



MIDDLEBURG TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 24, 2022



PENDING APPROVAL

PRESENT: Mayor Trowbridge M. Littleton
Vice Mayor Peter A. Leonard-Morgan
Councilmember Chris W. Bernard
Councilmember J. Kevin Daly
Councilmember Morris E. "Bud" Jacobs
Councilmember Philip M. Miller
Councilmember Cindy C. Pearson

STAFF: Danny Davis, Town Manager
Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk
William M. Moore, Deputy Town Manager
Ali MacIntyre, Director of Business Development & Community Partnerships
Tina Staples, Town Treasurer/Finance Director
A.J. Panebianco, Chief of Police

ABSENT: Councilmember C. Darlene Kirk

The Town Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia held their regular monthly meeting on Thursday, February 24, 2022 in the Town Hall Council Chambers, located at 10 West Marshall Street. Mayor Littleton led Council and those attending in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. The roll was called at 6:00 p.m. Councilmember Pearson announced that she was participating remotely from home, as she was recovering from surgery.

Special Recognition

Remembrance of Mary Woodruff

Mayor Littleton noted that Mary Woodruff recently passed unexpectedly. He advised that she was a dear friend of the community and would be missed by all. Mr. Littleton expressed the Town's condolences to the family. He announced that a memorial service would be held in April at The Hill School.

Vice Mayor Leonard-Morgan advised that the Town lost a family member and noted Mrs. Woodruff's contributions to the Middleburg Sustainability Committee.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Mayor Littleton advised that the Town would adopt a resolution recognizing Mrs. Woodruff's contributions to the community at the appropriate time and would invite the family to attend that meeting.

Councilmember Pearson noted that both Mr. & Mrs. Woodruff were important to the community.

Public Hearing

Ordinance Authorizing Issuance of 2022 General Obligation Bond – Town Hall Project

Town Manager Davis reminded Council that the proposal was to issue a general obligation bond to provide funding to offset the budget shortfall for the Town Hall Project. He further reminded them that the Strategic Finance Committee recommended the Town seek an additional \$2.5 million loan. Mr. Davis reported that Davenport, the Town's financial advisors, received three responses to the request for proposals and advised that the preliminary results showed the

responses to be in line with or more favorable than the estimate. He further advised that the staff would work with the Town's bond counsel next week to review them. Mr. Davis noted that Council would be asked to endorse a specific proposal during their March 10th meeting and advised that he would report to them on the results of the review before that time. He opined that the interest rates were good. Mr. Davis reminded Council that a public hearing must be held before the Town could issue a bond and noted that no action was needed at this time.

No one spoke and the public hearing was closed.

Staff Reports

Project Status Update

Town Manager Davis reported that Deputy Town Manager Moore was working with J2 Engineers to identify options for addressing Pinkney Street. He advised that they would report on them during the March 10th Council meeting. Mr. Davis reported that the Wayfinding Signage Project was moving forward and noted that the staff was reviewing the sign designs to ensure they were correct.

In response to inquiries from the Council, Deputy Town Manager Moore reported that the wayfinding signage vendor was experiencing supply chain issues; therefore, the anticipated project completion date had been moved to the end of June 2022.

Consent Agenda

(A) Council Approval – February 10, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Bernard moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that Council adopt the consent agenda as proposed.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmember Kirk

(Mayor Littleton only votes in the case of a tie.)

Action Items

Council Approval – Resolution Declaring Townhouse a Dangerous Building – 110 North Jay Street

Deputy Town Manager Moore reminded Council that in 2018, they adopted a dangerous structures ordinance and, in 2019, the staff began to inspect and document the conditions of properties in the town. He reported that the townhouse at 110 North Jay Street had been on the Town's radar since that time and noted that the staff had received numerous complaints from the neighbors and homeowner's association regarding its condition. Mr. Moore reported that the townhouse was damaged in 2016 due to a hailstorm and was never repaired. He further reported that the tarp that was placed over the roof was now shredded and there were numerous parts of the home that were either missing or rotted. Mr. Moore advised that the staff had exhausted all efforts to reach the property owner and were at the point where they were recommending the Town intervene to make the needed repairs. He reminded Council that to do so, they must adopt a resolution declaring the residence to be dangerous, at which point, notices would be placed in the newspaper and a certified letter sent to the property owner demanding the repairs be made within thirty days or the Town would affect the repairs. Mr. Moore explained that if the Town made the repairs, it would charge the property owner for them and impose a civil penalty. He asked that the Council adopt the resolution. In response to inquiries from the Council, Mr. Moore confirmed he had already sent letters to the property owner, who was local to Virginia; however, he had not received a response from her.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Manager Davis confirmed the mortgage company was paying the real estate taxes on the property. Deputy Town Manager Moore noted that the water had been disconnected for five years.

In response to a suggestion from the Council that the staff also reach out to the mortgage company who held the loan on the property, Deputy Town Manager Moore confirmed he would copy them on the letter; however, he advised that he could only compel the property owner to make the repairs. In response to an inquiry from the Council as to the standard of the repairs, Mr. Moore explained that the Town would cure the violations, so the property was no longer dangerous.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Councilmember Daly confirmed there was a lien on the property for past due HOA dues.

In response to an inquiry from the Council as to whether the property owner was no longer present, it was noted that a couple of years ago, the property owner had been observed in the home late at night with a flashlight and that the window displays have continued to be changed.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Deputy Town Manager Moore advised that he had not yet consulted with the Town Attorney on this matter as he was following the ordinance; however, he would do so.

In response to an inquiry from the Council as to whether the Town could force a sale of the property in the event the property owner did not reimburse the Town for the cost of the repairs, Town Manager Davis advised that the Town could place a lien on the property, which would have the same priority as unpaid taxes. He noted that he would have to consult the Town Attorney to determine whether the Town could force a tax sale and, if so, how long it must wait to do so. Mr. Davis noted that another action would be required by the Council before the staff proceeded with the repairs.

Council noted that they were only being asked to declare the structure to be dangerous. They questioned the next steps in the process. They also questioned whether the property taxes were up to date.

Deputy Town Manager Moore reported that he would send out the certified letter tomorrow. Town Treasurer Staples reported that the mortgage company was paying the real estate taxes through the escrow. Town Manager Davis reported that there was an unpaid water bill for the property that had accrued a substantial amount of fines and interest.

Council asked that the staff consult with the Town Attorney to determine (1) whether the Town could force a foreclosure sale of the property in the event the property owner did not reimburse it for the cost of the repairs and (2) whether the Town could reach out to the mortgage company about making the repairs. They directed that all letters be sent via certified mail.

Councilmember Daly moved, seconded by Councilmember Miller, that Council adopt a Resolution Declaring the Townhouse at 110 North Jay Street as a Dangerous Building.

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

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmember Kirk

(Mayor Littleton only votes in the case of a tie.)

Discussion Items

FY '23 Budget Presentation

Town Manager Davis provided the Council with an overview of the current fiscal year's highlights and the major accomplishments. He advised that while inflation was not impacting the Town currently, it may in FY '23. Mr. Davis reviewed the proposed goals for FY '23.

Town Manager Davis reminded Council that the tax rate for FY '23 was advertised at \$.153. He advised that the average residential real property assessed values increased by 17.2%, resulting in an equalized tax rate for FY '23 of \$.1329. Mr. Davis noted that he also provided the members with the revenues if the rate was set at \$.1429, which would account for a 7.5% increase for inflation, and \$.1462, which would add an additional 10% to the equalized rate. He reviewed the assessments by category.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the overall General Fund revenues and advised that his projections for FY '23 were based on the FY '22 projections, minus the fund balance transfer. He reported that the General Fund expenditures were proposed to increase overall by 2%, as most of the Town's operations had returned to normal; however, the expenditures were 3.7% less than those in the FY '22 Budget due to the removal of the capital projects and the Health Center Fund loan repayment. Mr. Davis advised that the expenditures included funding for the Council's strategic initiatives, the Town Hall debt service and half of the operating cost for the new Town Hall. He further advised that, at the recommendation of the Strategic Finance Committee, the General and Utility Funds' operating and maintenance line items included an 8-10% increase due to inflation and the uncertainty of the economy. Mr. Davis noted that adjustments were made to the Police wages and overtime line items due to the increased use of part-time officers, which would help reduce the amount of overtime needed. He reported that the marketing line item under Economic Development had been split into multiple categories to show how the funds were being allocated and that funding had been returned for all the Town's special events. Mr. Davis noted that the Middleburg Community Center had asked that the Town assume responsibility for the Fourth of July Celebration beginning in 2023; therefore, the budget included additional costs for event management and activities.

Town Manager Davis noted that the FY '23 Budget included a continued investment in the Town's employees. He reported that employer contribution rates for VRS were up by 2.09% and the health insurance costs increased by 7.5%. Mr. Davis advised that he included funding for a cost-of-living allowance (COLA), as well as for merit increases and performance bonuses, so the Town could remain competitive and retain its employees.

Town Manager Davis displayed a chart showing the General Fund expenditures, minus the capital expenditures, including the new debt. He reported that the proposed budget included \$700,000 in unallocated funds in the General Fund. Mr. Davis reminded Council that the policy was for a 5% contingency reserve, which would equate to \$188,000. He advised that the contingency reserve would provide a cushion in case revenues were less than expected and noted that anything that was unexpended at the end of the fiscal year would go into the unassigned fund balance. Mr. Davis reminded Council that they would review the General Fund's unassigned fund balance in the next year or two to discuss whether they wanted to pay down the Town Hall debt service. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he confirmed that the only debt was for the new Town Hall.

Town Manager Davis reported that water consumption was down; therefore, the Utility Fund revenues were projected to be down even though the rates were proposed to increase. He noted that the results of the utility rate model would be presented to the Strategic Finance Committee in early March and then to the Council during their March 31st special meeting. Mr. Davis reminded Council that some of the ARPA money would be used for Utility Fund capital projects. He advised that 87% of the Utility Fund revenues were the result of user fees. In response to an inquiry from the Council, Mr. Davis confirmed that Salamander had already paid the tap fees for the houses in their subdivision.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the proposed Utility Fund expenditures. He advised that there were reductions in some of the line items, as the studies conducted in FY '22 would not need to be repeated and there was less sludge to be processed due to improvements in operation of the system. Mr. Davis further advised that adjustments were made to the water line repairs line item, as this was more of a O/M cost than a capital one. He reported that the capital projects would be funded using cash, bond financing and ARPA funds. Mr. Davis reviewed the Utility Fund expenditure breakdown by category and noted that in the past, the Town did not spend all its allocation; therefore, it was able to build a solid unassigned fund balance. He reported that the FY '23 proposed budget included a \$56,000 contingency reserve. Mr. Davis advised that this equated to 3.8% of the budget, which was close to that recommended in the financial policies.

Town Manager Davis advised Council that he anticipated the Health Center Funds would be disbursed to the new charitable foundation in FY '22.

Town Manager Davis reviewed the budget schedule and noted that there were multiple opportunities for public input.

The Council held some discussion of the General Fund revenue projections and questioned whether they were over-estimated. They agreed that revenues were currently high; however, they opined that inflation could chip away at them.

Town Manager Davis advised that he applied a 75% factor to the first six months of the FY '22 revenues to determine the estimated revenues for the full year. He further advised that the meals tax revenues were proposed to increase by 2% over this year's revenues and the transient occupancy tax revenues were proposed to increase by 5%. Mr. Davis noted that he tried to be conservative. He reminded Council that the staff would know more by May/June and agreed the revenues could be affected by inflation and world events. Mr. Davis noted, however, that as meals costs increased, the Town's meals tax revenues would also increase, assuming people continued to eat out.

The Council noted the need to be conservative. They suggested the need to also think about inflation from the standpoint of expenditures and opined that the projections may be a touch low. The Council noted that there would be different rates of inflation for different segments.

Town Manager Davis explained that in a year-to-year budget comparison, the FY '23 Budget showed a 3.7% decrease in General Fund expenditures due to the elimination of some one-time items. He advised that even without those, the budget was still higher. Mr. Davis noted that there were still some unknowns, such as the cost for the cleaning and landscape maintenance contracts for the new Town Hall; however, the contingency reserve could be used to help cover any voids. He advised that the Strategic Finance Committee met in January and recommended the staff prepare for the uncertainty that would occur in the future.

Mayor Littleton noted that the Council could watch the actual non-human resource costs for another two months before it had to adopt the budget. He advised that he was comfortable that what was proposed was a good starting point.

Town Manager Davis noted that Dominion Power was doubling its fuel surcharge. He advised that the Town would need to see how this affected electric rates and noted that those line items may need to be increased.

In response to a Council request that the staff flag any line items that changed in the proposed budget due to inflation, Town Manager Davis confirmed he would track any changes in the numbers.

Mayor Littleton noted that the salaries and COLA may change as things progressed. It was noted that the proposed budget included a 5% COLA increase, as well as merit increases for employees. The Council noted that the staff was the Town's most important asset and suggested they wanted to make sure it was not costing them more to come to work. It was noted that social security and military retirement pay were increasing by 5.9%. They further noted that it cost more to replace an employee. They questioned whether a 5% COLA was enough.

Town Manager Davis noted that there was no formula for projecting COLA's and explained that the 5% was based on a combination of inflation and the COLAs that were being proposed by other local government entities. He reviewed the increases being proposed by other localities. Mr. Davis reiterated that he was proposing a 5% COLA and an average 2% merit increase; however, he noted that not all the employees received a merit increase each year. In response to an inquiry as to how Middleburg's base salaries compared to other localities, Mr. Davis noted that this was tricky to determine due to Middleburg's location in Loudoun County. He opined that the law enforcement salaries were competitive and noted that the Town was able to recruit new officers should it need to. Mr. Davis further opined that the administrative staff's salaries were in line with the market.

In response to an inquiry from the Council regarding reduced water consumption, Town Manager Davis opined that part of the reason for this year's reduction was that Salamander did not operate at 100% capacity earlier in the year. He opined that people were also more cognizant of their water use and that some leaks had been repaired. Mr. Davis advised that the staff was watching this with each billing cycle. He expressed hope that the replacement of the water meters would allow consumption to be more accurately captured.

Councilmember Pearson noted that the Community Center's water bills were down, as they were not having as many events.

Mayor Littleton noted that the current real estate tax rate was \$.153, and the equalized rate was \$.1329. He further noted that if it was equalized and 7.5% was added for inflation, this would result in a tax rate of \$.1429.

In response to a comment offered by the Council, Town Manager Davis advised that if the tax rate was equalized, the Town would still receive \$10,000 more in revenues over FY '22. He reminded Council that the revenue difference between the current rate and the equalized rate was \$81,000. Mr. Davis advised that each \$.01 equated to approximately \$40,000 in revenue. He noted that to equalize the tax rate would require a \$.02 rate reduction. In response to an inquiry from the Council, he reiterated that there would be additional revenue in FY '23 if the Town equalized the tax rate.

Mayor Littleton reminded Council that the Town's costs were not fixed. He noted that the State made the Town look at the bill; however, it did not take into consideration that the Town's costs went up.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Manager Davis confirmed the Town would realize an additional \$35,000 in revenue if the Council equalized the real property tax rate. He noted, however, that the revenues must also account for appeals of the tax assessed values and for lost revenue due to the Tax Relief for the Elderly & Disabled Program, which came to approximately \$20,000. Mr. Davis advised that once those were taken into consideration, the Town would realize an additional \$17,000 in real property tax revenue over FY '22. He reminded Council that the County had equalized or reduced the real property tax rate over the past five years; however, he noted that they had the flexibility of additional revenue sources.

Mayor Littleton noted that Loudoun County relied upon data centers to provide a great deal of their revenue. He further noted that real estate tax revenues only provided 15-16% of Middleburg's revenues. Mr. Littleton suggested that as revenue sources changed, real estate tax rates must be increased. In response to a suggestion that the Council write a policy to serve as a decision-making guide on setting tax rates, Mayor Littleton advised that while this was not a bad idea, the policy could not be mandatory for future Councils, as they needed to have flexibility to make smart decisions. He suggested the tax rate proposal be taken to the Strategic Finance Committee for their input.

Council noted that they promised they would not increase real estate taxes for the new Town Hall Project and suggested that serious consideration needed to be given to equalizing the tax rate. They noted, however, that they would hate to decrease it this year, only to have to increase it the following year. The Council reiterated that they made a commitment to the citizens. They noted that the Town would realize additional revenue, even if the tax rate was equalized.

Town Manager Davis reminded Council that when they made the statement that they would not increase the real estate tax rates for the Town Hall Project, they did not envision a 16-24% increase in property values. He confirmed the proposed real estate tax rate could be presented to the Strategic Finance Committee when the utility rate model was presented to them.

Council asked that the Strategic Finance Committee meeting be held within the next week so the Council would have the advantage of their input before their next budget discussion. They asked for information on how the different tax rates would affect the average tax bill.

Town Manager Davis advised that at the equalized tax rate, the average bill would go down, with the exception of townhouses, which would see a \$67 increase. He further advised that the average bill for a single-family dwelling and a townhouse would increase by \$50 and \$135, respectively, if the tax rate was \$.1422; and, by \$75 and \$159, respectively,

if it was \$.1462. Mr. Davis reported that Loudoun County was proposing to equalize their tax rate plus add an additional 6-9%. He noted that they were doing so to have a balance between real and personal property tax revenues, and because they were proposing to add an additional 250 employees to their payroll, as well as bringing on new facilities.

Scheduling of Planning Session to Review Council's Strategic Goals

Town Manager Davis opined that it was important for the Council to revisit their strategic initiatives. He questioned how long the Council would like for the planning session to be and if they had a preference for where it should be held.

After some discussion, the Council agreed they would like the staff to plan for a day long session. They asked that it not be held locally, but that it also not be at an overnight location; and, directed the staff to work out the details. The Council asked that a facilitator be utilized, as this would help them focus on the initiatives. They suggested the session be scheduled for some time in April.

Town Manager Davis reported that he would reach out to the facilitator that assisted the Council previously.

Report on Loudoun County Redistricting Map

Council questioned the "misinformation and disinformation" that members of the Board of Supervisors referred to during their discussion of the redistricting maps. They expressed disappointment at the Supervisors' remarks regarding the public input that was offered on the map options. The Council opined that the Middleburg community's interests were not served by the Board of Supervisors in the final process.

Mayor Littleton reminded Council that the County encouraged the members of the community to comment on the different map options. He advised that the County staff provided the Board of Supervisors with pages of the resulting raw data and explained that he took that data and created numerous tables and pie charts that identified the individuals' map preferences and current districts, which he then shared with the Board members. Mr. Littleton reported that of the comments that indicated a preference for one map, 86% favored the map proposed by the Coalition of Loudoun Towns (COLT). He noted that if the comments from the two western districts were removed, 75% of those in the eastern districts who submitted comments also favored the COLT map. Mr. Littleton advised that overall, all but one district favored the COLT map. He noted that the comments related to "misinformation" were referencing the data summaries he provided. Mr. Littleton opined that if political consideration had not been involved, the COLT map would have been chosen. He advised that the members of COLT were disappointed that the Board of Supervisors questioned their motives and attacked their character.

Mayor Littleton opined that there was an opportunity to influence the map by possibly moving one precinct. He explained that Middleburg and Aldie's populations represented only 2% of the population of the newly created Brambleton District and suggested they could easily be shifted into the Catoclin District so they would be in the same district as the other Western Loudoun towns. Mr. Littleton questioned whether the Council wished to advocate for this change. He expressed his personal opinion that it would be good for Western Loudoun County if Middleburg and Aldie could prod another Supervisor.

The Council agreed and thanked Mayor Littleton for all his hard work on this matter.

Consideration of Policy for Naming of Town Facilities/Rooms

Mayor Littleton reminded Council that with the construction of the new Town Hall, there would be facilities, including rooms and a building, that could be named. He noted that governments typically did so and opined that it was a good idea. Mr. Littleton asked that the members think about whether they were interested in doing this. He noted that he was not suggesting they propose names at this time. Mr. Littleton advised that the names could include places, battles, people, or things.

Council noted the issues that have recently arisen due to naming buildings after an individual. They suggested the need to be careful in that regard and to vet the person carefully. It was noted that the County named their rooms after the towns in Loudoun County.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Town Manager Davis urged caution against naming the Town Hall and suggested it simply be the "Town Hall". He further suggested the public rooms within it could be named and recommended they be names that were easily explained and that were not controversial. Mr. Davis noted that the agenda contained a copy of the County's naming policy and advised that they did not often name rooms after people. He reminded Council that there would be four public meeting rooms in the new building – the Police Training Room, the Council Chambers, the Executive Conference Room, and the Flex Conference Room. Mr. Davis suggested the pocket park off Marshall Street could also be named. He noted that Salamander would continue to own the Village Green and may want to weigh in on its name.

Council suggested the need to think about this carefully and to not rush into anything. They agreed to discuss it during their retreat. It was suggested that the members email any ideas they may have to the staff. It was also suggested that public input be solicited between now and the retreat.

Closed Session

Mayor Littleton advised Council that there was no need for the closed session at this time.

Information Items

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

In response to an inquiry from Council, Town Manager Davis noted that the response from Blink on the proposed contract changes was past due. He advised that he would follow-up with them.

There being no further business, Mayor Littleton declared the meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

APPROVED:

Trowbridge M. Littleton, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk

February 24, 2022 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)

Bridge Littleton: So it is sort of on the eastern side in the weather pattern blows the east. All right. Here we go. Call the February meeting to order first item is Pledge of Allegiance.

Everyone: [Pledge of Allegiance]

Bridge Littleton: All right, next item is the roll call,

Chris Bernard: Chris Bernard. Chris Bernard.

Bud Jacobs: Bud Jacobs.

Philip Miller: Philip Miller.

Bridge Littleton: Bridge Littleton.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Peter Leonard-Morgan.

Cindy Pearson: Cindy Pearson. I'm attending from home.

J. Kevin Daly: John Kevin Daly.

Rhonda North: Rhonda North, Town Clerk.

Danny Davis: Danny Davis, Town Manager

Bridge Littleton: Ok. Next item and I'm sure we're actually going to do this in a fuller, more expanded time when the family can attend and things like that. But as everybody is aware. You know, tragically, Mary Woodruff passed away last Wednesday night, you know, unexpectedly, and she was a true patron and saint and dear friend of the community, which and she will be deeply missed by all. And we send our regards and our prayers to Don and to Mary's two children and her grandchildren. I have spoken to Tom Northrup. They are going to have a service for Mary sometime in the April timeframe. And of course, everybody from council will be invited and it will be at the amphitheater. And so it'll be a service in some remembrances. And Tom Schweitzer is going to put together a program as well. And he's he's really, really good at that. And anyway, I don't know if anybody else wants to say anything I know. You know, we're we're going to be sorry to see Mary, you know, not not have Mary with us anymore. And also, you know, the the impact for Don. I also, you know, last I heard Don's doing as best as you can under the circumstances. He's back at home now, and I'm sure if anybody wanted to give him a call or go by and see him down at Meadowbrook, you know he'd love to see you. So feel free to and yeah, like I said, well, deeply Miss Mary. So yeah, anyone else want to say anything?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: You know, Middleburg is really like a family, and we've all lost a family member. Absolutely devastated to hear of the sudden loss of Mary Woodruff. Who was a phenomenal lady, I spent five years on the Go Green committee with her, which became the Middleburg Sustainability Committee. She was always a contributor. She always had great things to say. She was kind. And, of course, lately we had another colleague who was unwell and she was the first person to step up and and see her and report back, and I can't imagine, you know, this has happened, but we send our condolences to don and the family from all of us. We all feel horrible about this. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Oh hey Cindy, sorry, go ahead.

Cindy Pearson: I have something I would do you think that Don and or Michelle will be joining us at some time later?

Bridge Littleton: Not tonight.

Cindy Pearson: No, I know that.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, well, no, no, absolutely. I mean, I, you know, at the right time, I'd like us to do a resolution, you know, for them recognizing all of Mary's contribution to the town and to the community over, you know, decades. And when we do that, like we did for [inaudible] and for Mark's family, you know, we'll invite them. And you know, Michelle will be here, I'm sure, and Don. But yeah, we will definitely do that in the future time.

Cindy Pearson: Okay, because I do have something I'd like to say then. You know, I could do it now. But I mean, [multiple speakers]

Bridge Littleton: If you want to wait till then, that's fine.

Cindy Pearson: I will definitely I mean, we all know how important both of them are or have been to our community and always present every time at one of the events you turn around and you'd see them there, which just kind of was always nice. But sure would love to. Okay, thank you.

Bridge Littleton: You bet. Anybody else? Ok. Yeah, we'll do a bigger, you know, remembrance at the, you know, the next couple of weeks. Ok. Next item is the public comment. We will open the public comment session for anybody who would like to address the town council.

Rhonda North: Mr. Mayor, we because the parking lot is closed, we are also doing the meetings via Zoom now. And so I just would like to remind anyone who's on Zoom that if you would like to speak either during the public comment period or the public hearing, if you could simply use the raise your hand function or enter a message in chat or if you're on phone, if you could press star nine to let us know that you wish to speak. And then once we give you the opportunity to speak, then you would just need to unmute your microphone or press star six if you're on the telephone.

Bridge Littleton: Ok. We will now open the public comment. I don't think there's anybody here in person. Is there Rhonda, anybody online who would like to speak?

Rhonda North: I have someone online, but so far they're not indicating a desire to speak.

Bridge Littleton: All right, let's just give another second or two. So it's depending on which platform it can be hard to find the hand raise and all that stuff. Ok. We will close the public comment session and now go to the public hearing on the general obligation bond. Danny, if you want to set this up first and then we'll open the public hearing.

Danny Davis: Thank you, Mr. Mayor and council members, as we discussed at the last meeting or two meetings ago in order to help offset some of the funding shortfall of the Town Hall project we took a proposal to the Strategic Finance Committee for additional financing. After that, we brought it to council, who endorsed the idea of seeking an additional \$2.5 million in financing. Since that time, we've been working with our financial advisor, Davenport, who received initial results and proposals from three banks earlier this week. And the results are very preliminary, so I don't have any exact details to give you. However, I will tell you that they are in line with or even slightly more favorable than the rates that we had put into our initial estimates, which is a very positive sign and very good for us moving forward. We will be coming back and working as staff next week after our Bond Council runs through the actual legal aspects of the proposals. And then we plan to bring an action item to you at the March 10th meeting to endorse a specific financing proposal. We'll give you a heads up of of that those options and as much in advance as we can as we prepare for that next meeting. So the good news is we have good rates and it fits within our planning numbers and anticipation. With that, Mr.

Mayor, the public hearing this evening is a required part of any general bond obligation. But again, no action is requested this evening.

Bridge Littleton: Ok, thank you. So I'll open the public hearing first and then, you know, council can have any other discussion we need to. As Danny said, there's nothing we're voting on tonight, just making sure we have the public hearing. So again, if anybody is online who would like to speak, we will now open the public hearing. Anything, Rhonda?

Rhonda North: I'm not seeing a hand-raised or a chat indicating a desire to speak.

Bridge Littleton: Ok, we'll wait another couple five, 10 seconds. Anything? Ok? We will close the public hearing before we move on any member of council, any discussion on the bond item. Going once, going twice. Ok. Next up is no public presentations unless anybody has anything. All right. Moving on to project status update. Mr. Davis,

Danny Davis: Mr. Mayor, thank you, and we have Mr. Moore here for any specific questions. We've provided a brief update again on Pinckney Street, and Mr. Moore continues to work with our engineer J2. And we anticipate having a more full report at March, the March 10th meeting. We do have a current or a couple of different pathways that we're continuing to evaluate, and then we'll bring those options to you for final decision or a next step decision. Again, wayfinding is moving forward and Mr. Moore and Estee are working with the contractor to ensure that their colors are all correct and fonts are all correct as you have to do just to make sure that we get what we asked for and everything else is as listed in the report.

Bridge Littleton: [off mic]

Will Moore: I would tell you that we are currently in discussions with the contractor due to some supply chain issues.

Philip Miller: [inaudible] hearing about this anywhere else,

Chris Bernard: Supply chain?

Bridge Littleton: How do they not plan? [laughter]

Will Moore: But we're working with them on that. Their preliminary schedule that they delivered based on some discussions we had would actually push that to the end of June, but we're going to work with them to try to rein that in.

Bridge Littleton: [off mic]

Will Moore: It's actually it does say 2022 in the report

Bridge Littleton: It also may thirty first.

Will Moore: It does. [laughter].

Bridge Littleton: Trust me, it won't be the last update. Any questions for Will or Danny. Nope. All right. Moving on. Next item, any reports from town committees? All right. Did you look at me? Well, yeah, of course, any any town committee, reports Peter.

Chris Bernard: He doesn't have an update now, but by the end of the meeting he will. [off mic].

Bridge Littleton: Ok. Consent agenda. Would anybody like anything removed from the consent agenda? As we only have one item, is there a motion?

Chris Bernard: I move that we adopt the consent agenda as proposed.

J. Kevin Daly: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Any discussion? All those in favor say aye.

Everyone: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Opposed.

Cindy Pearson: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Cindy. Oh, I can't wait to your leg is better. [off mic] Ok. Next item here. Hold on one second. Just looking. All right. Next item is a presentation from Mr. Davis and Ms. Staples on the FY 23 budget.

Rhonda North: Mr. Mayor, we amended the agenda to add an action item. I'm not sure you have the right. Oh, when did you send that out?

Danny Davis: I sent it Tuesday afternoon.

Bridge Littleton: I pulled up Rhonda's what is it?

Danny Davis: Declaration of dangerous building at 110 North J Street.

Bridge Littleton: Ok, hold on, I. Okay. Let's go to it. Sorry. All right, Mr. Moore over to you.

Will Moore: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Bridge Littleton: Hang on a second. I didn't get it for some reason.

Danny Davis: All resend it to you right now.

Bridge Littleton: Thank you.

Will Moore: Ok, I'll give a little more detailed explanation, since the mayor has not yet seen this. So reminder that a few years ago, July 2018, we adopted the Chapter Thirty Eight Dangerous Structures ordinance. In 2019, we started doing property inspections, kind of a walking visual inspection, documenting properties throughout a core section of town. And this particular structure townhouse at 110 North J Street was on our radar. It's been subject to numerous complaints from neighboring owners, neighboring residents and the owners association from the development in which it's located. In brief, it was damaged quite a bit like many other structures in the hailstorm of 2016. The roof was never repaired. It was tarped. For a long period of time that tarp has since shredded. It's blown its remnants have blown away onto neighboring properties into the gutters. It's completely exposed now, the damaged roof. And in addition, there's numerous parts of the building that are outlined in the attached inspection report missing pieces of siding, rotting siding, missing trim boards, fascia boards, gaps in seals around doors and windows that can allow water to infiltrate. We have exhausted our efforts to reach and cooperatively work with the property owner, so at the time we adopted the ordinance, we also set up an administrative process that we would follow to field complaints, investigate complaints, attempt to work with the property owner in a cooperative manner, et cetera, et cetera. We've now reached a point where we are suggesting that we may need to intervene and do those repairs ourselves in order to do that. You first must adopt a resolution declaring the building as dangerous and then authorizing us to move forward with those next steps, which involve us placing an advertisement in the paper, as well as a certified letter to the owner telling putting them on notice that if repairs are not completed within 30 days, we can then go in effect those repairs ourselves, and they would then become chargeable to her as a property owner, in addition to a civil penalty up to one thousand. Oh, so we're asking you to adopt that resolution tonight that would then allow us to go forward with the formal enforcement efforts.

Bridge Littleton: Well, I appreciate that. I know it's the one next to you. [off mic] No, that's the one. yeah.

Chris Bernard: I saw a piece of siding blow off one day from my backyard.

Bridge Littleton: Well, I mean, I was at your house. I looked I remember seeing the shredded tarp all over. [off mic] So I mean, do you guys know who the owner is? We do. And they do get the certified letters. They don't get returned.

Will Moore: So no letters have been sent certified to this point. Ok, but letters have been sent and not responded to.

Bud Jacobs: Ok. And the owner is presumably out of state somewhere.

Will Moore: No, the owner is local to Virginia.

Bud Jacobs: Really?

Bridge Littleton: Interesting. Let me if I can ask this question. Have they paid their real estate taxes?

Danny Davis: I believe so. We looked it up recently.

Bridge Littleton: And ours too.

Danny Davis: Now I will note that the the person does have a mortgage on their property, and as far as we can tell, has no judgments against her. So the likely is paying escrow through the mortgage, so it continues to be paid.

Bridge Littleton: And the mortgage company is paying them. Ok, got it.

Danny Davis: Oh for water. Correct.

Will Moore: The water service has been cut off for five years.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Ok. All right, Chris.

Chris Bernard: So we've attempted to reach out to the property owner. What about the bank? [off mic] They might have an incentive to get it done. I'd rather us not pay for it and try to get it back later.

Danny Davis: We could include them on.

Will Moore: I mean, we can include them on correspondence, but there's nothing in the code that. [off mic] Yeah, I mean, we can we can copy them on correspondence, but our avenue of attack has to be through the owner. In other words, we can't we can't affect the repairs. We can't compel the mortgage company to do those repairs, but we're happy to

Chris Bernard: Oh I'm not talking about compelling them to do it. I'm talking about letting them know. Yeah.

Will Moore: I imagine we could probably copy them on the correspondence.

Chris Bernard: They might, but I'm saying so if they found out they may lein on her or do something themselves rather than us, have to do it.

Bridge Littleton: Or maybe not.

Chris Bernard: Maybe not.

Will Moore: You know, just very brief background. I don't want to take us too far off course, but there was a process and Mr. Daly might have more information where a different provider took over the loan within the last couple of years and that at some point in time, someone, whether it was that new mortgage lender or whether it was the owner, came in and did some minor repairs, there was a hole in basically the front door that was sealed up and some so.

Chris Bernard: Well someone put the tarp for five years. [off mic].

Bridge Littleton: I don't know. Yeah. Peter.

Bud Jacobs: I was curious. Assuming we have, we take this step, and if we ever get to the point of actually having to do the repairs, what's the standard that we would make the repairs to? It's just to minimally restore it to safe condition? Or would we be on the hook to do a little more than that? I'm thinking of aesthetics the front of the front of the building, for example.

Will Moore: This would be to to cure the violations that and it's really to make it so it's not dangerous anymore. That's the purpose of the.

Bud Jacobs: Purpose of it. Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: And I think the dangerous thing is right, like it rots, it falls off. It gets it's a townhouse, so it gets leaks and then it can leak into the neighbors.

Philip Miller: Siding flies into Chris's yard.

Cindy Pearson: And mold. Yeah.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Do we know if the HOA is being paid as well is that that we know about. Dues.

Will Moore: Mr. Daly, is a member of the HOA may be able to comment on that.

J. Kevin Daly: There is a lien on the house for HOA dues in arrears under the new I think it's USAA the bank has been sending past two years, however, she's still in arrears.

Bridge Littleton: I mean, no response at all from the owner. Is there any chance the owner is not there anymore or not here anymore? It's so bizarre. [off mic]

Will Moore: There are some other observations that have been made that indicate that the owner is around and present. Yes.

Philip Miller: Aware, but ignoring.

J. Kevin Daly: On one occasion, there was a flashlight inside the building very late at night, and Officer Jason was requested to come out to investigate. And out of the building, the darkened building with a flashlight came the owner who identified herself. This was, I think, a couple of years back. There's been some indications of window display changes being made. But no, no firm sightings.,

Chris Bernard: Let's do a podcast about it.

Bridge Littleton: My last question, what's Martin's view?

Will Moore: We've not consulted Martin on this. I mean, this is we're following the.

Bridge Littleton: No, I get I get it, I get it. So at the end of the day.

Will Moore: I will have some consultation with him about some particulars of the ordinance.

Bridge Littleton: Sure. So, then just let me walk through this in a worst case scenario. We do the repairs. We send a bill and a \$1000 fine. She never pays it. Eventually, then we get a lien against the property. Eventually, can we force a sale?

Danny Davis: I don't believe we have that authority under state code. It's only just a lien that's recoverable at the same, typically the same priority as unpaid taxes.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, but I mean.

Danny Davis: But there's no force. There's no

Bridge Littleton: Jurisdictions can foreclose a property like for unpaid taxes.

Danny Davis: For unpaid taxes.

Chris Bernard: [off mic].

Bridge Littleton: Well, that'll then happen by function of law. What I'm saying is, look if she's 30 years old [inaudible]. Ok. You know, she never sells it. Ok. And we're going to get I'm assuming interest and stuff like that on our.

Chris Bernard: [off mic]

Danny Davis: I believe typically, but yeah.

Bridge Littleton: I mean, let's just think about that process. Sure. So how long is how long? I mean, I totally agree we have to do it. But I mean, how long are we sitting there holding the lien, you know, is there a triggering function that like after five years, you can bring an action to foreclose. They can either pay and keep their home or it gets foreclosed, sold on the courthouse steps like you do with a tax auction.

Danny Davis: Yeah, we'll ask Martin and we'll get clarity for you. There will have there will have to be another council action taken before we actually go in and actually do work. So, you know, this is basically setting the resolution or at least even if it's not required, I'd want to bring it back to you just to let you know the results of where we stand.

Philip Miller: This is just a declaration. This is no action.

Danny Davis: Yes.

Philip Miller: Well, we wrote the ordinance for a reason.

Bridge Littleton: I don't think we were thinking of this property at the time, we were thinking of another property.

Chris Bernard: So when do they get the certified letter?

Will Moore: The certified letter will go out tomorrow.

Bridge Littleton: Great.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: And sorry, did someone mention whether we had received all our town taxes, real property taxes? Great question. [multiple speakers] [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Paying her mortgage in the escrow.

Danny Davis: The one that we're missing is the water bill that was unpaid for many months. And then we had left the account open. So it was accruing fines and interest at hundreds of dollars per billing cycle and we finally just cut off the account. But it's, you know, in the thousands of dollars

J. Kevin Daly: Which she still owes.

Danny Davis: Yeah. Oh, absolutely. So, it appears that all all real estate taxes are up to date.

Bridge Littleton: So I guess a good question would be asked Martin if the ordinance allows us or if state codes allows us to in instances like this where we may have to spend \$100000 for repairs if our ordinance authorizes us or state code allows us to have in the ordinance that after a certain amount of time, we could foreclose if we want it to.

Danny Davis: Will do.

Philip Miller: And I would also say just double check on the legalities of reaching out to the mortgage holder.

Bridge Littleton: Now, you know, this is a nit, but I think when you're getting to this level where you're sending them letters, send them certified every letter certified that way they can never claim they didn't get it.

J. Kevin Daly: Well they can if they don't open their mailbox and pull it out, they can say they never got it. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: I get it, I get it, you know? But it's two bucks, you know, so and if they refuse it? Well, you know, I mean, we proved that we did our part. Ok, any other questions before we. Cindy, any questions? Ok? All right.

J. Kevin Daly: If that's the case, Mr. Mayor, I move Council adopt a resolution declaring the townhouse at 110 North Jay Street as a dangerous building.

Philip Miller: Second.

Bridge Littleton: Any other discussion? All those in favor say aye.

Everyone: Aye.

Bridge Littleton: Abstentions, opposed\ . Ok, passes. Now onto the next item, which is the budget. All right, Mr. Davis, over to you.

Danny Davis: Well, thank you, Mr. Mayor and council members, thank you for the opportunity to present to you the proposed budget for fiscal year 2023.

Bridge Littleton: Glad you recognize it as an opportunity we gave you.

Danny Davis: Yes, it is.

Chris Bernard: It's every moment here is an opportunity.

Danny Davis: It's one big hourglass for this presentation. During the presentation, we're going to cover these five major areas, including our current year highlights and accomplishments, our goals and outlook for next year. And then an overview of both our general fund and our utility fund. And then for yourselves and for the public an overview of the schedule of the budget review process. This current fiscal year as you know, the town has continued to support our community through COVID response, sharing of key health information and supporting vaccination efforts. Federal funding through ARPA has allowed the town to grant utility bill credits to our customers, pay off arrearages and our utility system, support marketing efforts, and provide outreach to residents about mental health and other social services

for those struggling through the pandemic. Even this upcoming week, we are partnering with the Loudoun County Health Department to have a vaccination clinic at the Emmanuel Episcopal Church. As a result of the rollout of vaccines over the past year we saw a strong resurgence in tourism and travel, evidenced by the demand for lodging and dining, as well as reports of strong business activity at our retailers. We also saw many events come back, such as July 4th, the equestrian events and Christmas and Middleburg, with nearly 10000 people in attendance that day. We held holiday activities the entire month of December, which led to very strong sales for our businesses and a lot of great community involvement. Ali played a very important role in all of these holiday activities, and of course, we couldn't hold any of these events without the great work of A.J. and the police department. This fiscal year, we brought on three new employees, allowing us to be fully staffed and making great progress in our respective departments. We also brought on new partners for our social media management and event management. Amidst all this, though, we very quickly have seen inflation rise to historic levels not seen in four decades. While it's not significantly impacting us in our immediate operations, we do recognize that inflation and supply chain issues may impact our budget into fiscal 23, and I'll discuss this more when we talk about expenditures. Of course, we've also had some major accomplishments this fiscal year. We made significant progress on the town hall and police department, awarding a construction contract and holding a groundbreaking on January 24th actual site. Work has begun and we anticipate some very visible activity to begin in the next couple of weeks. Rhonda continues to be a crucial team member in this project and is helping it to stay on time and on budget. The Town Council approved.

Bridge Littleton: We were expecting ahead of schedule and under budget. [multiple speakers] [laughter]

Danny Davis: The town council, as we just discussed, did approve a contract for wayfinding signage in the replacement consolidation of street signage. And this is obviously a long needed project and kudos to both Estee and Will for bringing this to near completion in 2022 we hope. We are embarking on other important studies, including of our utility system, allowing us to plan for future projects and infrastructure needs. And as we discussed over the summer and fall, the Town Council approved changes to the R-2 zoning district, along with initiating a more detailed study of this district to minimize the impacts of future development or redevelopment, especially in the older parts of town. Additionally, the Council and Planning Commission have spent time reviewing our policies and ordinances related to short term rentals, ensuring that we preserve the character of our community. And this past this past year, as in fiscal 21, we took efforts to continue saving dollars due to potential COVID impacts, but also to become more efficient in our work, such as there are online billing system. Tina has played an essential role in these efforts, streamlining our financial processes and continuing to work very effectively and ensuring that our utility bills are paid and collected in a timely manner. So as always, as we look towards fiscal 23 each year or to the next fiscal year, it's important for us to align the budget and our activities around the strategic initiatives of the Town Council. The council last updated the strategic initiatives in March of 2021, and we are going to be talking through those in the next few minutes after this presentation to talk about the next opportunity to review and update your strategic plan and initiatives. The goals listed on this slide are represented in your strategic initiative and continue to be the focus of our organization and the budget. And I also want to highlight our ongoing desire to strengthen our organization through the training, education and development of staff. We have a very strong team and we want to be constantly learning and improving in our service to the community. Now on to the general fund. We discussed revenues in detail last meeting, so these are just a few highlights. As we talked about, real property assessments are significantly higher this year across the board, but specifically in single family homes and townhomes. We have currently advertised the tax rate at its current rate of 15.3 Cents per hundred dollars of assessed value, and we recognize that council has an interest in reviewing options to decrease the tax rate. Also just to note, we removed one sizable revenue line, which was the transfer from revenues that was shown as both a revenue and an expenditure that was intended to serve essentially as a placeholder or to pay for small capital projects. However, as we do not have any general fund capital projects beyond the town hall identified at this time, we have removed this as a revenue source. Any future projects that we might bring to you, we would bring both the project and the funding source at that time. This slide here shows you the average residential assessment over the last three years and current year, you'll see a blended total values across the number of residential parcels that we have. The average residential assessment is nearly six hundred nineteen thousand dollars. That's a 17.2 Percent increase again on average over last year. The Red Line shows you the tax rate, which has stayed at 15.3 Cents per hundred dollars of assessed value for the last three years, and this also shows the council's interest in considering a possible decrease. The budget document you'll see a few pages into the document, you'll see that the equalized tax rate is 13.29 cents. However, we've provided a few other examples in the budget for you, including if we took the equalized tax rate and added inflation at 7.5 Percent, then that tax rate would be 14.29 cents. Or

if we took the equalized tax rate and added 10 percent, then that tax rate would be 14.62 Cents. Those are all listed in the budget and we can walk through that if desired. This slide also is just showing average assessment by residential category. And as we discussed previously, townhomes are now on average assessed at forty thousand more than single family homes in the town of Middleburg.

Bridge Littleton: So we're going to come back to talking about the equalized tax rate.

Danny Davis: Absolutely.

Bridge Littleton: Ok, I just want to make sure.

Danny Davis: As we look at overall general fund revenues, this chart is a breakdown of our main revenue sources. We show in this slide here you can see how FY 22 projected revenues, as we've discussed with you, are estimated to be about 15 percent higher than our fiscal 22 budgeted numbers. We do believe this trend will continue, so we have built our fiscal year 23 revenues off of the fiscal year 22 projections. The reason for the decrease between 22 projected and 23 proposed is that removal of the transfer from fund balance that I just previously mentioned,

Bridge Littleton: Which was about how much?

Danny Davis: Three hundred And fifty thousand dollars. [off mic] Yes, sir.

Bridge Littleton: So if you take 330 out of that 0.153, that puts you back to about six sixty, six seventy. So that's why those two. So it's not actually taxes lost, it's just fund balance being taken out of the calculation.

Danny Davis: Correct. And yeah, that's kind of a general aggregated other line. So that is correct. Moving on to the expenditure side, we are anticipating a somewhat return to normal for most of our operations that haven't already compared to fiscal 22 adopted. This current budget is now proposing a two percent increase in expenditures. But it actually represents a reduction of 3.7 Percent over the fiscal 22 amended budget. This partially goes back to what we just talked about the removal of the three hundred and fifty thousand dollars of cash going into capital projects. It also as a result of removal of in fiscal 22, the council authorized two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to repay the Health Center Fund for COVID expenses. Some other changes in expenditures. And these are high level. And again, we'll go through these in more detail during the budget process includes additional funding and administration to cover possible expenses related to various council initiatives that have been discussed and are continuing to be discussed, including those that might require additional review by the town attorney. Expenditures also include debt service payments for the new town hall, including the anticipated debt service that we just talked about a few minutes ago, as well as anticipated half year operating costs for the new town hall. We will refine these costs over the upcoming months, specifically during the summer and fall timeframe as we go through the procurement process in preparation for the town hall opening in January. Opening to the public in January. Across the General Fund and Utility Fund, we've included 8 to 10 percent increases in many of our operations and maintenance line items. This was a recommendation from the Strategic Finance Committee in light of the current inflationary situation, as well as the uncertainty in our economy, supply chain and current pressure on prices. You will note in the police department salary line that we've made some adjustments in the overtime and other wages line items, primarily that's to account for our use of part time officers to try to limit how much overtime we have to use. We have some very dedicated part time officers, one in particular that we're able to count on for a good bit of work. And again, that keeps us from burnout on our regular full time officers and also saves money compared to the overtime rate. That line item also accounts for officers that support our activities with Christmas and Middleburg as they come from across the Commonwealth. In economic development you will see that we've split our marketing line item into multiple categories to more clearly show how those funds are being specifically allocated. In addition, where it's anticipating a return to all town events in 2022 and 2023 with the hope that they'll be even better than before. And so we've included funding for those. One key item that I've spoken with some of you about, but not all of you, is that we've been approached by the Middleburg Community Center, who has asked the town to take over July 4th activities beginning in calendar year 2023. We have planned some additional funding in our economic development budget to accommodate additional costs from our event management firm, as well as some of the day to day of activities that would go into that. We'll discuss that in more detail when we get into the economic development budget. Finally, I'd

like to note that the proposed fiscal 23 budget, so it shows a continued investment in our employees, our VRS employer contribution contribution rate changed by a raw percentage number of 2.09 Percent, which represents a 12.2 percent relative increase over last year's rate. So last year's contribution rate to VRS was 15.75 that increased to 17.84 Percent of salaries. And so that is a relative 12 percent increase in the contribution to VRS. Our health insurance rates have increased 7.5 Percent, although when you look at the line item in the budget, it's actually a lesser percentage than that because it always depends on the individual elections that employees make for their own personal and family health care needs. Based on a number of factors. I am proposing a cost of living increase for employees, and I've talked, I believe with all of you about that. We've seen the reports and we've also all seen the impacts of increased costs that's represented by some key data. This includes the rate of inflation in January being 7.5 Percent, Social Security COLAs given at 5.9 Percent. Average wages across the U.S. are up 5.7 Percent year over year. And other public employers are increasing wages anywhere from three to eight percent or even more in our region north, south, east and west. Certain employers have even given midyear cost of living increases. Many employers have given significant bonuses as part of COVID. All this being said, our staff and we continue to be very grateful for all that council has done for us. So this is not by any means to put us in any kind of position, but simply to say that we want to continue to remain competitive in our region and continue to recognize that both cost of living increases and also the competitive nature of retaining and recruiting employees. Finally, also including in the proposed budget, a continuation of merit increases for top performers, as well as the bonus pool for spot bonuses and project bonuses. In each of these show a continued investment in our staff and those that serve the public day in and day out. So now, with similar chart graph to break down expenditures in the general fund at the request of the mayor, I did specifically pull out the capital funding either debt service or capital cash. So in prior years, this was all cash. Current year, it's a blend of some capital cash and debt service. But in the future years since we pulled the capital cash out, it is strictly debt service. This amount again anticipates the amount of the new debt as well. Once the full payments of our current existing bond take effect. Because the first few years were interest, only the annual amount of debt service will be approximately seven hundred and thirty thousand dollars. [off mic] Yeah. You can also see the top line for fiscal 23 proposed that there is just over \$700000 of revenues that are currently unallocated. Our town financial policies state that we should include at least a five percent contingency, which would be around one hundred and eighty eight thousand dollars. Unallocated funds are there to provide a cushion in case revenues come in less than expected, but any unexpended funds at the end of the fiscal year would go into unassigned fund balance. And as we did discuss also a couple meetings ago, the Town Council is going to review unassigned fund balance in the next year or two to look at paying down as much of the debt service as we can on or the debt as we can on the town hall.

Bridge Littleton: We've repaid everything we need to repay, like in terms of health center, everything else.

Danny Davis: It's my understanding. Yes.

Bridge Littleton: Debt obligations.

Danny Davis: In the general fund.

Bridge Littleton: No, not [inaudible]. Our only town debt obligations for anything is for the new town hall.

Danny Davis: That is my understanding. There may be a slight few thousand dollars from some old project, but yes, the only obligations that we have are the town hall. So that's General Fund looking at utility funds, hopefully a little more quickly through this. I will say that we have noticed that consumption levels have decreased since before the pandemic. Not quite sure exactly.

Bridge Littleton: Do we want to talk about the general fund now or do we want to go through all of it and then go back? Do we want to do General Fund and then the utility or just let him go all the way through it and then. [multiple speakers]

Danny Davis: And then we'll come back. All right. So we have seen consumption levels kind of soften over the last year or so, in fact, including in current fiscal year. And so we are actually anticipating our revenues in fiscal 23 to be less than in fiscal 22, even including in their potential rate increase. We are working with our consultant new gen strategies, who's done our rate model for a number of years and we are updating that model. We plan to bring that to the Finance Committee, hopefully in March and then to the council at your special meeting on March 31st. With that, we will be able

to give you a better picture of where we see the potential need for rate increases, not just this year but into the future for our future capital projects. And again, as noted, we do, we will have grant funding from ARPA to offset many of the capital projects that we have listed in the utility CIP. This chart shows the breakdown of utility fund revenues. What you'll see is the 87 percent of our revenues in the utility fund come from user fees, so we are reliant on those fees for most all of our activities. On the expenditure side. We've continued the good work that we did.

Bridge Littleton: Yes, the TAP fees that Salamander are paid in advance that was for forty nine homes.

Danny Davis: That was.

Bridge Littleton: So there's not one single TAP fee coming from that.

Danny Davis: That's correct. For those homes. That is correct. On the expenditure side, last year, we did conduct the zero based budgeting process and that was very effective. We've had a few tweaks for this fiscal year. One being we had a significant expense for both the utility system master plan and the Well Recharge study. So that's one hundred and forty thousand dollars that is were one time expenditures and would not need to be repeated for this current fiscal year. So we've reduced that line item. Stuart, to his credit, has been extremely successful in running our sewer plan and has produced significantly less sludge than we had in the past, which has reduced our hauling and disposal costs, and we've reflected that savings in that line item as well. We did adjust one line item and water operations related to waterline repairs. We had moved most of that money into capital funding and realized that's really an operational cost more than a capital cost. So we've just realigned those dollars a bit. And then again, we have funding in place for capital projects through cash, bond financing, as well as the ARPA grants. This is breakdown of expenditures in the utility fund you'll see in fiscal 20 and 21 some significant un- or, I should say, did not have any major system issues. So we did not spend all of the allocated dollars, which has helped us build a solid unassigned fund balance in the utility fund, which should be around one hundred percent of our annual expenditures. In current fiscal year. You see our budget listed here and then in the fiscal 23, you'll see the decrease again for the reasons just mentioned in fiscal twenty three, we have an unallocated contingency of just over fifty six thousand dollars. This falls below the targeted contingency of five percent, but it sits at about 3.8 Percent and we think it's still sufficient given our fund balance and the utility fund. Finally, just some quick notes. The Health Center Fund, as we've said for a few years, we're hoping to fully disburse in this current year and we are working to finalize those documents with our auditors. And then we will bring that to a review meeting as requested to go through the details. Hope that if we can get IRS approval by the end of June, that this can be endorsed by council and move forward for disbursement. We're also just again full awareness. We have to continue watching all of our revenue streams pretty closely, just with changes in consumer spending as it relates to both lodging and dining specifically, but also on the utility side. And if there are any significant changes as we continue watching that, we'll bring that back as part of the budget discussions. In terms of review we have on our calendar for the next council meetings, a review and a discussion of budget as desired and appropriate. We do have the real property tax rate public hearing on March 24th. We will also hopefully have a budget discussion that night and then a special meeting on March 31st to adopt the real property tax rate, as well as to discuss the utility system rate model. We are happy to have additional budget meetings, either separate from council meetings or combined with council meetings throughout April and May with an anticipation of adoption sometime in May. Although it doesn't have to be adopted until June 30th. And for the public's benefit, they can provide input at any council meeting. They can provide input at the public hearing specific to the budget or tax rate. They can also call us, go online at MiddleburgVA.gov or email, and we'll make sure get those to council. And that's my presentation. Thank you again for the chance to walk through this with you, and I'm happy to start back at the beginning if we want to go through questions there or topic by topic.

Bridge Littleton: So. Yeah. I'm sorry, I don't. Let's go, let's start back at the at the beginning. So questions around revenue projections for the general fund budget and any items or issues on that, and then we'll cover expenses. And then we'll do the same for yeah. Yeah. Christopher.

Chris Bernard: Just a question about the local taxes. Are we overestimating what we think is going to happen next year because I know everything's [inaudible] right now, and if we're looking at inflation, I think inflation is going to start to chip away at maybe some of that.

Danny Davis: Yeah. And I think that's a valid question. And there's a couple a couple of ways to approach this. So we are six months into fiscal year 22, which we know was a super HOT summer and fall time frame with very, very lots of activity, obviously at the lodging properties and at our restaurants. I took the revenues from the first half of the year, applied a seventy five percent factor to those revenues to build out the full fiscal year 22 revenue estimation. In prior fiscal years we've seen that as high as 85 to 90 percent, so I feel that I was, you know, assuming that we keep some standard of activity up, that it was already a fairly conservative development. From 22 to 23, I only built in a two percent increase in meals, taxes and a five percent increase in TOT from from things I've heard the specifically, the resort expects likely to be even higher than that, but I was again trying to be fairly conservative in building those numbers. So that's kind of the analytical answer to your question. I think from a field perspective, we'll probably know by the time we get to May, June, definitely by the end of the fiscal year as to see how activity responds to the inflationary pressures and other world events and whether they change people's travel patterns or not in a somewhat and I don't mean to sound this as something that we asked for or hoped for. But as inflation impacts the cost of meals, assuming people continue to eat out, it impacts our revenues and meals tax as well, because the meals tax is added as a percentage of the meal cost. So again, we don't bank on that being a specific factor. But, you know, assuming that people's discretionary incomes allow them to continue eating out as they have been than we anticipated it, you know, we think these numbers are real world. I don't feel like they're as conservative as we used to be in our budgeting, but they could be overshooting by by a hair, but we don't really know until we get there.

Bridge Littleton: Any other questions on the general fund revenue side?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I sort of say, well, Chris has been saying, we just don't know. I think being conservative is really important. You've done a great job of being conservative. We don't know if there's going to be a bubble burst or what's going to happen in the world events right now, but it's looking dodgy. I think we're in a we're talking about bubbles. We're in a bubble here in Middleburg as well. You know, in terms of the visitors that we have who come here and their expendable income that they spend in Middleburg. So it's a little bit different, but you know, at this point. You've been conservative, and I can't see that you could do much more without really going in so low that then we just burst the budget as well, so we are sort of at the mercy of events.

Bridge Littleton: Anybody else? Questions input? Ok. Expense side on the general fund. Oh, wait, Cindy. Oh yeah, we can't see her. Oh.

Chris Bernard: Danny's trying to cut Cindy out of the meeting.

Cindy Pearson: No, I'm good, thank you. I'd spoken to Danny yesterday about most of this, so. Ok. Ok, thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Expense side general fund Chris.

Chris Bernard: Laughing cause similar question. I'm looking at the expenditures, and I'm wondering if maybe we need to think about inflation a little bit as we're doing, I know we thought about it, but I just I. You know, as I said before, on the revenue side, I think we're a touch high and I think maybe we were a touch low on the expenditure side, and that's probably why there's that giant contingency line.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Haven't we looked at 10 percent?

Danny Davis: So, we did, and we did not apply that to every single line item. Yeah, it wasn't just a straight across the board.

Chris Bernard: Ok, was it the chart that showed the different.

Bridge Littleton: All the different market segments? Some market segments are not even up one percent. [multiple speakers] Yeah. It was actually really helpful to like, say, hey, a lot of these costs that we're going to hit are actually those markets are only experiencing a three percent increase. Like automotive was through the roof.

Chris Bernard: But looking at a negative 3.7 feels ambitious.

Danny Davis: Well, again, I think some of that the negative 3.7% is because there's essentially \$600,000 from current fiscal year that's pulled out just because they were [multiple speakers] They were one time funds that were pulled out and that's that capital cash expenditure and the 250 for the health center fund. So if you kind of pull those out as one timers, then it's not nearly the same. You know, it's not a negative, it's still an increase year over year. But you know, we did we did look at so you know, again, some of the line items we're looking at eight to 10 percent, you know, so printing goes from six thousand to six thousand six hundred. We have some unknowns and again, related to the town hall, right? We don't really know what a cleaning contract will be. Landscaping shouldn't be extremely much more than what it is, but there will be an increase. And again, some of those are will be developed out as we go through the next few months. But I mean, I'm always open to input on areas or again, like you said, the contingency kind of fills that void. So if we start to see some significant increases, just completely unexpected, that can provide us cover.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: What input did what did the Strategic Finance Committee think about that?

Danny Davis: So we met in January or December, perhaps. I don't recall which. January, early January. And so we at that point, I was probably a day or two after the seven percent inflation number first came out. And I think if I can speak for them in general, the general feeling was, as we all said, this is these are historic rate levels not seen in decades. And specifically at the committee, they said, you need to really, really prepare for this time of uncertainty in our economy because it's not just one month, but we don't know what this means for the next three months, six months into the next year. The chairman of the committee then caught me afterwards and essentially reiterated doubled down and said, you know, don't take this lightly. You know, consider it very seriously that, you know, inflation is real and this is going to impact your budget, which is why we've tried to build that kind of buffer in there.

Bridge Littleton: So what I would say, too, is. So I think on the expense side. Well, we got there's some elements we want to talk about, but in general, the approach for the non-human cost of eight to 10 here and there, but certain things, you know, aren't going to be that big of a deal. So whatever. We don't have to adopt this budget until June. So you can actually watch actuals. So you know, so you know, as of January for 2021, the inflation was 7.5 Percent for the whole year. Right. But some of that inflation actually hasn't hit those markets yet. Sure, it's trickling through now. So you're going to be able to have. We will be able to have another two months of seeing real things and prices actually start to shift. And that should be a good barometer for you to gut check where we get to in let's say the first of June, it'd be like, OK, we said printing was going to be this much and it's tracking a little low. No change or it's tracking higher. Ok, we've got to go higher. Yeah. I mean, the tax rate, we got to do that by March. But so I mean, everything I went through and when you and I went through it, I feel comfortable that, you know, it's a good starting point knowing that we've got the next three months to watch and see what price indexes do for the different stuff.

Danny Davis: That's a good point. And we just got notice a day or two ago from Dominion Power about the fuel surcharge that they add to the each account or something, and it's essentially more than doubled. And so I'll need to wait and go see what that does to actual rates for the year. But that could, you know, between our own direct fuel costs, but also looking at electricity costs, both general fund and utility fund. That's one specific area where I think we're going to see perhaps needing to bump that greater than what we have in there right now.

Bridge Littleton: Any other questions from anybody on the non-human expense side of non-salary expense side of the general fund?

Bud Jacobs: I assume Danny would if you see red flags appearing on the on the inflation index over the next couple of three months as they occur, would you remember to sort of update us even if it turns out to be sort of line by line and what we're proposing?

Danny Davis: Absolutely. Sure thing. And in our goal, both, I think we can do that on a broad level of course, when new numbers come out each month or any other direct specific impacts, we can let you know that either in an email or as part of Tina's report, but then in the budget itself, we track any changes we make to these numbers on a specific sheet. Line

by line. And so as we go through the process, even if it's one hundred dollars to add, you know, a 20 percent inflationary factor instead of 10, we'll have each of those listed out for you. So we have that detail.

Chris Bernard: I'd like to have that so that we don't have to sort of go through it when we're actually getting ready to approve.

Danny Davis: Yes. Yeah, absolutely. [off mic] Yeah, exactly.

Bridge Littleton: Ok, so then the next part of it is how we want to look at and approach salaries and, you know, cost of living merit, all that kind of stuff. So I think what I'll say generally, well, generally, I think it's the same thing, right? Directionally, we have a place we might want to go. But as things, you know, line up the rest of the year, it may change one way or the other. So I think it's good to have a general discussion now to see where everybody falls in in terms of looking at it. So. Does anybody want to speak first or have any thoughts on, I guess, Danny, you're recommending for a cost of living five percent?

Danny Davis: That's correct.

Bridge Littleton: With merits, you know, on top of that.

Danny Davis: Yes, sir.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I mean, I think the staff is the most important asset that we have and, you know, we're very fortunate to have everyone. If that's what you're recommending, I go with it. We have to, you know, we want to make sure they're not. It's not costing them more to come to work than if they stayed home. So, yeah.

J. Kevin Daly: The question is COLA cost of living allowance for military retirement and Social Security went 5.9 Percent and it still appears to be below what the inflation rate is. Are you ensuring that you know you pay for quality and it costs to actually more money to go out and find replacements? Are we raising the COLA enough?

Danny Davis: I'll tell you my best answer for that, which is there's no exact figure. No perfect number for a scenario like this.

Bridge Littleton: And the thing I would add is inflation and COLA also, meaning purchasing power on a individual basis are not tied. I mean, they are, they drive one another. But inflation is driven on many different factors that are not that don't actually hit the individual in their home and things like that. So I'm not saying, you know, in some times the inflation is low, but the COLA needs to be higher because the inflationary things that are hitting are hitting people at home. And then sometimes it's the reverse, the things that are maybe making the general inflation be high are actually not hitting at home, it's hitting in other areas. So I mean, Kevin, I totally get your point. And I think that's something that's it would be helpful for someone or a place that is an act like does this economic type thinking to help us pull that apart and understand it. To know whether it's high or low right on point or whatever.

Danny Davis: So that is that is true. And again, even with those numbers, you know, there's there's typically not a specific, exact formula that's used to say it must be this, it must be that. So, you know, I'm not sure I have a perfect answer to your question to say, I think taking all factors into consideration between, you know, those general percentages between what we've seen in Social Security and military between, you know, general across the board as well as, you know, as I mentioned, other governments in the region, other public entities taking a number of steps to either incentivize retention or to boost their ability to recruit. I felt that it's the proper level for us because I want to be careful. We don't set a stage where we become unaffordable. You know, or unsustainable in our salaries or out of whack with, you know, those around us where we are for some reason, you know, percentages and much higher than other jurisdictions. So, you know, I believe it's at a good level.

Bridge Littleton: What's Leesburg proposing?

Danny Davis: So Leesburg has a couple proposals. They've made some baseline changes, so some of it is for existing employees. I believe it's a three percent. Let me pull it up a two percent COLA and a three or four percent merit. They also, though, have given some specific other direct incentives for people in certain areas of their operations. They have a starting salary for police at sixty three thousand, for instance. So, you know, I mean, it's they set a starting salary for someone who's green, not even certified. It'll take 12 months to get on the street higher than our starting salary for certified. [off mic] Oh, well, yes. [off mic] Well, they don't always they will bring an experienced officer.

Bridge Littleton: No, no, no, no. That is a practice they've been doing for years.

Danny Davis: What is that? I'm sorry.

Bridge Littleton: Paying new people higher than we would pay them? What's that? Oh, Cindy, I'm sorry, I just got a hand up.

Cindy Pearson: Oh, that's okay. Yeah. Finish what you're doing, then I'll talk.

Danny Davis: Yeah. And no, they typically are higher than I'm not saying we have to be there by any means, and that's not what I'm proposing here.

Bridge Littleton: They're not doing that because of the current inflation.

Danny Davis: No. But what they have done is they boost that base salary significantly over what it used to be. And I don't know what the percentage is, but you know, everyone's recognizing, especially for law enforcement, that getting the first number right, it affects everybody else, but it also gives you the ability to recruit.

Bridge Littleton: Cindy, go ahead.

Cindy Pearson: Oh, OK. You know, I think the rate is good and you know, to Kevin's thing, could it be a little more? The thing we have to remember is all the staff drive, and gas right now is that where it's that's where it's going to hit them the hardest is every time they fill up their tank with gas. So I think at least the five percent is good. You know, if everybody's comfortable with that, that's all.

Bridge Littleton: Anybody else?

Philip Miller: What's the county doing?

Danny Davis: So there are a couple of different aspects of it specifically right now, they. So let me separate general employees and law enforcement. Their law enforcement are on a grade and step program. So each law enforcement will get both a grade and a step this year. So essentially six percent. They don't do merit in law enforcement. It's just simply a grading step. General employees are a three percent merit increase, however, and I don't know when or if this would happen. It sounds like they may consider an additional cost of living increase, but that's not been included in the proposed budget at this time.

Bridge Littleton: So what we know is that Loudoun is proposing three percent?

Danny Davis: For yes [inaudible] yes.

Bridge Littleton: Ok.

Danny Davis: And we can talk about past increases they've given, but that's for another day, if you'd like.

Bridge Littleton: All right. How about like Fairfax County?

Danny Davis: Fairfax just released there's the day or two ago. They're doing a four percent COLA in a for general employees, 2.15 Percent merit, so that's 6.16 Percent for their public safety. And again, that's average, but that's on average public safety on average will be a 7.86 Percent increase.

Bridge Littleton: So you're proposing a five percent COLA, what are you proposing for merit?

Danny Davis: It's an average at two percent, but again, that's some places. Yeah, so some places. And just to be clear, some places do merit, which is unless you totally just mess up, you get your merit increase. Well, that's different here, where we rate the top employees. We have our rating performance system and not everyone gets a merit increase every single year. So I know you know that, but I'm just being clear there is a differential between those who say merit really their pay per for for performances. As long as you're squeaking by, you get it and your percentage doesn't change whether you squeak by or you're a top performer. And if I can to note I'm not sure if I put this anywhere else, but Town of Herndon just did a mid-year COLA of three percent effective the end of March, and they anticipate then doing a three percent merit as part of the upcoming budget. So Warrington is proposing very similar to what I've proposed to you today, five percent COLA and two percent merit. I've heard that Vienna's likely proposing a seven plus percent COLA. Blacksburg's done eight percent COLA. Culpeper's fairly high up there too six to eight percent, something like that. So and again, that's to show you it's not just east of us here, you know? And I can go grab more info. [off mic] I can't disclose that info yet. They've not presented their budget. I will tell you it's higher than or at least the the idea is it's likely higher than what I've proposed. But again, that's not been proposed specifically.

Bridge Littleton: Ok any other questions, thoughts, inputs? Let me again, we're not we don't need to make a decision tonight, but, you know, directionally. All right.

J. Kevin Daly: COLA and the cost of living allowance and pay increase is based on well starts with a base, our base salary rates for our police officers, for our town staff. How do they equate to Purcellville, Leesburg, and the rest of the county?

Danny Davis: And that is that is a tricky part of where we're situated in Loudoun county. And I don't mean to say this to try to hedge, but because Leesburg and Loudoun could be competitors, you know, for for our employees. But at the same time, Culpeper could be or Stephens City or Strasburg or, you know, Fairfax County. Not as much, but possibly. So the challenge with that is that if I take an employee here, say a patrol officer with five years' experience and I compare them to sheriff's deputy and Loudoun and a police officer and Purcellville and a police officer in Culpeper, you're going to get three quite distinct, different numbers. I personally believe that we fall very balanced in between those meaning if you don't mind me saying my position here, my salary essentially equates to an assistant director level position in Loudoun county, and that doesn't mean it's right or wrong. I'm just, you know, it's like five levels down from the county administrator, and that's just because that person has responsibility over a significant function. Just as I have responsibility over a very significant function. And we're a \$6 million budget and they might have responsibility over a \$50 million portion of one department. [off mic] Correct. So so part of that point is, you know, trying to do a clear apples to apples can be difficult. I will say that I believe our our law enforcement, we are competitive and that we currently were were full. And, you know, thankfully, we don't believe people are interested in leaving us just for money and hopefully they're not interested in leaving at all. And and I think we're at a place where we can recruit should we have any vacancies. So and I think that goes for the rest of our staff. I think we are generally in line with our market here as we as we look at, you know, other places around us. I will note not to try to put too fine a point on this. Again, everybody used their ARPA dollars differently. Everybody responded to COVID differently. Council was was very supportive of us and generous in the midst of COVID with multiple bonuses throughout. But as one example, Purcellville gave \$7,500 bonuses to all of their police officers, which if you assume they're in the 60 to 70 thousand range, that's a, you know, 10 to 12 percent, essentially one-time bonus, \$5,000 to maintenance, utility and IT workers and \$2,000 to their customer service. So, you know, each place is different. You know, each place is going to be able to have other dollars but they used ARPA funds because they got \$10 million for that. So, you know,

Bridge Littleton: Numbers and that metric work [multiple speakers].

Danny Davis: Yes.

Bridge Littleton: They're one fifth, the size of Leesburg, and they've got five million more than Leesburg.

Danny Davis: Yeah, the real winners were the Herndon's and the Vienna's Herndon got \$25 million. Now they have a lot of infrastructure needs that they are putting it towards. But, you know, so I'm not saying I want to be in their shoes right now. But yeah, the ARPA dollars just worked for some people really well. I hope that answers as best I can your question.

Bridge Littleton: Appreciate it. Any other questions? All right. We will move on to the utility side, any questions on the revenue side.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Yeah, so I'm on the committee, so I know a lot about this, but just to open it up, thoughts on the lower consumption and the rationale, you know [inaudible]. Well, yeah. You know [inaudible] people were at home a lot more, you know, working from home and therefore I would have thought use more water. So it's sort of counterintuitive unless there's something. But you know,

Danny Davis: It is a bit and I will say, and I hope I'm not, you know, creating any doom or gloom here. Some of it could just very well be that even the beginning of this fiscal year, Salamander was still not at one hundred percent of its typical banquets, corporate and weddings. And so even the room rates were significantly higher and dining throughout the town was significantly higher. It may just mean that, you know, we didn't see the same amount of the 500 person banquet that eats a lot of food and creates a lot of dishwashing because they were still limited to a degree and things were still slowly coming back. So I think that could be a factor. I do think maybe people are being more cognizant, you know, and trying to save dollars just because of being in the midst of COVID.

Chris Bernard: You don't have to go to work, don't shower for a month. [laughter]

Danny Davis: And you know, there was we may have shared this. There was one fairly significant leak at the pool at Salamander that resulted in some good revenues for us for a couple of years. And then they found it which good for them. We don't want to waste water. So again, this is similar to the mayor's comments about watching inflation over the next few months. I think this is one where we have a new billing cycle going out in March. So we'll kind of have the next round of numbers now. We always know this quarter is super low because it's the slow, slow, slow two months of the year. Maybe by May we'll have an idea, you know where we stand in 22, but we may not really know until the new fiscal year begins because we don't bill June's water until July 15th and we don't collect it until August 15th, so we end up kind of behind [inaudible]. So I don't know. I'm not sure I have a great answer for you. I do hope. I do hope that our The Project Council approved for the radio meter read program, as well as updating all the older meters, will allow us to capture some water where maybe meters have slowed down or were not accurately, you know, calculating the water to our detriment, not to the customer, so.

Bridge Littleton: I spoke to him last night, he said rates were up because they were able to charge it, but that their occupancy was down and that one of the things so they they did well from a raw gross cash perspective. Because they were able to demand a higher rate, but they had certainly less rooms being rented. But he said February was looking very strong and that they are, you know, behind on where they want to be with banquets and corporate events and stuff like that. But it is starting to get better. So, OK, any other questions?

Rhonda North: Cindy has her hand up?

Bridge Littleton: Cindy does. Oh, Cindy. Go ahead. Sorry.

Cindy Pearson: No. Just wanted to on what Danny just commented on with Salamander, but the community center, their water bills have been very low for the, you know, over this too. So they haven't had the events, you know, so that's where that is, where some of a loss or decrease in consumption has come from too.

Bridge Littleton: No, that's a good point. Ok, any questions on the utility expense side? Ok, then the last thing and you can go ahead and close it out [inaudible] Cindy. Next question is let's discuss the property tax rate. So we're at 15.3 fully equalized is down to what thirteen.

Danny Davis: Two nine.

Bridge Littleton: Two nine. The one number I asked Danny to put in there is if we go to the fully equalized rate and then add back seven and a half percent to account for inflation. That gives us the what, 14.26.

Danny Davis: 14.29. It's on page 10 of the document you have there. If you want to see it or Cindy, it's in the PDF of the budget, the page 10 of the budget document.

Bridge Littleton: So yes, and again, I didn't you know the equalize all about the actual raw tax bill to the human being as opposed to the rate, which I hate how the state makes us do that. But you know, hey, if I could do that, my federal taxes, that'd be great. Imagine what George Washington's rate would be today, but any thoughts on taking that approach? Yeah Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: What I would like to say. For me, this is one of the most important points parts of this whole budget, because this is where it can hit the residents of Middleburg hardest. And I think we need to take a really good look at this because the the revenue predictions that we've got from TOT and meals tax are, you know, quite quite very positive. So if I understand correctly, you know, if we just adopted the equalized tax rate, we're talking about a revenue loss compared to this year Danny?

Danny Davis: That [inaudible] No, sir.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Can you explain that in just again?

Danny Davis: Absolutely. So looking at this page 10 of the budget the current year equalize or the equalized tax rate would bring in, as shown here, \$539,733 but it's equalized, not including new construction or growth. So essentially, it's about, the equalized rate is about \$10,000 more than what we expect to bring in current fiscal year 10 to 20 thousand more. The \$81,000 difference is the difference between if we kept the tax rate the same at 15.3 versus going all the way down to the equalized number. That's a that's a \$81,000 difference. Essentially, each penny, each cent on the tax rate is about just over \$40,000 in in revenue to the town, and it's just over a two cent decrease to equalize the rate.

Bridge Littleton: So just just to make sure we keep the conversation apples to apples, let's not worry about new construction, OK, because that's just going to get everybody confused. Ok, right? Because we don't have the other side of it with new construction. So let's just, right. And new construction means new cost, new lines, new services. So, you know [inaudible] new homes. We're going to have to do more things for people that's going to have more costs.

Danny Davis: So, so, so yes.

Bridge Littleton: Say the town never built another house and it just stayed with it. Is what this is saying is if we equalize down to nobody's tax bill changing, it would be a loss of \$81,000.

Danny Davis: But not a loss over fiscal 22.

Bridge Littleton: Correct. Correct. That's why I'm here.

Danny Davis: Yes. So so yeah, fiscal 22 our adopted budget for that line item was was approximately \$503,000. It may come in slightly higher than that, but that was our budget. So let's go with that number. So 503 is what we anticipate to bring in current year. So even if we equalize the rate, there still will be additional revenue. None of these scenarios are actually a decrease of revenue to the town. Yes.

Bridge Littleton: The the thing that makes this conversation hard and why I I just I hate the way the state forces us to talk about it is, your costs don't stay fixed, right? So the states, the way the state makes us look at this is the dollars of the tax bill, not the rate on the value, right? So the equalizing is the the dynamic of your tax bill this year was a thousand. Your tax bill next year will be a thousand with equalizing the tax rate. So it's it's adjusting the rate to get your bill to stay the same. Ok, I got it, what the problem is, costs still go up. So in especially in jurisdictions where you know, 60 70 percent of their revenue comes from real estate taxes, this is a huge thing to struggle with. I mean, thank God. You know.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: OK, so my question in simple terms is if we were to have the equalized tax rate for 23, that's an increase over 22 thirty five thousand dollars, roughly right.

Danny Davis: There are some nuances. But yeah, we and I yes, yes, I if I if I can just add one nuance to it, just if case we're getting into actual, you know, numbers here, we have to account for property tax assessments where people appeal their tax and get a reduced assessment. And we also have to account for tax relief for the elderly and permanently disabled between those two. We add a we yeah. So we subtract twenty thousand dollars off any of these revenue lines here. So essentially, if this five thirty nine that you see here for the equalized rate, I would subtract twenty thousand off that before I put it in the budget. So it would be five nineteen. So let's say five twenty. So it's still a it's still a seventeen thousand dollar increase over fiscal year 22. I'm sorry for all the detail nuance, but

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, so like Loudoun for the last fifteen years is equalized every year.

Danny Davis: I wouldn't say fifteen years, but for at least the last four or five and again, they've had the flexibility of additional revenue [multiple speakers].

Bridge Littleton: Where I'm going with that is, is that

Danny Davis: Equalized or lowered?

Bridge Littleton: They either equalized it or lowered it. So you had a \$500,000 house 20 years ago, you paid \$5,000 in taxes. That house is now worth a million dollars. You're still only paying \$5,000 in taxes. So as a contribution to the revenue, you know, and it's all, you know, forget the seven and a half percent, right? Just normal inflation. You're actually paying half as much tax as a percentage of what your house is worth and what you're earning because your salaries go up and people get raises and stuff like that. So that's you know. That's what we have to be thoughtful about is how do we want to work that dynamic? You know, as much as we talk about in the counties finally recognizing that their overreliance on data center revenues is creating a huge liability.

Bud Jacobs: Chicken has come home too. [inaudible]

Bridge Littleton: So real estate taxes make up 15 16 percent of our revenues. But, you know. That God forbid, we go into a, you know, our friends across the street have some huge issue and that dynamic changes, you know, we've saved a lot of money, which is great. But you know, when you all know this, the thing I'm always hyper concerned about is all of a sudden we're in a problem and we've got to go to the residents and say, Guess what your bill is going up 40 percent. Or 20 or 10 or whatever, right? So.

Philip Miller: Is this something where we want to really have a small workgroup look into writing a policy that would guide our decisions not just this year, but years forward?

Bridge Littleton: I'd say it this way, I don't think it's a bad idea to have something directional, but I think you want to be careful about being mandatory because you certainly want to let future councils 25 years from now. God knows how the world changes, have the flexibility to make the smart decisions, but maybe it's the establishment of a process that reviews this and go through it in much greater detail. And maybe that's probably the Strategic Finance Committee, but we didn't take this to them. We didn't take this part to them. No, I don't. I just think, well, it's the type you know, the Strategic Finance Committee is like how we're borrowing the money and not that we didn't want to. We just didn't think about it. I don't think that's a bad idea.

Philip Miller: Yeah. And I for me personally, I think, you know, we made we also have to remember that we made a promise that we weren't going to raise people's taxes the year that we're building this building and taking on all this debt. And so that should be a serious consideration for all of us to live up to that. So in that sense, I mean, this year, I'm in favor of just equalizing the tax rate.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, you mean all the way down?

Chris Bernard: Yeah. If there's ever a year to do it's this year, if there is every year to do it,

Bridge Littleton: Cindy.

Cindy Pearson: I was going to say taken it to the Finance Committee might be really good because they do look at things a different way than we do. And with equalizing it all the way down, I was thinking, wasn't there a second step there that you said, Danny? That took it to like 14.6 ish?

Danny Davis: Yes. Yes, ma'am there's there's, you know, two two potentials. One is if you have the equalized rate, plus what generally we're calling inflation seven and a half percent or. And that's at 14.09 Cents. Or if we do the equalize rate just plus ten percent, which is just kind of a general number that would get to 14.62.

Cindy Pearson: Because I'm like, Bridge, I, you know, I hate to take it down, which it really isn't, but we are. And then, you know, the next year, like you said, something happens and we have to raise it back up. It just seems like, OK, then you built the town office. Now you need to raise it. So it's kind of a myth.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: [off mic] I agree with that and I just looking at it simplistically, you know, over 22 2022, it's still a revenue increase at the equalized rate. Right? And I know,

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, yeah. But but it's like saying. Look at it on a personal level, right? I'm gonna give you a one percent salary increase, but costs have gone up ten percent, but you still got an increase. That's the that's the the right.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: This isn't one percent. I mean, even, you know, taking out that \$20000.

Danny Davis: It's a it's about 3.2 Percent increase if at the equalized rate. Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: I've. Yeah. I mean, when we said we said we weren't going to raise the tax rate, right?

Danny Davis: We said residential real estate taxes.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Right? And the problem is we don't have control over.

Danny Davis: But again, I do I do agree with that comment that Mr. Leonard Morgan said, which is the town doesn't have control over property value assessments now. You know, again, at the end of the day, you know, this is this is for council to to decide on what's the best approach in in your commitment to the residents. So I don't think at that time where we were making those statements and comments. No one anticipated, you know, 16 to 24 percent raises in property values, either. But again, you know, I if to Mr. Bernard's question, we haven't called a Strategic Finance Committee meeting yet, but we're looking at probably the second week of March give or take. And I think that could be a valuable time to hear from the Strategic Finance Committee on that, as well as the utility rate model. And then following that, we'll have the public hearing on the 24th and then opportunity for a decision on the 31st.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Do we have enough time to do all that?

Danny Davis: We don't have to give the the rate to the county until April 1st.

Bridge Littleton: Ok, so let's see if we can try to have the Strategic Finance Committee meeting next week.

Danny Davis: Ok.

Bridge Littleton: I mean, let's get ahead of it.

Danny Davis: We. Ok, just have to get for you.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, man, it's going to be short on some people, I'm sure it's Thursday. I mean, I mean, you know, let's say, I mean, even if it's next Friday, you know, we can do it by Zoom [inaudible], I mean, I'll have to have everybody here. That's all great. But you know.

Rhonda North: Can't do it entirely by Zoom.

Bridge Littleton: Ok.

Rhonda North: You have to have a quorum physically.

Bridge Littleton: Got it. So let's see if we can do that, because I would certainly love to know what their input is, and I would love for you guys to have their input and not like, hey, they met yesterday. Here's what they said. And by the way, here's the hearing, you know to be. Yeah. Oh yeah, it's a called meeting.

Danny Davis: We even if we go to the following week, we still have two weeks before the public hearing.

Bridge Littleton: So when you were saying like, we're looking at it, a meeting like sort of mid-March and like, I would love for you guys and all of us to be able to have a week or two to synthesize the information, grapple with it, play with it, understand what it means. What does it mean? Like, you know, it would be great too? On this, how much these different things affect the average tax bill? Right, so the average home price is X, so this one means that, you know, their tax bill will be up by two hundred and twenty dollars and one hundred and eighty.

Chris Bernard: If your home is worth. Three, four, five, six hundred thousand. This is what it would be, and then you can kind of fill in between

Bridge Littleton: No change, right? It's just we're equalizing plus and then equalizing clubs right now the average [multiple speakers] with Japan's three or six, thirty or something.

Danny Davis: So, yeah, so so I ran I ran the figures based on categories single family townhouse, you know at the equalize rate. Pretty much everyone sees a decrease in their tax bill again on average, except for townhomes, which still see a sixty seven dollar increase, right, because they jumped twenty four percent.

Bridge Littleton: Right.

Danny Davis: So we can run that in a [multiple speakers] I haven't, but it's actually that's fourteen.

Bridge Littleton: 14.29.

Danny Davis: Well, I had a fourteen two two, but it's close enough. It's about fifty dollars increase for single families and one hundred and thirty five increase for townhouses. Condos go down. And we're not talking commercial. And then at fourteen six two, it's a seventy five dollar increase for single families and one hundred and fifty nine dollar increase for townhomes.

Bridge Littleton: And that's the annual.

Danny Davis: That's annual real town of Middleburg.

Bridge Littleton: Gotcha.

Danny Davis: The real property tax bill.

Bridge Littleton: Because isn't the county thinking of doing that too? They're not going to equalize, they're going to equalize plus something.

Danny Davis: Yeah, they're they're they're going to be plus, you know, six to nine percent. Probably the equalize was eighty four and a half. They they're looking at eighty nine and a half. So that's five cents. But they advertised an additional up to two two cents more.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: This is all about the data center issue, right?

Danny Davis: It's well, it's partly that making sure the balance between real and personal property is right. It's also that they've recognized they have a lot of demands and needs. They they have they have proposed, they have proposed an additional two hundred and fifty employees in their budget. But that's for I mean, they it's all needs. It's opening new facilities that they've paid \$80 million for. It's, you know, more law enforcement, it's health, it's social services, it's needed family services.

Bridge Littleton: And that's not LCP as well.

Danny Davis: No, that's general government.

Bridge Littleton: That's five percent.

Danny Davis: [off mic] Even probably just a hair more, they're not quite at 5,000 yet. Yeah, it's a significant number.

Bridge Littleton: Ok. Uh, yeah.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I'm just a bit confused. Sorry, I'm looking at the revenues for FY 22 and property taxes 539818 and then we're talking about [off mic].

Danny Davis: Oh, because that includes personal property, the business, so if you go three lines above that. Yes, sir.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Thanks. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Come on, Peter Line seven ninety three. Cell J. Sub Bullet three.

Chris Bernard: He was doing his pounds conversion. It's fine. [laughter]

Bridge Littleton: Oh God. All right. Any other questions or guidance for Danny and staff? Going once, twice. [multiple speakers] Ok. [laughter] Redo all this. Ok. Next item here is strategic planning session for goals. [off mic] Yeah, Bud we love you too. [off mic]

Danny Davis: Mr. Mayor, you? Yeah. The memo here, I think it's discussion. Clearly, I think it's important for us to relook at the strategic initiatives coming out of COVID. And I think a reset. I think the question is, how long do you think you need to talk through these? You know, I would think a half day would probably be sufficient, but I don't want to make assumptions.

Chris Bernard: Oh are we walking or taking a cart. [laughter].

Bridge Littleton: Hey Bud how do you really feel? I couldn't tell.

Danny Davis: Or you can just you can just re endorse what we have and we'll go.

Philip Miller: You have to suffer, you have to suffer. Exactly. [laughter]

Bridge Littleton: Anyway, any thoughts, I mean, I think the idea was maybe go somewhere for, you know, mid-morning lunch, be done by mid-afternoon, go through each one of them, just make sure we're all on alignment that those what we want to do.

Philip Miller: [multiple speakers] I think we should set aside a day. And if we get out early, get out early. But I feel like we're going to kick these things back and forth a thousand times, especially. The last time we all actually got together and did this in person. We did some exercises that added some time that I think were beneficial that we may want to consider looking at again. And sometimes that's breakout groups. Sometimes that's just individual contributions. [off mic] Yeah, exactly.

Bridge Littleton: I enjoyed the slip and slide. Yeah, I appreciate Danny getting that, you know, brought in. So all right. Well, if we want to set aside a day, that's fine. I think, you know, we're not talking overnight. I think it'd be good to not be here, you know, be outside the humdrum of the rest of the day.

Danny Davis: So I would suggest and I can look into it at the Meadow Kirk Retreat Center its just off line Killen and Snickers Hill, and it's got big space to be able to meet. They have we can bring in food or they have ability. There is just a 10 minutes away, so it's not far, but it's set aside, it's set apart. It's one option. The Foxcroft boardroom is one option, but you know, for that long meeting, I think we'd want a little more space.

Bridge Littleton: Evergreen.

Bud Jacobs: Sure.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Never mind we can go to Loudoun. Ok, so let's do it this way. Everybody good with just a set aside setting aside a day and let Danny and staff work out the details. [off mic]

Danny Davis: That was going to be my next question. Thank you.

Bud Jacobs: Is that a yes for a facilitator?

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I think they need to focus more. And it frees them up. They don't have to run it.

Danny Davis: Yes, it does. It does. Absolutely. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. All right. So yes.

Danny Davis: Ok. And we can talk either now or behind the scenes about whether to bring back the person who who helped.

Bridge Littleton: I thought she was good.

Danny Davis: I did, too. And she has now, you know, some background in history to be able to.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, that was.

Danny Davis: Ok, well, we'll reach out to her.

Bridge Littleton: Was she from Richmond?

Danny Davis: Yes. Just outside Richmond.

Bridge Littleton: Ok?

Danny Davis: Her check coming back to us, we had the wrong address.

Bridge Littleton: Ok, any other anything else on that Danny?

Danny Davis: No, that's very helpful. And then time frame, I would say, you know, obviously we have a lot this month with [inaudible] budget. So you're saying after so you're saying, like into July or August?

Bridge Littleton: Oh no, no, I'm sorry after we get past the budget hearing all that stuff. [multiple speakers]

Danny Davis: April. Yes, so April ish time frame. And that would still actually give us time to tweak parts of the actual budget itself. Yeah. Should something come out or we want to realign?

Bridge Littleton: I mean, I would definitely some in April, because once you get to May, then you start getting into kids, getting out of school, people going, places doing stuff. Okay, all right. Next item is, oh, so did everybody see what happened? The [inaudible] redistricting?

Bud Jacobs: Oh yeah.

Bridge Littleton: Maybe watch the video.

Chris Bernard: I missed it.

Bridge Littleton: You want a good if you want a good.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Big thing of popcorn. Put your feet up

Philip Miller: If you want to watch a shellacking from the dais and definitely something to watch.

Bridge Littleton: It was unfortunate.

Bud Jacobs: I only saw the what was in the press and apart from the result, the couple of things that leapt out at the. One was I believe it was Supervisor Turner suggested that there was misinformation and disinformation in the many letters that Western Loudoun's sent endorsing the COLT plan. But of course, at least in the press coverage, none of that misinformation so-called was spelled out. And I'd like to know what he was actually referring to. It seems to me that it's really easy to start throwing around Soviet like pronouncements about citizen input that don't serve the community and certainly don't serve our community's interests. Which leads me to my second concern, which was a comment that I believe it was Supervisor Letourneau made at least as covered in the press that the letters from or the comments from Western Loudoun could be discounted because they were the result of a concerted campaign. The last time I checked, one of the things that our democracy historically has acted upon one way or the other is concerted campaigns from interested parties in legislation or government actions of some sort. Now, in fact, I don't think it was a concerted campaign. I think what was reflected was the enormous concern that Western Loudoun has about its future. And how that future can be conditioned by a reduction of our political representation on the county board. And I found the the remarks that were made again, as reflected in the press, to be a terrible reflection on the Board of Supervisors handling of this entire process. And I would add just at the substantive level, allegedly one of the concerns that the process was going to reflect was communities of interest and that they be preserved as much as possible in the outcome. Well, if you look at the map where Middleburg and Aldie will lie, it's hard to see that there is an entire community of interest between our two little towns and the larger communities that lie to our East that are now in or going to be, I guess, in our district. And

it's hard to imagine how our voices are going to be, the voices of our community are going to be reflected in whoever assumes the supervisor's slot in that district. And I just thought the whole process. I won't I won't comment on the chair's remarks. I think they can be on Chairman Randall's remarks and reactions. Again, as reflected in the press, reflected in the press, they were practically incomprehensible for me, I didn't really understand what she was saying. But in general, I I thought that our interests and our community's interests were not served by the process. I applaud COLT for their efforts. I thought they're by far they had the best, the best ideas, and I regret deeply that they that their ideas were not supported in the in the final process by the board.

Bridge Littleton: Bud thank you so to give you to answer a couple of questions you had. So the county, when they began the process, they encouraged members or excuse me, when the maps were all in and the and the website went up that you could go, look at everything and play with it and see what map did what and populations and all that. The county also set up a portal where the community could go in and put in comments and you could put your name what district you were from and then you could put a comment. Well, that was open for about three weeks to a month or whatever, so in the staff report that was provided to the board the Friday before the Tuesday meeting, they gave them all the raw data dump of those comments. There's about 500, but it was just a spreadsheet. So unless, you know, so if you want to read if you want to read forty five pages of spreadsheet, you know, you really couldn't discern what that meant. So what we did over the weekend was we literally dumped it into an it was actually in a PDF. I exported it to an Excel spreadsheet and then went comment by comment, creative, creative pivot table and went comment by comment. And if you could discern which of the three maps that person, I turned it into a vote. And since you had the district they were from, then you could actually aggregate where in the county that vote was coming from. So what we did was we took all of that. We put it into a table and then we created pie charts. By all of Loudoun county, then by Loudoun county without the Blue Ridge or Catoclin District, and then we did district by district. So Algonquian, you know, broad run Dulles, whatever, whatever, whatever. And we provided that analysis to the board. The day before. The meeting and only the board. We did not provide it to anybody else, we did not send to the press. We did not send it to the anybody else. And so they got the day before. And the one data element that we shared publicly when we spoke was this one. Of the 500 comments that you could discern votes, there was about 490 you could discern votes from about, you know, 10 people were basically, I don't like any of them. Ok, well, that's not a vote, right? Or I really think the county should be doing better things. Ok, that's not a vote. I believe it was county wide. It was. Eighty six percent of the input wanted the COLT map. And then I think the, you know, the Letourneau Turner map got. You know, 12 percent and the fetcher map got four. You take out the two Western districts. You know, for the, you know, the input of the claim that it was all Western Loudoun votes, so you take out everybody who was from Blue Ridge and Catoclin, so it's just Eastern District. Seventy five percent of the people who commented wanted the COLT map, and then it was, you know, sixteen and eight or whatever. And we referenced that in the public comments, so that's in the public space. Everything else we gave to the supervisors. The other thing I will say is in every district, but one the residents there overwhelmingly, who who provided input overwhelmingly supported the measure. So in Supervisor Turner's. Input that night sort of reflected an email he sent the call earlier in the day, which said, you know that you're that we were trying to say that these five hundred people giving input was the voice of all of Loudoun, and that would be seen as misinformation or disinformation. Well, in our briefing that we gave them, we said, Look, this is what the rating of the input is. And in my public comment that night, I said of the 500 people who responded, this was the input. Ok, so. I think that's where he was going to with his comment about misinformation and disinformation. Great. Thank you. I don't think it was, you know, all these people, you know, came, you know, sending comments in line and whatever. To the comment that they were that that that the deck was being stacked or whatever it was. Supervisor Buffington, a couple of times on his Facebook page, said. I'm voting for the COLT map if you want to provide input for the county. Here's the website to go do it. So, you know, a lot of folks from the West did do that. The majority of the comments were from the East, but, you know, it's significant. I mean, Blue Ridge, absolutely by far, you know, had the most amount of comments. I mean, most of the districts, maybe even 50 percent more or even more. I mean, one district, one person commented. Now most the other districts, you'd have 30, 40, 50, something like that. So, you know, it's a fair point, right? A higher, much higher percentage of turnout happened in the West. But we provided the data without the West in it as well. So that's where I don't really agree with with the supervisor's comment that, you know, the East didn't get a voice. They did, and all the people from the east said seventy five percent, they preferred the COLT map. So that's that's that piece. When you look at the county assessment and the scoring of the three different maps. The COLT map scored the best. It protected the most communities of interest. And every other single metric that was on there. We were either tied or better than the other two maps. So that's like, you know, protecting historic minorities or ensuring minority representation. There was there were six or seven different

things that you've got to scoring and that's that Justice Department stuff, right? And all the maps were in compliance with the Justice Department. But there is it's actually a number score. So every single one we either tied or we're better than the other two. So, you know, on the face of if this was not a political process, if this was simply an administrative process done by an independent commission. I would I would submit the COLT map probably would have been the one that was chosen. Now it doesn't mean that the Letourneau Turner map is a non-compliant or whatever map, right? So OK. Governing is choosing. And the board decided to choose that map just as we get presented with things all the time. And you know, it might be one is the favorite recommendation from staff or somebody else, but we choose to do something else, and that's fine. And if the public doesn't like us for it, they'll vote our ass out. And that's not where I think Colt's disappointment was. Was. Our motives and our character and our intentions being attacked. Yes. That's where, you know, I mean, us being called disingenuous, I think was was, you know, that, you know, trying to trying to orchestrate a disinformation campaign, I think was was unfortunate. So but the map is the map. That's what's going forward. I think there is opportunity to maybe influence it. I don't know. I think if there is, it's like literally being able to move one precinct. But that's it. This thing is ninety five percent what it's going to be. So now to your question about Middleburg and Aldie representation. That's I'm hugely concerned, right? Aldie and Middleburg that precinct is sixteen hundred and forty-nine people in a district of fifty-three thousand. So we are literally in a district which will be two percent of the population of the rest of it. So you know what we do and how we manage that relationship with that new district when those new elections happen is going to be a, you know, it's not like it is today. You know, and somebody asked me, well, why don't you just get yourselves moving into Catoctin? And you know, it's it's it's and that's a question for the for the council. Do we want to advocate for that? And I was actually telling Danny this. So could we be accommodated in the Catoctin District with all the other towns because we're the only town that would be in a separate district? Yes, we could. That particular district could accommodate us. You'd have to move something else, but it could be done. The numbers work. Yeah, yeah, you can make the numbers work. I personally would not want to be moved. And the reason is the needs of Western towns of Loudoun and Western Loudoun are going to be well represented by that district. If we can have any influence or input or prodding or poking of another supervisor because they are fiduciary responsible for us, then that's a good thing for Western Loudoun. Our voice not might not be loud, but they are. They work for us. [off mic]

Peter Leonard-Morgan: But I've always heard that Middleburg does box well above its weight, so.

Bridge Littleton: So anyway, that's kind of where the state of play is. There is going to be a public hearing on this in May, so there is time for additional input to the board. You know, things

Chris Bernard: We'll come out to support. Will they just accuse them of being [multiple speakers]

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. I will say one thing. I mean, there were several things that were said that I just sort of. Was like, well, I mean, so right now in this new district, I mean, Tony Buffington has been district at out of his job because he lives a personal that's now part of the district of Caleb Kershner lives. Right. So and in this new brown blob, it's what Alvin calls this what our new district will be because on the map is brown. There is no one. So what will be interesting is in these other districts, some of the comments that were made by some of the supervisors boy, they were given a nice tagline. Their opponent was given a nice tagline. The one, the one that was the. Whatever you want to call it of, I'm going to misquote it, so it was something along the lines of we don't listen to the public during the budget process why do we listen to them now. [laughter]

Bud Jacobs: You'll be here all week. [laughter]

Philip Miller: I see banners.

Chris Bernard: Yeah, I'm sorry. I think I have a no taxation without representation T-shirt somewhere.

Bridge Littleton: So anyway, yeah, right. So. And you know, we're so closed meeting to figure out what we want to do. There will be a. I mean, we've talked about moving one precinct. I don't want to say it publicly yet, but we want to talk to the folks in that precinct and say, Hey, would you? We think it would be good if you did for these reasons. Again, don't know what's going to happen. Don't know anything. The board might even consider it. But we have heard from that

precinct that they really want to be included. So and the reasons why and so it's it was a OK, you know, that makes a lot of sense and we have interests that are aligned. So but we'll see.

Bud Jacobs: I'm sorry to be included in the new district?

Bridge Littleton: Correct.

Bud Jacobs: I see.

Bridge Littleton: Oh, and Cindy had a question. Yes, Cindy.

Cindy Pearson: No. I just wanted to thank you for all your time that you put into that Bridge and for not jumping up and knocking people out. You have to consider all that. You know, it's a tremendous amount of work and just appreciate it greatly.

Bridge Littleton: You're very welcome. I mean, I will say I have. For seven people with such divergent backgrounds from a town of, you know, 100 people to a town of 50,000. One of the smallest towns in the state of Virginia to the largest town in the state of Virginia. For all of us to come together like we did and I mean, we worked really hard to put that map together. And I mean, we're trying to be as thoughtful.

Cindy Pearson: But yeah, I think that's part of the part of their problem is you all do work together so well and come up with these different options. And as we know, they don't do that as well.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, so with that I really appreciate the thoughtful commentary and send to you as well. But so that's our map and they're sticking to it. Any other questions on that? [laughter] Thank God, we don't have districts in Middleburg. [off mic] drawing that map every 10 years. [off mic] That's the town border. [off mic] Yeah. Ok, next item here, and it's not coming up for me is and again. Look, I. Well, when we were in the in the weekly meeting or whatever this is just put on. Not that we have to do anything, not that we have to make any decisions. But you know, we're going to have rooms, we're going to have a building, we're going to have facilities. You know, those things typically government names those things. And I think it's a good idea that we do that as well. And again, tonight can simply be, yeah, let's start thinking about it. I'm not proposing that we start throwing out names, you know, the Bud Jacobs laboratory [off mic]. [laughter] Well you got to go. You got to go.

Philip Miller: I'm sticking. I'm sticking to my opinion that we should sell the naming rights like stadiums

Bridge Littleton: Careful and you might have a Putin conference room.

Chris Bernard: And I think when Bill Turnure was on his way out, I told him we were going to name this building after him before we bulldoze it.

Bridge Littleton: Perfect. We can do that. No, we should do. We should print something up as the wrecking ball comes down and build a new town hall. So anyway, open discussion. What do people think? How do we want to think about this and approach it? You know, there's places there's there's I mean, like they need aircraft carriers after battles, right? Or monuments or whatever and or people. So and it doesn't have to be everything it could be. We're going to name the rooms. We're not going to be in the building to just anybody want to throw something out. Cindy, you got your hand up.

Cindy Pearson: Yup. I, you know, I sent you an email on this. It's just that in the times, as we have right now, how people get so over names and things that people have done in the past. And OK, maybe they name it after me because they think I'm a great person, but that they find out that I really have done something in the past they didn't like. So it gets, you know, nixed later. So I just think we do it. We just need to be careful of how we're naming naming the rooms and after whom.

Bridge Littleton: Totally agree. You know, and if it if there ever is going to be a person, clearly we'll vet it extensively. But I mean, the county names their conference rooms after towns. So the Middleburg room is,

Danny Davis: Well, it's about the smallest room in the government center.

Bridge Littleton: Perfect. That's not the Hillsborough room.

Danny Davis: Oh, that one, too. They're side by side. [laughter]

Bridge Littleton: Well, OK. Any thoughts? [off mic] What's that?

Chris Bernard: I like the one eight hundred flowers dot com entry hall like your sponsorship revenue.

Bridge Littleton: Maybe it could be like UVA. I mean, there's nothing worse than UVA football stadium. You know, it's right. Lane field at Scott Stadium at Marshall Park, you know?

Chris Bernard: Yeah, players.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, yeah. I mean, Danny, from your guys, from your government experience, you know how those things typically work.

Danny Davis: Well, there's there's how it works. And if you want my opinion, yeah, I I would probably suggest a caution against naming the building itself. I think everyone's going to call it the town hall. Right. And I think it's easier that way. It feels more personal. And anytime you go to a town, you look or you don't look, I look because I'm a geek, but I look for the town hall, right? You look for that place, which is the the center of of kind of the town. So I think the building itself, I would suggest you consider not naming room wise. I really do think it's it's kind of it could be a variety of things. It could be the the horse conference room and the Fox conference room. It could be the name after a very significant person or historical event in town. [off mic] Yeah, exactly. And you know, for us and ease of use is, you know, a name that can easily be explained, stated, you know, it's not a whole mouthful, you know, like you said, the stadium at UVA. So the Powell room, hey, let's let's hop over to the Powell room. Let's hop over to the whoever it might be room. I think obviously Cindy's point, you know, very much appropriate that we want to make sure that it's as non-controversial as possible and very much reflects the history. And we did provide the county's naming process for as typically related to parks. So they don't often name rooms, at least that I've seen recently out of after people. But you know, we're we're small town. We can choose what we feel, what what feels right to you for this

Bridge Littleton: And we can have a combination. Sure doesn't have to be all places or people. It can be both.

Danny Davis: Right. So in, you know, just as a reminder, we have the training room and the police department. So that's basically, you know, one place there, we have the small conference room and the admin suite. We have the council chambers and we have the executive conference conference room. So I mean, it's pretty much if you limited just to a public meeting kind of space for, you know, that you're really looking at. And I don't think we have an intention that we could, you know, we will have the pocket park out front where this sits. So the bill to newer former town hall pocket park and maybe that would be helpful. I would tell you from a you know, again, people might say, Hey, let's go to the town hall, but we are going to have two green spaces on either side of the town hall. One's the village green and one's a town green. And so it may not be the worst idea to have at least a way to designate that this is the such and such park. And that is the and maybe that one doesn't get named because it's owned by Salamander still. Or maybe they want to weigh in on that or yeah, simply the village green.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Well, I think the concept is very good to think about. I think it's something we shouldn't decide on tonight. I know we're not supposed to, but you know, for example, you talk about the police department. And of course, first thing that comes to mind is the the policeman who was was killed [inaudible] and it would be potentially a lovely.

Danny Davis: Absolutely. I agree.

Bud Jacobs: That's an interesting story.

Chris Bernard: You just got to find a name that fits them all.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: I think we're in a huge rush, which is great because we could put a lot of thought into this.

Bridge Littleton: But I think your point is right. I mean, when, when when I was working at it, I mean, we had a seven storey building. There was four conferences on every floor. Yeah. You know, so and you know.

Danny Davis: 1a 1b.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. Well, it was interesting. What they did was they won half of the building was blue and the other half of the building was green. So it would be like green side number two, right? So but you knew exactly where it was, right? Even the third floor green two, you know, like, I know exactly where it is. So, you know, having the Powell room, where the Hamilton Room or the Dulles room, you know exactly where to go meet, you know?

Danny Davis: Ok, well, yeah, if you'd like, we'll we'll. I mean, I think the criteria listed out is pretty straightforward. You know, we could kind of base off of the county, but I don't even know how formal you need to get. I think the question is the next step of the process. Do you want council members to provide some ideas to us and we bring that to a meeting in a couple of weeks? Or I mean, maybe a month or two.

Chris Bernard: Let's talk about it at our strategic yeah,

J. Kevin Daly: Retreat.

Chris Bernard: Everyone bring your best ideas to that. Yeah. But that's why we ask.

Bud Jacobs: Hey, we're there all day.

Bridge Littleton: So we've got two regular conference rooms. We've got a training room

Danny Davis: Police training room.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, police training room. Then we've got the.

Danny Davis: Council chambers.

Bridge Littleton: Council chambers and then we've got a big park and a little park. So, you know, give Danny and everybody a spreadsheet or Rhonda with all that listed out and send your input back. And I mean, you may come out that all of a sudden everything, you know, a lot of people have the same ideas for something. So and then we can look through it at the retreat.

Bud Jacobs: Well, how about community input?

Bridge Littleton: You know, it's not a bad idea.

Danny Davis: I was going to ask. Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: So let's all do that and let's tell the community that these are going to be the different things we're planning on naming any thoughts or ideas.

Danny Davis: Do you want us to consider doing a? I hate to say it, a survey.

Bridge Littleton: No, no, no. I think just put it on Facebook and put it in the next water bill.

Danny Davis: Can we avoid Facebook?

Bridge Littleton: Whoa, whoa, oh oh, oh, oh yeah.

Cindy Pearson: We'll, open a can of worms [multiple speakers]

Bridge Littleton: I got you. I got you.

Cindy Pearson: No.

Danny Davis: Yeah. Well, no.

Bridge Littleton: [inaudible] We put a site, put a thing on our website.

Danny Davis: Yeah, sure.

Bridge Littleton: You know, input. Here's how you do it.

Bud Jacobs: Well, we have a lot. We have a lot of time. You can put it in a couple of water bills. Yeah, coming down the road and leave the website open. Yeah.

Bridge Littleton: Perfect. Oh God. [laughter] Put something in there.

Rhonda North: So you want to ask. Ask them if they have ideas for names.

Bridge Littleton: Yes.

Rhonda North: Ok.

Bud Jacobs: Well I was thinking Sam Semper.

Bridge Littleton: [multiple speakers] Sam, Sam. [multiple speakers] All right. Was there anything else that we were doing?

Rhonda North: Closed session?

Danny Davis: I don't know if we need to go in closed session for anything unless you feel, you know,

Bridge Littleton: I think we're good [inaudible] and I like it. Ok. Any other? Yes, sir.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: No. No, no. Well, it sort of is. I've just got a quick question if you don't mind me asking it. [multiple speakers] Any any developments on the EV charging contract?

Danny Davis: I appreciate you asking, you know, it actually hit me earlier today that I was supposed to hear comments two weeks ago and did not, so I'll will follow up with them tomorrow. Yep.

Bridge Littleton: Ok. Any other information items? Nope. All right, I think we're good. Cindy, anything on your end? All right, meeting adjourned.