



**MIDDLEBURG TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR WORK SESSION
MINUTES**



Thursday, March 22, 2018

PRESENT: Mayor Betsy A. Davis
Vice Mayor Darlene Kirk
Councilmember J. Kevin Daly
Councilmember Kevin Hazard
Councilmember Peter Leonard-Morgan
Councilmember Trowbridge "Bridge" Littleton
Councilmember Mark T. Snyder

STAFF: Martha Mason Semmes, Town Administrator
Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk
Ashley M. Bott, Town Treasurer
A.J. Panebianco, Chief of Police

ABSENT: Councilmember Philip Miller

The Town Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia held their regular monthly work session on Thursday, March 22, 2018 in the Town Hall Council Chambers, located at 10 W. Marshall Street. Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Presentation – Visit Loudoun

Beth Erickson, President of Visit Loudoun, distributed handouts to the Council and displayed some recent media "wins". She advised that she was looking at what Visit Loudoun was doing to define performance measures and how it would move forward with the Town. Ms. Erickson reviewed some key bullet points, the first of which was to continue to see year-over-year growth in the transient occupancy tax (lodging tax) revenues from the Salamander Resort. She reported that Visit Loudoun contributed through direct sales, marketing and promotion and advised that the Town of Middleburg alone received 63 million impressions. Ms. Erickson noted that she had a list of the hits, which included the Napa Valley Register, Lonely Planet, Wine Enthusiasts and Black Book. She reported that they were currently working to bring a Fox 5 Zip Trip to Middleburg this summer. Ms. Erickson advised that they secured a "win" on National Absence Day in Money, Inc. and that Smart Meetings talked about Middleburg as a meeting destination. She further advised that the Middleburg Spring Races were talked about in I Fly Magazine as one of the key things to do in Loudoun County. Ms. Erickson reported that on any given day, they engaged 90,000 followers across their social media platforms. She advised that Visit Loudoun provided information on events, attractions, where to stay/eat and itineraries in Middleburg.

Ms. Erickson reported that they had the great fortune this year to work with a lot of international partners to bring international media and tour groups to Middleburg. She advised that they brought them to the Boxwood Winery, Salamander Resort, the National Sporting Library, Market Salamander and King Street Oyster Bar. Ms. Erickson noted that one group even came back for a second trip.

Ms. Erickson reminded Council that during their last discussion, they talked about itineraries. She noted that the members asked what they looked like and how they were handled. Ms. Erickson explained that they were used to pitch story ideas and if people were asking questions about where to go. She advised that they were on their website and blogs and opined that they were an active voice when pushed through social media. Ms. Erickson noted that they linked Middleburg to Loudoun County in order to drive traffic to both. She advised that they have developed multiple itineraries for the group market, the first of which was based on the 70th anniversary of the Marshall Plan. Ms. Erickson noted that the group was in Middleburg on the first day to shop and dine. She advised that the plan was translated to German to take on a German trade mission and noted that it was favorably received. Ms. Erickson reported that they would run a series on small towns in Loudoun County, which linked everything from the Leesburg Flower & Garden Show to the Middleburg Christmas Parade to the Purcellville Food & Wine Festival. She advised that when people came to Loudoun County, they wanted them to stay longer and explore all that Loudoun had to offer. Ms. Erickson noted that guests were sent to the National Sporting Library and the Salamander Resort.

Ms. Erickson reported that Visit Loudoun partnered with the Virginia Tourism Corporation, which was the most iconic travel brand, with a specific feature on Middleburg. She reminded Council of the incredible amount of traffic that Virginia.org received from all over the country, especially from people looking for things to do in the fall. Ms. Erickson reported that new for this year were day trip itineraries as Visit Loudoun recognized that they may not be able to capture people who wanted to stay overnight. She advised that they worked to develop three new day trip itineraries, including one based on polo, one on the arts and one on the Civil War, all of which featured Middleburg. Ms. Erickson opined that they have been very successful.

Ms. Erickson noted that Visit Loudoun took media trips, including going to New York recently, during which they promoted Middleburg. She advised that they were working closely with their colleagues from Prince William County, Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria to market and promote the Northern Virginia region as the cultural region of Virginia. Ms. Erickson reported that this region was the third largest in tourism revenue generation and advised that the Northern Virginia region drove more than 48% of tourism revenue for Virginia. She advised that it was a leader in the market and reiterated that the localities were working together collaboratively.

Ms. Erickson displayed an example of what Visit Loudoun took to international shows and noted that a piece on Middleburg was included in each. She reminded Council that the last time they spoke, they talked about what Visit Loudoun was doing with Middleburg. Ms. Erickson reported that they have held a social media forum that was promoted through the Town, as well as offering industry communication, in which a number of businesses participated. She reported that they would offer a Social Media Basics 101 in Middleburg and noted that they were looking for possible dates. Ms. Erickson advised that they held a Wedding Forum and reminded Council of the Weddings in Loudoun Tour, which included local businesses.

Ms. Erickson reported that Middleburg had a representative on Visit Loudoun's Board and advised that Business & Economic Development Director Jamie Gaucher was a great addition. She noted that Reggie Cooper, of the Salamander Resort; Emily Miller, of the Goodstone Inn; and, Trevin Houck, formerly of Empowered Adventures also served. Ms. Erickson advised that Melanie Mathewes, of the National Sporting Library and Museum, was coming on board for a three year term starting July 1st.

Ms. Erickson noted the importance of looking at not only what they were doing in Middleburg, but what Visit Loudoun was doing for tourism overall for Loudoun County and opined that they were a huge economic driver. She advised Council that the Mayor had a copy of the Politico newspaper and reported that she met with a congressional representative about the power of

tourism and the importance of it in job creation. Ms. Erickson reiterated that Loudoun County was third in visitor spending, which put it above Virginia Beach and Williamsburg and only below Arlington and Fairfax. She advised that last year, the County welcomed nearly 5 million visitors who spent \$1.7 billion; supported 17,225 jobs, which in turn generated \$663 million in wages; which generated \$45.7 million in state and local taxes or \$689.69 in tax relief per Loudoun County household.

Ms. Erickson advised that she, Business & Economic Development Director Gaucher and Town Administrator Semmes were looking at streamlining the information for their performance measures. She further advised that they have had discussions on an MOA, which was reduced down to two pages. Ms. Erickson reiterated that they were looking at performance measures and core tourism services that Visit Loudoun provided to the Town of Middleburg. She reported that they would come to the Council twice a year – once during the budget season and at the end/beginning of the fiscal year - to talk about how things were going. Ms. Erickson advised that in August, they would provide an end report on confirmed bookings and in February would update the Council on performance measures and discuss the next year’s MOA. She noted that they would continue to provide Middleburg with hotel weekly occupancy data and the monthly travel pulse dashboard report, which may be of use to the Council. Ms. Erickson advised that they participated in Bizz Buzz and suggested they could attend the EDAC meetings to talk about trends. She reported that they would put two training sessions on their calendar that would be held in Middleburg and advised that the Business & Economic Development Director would send out an email to the business community asking that they help identify the items on which they needed training. Ms. Erickson noted that if the items were not in their wheelhouse, they would look to bring someone in to offer the training. She advised that one of the things the Business & Economic Development Director asked about was specific database use, which was not in their wheelhouse. She reported that they would partner with someone to bring that training to Middleburg.

Ms. Erickson advised that Visit Loudoun would act as a referral agency. She noted that they would continue to talk about tourism development regularly, including what was missing, in Middleburg. Ms. Erickson reported that they would schedule quarterly meetings to go through things. She advised that Visit Loudoun would continue to work on any type of additional photography and industry standard items. Ms. Erickson noted that the Business & Economic Development Director had what was applicable.

Ms. Erickson reported that Visit Loudoun would be in the third year of its strategic plan and advised that the next year would be about that plan. She requested the Town designate members to participate in their kick-off next year.

Ms. Erickson noted that they participated in marketing and promotion and in economic development functions as requested. She reported that they have put major Middleburg events on their calendar. Ms. Erickson noted that they would hold discussions on what Visit Loudoun could do and would continue to do.

Councilmember Littleton reminded Ms. Erickson that she and the Council had discussions last year when they talked about an MOA. He further reminded her that the Council said “it was important to tie funding for this year to specific performance measures”, which they talked at length. Mr. Littleton questioned whether the taxes the town citizens paid to Loudoun County were a part of what the County provided to Visit Loudoun. Ms. Erickson advised that they were not and explained that Visit Loudoun’s funding came from the transient occupancy taxes only.

Councilmember Littleton noted that they received a direct \$35,000 contribution from the Town. He reminded Ms. Erickson that when they talked about this last year, concern was raised about the real pressing needs. Mr. Littleton opined that Visit Loudoun was great at representing big businesses; however, he suggested the little stores needed help and guidance. He acknowledged that there was not a signed MOA; however, he questioned whether Visit Loudoun had achieved the intent of what the Council wanted when it had their discussions.

Ms. Erickson reported that she would leave that to the Business & Economic Development Director to answer. She noted that they were six months into the fiscal year and opined that they would hit all of the key metrics. Ms. Erickson reminded Council that one of the things they talked about was holding training here and opined that they would achieve that easily.

Mayor Davis noted that when Visit Loudoun promoted day and overnight trips, they brought groups to the larger facilities. She opined that they were also good about promoting the town as a whole. Ms. Davis noted that when people came to Middleburg, they experienced wonderful shopping and dining, which was important. She suggested the need for more coordination so the small businesses would know ahead of time that people were coming in the event they wanted to have something to tie into the welcome tour. Ms. Davis noted that it was up to the individual business to get people into their doors; however, the businesses needed a heads up that the welcome program was occurring. She suggested that if the individual businesses chose not to do something to bring the visitors into their doors that would be on them; however, she reiterated the need to give them the opportunity to do something.

Ms. Erickson advised that she would meet with Reggie Cooper and suggested the way to do that was to look at the groups that were coming into Middleburg. She noted that they sold Middleburg as a destination eighteen months to a year in advance. Ms. Erickson suggested that during the quarterly meetings, they could compare information. She advised that the reason for looking at the itineraries for Middleburg was because it not always the big guys. Ms. Erickson noted that there was always room for growth and opined that this was easily achievable. She advised that she liked this idea and agreed they could look at what groups were coming in on a quarterly basis and share that information during the Bizz Buzz. Ms. Erickson suggested this would be a way to make tourism visible. She reminded Council that a visitor may not look like a tourist. Ms. Erickson agreed with the need to be better at putting a face on them.

Councilmember Littleton opined that there was no problem with the active engagement between Visit Loudoun and Salamander and suggested they probably talked weekly. He noted that tax dollars from local businesses were used to fund Visit Loudoun; therefore, they needed a piece of their efforts too. Mr. Littleton opined that the small businesses deserved some kind of outreach, regardless of whether Visit Loudoun did so quarterly or created a distribution list to notify owners three to four weeks in advance of something. He opined that if the business owners knew what they were promoting, they could reach out to Visit Loudoun to become a part of it. Mr. Littleton further opined that this would be helpful and suggested Visit Loudoun could do it. He questioned whether they had an email list of Middleburg businesses.

Ms. Erickson reported that they did this in partnership with the Bizz Buzz and the Business & Economic Development Director. She advised that she communicated those things through Mr. Gaucher and the Town Administrator.

Councilmember Snyder questioned whether Visit Loudoun included the equestrian events in Middleburg and Upperville in their marketing.

Ms. Erickson confirmed they did. She reiterated that the Spring Races were featured in the I Fly Magazine. Ms. Erickson reported that the horse country was a big part of their brand, which they promoted heavily. She confirmed it was on their calendar. Ms. Erickson advised that they worked closely with the Side Saddle to promote their activities.

Councilmember Snyder advised that this was important to the Town and to the open space.

Vice Mayor Kirk suggested the need to reach out to Reggie Cooper to see if Salamander gave anything to their guests about businesses in town. She noted that she always recommended they come into town. Ms. Kirk opined that at one point, the employees had a list of the businesses.

Councilmember Snyder noted that he met a couple last weekend that were staying at Salamander. He advised that they had eaten breakfast there the first day and were looking for ideas for other restaurants. Mr. Snyder noted that they settled on the Upper Crust. He advised that their complaint was that Salamander had food; however, they did not want to eat there all the time. Mr. Snyder noted that they were also worried about the expense. He questioned whether Salamander told people what was available in the town. Vice Mayor Kirk opined that it depended on who they asked. Ms. Erickson confirmed they had a concierge on staff that should be able to direct people and answer questions.

Vice Mayor Kirk advised that the concierge took pamphlets to the Pink Box so they could distribute them. She further advised that the telephone operators did so as well. Ms. Kirk reported that at one point, they had a brochure with a list of stores, including what they sold, so they could help guests if they were looking for a specific item.

Mayor Davis questioned whether they had copies of the Town's Shopping and Dining Guide. Town Clerk North confirmed that Salamander picked up huge quantities of the brochure.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted the HEAL Expo/5K and questioned whether it was listed on Visit Loudoun's Instagram and Facebook page. Ms. Erickson confirmed it was on their locals' calendar and that a social media hit went out on it. She advised that she liked having information like that and opined that it was uniquely Middleburg to have a horn start the race. Ms. Erickson reported that they were happy to help promote events; however, she noted the need to get the information on them.

Ms. Erickson passed around a magazine that looked at Loudoun County as a unique meeting destination. She opined that what made Middleburg/Loudoun County stand apart from the others was that it could host 150-200 person meetings.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted the need to keep tagging #LoveLoudoun. Ms. Ericson confirmed this allowed people to find things quickly and easily.

Councilmember Daly noted that when he received the Noble Peace Prize, General Marshall refused to accept it under the name "the Marshall Plan" and instead referred to it as "the European Economic Recovery Act". Ms. Erickson advised that she would be delighted if the majority of Americans could recognize the Marshall Plan. She opined that the anniversary was quite moving.

Discussion – FY '19 General Fund & Utility Fund Budgets

Mayor Davis asked whether the members had any questions and noted that this was the third round of discussions for the General Fund Budget and the second for the Utility Fund Budget.

Councilmember Snyder noted that he could not question the increase for the website as he thought it needed a lot of work. He advised that he was disappointed to find out that after he received an automated phone alert about the Town Office closing and the trash collection change, it was not on the website. Mr. Snyder opined that it would have been nice if the Town could get a real website that it could use to communicate.

Town Administrator Semmes noted that some websites had a red bar when there was an emergency alert. Councilmember Snyder opined that there were all kinds of good ideas that could be incorporated into the Town's website.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan advised that the issue for him was the cost. He noted that he had created websites and advised that he did not understand spending \$50,000 for it. He acknowledged the trials that the Town had with the existing one. Mr. Leonard-Morgan questioned how \$50,000 was reached as the budget number. He opined that \$20,000-25,000 was a big number.

Town Administrator Semmes reminded Council that this was raised by Councilmember Miller during the last meeting. She opined that it was the maximum amount that would be spent.

Mayor Davis noted that she read an explanation for the increased funding, which was that it was to make the website more interactive.

Councilmember Littleton opined that the numbers on the explanation sheet and the budget sheet were different. Town Administrator Semmes explained that the explanation sheet was based on what the Business & Economic Development Director proposed and the budget sheet was based on what was now being proposed. She noted that the explanation did mention that this would include both the development of the new website and the license associated with an informatics tool for existing Middleburg based businesses. Ms. Semmes opined that it would include some sort of interactive tool.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan questioned whether there was a group working on this or whether it was just one person.

Town Administrator Semmes advised Council that the Business & Economic Development Director was working to get the branding study done first. She further advised that it would be next year when the Town would solicit bids for the website.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan suggested the need for a sheet identifying what the Town needed and would like to have. He further suggested the need for everyone to provide input.

Councilmember Littleton suggested that when the project was implemented, it needed to include a requirements definition, including what the Town must have, what it should have and what it would like to have. He further suggested the staff, businesses and Council needed to provide a list. Mr. Littleton recommended this be run like a project, including creating a scope of work. He agreed with Councilmember Leonard-Morgan that he was uncomfortable with a \$50,000 budget when the Town had not identified what the website would do. Mr. Littleton questioned whether it would be a directory. He further questioned what was meant by info graphics.

Councilmember Snyder opined that the Town could spend an infinite amount of money on software if no requirements were identified.

Vice Mayor Kirk advised that she wanted the website to be workable, usable and up to date. She opined that it would be nice to have had the Town Office closing on the website.

Councilmember Littleton suggested the same thing needed to be done as was done for the electronic agendas. He noted that he had never developed a website. Mr. Littleton suggested the need to ask someone to help. He opined that it did not need to be a committee; however, he reiterated the need to identify the Town's requirements and to do an analysis.

Town Administrator Semmes advised that she was not sure the Town needed to start from scratch and reminded Council that work was done for the last website RFP, including the identification of requirements. She noted the need to make sure the Town uncovered all of the possibilities, particularly since it had a new Business & Economic Development Director who had new ideas.

Mayor Davis noted that when it was done before, it was handled by EDAC. She advised that if she remembered correctly, when it was discussed, \$50,000 was identified as the high end.

Councilmember Snyder noted the need to agree on what the website needed to do. He suggested it be useful to visitors, businesses and residents who were trying to look up town information.

Mayor Davis inquired as to what was in the previous RFP. Town Administrator Semmes suggested the need to dust off what was done before. She further suggested this did not have to wait until the branding was complete.

Vice Mayor Kirk suggested that Councilmembers Snyder and Leonard-Morgan work with the Business & Economic Development Director to look at the previous RFP, including the requirements.

Councilmember Hazard suggested that Councilmember Miller also be involved. Town Administrator Semmes noted that he had done website development. Councilmember Leonard-Morgan opined that it was important to have the branding involved.

Vice Mayor Kirk reiterated that it would be nice to have a list of requirements of what the Town wanted.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted that the Council may find it did cost that much if residents wanted to pay their bills through the website.

Town Administrator Semmes advised that the \$50,000 could be left in the budget, with the thought that it would be on the high end. She further advised that the Council could cut it now and do a budget amendment later if it was determined that more was needed.

Councilmember Hazard expressed concern that if a vendor was bidding and saw \$50,000 in the budget for this project, the bid would be \$50,000 regardless of the requirements. He suggest it be reduced to \$30,000 and adjusted mid-term if needed.

Town Administrator Semmes noted that there could be some tools that could be under another category.

Councilmember Littleton opined that informatics may be a good tool; however, he questioned what it would involve. He questioned what it would do, how it would be used and whether it would be for the Town.

Councilmember Snyder suggested Councilmembers Leonard-Morgan, Miller and himself meet with the Business & Economic Development Director to develop a list of the requirements and nice to haves. He further suggested the list be ranked. Mr. Snyder suggested the Business & Economic Development Director do cursory research on the cost of the items. He noted that this could then be brought to the full Council for discussion. Mr. Snyder suggested the key was to get an agreement on the website's requirements. Mayor Davis agreed.

Town Administrator Semmes suggested the members of Council be advisors to the staff in order to avoid FOIA issues. Mayor Davis suggested the staff work on the logistics of how people would meet. Councilmember Snyder advised that he would meet when it was convenient for Mr. Gaucher. He noted that the times he could meet may not be convenient for the other members.

Councilmember Littleton suggested there could be pieces that each individual could focus upon. He noted the need to share information. Mr. Littleton advised that when the review committee did the electronic agendas, it kept a spread sheet of the requirements, which were ranked, that had approximately twenty items on it. He advised that once they ranked the most important ones, it came to approximately eight items.

Mayor Davis questioned whether the Council was in agreement to reduce the website budget to \$30,000 knowing it could be changed if needed. The members agreed they were.

Vice Mayor Kirk inquired as to the special election line item in the budget. Town Clerk North noted the need to look at what could happen in the upcoming election. She reminded Council that if Councilmember Littleton was elected as Mayor, two years would remain on his term on the Council. Ms. North further reminded them that they would have to make an interim appointment and petition the court to set a date for a special election in November. She advised that funding was included in the budget so the Town could be prepared for what could occur.

Vice Mayor Kirk questioned who did the Town's office cleaning. Town Administrator Semmes reported that it was all done by one company – AMS Cleaning.

Vice Mayor Kirk noted that the utility user revenues were projected to increase to \$611,000 and questioned why. Town Administrator Semmes advised that this was based on a 3% increase in water and sewer rates. She further advised that no increase was proposed in usage as the tiny amount of infill housing was not enough to change it.

Councilmember Littleton questioned whether the staff was recommending a 3% increase in the utility rates. Councilmember Snyder confirmed it was and noted that it was built into the rate model. Town Administrator Semmes reported that it was a sustainable increase that the consultants were recommending. She equated it to a COLA each year.

Councilmember Snyder reported that it was intended to cover the cost of inflation.

Town Administrator Semmes advised that it did not include construction costs, otherwise it would be even higher. She explained that this would just allow the Utility Fund to tread water without going into the red. Ms. Semmes reminded Council that the Town was also trying to get capital projects done.

Councilmember Littleton noted that there was approximately \$600,000 in capital projects. He further noted the \$300,000 loan from the General Fund to cover the Utility Fund's shortfall in capital costs. Mr. Littleton advised that a \$315,000 transfer from utility reserves would also be used to make up the difference. He noted that the Town had capital projects that must be done and advised that in order to do them, the Town must loan itself \$600,000. Town Administrator Semmes reported that the loan would be for \$300,000.

Councilmember Littleton opined that there was a total of \$600,000 in Utility Fund capital project costs that the utility fees were not covering. Town Administrator Semmes confirmed this was correct.

Councilmember Snyder reminded Council that this was the first time the Town had the reserves to do so.

Councilmember Littleton expressed an understanding. He reiterated that the Town was taking \$300,000 out of its savings to help do the project. Mr. Littleton questioned whether there was a reason why the Town would not take it all from unassigned funds and leave the utility reserve in the event of a major failure. He further questioned whether this was a budgeting choice.

Town Administrator Semmes explained that it was a budget preference to try to use utility funds first for utility expenses. She reminded Council that the Utility Fund was an enterprise fund. Ms. Semmes noted that there was nothing illegal about borrowing money from the General Fund and noted that the interest rate the Town charged itself could be less than the market rate.

Councilmember Snyder reminded Council that the proposed budget included funding based on engineering estimates, not bids.

Councilmember Littleton advised that the next time the Council got into the weeds of the Utility Fund, he would like to understand it. He noted that the Town had unassigned funds. Mr. Littleton advised that he liked that it had a Utility Fund reserve as the treatment plant could have a major issue that needed to be addressed.

Councilmember Snyder explained that when utility assets wore out, the Town should have at least most of the money in reserve to replace them. He further explained that it was trying to build up a replacement reserve so there would not be a big emergency.

Town Treasurer Bott noted that this was part of the discussion on the reserve policy. She agreed it would be nice to have the extra money in the reserves in the event there was another economic downturn and the Town needed that money.

Councilmember Littleton advised that he was not saying what was proposed was wrong. He noted that there were choices. Councilmember Snyder opined that this was a good discussion item.

Councilmember Hazard noted that the Other Contract Services & Engineering line item on Page 23 included the same amount as in FY '18; however, it did not look like the Town would use that much this year. He questioned whether it was possible to reduce it. Mr. Hazard further questioned whether the staff was anticipating something that had not yet occurred.

Town Administrator Semmes noted that this was the funding that was used for the Town's utility engineer. She confirmed there was a need to use some of those funds this coming fiscal year to support the Comprehensive Plan on the utility side. Ms. Semmes advised that there would be upcoming costs that were not yet shown in the year-to-date figures.

Councilmember Snyder advised that he would like to do a water engineering study so it could be available for the Planning Commission, as well as to support other Town projects, such as water main replacements. He reminded Council that engineering was necessary. Mr. Snyder advised that he was comfortable the proposed figure provided a cushion. He reminded Council that engineering estimates and bid costs could vary – sometimes by a lot.

Councilmember Hazard noted that this line item would be used strictly for engineering costs.

Town Administrator Semmes reported that the Town's utility engineer was preparing an estimate for the services necessary to support the Comprehensive Plan. She advised that she would have a better idea of the cost when it came in.

Councilmember Hazard noted the line item for equipment/supplies on Page 24. He advised that the adopted budget was for \$50,000; however, only \$16,000 had been spent as of this time. He further noted that the line item was proposed to increase by 50%. Mr. Hazard questioned whether something big was coming up.

Town Administrator Semmes reported that one item was \$15,000 for a water tank altitude value the Town planned to purchase. Councilmember Snyder noted that there were different elevations for the water tanks. He advised Council that one could overflow as it did not know that it was already full, meaning it would continue to pump water that then poured out of the tank. Mr. Snyder explained that there would be a valve on both water tanks. Town Administrator Semmes advised Council that she would get them additional details on those costs if desired.

Councilmember Hazard noted the total utility costs at the end of FY '17 and advised that what was proposed was double what it was two years ago.

Town Administrator Semmes explained that a lot of it was for capital improvements. She reminded Council that the Town had not been able to do those for a long time and recommended it do them while it could.

Councilmember Littleton recommended the scale be changed on the revenue graph so it did not look as out of proportion.

Town Treasurer Bott reminded Council of the business personal property tax and recommended letters be sent to the businesses explaining its reinstatement. The Council agreed with this recommendation.

Town Administrator Semmes noted that while the Council did not have to do so during this meeting, they needed to make a decision regarding health insurance for members of the Council. She advised that the staff provided additional information in response to questions that arose during the last meeting. Ms. Semmes reminded Council that the current policy was approved twice – once in 2013 and once in 2014. She advised that it was ongoing before that. Ms. Semmes noted that the policy changed because the insurance company said the Council must be treated as part-time employees and that people who were eligible for Medicare could no longer be on the Town's insurance plan.

Mayor Davis advised that she read the minutes from those meetings. She noted that councilmembers were considered to be part-time employees in order to be on the Town's health insurance. Town Administrator Semmes confirmed that in order to get health insurance benefits, the members of Council were considered to be part-time employees.

Mayor Davis reminded Council of the changes in taxes last year because the members were considered to be part-time employees.

Town Treasurer Bott advised that what was withheld was usually FICA and Social Security. She noted that the amount withheld was dependent on what the member put on his/her W-4 form. Ms. Bott noted that the members could also put in a flat amount.

Mayor Davis questioned whether the Council wanted to talk about health insurance at another time.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan questioned whether the Town must legally offer health insurance to the members. Councilmember Littleton explained that it meant the members were eligible to participate.

Councilmember Snyder noted that the members of Council were part-time employees for tax purposes. He further noted that the Town's insurer would consider a taxable part-time employee as eligible for health insurance under their rules. Mr. Snyder advised that the members were not employees, but rather were elected public officials. He noted that when he went through a security clearance for his job, the person who interviewed him had a hard time understanding that a councilmember did not have a boss and could only be fired by the voters.

Mayor Davis reminded Council that the Town must pay a percentage of part-time employees' health insurance premiums. Town Administrator Semmes confirmed it must pay 50% if the members were covered.

Councilmember Daly noted that it was at the discretion of the member of Council as to whether they wanted the insurance.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan suggested the Council could decide that councilmembers would not be eligible for it. Town Administrator Semmes confirmed this was correct and noted that in the past, they decided they would be eligible, which was the reason it was in the budget.

Vice Mayor Kirk questioned whether it cost the Town \$4,700/year/person. Town Administrator Semmes confirmed it did.

Councilmember Snyder opined that this was excessive and bad policy.

Mayor Davis questioned whether the Town must pay half. Town Administrator Semmes confirmed it did. Vice Mayor Kirk noted that the member could not reimburse the Town and advised that they used to be able to do so.

Councilmember Littleton questioned whether the members could be given the option to accept pay or insurance. He suggested the member could forgo their pay or give it back.

Town Administrator Semmes confirmed that past members had given their pay back to the Town; however, they could not be required to do so.

Councilmember Snyder suggested this be tabled and brought back up for discussion.

Mayor Davis asked whether the Council could strongly recommend the member give back his/her pay. She acknowledged that it could not require them to do so.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan advised that he needed to think about this more.

Town Treasurer Bott asked the members to let her know if they had any questions in advance of the next meeting so she could find out the answers if she did not know them.

Mayor Davis acknowledged that the Town must pay half of the premium. She suggested the Council could morally suggest the member forgo his/her monthly stipend.

Town Administrator Semmes noted that the Town must give the member their monthly stipend. She advised that the Council could not require that the member pay it back.

Councilmember Littleton questioned whether that was correct and noted that there were people in congress that forgo their pay. Town Administrator Semmes advised that the staff would research this. She reiterated that it could not be required.

Town Clerk North reminded Council that in the past, some members endorsed their check and returned it to the Town in the form of a donation.

Vice Mayor Kirk questioned whether the money would be placed in the health insurance line item if the member donated it back to the Council. Town Clerk North advised that it would be listed under donations. She reminded Council that this was under the General Fund and the expenses were under the General Fund; therefore, the revenue and expense would be from the same pot of money.

Mayor Davis suggested the staff find out whether a member could forgo their pay. She further suggested this be discussed at the next meeting or the work session.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan asked that the information be emailed to the Council prior to the next meeting.

Town Administrator Semmes noted that the Town received its VMLIP insurance renewal costs and reported that they were a little higher, but not much. She advised that the new costs would be included in the next round of the budget.

Town Administrator Semmes reminded Council of the need to discuss the budget schedule. Vice Mayor Kirk advised that she did not want to wait until the last meeting in June to adopt the budget. She recommended it be the middle of the month at the latest.

Councilmember Snyder agreed and noted that that was more in keeping with the way the Council traditionally did it.

Councilmember Hazard questioned whether the budget would be based on the equalized tax rate. Town Administrator Semmes confirmed the Council decided to go with the equalized tax rate during its last meeting. She noted that Loudoun County proposed a rate that was a half cent below its equalized rate, which would put it at \$1.85 – the lowest since 2008. Ms. Semmes advised that this would help Middleburg's taxpayers.

Councilmember Snyder advised that he was in support of what Vice Mayor Kirk said earlier and noted that he would like to have any public hearings as early as possible. He asked that they be held during the May 10th meeting.

Town Administrator Semmes advised that if the Council was happy with the proposed utility rates, the staff could advertise the public hearing for sooner. She noted that the Town did not need to hold a public hearing on the real estate tax rate since it was going with the equalized rate. Ms. Semmes explained that because there was an extra Thursday in March, the Council would need to make a decision during this meeting if they wanted to hold the public hearing in April.

Councilmember Snyder asked whether the members were okay advertising the proposed budget with the utility rate increase.

Councilmember Littleton advised that he would like to see the rate model. He questioned the usage per gallon by rate element, whether everyone would have a rate increase or whether it would be based on usage. Councilmember Snyder confirmed it was a flat rate increase.

Councilmember Littleton reiterated that he would prefer to see what the actual detailed buildup was, as opposed to a single number. He suggested he be sent the rate model.

Councilmember Snyder noted that he sent the members of a copy of the rate model. He offered to sit down and go through it with them so they could see what the 3% did for the budget.

Councilmember Littleton explained that he wanted to see what the 3% increase did based on usage. He questioned the impact to the user. Councilmember Snyder advised that he would send the rate model to the Council. Town Administrator Semmes suggested the staff identify the cost based on average bills and noted that it was available in the rate model.

Vice Mayor Kirk questioned whether the Council wanted to make a decision on advertising the rates during this meeting.

Councilmember Littleton suggested the staff get the information to the Council by the close of business on March 23rd so they could review it over the weekend. He further suggested that if any member had questions, this be placed on the next meeting agenda. Mr. Littleton further suggested that if the staff did not hear from anyone by noon on March 26th, they advertise the 3% rate increase.

Councilmember Snyder reiterated that it was a flat rate model. He advised that if an individual's bill was \$100, it would be \$103.

Councilmember Littleton noted that he knew what his average bill was; however, he did not look at the number of gallons used.

Mayor Davis inquired as to the average bill. Town Treasurer Bott reported that it was 7,500 gallons or \$200 every two months. Town Administrator Semmes advised Council that she would get the information to them as requested.

Mayor Davis asked that it be sent via email tomorrow. She suggested that if the staff had not heard anything from Council by March 26th that they advertise the public hearing.

Councilmember Daly noted that he would be out of town. He advised that he did not have an issue with the 3% increase.

Town Administrator Semmes reiterated that she would send the information to Council. She asked that the members acknowledge that they received it.

Council Approval – Purchase of Microsoft Surface Pros

Town Clerk North advised Council that Councilmember Littleton and the staff have been checking different locations for the price of a Surface Pro. She reported that what they were finding was that some places offered them cheaper due to sales; however, they limited the number of units that could be purchased at that price. Ms. North advised that the staff was recommending that rather than making the motion to purchase them from Microsoft, the Council authorize the staff to purchase the Surface Pros at a price not to exceed \$18,061, with the staff then finding the best deal possible. She noted that this may involve purchasing them through multiple vendors.

Mayor Davis noted that the purchase also included items like the warranty, pens and travel cases. She questioned why travel cases would be purchased. Town Clerk North explained that it was for members of the staff, who would travel with them. She noted that Chief Panebianco recommended a heavy duty travel case in the event they were dropped. Ms. North reminded Council that the devices they would use would remain in the Council Chambers.

Councilmember Snyder questioned how the Council was going to get its agenda packet if the devices were kept in the Town Office. Councilmember Littleton explained that this was a web-based system. He advised that the members could log into it using a computer or other device from anywhere in the world. Mr. Littleton noted that the members would have a user name and a password; therefore, access was not about the device.

Mayor Davis noted that she had an issue with that. She advised that when the Council discussed this several years ago, the point was that all of the Council's work – whether they were emails or other work – would be done on a Town device.

Town Clerk North reminded Council that if the Council wished to handle it that way, the Town would have to purchase more than fifteen devices as it was proposed that the Planning Commission and HDRC would use the same devices as the Council.

Councilmember Littleton noted that this would involve the purchase of ten additional devices that would remain permanently at the dais for the other committees to review their agendas.

Mayor Davis reiterated that the Council previously discussed that a clean way to keep the Town's records, in the event a member was ever the subject of a FOIA request, would be to have a device that they used for Town work only.

Councilmember Littleton confirmed that could be done. He reminded Council that the goal was to eliminate paper from the committee meetings. Mr. Littleton noted that if the Councilmembers took the devices with them, the Planning Commission would have to continue to use paper agendas.

Vice Mayor Kirk suggested this would require the purchase of eight additional devices. Councilmember Littleton confirmed it would. He noted that it would require a device that remained at the dais permanently and one that went home with the members of Council.

Town Administrator Semmes reminded Council that when this was first discussed, the system was not web-based. She noted that the Town's email system was now web-based and the electronic agenda system would be web-based, which changed the need to have everything on one machine. Ms. Semmes reiterated that everything would be housed on the cloud as opposed to being on a machine.

Town Clerk North advised Council that even the notes they would make on the agenda items would be done through iLegislate, which was a web-based system. She further advised that those comments would be saved on the cloud; therefore, it would not matter which device the members used. Ms. North noted that the records would all be available on the cloud in the event the Town received a FOIA request. She advised that the same was true of the members' emails, as long as they used their Town email accounts. Ms. North explained that it was not about the device.

Councilmember Littleton confirmed the members could take the devices home and explained that it would simply mean the expenditure of \$10,000 more in order to purchase additional devices.

Mayor Davis acknowledged that things have changed since the Town would be using web-based systems. She advised that she had no issues with this as long as there was a clean way to retrieve the information. Ms. Davis questioned whether all of the members had an iPad or other device that they could use to access the agendas from outside of the Town Office.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan questioned whether it could be accessed through a laptop. Councilmember Littleton confirmed it could. He noted that it could also be accessed through a mobile device; therefore, a member could log into the system from their cell phones.

Mayor Davis noted that having individual devices was something the Council previously discussed; however, she opined that it would be more expensive.

Councilmember Hazard questioned why devices were needed if the system was on the cloud. Town Clerk North noted that not everyone may have a mobile device and advised that there needed to be a way for each member to view the agenda during the meeting.

Councilmember Hazard noted that he had three devices that he could bring. Town Clerk North opined that not everyone had a mobile device. Councilmember Littleton reminded Council that the HDRC and Planning Commission also needed to have the ability to view their agendas. He noted that the members may not all have a mobile device.

Town Clerk North reported that she put the work session agenda into the Granicus system earlier in the day as the staff was training on it. She advised that while it took her approximately the same amount of time to input it as it currently took to prepare the master agenda, she would save time by not having to copy and assemble the packets and the Police Department would save time by not having to deliver them. Ms. North opined that as she became more familiar with Granicus, she may even be able to create the agendas faster. She confirmed it was a time saver, as well as a paper saver.

Vice Mayor Kirk moved, seconded by Councilmember Daly, that the Council authorize the Town Administrator to purchase fifteen (15) Surface Pro 4GB 128GB devices, including warranties and accessories, for a price not to exceed \$18,061.

Councilmember Hazard questioned whether anyone polled the three bodies to determine whether everyone had a device. Town Clerk North reported that the staff had discussions with the Planning Commission and HDRC to let them know this was in the works. She advised that they also let them know that no one would be forced to use them if they were not comfortable doing so or did not have a computer. Ms. North reported that some members have indicated they did not have a computer and others indicated they were not comfortable using an electronic agenda.

Councilmember Hazard opined that if they were going to continue to use paper, they did not need a device.

Mayor Davis opined that the reasons for going to this system were to eliminate paper and to reduce staff time. She questioned why the Town would accommodate paper agendas. Ms. Davis further questioned whether the members could learn to use the system.

Councilmember Hazard opined that only one person did not have a portable device. He questioned why the Town should spend \$18,000 to provide devices.

Councilmember Littleton questioned what would happen if a member(s) forgot to bring their device with them to the meeting. He noted that there would no longer be paper copies of the agenda available.

Town Clerk North advised that there would only be one paper copy, which would be the one required to be available to the public.

Councilmember Hazard noted that he had multiple devices he could use. He questioned whether the other members of Council had a mobile device that they could bring.

Vice Mayor Kirk advised that she did not. Councilmember Leonard-Morgan opined that there would always be individuals who did not have one. Councilmember Daly advised that he did not want to bring his personal device. Vice Mayor Kirk opined that a volunteer should not have to bring their personal computer to the Town Office for a meeting.

Town Clerk North advised Council that the Surface Pros would be set up and fully charged in preparation for each meeting.

Councilmember Littleton opined that the Council would be setting bodies up to have horrible meetings if they did not provide devices in the Council Chambers, as people could forget their personal ones if they were running into a meeting straight from work. He reiterated that this was not just about the Council, but was also about the Planning Commission and HDRC. Mr. Littleton noted that this would require the staff to make copies of the agenda packet, which would delay the start of the meetings by twenty minutes.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan opined that the system would work because there would be a device at each station. He noted that there may be a non-technical person on each committee. Councilmember Daly concurred.

Vice Mayor Kirk cited a resident who would fall into that category. Town Clerk North noted that that individual did serve on a Town committee. She reminded Council that even though other committees' meetings, such as EDAC, would not be videotaped, the electronic agendas would be used for them as well. Ms. North reminded Council that there would be extra costs to videotape the other committee meetings; however, the Town could use the electronic agenda system for an unlimited number of committees at no extra cost.

Mayor Davis questioned whether the Council was going to require that everyone use the Surface Pro to access the agendas electronically. Councilmember Leonard-Morgan opined that if there were one or two individuals who could not use them, the Town should accommodate them. He noted that this would not occur forever.

Town Clerk North reiterated that the plan was to just give those individuals a paper copy. She reminded Council that the system would allow her to print the agendas with the push of a button.

Councilmember Littleton noted that he watched the demonstration of Granicus. He advised that the nice thing about it was that the Town Clerk would set the agenda up in the system and, once published, each of the members would receive an email notification that it was available. Mr. Littleton noted that if one individual did not own a computer, and must have a paper copy, the Town Clerk could print one copy. He advised that this would then only involve the delivery of one agenda, as opposed to having the staff spend hours copying, assembling and delivering multiple copies. Mr. Littleton agreed the Town needed to initially be accommodating of those members who were uncomfortable embracing change; however, he opined that eventually, one-by-one, they would convert over. Councilmember Daly noted that it would also be resolved through attrition.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Kirk, Daly, Hazard, Leonard-Morgan and Littleton

No – Councilmember Snyder

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmember Miller

(Mayor Davis only votes in the case of a tie)

Council Discussion – VML Policy Committee Appointments

Mayor Davis advised Council that she asked that this be placed on the agenda as she felt it was a Council decision. She questioned whether the Council wanted to nominate individuals to serve on the various VML policy committees.

Councilmember Littleton opined that it would be excellent for members to put their names forward to serve on the six policy committees. He further opined that the VML was an awesome organization and noted that they were all over the legislation that was proposed during the General Assembly sessions. Mr. Littleton noted that all of the towns and cities were connected through VML. He explained that having a representative on the front end could make all the difference in helping the VML to decide what should be its priorities.

Mayor Davis questioned how the Council wanted to approach this. She further questioned whether individuals should contact the staff if they were interested in being considered, with the Council then making the decision.

Town Clerk North reminded Council that two members could be nominated to a committee – one of whom should be a member of the governing body and one of whom could be an appointed official/member of staff. She advised that citizens could not serve on a VML policy committee.

Councilmember Hazard opined that the first member did not have to be a member of the Council but rather could be a member of the staff.

Mayor Davis noted the due date was April 18th for the nominations. She further noted the elections in May and advised that it was frustrating as there could be others who could be appointed.

Town Clerk North advised Council that she had that discussion with representatives from VML years ago when Front Royal was submitting its nominations. She reported that VML responded that the nominations must be received by the deadline; however, the names could be changed after the elections were held. Ms. North noted that the Council did not have to nominate two people to a committee or even appoint one person.

Vice Mayor Kirk suggested the Council nominate one person per Committee. The Council suggested Councilmember Miller be nominated for the Community & Economic Development Committee. Councilmember Leonard-Morgan volunteered for the Environmental Quality Committee, given his role as the Council representative for Go Green. Town Administrator Semmes agreed to handle the General Laws Committee. Councilmember Daly volunteered for the Human Development & Education Committee. Council suggested that Town Planner Moore or Chief Panebianco be nominated for the Transportation Committee and asked that they be asked about their interest in serving. The Council further suggested the Town Treasurer be nominated for the Finance Committee. Town Administrator Semmes agreed to check with the members of staff to determine their interest in serving.

Councilmember Littleton noted that he could not serve on a policy committee as he served on the Executive Board, which voted on the recommendations of the policy committees. He volunteered to check with Councilmember Miller to see if he would be interested in serving on the Economic Development Committee.

Mayor Davis questioned whether a decision needed to be made at the next meeting. Town Clerk North advised that once the Town Administrator checked with the staff on the nominations, she could complete the form, have the Town Administrator sign it and return it to VML.

Councilmember Daly noted that these were nominations only. Town Clerk North noted that the Town of Front Royal submitted nominations during her twenty year tenure and advised that everyone they nominated was appointed to a committee.

Town Council Committee Reports

Councilmember Daly reminded Council that the Police Department was open 24/7, including on the snow day. He further reminded them that the Town rented property for their offices. Mr. Daly advised that the lessor did not clear the sidewalks or parking area and reported that the Chief of Police shoveled the snow himself for everyone who occupied the complex. He opined that this was not the best use of his time or that of any other member of the Department. Mr. Daly questioned whether the Council could write a letter to the landlord recommending they follow up on their responsibilities. He opined that it was not right that Town employees were doing what it was paying someone else to do.

Mayor Davis agreed the Council could send a letter; however, she suggested the landlord be called first.

Town Administrator Semmes noted that the Chief had a conversation with him. She advised that she could contact him if the Council liked. Ms. Semmes noted that she was not sure what the expectations were within the lease. She suggested the Town could have a conversation with the owner and impress the importance upon him of doing snow removal.

Mayor Davis suggested the staff determine what was included in the lease.

Councilmember Daly suggested the Council put him on notice. He acknowledged that the Chief had spoken with him; however, he suggested the need for something official – either a phone call or a letter – putting the landlord on notice if it was his responsibility.

Councilmember Littleton advised Council that while it did not require Council approval, the HDRC would like to establish a process for recognizing people who went above and beyond to restore an existing building or add to the nature and character of Middleburg. He advised that it would be in the form of a letter of thanks from the HDRC. Mr. Littleton reported that they

would develop guidelines for when an individual would receive one. He reminded Council that in the last year and a half, several people had restored buildings in the Historic District. Mr. Littleton noted that the HDRC was the body to make sure that happened right and advised that it added much to the town. He explained that it would not be something official but rather would be a nice letter on letterhead to recognize what was done to enrich the community. Mr. Littleton suggested it could be given to the owner, with copies also given to those who participated in the project. Mayor Davis asked that the Council be given a copy so they would be aware of it.

Councilmember Littleton reiterated that they would draft guidelines, with the decision being by the majority of the HDRC. He advised that anything could be nominated, including a sign. Mr. Littleton advised that once the nomination was made, he would bring it to the Council, with the HDRC giving the recognition at their next meeting. The Council agreed they liked this idea.

Discussion – Property Ad-Hoc Committee Report

Vice Mayor Kirk advised Council that she assumed the Committee was to look at future sites as well as current ones. She reminded them of the space needs study that was underway, which would help identify the future Town Office/Police Department location. Ms. Kirk reiterated that she thought that was part of the Committee's purview.

Mayor Davis noted the background of why the Committee was put together. She advised that this was not to say that if the Council chose, the Committee could not evaluate the list; however, she opined that it should be a decision of the full Council. Ms. Davis advised that it was her understanding that the Committee was to evaluate what the Town currently owned.

Vice Mayor Kirk reported that they were looking at what the Town had and what it might need.

Councilmember Littleton suggested the Committee needed to understand the Town's needs so it could determine whether anything that was currently owned would fit that need.

Vice Mayor Kirk noted that the Council would look at the Committee's recommendations and make the final decision. She reported that the Ad Hoc Property Committee was recommending the Town retain its utility facilities. Vice Mayor Kirk further reported that, at some point, the Town would need an enclosed storage area at one of the facilities to house the Police and Maintenance Departments items that may only be used once a year. She noted that the Council may decide to put that facility on an existing property or at a utility facility. Ms. Kirk suggested as much be squeezed onto the Town's existing property as possible so it would not have to purchase more. She reported that the Committee was recommending the Town divest itself of some of its properties and noted that those would be discussed in closed session.

Councilmember Snyder questioned whether the Town had the room for a storage facility.

Councilmember Littleton noted that the Town Shop was located on a small corner. He questioned whether there was a place where the Town could construct a permanent building that would be large enough to get everything in one place so the Town could get rid of that parcel.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan questioned whether the plans were to demolish the old wastewater treatment plant. Town Administrator confirmed they were eventually. She advised that the estimate to remove it was high. Ms. Semmes noted the need to pour concrete into the concrete pits.

Councilmember Snyder advised that it was the sense of the Utility Committee that the estimate was high. He further advised that they felt the Town had higher priorities.

Councilmember Hazard questioned whether there was a need for remediation on the site and opined that this was most of the cost, as the demolition should not be that much.

Vice Mayor Kirk reported that the Property Committee recommended deferring a recommendation on the undeveloped streets in town until the Comprehensive Plan update was complete.

Town Administrator Semmes noted that the Committee looked at the entire property inventory and had an understanding of the various pieces. She further noted that they looked closely at some of the buildings and advised that a decision was needed on those. Ms. Semmes expressed hope that this could be done.

Other Discussion Items

Town Administrator Semmes reported that the bell was still on the Asbury Church. She further reported that it was a bronze bell that was made by a foundry in Baltimore, MD in the 1830s. Ms. Semmes advised that the contractor determined that the belfry was added later and opined that it was added when the church was renovated in 1867. She reiterated that the bell was still there; however, the belfry was in bad condition. Ms. Semmes reported that the contractor and the Town's structural engineer came up with a way to renovate the belfry; however, they needed to know whether the bell would be left there. She reminded Council that the Town may or may not keep the church and noted that the main goal in acquiring the property was to stabilize and preserve the building. Ms. Semmes noted the need to look at what would happen with the building in the future. She advised that even if the Town saved the building, the bell would not be visible. Ms. Semmes suggested it made sense to remove and relocate it. She further suggested the museum may have a use for it and noted that she had a brief exchange with Mr. Littleton about that.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan questioned whether the bell was hidden. Town Administrator Semmes advised that it could not be seen.

Councilmember Hazard questioned the cost to renovate the belfry with and without the bell. Town Administrator Semmes reported that there was not a significant cost difference. She noted that it must be removed and questioned whether the Council wanted it to be reinstalled.

Councilmember Littleton advised Council that the museum defined sixty stories that it would use to tell the story of the community, with one being race and religion. He noted that Middleburg was the first free church, as well as being the first free black church in Virginia. Mr. Littleton opined that the stories behind it were fascinating. He advised Council that if they were willing to do so, based on his conversations with half of the Museum's Board of Directors, they would love to accept the bell. Mr. Littleton noted that stories could be told through it. He explained that the Board did not want every story to be about dates and advised that they wanted them to be focused around something. Mr. Littleton noted that this bell lasted through each church that was there and recommended it be placed in the museum. He advised that people would be able to walk around and touch it. Mr. Littleton further advised that it would not be static and could make noise. He noted that the bell was owned by the Town so it was a Council decision; however, the museum would love to have it.

Councilmember Hazard agreed this was a great idea; however, he suggested community input be sought before making a decision. Vice Mayor Kirk advised that she was fine with that.

Town Administrator Semmes reminded Council that they did not have to make a decision immediately. She advised that the bell would be taken down and stored.

Mayor Davis opined that it was a great story. She noted that the bell could not currently be seen and suggested that if it was displayed in the museum, it would be meaningful.

Town Administrator Semmes suggested the Town could always loan the bell to the museum.

Councilmember Littleton agreed. He noted that if the museum had the bell, they could then refer visitors to the Asbury Church.

Town Administrator Semmes noted that it was already a part of the walking tour and suggested it continue to be a part of it.

Mayor Davis reiterated that this was a great idea.

Councilmember Littleton agreed the community should be asked about it. Councilmember Hazard suggested most people would agree with it.

Councilmember Littleton noted that the Pink Box was sponsoring the Bizz Buzz on April 10th. He suggested that if the staff had pictures of the bell, they could display them and solicit feedback. Mr. Littleton reminded Council that the Bizz Buzz usually had a great cross representation of the community. Town Administrator Semmes agreed to get a photo of the bell.

Mayor Davis noted that she asked the staff to place a copy of the Loudoun County Home Improvements Program flyer on the members' desks. She further noted that the Town received an email from Loudoun County's Program Coordinator offering to speak before the Council to give them more information. Ms. Davis questioned whether this was something the Council would like to hear a presentation on or whether the staff should just promote it using the Friday Email Blast and the Town's website.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan advised that he would love to hear the presentation.

Councilmember Snyder advised that he would like to spend time letting people know this was being done. He suggested it be publicized, with the meeting being held in early spring.

Mayor Davis questioned when the Council would like to do it. Vice Mayor Kirk suggested it be done in May and noted that people would be thinking of doing home improvements at that time.

Town Clerk North advised Council that she would check the Program Coordinator's schedule to determine when it was possible to get him before the Council. She advised that the staff would then advertise it extensively. Ms. North questioned whether the Council wanted to hear the presentation as a part of their regular meeting or in a separate meeting. The Council asked that it be a part of a regular meeting if the presentation was not too long.

Vice Mayor Kirk questioned whether the Town needed to hire a consultant to deal with the home page on the Town's website. She further questioned whether the Council wanted to have a basic home page.

Town Clerk North reminded Council that the Town had an operating website. She noted that it may not do everything the Town would like it to; however, it was a functioning website.

Vice Mayor Kirk noted that Councilmember Snyder indicated the Town Office closing was not on the Town's website. Town Clerk North advised that she was not sure what happened there, as the Administrative Assistant was putting it on the website while she initiated the phone alerts. Town Administrator Semmes opined that this may have been a staff slip.

Mayor Davis announced that she was almost finished with her next Mayor's Message. She advised that she had a draft; however, she wanted to go back to look at it again.

Closed Session – Acquisition/Disposition of Public Property

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan moved, seconded by Councilmember Hazard, that Council go into closed session as allowed under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act Section 2.2-3711(A) (3) pertaining to the discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. Councilmember Leonard-Morgan further moved, seconded by Councilmember Hazard, that these matters be limited to the acquisition of property within the town and the disposition of publicly held property for economic development purposes. Councilmember Leonard-Morgan further moved, seconded by Councilmember Hazard, that in addition to the Council, the following individuals be present during the closed session: Martha Mason Semmes and Rhonda North. Councilmember Leonard-Morgan further moved, seconded by Councilmember Hazard, that the Council thereafter reconvene in open session for action as appropriate.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Kirk, Daly, Hazard, Leonard-Morgan, Littleton and Snyder

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmember Miller

(Mayor Davis only votes in the case of a tie)

Mayor Davis asked that Council certify that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting, which the members so did. She reminded those present for the closed session that any discussion that occurred within it should be treated as confidential.

There being no further business, Mayor Davis declared the meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

APPROVED:

Betsy A. Davis, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk