

Town of Hurt, Virginia  
Council Meeting Minutes  
September 5, 2023

Hurt Town Council held its monthly business meeting Tuesday, September 5, 2023, at the Hurt Volunteer Fire Department. The meeting opened at 6:00 pm by Mayor Gary Hodnett with a quorum present.

## Roll Call

Members present: Mr. Gary Poindexter, Mr. Bob Majure, Mr. Jeremiah Knowles, Mr. Pierre Richard, Mr. Glenn Mitchell, and Mrs. Kathy Keesee via phone call.

## Closed Session

A motion was made to enter closed session to discuss personnel and prospective business as authorized by VA FOIA § 2.2-3711 A (1, 3, 5,).

Motion: Mr. Poindexter                      Second: Mr. Majure                      Passage: Unanimous

Council entered closed session at 6:02 pm and exited closed session at approximately 7:12 pm.

A motion was made to return to open session and to certify that only personnel and prospective business matters were discussed during closed session, as required by VA FOIA § 2.2-3712 (D).

Motion: Mr. Poindexter                      Second: Mr. Majure                      Passage: Unanimous

## Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: Mr. Poindexter

## Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Gary Hodnett

## Welcome/Opening Remarks

Mayor Hodnett stated we have a good crowd, we will get to you guys in just a second.

## Outcomes of Closed

A motion was made to that we add to the employee handbook a trial parental leave policy as discussed in closed session effective November 1<sup>st</sup> 2023.

Motion: Mr. Majure                      Second: Mr. Knowles                      Passage: Unanimous

A motion was made to we bring on Mike Jones from major security consultants to consult for the town on public safety security consulting, emergency management consulting, grant writing assistance, policy development, economic development, crisis management, land use consulting, public health and emergency consulting, and General Government consulting, but primarily grant writing at \$0 cost.

Motion: Mr. Knowles                      Second: Mr. Majure                      Passage: 4-2

(Mr. Poindexter & Mr. Richard with a no vote)

Mrs. Johnson stated you all have gone against what the citizens have talked to you about in regard to this gentleman. You have gone against it, you're not at all concerned with what the citizens of this Town have spoken for and want. Mrs. Neal stated we took it out of the budget, I know you say its free. Mayor Hodnett replied it is primarily to do with grant money. Mr. Neal stated there is all kind of people you can

hire to write a grant if you need one, depending on what type of grant it is, you can hire them. Mayor Hodnett replied you can hire them, but this one is free. Mrs. Johnson stated y'all have not let this man go and live his life in Northern Virginia, or Richmond area. Is there not someone hired by Pittsylvania County to represent us in the area of grants? Mrs. Worley stated do we not have staff that have time to work on grants? Mayor Hodnett replied we do not have staff that has the time to work on grants. We have talked to Pittsylvania County to bring in some of their grant writers as well. We're working with the Brownfield people on grants as well.

#### Consent Agenda

Mayor Hodnett stated we are moving on to the Consent Agenda. Mrs. Neal stated oh it doesn't matter what we think. Mayor Hodnett replied absolutely it matters what you think. It matters what all 1200 people in the Town think, everybody matters. Mr. Neal replied evidently not, we already stated we don't want him. Mayor Hodnett stated we have 1200 people in Town. Mrs. Johnson stated they aren't here. One of them told me today he doesn't come because our voices aren't heard and he gets frustrated, so he doesn't come anymore and he's a former mayor. Mayor Hodnett asked if he heard a motion to pass the August expenditures and minutes as is.

A motion was made to pass as is.

Motion: Mr. Knowles

Second: Mr. Majure

Passage: Unanimous

#### Additions to the Agenda

Mayor Hodnett stated Pierre wanted to add a reading about some VML policies on council members and requirements for classes. Mr. Richard stated it's a resource that I came across on the web, and it is published by the Virginia Municipal League. It is a handbook for Virginia mayor's and council members. It seems to be very informative, and I think also probably members of the public. They have a website, and you can look this up. It has various chapters on local government, working as a team, managing conflict and cycles of council leadership, legal quirks, economic development, we have everything from animal control to airports. Another nice thing is, each chapter also shows the list of resources and links that are that are related to the Senate. One thing that the mayor and I talked about, this is something that they that they have, and this guy talks about the two-year council leadership cycle. It gives the public a clear eye in theory of what the cycle of business is. I recommend to everyone if they have a chance, or if they're interested to look up the Virginia Municipal League website and look up their handbook for Virginia mayors and councilmembers. Mr. Knowles asked if we had a link for that on our website? Mayor Hodnett replied no, but we can get it.

#### Public Comment

Paul Johnson stated I chair the zoning appeals committee, and Dogwood Trailer Park has worked extremely hard to meet everything we put in front of them to bring that park into guidelines, town ordinances. The biggest discussion that we had with the owner's rep was that we were holding them accountable for town ordinances that the rest of the town wouldn't even abiding by. I'm going to ask you guys to make sure that you have the rest of the town abide by the ordinances just like the owners of that trailer park because they have cleaned brush, cut grass, weed eat, haul trash, and they brought dumpsters in. I took 15 minutes last week and collected about 30 addresses and emailed it to the town on ordinance violations in regard to grass and weeds. Second thing is if we're going to follow with what Mike Jones says from his letter, and we'll get into the purchase of the shopping center where we're going to bring these wonderful businesses in, but like Mike Jones says, if you don't have solid law enforcement with at least five officers, no businesses will come. I think we're putting the cart before the

horse until we have Jason some help, where we can cover this town by ourselves who's going to come and take inhabitants of that when we can't provide 24 round the clock service.

Wanda Dews stated you say you don't have time; no one has time to write grants, well why don't you do a time study on the office personal, that is going to tell you exactly of every minute of every day goes. Number 2, I just want to announce that I'm going to run for town council this fall as a write in, thank you.

Rainy Clay stated I got a couple things. I need to know what is the rule about people taking their trash cans in? I think years ago, it was that they had to be taken in by 10 o'clock on Friday night and they would be charged \$5 a day fine every day that it sat out on the curb. Nobody on West Spencer takes their garbage cans in until the middle of the week, if they even take it at all. I'd like for somebody to check this out and see, because if that's the case then we could be charging these people \$5 a day then we need to start collecting. Back last year when we had bad storms, I'd stop and pick them up off the road so that I could go around them. The dog on Spring Street is still running loose and it doesn't have a collar. Another question, I'd like to know when the plastic plant is going to open? It has been sitting there, when was it supposed to open, 2022 or 2021? Mayor Hodnett replied I think it was around spring of 2022, then it backed up to the fall. Mrs. Clay asked, "have you heard anything? Mayor Hodnett replied they were down here last meeting and addressed all of that. They are working on it as fast as they can. Mrs. Clay stated the last thing I got, back a couple months ago I was at Council and this discussion of hiring Mike Jones back or getting him back, John, if I'm not mistaken, I hope somebody will correct me, John made the remark that he would have to apply for the job and he had to go through all the hoops and everything and submit a letter. If this is the case, you all have voted to bring him back, is he going to have to do a application? Mayor Hodnett replied he is working for free, so he is not an employee of the town. He's volunteering his time and it was under the guidelines that Jeremiah read, which is primarily grant writing. Mr. Neal replied he also read a whole list of stuff. Mr. Poindexter stated it may be helpful to read that list because I don't think many people heard it. Mayor Hodnett replied the primary thing is grant writing. Mrs. Mayhew asked how long is this free service? Mayor Hodnett replied until we don't need him any longer. Mrs. Mayhew stated if he starts charging, we are going to tell him goodbye? Mayor Hodnett replied yeah. Mr. Knowles stated the list was public safety security consulting, emergency management consulting, grant writing assistance, policy development, economic development, crisis management, land use consulting, public health and emergency consulting, and General Government consulting. Mrs. Clay asked why would someone supposedly of his qualifications want to come back to the Town of Hurt when he knows people don't like him and work for free? Mayor Hodnett replied I can't answer that other than he feels like he has a skill set that would be beneficial to the town. Mr. Knowles stated he is a third party consultant, it is on him. Mrs. Johnson stated when you all heard the citizens voices why you would override the citizens voices for this man, because for whatever reason, he doesn't want to let us go, and people surrounding us have gladly watched him go and let him go. He doesn't want to let us go so now he's offering this for free and you all can't let him go, he can't let us go and the people that matter, the citizens, don't want him. Mayor Hodnett replied if he can aid us in getting hundreds of 1000s of dollars worth of grant money in here to put into the plaza or to put in our water system and stuff like that, why wouldn't you want to take advantage of that? Mrs. Johnson replied is he going to aid us in a way that we utilize our local people as well, or just the people that he has special contact with? Mayor Hodnett replied you say our local people, define that? Mrs. Johnson stated we have contractors all around our community, Chatham, Altavista, and Gretna. They

haven't heard from the Town of Hurt about anything, but we know that Jones has called in favors from his people. Mayor Hodnett replied we are working on grants now and he's going to be finding us additional grants other than what we're working on. We haven't shopped out anything as far as any work over the plaza yet other than we've had four roofers come in to take a look at the roof. We're doing some stuff like that, but we haven't got down to working on anything at all. We're still chasing grants because when we get ready to start that work, we've got to have that money in here. Mrs. Neal asked if he was going to apologize to the citizens, the way he talked about the town at that meeting back in February? Mr. Neal stated also that report you asked him for? Mrs. Neal stated that was a total embarrassment. Didn't you say that John said it had to be made public? Mayor Hodnett replied yes, and the newspaper has a copy of it. Mrs. Neal stated well it's a total embarrassment.

Steve Worley started at 605 Spring Street. One thing that I want to mention at the last business meeting Mike Jones came up and Mr. Poindexter stated, "Well, I really don't want to go down that road, thank you sir for saying that. Thank you, sir, for making a motion that we end his contract way back when we were doing the budget. The town applauded when the man was voted out, now your town council and mayor see fit to bring the man back against the will of the citizens of Hurt. Now you say there is 1200 people, this right here represents the majority of what the Town wants. If you bring him back against the will of the people of Hurt, and they have made it plain, how can they make it any plainer, if he came back I would like to make an appointment with him and take him over here to the English park and id like to see him walk on water the way y'all think he can do it. Y'all are so wrapped up in this guy. He's not the only one that can write a grant. He's not the only one that can search for money to help the town and you say he is going to do it free, all he's going to do when you bring him back, is keep a terminal in the Town of Hurt and keep all the citizens in an uproar. Now you need to can this guy, and Gary you need to quit, I mean you requested that he gave you a summary of what he accomplished of whatever he did. The first paragraph was all his credentials, what he's done at the request of the mayor and then all he did was blast the town council and the mayors before of what a poor job they done. He said the only way you are going to have Hurt safe is to hire/ fire policeman. How in the name of father are they going to pay that out of 650 households that pay taxes. The only way we are going to do that is we are going to increase taxes on the citizens that's here. You don't have enough citizens in this town to raise taxes enough to pay five cops. If that is the advice he is going to give, I don't see where we need his advice. Above all why won't this town council and mayor listen to the will of the people that we don't want him? Why is it so hard to understand? No answer, you sit up there, and you decide well, this is going to be the best for the town, regardless of what the majority of the people want. That's not how government runs. That's not how democracy is. If you bring that man back, and put him in, and if he wants to pay us, I still wouldn't want him, but he is going to do it free. If you sit there and you decide, this is what I'm going to do regardless of what the citizens want, then we don't have a democracy, we have a dictatorship. That's what we got. Now this lady said she is running; I am running also. I don't want to be a fuss on the terminal. We can work together, but we have to listen to the citizens of Hurt. You have to listen to what the people want, and you can't just sit up there and run over top of them and expect them to smile and like it. I think my 3 minutes is up. Mr. Johnson stated if I can add one more thing, I'd like y'all to keep in mind the shopping center. Rustburg middle school cost \$56 million to build, \$100,000 will get you about one quarter of that roof done. It is going to take more than \$100,000 in grants you're going to have to get several million dollars worth of grants to make that eye sore into something where a high-end store is going to want to come.

## New Business

Public Works assistance: Mayor Hodnett stated during closed we discussed a public work assistance and advertising for that, and discussion? Mr. Poindexter stated I think a good place to start would be to justify, spell out the specifics of what you have in mind for the new person, the scope of services for an employee not a consultant. We have to justify what we're doing to the public and then we've got to look at where exactly we're going to get to money for that. I will start by saying I've looked over it. I understand that there's always a need for more people to do things, I get that, that that's not the issue. When I looked at the budget, to bring another person whether its full or part time, or either one public works, I've got to look at the general fund and got to look at the enterprise fund. As we've discussed before, they don't typically cross over and subsidize one another. We've already been through the debacle of trying to split employees between the two. That's not good and I'm opposed to that. I've looked over the general and the only place in there to acquire a limited amount of money to fund a part time position is a part time patrolman which were not advertising for, and that is only about \$6,000-\$7,000, something like that, if I read it right. We're going to need a lot more than \$6,532 is what is in the budget. We going to need a lot more money than that to fund a part time position. If it is going to come from the enterprise instead then we're at the same impasse. Where are we going to get the money, I'm not opposed to doing it. I'm just looking for a way to do it. Mayor Hodnett asked if there was any other discussion? No comment. Here is what we are up against, we have a consent order by the state we have to adhere to it. He has lead and copper regulations that he has to keep up with, he can not keep up. Today for example, he spent more time out working on water meters than he did on the paperwork. Number two, we've been warned by state because of phase one, that if we do not keep this paperwork up, that funding will be pulled. We're still under consent order that we have to fully fund not within paying 75%. We have got to have help to keep that stuff caught up and in place at the given times that the state tells us it has to be done. We have no choice at this point in time. He can not do it by himself. Council, do I have any volunteers from you guys to come down and take on that workload to help him? Mr. Neal asked what about the two secretaries you got down there at the office, why can't one of them do it? Mayor Hodnett replied they have other responsibilities that they are taking care of during the day. They try to help all they can, they absolutely do, yes, but it's not enough. Mrs. Johnson asked, "could monies from the shopping center have funded this endeavor, had you not purchased the shopping center? Mayor Hodnett replied possibly yes. Mr. Knowles stated well it was ARPA funds. Mr. Poindexter stated that depends on how you look at it because it was federal ARPA funds that made that possible. We explained all that at the time and during the budget discussion, that we were not pulling money from other things, we were not raising taxes and fees for the purpose of acquiring the plaza. That is a fact. The Plaza is not a liability, it is an income source to the town. In fact, we were able to balance the budget without a tax increase by using some of the rental income from the plaza to do that, as opposed to doing something else. We have very limited options to revenue. This town needs revenue in extreme is an understatement. We don't have the options that many of our counterparts have under no circumstances, what I back up on the propriety of acquiring the plaza and looking to it as a source of income. Now, some of that money does have to go back into improving it so that we can get more tenants, which will in turn increase the income from it even further. Now, as far as what everyone is doing in the office, it's easy to say, well, we used to have one person or we used to have two persons, or we use to have whoever, well, that didn't work well. We've learned from that rather painfully in which they are still cleaning the mess up. It's barely adequate to have two people because finally we're actually doing what should have been done all these years and nobody even realized that it either wasn't being

done or it was being half done. These ladies are spread thin. As far as grant writing is concerned, I will speak to that. Grant writing is a separate skill. It is a specific skill that a person has to be trained in a lot of times and you have to be certified and qualified to do that. I'm a writer, a number cruncher, and a science person, but I would have to take a class on how to write a grant. That's something that you have to pay someone to do that knows what they're doing, or you're going to get yourself in over your head in short order. With our budget, we can't be expected to have a grant writer. Irrespective of any conversation about Mike Jones, I do believe we need to move on past that, but as far as the concerns over grant writing being done in house, I don't know of a town in this part of Virginia that has a grant writer on staff unless it's a very large one with a very large budget. This is not something that a simple band aid solution will work for. We've got a situation here that Joe has got more to see after than one person can reasonably be expected to do. The workload has increased on our folks from what it was several years ago, so what worked when I was mayor or when Lillian was mayor will not work now. It's not going to fit, the situation has changed, time has changed. I do understand and agree that we need to get him at least some part-time help, but now we've got a serious problem here about how we're going to pay for it. To me, that's what this discussion is about, is how we're going to distribute this, how we're going to get it out of general, or out of enterprise. We could look at more off the rental income from the plaza, but how far does that go. On the waterside we haven't used very much of the consultant budget for that, but at the same time, I don't know how much more we're going to need. Where we are, we got to have a dollar amount that we need to fund this position and then we've got to figure out where we're going to get it, but cutting existing services or existing positions, or putting more on the people we already have, is not a viable option.

Mr. Majure stated one thing that I don't believe we got fully covered in our budget that we built in June was the solar farms lease. At what point is it going to be at its highest level of roughly \$40,000 a year? Mayor Hodnett replied two years. Mr. Majure stated right now we have it budgeted for \$5,000, is it going to stay that way or are we going to get anymore this year? Mayor Hodnett replied no that is the option payment. Mr. Poindexter stated it was budgeted based on what was already in the agreement for that, it will go up in the future. That won't help us immediately here in the next month as to how to deal with this. The solar is promising but that is a timescale in years not months. Mayor Hodnett stated we all know where it has to come from, we can dance around the issue all we want. You know where its got to come from, its got to come out of reserves. That's going to be the cheapest way to do it because if we get in a bind with the state, the fires are going to be far superior to anything we take out of reserves. I am dead set against it, but I think this is an emergency that would require it. Mr. Majure asked out of water? Mr. Poindexter replied it would have to be out of the enterprise reserves. That's the only way I see to accomplish this. There's not any wiggle room in this budget in other items that is substantial enough to make a difference with this. We've had discussions about reserves, about using them and not using them. Mayor Hodnett replied I hate it. Mr. Poindexter replied, "I don't think any of us like that. Mayor Hodnett stated but I like the fines less. Mr. Poindexter stated if you get hit with fines or any other complicating factor then it is going to cost more than what it would pull out of the reserves. Mayor Hodnett stated Joe you know what you're up against. You sat in on the meeting 3 weeks ago with the engineering firm and the Virginia Department of Health and they are not giving us any wiggle room at all on this are they? Joe replied no they said they want a fast and timely manner with all the paperwork. It takes me 3 days to sit at the computer to find out all of the information, and if I am doing that then how can I go out in the field and take care of anything? Mayor Hodnett replied you dealt with two meters today. Joe replied yeah and that is not the maintenance that I got to get out. I still got to circulate all my

street valves on the fire hydrants. How can I get out there? Mayor Hodnett replied that's what I mean. Joe stated then I have maintenance on my pumps and my leak letters that I have to jump on everyday and mail out. The other day I sent out 35, I got to type up the letters and all. Mayor Hodnett stated that's why we want to make sure the person we get on board gets their class 5 license as well. Mr. Poindexter stated whoever comes on board needs to acquire that in a reasonable period of time. They need to be able to do anything Joe can do on his days off. Mayor Hodnett asked how much vacation time have you had since you have been on board? Joe replied none. Mayor Hodnett asked how long have you been with us? Joe replied 2 years. Mayor Hodnett stated 2 years, because he doesn't feel comfortable leaving. Mrs. Neal asked why can't you sell the plaza, you said you were offered 4 times what you paid for it. Mayor Hodnett replied I got a answer for that at the end of the meeting. He hasn't taken a vacation, he doesn't feel comfortable doing it. We have got to have people in here to help with this stuff. Mr. Majure stated that is what reserves are for. Mayor Hodnett replied I hate it. Mrs. Neal stated we need that worse than we need the plaza. Mr. Neal stated Mr. Mayor I thought you said you wouldn't pull anything out of reserves, that is one thing you would not do? Mayor Hodnett replied I hate it, absolutely totally hate it. I am not going to answer anymore questions until we get to the end. Mr. Majure stated that is the only way other than to raise rates. Mr. Knowles stated pull it out of reserves. Mr. Poindexter stated I don't see any other way I mean, I've looked over both sides, and they're just not anything there. We just need to have some kind of idea of how much money that we're talking about. Also keep in mind that whoever that person is, one, we need to know whether and I'm presuming that we will start with this as a part time thing, maybe I'm wrong, and the other thing is they certainly need to be cross trained to cover office absences, things of that nature. Mayor Hodnett stated they are going to come in and train under Kelsie for Southern and learn the database and the system because general is completely separate and different from water. Alright so we know what we are going to do there.

Approve updated Rates & Fees Schedule for advertising

Mayor Hodnett stated do I hear a motion to approve the rates and fees? Mr. Poindexter stated this is a clean copy that I went through and added in all of the notes that was emailed to me about things that weren't picked up on the first draft.

A motion was made to approve and enact the revised master list rates and fees for fiscal year 23-24 as presented.

Motion: Mr. Poindexter

Second: Mr. Knowles

Passage: Unanimous

Building Update on Town Hall

Mayor Hodnett stated the update on Town Hall we should be back in the renovated building by October 5<sup>th</sup>, so that is moving along real good.

Plaza Update (Brownfield testing Sept. 5,6,7) Marketing Study & Conceptual Renderings, Roofers, Contacts, and Digital Road Sign.

Mayor Hodnett stated the Brownfield testing will be taking place September 5, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>. We have a market study going on and part of that Brownfield grant is for a marketing study, as well as conceptual renderings on what it would look like with different designs. John just finished going through the leases, and we are getting ready to work on and pass new contracts for the lessee. The Department of Energy grant that we had initially started working on, we found out one day this week that we did not make it to round two for that. We will immediately continue with some of the other grants that we've got in place and working on those. Mr. Majure asked if there was any reason why? Mayor Hodnett replied they don't give you a reason, they just said that we didn't make it to round 2. One of the things that I think

we want to do is the bushes at the end of the building. They're on the townhall side of the building and cut all that stuff down. Mr. Poindexter stated that sign out there has been a eyesore for years, I think that is fairly high on the list as well? Mayor Hodnett we got some people coming in on signs, talking about digital signs and stuff like that and take a look at that. We've got several people that are interested in coming in and filling in some of the vacant suites. We've got one that is a restaurant taking a look as well. We've reached out to 10 to 12 businesses, we've actually got one business that has given us case number for the Winn Dixie building, they are starting to take a look at that with some interest. We talked to the county about grants as well. The county told us that they're fully behind us on this, they see the need for the plaza in the town and especially as a good form of economic development. They are involved with working with on grants and the Western Piedmont Plan District is involved with that.

#### Trunk or Treat October 28<sup>th</sup>

Mayor Hodnett stated we are going to have the trunk or treat again in the parking lot on October 28.

#### PD "Christmas Stew for Kids" November 4<sup>th</sup>

Mayor Hodnett stated November 4, Jason you're going to be doing the stew for the kids Christmas correct? Jason replied first weekend in November, yeah.

#### December 3rd Christmas at Town Hall & Christmas Dinner Date

Mayor Hodnett stated Sunday, December 3, we're going to have Christmas at Town Hall for all of the kids and will have Santa Claus. Everybody is welcomed. Hope you guys will attend.

Mayor Hodnett stated and Paul you mentioned the roofing on the plaza, you're right, it is going to be a big number, but we got grants, the county is working with us on it. They are willing to throw some money in for that. Like I said we got four different people coming down that the county uses. We're in the process of taking quotes and all for that.

#### Report from Legal Counsel – Attorney Eller

Attorney Eller stated well, we've been pretty busy in the last month. We had the special use permit that was discussed and agreed to for the two solar projects at the key Park and I prepared the actual special use permit document for both projects. We have that ready to be formalized, but it's effective on August 15<sup>th</sup>. They're going to be able to go ahead and get those projects going and some income flowing to the town from that. We also did a form lease for use on all the tenants at the Plaza as they come up for renewal and also any new ones that come in. We'll have a lease that we can use for all of those. I did the contract for the new policeman, which we now have ready for him. He is going to start September 11<sup>th</sup>. Also worked with the Board of Zoning Appeals a lot on the variance application that was made by the people that own the Pine Acres Trailer Park. We've written up those documents and the Board of Zoning Appeals will meet tomorrow night and formally adopt those so we'll have that done.

#### Reports from Staff

Treasurer –Ellen Brumfield reported that in the general account, we have \$355,652.69, of that \$139,217.19 is our APRA funds that's outstanding and will collect and 2024. That leaves us a balance and operating of \$216,435.50. Town Council members, have you reviewed the July bank reconciliation, any questions on it? No comment. I will pass this around so that every one of the members can sign and date it and we'll put this in our minutes for the recording purposes. Town Council members have you



reviewed the August 2023 check listing /check register, any questions on that? No comment. I'll pass this around so that it can be signed and dated and recorded in minutes for record purposes.

Administrative - Kelsie Anderson reported that thus far the water collections are at 75%. I received the Pittsylvania County Real Estate and Personal Property books last week, so those have all been mapped into southern with any updated vehicles and houses. I am currently waiting to received the 2023 SCC and railroad amounts. Once I receive those I will be ready to bill for 2023 taxes.

Public Works – Joe Smith reported that he has been working with the engineers on a lot of projects, trying to gather up all the information they need to make their report to the state. I think that is coming up at the end of the year. Also been working with cut offs putting together the cut off list. A lot of people owe from the last water billing. Been working with leak letters and sending them out, a lot of people have leaks. Some have been going on for like 8 months, and others want to jump on it, but they don't know how, so I have to go out and show them where the valves and things like that are. I am trying to run around and do this lead and copper report, anytime someone comes in they ask questions, so I go to their house and in the crawlspace or basement and get pictures. I have about 89 so far out of the 630 that I need. Mr. Knowles asked Joe on the lead and copper is there something we can do, that citizens could do to help out, maybe take photos and send those in? Joe replied that would help, a lot of people have said you can come take a picture, but others haven't responded at all. This isn't the first attempt but this is the first time I have put it on the water bill. I've let others know, but a lot of people don't know, especially renters. The town has a lot of renters. Mr. Knowles stated and this lead and copper is mandated by the state? Joe replied yes, I have to have this all done by next October. I still have to go out to the meters and identify the lines between the main and the meter. I have to go two feet past the meter box and I have to dig that. That doesn't count the other stuff that I am supposed to be doing, I got to maintain my valves and work on my fire hydrants, and whatever else that I can get to. Mayor Hodnett stated and all the information on the consent order that the state is requested. Joe replied yeah, plus my sampling, like I have to sit up tonight and do all the paper work and all the sample bottles tonight. I don't charge the town when I do that, that is going to take me 3-4 hours. I do it every month. That is where I am at.

Police Department – Chief Lovelace

August 2023 Police Report

Calls for Service-

Public Service-3

Missing Person-1

Animal Complaint-1

Assist Other Agencies (Emergency Services)- 0

All other offenses- 3

Drug Offense- 0

Domestic-0

Vandalism- 1

Simple Assault- 1

Civil- 1

Non-reportable-3

Other

Miles Driven-271

Training- Chief Lovelace was recertified in Field Training, CPR, First Aid, & AED

Assist Other Town Departments- 0

Use of Force- 0

Department/Officer Complaints-0

Department Updates

Fundraising stew will be held on November 4 for children in need at Christmas. Stew will be presold; the price of the stew is undetermined at this time. Two ballistic shields have been purchased with an ARPA grant. This grant is a 100 percent reimbursement to the town.

Halloween items for our annual community outreach program for our children at both schools have begun to be purchased. Bags will be given out to the children at both FCA and HES. The bags include how to trick or treat safely along with candy and a toy.

Our new hire start date for the Police Department will be on September 11.

Report from Mayor – Gary Hodnett

Mayor Hodnett stated Janet I'll answer your question about the plaza and why we want to keep it. Lets do a little walk down memory lane with the Town of Hurt. Years ago Clement Hill, and I've talked to former mayors like you guys have, Clement Hill came up. Mr. Hurt left it to the Town, a valuable piece of our history. Town Council decided to sell it because they didn't want to spend the money on fixing it up. People bought it and now it is fallen down up there behind the Plaza. It was sold for a little bit of money. The town has nothing to show for it, and that is our history. Next, the town farm up here, the timber was cut off of that and with the agreement that we are going to go in, we are going to level it up and get us some site ready land for industrial development where we can go out and attract industry to come in, never happened. Money was used to balance the budget or whatever the town needed it for and we have nothing to show for that. Number three, water treatment plant up here behind Clockman. It was offered to the town all they had to do was go out and get the loan to start working on that and we would be self reliant on water years ago. We wouldn't be buying water and depending on somebody else, but we are. Another bad decision. The land behind the Hurt community center, going out of town on old 29, the old Hurt community center, the town owned that land. Well instead of trying to do something with it, they traded that all of that off for services rendered. That land is gone, we got nothing from that either. It's no way if I have anything to do with it under the sun, that the plaza will be traded for pitons and a few dollars on the budget. That plaza when its fixed up with 70,000 square feet, the average rental in Danville and Lynchburg for rundown dumpy plazas is \$10 a foot, do the math, real easy. If we get half of that at 70,000 square feet, that's \$350,000 a year in pure rental income, that will subsidize the budget and help people in this town get reduced taxes because we've got that money coming in. That is the importance of this plaza. It can subsidize your taxes going forward. If we can get it up, that's pure rental money. It doesn't count the business licenses, the taxes that we get off of all that. It's just like the solar farm up on the hill, that's going to kick in another \$60 grand a year. The town has got two things, and we're working on others, that are absolutely going to contribute to the tax base of this town. Your taxes at some point in time are going to be less likely to go up. It's going to be helping you, you're going to have something to show for it. All of these other things was just given away in town and we don't have anything to show for it now. The Clement Hill, I would love to have that sitting up there nice behind the plaza, but that's how important this plaza and solar farm are to this town. Mrs. Neal stated well I agree with that, but what about Joe who needs the assistance, tell it to the tax payers that you are going to raise taxes. It is a wonderful idea, I'm not saying its not a good idea. I'm saying, can

we afford it, Joe needs an assistant, he can't work two years with no vacation. Mayor Hodnett replied it is not costing us anything at this point in time. We are seeking grants that will do 90% of the work over there at the Plaza. We are going to get it fixed up on government money, not tax money. We applying for every grant that we can apply for. Mrs. Neal stated you already told us that the water is going to go up \$3.00 per 1000 gallon next budget year. Mayor Hodnett replied you can't mix general funds and enterprise funds. Mrs. Neal replied I know that is separate I understand that, but you are going to force people to start using Styrofoam plates. Landfills are going to fill up and it's bad for the environment because we can't afford the water. I mean, you could sell that plaza, you told us it was worth 4 times what you paid for it. Mayor Hodnett replied I told you 3 times, but the plaza over 10 years, look at what it's going to generate for this town. Mrs. Neal stated ok Joe, 10 years with no vacation. Mayor Hodnett replied I don't see how anybody can sit here and say that selling that plaza would be the right thing to do. Mrs. Neal stated but we need the money, if we didn't need the money, sure. Mayor Hodnett replied well what are you going to do when you sell the plaza, what is going to be the next thing you have to sell when you need some money. Mrs. Neal stated well what you said we could get for it, that should carry us quite a while. Mayor Hodnett replied no it won't. Mr. Poindexter stated that money would be gone, it would be spent it through less than five years, and then we would not have the rental income from it during that time or beyond. Mrs. Neal replied I understand that, but today, today, what do we need today the most? Joe needs an assistance, but we can't afford it. Mr. Poindexter stated we just came up with a way to deal with that. Selling the plaza is not the answer to that. That is a little immediate, short term, band aid, fix it for this year. Mrs. Neal stated you are taking from reserves so the taxes will go up. You said you would not take money from the reserves. Mr. Poindexter replied it will not have a lasting positive effect to sell the plaza. It will be regrettable within a few years. It is long term. The problems we have require thinking long term and outside of the box. Short term immediate thinking is why we are in the conditions that we are in now. Mrs. Neal replied I understand that. Mr. Johnson stated I'm not sure how the leases are wrote for the tenants down there or future tenants and I heard Gary say that y'all have used some money from the rent to fill voids. One suggestion I would give and I've seen it done before, is to put in your lease that your tenant is responsible for items like the HVAC equipment and electrical service because that's the two things is going to nail you. Attorney Eller replied it is all in the lease that I drafted. Mr. Johnson stated that's what I'm saying. I didn't know what the lease read but that covers a lot because you lose one HVAC unit, that's \$30 grand. Attorney Eller replied just a net lease, you know what that is. Mr. Johnson replied yes sir. Attorney Eller replied that is what we got. Mayor Hodnett stated the lease is heavily favored toward us. It is an extremely good lease. Mr. Johnson stated I haven't seen it. Mrs. Mayhew stated y'all are talking about the long term stuff, have you given any thought to if we have to raise taxes on the people and all is going to be a deterrent to where people are not going to come to the Town of Hurt to look for a place to live or place to do business because they can't afford to come to town. I mean, why would I come to the Town of Hurt if taxes are gone up and we already have to pay double anyway with Pittsylvania County and Hurt, and things like the stuff your getting into with Mike Jones. If you have too many people who aren't satisfied then they are going to start moving out of Hurt. When you think long term and outside of this box keep that in your mind too. Mrs. Moorefield asked if the other gentleman was still working part time? Mayor Hodnett replied Tom, yea he is. Mr. Knowles replied he technically doesn't work for the town, he is a consultant on a per needed basis. Mr. Blackstock stated I have a couple questions, since you are taking questions at this time. Since January who has who's been applying and writing the grants, since January of 2023 to present? Mayor Hodnett replied Ellen and I have been working on them and the people from clean

footprint have assisted us on some grants. Mr. Blackstock asked if we have been paying clean footprint? Mayor Hodnett replied no. Mr. Blackstock replied second, I went on top of the plaza a few weeks ago with my son for Blackstock Heating and Air, at one of the shops, and the unit we looked at was in dire need of being replaced, it was probably a unit that has been there since the plaza was built. I've rented plaza space before, it is no way that beauty salon will be able to afford to pay to replace that unit if it came down to it. Working off a band aid now, but there's no way that you could put in her lease that she would be required to pay that \$30,000 and it'd be a rooftop unit around \$25,000 to \$30,000 to replace that one unit. It is no way she could do it, she would have to leave the plaza and find other places to rent. Looking at the lease you said it was friendly for the town, but it is no way she could stay there because she has to have heating and cooling. Mayor Hodnett asked was that a question. Mr. Blackstock stated the only question I had was about the grant writing. Mrs. Mayhew stated I understood Jason to say he wrote his grant and he got it. Mayor Hodnett replied he did. Mrs. Mayhew stated well why don't you take some lessons from him. Mr. Johnson stated the only thing I'm curious about as far as Mike, and I'm just throwing this out there. While y'all were talking about grants, I looked up the average salary in Lynchburg for grant writers and its about \$67,000-\$68,000 a year. I like about most of everybody in this room here, but I don't like nobody enough to give you \$68,000 worth of free. There's got to be something else in the background. Mr. Knowles replied I don't know of anything. I'm willing to take free labor. If he wants to work for free, I'll take it because free is cheap. Mrs. Worley asked well why does it have to be him? Mr. Knowles replied because he is the only one willing to do it for free. I don't know why he is doing it for free, but he is willing to do it. Mayor Hodnett replied he does have a lot of expertise in it. Mrs. Worley stated well I thought he was so busy, he is up and down the East Coast, he has businesses up and down the East Coast. I don't know how he has any time. Mrs. Mayhew stated his wife just died a couple weeks ago, I would think he would have other things to do and take care of. Mayor Hodnett replied we are internally looking for grants. Pittsylvania County is helping. We're going to call in every resource we can on this. Pittsylvania County, and the organization within the county have agreed to back us on this. They understand the importance of bringing more industry to the northern end of the county. Even they admit that it has been neglected for years and they want to help us.

Meeting adjourned at 8:19pm.

Kelsie Anderson

Kelsie Anderson-Clerk

Gary Hodnett

Gary Hodnett-Mayor