



MINUTES

WYTHEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2024 AT 5:00 PM

MUNICIPAL BUILDING - 150 EAST MONROE STREET
WYTHEVILLE, VA 24382

1. **RE: ATTENDANCE**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Beth Taylor, Vice-Mayor Cathy Pattison, Councilwoman Holly Atkins, Councilman Gary Gillman, Councilwoman Candice Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Town Manager Brian Freeman, Assistant Town Manager Elaine Holeyton, Town Clerk Sherry Corvin, Interim Town Attorney Paul Cassell, Town Treasurer Michael Stephens, Computer Operations Manager Ron Jude, Director of Museums Grant Gerlich, Planning Director John Woods, Police Chief Joel Hash, Detective Lonnie Anders, Sergeant Jerrod Sadler, Patrol Officer Darren Umberger, Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Alison Pollard, Sanjai "C.J." Patel, Josh Sexton, Patricia Austin, Rusty Jones, Jim Cohen, Mike Forrest, Art Davis, Wendy Welch, Nancy Martin, Kirk Chamberlain Collin O'Donnell, Gary Gardner, Donnie Bales, Glenda Crockett-Eans, Thalia Rodriguez, Nick Patel, Others

2. **RE: CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order.

3. **RE: ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM**

Mayor Taylor advised that a quorum of Council members was present.

4. **RE: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice-Mayor Pattison.

5. **RE: APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the Approval of Agenda. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion made by Vice-Mayor Pattison, Seconded by Councilman Gillman. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to approve the agenda as presented. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilman Gillman, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Mayor Taylor, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilwoman Johnson.

6. **RE: 6:00 P.M. SCHEDULED RECESS**

Mayor Taylor advised that for information purposes, the agenda includes a 6:00 p.m. scheduled recess, if necessary.

7. **RE: CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Taylor presented the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the work session and the regular meeting of April 8, 2024. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the minutes of the work session and regular meetings of April 8, 2024, as presented.

Motion made by Councilman Gillman, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: Voting Yea:

Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson.

8. RE: PUBLIC HEARINGS, REQUESTS, RESOLUTIONS, COUNCIL DECISIONS

Mayor Taylor advised that the Council has three public hearings on the agenda, therefore, she would like to request those who have signed in to speak regarding any of the public hearing agenda items, to please come to the podium, state their name and address and if the person is with a larger group, inform the Council so there are not multiple people speaking about the same agenda item. She stated that she would like to remind everyone to please show respect for each other, Town Staff and the Town Council.

A. RE: LODGING TAX INCREASE - STAFF REPORT/PRESENTATION

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider increasing the Lodging Tax to a rate not to exceed ten (10) percent on the charge made to each room rented to transients. She noted that Town Manager Freeman would present the Town Council with information regarding this matter.

Town Manager Freeman stated that if the Council agrees, he thought it would be beneficial to review his presentation for the entire budget because a lot of the information is connected. He explained that there are slides specific to Meals and Lodging Tax, which are regarding the two scheduled public hearings. Town Manager Freeman advised that he would request the Council to hold their questions that are not relative to Meals and Lodging Tax until he gets to the budget portion of the agenda. It was the consensus of the Council to hold all questions that are not relative to the Meals and Lodging Tax until Town Manager Freeman gets to the budget item on the agenda.

Town Manager Freeman thanked Town Treasurer Stephens for his help during the budget process. He thanked the Budget and Finance Committee for meeting the last eight to ten weeks for multiple hours, and he noted that everyone may not have agreed on everything, however, the Committee worked hard to develop a budget that will provide for a healthy discussion. Town Manager Freeman reviewed the proposed 2024-25 Fiscal Year Budget with the Town Council which includes a three percent cost of living increase for all full-time employees along with a one percent year-end holiday bonus. He discussed the proposed budget of various Town Departments including Museums, Water and Wastewater, Public Safety, Fire and Rescue, Public Works, etc.

Town Manager Freeman discussed how the Town's revenue is generated. He noted that general property taxes make up only 10.4 percent of the total revenues needed to operate the Town's General Fund for Fiscal Year 2024-25. He commented that local taxes make up 44 percent of the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25, and that this percentage does not include any Meals or Lodging Taxes. Town Manager Freeman explained what the Town's Meals Taxes are based on, the meaning of the Meals Tax, etc. He advised that Meals Tax makes up the single largest revenue stream, at nearly 19 percent of the Town's entire General Fund. Town Manager Freeman discussed the Lodging or Transient Occupancy Tax. He noted that this is a tax charged on rooms or lodging rentals provided to individuals who stay fewer than 30 consecutive days. Town Manager Freeman continued to review Lodging Tax information and noted that Lodging Tax is projected, at the current eight (8) percent tax rate, to make up approximately 8.3 percent of the total General Fund revenue stream. He explained that a combination of Meals and Lodging Taxes make up approximately 27 percent of the Town's General Fund. Town Manager Freeman then reviewed the proposed Meals and Lodging Taxes across the region. He explained that Categorical Aide is a revenue stream which is given to localities by the State in the form of grants to target very specific programs. Town Manager Freeman noted that there are strict guidelines for what the grant funds can be spent on, which is what the public needs to understand. He commented that most of Wytheville's Categorical Aide comes in the form of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Maintenance Funds, which total about \$3.5M, annually. Town Manager Freeman noted that the Public Works Department makes up approximately \$5.4M of the General Fund, and 65 percent of that money comes from VDOT. He remarked that these funds are based on the number of lane miles of roadway maintained by the Town. Town Manager Freeman continued to highlight other Categorical Aide

information included in the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25, which makes up one of the largest portions of the Town's revenue stream at about 16 percent of the entire General Fund. He advised that interest on reserves has become an important category. Town Manager Freeman expressed that the Town has tried to take advantage of the higher interest rates. He remarked that, last year, the Town did a small amount of borrowing, and that this year, the Town does not intend to borrow. Town Manager Freeman advised that the Town is trying to hold onto the reserves, because there is the anticipation of tripling the interest on reserves. He continued to discuss the Town's reserves and the interest projected on reserves for the next year. Town Manager Freeman commented that the Federal Reserve has indicated that they are targeting a core inflation ration of two percent. He noted that, in March, the Town was above 3.8 percent. Town Manager Freeman remarked that one year ago, core inflation was still at 5.5 percent. He explained that core inflation measures the price of goods and services excluding energy and food sectors because they fluctuate too much for them to be included. Town Manager Freeman remarked that interest on the Town's reserves is not a huge part of the budget, but it is expected to provide a significant revenue. He stated that the current budget figure appears to be on pace to eclipse the \$565,000 projection, and the Budget and Finance Committee and Town Staff is projecting \$700,000 for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

RE: LODGING TAX INCREASE - PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Taylor advised that the meeting constituted a public hearing (due notice having been given) to consider increasing the Lodging Tax to a rate not to exceed ten (10) percent on the charge made to each room rented to transients. She inquired if there were any citizens present who wished to address the Council during the public hearing. There being none, Mayor Taylor stated that she has been asked by Mr. William Smith to read his letter into the record, regarding their concerns regarding this matter. The letter was then entered into the record, as follows:

"I submit this on behalf of my family, the Bolling Wilson Hotel, and the Graze on Main Restaurant and request this be read aloud during the public comment period of the Public Hearing scheduled at 5 PM on Monday April 22, 2024.

We oppose proposed increases in the local Lodging Tax and Meals Tax and call for the reduction of both from current levels.

- 1) Both taxes are regressive, thus a burden on local citizens and the traveling public who support our very important tourism industry.*
- 2) These taxes have created a financial dependency on volatile revenue sources, which is detrimental to the Town of Wytheville's financial stability.*

I further call for the immediate cessation of further discussion regarding increases in both Meals Tax and lodging Tax until such time as the following contradictions are investigated, results disclosed to the public, and all related issues resolved."

Mayor Taylor explained that the rest of the letter that she just read into the record will be located in the Town Clerk's office if anyone would like to read it. There being no further discussion, she declared the public hearing closed and proceeded with the agenda.

RE: ORDINANCE NO. 1431 - LODGING TAX

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the consideration by the Town Council to adopt Ordinance No. 1431, an ordinance amending and reenacting Chapter 14, Taxation, Article VI. Lodging Tax, Section 14-107, Amount of Levy, of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, to increase the Lodging Tax from eight (8) percent to ten (10) percent, on first and final reading. She stated that Vice-Mayor Pattison will now report on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee.

Vice-Mayor Pattison reported on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee, as follows: Transient Occupancy Tax, also known as Lodging Tax, is a tax charged on room or lodging rentals provided to individuals who stay fewer than 30 consecutive days. These taxes are paid by the guest and collected by the lodging establishment for monthly remittance to the locality. Lodging Taxes are an important source of revenue for the Town of Wytheville and help offset the need for other local taxes such as Real Estate and Personal Property Taxes. These taxes provide financial support

for general operations including, but not limited to, our many marketing, tourism and economic development programs, as well as the Town's Police and Fire and EMS Departments. Continued inflationary forces have led to cost increases in all facets of government operations and are contributing to an anticipated budget deficit for Fiscal Year 2024-25. In order to maintain the high level of service our citizens and visitors have come to expect, the Town will need to generate new revenues for the coming budget year.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Pattison and seconded by Councilwoman Johnson to increase the Transient Occupancy Tax from eight (8) percent to ten (10) percent with an effective date of July 1, 2024. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call and supermajority vote: Voting Yea: Councilwoman Johnson, Councilwoman Atkins, Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Gillman. Ordinance No. 1431 was approved on first and final reading.

B. RE: MEALS TAX INCREASE - STAFF REPORT/PRESENTATION

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider increasing the Meals Tax to a rate not to exceed nine (9) percent on every meal served, sold or delivered in the town by a restaurant or caterer. She stated that Vice-Mayor Pattison will report on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee regarding this matter.

Vice-Mayor Pattison reported on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee, as follows: Meals Taxes are taxes on foods prepared for human consumption, restaurants, eateries, food trucks, etc. This tax does not apply to foods sold through vending machines or other foods sold in grocery or convenience stores that are not prepared. Meals Taxes are paid by the patron and collected by the business for monthly remittance to the locality. Meals Taxes are an important source of revenue for the Town of Wytheville and help offset the need for other local taxes such as Real Estate and Personal Property Taxes. Meals Taxes provide financial support for general town operations, as well as the many marketing, tourism and economic development programs and the Town's robust Public Safety Departments. After consideration of all factors, including the recency with which the Meals Tax was last increased, it is the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that the Meals Tax remain at eight (8) percent and for the Town Council to reconsider this topic later in 2025.

RE: MEALS TAX INCREASE - PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Taylor advised that the meeting constituted a public hearing (due notice having been given) to consider increasing the Meals Tax to a rate not to exceed nine (9) percent on every meal served, sold or delivered in the town by a restaurant or caterer. She inquired if there were any citizens present who wished to address the Council during the public hearing.

Mr. Art Davis was recognized and stated that he resides at 515 East Pine Street in Wytheville. Mr. Davis thanked the Town Council for allowing him to speak. He stated that he wishes that Town staff would have sent letters to the restaurants in town letting them know of the proposed Meals Tax increase. Mr. Davis then discussed his concerns regarding a Meals Tax increase with the Town Council. Mayor Taylor thanked Mr. Davis for his comments.

Mr. Collin O'Donnell was recognized and stated that he is with The Grind located at 155 East Main Street in Wytheville. Mr. O'Donnell thanked the Council for allowing him to speak. Mr. O'Donnell addressed the Council regarding Meals Tax rates of up to five (5) percent lower than Wytheville in multiple large-scale cities across the United States, a 32 percent decrease from last year in tourism traffic downtown and how a Meals Tax increase will negatively impact the Town of Wytheville and its small businesses. Mayor Taylor thanked Mr. O'Donnell for his comments.

She inquired if there were any other citizens who wished to address the Council during the public hearing. There being none, she declared the public hearing closed and proceeded with the agenda.

RE: ORDINANCE NO. 1432 - MEALS TAX

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider approving or disapproving Ordinance No. 1432, an ordinance amending and reenacting Chapter 14, Taxation, Article V. Meals Tax, Section 14-79, Levy of Tax, of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, to increase the Meals Tax from eight (8) percent to nine (9) percent, on first and final reading.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Pattison and seconded by Councilwoman Johnson to disapprove Ordinance No. 1432, an ordinance amending and reenacting Chapter 14, Taxation, Article V. Meals Tax, Section 14-79, Levy of Tax, of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, to increase the Meals Tax from eight (8) percent to nine (9) percent, on first and final reading. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call and supermajority vote: Voting Yea: Councilman Gillman, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Mayor Taylor, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilwoman Johnson. Ordinance No. 1432 was disapproved on first and final reading.

C. RE: MASTER FEE SCHEDULE INCREASES - STAFF REPORT/PRESENTATION

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider the Town of Wytheville Master Fee Schedule for Fiscal Year 2024-25 that includes increases to water and sewer rates. She stated that Assistant Town Manager Holeton will give the Council more information regarding this topic.

Assistant Town Manager Holeton stated that the proposed Master Fee Schedule presents the user fee and charges collected on behalf of the 12 Town Departments. She noted that these fees cover everything from Recreation Center Pass Plans to Building Permits. Assistant Town Manager Holeton advised that in addition to fees for services, the Rate Schedule lists the water rates, sewer rates and utility connection fees for the Town. She then briefly explained the review process of the Master Fee Schedule with the Town Council. Assistant Town Manager Holeton stated that the changes made to the Master Fee Schedule will become effective on July 1, 2024, should the Council adopt the Master Fee Schedule.

RE: MASTER FEE SCHEDULE INCREASES - PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Taylor stated that the meeting constituted a public hearing (due notice having been given) to consider the Town of Wytheville Master Fee Schedule for Fiscal Year 2024-25 that includes increases to water and sewer rates. She inquired if there were any citizens who wished to address the Council during the public hearing.

Ms. Glenda Crockett-Eans was recognized and stated that she resides at 50 Lee Circle in Wytheville. Ms. Crockett-Eans inquired if she could be provided a listing of the increases and/or changes that were made to the Master Fee Schedule. Assistant Town Manager then presented the increases and changes that were made to the Master Fee Schedule.

Mayor Taylor stated that she has been asked by Mr. William Smith to read his letter into the record, regarding their concerns regarding this matter. The letter was then entered into the record, as follows:

"I submit this on behalf of my family, Professional Buildings LLC, The Bolling Wilson Hotel, and Graze On Main Restaurant. We request this be read aloud during the public comment period the Public Hearing scheduled at 5PM on Monday April 22, 2024.

We oppose increases in the 2024-25 Master Fee Schedule as proposed.

These increases, the second in two years, clearly represent a dependency by the Town of Wytheville in raising fees and taxes to balance expenditure driven budget deficits rather than addressing the root problem of overspending based on revenues."

Mayor Taylor stated that is only half of the letter, and that the other half will be located in the Town Clerk's Office if anyone is interested in reading it. She inquired if there was anyone else who wished to address the Council during the public hearing. There being none, she declared the public hearing closed and proceeded with the agenda.

**RE: FY 2024-25 TOWN OF WYTHEVILLE MASTER FEE SCHEDULE
CONSIDERATION**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider adopting the Town of Wytheville Master Fee Schedule for Fiscal Year 2024-25 that includes increases to water and sewer rates. She inquired if there was a motion to adopt the Town of Wytheville Master Fee Schedule for Fiscal Year 2024-25 that includes increases to water and sewer rates.

Motion made by Vice-Mayor Pattison, Seconded by Councilwoman Johnson. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilwoman Johnson, Councilwoman Atkins, Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Gillman.

**D. RE: ORDINANCE NO. 1433, BUDGET ORDINANCE FY 24-25 - STAFF
REPORT/PRESENTATION**

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider Ordinance No. 1433, the Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2024-25, on first, but not final, reading. She stated that Town Manager Freeman will give the Council more information on this ordinance.

Town Manager Freeman stated that he had already presented his information regarding the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget earlier in the meeting, during the discussion regarding Lodging Tax. He then gave a brief overview regarding the State Code requirements on budget readings. Town Manager Freeman advised that he would be glad to answer any questions that the Council may have.

RE: ORDINANCE NO. 1433, FY 24-25 BUDGET ORDINANCE - FIRST READING

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is the consideration by Town Council to approve Ordinance No. 1433, the Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2024-25, on first, but not final, reading. She inquired if there was a motion to approve Ordinance No. 1433, the Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2024-25, on first, but not final, reading.

Motion made by Councilman Gillman, Seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she would like to see the Town Attorney salary remain in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget. She noted that she was under the impression that the Town Attorney position is still open. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if Town Manager Freeman could review the Town Council budget. Town Manager Freeman then explained the breakdown of the Town Council's budget with the Council members. It was the consensus of the Council to keep the Town Attorney salary in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget, in the event that an unexpected situation arises with Interim Town Attorney Cassell. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any further discussion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results by, roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilman Gillman, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Mayor Taylor, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilwoman Johnson. Ordinance No. 1433 was approved on first, but not final, reading.

E. RE: LODGING TAX INCREASE (CONTINUED)

Mayor Taylor advised that there is a citizen interested in the previous Lodging Tax agenda item, who arrived at the meeting late. She stated that she would now like to give them an opportunity to address the Town Council regarding this matter.

Mr. C.J. Patel was recognized and stated that he and his brother have four (4) properties in the Town of Wytheville. He advised that he owns the Sleep Inn on Peppers Ferry Road and Holston Road, and inquired if the Town could replace the streetlights there. Town Manager Freeman stated that he would have Town staff check on that matter. Mr. Patel inquired about why the Town only advertised the Lodging Tax public hearing in the newspaper, instead of also sending hotel owners a letter. Mayor Taylor stated that she had contacted Mr. Nick Patel regarding the Lodging Tax public hearing and had asked him to share the information he was given with other hotel owners in town. Discussion continued regarding the public hearing

advertisement, the Lodging Tax increase, the impact it makes in the town and how to bring more businesses to Wytheville. Mayor Taylor thanked Mr. Patel for his comments.

RE: FY 2024-25 COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION FUNDING REQUESTS

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider approving or disapproving the following Community Contribution funding requests for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

Mayor Taylor stated that the first request is for Brain Injury Solutions in the amount of \$500. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of Brain Injury Solutions for \$500. Motion made by Councilman Gillman, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilman Gillman, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Mayor Taylor, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilwoman Johnson.

Mayor Taylor stated that the second request is for the Wytheville Training School Cultural Center in the amount of \$4,500. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of the Wytheville Training School Cultural Center. Councilwoman Johnson noted that before the Council voted on this request, she would like to discuss all of the requests at one time. She stated that due to the nature of some of these requests, she would like additional consideration. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if the Council could have some dialogue about these requests at one time, and then vote on them separately. Interim Town Attorney Cassell stated that it is acceptable for the Council to have dialogue and vote, in that order.

Mayor Taylor stated that she would now open the floor for discussion regarding Community Contribution funding requests for Fiscal Year 2024-25. Councilwoman Johnson stated that there are some substantial changes in the amounts that are being requested from the last fiscal year, and that is why she would like to discuss these requests at one time. She noted that she would, personally, like to see the Wytheville Training School Cultural Center, the Edith Bolling Wilson A First Lady's Birthplace Museum and Open Door Community receive at least \$10,000. Councilwoman Johnson advised that she would, also, like for the Wythe-Grayson Regional Library to receive \$4,000, and for the Millwald Theatre to receive \$50,000. She commented that she is aware that the Council has already approved the \$500 request for Brain Injury Solutions, however, she would like to amend that decision for them to receive \$1,000. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she is in agreement with Councilwoman Johnson regarding the amounts for the Wytheville Training School Cultural Center. She noted, however, that she does not support the request of the Millwald Theatre for \$200,000. Vice-Mayor Pattison stated that she is in agreement with Councilwoman Johnson, however, she would like to discuss the amount that the Millwald Theatre has requested. She commented that the Millwald Theatre serves as a cultural and social center for historic downtown Wytheville. She noted that they are asking the Town for support for operating purposes to help keep their doors open. Mr. Rusty Jones with the Millwald Theatre was recognized and addressed the Council regarding the process of how the request for \$200,000 for the Millwald Theatre was developed. Discussion continued regarding the Town supporting the funding request for the Millwald Theatre.

Mr. Christopher Fox was recognized and stated that he resides at 305 North 4th Street in Wytheville. Mr. Fox addressed the Council regarding Open Door Community's funding request for \$50,000, and how he feels that giving the full amount will be beneficial to the community. A brief discussion was held regarding the funding request made by Open Door Community, and how those funds will be used. Mayor Taylor thanked Mr. Fox for his comments.

Ms. Wendy Welch was recognized and stated that she resides at 550 Tazewell Street in Wytheville. Ms. Welch stated that she is a volunteer with Open Door Community and with the Wytheville Women's Club. She noted that whatever Open Door Community is requesting funding for, they will spend it very well, as they are very careful with their spending. Ms. Welch continued to discuss the resources that Open Door Community provides for people in the community. Discussion continued regarding the request of Open Door Community for \$50,000 and how those funds will

be used. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any further discussion. There being none, she proceeded with the agenda.

Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to amend the amount for Brain Injury Solutions from \$500 to \$1,000. Motion made by Councilwoman Johnson, Seconded by Vice-Mayor Pattison. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilwoman Johnson, Councilwoman Atkins, Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Gillman.

Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of the Wytheville Training School Cultural Center for \$10,000. Motion made by Councilwoman Johnson, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins. Mayor Taylor noted that she finds it hard to support some of the increased requests, and that she may not approve of all of them. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any further discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilman Gillman, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Mayor Taylor, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilwoman Johnson.

Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of the Edith Bolling Wilson A First Lady's Birthplace Museum for \$10,000. Motion made by Vice-Mayor Pattison, Seconded by Councilwoman Johnson. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilwoman Johnson, Councilwoman Atkins, Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Gillman.

Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of the Wythe-Grayson Regional Library for \$4,000. Motion made by Councilwoman Johnson, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilman Gillman, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Mayor Taylor, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilwoman Johnson.

Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of Open Door Community for \$10,000. Motion made by Councilwoman Johnson, Seconded by Councilman Gillman. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilman Gillman, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Mayor Taylor, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilwoman Johnson.

Mayor Taylor inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of the Millwald Theatre for \$150,000. Motion made by Vice-Mayor Pattison, Seconded by Councilman Gillman. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she would like to give the Millwald \$75,000, instead of \$150,000. Councilwoman Johnson inquired if the Council would consider giving the Millwald Theatre \$75,000 now, and then revisit the idea of the additional amount in the future. Mr. Rusty Jones with the Millwald Theatre addressed the Council, again, regarding their request and noted that they would like to receive that money in the first part of the fiscal year should the Council pass the \$75,000 request. He continued to discuss what these funds would be used for and how they will help operational costs with the Council. A motion was made by Councilwoman Atkins and seconded by Councilwoman Johnson to amend the original motion to approve the Millwald Theatre's request to receive \$150,000 to the Millwald Theatre to receive \$75,000 on or near July 1, 2024, and to revisit their request regarding the additional funds they requested in December of 2024. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilwoman Johnson, Councilwoman Atkins, Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Gillman.

F. RE: ORDINANCE NO. 1430 - PERSONNEL POLICY - RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider Ordinance No. 1430, an ordinance amending and reenacting Ordinance No. 1028, generally known as Personnel Rules, Regulations and Policies, of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, so as to amend Section 6. Benefits, Subsection 6.4 Retirement Benefits, on first reading.

She stated that Town Manager Freeman would give the Council more information regarding this ordinance.

Town Manager Freeman then presented a report to the Town Council consisting of information regarding Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) and the proposed changes that have been made to the Personnel Ordinance. He advised that it is the Staff recommendation to remove the \$300 premium cap, increase the benefit to 50% of the blended premium to align with the current employer offered insurance benefit requirements, restore the benefit to all employees regardless of Hazardous Duty Benefit status and to keep the retirement benefit at the current five (5) year limit. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she would like for the Council to consider increasing the Town's retirement benefit from five (5) years to seven (7) years. Discussion was held regarding this request and how often the retirement benefits can be evaluated in the future.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Atkins and seconded by Councilwoman Johnson to approve Ordinance No. 1430, an ordinance amending and reenacting Ordinance No. 1028, generally known as Personnel Rules, Regulations and Policies, of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, so as to amend Section 6. Benefits, Subsection 6.4 Retirement Benefits, as presented with the exception to continue the Town's retirement benefit for six (6) years instead of the proposed five (5) years. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was not approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilwoman Johnson, Councilwoman Atkins. Voting Nay: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilman Gillman.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Johnson and seconded by Councilman Gillman to adopt Ordinance No. 1430, an ordinance amending and reenacting Ordinance No. 1028, generally known as Personnel Rules, Regulations and Policies, of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, so as to amend Section 6. Benefits, Subsection 6.4 Retirement Benefits, on first and final reading, as follows: to remove the \$300 premium cap, increase the benefit to 50% of the blended premium to align with the current employer offered insurance benefit requirements, restore the benefit to all employees regardless of Hazardous Duty Benefit status and to keep the retirement benefit at the current five (5) year limit. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by roll call vote: Voting Yea: Councilman Gillman, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Mayor Taylor, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilwoman Johnson.

G. RE: RAFFLE PERMIT REQUEST - WYTHEVILLE FARMERS' MARKET

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider the request of the Wytheville Farmers' Market for the issuance of a raffle permit for calendar year 2024. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of the Wytheville Farmers' Market for the issuance of a raffle permit for calendar year 2024.

Motion made by Councilman Gillman, Seconded by Councilwoman Johnson. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson.

H. RE: RAFFLE PERMIT REQUEST - WYTHEVILLE TRAINING SCHOOL CULTURAL CENTER

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider the request of the Wytheville Training School Cultural Center for the issuance of a raffle permit for calendar year 2024. She inquired if there was a motion to approve the request of the Wytheville Training School Cultural Center for calendar year 2024.

Motion made by Councilwoman Johnson, Seconded by Councilman Gillman. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson.

I. RE: RESOLUTION - DEVOTED TO YOU "A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER" EVENT

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to consider adopting a resolution of appreciation for Devoted to You for the "A Christmas to Remember" event. She inquired if there was a motion to adopt a resolution of appreciation for Devoted to You for the "A Christmas to Remember" event.

Motion made by Councilwoman Johnson, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson.

J. RE: SCHEDULE PUBLIC HEARING - RECEIVE FOR ELECTRICAL FRANCHISE

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to schedule a public hearing for the May 13, 2024, Town Council meeting to receive bids and consider the sale of a non-exclusive franchise, privilege, lease or right for an electric, heat, and power transmission and distribution system in the Town of Wytheville. She inquired if there was a motion to schedule a public hearing for the Monday, May 13, 2024, Town Council meeting at 5:00 p.m., to receive bids and consider the sale of a non-exclusive franchise, privilege, lease or right for an electric, heat, and power transmission and distribution system.

Motion made by Councilman Gillman, Seconded by Councilwoman Atkins. Mayor Taylor inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: Voting Yea: Mayor Taylor, Vice-Mayor Pattison, Councilwoman Atkins, Councilman Gillman, Councilwoman Johnson.

9. RE: CITIZENS' PERIOD

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is Citizens' Period. She stated that there is no one listed on the sign-in sheet who wished to address the Council during Citizens' Period, therefore, she would proceed with the agenda.

10. RE: PRESENTATIONS TO TOWN COUNCIL

A. RE: PRESENTATION TO TOWN COUNCIL - CROSSWALK ON EAST MAIN STREET

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is a presentation by Planning Director John Woods regarding the crosswalk project on East Main Street at the entrances to Wytheville Community College and the Hardee's Restaurant. She stated that Planning Director Woods will now give the Council more information regarding the crosswalk project.

Planning Director John Woods stated that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) should be providing the Town with the design plans of the crosswalk within the next few months, and the project should be put out to bid in the fall of this year. He then presented information to the Council regarding the proposed crosswalk at the entrances of Wytheville Community College and Hardee's Restaurant. The Council thanked Director Woods for his presentation.

11. RE: NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is New Business. Town Manager Freeman stated that he did not have any New Business to report, at this time.

12. RE: REPORTS

A. RE: UPCOMING MEETINGS

Town Clerk Sherry Corvin presented the upcoming meetings, as follows:

1. The Joint Industrial Development Authority (JIDA) of Wythe County will meet on Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 3:00 p.m., and the location is to be determined.
2. The Town of Wytheville will hold a Traffic Calming Input Session for Mountain View Drive on Thursday, May 2, 2024, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at the Wytheville Meeting Center.
3. The Tree Advisory Committee will meet on Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 8:30 a.m., in Conference Room A.
4. The Wytheville Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers.
5. The next regular scheduled meeting of the Wytheville Town Council will be held on Monday, May 13, 2024, at 5:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers.

13. RE: OTHER BUSINESS

A. RE: TOWN COMMITTEES/BOARDS/AUTHORITIES REAPPOINTMENTS/VACANCIES FOR 2024

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is to review Committee reappointments/vacancies for 2024. Town Clerk Corvin stated that the Council has a listing of all the upcoming reappointments and vacancies through the end of 2024. She then reviewed the upcoming reappointments and vacancies on the Board of Zoning Appeals, Joint Industrial Development Authority, Recreation Commission, Smyth-Wythe Airport Commission, Tree Advisory Committee, Wytheville Economic Development Authority and the Wytheville Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

B. RE: COUNCIL MEMBER TIME

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is Council Member Time. She inquired if Councilman Gillman had anything to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilman Gillman stated that he would like for the Public Works Department to look at the potholes on Tazewell and East Pine Streets. Town Manager Freeman noted that he will look into this matter.

Councilman Gillman stated that he has had citizens reach out to him complaining about people parking in the middle of the road, in the afternoons, when picking up children from Spiller Elementary School. Town Manager Freeman commented that he would check on this topic.

Mayor Taylor inquired if Vice-Mayor Pattison had anything to discuss during Council Member Time. Vice-Mayor Pattison stated that she did not have anything to discuss at this time.

Mayor Taylor stated that they did not have anything to discuss during Council Member Time.

Mayor Taylor inquired if Councilwoman Atkins had anything to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she did not have anything to discuss at this time.

Mayor Taylor inquired if Councilwoman Johnson had anything she would like to discuss during Council Member Time. Councilwoman Johnson inquired if Staff has reached out to the owner of The Paper Clip to discuss their traffic concerns on Main Street. Town Manager Freeman stated that he will check with Police Lieutenant Bard, regarding the status of this matter.

Councilwoman Johnson inquired how many retirees the Town had for December 2023, and if they were given plaques to recognize their years of service. Town Manager Freeman stated that the Town used to recognize retirees, but during the COVID 19 pandemic they were not recognized, however, those retirees from that time period have since been recognized.

Councilwoman Johnson stated that she would like to have a discussion, at a future Council meeting, regarding approving Town Clerk Corvin to attend the Virginia

Municipal League (VML) Conference for the purposes of continuing her education. She noted that she would, also, like to discuss continuing the education of Chief Deputy Clerk Jones and Deputy Clerk Bedwell. A brief discussion continued regarding the continuation of education for Town Clerk Corvin, Chief Deputy Clerk Jones and Deputy Clerk Bedwell.

C. RE: MISCELLANEOUS

Mayor Taylor advised that the next agenda item is miscellaneous items. She inquired if there were any Council Committee Reports. A brief discussion was held regarding Council members attending their committee meetings and presenting reports to the rest of the Council members. Mayor Taylor stated that the Town of Wytheville's Arbor Day Celebration will be held on Friday, April 26, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., on Church Street next to Barnett Funeral Home.

14. RE: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting. (7:32 p.m.)

Beth A. Taylor, Mayor

Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Clerk of Council