could be the. Oh. Click, click, click. Yeah, yeah. It could be that's the door stops just don't hold it fully and it's got a strong hinge to it. So sometimes it just clicks. Sometimes the pipes, you know, as water flows through the building, you'll get a little rattle. So, all in all, I have a \$687 change in the budget year to year.

Chris Bernard: Any questions on. Yeah, Pam.

Pam Curran: Have we done an analysis of a contractor versus an employee for maintenance? So instead of going out and hiring a cleaning contractor and versus hiring an employee.

Danny Davis: So, we have not done a full analysis, I will tell you, our current cleaning contract is around \$18,000.

Will Moore: \$19,800.

Danny Davis: Yeah. So just under \$20,000 for this building and the public restrooms on Liberty, and that's three times a week.

Pam Curran: Yeah. I just wondered, you know, contract versus with overhead versus us having our own employee.

Danny Davis: Yeah, we could.

Cindy Pearson: It will include all the equipment.

Danny Davis: Right.

Pam Curran: What's that?

Chris Bernard: Yeah, they'd have to be that we'd have to then have all the cleaning equipment and.

Pam Curran: No. Maybe it's just the analysis. I'm just wondering who do it.

Danny Davis: Yeah. So.

Pam Curran: Yeah. I hear you.

Danny Davis: Yeah, but what I can tell you is I haven't. I can't hand you a document of a formal analysis, but what I could tell you, though, is looking at the needs of our buildings and the size of them and the frequency, I don't think, justifies a staff person for it.

Pam Curran: Okay. I just wanted us. [off mic] And then.

Danny Davis: Jessica. Yeah.

Pam Curran: I had a second question. Utilities, do we lock our utilities in?

Chris Bernard: Hold on.

J. Kevin Daly: Sorry.

Pam Curran: Without Bridge we're out of control. Did we lock our utilities in?

Danny Davis: Did we lock our utilities?

Pam Curran: Yeah.

Danny Davis: You mean.

Pam Curran: Can we lock our utilities in? You know, there are programs where you can lock them in, so you don't have the fluctuations.

Danny Davis: Right. Thank you. So, we are a part of and I'm not going to get the acronym correct VPEGA or something like that. It's an association of public entities that negotiate collaboratively with Dominion Power on rates. So, I don't specifically involve myself in any of that, but I do trust the people who run that. And it's kind of an arm or a partnership with VML, Virginia Municipal League. And I know that they advocate for the best rates for our power specifically. We don't use a significant amount of heating gas, natural gas, where I think that we could necessarily lock in per se. But as we look at those on an ongoing basis. We can look at our options maybe in the future years.

Chris Bernard: Bud.

Bud Jacobs: I don't know if this helps, Pam, but on the contractor versus FTE question, I'm not sure it's worth our trouble to even mess with it. We're so small. However, at the federal level, there have been several studies done, and it looks like

it's pretty much a wash in terms of where the money is and what columns for an employee versus a contractor. And at the federal level, the real reason for hiring contractors is that they are so easily fired. And on the military and intelligence side, it removes a level or two of accountability, which I'm sure Colonel Daly could talk to you about in some detail.

J. Kevin Daly: [off mic]

Bud Jacobs: [laughter] Strike that. Never mind.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. I think just based on the volume of the work that we need done, I don't know that it would warrant a full-time person. So, it's an interesting idea.

Darlene Kirk: I was going to say. The other thing we'd have to think about is, again, I guess all the other benefits of retirement and all that we have to put in. So that's.

Chris Bernard: Anybody else with questions? Okay. Really quick, before we move on just give us a quick rundown on the rest of the budget season schedule.

Danny Davis: Great. Thank you, Mr. Vice Mayor. I appreciate that it was on the tip of my tongue. So, what we anticipate is for next meeting, since you did adopt the tax rate tonight, we don't need that on the next meeting agenda. Next meeting we will focus on police department, that'd be my goal. That may take the whole meeting. Not the whole meeting, but the whole. It may take. Yes, it may take many meetings. But if we want, we can move on to other departments after that even if desired, into economic development and events, if there's time and energy for that. So next would be public safety. Following that, the first meeting in April, I am going to amend what was on your initial budget schedule and go ahead and start the discussion of the utility fund. And there's a specific reason for that. Our financial advisors and our rate consultant will be presenting to the finance committee on the 24th on March 24th. A part of that conversation from our financial advisor, you may recall we have a line of credit that's we have used about a million and a half of that line of credit that is due June 30th is due this fiscal year. And so, there are a variety of options on the table for us to consider. And we're going to seek the input of the finance committee on that. And then if it were to be that we decide to term out or term out or, and reissue some of that debt as permanent debt and potentially need additional debt for utility projects then we need to move on that quickly so that we can complete that process in time to term that out and pay that by June 30th, since that's about 1.4 million. So that's why I'd like to go ahead and bring that to Council on April 10th for discussion with a recommendation from the Finance Committee. And should Council be agreeable to that effort, then we would begin the process with Davenport right away to start the debt issuance procedures, RFP, things like that. But it takes a couple months to get that complete. And so, we just want to do that. So that would be April 10th. April 24th we would then have further discussions. We will have probably revenue updates. We'll have yes through March. We will have further conversations on any other items in the general fund and then continue discussing utility fund. And then I would anticipate either at that meeting or the first meeting in May, talking through the capital program as well. So, it's kind of lay of the land of where we are. Of course, at any of these meetings, we can always bring back topics from another week if we need more detail or if, as you ask questions, I'll do my best to get them to you as quickly as we can. And if we, you know, need to come back at a future meeting with more answers, we'll do that for you. And then, of course, if it feels like we need a special meeting for any reason, we can work with the Mayor and Vice Mayor to call a special meeting.

Chris Bernard: Yeah, I'd say maybe just at the beginning of each of these discussions as we go through it. We won't have updated revenue numbers every meeting probably just once a month. But maybe just anecdotally, what are we seeing? Are there is there anything just so that we can keep looking at those different scenarios and make adjustments?

Danny Davis: Will do.

Chris Bernard: Okay. We will move on to Status Report Middleburg Day, which is me. So, Ali has been working on this. We've got Middleburg Day this year is going to be Friday, May 30th. It's going to be from 5 to 9. We are not going to roll the dice on the weather this year. We are going to have a tent that will cover the parking area back here, just in case. But we had some feedback last year that there wasn't much shade for people to get out of the sun. So, it accomplishes two goals, which is great. We were able to fit it into the budget. Mark is gone, so American Legion is going to be doing the

grilling this year. Backstreet Catering is going to do the side. Scruffy's will be back. Perry with Robinson Refuse is going to do waste management and head up the band. And what else do we have? We've got invitations going out April 1st. As part of the Farmers Market initiative, we are working on getting some updated info about the Farmers Market to include on a postcard with the Middleburg Day invitation so we can try to drum up some activity there. We're going to reduce the shuttle a little bit. Last year we had some feedback. Not a lot of people use the shuttle, so we're still going to have one run instead of two. That way it's there in case people need it. But that'll reduce some costs, which is nice. And other than that, I don't think we have a ton of updates, but we are cranking along. Does anybody have questions?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Is the shuttle for Windy Hill or others as well?

Chris Bernard: There are stops throughout the town. Windy Hill is a stop for sure.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Is there a way to get more? Do we get a lot of people from Windy Hill? I can't.

Chris Bernard: You know, it's funny. I feel like we did get a good turnout from Windy Hill last year, but almost no one used the shuttle, so I don't really know how they got there. But we talked to the shuttle drivers, and they were like, look, we had 1 or 2 people. So, it stops, you know, in a couple places through Ridgeview, and then it goes around to Lincoln Road because that's a tough place to drive from. [off mic] That's Middleburg Day. Next up, Farmers Market. So, I will take that one as well. So, we talked a lot about the Farmers Market and some of our ideas as far as continuing it this year. Pam and Ali and I have gotten together probably 4 or 5 times. We have a standing weekly meeting right now. And we have come up with several ideas really focusing on trying to get things that will be easy to pull off and will get the most bang for our buck. As far as time and effort, but also, you know, trying to drum up some excitement. We're focusing really on providing you know, boost the vendors, try to get more access for people in town to get produce, meats, flowers, vegetables, Farmers Market things. We're going to add some craft vendors as well. So, like gifts and stuff like that for people. But also try to focus on turning it into an opportunity for people in town to get together and engage with each other on a weekend, make it very family friendly. So, we're adding some wellness activities, maybe try to incorporate some car events, some pet focused events. We are going to bring back the little marketeers, which is the young entrepreneurs. We're going to try to involve all the local schools really try to maximize opportunities to have Council and police presence at the Farmers Market so that citizens can engage with us and ask questions about what's going on. I know that Ali has gotten a bunch of new vendor activity. She can probably give a better update on that. She's got a list here. I know, even since she put this list together, we've had 3 or 4 more apply. So, we're getting some good activity there. We've got a schedule that hopefully is going to go on that postcard that will give people an idea of when these different events are going to be. For example, like our wellness days, we're trying to work with like a mobile golf simulator for one day, and we're trying to do some equestrian focused stuff and yoga. So, we'll try to put a schedule together so that people can actually, you know, plan on attending. And I believe that is kind of the big stuff. There is something in the agenda about signage. And I know we want to be extremely careful about you know, the visual aspects in the town. And the example in there is something that Quail Run put together. It's a potential addition to the entry point signs. They're barely noticeable. It's really it, and I think I brought this up last time. If you drive into Warrenton on 17 they have their big you know Welcome to Warrenton sign. And underneath it 12 years or 12 months a year it says Farmers Market, the location and the time. It's very simple. You barely notice it, but you do see it over and over and over again. And I do remember it. So hopefully something subtle like that will let all those people driving through on Route 50 know that it's there. And just remind the folks in town that are driving in and out every day. Okay.

Danny Davis: Do you mind if I provide just a quick comment on that? So, we did work with Quail Run to put this together. And I think our staff team thinks that it would, you know, fit within the look and feel of the sign and be appropriate with enough difference in color to catch your attention. I was asked by the Mayor to share his thoughts. And I will not do him justice in his feelings on this matter. He would express to you that he strongly opposes the idea of signage, primarily from the idea that we are putting up an advertisement. In his words, when we don't allow other businesses to do similar things, whether it's on this sign or their own banners on the side of the road or things like that. He feels that that, you know, is fundamentally either not fair or just not appropriate for us to put something like this up when other businesses cannot do the same and promote their own particular business or activity. So, I have expressed to you his opinion. I will leave that as it is and let you guys debate. I would, I don't I need to say not me. The town does not need a decision on this like immediately. However, if Council does wish or does think that it's appropriate to pursue the total cost

for two of these. So, one on each side of town is just under \$1,000 total. It is the material that would you know, last for a long time and meet the same type material of the signage and have the attachments to it that will allow us to actually take it down in the wintertime. So, it's only put up probably from April to the end of October. So again, this is a Council thing. If Council wishes to give direction tonight, then we can proceed. If so, or just say we're not going forward with it, or if you wish to push it off to another meeting, we can wait as well.

Chris Bernard: Darlene had her hand up.

Darlene Kirk: What do we allow? I mean, I know we have put things on these signs before, but do we have like, a list of what we allow on these signs?

Danny Davis: Number one, we've only done one thing on these signs that I recall. And I did that without Mr. Moore's knowledge or approval.

Will Moore: We don't technically allow. [multiple speakers]

Danny Davis: Yeah, we technically don't allow anything on these signs and don't have. [off mic] On the old signs we had the four that we would put up. And when we put these signs up, we did it with the intention that we would not do that anymore.

Darlene Kirk: Okay. And one other question. It's not really about the Mayor necessarily, but would something like the things that they put on the lights through the town, is that something that we would rather do? Yeah. Yeah.

Danny Davis: So, we could do banners through the season of the Farmers Market to promote.[multiple speakers].

Darlene Kirk: I'm just asking. [off mic]

Danny Davis: Yeah, absolutely.

Darlene Kirk: I'm just throwing that out there.

Danny Davis: Yeah. [off mic]

Cindy Pearson: So, I would kick up a conversation with Bridge, as the businesses do have a place to put a sign, they put it on their building. And the town limits our building per se. And that's where we're going to advertise our, what we have is a Farmers Market. And also, on the sign I really like it, but I think a cute little fox running right across it, going to the Farmers Market. He doesn't have to be big, but colorful would be really nice.

Danny Davis: We're back to this fox thing again, aren't we? It feels like six years ago.

Cindy Pearson: No, the horse is already up there. [laughter]

Darlene Kirk: I like that.

Chris Bernard: Peter.

Chris Bernard: Thank you. Peter has a question.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I love the idea of the banners, actually. And my comment on this, I think it's a great looking rider. I just thought we weren't ever going to do them. So. And I do think there's a distinguishing between a town community event like this as opposed to a business marketing or advertising. No disrespect to businesses. So, this is more of a community. This is the Town of Middleburg. I think the rider looks really good. I just I have to get my head around the idea that we're not we're now going to put something on there that we never, we always said we wouldn't do it.

Chris Bernard: Go ahead, Darlene.

Darlene Kirk: The event that we did last year. Middleburg Days that I mean, we wouldn't put up a sign for that. I know because it's for the people of the town and this is sort of the same thing. So, I'm just throwing out crap that people think about.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. No, I think Cindy's point to drawing a distinction between it, you know, being a business advertisement and it's not even a town event like it's an event series. It's more a I don't know, but I think it's a different thing. So, my thought on that is that, look, it's not permanent. I don't believe it puts us in a corner where we would have to let anyone else put anything on our signs. So, it's really just a matter of the aesthetic. And I think if we really want to be serious about driving real traffic to the Farmers Market we should at least look at all the different opportunities. I think the banners is a great call. Perhaps doing something with our wayfinding as well. But, I mean, I know a lot of the people through town. Everyone has to drive past those two points. So, it's an opportunity to hit them and possibly going both ways, I don't know. Go ahead Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I think so Darlene's idea of the banners are the light post, the lamp post ones are not horrible banners. You're thinking.

Chris Bernard: Like the here. Like the ones down the street.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: On the lamp post. The light post. And I do think that is a really great idea because you then got multiple ones and I know it has to be applied through Mr. Moore here, who's very just. Yeah.

Will Moore: Yeah, it's tricky because there's a lot of competition for that space at certain times of the year. We would just have to level set the expectation with the vendors that those banners may not be up every single week for the duration of the market, but we already have kind of some placeholder banners that we put up when other applicants are not using those spaces. And those placeholder banners could very well become Farmers Market banners.

Chris Bernard: And without like, I'm not to be controversial about it, but I don't think that at least the way that we've been talking about it is I don't feel any like I'm not beholden to do this for the vendors. Right. This is to promote an opportunity for our community members to go do something positive. And it's not so much about, you know, driving traffic. I think, you know, the vendors being successful is kind of a means to an end, because if they're successful, they'll show up. And therefore, you know, our constituents will have something good to do. So that's kind of my thought on that. Pam, did you have anything because you've been part of all these conversations?

Pam Curran: No, I mean, we have focused on making sure it's a community event and a place that people want to come and connect and meet us, even, you know, to talk about things. So, I think your point is well taken about what our goals are.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. Cindy.

Cindy Pearson: The picnic tables out in the little front area off of Marshall Street are so nice, and I'm sure they will be used through the Farmers Market even more.

Chris Bernard: Oh my God. I don't think we've talked about like the biggest thing. So, the location or the setup, right? So, has everyone seen the idea for the new setup for the market, which is running the tents along the arcade? I guess there's not a graphic. So, we there was a lot of talk last year about the ins and outs and where people park and all of that. So, this year we have decided that the vendor tent. So, we're going to close the entrance over on Marshall Street during the morning. The tents are going to start there, and they're going to line up along the arcade here against the retaining wall so that people have access to shade. We have the picnic tables and the green space out here where people can kind of congregate and hang out. It'll make it feel a little more full and then more importantly, well, not more but equally as importantly, it will open up all these parking spots in the back. So, we will have signage that will direct people around to

the entrance over here. They can drive in, they can park along here, they can park back in the square. I think it's going to make a really a really big impact.

J. Kevin Daly: It's more visible from the street.

Chris Bernard: Absolutely.

J. Kevin Daly: As opposed to being in the back.

Chris Bernard: Absolutely, no it was great. I think that was Danny's idea and it was maybe the best one he's had in a long time.

Danny Davis: Yeah.

Chris Bernard: Darlene.

Danny Davis: If the best I can do is Farmers Market, let's go.

Cindy Pearson: Take it.

Darlene Kirk: Yeah, take it. [inaudible] Off the street. But that's not that's just a vehicle. It's not for walking traffic. Right. [multiple speakers]

Chris Bernard: Yeah.

Darlene Kirk: A lot of people.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. We'll have no we'll just have little barricades with signage that points people this way. But yes, absolutely pedestrian access is encouraged from that end.

Danny Davis: And I think the use of the picnic tables, combined with having music there and the vendors, it's just going to enhance that.

Chris Bernard: I think we'll probably I think the last we spoke is will probably try to see if we can have music set up kind of where the flagpoles are, because I think there's electricity over there and they'll be playing out into the street and into the area, the grass area. Food truck can go down towards the other end, and that way people will walk past it on the way in. I can't believe that wasn't in the memo that's hilarious.

Darlene Kirk: I was just going to say, too, with the music going that way towards the town, it's going to bring visitors from the town anyway.

Chris Bernard: And maybe, I guess, like the final little detail that we didn't mention is we are going to extend the market hours. It's going to go from 9 to 1 instead of noon. You know, the vendors are going to come all the way out. It gives them an extra hour. They've already come out and set up, you know, and hopefully we'll capture some of those folks that are coming into town and passing through and then having a food truck that's there until one night, especially while these other two restaurants haven't opened up yet. It might provide another place for people to go grab a quick bite to eat while they're in town. Cindy.

Cindy Pearson: One more quick thing, is it possible to have like, a Middleburg Farmers Market Facebook page as part of the town somehow, and not use the market manager's Facebook to promote the market more?

Chris Bernard: Yes. So, we have the Farmers Market [multiple speakers] does have its own Facebook and Instagram that wasn't really used previously. So, we were going to use that in conjunction with the normal town stuff.

Danny Davis: The only challenge I would note with that is that posting to Middleburg Uncensored has to be done by an individual, cannot be done from an account. So, unless the Farmers Market is set up as an individual account, I think it's a page. We'll have to look at that.

Chris Bernard: But could an individual share a post from that market.

Danny Davis: Yes. Well, that's how it needs to be.

Chris Bernard: I'll tell Bridge to put it on his calendar.

Danny Davis: Yes.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Well, actually we have a sustainability committee Facebook page that I manage, but it's a separate committee page, and Rhonda does know about that.

Will Moore: She does now.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Does now. You know, for things like the cleanup, you know, gets volunteers in and it's pretty good. And I think that's a thought maybe.

Chris Bernard: [inaudible] it's already set up. The disadvantage to doing it on the like the Town of Middleburg thing is, you can only do it so frequently. And so, I think having both is a big help and then other. Sorry, just I guess last little things is there are some pretty substantial Facebook groups in Loudoun County with like, moms, Dulles Moms and stuff like that. And so, we're going to really try to target some of those folks and, tell them, like, look, Middleburg is not going to have a huge market. It's not going to be one Loudoun. You're not going to go there and see 100 vendors, but it is going to be a really nice, intimate, like family friendly, enjoyable, super expensive activity. [laughter]

Danny Davis: So real quick I should have mentioned this in Ali's report our social media followers have increased on Facebook almost tenfold from when we started, not even four years ago. So, we're at almost 50,000 followers on our Facebook page. That's phenomenal. And our Instagram is up to almost 16,000, which again, for a government page it's still, I think, four times what we started with. So that's good for us promoting this and continuing to get that out. That's right.

Chris Bernard: Well, and we've also talked about, you know, how do we measure success. And we haven't fully defined that. But we're having our kickoff meeting probably sometime next week with Placer. So, we will be able to leverage some of that location data to really track visitors. We're going to work with the vendors on some very quick exit surveys, maybe weekly or monthly, to find out how they're doing and what they're seeing. And I think that's it for now. Do we want to do we want to give Danny a decision on the signs, or do we want to allow Bridge a chance to come back and make his argument?

J. Kevin Daly: [off mic] I think it's already been made.

Danny Davis: Is there any strong objection to proceeding? [off mic]

Danny Davis: We technically don't, but if you feel like it gives you, you can just give me direction to say, go do it. That's fine. But if you.

Chris Bernard: Does anyone have any objections to moving forward with [off mic]

Pam Curran: The signs or the banners? [off mic]

Chris Bernard: The signs.

Cindy Pearson: As long as you have the fox. [multiple speakers]

Chris Bernard: The signs. The banners haven't been designed.

Danny Davis: We're going to we're going.

Chris Bernard: Still they're going to look into the banners as an option.

J. Kevin Daly: It's just the signs.

Chris Bernard: Yeah. Right now, this is.

Danny Davis: This is step one. We'll look at the banners as a potential step two. And I have some ideas to work with Mr. Moore on that.

J. Kevin Daly: All right. I move that we go with the signage at the entrance to Middleburg.

Cindy Pearson: I'd like to make a friendly amendment that you put the fox on top. Just kidding. [laughter]

J. Kevin Daly: I accept the friendly amendment.

Cindy Pearson: No, no.

Darlene Kirk: Second. No, no. [laughter]

J. Kevin Daly: Need a second.

Chris Bernard: All right. We got Darlene seconded. All those in favor?

All of Council: Aye.

Chris Bernard: Any opposed? All right motion carries.

Danny Davis: [off mic] Thank you. That gives me cover. [off mic]

Chris Bernard: No, no. We're back. Okay, so that's good for the Farmers Market information items. Does anybody have any additional information items for the group? Darlene. [off mic]

Darlene Kirk: I moved it towards me. I think that's good enough. [off mic] Middleburg Elementary School or Charter School is having a meeting from 6 to 7:30 on March 26th. It's a Wednesday, and they're talking about designs for Route 50 and turn offs and that sort of thing. So, everybody needs to go and get their friends to go.

Chris Bernard: Yeah, actually.

Darlene Kirk: Even your enemies.

Chris Bernard: I was a little bit remiss in not bringing this up earlier or bringing it up myself. So, we had a conference call last week with a group of stakeholders in the community, Loudoun and Fauquier, to strategize kind of how we're going to interface with the county on their proposed Route 50 updates. Yeah, there's frankly, there's a lot of big, proposed changes that the county is looking to push forward. And 99% of them are not great. And I think that's probably being generous. So, yes. March 26th, 6:00 to 7:30 Charter School. I think it's going to be a big turnout, but I think it's important, just like with Mickie Gordon to not just let them know that we oppose this is how much we oppose it. So, tell everyone

you know. Any other information items from anybody? I'm so excited. All right. We need a motion to go into closed session. It sounds so nice when Peter reads it.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Mayor Littleton. Oh, no wrong one. [laughter] I move that Council go into closed session as authorized under section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia for consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual litigation involving one Cooper Building Services, LLC versus the Town of Middleburg and two Salamander Farms, LLC versus the Town of Middleburg, both as allowed under subsection A7. I further move that Council thereafter reconvene in open session for action as appropriate.

Chris Bernard: Any discussion?

Darlene Kirk: Second?

Cindy Pearson: Yeah.

Chris Bernard: No discussion. All those in favor?

All of Council: Aye.

Chris Bernard: Any opposed? All right. We are now in closed session. I asked the Council certify that in the closed session just concluded, to the best of each members knowledge, nothing was discussed except the matter or matters one specifically identified in the motion to convene in closed session, and two lawfully permitted to be discussed in a closed session under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, as cited in the motion. I would like to remind those present for the closed session that any discussion that occurred within it should be treated as confidential.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Yes.

Bud Jacobs: Yes.

Darlene Kirk: Yes.

Chris Bernard: Yes.

Cindy Pearson: Yes.

J. Kevin Daly: Yes.

Pam Curran: Yes.

Chris Bernard: I guess with no further action, we can close the meeting.

Darlene Kirk: Yay!