

Fries Town Council  
June 4, 2024  
Budget Public Hearing  
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Bill Davis, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, Richard Hawks and James Young.

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor and Kevin Combs.

Call to Order: The Mayor called the meeting to order and announced the purpose of the public hearing was to receive public comment on the proposed FY2024/2025 budget. She read the budget and reviewed the proposed changes. She then opened the floor for comments.

There were no comments or concerns.

Johnny Dickson moved to present the budget for approval at the regular session. James Young provided the second. All present voted Aye and the motion carried.

With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Jo Ann Gunter. Bill Davis provided the second and the hearing was adjourned.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Fries Town Council  
June 4, 2024  
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Bill Davis, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, Richard Hawks and James Young.

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Kevin Combs, Tourism Director; Deputy Roberts, Grayson County Sheriff's Department; Shania Stockton, Galax Gazette; Emerald Young and several other town citizens.

Call to Order: The Mayor called the meeting to order and Johnny Dickson gave the invocation.

Minutes & Bills: JoAnn Gunter moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to approve the minutes and bills as presented. Johnny Dickson provided the second to the motion. All present voted aye and the minutes and bills were approved.

Police Report: Deputy Roberts provided the police report for May, which included: 2 fourth searches, 1 criminal arrest, 3 warning tickets, 1 warrant and investigation of 5 misdemeanors and 1 felony. Routine activities included: 168 closed business checks, 50 service calls, 83 church checks, 92 directive patrols, 70 open business checks, 13 forestry checks, 5 civil papers, 4 warrant service attempts and EPO for a total of 164 hours.

Mayor Commentary: Mayor Grant reported a list of accomplishments since the last meeting that included:

1. Met with Cassandra Cornette, Environmental Health Specialist for the Virginia Health Department.
2. Held a budget workshop on May 14<sup>th</sup>. She thanked Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cubbage and Richard Hawks for attending.
3. Testified at a recent ABC Board hearing.
4. Contacted VDOT to get the drainage drop-in at the corner of the community center cleaned out.
5. Met with Brian Dixon concerning his ideas and recommendations for parking and the community center.
6. Hosted a market vendor meeting. Thank you to Yvonne Burr and Mary Ann Cubbage.
7. Opened the Farmers Market on March 25<sup>th</sup>. She thanked Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, Mary Ann Cubbage and Yvonne Burr for helping to make the first day a success.
8. Donated soil to the community garden. She thanked Karen Snyder, Joyce Brown and Jena Rosencrans for their hard work and dedication. Karen Snyder reported that the town had secured a grant to establish the market with the intent of providing a place for the District III Seniors to grow fresh produce for their attendees as many were on fixed incomes. Karen, Joyce and Jena had secured plant donations as well as landscaping supplies. They hoped to do more before the growing season ended.
9. She attended the Fries Lions Club meeting and reported that the club planned to donate a few trees to the town.

10. Met with Robert Hilt and closed out the grant documents for the Rural Development WTP wall project. Construction was scheduled to begin on Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup>.
11. Preliminary Engineering had started for the water treatment filters as well.
12. Attended a virtual meeting with VDOT and Jada Black concerning development in the town.
13. Secured the proper documentation for the Board of Zoning Appeals, presented at the courthouse and received approval from the Circuit Court Judge the same day.
14. Ordered new safety railings for the depot and received them. Installation was to begin the following week.
15. Reported that the new part-time worker was working out wonderfully. She thanked him for his efforts.
16. Had the water fountains and plumbing at the depot repaired.

### Organization Updates:

1. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported that the following:

#### **Report to Fries Town Council**

**By Tourism Director**

**June 4, 2024**

#### **May was another active month for the Fries Tourism Department:**

##### **Action taken:**

- Saw the publication of a front-page article about happenings in Fries in The Declaration
- Received check from Legends of Grayson to go toward Fiddlers Convention
- In conjunction with The Historic Fries Theatre held the first in a series of 5 outdoor concerts at The Depot.
  - o First one was heavily attended
  - o Brought business into Fries
  - o Lots of rave reviews
- Heavily marketed the concert series to get the word out about Fries
  - o Purchased ad buys on WBRF and WPAQ
  - o Granted live interviews to both stations
  - o Produced a video about the concerts
  - o Printed posters and flyers and distributed them
  - o Heavily promoted them on social media
- Continued efforts with a group of local concerned citizens and music lovers to revive the Fries Fiddlers Convention
  - o Event will be held August 16-17 at the Fries Ballpark
  - o Event conducted under the umbrella of Fries Tourism
  - o It will be a totally non-profit event with excess funds being held over for next year's convention and also going to a music scholarship for children and young people
- Continued scheduling events on website calendar for the year including events sponsored by Fries Fire and Rescue, the New River Trail State Park and others. Continued heavy social media presence for the town by producing original content and by re-posting posts by others in town.

- Raised funds for the Fries Fiddlers Convention and Fries Tourism. So far, we have raised over \$10,000 for the fiddlers' convention and for the tourism department.
- Received word that the town has been awarded a grant for marketing.
- Met with various Virginia and Grayson County tourism personnel in their areas of expertise such as Virginia is for Lovers, Virginia tourism grant application process, and co-op advertising opportunities.
- Followed up on an initiative whereby I contacted the vrbo owners and restaurants in town to feature them on the town's social media. I have featured 3 mill houses, the Fries RV Park, the Washington Inn, the Fries condo, the two Blevins properties, the Windy River Café, and the Fries Dam Steakhouse in social media posts so far.
- Distributed rack cards, concert posters, and Visitors Guides around the region.
- Grayson County tourism paid for Fries rack cards and placement of them at Virginia perimeter welcome centers
- Facilitated programs by the New River Trail Park Service
- Passed the Small Unmanned Aerial systems exam, which means I can use a drone for video and still photography on behalf of the town.

In case you doubt the impact tourism can make on Fries, consider these facts. Tourists spent approximately \$1 billion in the region of the state roughly from Patrick County to Washington County (Southwestern Virginia – Blue Ridge Highlands region) in 2022. In the Twin County area, the amount was approximately \$80 million. (Figures provided by Virginia Tourism Corporation in the report Direct Economic Impact and Spending Shares by Industries, 2022).

• Tourist season is booming in Fries. Here are the events scheduled in town until the next council meeting:

- o June 6 – Jam session canceled due to Mt Airy Fiddlers
- o June 6 – 3:30 – 4:30 pm: Osprey watch by New River Trail State Park
- o June 6 – 5:00 – 6:00 pm: Town history tour by NRTSP
- o June 8 – 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Town Market
- o June 13 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
- o June 14 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Concert at The Depot - New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters
- o June 15 – 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Town Market
- o June 15 – 2:00 – Dark: Thunder by the River Classic Car Cruise-In
- o June 20 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
- o June 22 – 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Town Market
- o June 22 – 12:00 – 8 pm: Go with the Flow Beerfest
- o June 27 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
- o June 29 – 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Town Market
- o Don't' forget our restaurants in town: The Fries Dam Steakhouse, The Windy River Café, and The Caboose.

I would like to encourage all members of town government to support and attend town events. I and many others in the community work hard to make the town attractive – to current residents, to visitors, and to possible future residents. Your support is greatly appreciated. You might not particularly enjoy say old-time music, or car shows, or wildflowers, but going to these events shows your interest in the town, its residents, and its visitors. Residents and visitors are the future of the town, and it would be beneficial to the town to see your support, and for you to see what the town is doing to encourage visitation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Combs, Tourism Director

2. Fries Historic Theatre: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Fries Town Council  
Fries, Virginia  
June 4, 2024

This report will provide you with an update on the recent activities and developments at The Historic Fries Theatre, as well as present financial statements for the year-to-date period ended May 31, 2024, and a listing of financial transactions for the non-profit corporation for the year-to-date through the first few days of June.

As always, the Theatre board and management have remained dedicated to maximizing the town's asset by working diligently to leverage the Theatre as a means to attract visitors to Fries and stimulate economic activity. Collaboration with Fries tourism has been instrumental in this effort, as we continue to position the Theatre as a hub for cultural enrichment and community engagement.

The venue is a treasure for young and old alike. Young people learn of the Appalachian culture and heritage while learning to play traditional instruments and understanding the importance of dance and its connection with the music. Older folks enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie of hearing the tunes played again and again.

It is astounding how many people come into Fries to attend the weekly jam session. Many folks from out of town plan their vacations around the jam and arrange it so they can come in Thursday and stay through the following Thursday night – just so they can attend the jam twice.

An incident I recently witnessed indicates the impact the Theatre has on the town and its fans. I was talking to a man from Ohio who frequents the jam – driving here from Ohio just to participate in it, and I assume arranging for an overnight stay here. As we finished our conversation and he walked away, he repeated three times, “This is such a wonderful place!”

One of the notable transformations taking place at the Theatre is its evolution into more than just a music venue. We are actively shaping it into a museum and cultural center that tells the story of Fries. Visitors and residents alike come not only to enjoy music and dance, and to socialize but also to immerse themselves in the rich history and heritage of our town.

Throughout the month of May, the Theatre achieved the following milestones:

1. Continued adding Virginia is For Lovers merchandise for sale at the Theatre.
2. Continued collaboration with the Fries Musical Heritage Committee to restart the Fries Fiddlers' Convention.
3. Continued publicizing the outdoor concerts which began in May, with bands booked for performances through October.
4. Successfully hosted the first concert in May with the Whitetop Mountain Band.

5. Held five highly successful jam sessions, drawing visitors from across the country and even internationally, and providing entertainment and fellowship for locals and visitors alike, and drawing typically 70-80 visitors per jam.
6. Continued efforts to maintain the cleanliness of the Theatre and community center grounds.

In conclusion, The Historic Fries Theatre remains committed to its mission of preserving our town's heritage while serving as a catalyst for cultural enrichment and economic development. We appreciate the continued support of the Fries Town Council and look forward to further collaboration in the months ahead.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Kevin Combs  
 Secretary  
 The Historic Fries Theatre

The Mayor thanked him for both his reports.

3. Fries Community Center: No report was given.
4. Fries Fire & Rescue: James Young reported that the Independence Day parade would be held on Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup>. Fireworks would be held on Saturday, July 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:30pm. The Fire Department also planned to host a Fun Day in the Town Park on July 6<sup>th</sup> from 6pm—9:30pm. The Mayor thanked him for his report.
5. Friends of Fries: Mary Ann Cabbage reported that the Friends of Fries had spruced up the caboose flower beds and were raising funds to install a new picnic table in the caboose area. The Mayor thanked Mary Ann, Richard and Rachel Hawks, and the Friends of Fries for providing free coffee for the Saturday Markets for last year and the start-up of this season.

#### Old Business:

1. FY2024/2025 Budget: The Mayor reviewed the published budget and proposed changes. After some discussion, Mary Ann Cabbage moved to adopt the budget as presented and advertised. Yvonne Burr provided the second. There was no further discussion. All present voted Aye and the FY24/25 budget was adopted.

#### New Business:

1. Brian Edenfield: Carrico Street Campground Plans & Fenders Curve Update:

Mr. Edenfield stated that he was there to update the council on his holdings within the town. He reported that the hotel and condo rentals had greatly improved and were doing great. He and his former partner, Mr. Reeves had amicably parted ways. He and another business partner had recently purchased the New Riverside Store

and Deli and he asked that people come and see the changes they were making there. He then handed out a packet of updated plans for his three upcoming projects. They were:

- Carrico Street River lots: Mr. Edenfield stated that he had submitted his plans to Grayson County and was expecting approval shortly. He had changed the scope of the project since his last zoning approval from the town from building 4 tiny homes and selling the 4 lots individually to a 16-site RV short-term rental campground. Richard Farmer stated that he thought it was a great idea, but thought the town should implement an ordinance to regulate in the long term.
- Fender's Curve River lots: Mr. Edenfield reported that a traffic study had been done in the area and that he was awaiting approval from VDOT concerning the use of the entrance. He planned to sell the lots off individually "as is" without making any changes to the property.
- Housing Subdivision: Mr. Edenfield reported that he had included an updated plan for the subdivision, but planned to do a few fewer homes on the property to allow for green space. He still asked that the town consider applying for grant funding to supply the water and sewer line infrastructure to the subdivision.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Edenfield for his plans and updates and pledged to forward the newly submitted information to the Planning Committee for review.

## 2. Emerald Young: Problem with Emergency Services:

Ms. Young reported that she was a resident of Turkey Knob and had recently had an incident with Twin County 911 that she wished to draw attention to. She reported that there had been a large fire on 57 acres of property near her home. She did not know of any controlled burns in the area, so she called 911 to find out if it was a wildfire or a controlled burn and get a status update. She spoke with Dispatcher Michelle Privett and reported it took 5 minutes to get Fries Fire Department dispatched. She felt that the 911 dispatcher withheld response due to her race. She asked to speak to Privett's supervisor, Whitney Smith, who ignored her requests for a review of the recording of the call and a copy of the call to be provided to her. She finally received a copy of the 911 call from Ronald Newman, who reviewed the call and found no evidence of racism, but he did not address what she felt was mismanagement of the call. She asked the council for their advice on how to proceed. The Mayor responded that the matter was out of the town's jurisdiction. James Young suggested that she continue to pursue the matter with Twin County 911 as the town had no jurisdiction over the matter. Ms. Young responded that she felt that she had been discriminated against due to her race and she wanted to publicize the matter to make it known that there was a problem with the 911 system. She thanked the council for hearing her complaint. The Mayor thanked Ms. Young for attending.

Announcements:

1. Golf Cart Permits are due. Inspection forms are available at Town Hall.
2. Personal Property Taxes are due tomorrow, June 5<sup>th</sup>. If you didn't receive your statement, please contact town hall.
3. Don't forget to vote in the Primary Election, Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>.
4. New Orleans Jesuit High School Students will be in town July 14<sup>th</sup> through July 25<sup>th</sup>. Anyone needing work done or interested in helping with meals, contact Town Hall.

Johnny Dickson commented that the new part-time worker was doing a great job and that he should be moved to full-time as soon as possible. The Mayor explained that once he finished the required probationary period as prescribed by the personnel policy he could be moved to full-time.

Nancy Griffith commented that the sidewalks were looking great, but she had noticed cars pulling up on the sidewalk and parking. She was concerned the cars would cause the sidewalks to break up worse than they already are. The Mayor replied that she would look into the matter.

The Clerk reported that the wastewater treatment plant mower was officially beyond repair. She asked council's opinion on replacement pricing and for suggestions. Johnny Dickson suggested checking with the Cochran station on 89 for a replacement mower. James Young suggested that we only go with a commercial-grade mower. No price range was suggested, but the Clerk and Mayor agreed to bring three quotes before council to review.

The Mayor reported she had recently had a conversation with VDOT again and had asked about the paving that had been promised last summer. VDOT replied that Fries was still on the list to get paved this year.

Discussed requesting that VDOT re-visit installing a crosswalk to the upper parking lot due to a number of elderly and children that cross the road in that location. Also discussed adding signage to address parking issues in that lot for other issues. Charlie Lawrence suggested that council check into lowering the speed limit through town due to upcoming legislative changes that would give localities more input in doing so.

With no further business to discuss, James Young moved to adjourn. Johnny Dickson provided the second and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_



Fries Town Council  
May 7, 2024  
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cubbage, Bill Davis, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter and Richard Hawks.

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Kevin Combs, Tourism Director; Deputy Landreth, Grayson County Sheriff's Department; Shania Stockton, Galax Gazette; Johnny Moore, Fries Community Center; David Greenbaum, Richard Farmer, Judy Farmer, Saul Chase, Nan Chase, Karen Snyder and several other town citizens.

Call to Order: The Mayor called the meeting to order and Jo Ann Gunter gave the invocation.

Minutes & Bills: Johnny Dickson moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to approve the minutes and bills as presented. Yvonne Burr provided the second to the motion. All present voted aye and the minutes and bills were approved.

Police Report: Deputy Landreth provided the police report for April, which included: 1 fourth search and investigation of 3 misdemeanors. Routine activities included: 128 closed business checks, 19 service calls, 40 church checks, 71 directive patrols, 29 open business checks, 6 forestry checks, 1 civil paper, and 3 warrant service attempts for a total of 164 hours.

Mayor Commentary: Mayor Grant reported a list of accomplishments since the last meeting that included:

1. Composed various letters to address ordinance violations, delinquent utility bills, and taxes.
2. Secured parade permits with Virginia State Police, VDOT, and the Grayson County Sheriff's Department for all town parades for 2024.
3. Renewed lease with the Frosty Monkey.
4. Renewed the town's VRSA insurance. The rate for FY2024/2025 is \$28,000.00.
5. She reported that the personal property tax information came from the county late, but the town taxes had been mailed and were due on June 5<sup>th</sup>.
6. Had a full-time public works employee resign.
7. Hired a part-time public works employee. She happily reported that he was doing an excellent job.
8. The Mayor and Vice Mayor attended the market vendor meeting at Independence in preparation of our own market. The new employee reported things were going well.
9. Held various planning sessions in town hall.
10. Held progress meeting with the new public works employee after two weeks of employment.
11. The Mayor attended the Lion's Club meeting.
12. She thanked Steven Boyer, Grayson County Administrator, for facilitating an attorney to perform grant contract reviews and resolution.
13. She attended the online presentation of the Economic Development plan that was created by Mr. Peter Huber's class at Virginia Tech.

14. Assessed and repaired a water line break. Michael Vaughan, public works, did an excellent job handling the repair quickly.
15. Composed letters of recommendation supporting a beer and wine ABC license for the Fries Dam Steakhouse.
16. Attended online conference with Brightspeed who plans to install a new fiber optic internet system in the town in 2025.
17. The Mayor recommended that the council approve the following new members and terms for the Zoning Appeals Board: Gary Riffe, (1) one year; French Anderson, (2) two years; Charlie Lawrence, (3) three years; Rachel Hawks, (4) four years and Karen Snyder, (5) five years. After some discussion, Jo Ann Gunter moved to approve the suggested members and terms for the Zoning Board of Appeals. Johnny Dickson provided the second. All present voted Aye and the new members were approved.

#### Organization Updates:

1. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported that the following:

#### **Fries Town Council**

**May 7, 2024**

#### **Report of Tourism Director**

**I am pleased to present the monthly report from the Fries Tourism Department for the month of April. Here is a summary of the actions taken and achievements made:**

- 1. Community Engagement and Fundraising: Attended a reception for Senator Mark Warner at The Birthplace of Country Music in Bristol and have raised funds for both the Fries Fiddlers Convention and Fries Tourism - to date, over \$10,000 for these initiatives.**
- 2. Promotion of Local Businesses: Initiated a campaign to feature local VRBO owners and restaurants on the town's social media platforms, showcasing establishments like the Fries RV Park, the Washington Inn, The Windy River Café, The Fries Dam Steakhouse, and 3 millhouse VRBOs.**
- 3. Marketing and Promotion: Prepared rack cards and published a full-page ad in the Gazette Visitors' Guide to promote tourism in Fries.**
- 4. Facilitation of Programs and Events: Facilitated programs by the New River Trail Park Service and hosted successful events such as the Spring Wildflower Walk and The New River Trail 50k/25k/10k, which attracted over 140 participants and their families.**
- 5. Revival of the Fries Fiddlers Convention: Actively working with local citizens and music enthusiasts to revive the Fries Fiddlers Convention. The event is scheduled to take place on August 16-17 at the Fries Ballpark. This non-profit event aims to support the local music community and will also contribute to a music scholarship for children and young people.**

**6. Event Scheduling and Coordination:** Continued to update the website calendar with upcoming events sponsored by various organizations including Fries Fire and Rescue, the New River Trail State Park, and others.

**7. Collaboration with Virginia Tourism Personnel:** Engaged with Virginia tourism personnel to explore opportunities such as grant applications and co-op advertising.

Furthermore, I would like to highlight the significant economic impact of tourism on our region. Tourists spent approximately \$1 billion in the Blue Ridge Highlands region in 2022, with the Twin County area receiving approximately \$80 million of that spending.

As we move forward, I encourage all members of the town government to actively support and attend town events. Your presence not only demonstrates your interest in the community but also shows support for our residents and visitors. Together, we can continue to make Fries an attractive destination for all.

Thank you for your attention and support.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Combs, Tourism Director

2. Fries Historic Theatre: Kevin Combs reported the following:

May 7, 2024  
Fries Town Council  
Fries, Virginia

This report will provide you with an update on the recent activities and developments at The Historic Fries Theatre, as well as present financial statements for the year-to-date period ended April 30, 2024, and a listing of financial transactions for the non-profit corporation for the month of April and the first week in May.

The Theatre board and management have remained dedicated to maximizing the town's asset by working diligently to leverage the Theatre as a means to attract visitors to Fries and stimulate economic activity. Collaboration with Fries tourism has been instrumental in this effort, as we continue to position the Theatre as a hub for cultural enrichment and community engagement.

One of the notable transformations taking place at the Theatre is its evolution into more than just a music venue. We are actively shaping it into a museum and cultural center that tells the story of Fries. Visitors and residents alike come not only to enjoy music and dance, and to socialize but also to immerse themselves in the rich history and heritage of our town. As an example of this endeavor, an original artwork documenting work in the mill is

currently on display in the Theatre foyer.

Throughout the month of April, the Theatre achieved the following milestones:

1. Continued adding Virginia is For Lovers merchandise for sale at the Theatre.
2. Continued collaboration with the Fries Musical Heritage Committee to restart the Fries Fiddlers' Convention.
3. Began publicizing the outdoor concerts scheduled to begin in May, with bands booked for performances through October.
4. Successfully hosted a dance on April 12 with Leftover Biscuits, made possible by a generous donation from Charlie Lawrence.
5. Hosted PBS for the filming of a documentary at the Theatre.
6. Attended a Friends of the New River Trail meeting at Foster Falls and invited the group to meet at the Theatre.
7. Received a donation of sound equipment from Roger Bond.
8. Held four highly successful jam sessions, drawing visitors from across the country and even internationally, and providing entertainment and fellowship for locals and visitors alike.
9. Continued efforts to maintain the cleanliness of the Theatre and community center grounds.

Financial statements for the year-to-date period ended April 30, 2024, and a listing of financial transactions for the month of April and the first week in May were attached for council review.

In conclusion, The Historic Fries Theatre remains committed to its mission of preserving our town's heritage while serving as a catalyst for cultural enrichment and economic development. We appreciate the continued support of the Fries Town Council and look forward to further collaboration in the months ahead.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Kevin Combs  
 Secretary  
 The Historic Fries Theatre

3. Fries Community Center: Johnny Moore reported the following:
  - \*The center had paid for their lifeguard certification classes and had hired lifeguards for the pool season.
  - \*The board had begun pursuing grants and funding for the center.
  - \*The board had met with an auditor, April MacInnis, who then reviewed the books and gave them recommendations. All was in order.
  - \*Spring sports were in full swing. Baseball and softball were underway.
  - \*Their recent paint night had been successful with 40 participants.
  - \*The Fries throws and Fries baseball hats were still available for purchase. They planned to have t-shirts available soon.
  - \*The center was holding a fundraising raffle. The first prize was a Stanley Cup.
  - \*The pool would be opening on May 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - \*May 11<sup>th</sup> was a planned work day to prepare the pool for opening.

\*A roof leak was found in the gym over the bleachers.

\*They planned to replace the cover over the footwash before opening the pool.

\*After removing the old carpeting on the pool porch, they felt it to be a slip hazard. Johnny asked for council permission to paint the porch with sanded paint to avoid any slipping. Johnny Dickson moved to approve the request. Jo Ann Gunter provided the second. The Mayor asked if they had researched the paint for that purpose. Johnny Moore reported that he had found that they could not afford the epoxy paint that would be best for the surface. They were going to try the gray paint porch paint they had on hand and put sand in it to help stop slipping. Bill Davis suggested looking at outdoor carpet. Johnny Moore reported that they had some on hand, but not enough to cover the entire porch. They planned to put the carpet in the areas where the tile was uneven and use the paint everywhere else. After some further discussion, Mary Ann Cabbage moved to approve their plans for the porch. Richard Hawks provided the second. All present voted Aye and the motion carried.

\*Johnny Moore then presented an updated membership list for the community center. The list was as follows: James Young, Chairman; Johnny Moore, Vice-Chairman; Mandi Funk, Treasurer; Alicia Jeffery, Secretary; Joyce Brown, Christy Moore, Kaitlyn Griffin, and Ethan Griffin. He also reported that Karen Snyder, Zack Vaughan, and Shelly Anders had resigned.

\* Johnny also reported that the center had a beginning balance of \$14,711.16 as of April 1, 2024, and as of April 30<sup>th</sup> had a balance of \$13,460.51.

Brian Dixon, then addressed the council concerning some ideas he had about creating parking options above the community center, as well as funding ideas. After some discussion, the Mayor thanked Brian for his interest and ideas and suggested that he make an appointment with her so they may discuss his ideas in further detail. She then thanked Johnny for his report as well.

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: No report given.
5. Friends of Fries: Mary Ann Cabbage reported that the Friends of Fries met in April and had also spruced up the caboose flower beds and replaced a dead tree in the theatre beds. They planned to spruce up the beds around the fountain in the near future. Johnny Moore asked if they maintained all the flower beds around the community center building. Mary Ann replied that they did not, only the beds at the town hall and the theater. He then asked permission to begin maintaining the flower beds on the pool side of the building. No one objected. The Mayor thanked Mary Ann for reporting.

#### Old Business:

1. Saul Chase: Boiler Issue: Mr. Chase reported that on April 18<sup>th</sup> he had met with Chad Reeves and the clerk and toured the community center building to see what could supplement the heat to make it possible to stop using the boiler. After the meeting, Mr. Reeves submitted bids from Virginia Carolina Heating & Cooling and Carolina Vintage Air for mini-split systems as well as conventional heat pumps. The total for the units, labor, electrical upgrades and the metal & concrete work came to

a total of \$230,000. Mr. Chase stated that with numbers in hand he could now start to look for funding. He reported that Pete Huber and students were trying to help find funding also. Mr. Chase also had plans to meet with Tim Kaine on May 13<sup>th</sup> at the Galax Library and spoke with Josh Hess of Morgan Griffith's office to ask for funding suggestions. The Mayor thanked Mr. Chase for his efforts.

2. Farmers Market Schedule: The Clerk passed around the work calendar for the council to pick the days they planned to work the market. The Mayor asked that council members attend the vendor meeting and the first market day, May 25<sup>th</sup> to review market rules and set up procedures.

### New Business:

1. David Greenbaum: Bike Repair: Mr. Greenbaum introduced himself to the council. A resident of Fries since 2021, he reported having a long history with bicycles. His work history included working for a bicycle company as well as many bike repair shops. While he was not interested in bicycle sales, he was interested in bike repair. He asked permission from the council to set up at the Market on Saturdays and provide free bike repair. He had contacted several local insurance agents to find liability insurance but hadn't yet found what was needed to proceed. Johnny Moore stated that he possibly had a contact to help. Council had no objections to Mr. Greenbaum providing free bike repair as long as he took care of the liability issue.
2. Resolution: Attorney Approval: The Mayor read the following resolution aloud:

#### A RESOLUTION APPOINTING SPECIAL COUNSEL TO CERTIFY CERTAIN CONTRACT DOCUMENTS.

WHEREAS, the Town of Fries (the "Town") has received a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service ("RUS") to make certain emergency repairs to its water plant and distribution facilities (the "Project"); and

WHEREAS, RUS requires the Town to have certain contract provisions reviewed and approved by legal counsel authorized and acting to do the same.

NOW THEREFORE, the Council of the Town of Fries hereby resolves that it appoints Mr. Michael Lockaby, of the law firm of Spilman, Thomas & Battle, as its duly authorized and acting legal representative for the purposes of investigating and executing the Certificate of Owner's Attorney required by the RUS.

And this Resolution is in effect upon adoption.

Adopted at the May 7, 2024 meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Fries, by the following vote:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Aye</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Cynthia Grant				
Yvonne Burr				
Mary Ann Cubbage				
Bill Davis				
Johnny Dickson				
Jo Ann Gunter				
Richard Hawks				
James Young				

Attest:

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Clerk of Council

After reviewing the resolution, Yvonne Burr moved to adopt the resolution. Mary Ann Cubbage provided the second. Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cubbage, Bill Davis, Jo Ann Gunter, Richard Hawks, Johnny Dickson and Cynthia Grant all voted Aye and the resolution was adopted.

3. Wastewater Treatment Plant Replacement Influent Pump Quotes: The clerk presented quotes for the emergency replacement of an influent pump for the wastewater treatment plant. The low quote was for \$9,025.00. After some discussion, Jo Ann Gunter moved to approve the expenditure. Yvonne Burr provided the second. All present voted Aye and the expenditure was approved.
4. Budget Schedule: Budget workshop was scheduled for Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 11am. The Budget Public Hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

Announcements:

1. Golf Cart Permits are due. Inspection forms are available at Town Hall.
2. Fries Town Market Opening Date is Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup>. Interested Vendors need to contact Town Hall.
3. Large Item Curbside Pickup: Monday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>.
4. New Orleans Jesuit High School Students will be in town July 14<sup>th</sup> through July 25<sup>th</sup>. Anyone needing work done or interested in helping with meals, contact Town Hall.

Nan Chase inquired about the timeline of the repaving of Main Street. The Mayor replied that this spring/summer was her understanding.

Tasha Spencer asked that a crosswalk or mirror be placed above the community center for pedestrian safety. She also suggested a fence be installed around the town park. The Mayor replied that the town had consulted VDOT in the past about a crosswalk

above the community center, but the engineer at the time wouldn't approve it due to lack of sight distance for vehicles. She pledged to speak with VDOT again.

With no further business to discuss, Mary Ann Cubbage moved to adjourn. Yvonne Burr provided the second and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_



Fries Town Council  
Joint Public Hearing with Fries Zoning Planning Board  
April 2, 2024  
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cubbage, Bill Davis, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, and Richard Hawks.

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Diana Goodwin, Martha Norman, Kathy Davis, Vicki Kirby, Richard Farmer and Tracy & Tracy Burcham.

Call to Order: The Mayor called the meeting to order.

The Mayor announced that the purpose of the meeting was to receive public comment on a variance request submitted for the property located at 305 Hampton Street that was under review by the Fries Zoning Planning Board. She apologized for Brenda Vaughan, Junior Anderson, and Bobby Jones who were unable to attend, and explained that Yvonne Burr was the council representative on the planning board and was in attendance to discuss the planning board's findings. She then opened the floor for public comment.

Diana Goodwin, owner/realtor of the property at 305 Hampton Street explained that the property was made up of several lots and she wished to separate the back lot and sell it as a buildable lot. She said that she thought a tiny home would fit nicely into the neighborhood. She stated that the property could meet the setback requirements and the only problem that she saw was that there was not enough road frontage to meet the current requirements.

Scotty Alley, a resident of Blair Road could not attend but sent an email stating that he felt that the lot was too small and should not be made a buildable lot.

Richard Farmer, a resident of Hampton Street spoke against the change stating that with the possibility of a housing development going in right across the fence that it would simply be too much development, too close together.

Tracy Burcham, a resident of Hampton Street stated that he didn't believe you should stick a house on a piece of property just because it would fit. He felt that if a home were built there, it would be too close to the adjoining properties.

Vickie Kirby, a resident of Hampton Street stated that while she wanted to see the town grow, she felt the lot would be too crowded. Because of Blair Road being very narrow, she felt that it would be difficult to get construction equipment onto the property without crossing onto the neighboring properties. She also felt that there would be drainage issues created by building on the lot in question that could be a problem for years in the future as there were already drainage issues there.

Richard Farmer reported that a large drainage line emptied onto the lot in question and made it swampy after large rainfalls.

Diana Goodwin said that if there were a drainage problem that it would have to be addressed during construction. She also stated that she understood the "not in my backyard" mentality, but she felt that if a tiny home was respectfully installed that it would be a benefit to the town.

Tracy Burcham stated that Ms. Goodwin had made the investment in the property at 305 Hampton with the knowledge that it was one property and he felt that it should remain one property.

The Mayor asked if there were any further comments and there were none. Yvonne Burr moved to adjourn the public hearing. Mary Ann Cubbage provided the second. All present voted Aye and the hearing was adjourned.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Fries Town Council  
April 2, 2024  
Regular Session Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, Bill Davis, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, Richard Hawks and James Young.

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Kevin Combs, Tourism Director; Richard Farmer, Judy Farmer, Saul Chase, Alicia Jeffery, Mandi Funk, Jill and John Andrews, Sherry Watson, Christy and Johnny Moore, Joyce Brown, Charlie Lawrence and Karen Snyder.

Call to Order: The Mayor called the meeting to order and gave the invocation.

Minutes & Bills: Johnny Dickson moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to approve the minutes and bills as presented. Yvonne Burr provided the second to the motion. All present voted aye and the minutes and bills were approved.

Police Report: Deputy Phipps provided the police report for March, which included: 1 criminal arrest, 4 fourth searches, 1 warrant, 2 warning tickets, and investigation of 2 misdemeanors. Routine activities included: 225 closed business checks, 23 service calls, 81 church checks, 68 directive patrols, 42 open business checks, 19 forestry checks, 2 civil papers and 4 warrant service attempts for a total of 206 hours.

Mayor Commentary: Mayor Grant reported a list of accomplishments since the last meeting that included:

1. Working with property owners of derelict properties to reach a mutual resolution that doesn't end up in litigation.
2. Passed our annual water treatment plant inspection. She thanked Dillon Gunter for his efforts in keeping the plant in compliance.
3. Provided a meal to the Holy Cross student group that the community center hosted.
4. Finished the final re-write of the property use agreement with the Fries Community Center and negotiated a contract signing.
5. She attended the Lions Club Meeting.
6. Met with former Town Manager Brian Reed concerning applying for congressional funding through Mark Warner's office for the water treatment plant filter replacement project.
7. Submitted the application and financial report to secure ATL funding for the fire department.
8. Secured an attorney to review the contract for the construction for the water treatment wall project and also review the engineering contract for the VDH infrastructure project.
9. Held various planning sessions in town hall.
10. Purchased topsoil for the community garden.
11. Planned another meeting with the former town manager.
12. Continued search for a new permanent town attorney.

## Organization Updates:

1. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported that the following:

### **Report to Fries Town Council by**

**Tourism Director**

**April 2, 2024**

March was a busy month for the Fries Tourism Department.

### Action taken:

- Continued efforts with a group of local concerned citizens and music lovers to revive the Fries Fiddlers Convention
  - Event will be held August 16-17 at the Fries Ballpark
  - Event conducted under the umbrella of Fries Tourism
  - It will be a totally non-profit event with excess funds being held over for next year's convention and also going to a music scholarship for children and young people
- March 5-6 attended an online orientation with the Virginia Tourism Corporation.
- Continued scheduling events on website calendar for the year including events sponsored by Fries Fire and Rescue, the New River Trail State Park and others.
- Applied for a \$7,500 marketing grant with Virginia Tourism.
- Obtained sponsorship for an outdoor concert from The Crooked Road.
- Obtained sponsorship for a Friday night concert and dance at the theatre.
- Met with various Virginia tourism personnel in their areas of expertise such as Virginia is for Lovers, Virginia tourism grant application process, and co-op advertising opportunities.
- Followed up on an initiative whereby I contacted the vrbo owners and restaurants in town to feature them on the town's social media. I have met with the owners who have gotten back to me and featured some of them on social media. Still working on the process.
- Attended a grant writing workshop.
- Prepared rack cards and am in the process of refining them.
- Prepared a full-page ad to go in the Spring visitors guide of The Gazette.
- Worked with The New River Trail State Park rangers in bringing some programs by the park service into Fries.
- Worked with The New River Trail Race in getting volunteers and facilitating the race (April 13). **(Note to town council: This race brings hundreds of people into town. The event organizer needs volunteers for the race. Please consider volunteering. You can go to the race website ([newrivertrail50k.com](http://newrivertrail50k.com)) and click on the menu item "Get involved" for more information.)**
- Attended a week-long video editing class with the intention of bringing more video to my arsenal of social media tools. Video is fast-becoming the medium of choice in social media advertising.

In case you doubt the impact tourism can make on Fries, consider these facts. Tourists spent approximately \$1 billion in the region of the state roughly from Patrick County to Washington County (Southwestern Virginia – Blue Ridge Highlands region) in 2022. In the Twin County area, the amount was approximately \$80 million. (Figures provided by Virginia Tourism Corporation in the report *Direct Economic Impact and Spending Shares by Industries, 2022*).

- Tourist season is heating up in Fries. Here are the events scheduled in town for this month:
  - April 4 – 3:30 – 4:30 pm: Osprey watch by New River Trail State Park
  - April 4 – 5:00 – 6:00 pm: Town history tour by NRTSP
  - April 4 – 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
  - April 11 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
  - April 12 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Concert and dance at The Historic Fries Theatre
  - April 13 – all day: New River Trail 50k and 25k
  - April 18 – 3:30 – 4:30 pm: Osprey watch by New River Trail State Park
  - April 18 – 5:00 – 6:00 pm: Town history tour by NRTSP
  - April 18 – 5:30 – 7:30 pm: Group bicycle ride by NRTSP
  - April 18 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
  - April 20 – 9:30 – 11:30 am: Spring Wildflower Tour
  - April 21 – 12:00 – 3:00 pm: Spaghetti Lunch Drive Through by Fries Fire and Rescue
  - April 21 – 2:00 – 7:00 pm: Poker Ride by Fries Fire and Rescue
  - April 25 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre

**I would like to encourage all members of town government to support and attend town events. I and many others in the community work hard to make the town attractive – to current residents, to visitors, and to possible future residents. Your support is greatly appreciated. You might not particularly enjoy say old-time music, or car shows, or**

**wildflowers, but getting to these events shows your interest in the town, its residents, and its visitors. Residents and visitors are the future of the town, and it would be beneficial to the town to see your support, and for you to see what the town is doing to encourage visitation.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Combs, Tourism Director

2. Fries Historic Theatre: Kevin Combs reported the following:

**Report to Fries Town Council  
By The Historic Fries Theatre  
April 2, 2024**

The Theatre board and management have continued to work hard to maximize the town's asset. Theatre board and Fries tourism cooperate to leverage the theatre to bring people into Fries to visit and spend money.

Theatre management is gradually transforming the theatre into more than a music venue. It is crafting it as a museum and cultural center for Fries. Visitors and residents come to hear or play the music, dance, and socialize. But on the walls of the theatre, they are told the story of Fries. I recently hung an original artwork of mine documenting work in the mill. It is currently hanging in the foyer.

During the month of March, the Theatre:

- Hosted a musical performance and live auction for the community center (including running the sound board for the event).
- Updated theatre listing on google.
- Began adding Virginia is For Lovers merchandise for sale at the theatre
- Continued working with the Fries Musical Heritage committee to restart the Fries Fiddlers' Convention (see tourism report)
- Finalized the dates and bands for 5 outdoor concerts at The Depot in association with Fries Tourism. Concert dates are set and bands are booked:
  - May 24 – The Whitetop Mountain Band
  - June 14 – The New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters
  - July 12 – Trish Fore and The Wildcats
  - September 20 – The Crooked Road Ramblers
  - October 4 – Gap Civil (sponsored by The Crooked Road: Virginia's Musical Heritage Trial)
- Scheduled a dance for April 12 with Leftover Biscuits. The band is already paid for by a generous donation from Charlie Lawrence.
- Saw the release of a country music video filmed at the theatre by regional artist Jamie Collins.
- Hosted a shoot for a video by regional artist Jim Lloyd.
- Hosted four highly successful jam sessions during the month of February. Visitors like the warm, family-friendly atmosphere and are always commenting on how much fun it is.
  - Jam sessions draw visitors into Fries from all over the country and even the world.
  - Serve 50-100 people a week, providing fellowship and entertainment for locals and visitors alike
  - Jam sessions bring people to Fries where they spend their money on the steakhouse and the café.

- Cleaned the theatre weekly, and picked up the theatre and community center grounds weekly (including numerous cigarette butts).
- Incrementally worked to add museum and cultural exhibits to the Theatre.

Respectfully  
submitted,  
Kevin Combs  
Secretary  
The Historic Fries Theatre

Also submitted for council review were financial statements for the year-to-date period ending March 31, 2024, and a listing of all financial transactions for the non-profit corporation for the year.

3. Fries Community Center: Johnny Moore reported that the benefit auction fundraiser had been a great success. They held an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 30th and hosted approximately 75 kids. They also served concessions and gave out treats for the children. He reported that they had extended the baseball/softball signups due to spring break. They were in the process of hiring lifeguards and desk clerks for the summer pool season and planned to begin work on cleaning the pool as soon as possible. They had been consistently renting the dining room and gym for parties and were pleased with the response to their food pantry. The Mayor thanked him for the report and the efforts of the new board.
4. Fries Fire & Rescue: James Young reported that they had answered 48 EMS calls in March and were planning to host a grand opening ceremony at the Providence Sub Station on April 20<sup>th</sup>. The Mayor thanked him for his report.
5. Friends of Fries: Mary Ann Cabbage reported that the Friends of Fries met the previous week and reviewed the memo that was included in the council packet as follows:

April 1, 2024

From: Sharon Billings, Friends of Fries

To: Fries Town Council

RE: Friends of Fries activities for 2024

Dear Fries Town Council Members

We have had a meeting of a few of our members and wanted to report to you some of our goals for 2024.

1. **Town plantings**: We will be making plantings and maintain landscapes at following areas as in the past: Town Hall, Fries Theater, Caboose, Fountain, and Town sign.

Also, one of our members (Ed) is continuing to pick up litter on main road into Fries. One member (Johnny) mows grass along Riverview.

2. **Roundup spraying of main street sidewalks:** We would like to see the Main Street sidewalks kept free of weeds. We may be able to help with this
3. **New Raised Bed gardens behind Farmers market.** We can help disseminate information on growing vegetables successfully. Perhaps, we could meet with the senior citizens if they are to be the gardeners, and speak with them. In the future, we might be able to plant a pollinator garden in front of the raised beds.
4. **Farmers Market:** We would like to recommend that the farmer's market allow Yard Sales to take place, along with produce, food, and art. We think this will draw a number of devoted yard sale enthusiasts to the market and help with other sales. We strongly advise **not allowing clothing** to be sold, just household goods, tools, jewelry, boats, bikes, etc.
5. **Bus that is parked at Farmers market:** We think the bus could be parked someplace else, because it blocks the view of the market happenings and takes up valuable parking space for the market.
6. **List of churches:** a list of local churches will be sent separately and we recommend that this be used to send out letters to request their support of the Farmer's Market activities.
7. **Acoustics during your meetings:** It was noted that the acoustics are very bad for town meetings and perhaps a microphone could be used.

Thank you for your support and consideration of these requests.

Sincerely, Sharon Billings

The Mayor thanked Mary Ann for reporting.

#### Old Business:

1. Saul Chase: Boiler Issue: Mr. Chase reviewed his plan to eliminate the coal boiler by seeking grant funding to install mini-split units for heating and cooling. He reported that he planned to contact Mike Hash, Tim Kaine, Mark Warner, Jim Werth and Morgan Griffith to get support for the project. He also reported that Sharon Billings and Grayson County grant writer Deb Jones were assisting with the project. He then asked if the Mayor could meet with him, Chad Reeves and Johnny Moore to discuss location of installations and cost estimates as there were two funding opportunities coming up with deadlines in June and July. The Mayor asked Mr. Chase to set up the meeting with the clerk. Mr. Chase then asked for council permission to contact the people he listed and pursue grant funding for the heating/cooling system on behalf of the Town of Fries. After some discussion, Mary Ann Cabbage moved to allow Mr. Chase to make the contacts as requested and to apply for funding to address the heating and cooling systems in the community center building. Johnny



Dickson provided the second. All present voted Aye and the motion carried. The Mayor thanked Mr. Chase for his efforts.

New Business:

1. Zoning/Planning Board Recommendation for Goodwin Variance Request:

The Mayor reported that the planning board, after meeting several times and receiving public comment at a properly advertised public hearing, had completed their initial review of the request to approve parcel #25A2-3-10 as a separate, buildable lot. The parcel had been purchased and conveyed as a portion of the home and lot of 305 Hampton Street. Committee member Yvonne Burr reported that the parcel did not meet the current zoning requirements for road frontage or lot area to be a separate, buildable lot and therefore, the committee could not recommend approval of the request. Mary Ann Cabbage moved to continue the discussion of the matter further. Johnny Dickson provided the second. All present voted Aye and the motion carried. The council then proceeded to ask questions of Ms. Goodwin concerning drainage issues, road frontage, and setback requirements. Ms. Goodwin answered all the questions asked by the council. She also stated that she had an additional lot that she could split to add to the lot in question to make it a legally buildable lot, but she didn't want to go that route. After some further discussion, Johnny Dickson moved that the council accept the planning board's recommendation, being that the lot did not meet the current zoning regulations and therefore, was not eligible to become a separate buildable lot. Richard Hawks provided the second. The Mayor then called for a vote. Bill Davis and Jo Ann Gunter abstained from the vote as they are property owners in the area in question. Yvonne Burr abstained from the vote as she was a member of the Planning Board making the recommendation. Johnny Dickson, Richard Hawks, Junior Young and Mary Ann Cabbage all voted Aye and the motion carried. Ms. Goodwin then asked about the appeals process. The Mayor replied that she would be notified of the appeals process as soon as possible.

2. Closed Session: VA Code Section 2.2-3711.A:

Pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Council by affirmative vote went into closed session as provided by Section 2.2-3711. A. and invited the officers of the Fries Community Center to remain. The officers that remained were: Johnny Moore, Vice Chairman; Alicia Jeffery, Secretary and Mandi Funk, Treasurer. (Moved by Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage provided the second).

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Yvonne Burr moved to exit the closed session. James Young provided the second. All present voted Aye and the motion carried.

As required in Section 2.2-3712.D of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, Council certified that to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as

were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting by Town Council.

Certified by: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, James Young, Richard Hawks, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, Bill Davis and Cynthia Grant.

After returning from the executive session, the council briefly discussed the agreement between the community center and the town. Yvonne Burr then moved to accept the revised agreement as presented. Johnny Dickson provided the second. The Mayor then called for a vote. James Young abstained as he was the Fries Community Center Chairman. Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, Richard Hawks, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter and Bill Davis all voted Aye and the agreement was approved.

With no further business to discuss, Richard Hawks moved to adjourn. Junior Young provided the second and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Fries Town Council  
March 5, 2024  
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cubbage, Bill Davis, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, Richard Hawks and James Young.

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Kevin Combs, Tourism Director; Deputy Jordan, Grayson County Sheriff's Department; Johnny Moore, Fries Community Center; Shania Stockton, Galax Gazette; Rebecca Robertson, GATE Center; Pat Moles, Tri-Area Community Health, Nan & Saul Chase and several citizens and visitors.

Call to Order: The Mayor called the meeting to order.

Invocation: Johnny Dickson gave the invocation.

Minutes & Bills: Jo Ann Gunter moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to approve the minutes and bills as presented. Yvonne Burr provided the second to the motion. All present voted aye and the minutes and bills were approved.

Police Report: Deputy Jordan provided the police report for February, which included: 5 criminal arrests, 2 DUID arrests, 8 fourth searches, 2 warrants and 1 warning ticket, investigation of 3 felonies and 3 misdemeanors. Routine activities included: 263 closed business checks, 36 service calls, 75 church checks, 99 directive patrols, 53 open business checks, 5 forestry checks, 1 ECO / LE ECO, and 6 warrant service attempts for a total of 171 hours.

Mayor Commentary: Mayor Grant reported a list of accomplishments since the last meeting that included:

1. A meeting with Pete Huber. Mr. Huber was teaching an economic development class at Virginia Tech and had offered to have his students develop an economic development plan for the town as a class project. As part of the development, surveys were being distributed to get citizen input for the future of the town.
2. Applied for a SERCAP grant to address antiquated equipment at the wastewater treatment plant.
3. Reported that both the pumps at the Blairtown pump station had failed. Replacements were on the way. The station was being pumped out by truck until the new pumps could be installed.
4. She became a member of the Twin County Chamber of Commerce and attended their meeting.
5. Met with members of the Fries Community Center.
6. Installed seven new meters and will be replacing more.
7. Had two water line breaks repaired.
8. Had potholes on Smith Street and Riverview Avenue patched.
9. Installed two new street lights on Lee Drive.
10. Had the theater roof patched.

11. Had the storm drain at the new restaurant flushed due to a clog.
12. Had urinals and commodes in the community center repaired.
13. Met with Lane Group Engineers concerning FEMA Stormwater project at the school.
14. Had a sewer line cleanout repaired on Hampton Street behind the Dollar General Store.
15. Had the meters read.
16. Located water and sewer lines for four new water and sewer taps on Top Street.
17. Signed agreement with the contractor for the wall project.
18. Continued search for a new town attorney.

### Organization Updates:

1. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported that the following:

Report to Fries Town Council  
 By Tourism Director  
 March 5, 2024

February was another productive month for the Fries Tourism Department.

#### Action taken:

- Formed a group of local concerned citizens and music lovers to revive the Fries Fiddlers Convention
  - Event will be held August 16-17 at the Fries Ballpark
  - Event conducted under the umbrella of Fries Tourism
  - It will be a totally non-profit event with excess funds being held over for next year's convention and also going to a music scholarship for children and young people
- Continued scheduling events on website calendar for the year including events sponsored by Fries Fire and Rescue and the Fries Community Center.
- Met with Tracy Cornett of Grayson County tourism and familiarized myself with the grant process with Virginia Tourism.
- Initiated grant application and am putting the pieces together.
- Again met with Melissa Peddy of the 50k/25k race. Discussed possibility of a 5k race, but decided to put it off until next year
- Continued working with Emory & Henry on the Watershed project – a profile of Fries.
- Finalized plans for the five outdoor concerts this summer and early fall.
- Began an initiative whereby I contacted the vrbo owners and restaurants in town to feature them on the town's social media.

The grant application to the Virginia Tourism Corporation is centered around the theme: Fries – where music rises with the mountains. With all Fries has to offer, it's hard to decide on one aspect to emphasize, but with the revival of the Fiddlers' Convention, it seemed that music was the easy choice. So, the grant application will center around traditional music and with so many events going on this year with music, it will be easy to market the town using that theme. Those events include – concert/dance at the Theatre, five concerts at The Depot, the Fries Fiddlers' Convention, and of course, the Thursday night jam at the Theatre (aka The Jam

at the Dam). In addition, additional attention will be called to Fries when Legends of Grayson honors Jessie Lovell and Evelyn Farmer in April.

I would like to encourage all members of town government to support and attend town events. I and many others in the community work hard to make the town attractive – to current residents, to visitors, and to possible future residents. Your support is greatly appreciated. You might not particularly enjoy say old-time music, or car shows, or wildflowers, but getting to these events shows your interest in the town, its residents, and its visitors. Residents and visitors are the future of the town, and it would be beneficial to the town to see your support, and for you to see what the town is doing to encourage visitation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Combs, Tourism Director

2. Fries Historic Theatre: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Report to Fries Town Council  
By The Historic Fries Theatre  
March 5, 2024

The Theatre board and management have continued to work hard to maximize the town's asset. Theatre board and Fries tourism cooperate to leverage the theatre to bring people into Fries to visit and spend money.

Theatre management is gradually transforming the theatre into more than a music venue. It is crafting it as a museum and cultural center for Fries. Visitors and residents come to hear or play the music, dance, and socialize. But on the walls of the theatre, they are told the story of Fries. We have hung some of my work of the area. Ken Landreth recently donated an advertising calendar from 1925 from John Rector's store. It is currently hanging in the foyer.

During the month of February, the Theatre:

- Worked with a committee to restart the Fries Fiddlers' Convention (see tourism report)
- Finalized the dates and bands for 5 outdoor concerts at The Depot in association with Fries Tourism. Concert dates are set and bands are booked:
  - May 24 – The Whitetop Mountain Band
  - June 14 – The New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters
  - July 12 – Trish Fore and The Wildcats
  - September 20 – The Crooked Road Ramblers
  - October 4 – Gap Civil
- Scheduled a dance for April 12 with Leftover Biscuits. The band is already paid for by a generous donation from Charlie Lawrence.
- Hosted a country music video photo session, bringing exposure to the theatre and business to the Fries Dam Steakhouse.

- Held a Valentine’s Dance that was very successful. Marketed the dance heavily bringing much attention to Fries and the Theatre.
- Hosted five highly successful jam sessions during the month of February.
  - Jam sessions draw visitors into Fries from all over the country and even the world (see map).
  - Serve 50-100 people a week, providing fellowship and entertainment for locals and visitors alike
  - Jam sessions bring people to Fries where they spend their money on the steakhouse and the café.
- Prepared a new listing for The Crooked Road’s website describing the theatre and jam session and replacing an old and very out-of-date listing.
- Cleaned the theatre weekly, and picked up the theatre and community center grounds weekly (including numerous cigarette butts).
- Incrementally worked to add museum and cultural exhibits to the Theatre.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Kevin Combs  
 Secretary  
 The Historic Fries Theatre

Also submitted for council review were financial statements for the year-to-date period ending February 29, 2024, and a listing of all financial transactions for the non-profit corporation for the year.

3. Fries Community Center: Johnny Moore reported that the free community meal that the center provided on February 24<sup>th</sup> had been successful. They served 30 people onsite and delivered several to-go meals locally. They planned to continue the free meal every month. He reported that basketball season was almost over and the last game would be held on Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>. Baseball signups were underway and registration forms were available in the Fries Library. The center hosted 10 students from Holy Cross starting March 1<sup>st</sup>. The students completed several projects such as painting the dining room and cleaning up at the ballpark. Town Council was scheduled to provide a meal for the students on Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>. He announced their upcoming events were: a live auction, pinto bean supper and music by Elizabeth & Phillip Vaughan would be held on Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup> beginning at 5 pm and an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> in the ballpark from 12—4 pm. He reported that they had cleaned and started working the bowling alley and had recently had a party there. They had pursued the donation of bowling alley lanes and equipment from the old bowling alley in Galax that had closed and planned to use the materials donated for repairs. He also reported that the community center was partnering with Grayson County to find a grant to abate the asbestos from the pipes in the bowling alley. In conclusion, he reported that the center was looking forward to getting the pool open for the summer months. The Mayor thanked him for the report and the efforts of the new board.
4. Fries Fire & Rescue: No report submitted.

5. Friends of Fries: No report submitted.

Old Business:

There was no old business discussed.

New Business:

1. Tri-Area Community Health, Inc.: Chief Operations Officer, Pat Moles: Ms. Moles introduced herself and gave a brief update on the progress at the Fries facility. She reported that the new x-ray machine had been purchased and installed. However, the window that the x-ray technician would stand behind while operating the machine was damaged during shipping. They were waiting for the replacement window to arrive and be installed so that the machine could be useable. She also reported that the pharmacy construction had been completed and the facility had been inspected. To be able to operate they still needed their application to sell drugs that had been submitted to the DEA to be approved and were also working to secure their contracts with various insurance companies. They hoped to have the pharmacy open soon. She encouraged locals to consider becoming patients at the Fries facility in the near future. The Mayor thanked Ms. Moles for her update.
2. Grayson County Agricultural Fair: Rebecca Roberts: Ms. Roberts gave a brief history of the fair, which has been held annually for three years. This year the fair was scheduled for August 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup>. They planned to extend the hours for the fair and hoped to pull in more vendors. She reported that vendors such as Duck Donuts and Sassy Good Eats had committed to the fair, but she was still looking for funnel cake and freshly squeezed lemonade vendors. She reported that Wayne Henderson would be holding a concert on one night of the fair, and she hoped to get another local group to play. She also asked that local artists and crafters get involved and enter the art division. She felt that Fries was under-represented in past fairs and hoped Fries citizens would be more involved this year. She asked anyone who was interested in participating or had ideas to contact her at 276-768-8162. She also reported that the artisans and crafters that participate in the Ag and Art Festival-Farm and Artisan Tour in September join the artisans meeting in August to organize. The date and time were to be announced at a later date. She suggested that the local Fries artists and crafters set up at the Fries Town Market and be included in the tour. The Mayor thanked Ms. Roberts for her report and for her efforts to include Fries.
3. Development Project: Chad Reeves: Mr. Reeves presented a new site plan for the proposed development of the former Delp property at 917 E. Main Street. The plan included 58 new parcels with houses, all parcels with a minimum area of 11,000 square feet and a maximum of 12,750 square feet. The plan also provided the street layout, as well as the water and sewer connection sites. Mr. Reeves also presented the proposed house design plans for the homes. After some discussion and council review, the Mayor suggested the next step would be to schedule a meeting with Brian Reed of the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission. She thanked Mr.

Reeves for the presentation and reported that she would be in touch with a meeting date and time in the near future.

4. Boiler Issue: Saul Chase: Mr. Chase announced his new initiative entitled "Stop the Coal Dust." The purpose of his initiative is the find an alternative heating solution for the Fries Community Center building and stop the use of the antiquated coal boiler. He presented an action plan that stated:

Actions requested from the Town of Fries: Authorize Town of Fries Employees to conduct a tour of the Fries Community Center for a certified HVAC-R technician so information can be collected to develop a comprehensive proposal for an HVAC system for the center that will eliminate the need for use of the "National Boiler." Authorize Mr. Chase to work with Debra Jones, grant writer for Grayson County, to prepare proposals to grant agencies, preferably for grants that do not require a monetary match from the Town of Fries, for the consideration of the Fries Town Council and Fries Community Center Board of Directors. Authorize Mr. Chase and Ms. Jones to develop activities that will demonstrate community support for "Stop the Coal Dust." Mr. Chase will seek endorsement from the Fries Town Council and the Fries Community Center Board of Directors before implementing any activities. Authorize Mr. Chase to attend Fries Community Center Board of Directors monthly meetings to seek their members' input and keep them informed regarding "Stop the Coal Dust" activities. Serve as a repository for financial contributions made to "Stop the Coal Dust." Authorize town staff to work with Ms. Jones and Mr. Chase in preparation of the grant proposals. Authorize town employees to assist in the grant application process, and upon acceptance of a grant, serve as fiscal agents to receive and dispense funds and implement the requirements as stated in the grant authorization.

Mr. Chase proposed securing funding to install mini splits all over the building for zone heating and cooling instead of a central unit that would provide heating and cooling to the whole building as it would be most cost-effective. He reported that the library, theater and dining room all had zone heating and cooling and it seemed to be working. After some discussion, Mr. Chad Reeves offered to assist with the project as he was a licensed HVAC contractor. Johnny Moore, Vice Chairman of the Fries Community Center, expressed his concern about the cost of operation of the individual mini splits. The center is responsible for the majority of the electric bills in the building and he was concerned that the operation of all those units would cause a financial hardship for the center. The Mayor replied that there seemed to be a lot of details that would need to be hashed out, but that Mr. Chase seemed to be on the right track to resolving the issue. She suggested that a meeting be scheduled with Mr. Chase, Mr. Reeves and Mr. Moore at Town Hall to discuss the issue in further detail. No formal action was taken by council. The Mayor thanked Mr. Chase for his report and his efforts.

5. Closed Session: VA Code Section 2.2-3711.A:

Pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Council by affirmative vote went into closed session as provided by Section 2.2-3711. A. (Moved by Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage provided the second).



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James Young moved to exit the closed session. Johnny Dickson provided the second. All present voted Aye and the motion carried.

As required in Section 2.2-3712.D of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, Council certified that to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting by Town Council.

Certified by: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, James Young, Richard Hawks, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, Bill Davis and Cynthia Grant.

After returning from the executive session, the clerk presented the renewal contract for the caboose property between the town and Jessica Newton of the Frosty Monkey. After some discussion, Johnny Dickson moved to approve the contract as written and continue to lease the property to Jessica Newton of the Frosty Monkey. Yvonne Burr provided the second to the motion. All present voted Aye and the motion carried.

The clerk reported that both pumps at the Blairtown pump station had gone out and then presented a quote for a new 3hp replacement pump for \$4,400 plus shipping charges and installation. After some discussion concerning the options of rebuilding or buying new, Junior Young moved to purchase two new replacement pumps for the pump station at an approximate cost of \$8,800 plus shipping, and any unforeseen costs due to installation. Yvonne Burr provided the second to the motion. All present vote Aye and the motion carried.

With no further business to discuss, Johnny Dickson moved to adjourn. Junior Young provided the second and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Fries Town Council  
February 6, 2024  
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, Bill Davis, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, Richard Hawks and James Young.

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Kevin Combs, Tourism Director; Deputy Long, Grayson County Sheriff's Department; Johnny Moore, Fries Community Center; Shania Stockton, Galax Gazette and several citizens and visitors.

Call to Order: The Mayor called the meeting to order.

Invocation: Johnny Dickson gave the invocation.

Minutes & Bills: Mary Ann Cabbage moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to approve the minutes and bills as presented. Yvonne Burr provided the second to the motion. All present voted aye and the minutes and bills were approved.

Police Report: Deputy Long provided the police report for January, which included: 3 criminal arrests, 1 traffic arrest, 1 DUID arrest and 1 warning ticket, investigation of 1 felony and 1 misdemeanor. Routine activities included: 184 closed business checks, 19 service calls, 75 church checks, 67 directive patrols, 20 open business checks, 21 forestry checks, and 2 warrant service attempts for a total of 170 hours.

Mayor Commentary: Mayor Grant reported a list of accomplishments since the last meeting that included: the county FEMA grant for the drainage problem at the school was underway. Surveying had already started. Toured the tiny home that had been installed on Top Street, sent out Christmas cards from the town, held a Christmas luncheon for town employees, held various planning/work sessions at town hall, met and had onsite visits concerning drainage problem behind the steakhouse, advertised for engineering services for the VDH infrastructure grant, awarded The Lane Group the bid for engineering services as they were the low bidder, advertised, received bids and sold the 1999 Chevrolet pickup, attended the Lions Club meeting, met with Michelle Pridgeon to discuss the Farmers Market, attended a meeting at Truist Bank to sign signature cards, received a bid for repairing the footbridge, installed new lights at the community center and repaired plumbing issues, and received an update on the water plant wall project. The contractor had still not received their Virginia Contractors License, but was expecting it soon.

Organization Updates:

1. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported that the following:

Report to Fries Town Council

By Tourism Director  
February 6, 2024

January was a productive month for the Fries Tourism Department.

Action taken:

- Continued scheduling events on website calendar for the year including events sponsored by Fries Fire and Rescue and the Fries Community Center.
- Attended two grants webinars sponsored by Virginia Tourism
- Met with Melissa Peddy of the 50k/25k race
- Met with Erin Pitts, ranger with New River Trail State Park
- Met with Hannah Bond of New River Trail State Park
- Met with Tyler Hughes of The Crooked Road
- Met with Kalen Hunter of Virginia Tourism
- Met with Tal Stanley with Emory & Henry College
- Met with a group of local music lovers with the dream of reviving the Fries Fiddlers Convention
- Submitted an article to The Gazette announcing my appointment as Tourism director and using the article as a plug for Fries

The New River Trail State Park seems very eager to expand its activities in Fries. They have scheduled ten walking tours of the town. These will be on Thursday evenings beginning in May from five until 6 p.m. The tours will end up at The Historic Fries Theatre where the attendees will be encouraged to attend the jam session. Hannah Bond will lead those tours. Her material is very thorough and well researched. The park service has plans for further activities in Fries and these will be firmed up as the season approaches.

The Crooked Road is another resource the town can further develop. My meeting with them was very productive.

I approached Emory & Henry College seeking help from the college in yet unspecified ways.

I would like to encourage all members of town government to support and attend town events. I and many others in the community work hard to make the town attractive – to current residents, to visitors, and to possible future residents. Your support is greatly appreciated. You might not particularly enjoy say old-time music, or car shows, or wildflowers, but getting to these events shows your interest in the town, its residents,

and its visitors. Residents and visitors are the future of the town, and it would be beneficial to the town to see your support, and for you to see what the town is doing to encourage visitation.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Combs, Tourism Director

2. Fries Historic Theatre: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Report to Fries Town Council  
By The Historic Fries Theatre  
February 6, 2024

The Theatre board and management have worked hard to maximize the town's asset. Theatre board has cooperated with the tourism department to leverage the theatre to bring people into Fries to visit and spend money.

During the month of January, the Theatre has:

- Scheduled 5 outdoor concerts at The Depot in association with Fries Tourism. Concert dates are set and bands are booked:
  - o May 24 – The Whitetop Mountain Band
  - o June 14 – The New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters
  - o July 12 – Trish Fore and The Wildcats
  - o September 20 – The Crooked Road Ramblers
  - o October 4 – Gap Civil (pending)
- Scheduled a Valentines dance for this coming Friday, 7 p.m. with The New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters
- Hosted three highly successful jam sessions during the month of January – (with one being called due to the possibility of inclement weather).
  - o Jam sessions draw visitors into Fries
  - o Provide residents and visitors with fellowship, listening pleasure, and music making outlet.
- Worked with town management to determine which electric bill is its responsibility.
- Met with Crooked Road director Tyler Hughes and discovered ways to maximize the Theatre's relationship with The Crooked Road
- Continued to develop the Theatre as a cultural arts center.

Attached are financial statements for the year-to-date period ended January 31, 2024 and a listing of all financial transactions for the non-profit corporation since its formation.

Not included in the financial statements and handled off the books because we did not have enough information previously to include it is the amount of Theatre funds left in the community center accounts. In a gesture of goodwill, Theatre board voted to waive payment of the funds owed to it by the community center. See narrative attached which was sent to Community Center Board of Directors.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Combs  
Secretary  
The Historic Fries Theatre

Kevin also presented a Theatre financial report for council information.

3. Fries Community Center: Johnny Moore introduced himself as well as the board slate of officers who were:  
Chairman—James Young, Vice Chairman—Johnny Moore, Secretary—Alicia Jeffery and Treasurer—Mandi Funk. Other members of the board were Shelley Anders, Karen Snyder (liaison for the District III Senior Program), and Joyce Brown. He then reported a list of accomplishments which included: establishing a PayPal link for rentals, re-established the Fries Community Center Facebook page, adding a keyless entry to the dining room for rentals and working to build relationships with the Town of Fries, the Fries Historic Theatre, the District III Seniors, the Grayson County Board of Supervisors and the Carroll County Board of Supervisors. They had planned a clean-up day for February 10<sup>th</sup> to declutter and clean the facility, created a Sports Booster Club and also met with Mary Thomas, of the Wythe Grayson Regional Library to build a better working relationship with her. They had started sharing the library upcoming activities and were actively working to increase attendance to the library. The Mayor thanked him for the report and the efforts of the new board.
4. Fries Fire & Rescue: James Young reported that the department had run 18 fire calls in January, the paid EMS staffing had been working well and the department was still actively working on the AED project within the town. The Mayor thanked him for his report.
5. Friends of Fries: Mary Ann Cubbage reported that the group had not had a formal meeting recently, but planned to do some fundraising in the spring.

#### Old Business:

There was no old business discussed.

New Business:

1. Announcements: The Mayor then read the announcements which were:

- \*Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, March 5, 2024.

- \*\*Household Hazardous Waste Collection & Document Shredding – Saturday, March 16, 2024. City of Galax Public Works from 8am—11am, Grayson County Public Works from 1:00 to 4:00pm.

2. Closed Session: VA Code Section 2.2-3711.A:

Pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Council by affirmative vote went into closed session as provided by Section 2.2-3711. A. (Moved by Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage provided the second).

James Young moved to exit the closed session. Johnny Dickson provided the second. All present voted Aye and the motion carried.

As required in Section 2.2-3712.D of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, Council certified that to the best of each member’s knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting by Town Council.

Certified by: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, James Young, Richard Hawks, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, Bill Davis and Cynthia Grant.

With no further business to discuss, Johnny Dickson moved to adjourn. Mary Ann Cabbage provided the second and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Fries Town Council  
January 9, 2024  
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, Bill Davis, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, Richard Hawks and James Young.

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Kevin Combs, Tourism Director; Deputy Johnson, Grayson County Sheriff's Department and several citizens and visitors.

Call to Order: The Mayor called the meeting to order.

Invocation: Jo Ann Gunter gave the invocation.

Minutes & Bills: Johnny Dickson moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to approve the minutes and bills as presented. Richard Hawks provided the second to the motion. All present voted aye and the minutes and bills were approved.

Police Report: Deputy Johnson provided the police report for the month of December, which included: 1 fourth search and 1 warrant. Routine activities that included: 265 closed business checks, 15 service calls, 66 church checks, 89 directive patrols, 43 open business checks, 11 forestry checks and 12 warrant service attempts for a total of 177 hours. The officer then reported that the county had applied for and would be receiving a grant to install three new license plate reader cameras in the county. The cameras would be solar powered and would hold the license plate data for 30 days. In the case of missing children, the camera would automatically notify police if a wanted plate was photographed. The camera would not detect speed. The Sheriff's Department planned to monitor the cameras and data they provide. He asked that one of the new cameras be installed on town property and be dedicated to the town. He proposed installing the camera in the curves below the Fries Community Center. After some discussion, James Young moved to allow the Grayson County Sheriff's Department to install a license plate reader camera on town property. Yvonne Burr provided the second. All present voted Aye and the motion was approved.

Organization Updates:

1. Historic Fries Theatre: Kevin Combs reported that the Historic Fries Theatre (The Corporation) had completed all organizational requirements to operate as a charitable organization. It had complied with IRS, Commonwealth of Virginia and Town of Fries requirements. The Board of Directors were listed as Yvonne Burr (incorporator), Kevin Combs, Eddie Bond (accomplished old-time musician and NEA award recipient) and Dr. Charlie White (President emeritus of Wytheville Community College). He reported that the Theatre's main events had been the Thursday night jam sessions and a New Year's Eve dance and concert. The Director of The Crooked Road, Tyler Hughes, visited the December 14<sup>th</sup> jam. All events had been well attended. He also submitted a statement of financial position for the month of December for the theatre for council review. He reported that the board planned to host more events in the new year including: Friday night old time concert and dances occasionally, displaying art in the theatre with work from

local artists and hosting exhibitions of local visual art. Management was open to suggestions for other cultural events.

He also reported that upcoming issues for the theatre included: heating the facility in an economical manner, maintaining cash flow through the lean winter months and locating the meter for the electrical service to change the service into the name of the theatre. The Mayor thanked him for his report.

2. Tourism: Kevin Combs thanked council for appointing him as Tourism Director for the Town of Fries. He had been a lifelong supporter of Fries, and looked forward to serving the town. He reported that he had redesigned the town's website two years ago and continued to update it. He also maintained the town Facebook page and Instagram account. He reported that since being appointed he had: met with Nan Chase and received marketing materials she had in her possession, met with Tracy Cornett with Grayson Tourism and established a relationship, made contact with Melissa Peddy of New River Trail Races and Erin Pitts, Chief Ranger Visitor Experience with the New River Trail and scheduled meetings with them, updated the 2024 events on the website calendar (events include the New River Trail 50k/25k, Thunder by the River Cruise-Ins, Spring and Fall Wildflower Walks and Thursday Night Jams.) and worked with the new theatre board to make the theatre a cultural arts center. The Mayor thanked him for his efforts and report.
3. Fries Community Center: James Young reported some plumbing issues in the building, such as a commode running, a urinal that needed repair and a floor drain that was clogged in the women's locker room. He also asked if the boiler room had been locked due to the asbestos surrounding the boiler. The Mayor replied that it was possibly a health hazard and the locks were changed to reduce traffic in the room.
4. Fries Fire & Rescue: James Young reported that the department had ran 100 fire calls and 500 EMS calls in 2023. The paid EMS staff at the firehouse had begun January 1<sup>st</sup>. The paid service provided EMS staff in the building on Monday through Thursday from the hours of 7am—7pm. They hoped to have Fridays covered in the near future. Volunteer EMS still staffed the building on nights and weekends. The Mayor thanked him for his report.
5. Friends of Fries: Mary Ann Cubbage reported that the group had not had a formal meeting recently, but wanted to work on a pollinator garden at the depot in the spring and possibly host a home and garden tour in the near future as a fundraiser for the group.

#### Old Business:

There was no old business discussed.

#### New Business:

1. Announcements: The Mayor then read the announcements which were:

\*\* Primary Election -- Tuesday, March 5, 2024.



\*\*Household Hazardous Waste Collection & Document Shredding – Saturday, March 16, 2024. City of Galax Public Works from 8am—11am, Grayson County Public Works from 1:00 to 4:00pm.

2. Closed Session: VA Code Section 2.2-3711.A:

Pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Council by affirmative vote went into closed session as provided by Section 2.2-3711. A. (Moved by Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cubbage provided the second).

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James Young moved to exit the closed session. Yvonne Burr provided the second. All present voted Aye and the motion carried.

As required in Section 2.2-3712.D of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, Council certified that to the best of each member’s knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting by Town Council.

Certified by: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cubbage, James Young, Richard Hawks, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter, Bill Davis and Cynthia Grant.

After some discussion, James Young moved to table any further closed session discussion until the February meeting.

With no further business to discuss, James Young moved to adjourn. Bill Davis provided the second and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_