

# **Town of Hurt Virginia Council Meeting Minutes January 2, 2024**

Hurt Town Council held its monthly work session meeting Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at the Hurt Town Hall. The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Gary Hodnett with a quorum present.

**Roll Call:** Gary Poindexter, present, Michael Blackstock, present, Paul Johnson, present, Steve Worley, present, Kathy Keesee present

## **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

**Invocation:** Mr. Poindexter

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Mayor Gary Hodnett

**Welcome/Opening Remarks:** Someone in the audience asked about copies of the agenda and Mayor Hodnett states, there are some right over there.

**Consent Agenda:** December expenditures and minutes: Mayor Hodnett, assuming everybody had a chance to look at them. I'm assuming everybody had a chance to look at them. Councilperson Poindexter injects "before we move forward I have a question on the Financial Report and I know the Treasurer is on vacation, on the next to the last page 14 near the bottom of the page we have an item (purchase waste water capacity) this is what we pay Altavista and I noticed nothing has been used out of this line item and on the previous page where we do waste water billing this item looks like it is about right for the time period. I'm just asking how this can be? Mayor Hodnett states it may be the way the billing from Altavista comes in and we will take a look at it.

Councilperson Poindexter replies it may just be a coding error and I appreciate you following up on this as I didn't see anything else that jumps off the page at me.

Councilperson Kathy Keesee noted a correction with a word stating "taking" that should be "taken". Mayor Hodnett stated, "noted and asked if there are any other issues". No additional input was stated, and Mayor Hodnett asked for a motion Councilperson Poindexter made the motion to "accept the minutes and expenditures noting the two changes that were discussed" and the motion was seconded by Councilperson Keesee. Mayor Hodnett took the vote: Gary- Yes, Michael Yes, Kathy, yes. Steve, yes. Paul, yes.

**Additions to Agenda:**

## Opening of Public Comments:

- Rainy Clay was the first speaker. I have just little things. I would like to know, who is the person responding on behalf of the town on the town Facebook Page response seems curt when addressing the town. I mean, I've seen people make some comments and the responses that's coming from the town always seem sort of negative. I'm not like that. I wonder who's making those responses. Council asked do you have an example and Rainy Clay answered no. Another thing when I listen to the live meeting, I can't hear what's going on. Three years ago, we bought mics for the council members to use. I think that they need to be used again, because I can hear Gary, but it's low and I can't hear anybody else. I cannot hear the citizens. So I think it would be really good to start using the mics. I have an example. From the last meeting. Somebody made a statement and whoever represents the town told them to get their facts straight. That was from you know, who that is. But they were replying to a citizen comment. It was inappropriate. Mayor Hodnett stated I make some of the comments on Facebook and Kelsey does some of them. I'd like to know what changed to bring chairs back that weren't allowed at the last meeting, which limited citizen's attendance. What changed to bring the chairs back? I think in the December meeting, this row of chairs was taken out. We only had two rows of chairs and people had to stand outside. What changed to bring the chairs back? Mayor Hodnett, I think Steve, did you come down here and we talked about it? Council member Worley replied, Yeah. The sign says 30 I came in and looked the chair situation over. I was told that this was done by the fire marshal, and he met with Gary and Jason. And that's how it was that night. I got to do the count. I'll say well, we got seven short. I called Scott Hutcherson and I explained the situation to him. He said, well, Mr. Worley, the area that I was allotted, that's as many as you can seat there. And I said well, the sign says 35 and he said well, basically what you need to do is put another row of chairs up to make it to 35 capacity. And that will shorten up the town councils' area and increase the citizen's area. So Gary and I talked about it and we moved in another row. That's the reason we have seven more chairs there. So now we have accounted for 35 and normally that will accommodate. Mayor Hodnett replied thank you.
- Tommy Neal: I just want to talk about an incident that happened in my yard about three weeks ago. A lady came up the street and hit my parked truck that was parked in front of my house. And then she proceeded to come in through my

fence in my yard. This is about 12:45 I think anyway. We called 911 because we were told you know the deputies would help with the police problem in Hurt. So we didn't get any response from them. So we called Hurt Chief of Police. We didn't get a response from him. Finally an hour and half later, a trooper did show up. But the problem was the lady there was involved in the driving. She was on something, something I don't know what it was but then she proceeded to call some of her friends. Well that put me in a kind of predicament because at that time I was over there in a yard and I don't have any jurisdiction as far as in the Town of Hurt, our community. But luckily, and a shout out to the fire department, they showed up with two guys on a truck and then some came running down the sidewalk. I don't know where they come from, they come running down the sidewalk to the house and they stayed there until the situation you know was taken care of. But you know, we pay double taxes in town. I know you hear that a lot. We pay double the taxes, well we do. But we get a response like this and that's not a good idea. I can remember back in the 70s when I went to work in Altavista and Hurt had one policeman and he came out on every call that went on in the town whether it was day or night because a lot of times I called him out I was working midnight. So I know we're shorthanded and we're going to have one going to the academy. But maybe you can talk to the sheriff's department again and we need a deputy to actually come out at night if they'll show up. Mayor Hodnett asked, Chief Lovelace, would you like to take this one? I'll be more than glad to, Tommy Neal asked "Jason why do you think a deputy wouldn't come out? They didn't have any deputies in the area or what"? Chief Lovelace answers, "so what happens with this the state handles motor vehicle accidents instead of the sheriff's office. As far as working the accident the sheriff's office does not work the motor vehicle accident it's going to be Virginia State Police. Tommy Neal replies State Police have been working them in the Town of Hurt? Chief Lovelace, Yes sir, in the Town of Hurt. I mean, am I free to talk about the accident? I don't want to say anything without your permission and will not say anything about your business but am I free to talk about your phone call and speaking with your wife? Tommy Neal, Oh yeah. Okay. Chief Lovelace, All right. I just want to make sure that I'm not violating any level of your privacy that's relevant to that day. Tommy Neal, I mean, it was an accident but it could have been more than just an accident the way it turned out luckily again because the fire department guys were there and things were handled but it took an hour and a half. Mayor Hodnett asked, when you say things were handled are you talking

about the fire dept. prohibiting someone from leaving the scene? Tommy Neal answers like well she was going to leave and all this stuff you know? And one of the firemen came up and told me that she was going to leave and he convinced her to stay there. But then a friend wants her home you know and I'm just talking about that type of situation okay. Chief Lovelace replies, Virginia State Police will work accidents; the sheriff's office will not work accidents. Can I ask a question: did you dial 911? So dispatch for the county will call the state police and refer it over to the State Police. That is you know, what we have going on A, B and C and it's whoever's closest in the area. Anytime law enforcement has a call they are going to prioritize what's going on. So if you have somebody over here that's having a domestic, or somebody's locked out a vehicle, they're just locked out when they need a lock service and you're going to prioritize, to go to the domestic, versus sitting there waiting for them to prioritize on accidents as well. So if you'd have a fender bender, and you get in a motor vehicle accident that may have casualties, they're going to work casualties first. Tommy Neal replies "I don't know, you know, where they were as far as cars go? How do they determine what is needed the most? You know what I'm saying? Like if he calls 911 and he explains to them that there's an accident, like in my front yard. I mean, I just wonder how the State Police works. How do they determine? Well, we'll be able to handle this right. And we'll get there as soon as we can? Chief Lovelace replies No, I can't answer that. How they determine calls. Tommy Neal replies the other three times that I had accidents in my yard. This was the fourth time but anyway, the other three times Hurt Police handled the call. Steve Worley asked Chief Lovelace, but you didn't this time. You weren't available. Chief Lovelace replies I was off. Steve Worley said okay. So there was another incident that happened. A while back. Someone got his mailbox knocked down and a car ran up to the neighbor's yard and hit a tree and Hurt Police was called and a deputy sheriff of the County Sheriff's Department. No one showed up. Three and a half hours later, a state trooper showed up to work the case. You might be familiar with it, I don't know. But with the new guy that's being trained. We'll have two policemen. Chief Lovelace says Yes, sir. Steve Worley So some of those holes will be filled, but not 24/7. Hurt has a police department. If somebody runs through his yard, that's Hurts Police Department's responsibility. That's what we have that for on the side if you aren't available, but if this gets to be too frequent, the police departments you'll have to be represented on these situations. Chief Lovelace replies As far as that goes I'll say with the time that I've

been here, you get called out, sometimes you're available. Sometimes you're not. I'll give you a good example. I got called out and I told dispatch that 'm happy to respond but since I'm two and a half hours out it will be awhile for me to respond. That's real. The amount of time we'll take to get there and get ready as it so he's like, What about your other guy? I said he's the same man. And it wasn't because we were somewhere together. It's just because I was on the other side of Roanoke, and he was in Lexington. I try to do the best I can and come out when I can. I had just had a call over the weekend, I came out. And that's fine. It's not a big deal. Honestly, I can't come out every time. I would like to. I don't have a problem coming on. I've gotten older in life, and I'm not running around with kids. And, you know, it really doesn't matter to me to come out. It doesn't hurt my feelings. It's unfortunate that Mr. Neal had somebody in his yard, and I explained the situation to him, that I was with a sick family member later that night and I never heard his phone call. I'm not trying to lay blame. I'm trying to come up with a solution to help it. I'm open to solutions. And I have no problem listening to solutions. Mr. Neal states I'm not laying blame with the Hurt Police Department, I was just, you know, making you aware of it. Like I said in the past, it didn't matter what time of day or night it was, when he was off. How many days? You know, he was called out. If something happened in the Town of Hurt, Mayor Hodnett replied Well, it sounds like to me we need to put it on the agenda to talk about what are the expectations for you (Jason) . Are you expecting it to be available? 24/7? Or whenever you're at home? Obviously, if you're in Roanoke, you can't be available. But does that mean that if you're not available, is Tristan going to be available and come from his home anytime? So, I think that we've got to set expectations for the police department. Council member Worley states, as much as we can. I mean, it's not a perfect world, we're probably not going to have a perfect solution. But we might even have a solution that we're in some way. You might not make it perfect but might be able to help. Council person Poindexter interjects I mean, there's 168 hours in a week, seven times 24. So if you have two people on duty, you've still got about 60 hours there with no coverage. Mayor Hodnett states, it's always going to be a question. Why did you come out for one person, but the next one, you didn't come out for. Chief Lovelace states, and across the board, there's a shortage, shortage of law enforcement. And that's every agency I know of, they're going to be 26 short, really, they are struggling with certain shifts and certain agencies struggling to get a hold on it. They're just paying major overtime to cover this. Mayor Hodnett

states, All right, let's put this on the agenda for the work session that comes up in two weeks. Now let's move on to new business.

### **General Business:**

- We have a couple of the contractors that are looking at the basement here tonight. So we're going to let these gentlemen answer any questions that the council may have. I think both of you have the revised scope of work, correct. Both contractors answer in the affirmative. Glenda is not going to be here tonight. She said she would be at the meeting in two weeks for the work session, and we want to get everybody back and let's be prepared to come to some kind of agreement on how to move forward with who we're going to select. We have BJP Construction and Brumfield Construction. I know that both of you guys have submitted quotes for this. But we want to make sure that you take the new scope of work, go through that and make sure that you've got everything in that scope of work on your bid. The same applies to Glenda and I talked to her yesterday and gave her a scope of the work. She's going to do the same thing and go back through her numbers to make sure that she's got everything ready by our next meeting. Would either of you guys like to say anything and would any council member have any questions for Mr. Pillow or Mr. Brumfield? Both of you guys are Class A contractors so do either of you have anything to add or can you be ready in two weeks to go through the full scope of work and have your pricing ready? All right, it looks like the council is pleased with the scope of work. We've passed out the scope of work for the council to review. If anybody has any questions about what's on the scope of work between now and the work session on the 25<sup>th</sup> you can talk to Jason, or me. We'll be ready for our work session in two weeks. Thank you guys for coming. We appreciate your willingness to take a look at this project and want to work with us.
- The next thing we have is the property survey for the Durham property off of Lynn Street two parcels totaling around 22 acres that we have contracted with Mr. Durham to purchase. Mayor Hodnett asks John would you like to walk us through this. John Eller replies we sought estimates for survey quotes from three surveyors. Currently we have one from Southeast Surveys, the lady surveyor Lizabeth Rosser, said \$7,400 and she will not be able to do it for 30 days, 30 to 45 days. Russell Nixon's quote was \$6,200, and he could start right away, and Acres of Virginia's quote from Tommy Brooks is \$5,850, and he can start right away. Two can start right away so council it's up to you. Any questions? Mayor

Hodnett states it looks like we have two real choices Russell Nixon at \$6,200 and Acres of Virginia Tommy Nixon at \$5,850 looks like the decision for council would be to take either Russell Nixon or Acres of Virginia. That's the 62 and a 58.

Correct. Right. John Eller replies Yeah, there was also a 74. Not only is that a lot more, it would take a very long time to get it done. We need to get this done so we can close. Gary Poindexter asks, Which one is which? Acres of Virginia \$5,850. They're the ones that did the survey of the plaza before we purchased it and also the property up on the hill for the key industrial park. Gary Poindexter says I have some memory of that. John Eller says, They've done a lot of work for us and they are the cheapest. Council Person Blackstock asked, are they recording the survey, or will you have to record it? Attorney Eller answers, we will record it, that will be me. Mayor Hodnett states it sounds like a no-brainer, do I hear a motion. Council member Blackstock states I would like to make a motion that we use Acres of Virginia, Thomas Brooks to survey the Durham property at a cost of \$5,850. To be started as soon as possible. Attorney Eller states Acres of Virginia surveyed the Plaza for us as well as the property where the Solar Farm is going and they did a very good job on both. He says it will be this week.

Council person Worley seconds the motion, Mayor Hodnett, Steve yes, Paul yes, Kathy yes, Michael yes, Gary yes. It looks like its Acres of Virginia.

- Now let's move to the election for our vice mayor. Do I hear any nominations or discussions? Kathy Keesee states I'd like to nominate Bob Majeure, again, as our Vice Mayor. I think he's done an outstanding job. He's a quick learner, extremely intelligent, and very fair in his judgment. Gary Poindexter replies I'd like to sustain Kathy's remarks. I would support Bob for the same reasons, he's shown himself to be very involved and energetic and active in town business. And plus he has the advantage of availability, works from home and lives five minutes from the office if he's needed. And we all know that circumstances can change on a dime. So I see no reason why we would not give him another year to do that if he's willing to accept it. Mayor Hodnett stated I know that when we were talking with the solar people on the contract, Bob made himself available to be part of that. During those discussions, we all met at John's office and went through the contract. Are there any other nominations? None, all right. All in favor, Bob, just raise your right hand. Okay, unanimous.
- Mayor Hodnett now, moving on to the SRRIFA representation. We have to have two voting members and one alternate. Mayor Hodnett, I think I'm a member. Gary's a member and Bob is a member as well, Mr. Poindexter states, you and I

are the voting members and Bob is the alternate. So it suits me to continue unless somebody else really wants to represent the town. And, you know, I can't speak for you. Most people would say by default your office should be a member. But that's your call? I mean, you know your calendar. Whatever the case may be. Mayor Hodnett states I think it's important that the mayor for the town be a part of it. And I reluctantly took your position but after doing it for a year, well, actually two years now, I do think it's important that the mayor be a part of those meetings. So it's up to you guys. If you want me to, I'll be more than glad to do so. Bob told me he would continue as the alternate if needed. Council member Johnson asks can you explain what SRRIFA is? It's the park up here, the SVMP Park Southern Virginia Multi Modal Park and Danville, Pittsylvania County and Hurt are the three members that have the voting rights on projects coming into the Park and work that's going to be done up there. And of course, Matt Rowe, the economic development person for the county works on the projects as well trying to bring them in. Johnson, When did you guys get in? Council Person Poindexter replies, We built a team in 2018 and it became active at the start of 2019. It took pretty much the whole year of a team to get it put together. It was a pretty involved process. For our neocon was basically an intergovernmental partnership between the city and the county and the town to foster economic development in the SVMP. And it's the vehicle, if you will, through which to do the business, if there is a prospect to locate an industry in the SVMP, and that's the entity that that prospect would deal with, rather than any of the three governing bodies that are the owners. So it's an inter-governmental partnership that we formed so that we could pool resources and ideas to make that happen. Council person Blackstock asks how many times did you meet last year? Council person Poindexter answered two when we set it up; at first we met every month or two to get everything going. And then we settled into a pattern of meeting quarterly that was enough for the amount of business that we had. And since that time, it's dropped down to a more on as needed basis. So some quarters don't need to meet. Typically it meets in Chatham at noon, when it does meet, usually at the school board office or at the county Admin Building, whichever they choose. Honestly, unless a lot of new things get to be going on you'd be talking about not more than four meetings in a year probably. More like two or three. And they typically last for an hour and a half at the most. Kathy Keesee adds I think we should ask if any of our new council members are interested in participating. It would be a great way for someone, especially our new members to really get

more involved and informed about the things that are going on. And the process of economic development and all the complexities that go with that. I mean, it doesn't pay any money, but it's an opportunity to be a part of something. Council member Worley asks how much does this cost the town to be a part of this? Mayor Hodnett answers \$4,000 a year. Worley asks how many years have we been in? Council member Poindexter answers that in 2019, the total contribution to it by the three governments is \$100,000 a year. So the county and the city pick up the vast majority of it. Hurt participates in it on that limited 4% basis for some obvious reasons. One we are the host locality. The entity was created specifically for the purpose of developing the SVM P and dealing with the challenges that go with that. And it says to the world. When we did that, the rationale was it said to the world, we're going to do economic development, the way it is done in the 2020's not the way it was done in the 1980s. And that's called regional partnership, where you have people working together and using their network of contacts, resources, and so forth, to work toward that end. Council person Blackstock says so we paid \$16,000 into RIFA, what's our return on investment? Council person Poindexter states It's a long term prospect. There's currently no return. It is a long term prospect. Blackstock says that was one of the things that we all talked about this past budget session about, omitting it from the budget of us being a member of RIF". Council person Poindexter states well it has been mentioned. And I mean, I'm one of seven people. But, you know, there's a couple of things I would say about that. There are advantages to being in it, there are advantages. But to pull out of something like that, when you're the host locality. And you did it specifically for the purpose of addressing the most identified need in that locality, which is development and jobs that in my view says to the world, we're not interested in playing in the game, we want to let somebody else do it for us or wait for it to drop in our lap. We don't want to do anything to make this happen. And local governments everywhere if they want to bring in business and industry, they know that they have to put money, time, work, patience, resources, into the game. It's a long term proposition that is not short term that it comes with no guarantees that you will or won't get anything. And a couple of other things but, they've slipped me. I personally don't think that that is the message that we need to send when we want economic development. But we don't want to do the work, to facilitate it, to encourage it, to promote it, we won't let someone else pay for it. You know, to say that we don't have any business doing that when a lack of jobs and commerce is our single biggest financial challenge. That's pretty hard to

rationalize in my view. And, we went into it knowing that the timescale of this type of thing is in years multiple it might be in decades. But if you don't do what needs to be done, then there's a pretty good guarantee that you're not going to get anything out of it. And then there's another matter that I think is worth considering. It provides us a means at whatever point in time that we have one or more industries now. It means that we are able to receive for the town a share of the county's M&T tax that is already in place. Now that's revenue down the road, that's not going to help us right now. Council Person Blackstock states Approximately \$500,000 has been put into Rifa. Council member Poindexter states But not all of it by the town of hurt, right? Blackstock replies right, I'm saying, \$500,000. How much is left in the RIFA fund? Poindexter states I'm not sure. We haven't had a meeting since summer. So, I don't, I don't remember. Blackstock asks, so you know how much it has in there. Poindexter says, We will probably have a reorganizational meeting sometime during the first quarter of the year we typically do. Worley states so we've been paying this for 4 years coming up on 5 that's \$20,000 And you say this takes time? Development that comes out of this? Where has it been so far as And you say this takes time? Development that comes out of this? Where has it been so far as you've seen on the South end? None of it has been here, right? Mayor Hodnett says Well, as our reference SRRIFA is exclusively for the SVMP park here, what's going on in Danville falls under something other than SRRIFA. The county and the City of Danville have another agreement covering the south end of the county. Council person Poindexter injects that does the same job down there for places like Cane Creek and Berry Hill and so forth. They have another RIFA on the other end of the county. So it does the same function that this one is designed to do'. Worley asks, So this one right here is just strictly this one was created specifically for the SVMP here in Hurt. Poindexter says It does not work on any projects anywhere else. Mayor Hodnett states there are 600 acres here, Poindexter adds roughly 600 I don't remember the exact number. Because it was specifically created to work on that piece of property for an entire industry. Worley asks for the Town of Hurt? Poindexter states That's what it's for. Yeah, that's its sole purpose. Worley asked What do you think or when do you think you would see something for that amount of money? Poindexter replies Well, what do you mean, we're missing the boat here, one would think so. But keep this in mind when you go to deal with economic development. That is a national and global economic process that you're dealing with. And that's not a local thing. Every prospect that comes along,

you're going to be competing with, we're going to be competing with potential sites from perhaps anywhere in the country. We have lost several good ones, just over one or two details. Blackstock states we lost Tyson to Cane Creek. Poindexter states And again, you know, I can't, I'm limited in how much that I can say or call names because I haven't been on it. We're under a nondisclosure agreement. I will say this just as information, some people. But in 2016, I believe, I believe it was in May of 2016. A billionaire businessman, who builds power plants all over the world, sat right here where Michael is, set right here one afternoon, and met with us about the prospect of putting a gas powered power plant over there. That would have been several 100-million-dollar investments. And the M&T Tax alone from that could double the Town's Budget. We lost it because the gas company could not satisfy him with the consistency of the volume and pressure of gas. A couple of years later, we had another indoor farm. We were very close on that. And they chose the site and the other end of the county because the power there was a little bit cheaper per kilowatt. Okay, that is the type of thing that we are up against. You know, regardless of what type of industry it is, it took us from the founding of SRRIFA in 2019 and we took most of 18 to build it. But as you can see, it took two years until the announcement in the spring of 20 just to start Staunton River Plastics, and then COVID could not have hit at the worst time that everything got put on hold. And the problems have continued and I don't think that what's going on now is as much attributable to COVID but up to that up to a certain point, it was. Right, that's not something that anyone can control. Again, you're dealing with global and national politics and economics that are outside of the far outside of all of our league. Worley states "You're saying that if we don't fund it, we may regret it later down the road"? Poindexter says "Well, the way I see that is that our successes sitting here is 10 or 12 years down the road, dealing with some of the same things that we're dealing with today, I could certainly look at that and say, well, you know, we really could have used that revenue. If I had been patient several more years, we would now have x number of dollars more to work with at that time. So that's why I have stressed that even though it has not looked all that good up to this point, it really is a long term proposition. While we're talking about the \$4000, I would also hasten to point out that you're talking about something that is a fraction of 1% of our general budget. And this is not something that is making or breaking our budget, it is not something that it means, it probably costs everybody and in town \$1 a year, or, or a month, or whatever the equivalent is, but it's less than the

price of a coke. I mean, I'm going on quite a bit. And I know I'm close to the flame. But that's just my take on it". Council person Johnson states I go back to though a terrible analogy, the squeaky wheel gets the grease. Would it be more beneficial since we already have invested \$20,000 work into it? Should we meet more than once a year, twice a year, because when it was in the building stage it was made quite a bit. And you know, coming from a construction background. I've seen Danville jump in and leap and bounds. And they've got a fantastic lady down there. That knows how to get business to come in there. Poindexter says "Yes, sir. Yes, sir" you mean Cory. Johnson adds "that lady is worth every dime they pay her. To me for return on investment, I think we need to meet more than once or twice a year that needs to be on the forefront. Because I've had citizens here and I've asked myself, I've asked a lot of people, what does Hurt the Town of Hurt have to offer anybody? And if you take your emotions out of it, and you take everything out of it, what do we have to offer? For this power plant man to want to come? What do we have to offer to say to Staunton River Plastics to come which of course they still haven't opened yet and I look forward to the day they do but for this town to continue to survive and thrive. We've got to have some industry and we've got to get our name out there to people. And that's why I'm a big proponent for what we're doing on this water, you know, the Durham property to get on this side of the tracks. So it's just a shot up this hill then shot over that hill? Because that's the one thing we can't just sit here and say we'll man was great when we had Winn Dixie. It was great when we had Sears Roebuck. Yeah, it was, but they're not here. And we got to figure out where to move forward or not. I'm not opposed to \$4,000. And, you know, it's kind of like writing a charity check. I'm all about \$4000 to get in there and fight for it. You know, if I call to get Cory on the team, you know, we need some help on the northern end of the county". Council member Poindexter states "and you know, Cory is Matt's counterpart for the city. Matt is the person for the county. That's the Director of Economic Development. Now they work closely. I mean, the county and city work very closely together anyway. And one thing to keep in mind when you get in this business, it's not just who you know, in terms of who has money, it's who has the Rolodex that people need". Council member Johnson states, "exactly that stuff, right there matters and the thing for me was when I made the decision to run for the Town of Hurt was everything that I heard these people say. So, when I hear this and get up here that we're not commenting on social media, in a professional way. We need to correct it; we don't need to tell

somebody to fact check. If they got something wrong, then we need to present the facts. Not, not an argument, manners. But we got to build a partnership between our council and our town. And the people in this town for citizens to love this town as much as the people on this council, love this town to move this forward", Poindexter states "I've got some things about that that need working on and discussion a little later. And maybe the work session might be a good time to discuss social media and other platforms; I've got some things later for that. And in the meantime, I think the insight you have there, as far as RIFA goes, is really good. One thing to keep in mind, I mean, if there's some kind of sense of urgency for some to come out, I would just respectfully ask that you keep in mind, it's not just a simple vote to come out, there's a process to disengage, you're still going to have to pay another year of annual contribution anyway. And then you're going to have to go through some legal paperwork, there's a cost involved in coming out just like to stay in and plus, the message that you send to the world, the business world out there. I've had great reservations about that, I would encourage everyone to come to see how many SRIFA meetings we have this year, whether it's one or four, and you get a full understanding of what's going on. And then if this needs to be revisited next year, or the following year, maybe that would be time, time to be reconsidered. That's just my thoughts". John Eller asks Gary, "when do you think that there will be some cash flow from the Staunton River Plastics, I think they are our best prospect at this point. Whatever the log jam is, with their equipment, whenever that is resolved, and they become operational, will be a starting point". Poindexter replies "But now one thing to keep in mind with that, not only do we not know what fiscal year that's going to fall in. But anytime you do one of these economic development projects, you have to do an incentive package to get them. Okay, let's keep that in mind. That was the first industry or industry going into that industrial park; it was given a very generous, very gracious incentive package to choose that site over somewhere else. That's been a while and I do not remember all the specifics of that performance agreement. But I'm sure that there were tax waivers and rebates and various types of perks in there for the first few years, or otherwise, we wouldn't even be this far. So one has to work through all of that until those run out until you determine that that point in time, what the revenue stream is going to be for one thing, it's going to be unknown, whether they stay with the existing plan, or whether they expand that operation. Right, if they expand, then there's more there that is taxable. So we would be getting 4% of a

larger M & T tax, for example, through the county than we would if they don't expand. That's not something that can be quantified at this time. It just isn't. This is more of a symbolic thing. It's more of a matter of principle, than it is the \$ amount that we can put on a sheet of paper this year, in my view". Mayor Hodnett says "The other thing you've got to look at and Gary will tell you, I've had mixed emotions about this. I'll admit that, but outside of the SVMP Park in the Town of Hurt, where do we have a place where we could locate a business? I have right now a

list of businesses I've put together that Bob and I have been working on. I've got a list of 133 businesses in industries that we're ready to reach out to, to attract them, try to attract them outside of SRRIFA because, you know right now we're dependent on Matt Rowe to bring in something to us. Bob and I have decided that we're going to start trying to bring in people independent of SRRIFA. We're going to start reaching out, we're already contacting companies, we have a little piece of land at Key Park that the Solar Farm is not using. Now we have 21 acres we just purchased. Outside of this where do we have any usable land? So if you don't do this, then where else do we have to locate somebody? Without the land we have, if one of these people that Bob and I are working with and reaching out to become interested I would naturally try to renegotiate the deal at the SVMP with SRRIFA. Because if we're going to bring industries into the park, we see our investment is more than 4%. You know, we got it. We brought him in, and we talked to them. We want to get more than 4% for that. But that would be my question, where would we bring them to, if we were to get a fish on the line. And we really don't have a lot of property. And that's the bad situation that is in, and you can't sugarcoat it any other way. We just don't have the land. Poindexter replies "Well, if anyone wants to locate in the SVMP, they're going to be doing business with SRRIFA or whether the Town of Hurt is involved or not, unless the county and city decide to dissolve it. Right, because it was created specifically for that purpose as a mechanism or vehicle to do the business between Hurt partners LLC, the owners, and any prospective entity that would go into the SVMP. It was a new concept to all of us. At that time, it was new territory; it was experimental, uncharted territory, if you will. When Altavista pulled out a year or two later, the county and city absorbed that part of it. And we opted to stay at 4%. Because not everybody was comfortable with upping the allocation. At that time until we saw further, if we had had more bites and bigger prospects further along,

I think probably some people would have looked at it differently. But you know, we were taking it easy to get more familiar with it and more comfortable with the concept. And, you know, if there's justifying circumstances in the future, I mean, we can ask, you know, we can go to the board and ask for a bigger share or a smaller share or pull out. I mean, there's a process for any of that. And I would just ask that we think about this very carefully and not rush into anything".

Council person Worley ask "And, \$4000 is what percent of our budget, Poindexter say its \$100,000 budget", Mayor Hodnett states "No he is talking about our budget and it's a fraction, our budget is over million dollars" Poindexter stats "It's a fraction of 1% of our general budget". Steve Worley replies "Really? Well I see both sides. But at some point in time, we'd like to see a return. So, I guess the next question is, how long do we keep saying that at some point in time, something has come our way? Or, you know, you might say we are throwing it out the window. Well there's this next budget coming up as well, you know it's going to be some head scratching". Council person Blackstock says "Kathy in answering your question I'd be interested in being on the board". Steve Worley says "I do not want to be on the board but I'd like to know when the meeting is. I mean, anybody could go, right"? Poindexter replies "yes", Worley says "I'd like to sit in on meetings, just listen". Poindexter says "It's an intergovernmental entity, and it follows the same procedures that we have here. So, you know, sometimes there's a closed session, sometimes there isn't. And you have to be a member to go into a closed session. Other than that, it's open to the public". Worley says "other than that a version of what's in the closed session will come out in the open". Poindexter states "one way or the other it's an extension of being on council that it's specific to that issue". Worley "you might be right, with your way of thinking. And I guess I'd have to just be educated more on it. But I just hate to see that, you know, the citizens Hurt just keep pouring money in a

sinkhole, so to speak. But maybe I need to be more educated on what's going on". Poindexter asks, "Gary, do you feel like Bob would be okay, if we gave Mike the alternative"? "Membership"? Mayor Hodnett replies, "I'm sure he probably would be". Council person Kathy Keesee says "I think we should do that. Do I need to make that motion?" Mayor Hodnett replies "yeah, I mean, that we're looking for who's going to represent the town" Poindexter replies "We need a motion for two directors and one alternate". Worley says "is that the way it's

going down? Mike and Gary", Kathy says "Gary, Gary, and then Mike is the alternate. Is that correct"? Blackstock says "I think we need some new blood on the board, and I would like to vote, Gary Poindexter says "Yeah, I'm fine either way. If you want. I mean, I've got other things to work on if you really want to do that". Mayor Hodnett "Okay, so if Gary Poindexter feels that way Okay". Mayor Hodnett says "At the end, I need a recommendation to that effect. Kathy Keesee makes a motion." I'd like to make a motion for our representatives to be Gary Hodnett. Our mayor and Mike Blackstock, a councilmember and as an alternate Gary Poindexter. Mayor Hodnett asks, "do I hear a second" and Steve Worley seconds the motion. Mayor Hodnett calls the vote Poindexter yes, Keesee yes, Blackstock yes, Johnson yes, and Worley yes. Hodnett says done.

### **Old Business:**

- Solar contract that was in your packet. Mayor Hodnett asks "John, do you want to speak on this?" Attorney Eller "We discussed everything in the solar lease, contract a couple of meetings ago, and we had, like the council are good enough agreement with the terms of the lease for more information about the road, the issues of the road, the damage to the road, mud, and so forth. And we put that to the Pivot folks. They have responded with a road plan that has more than just the provisions as to the pavement maintenance, or here's a section on that says that representatives of the town and pivot and VDOT, we go out and we examine the road condition and establish all of the pavement before you can start and then at the end of construction again to determine if anything has to be done to bring it back up to the condition it was in before. So it sounds like that's a reasonable approach to that. As far as the mud? No, it's not going to be possible to say that you can't have any. What we're talking about is mud that would cause the road to be dangerous and slippery. And that came from what Gary has found out from the county they typically work with the state police but in our case it would be up to our police to enforce the clean road or do clear it up because it's administered to the by traveling public, but I think they're that they would be going back a road in there that's all wet. So it's not going to be a mud road. It can't operate a mud road up that hill. So I don't think that's going to really be an issue with the mud. But as you see, we've got this five pages. Yeah. Thank you. Mayor Hodnett "let me clarify what John was saying a while ago, as far as the mud in the road, Jason would inspect the road. And if he deemed that there may be a hazard, he

would contact them. And they would bring in somebody to clean the road, and get it back up to where we felt like it was no danger at all. So, Pivots is really good. I think they're easy to get along with and work with. I don't doubt that they wouldn't bring somebody in right away. In this addendum dated December 22, is acceptable to the council, then we're going to make a separate agreement getting signed by parties in the lease would be ready to be signed by the mayor. Mayor Hodnett "Do I hear a motion to move forward". Gary Poindexter "now, this looks good to me. This looks good. And this addendum is not all that's up for approval. And I went looking at a final approval permitting lease on the lease agreement. Yeah. The ones we've already reviewed". Mayor "correct". Gary Poindexter, "Alright, so those need to be done separately? Or can we approve them together for an LLC 6 & 15". Mayor, "I think you could make a motion to do the pivot 6, and 15. Or you could make a separate motion for each." Attorney Eller "So either way, same effect, because at that point, the mayor is going to execute the leases on behalf of the town". Poindexter "Now, I'm assuming from what I remember before, that this is a last sizable hurdle to turn them loose to get to work up here". Mayor "yep, there's no more to it. Because I know we've already been through the SU P last year. " Mayor "the lease option is all that's left, this is the execution of the lease option". Poindexter "Well, this is one of the best prospects that we have on the table; we have had in a long time to bring some revitalization in the future for our town. It's my pleasure to make a motion to approve the lease agreement, including the addendum as presented for number 6 and number 15. LLC with pivot energy". Mayor Hodnett "do I hear a second". Mr. Blackstock seconded the motion, Mr. Poindexter? Yes. Mr. Blackstock Yes. Mr. Johnson Yes. Mr. Worley Yes. Mrs. Keesee yes Mayor Hodnett "All right, moving right along, report from legal counsel". John Eller "that's our report and nothing else to report. The work on this survey was already discussed". Mayor Hodnett "well, thank you". Poindexter "I have a question for you. Anything new from Muni- code?" Mr. Eller "No. I haven't heard anything since the last time I communicated with them. Well, they said they're still working on it". Poindexter replies "Okay, just, just asking. It seems that that's been in their hands for some time now. And that's just another thing I'm anxious to see done". Kathy Keesee, "it's been a long time, and it's a lot of time and work went into that". Poindexter say "yeah, but it's good to see something going on and their legal team going through every one of our ordinances. And that's a ton of work".

Paul Johnson," did the insurance rider get taken care of for Faith Christian"? Mayor Hodnett replies, "Ellen's out and she would be handling that and she's aware of it". Paul Johnson replies, "All right", Mayor Hodnett states "Ellen and Kelsey are not here, so we will not have a treasurer or clerk's report". Mayor Hodnett says, "next Public Works Joe Smith ", Joe Smith adds "I had 2 signs fixed, one on Dogwood and 1 on Prospect. Now we're working on a water billing report. And I have that locked and ready to go out while also doing my monthly reports for the MOR for the water tower, as we turn into VDH plus all my journals for the start of the New Year. That's mainly what I've been working on since I read meters at the end of last month". Poindexter asks, "Joe, I have a quick question for you. And it's just as information is curiosity, there's no problem. I know that when we got the radio raised meters in the new system, people were impressed at its ability to track usage patterns and find leaks that people didn't think they had. Several were pleasantly surprised. Are you continuing to see more of that? Or has it plateaued? I mean, how's that continuing? How's that going"? Joe Smith answers "It's about the same. It's starting to plateau and people forget about it. They always say I don't have a leak. They're more acceptable to what I'm trying to explain and show them with graphs. And a lot of people have accepted it. I'll tell them they have to be okay, but you're still getting some calls for it. It's still proven to be effective". Mayor Hodnett replied, "we actually get a lot of calls from people who actually ask for him to take a look at their water and see if they do have a leak. So, it's working. It can tell you what hour of the night you have a leak and how many gallons of water went through your meter. If you are not up to using water, then it's self-explanatory". Poindexter says, "that's phenomenal. Thank you. I just wanted to ask about this information". Mayor Hodnett "Jason has the police report for December". Chief Lovelace replies, "you see the calls for service and one thing I need to put on the report was we had an explosive threat this past Sunday. I received it, it came to me in the email. As soon as I received that email, I contacted the mayor, to advise him so we could contact our staff. We didn't want any problems with them coming down to Town Hall. As far as that goes, I worked with the Virginia State Police fusion center on Sunday morning, they came down and we did a walk around the building to make sure that we didn't have any to be concerned about as far as anybody entering the facility. After that I asked for Mutual Aid and we brought in an explosive dog. We walked through the facility and the garage to confirm that we did not have any threats. At this time, we do not have any. That's

about as far as I can tell you because there were other entities involved in that threat and I can't disclose any more information about this. As far as others you see our training, and I was able to get some training about constitutional rights. This was put on at James Madison, there were a bunch of donors who put this on and it was limited seating, I was able to get a seat for that. We did not pay a dime for that. We had a bunch of attorneys coming in to teach us constitutional rights. Our Christmas for Kids Program we were able to assist 17 children in our community at Christmas time. So we did. We were also able to help Altavista with their shop with a cop. I think they had a tremendous turnout of children who needed assistance this year. So, there's a lot of people out there and a lot of other departments as well doing this. I met with a bunch of contractors this past month for the basement remodel. And today was our new officer's first day at the academy. So, I talked to him and he was on time reporting. I also told him to make sure he's early. Because they're really tight on being early, if you're not, it's three strikes and you're out, no tolerance. Council person Worley asked, "So do you think there's a pretty good chance that you will get to the bottom of this'.

Chief Lovelace "I have information and that's all I can say, I have information on it, I felt like with the remodel here, I felt really good with our security because we have are limited on who accesses our facility it doesn't mean that someone can go ahead and drop something to the side. But as far as anybody accessing our facility I felt good, because the email said "it was in our facility and I feel pretty, pretty good. So yeah". Steve Worley "Thus far you think it's pretty secure, but the basement is as far as secure we have to get the construction on the way in order to basically secure it". Lovelace says "Yes sir". Worley says "Because basically, all you have is a garage door that's your security, which is not a lot right". Jason says "Okay". Worley "The threat that came in was so much that something was being planted". Chief Lovelace "so I can tell you that the email stated that there were two explosive devices" Worley asked "in our facility?" Lovelace replies "Yes sir. We're in different times, we're not small-town USA anymore". Steve Worley says "with the remodel were there surveillance cameras watching the outside?" Chief Lovelace "Yes sir. So we do have a camera system going in but they have not completed the hook-up and I'm waiting on a quote for a key fob system to actually make entry into our secure rooms, one's going to be the server room and the evidence room". Worley replied "and that was included in the remodel quote"? Chief Lovelace that specifically was not included in the remodel. It does include cameras outside". Blackstock asks, "We have cameras outside?" Chief

Lovelace "yes we've got cameras outside" Council person Blackstock "under equipment repair and maintenance we got a lot of \$4,000 in the budget we got roughly \$3,600 left. I think we need to get a quote on installing bright LED lights outside the front and the back. it needs to light up the parking lot". Council person Johnson asks "do you feel like the threat email came from laptop or from a cell phone?" Chief Lovelace "I don't know". I'm just curious, I'm not surprised because there's so much knowledge now that a lot of politicians have been getting hit with the same exact thing. But I do agree and I'm sure you do, I worked in convenience stores for a very short period of time. When we drive by at night there are shadows and dark spots everywhere that someone can hide in. We need to light it up to prevent possible issues. It's so easy to miss somebody having a dog on a leash, I thank it behooves us at town hall to light it up good so that we can also reduce the risk of John having to represent us in court. Mayor Hodnett "talking about that bomb threat. One of the things that Jones did was early on he put staff through a class on how to respond to threats and even to COVID. When we had the two exposures down here, we were able to shut down Town Hall in a matter of minutes. The same would apply if staff were here and took a bomb threat, staff is well trained on what to do, how to get out and secure the building. So that's the good news. The bad news is, it's probably not going to stop, and it's probably the first of more coming down the pipe. But you have to take each of them seriously. And one of the things that we need to do is beef up our weak spots, and our weak spots are our water works, pump station, and our tank. Because, if anybody is going to come in here and attempt to do something, it's going to be the water supply. So we need to have cameras, and we need to be monitoring these stations. We also need to know if anybody's going on that property that's not an employee. And that means we're going to have to put some cameras in our system for monitoring our assets and critical infrastructure. So that's another thing that we're going to have to put in the budget for this coming year. Jason I'm sure we can run this through your system for the monitoring", Chief Lovelace "yes no problem". "This is a conversation that has to take place". Gary Poindexter states "I agree I hate to have the conversation about this. But in this case, I'm going to have to agree with the mayor about targets. If you stop and think for a minute, if you were a person who has it in mind to commit an act of terrorism, criminal activity, or whatever, infrastructure is one of the things you would look for, not just buildings". Mayor Hodnett states "Well guys our infrastructure is weak". Poindexter states, "There are some people in this world

now that have extremely serious problems on a scale that most of us can't really get our brains around. They do not care who or what they hurt, or how bad. Yes, infrastructure is. You know, that's an invitation for that type of thinking. Whether it's water, wastewater power, cybersecurity, the list goes on.

We better keep that in mind.

- Also is there anything new on refuse collection? Mayor Hodnett, "I sent John the RFP today for him to take a look though it's about 20 pages long. And you know, we'll start getting it out to the companies once we settle on the verbiage and make sure we're okay on all points, we just want to make sure we are covered on all points. And we want to make sure that they're well healed on insurance and anywhere there may be problems that we're going to be covered. For example, we don't want their trucks doing any damage to our cans, roads, or anything else. Someone in the audience questions has anyone made any complaints about the buzzards on the water tower? Mayor Hodnett answered yes a couple years ago.
- Several conversations take place in the audience about buzzards etc. Alright, anybody have anything else? Thank you all for coming. We adjourned at 8:31p.m.

Mayor Gary Hodnett

*Gary Hodnett*

Clerk Kelsie Anderson

*Kelsie Anderson*