

Fries Town Council
October 8, 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 Brannock, Grayson County Sheriff's Department; Chief Randy Lineberry, FVFD; and several town citizens and guests.

Call to Order: The Mayor called the meeting to order and Jo Ann Gunter 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 Brannock provided the police report for September, which included: 2 fourth searches, 1 traffic arrest, and investigation of 1 misdemeanor and 1 felony. Routine activities included: 162 closed business checks, 22 service calls, 63 church checks, 78 directive patrols, 41 open business checks, 12 forestry checks, 2 civil papers, 1 EPO and 2 warrant service attempts for a total of 174 hours. The Mayor thanked him for his report.

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

1. September 4th- Attended a virtual SERCAP meeting.
2. September 6th- reported storm drain issue at the Community Center to VDOT.
3. September 7th—Thanked Mary Ann Cubbage for working the market.
4. September 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th & 12th- Worked on Service Line Inventory with GLO team.
5. September 11th- Attended the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting.
6. September 13th- signed checks for bills and payroll.
7. September 14th—Thanked Jo Ann Gunter for working the market.
8. September 17th—Researched property boundaries at the Grayson County Courthouse with the Clerk.
9. September 18th—Paid for a new electrical service installation for food trucks at the depot.
10. September 20th—Attended the music at the depot.
11. September 21st—Attended the Cruise-In and thanked Jo Ann for working the market.
12. September 24th—Met with Grayson County Building Inspector concerning the footbridge.
12. September 25th—Attended a virtual meeting with the GLO team.
13. September 27th—Hurricane Helene hit Fries, and the power went off. She commended the Fries Fires and Rescue and the Fries Community Center for their response and the support that they offered to the community.
14. September 28th—Communications were terrible, but she placed calls to the Grayson County Emergency Services Coordinator, AEP, Former AEP employee and Grayson County Supervisor, Mike Hash, who she said the town owed a debt of thanks.
15. September 29th—Attended meeting at the depot with Governor Youngkin, Suzanne Youngkin, Morgan Griffith, Bill Carrico and many more state and local officials to discuss the

needs of the town. After the meeting assessed the damage to town facilities and property the rest of the day with the clerk.

16. September 30th—All scheduled events were suspended. Met with James Monroe of the Lane Group to continue assess damage to the town and address the emergency situation at the Blairtown pump station.

17. October 1st—Rescheduled the council meeting. Continued to work with local officials.

18. October 2nd—Ordered Starlink for communications. Discussed starting an Emergency Response Committee. Met with Locke-Lane construction that built the retaining wall at the water treatment plant and the Lane Group at the Blairtown pump station to discuss repairs. Received VDH approval for the preliminary engineering plan for the infrastructure grant.

19. October 3rd—Met with James Monroe concerning a collapsed storm drain and the footbridge.

20. October 4th—Met with James Monroe concerning repairs at pump station.

21. October 5th—She staffed the last market of the season. Thanked all who participated.

21. October 8th—Met with Senator Warner, FEMA & VA Emergency Services. Received wonderful news that the town was on track to receive Congressional Funding for the water treatment plant and the wastewater treatment plant. Also attended a FEMA briefing in Independence. She thanked Senator Warner; Sheriff Vaughan and the Grayson County Sheriff's Department; Chief Lineberry and Fries Fire and Rescue; Fries Community Center; Gods Pit Crew and all the volunteers from far and near that helped with the recovery efforts.

Organization Updates:

1. Fries Historic Theatre Report: Kevin Combs reported that the following:

Fries Town Council
Fries, Virginia

Report Overview

This report provides an update on the recent activities and developments at The Historic Fries Theatre. It also presents financial statements for the year-to-date period ending Aug 31, 2024, and a listing of financial transactions for the non-profit corporation for the year-to-date.

Dedication to Community and Economic Growth

The Theatre board and management remain dedicated to maximizing the town's assets by diligently leveraging the Theatre to attract visitors to Fries and stimulate economic activity. Collaboration with Fries tourism has been instrumental in positioning the Theatre as a hub for cultural enrichment and community engagement.

Cultural and Community Impact

The Theatre is a cherished venue for both young and old. Young people learn about Appalachian culture and heritage, traditional instruments, and the importance of dance in connection with music. Older individuals enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie of hearing familiar tunes.

The weekly jam sessions have attracted a significant number of visitors to Fries. Many people from out of town plan their vacations around the jam sessions, staying from Thursday to the following Thursday night to attend twice. Recent visitors have come from Holland, France, England, Canada, California, New Mexico, Colorado, New York, Florida, Ohio, and many other states.

Evolving into a Cultural Center

Gentrification, the process where local residents are priced out of their homes by newcomers who are attracted to a trendy area, has impacted Fries to some degree. This complex phenomenon elicits varying opinions but is often driven by uncontrollable forces. Effective management is crucial, as gentrification can erode local culture. The Historic Fries Theatre addresses this by preserving the community's heritage through weekly jam sessions, Friday night concerts, and displays celebrating Fries' history and culture.

Notably, the Theatre is evolving into more than just a music venue. We are shaping it into a museum and cultural center that tells the story of Fries, the mill, and their connection to Appalachian music and dance. Visitors and residents come not only to enjoy music and dance but also to immerse themselves in the town's rich history and heritage.

Recent Updates and Financial Informa0on

We recently repaired the neon sign. The cost, expected to be around \$800, isn't reflected in the current financial statements as they are on a cash basis and the final bill has not yet been received. Donations for the repair totaling \$200 were received from Tina Privette, James Danford, Eddie Bond, and Bonnie Bond.

August Highlights

Throughout August, the Theatre achieved several milestones:

1. Hosted a well-received exhibition of photography by local visual artist Mark V. Sanderford. Sanderford was the winner of the inaugural Fries Musical Heritage award presented at the Fries Fiddlers' Convention. Numerous guests attended the exhibitions who would not have otherwise attended the jam sessions.
2. Collaborated with the Fries Musical Heritage Committee to restart the Fries Fiddlers' Convention. The convention was a resounding success. More with the tourism report
3. Hosted a couple of Facebook Live sessions from the jam.
4. Continued publicizing outdoor concerts, with bands booked for performances through October.
5. Bought a sandwich board-style sign to publicize music on Thursday nights at the jam and Friday nights at The Depot.
6. Successfully hosted the concerts in May, June, and July with the Whitetop Mountain Band, the New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters, and Trish Fore & the Wildcats.
7. Held highly successful jam sessions, drawing 90 to 110 visitors per session in August, providing entertainment and fellowship for locals and visitors alike.
8. Continued efforts to maintain the cleanliness of the Theatre and community center grounds.

Conclusion

The Historic Fries Theatre remains committed to 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 Fries Historic Theater also presented a detailed financial report to the council.

2. Fries Tourism: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Report to Fries Town Council
By Kevin Combs, Tourism Director
October 8, 2024

September saw a decline in tourism traffic which was exacerbated by Hurricane Helene the weekend of September 28th.

The Fries tourism office has been working with the county tourism office and the mayor's office to assess damage to tourism assets and provide data, photos, and video to both the Virginia Tourism office and the governor's office.

We postponed the October installment of the Summer Concert Series at The Depot in consultation with its sponsor The Crooked Road. The concert will likely occur at The Historic Fries Theatre.

The Theatre was impacted by the storm. A full report is in the Theatre report to town council.

Other housing facilities, businesses, and organizations in town were impacted by the storm. The tourism office is attempting to gather information on the economic impact and will report these damages to the county tourism office.

Many tourism-related events are cancelled or postponed. The New River Trail State Park has canceled all programming and closed the trail until further notice.

AcHon taken:

- Held another installment in the Summer Concert Series at The Depot with the Crooked Road Ramblers playing. Heavily marketed the concert to get the word out about Fries and get people into town. Local restaurants saw increased business. Food truck generated tax revenue for the town.
 - Purchased ad buys on WBRF and WPAQ
 - Heavily promoted them on free social media
 - Purchased ad buys on Facebook
 - Granted live interview to WPAQ
 - Shared another video about the concerts
 - Printed posters and flyers and distributed them
- Represented the town in numerous festivals and public gatherings.
- 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.

- 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 4 mill houses, the Fries RV Park, the Washington Inn, the Fries condo, the two Blevins properties, the Windy River Café, Lil A Mart, and the Fries Dam Steakhouse in social media posts so far.
- Distributed rack cards, concert posters, and Visitors Guides around the region.
- Accomplished the placement of rack cards at state welcome centers. These cards will be at the perimeter of the state. Grayson County tourism paid for the Fries rack cards and placement of them at Virginia welcome centers
- Saw many visitors come into Fries to attend the Fries Fiddlers’ Convention, Summer Concert Series at The Depot, Thunder on the River Classic Car Shows, July 4th Parade, and the Thursday Night Jam Session at The Historic Fries Theatre.

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 CorporaHon in the report *Direct Economic Impact and Spending Shares by Industries, 2022*).

Date in October	Event
10	Thursday night jam session 7 p.m., The Historic Fries Theatre
12	Town market 9 a.m., The Depot
17	Thursday night jam session 7 p.m., The Historic Fries Theatre
19	Town market 9 a.m., The Depot
24	Thursday night jam session 7 p.m., The Historic Fries Theatre
26	Town market 9 a.m., The Depot
31	Thursday night jam session 7 p.m., The Historic Fries Theatre

Don’t’ forget our restaurants in town: The Fries Dam Steakhouse and The Windy River Café, and just outside of town – Li’l A and New River Side Store & Deli.

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.

The Mayor thanked him for his diligent efforts and both reports.

3. Fries Community Center: Christy Moore reported the community center had accomplished following:

Fries Community Center

- Free Community Meal in October
- Hosted dining room/ gym parties
- The center will remain open from 4-7pm Monday through Friday. Unless some unforeseen circumstances or holidays.
- New games have been assembled in the downstairs lobby: we have pool tables, air hockey, ping pong
- We purchased a jukebox box for the lobby downstairs
- We had a workday and cleaned out areas downstairs and organized
- Hosted Truck or Treat at the Fries Ballpark October 31st 5-8pm. We lost count at 400 tick-or-treaters. What was a huge success!
- The Fall Festival was hosted at the old Providence School and we had a great turnout
- The food pantry continues to be open during library hours for anyone in need. We are always accepting donations of non-perishable food items and hygiene products.
- We made several deliveries of food boxes to members of the community in need.
- We continue to provide support for the district 3 seniors. We provide gas for the bus, bingo prizes and more.
- We are working together with the fries fire department for Christmas food boxes. We are planning on needed about 200 boxes for members of the community.
- Johnny Moore resigned as vice chairman due to his wife Christy Moore being nominated for chairman.
- Christy Moore was voted on as Chairman of the community center board.
- Alicia Jeffery was voted on as Vice Chairman of the community center board.
- Hosting Christmas on the Mountain on December 7th. We currently have around 25 vendor spaces reserved.
- Sports: We are doing a trail run and merging our sports program with FCA sports for baseball season to see how the community likes the change.
- The community center bank account continues to remain stable and growing.

Thank you,

Fries Community Center Board

The Mayor thanked Mrs. Moore for the report.

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: Chief Randy Lineberry and Junior Young reported that the fire department had been busy the past week. They noted that the department had fed over 1,000 people, performed several swift water rescues, removed trees from roadways, and assisted citizens door-to-door during the storm. Carroll County Rescue also provided a drive-thru meal for the citizens of Fries. Randy noted that all donated items left over were taken to God's Pit Crew for further distribution where needed. Randy then suggested that the town install a warning system with a siren for fire calls due to the heavy traffic congestion toward the end of the week and on weekends. The department had already received a \$5,000 donation to start the project and asked that the town allow the department to install the siren on the water tower property on Top Street. He added that the siren would only be used for fire calls and would

not operate during the hours of 10 pm and 6am unless of a dangerous storm or some type of danger to the citizens. The siren would have two different tones, one for a fire call and one for an emergency event. He had discussed the siren with Senator Warner and hoped that more funding would become available for the project shortly. Randy added that the current emergency notification systems, Nixle and 911, were both inoperable during the storm countywide. He thanked Junior Young for his efforts working with the Grayson County Emergency Services Coordinator on behalf of the department during the communication outage. He reported that the department, as well as several other county agencies, had purchased Starlink to alleviate this problem in the future. Last, Randy reported that the department was also working with the Mayor to have Knox Boxes installed at local businesses and apartment buildings so that the fire department would be able to access the businesses in emergencies without breaking down doors or windows. The Mayor then asked for any discussion concerning the emergency warning siren. There was none. With no further discussion, Johnny Dixon moved to approve the emergency siren installation at the town water tower site on Top Street. Yvonne Burr provided the second to the motion. All present voted Aye and the motion carried. The Mayor thanked them for their reports and dedication to the Town of Fries.

Old Business:

1. There was no old business to discuss.

New Business:

1. November Meeting Date: Johnny Dixon moved to change the November meeting date to Tuesday, November 12th in the Historic Fries Theater due to the regular meeting date being on Election Day. James Young provided the second. All present voted Aye and the motion carried.
2. Town Water Expansion: Brian Dixon requested that the council consider expanding the water system to the river lots starting at Carrico Street and continuing to the ferry road in Fenders Curve. After some discussion, council agreed to pursue the endeavor, but asked Mr. Dixon to provide his plans in writing for approval by the planning commission. The Mayor thanked Mr. Dixon for his labor in pursuing the development project.
3. Town Water System: Johnny Moore expressed his concern that the water treatment plant did not have a generator. He stated that not being able to use the water affected their ability to open up the community center for people to take showers etc. during the storm. He stated that the center had considered having a fundraiser to purchase a generator for the town, but was told by county officials that it wasn't necessary because funding would be available. He then asked why the town didn't have a metering system for the water tank. The Mayor replied that the town did, in fact, have a metering system for the water tank that notified the plant of the water levels by a phone monitoring line. However, when the phone lines went down, so did the notification system to the plant. The metering system was still operational, it was just not readable at the plant. To find out the level of the water tank, you simply had to verify it by walking up to the water tower. It was plainly visible from the gate. The Mayor thanked Mr. Moore for his comments.

4. Tri-Area Community Health Center: Jim Werth thanked the fire department and everyone that had worked so diligently for the area citizens during the storm. He added that the medical center wanted to be a part of the community and would love to be involved in the emergency response committee. The Mayor thanked him for his continuing dedication to the community and added that he would be notified when the emergency response committee began to meet.
5. Tasha Spencer: Mrs. Spencer introduced herself to the council. She moved to Carroll County a year ago and has since opened a small business in the Town of Fries. Being new to the area, she wasn't sure how and where to go for help and information during the storm. Therefore, she asked to be included in the emergency response committee. The Mayor thanked her for her concern and agreed to notify her when the emergency response committee began to meet. Mrs. Spencer, an artist, also asked for permission to create a mural proposal for the floodwall. The Mayor stated that the council would be receptive to reviewing her proposal and thanked her for her interest.
6. 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, Jo Ann Gunter provided the second).

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, James Young, Richard Hawks, Johnny Dixon, Jo Ann Gunter, Bill Davis and Cynthia Grant.

Announcements:

1. Lions Club Yard Sale, Saturday, October 12th, 9am—3pm.
2. Fries Community Center Halloween Trunk or Treat, Oct. 31st from 5pm—8pm in the Fries Ballpark.

With no further business to discuss, Johnny Dixon moved to adjourn. James Young provided the second. All present voted Aye and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
September 3, 2024
Minutes

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

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

Call to Order: The Mayor called the meeting to order and Jo Ann Gunter 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. Mary Ann Cabbage provided the second to the motion. All present voted aye and the minutes and bills were approved.

Police Report: Deputy Jones provided the police report for August, which included: 7 fourth searches, 1 warrant, 2 traffic arrests, and investigation of 4 misdemeanors. Routine activities included: 143 closed business checks, 49 service calls, 56 church checks, 105 directive patrols, 38 open business checks, 17 forestry checks, 5 civil papers, and 2 warrant service attempts for a total of 204 hours. Deputy Jones also reported that they had recently held three stationary traffic checks in an effort to slow traffic down. The Mayor thanked him for his report.

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

1. August 7th- Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting. Signed and submitted attorney agreement. Gave approval to Diversified Integration to proceed with the installation of the influent control panel at the sewer plant.
2. August 9th – Attended the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the Tri-Area Community Health Pharmacy.
3. August 10th – Thanked Yvonne Burr for staffing the market. Also attended the Poor Man's Dinner. Yvonne Burr and Kevin Combs also represented the town.
4. August 12th – Our part-time water treatment worker started working with the town.
5. August 13th- Attended the Lions Club meeting. The club plans to plant a maple tree downtown. Met with Brian Dixon.
6. August 14th – Attended the Crime Prevention Coalition Meeting in Independence. Hosted a meeting with the GLO team, (EPA, VDH, GDIT etc.) Attended a SERCAP Grant webinar. Met with Angela Shupe concerning handicap accessibility.
7. August 16th – Attended the Fries Fiddlers Convention and the District III Senior's Picnic.
8. August 17th – Thanked Richard Hawks for staffing the market. Attended the Fries Fiddlers Convention and the Thunder by the River Cruise-In.
9. August 21st – Attended Planning Committee meeting, attended EPA webinar and performed a site visit to review the property at the end of Carrico Street.
10. August 22nd – Drove the bus for the District III Senior program.
11. August 27th – Attended the Chamber of Commerce meeting.
12. August 28th – Postponed the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting.
13. August 29th – Met with Brian Dixon and then attended the Thursday Night Jam.

- 14. August 30th – Opened new online account with VDH for service line inventory submittal. Had a meeting with Brian Dixon.
- 15. August 31st – Staffed the market with Jill.

Organization Updates:

1. Fries Historic Theatre Report: Kevin Combs reported that the following:

Fries Town Council Fries, Virginia

September 3, 2024

Report Overview

This report provides an update on the recent activities and developments at The Historic Fries Theatre. It also presents financial statements for the year-to-date period ending Aug 31, 2024, and a list of financial transactions for the non-profit corporation for the year-to-date.

Dedication to Community and Economic Growth

The Theatre board and management remain dedicated to maximizing the town's assets by diligently leveraging the Theatre to attract visitors to Fries and stimulate economic activity. Collaboration with Fries tourism has been instrumental in positioning the Theatre as a hub for cultural enrichment and community engagement.

Cultural and Community Impact

The Theatre is a cherished venue for both young and old. Young people learn about Appalachian culture and heritage, traditional instruments, and the importance of dance in connection with music. Older individuals enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie of hearing familiar tunes.

The weekly jam sessions have attracted a significant number of visitors to Fries. Many people from out of town plan their vacations around the jam sessions, staying from Thursday to the following Thursday night to attend twice. Recent visitors have come from Holland, France, England, Canada, California, New Mexico, Colorado, New York, Florida, Ohio, and many other states.

Evolving into a Cultural Center

Gentrification, the process where local residents are priced out of their homes by newcomers who are attracted to a trendy area, has impacted Fries to some degree. This complex phenomenon elicits varying opinions but is often driven by uncontrollable forces. Effective management is crucial, as gentrification can erode local culture. The Historic Fries Theatre addresses this by preserving the community's heritage through weekly jam sessions, Friday night concerts, and displays celebrating Fries' history and culture.

Notably, the Theatre is evolving into more than just a music venue. We are shaping it into a museum and cultural center that tells the story of Fries, the mill, and their connection to Appalachian music and dance. Visitors and residents come not only to enjoy music and dance but also to immerse themselves in the town's rich history and heritage.

Recent Updates and Financial Information

We recently repaired the neon sign. The cost, expected to be around \$800, isn't reflected in the current financial statements as they are on a cash basis and the final bill has not yet been received. Donations for the repair totaling \$200 were received from Tina Privette, James Danford, Eddie Bond, and Bonnie Bond.

August Highlights

Throughout August, the Theatre achieved several milestones:

1. Hosted a well-received exhibition of photography by local visual artist Mark V. Sanderford. Sanderford was the winner of the inaugural Fries Musical Heritage award presented at the Fries Fiddlers' Convention. Numerous guests attended the exhibitions who would not have otherwise attended the jam sessions.
2. Collaborated with the Fries Musical Heritage Committee to restart the Fries Fiddlers' Convention. The convention was a resounding success. More with the tourism report
3. Hosted a couple of Facebook Live sessions from the jam.
4. Continued publicizing outdoor concerts, with bands booked for performances through October.
5. Bought a sandwich board-style sign to publicize music on Thursday nights at the jam and Friday nights at The Depot.
6. Successfully hosted the concerts in May, June, and July with the Whitetop Mountain Band, the New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters, and Trish Fore & the Wildcats.
7. Held highly successful jam sessions, drawing 90 to 110 visitors per session in August, providing entertainment and fellowship for locals and visitors alike.
8. Continued efforts to maintain the cleanliness of the Theatre and community center grounds.

Conclusion

The Historic Fries Theatre remains committed to 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

*A detailed financial report was also given to the council for The Historic Fries Theatre.

2. Fries Tourism: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Report to Fries Town Council

By Kevin Combs, Tourism Director

September 3, 2024

August continued a marked increase in traffic in town that began in May.

Action taken:

- Collaborated with a group of community leaders and musicians to continue the Fries Fiddlers' Convention after Fries Fire and Rescue chose to discontinue it.
 - Event was held August 16-17 at the Fries Ballpark
 - Event conducted under the umbrella of Fries Tourism
 - Local restaurants and temporary housing reported increased business during the weekend.
 - It was 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
 - Distributed posters and flyers for the event at various music festivals in VA, NC, and WV.
 - Continued social media presence promoting the event
 - Gate receipts did not cover expenses, but with sponsorships and donations, the event sustained itself this year and will carry funds to next year.
 - Raised over \$3,000 in music scholarship money.
 - Full accounting will be presented at the next meeting of town council.
- Represented the town in numerous festivals and public gatherings.
- Began working on a flyer and a video to promote the Fries access of the New River Trail. The idea is to draw people in from the Galax and Foster Falls access. I have secured a permit to video on the New River Trail.
- 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.
- 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 4 mill houses, the Fries RV Park, the Washington Inn, the Fries condo, the two Blevins properties, the Windy River Café, L'il A Mart, and the Fries Dam Steakhouse in social media posts so far.
- Distributed rack cards, concert posters, and visitor guides around the region.
- Accomplished the placement of rack cards at state welcome centers. These cards will be at the perimeter of the state. Grayson County tourism paid for the Fries rack cards and placement of them at Virginia welcome centers
- Saw many visitors come into Fries to attend the Fries Fiddlers' Convention, Summer Concert Series at The Depot, Thunder on the River Classic Car Shows, July 4th Parade, and the Thursday Night Jam Session at The Historic Fries Theatre.

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

Report to Fries Town Council

By Kevin Combs, Tourism Director

September 2, 2024

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(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*).

Date in September	Event
5	Thursday night jam session 7 p.m., The Historic Fries Theatre
7	Town Market 9 a.m., The Depot
12	Fries Historical Walking Tour, 5 p.m., New River Trail State Park access
12	Thursday night jam session 7 p.m., The Historic Fries Theatre
14	Town Market 9 a.m., The Depot
19	Thursday night jam session 7 p.m., The Historic Fries Theatre
20	The Depot Concert Series – Crooked Road Ramblers, 7 p.m., The Depot
21	Town Market 9 a.m., The Depot
21	Horse Show, 3 p.m., Jamie Hyatt Arena
21	Thunder by the River Classic Car Cruise-In, 2 p.m., Town Park
26	Thursday night jam session 7 p.m., The Historic Fries Theatre
28	Town Market 9 a.m., The Depot
28	Hippies Only Volkswagen Fest, 11 a.m., Fries Town Park

Tourist season is still booming in Fries with leaf peeping season coming up soon.

Don't forget our restaurants in town: The Fries Dam Steakhouse, The Windy River Café, and The Caboose, and just outside of town – Li'l A and New River Side Store & Deli.

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.

The Mayor thanked him for his hard work and both reports.

3. Fries Community Center: Joyce Brown reported the community center had accomplished following:

Fries Community Center

1. Free Community Meal in August
2. The pool was drained and winterized
3. Hosted dining room/ gym parties
4. The center will remain open from 4-7 pm Monday through Friday. Unless some unforeseen circumstances or holidays.
5. Continued exercise classes.
6. Weight Room memberships continue to grow.
7. Working on the possibility of a fall paint night
8. We just started football season. We have flag football and K-2nd cheer. We also have a fall baseball team.
9. Finalized details for the 5K and Fall Festival for October. Pre-registration is still open.
10. We have a work day scheduled for September to get cleaning done at the center.
11. The community center bank account continues to remain stable and growing.

There has been some flooding in the bowling alley that we need to get addressed.

Thank you,

Fries Community Center Board

Ms. Brown also reported that she had gotten the mini-split in the dining room repaired.

The Mayor thanked Ms. Brown for the report and stated that the flooding in the bowling alley had been addressed.

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: James Young reported that the fire department had a horseshow scheduled for September 21st at the Jamie Hyatt Arena, the rescue squad had officially been able to enlist paid staff seven days per week, and the department was still progressing with the new AED program. The Mayor thanked him for his report.

Old Business:

1. There was no old business to discuss.

New Business:

1. Angela Shupe: Handicap Access: Mrs. Shupe did not attend the meeting.

Announcements:

1. Fries Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting, Wednesday, Sept. 11th @ 2pm
2. Fries Town Market Every Saturday @ 9am, Yard Sale Sat., Sept. 14th @ 9am.
3. Old-time Music and Dance @ the Depot, The Crooked Road Ramblers, Sept. 20th @ 7pm
4. Thunder by the River Cruise In – Town Park - Sept. 21st @2pm
5. Horse Show-Fries Fire & Rescue- Jamie Hyatt Arena –Sept. 21st @ 3pm.
6. Hippies Only! Volkswagen Fest- Town Park- Sept. 28th @ 11am
7. Fries Community Center Fall Festival & 5k Run- Walk- Oct. 5th @ 9am

Jill Snyder, resident of Grayson Street, expressed concern about speeding on Grayson Street. She reported that several area pets had been killed by speeding vehicles in the past few months. She asked that the council consider implementing a 4-way stop at the intersection of Cliff Street and Grayson Street and perhaps add speed limit signs to Grayson Street. The Mayor responded that she would look into the matter.

Charlie Lawrence offered to purchase speed limit signs to install on Main Street in an effort to slow traffic down. The Mayor responded that Main Street was a VDOT-maintained road and permission would have to come from them, but she would be glad to check into the matter.

Deb Renfro reported that she and Rob had sighted a bobcat on their property on Carroll Drive. She warned fellow citizens to look out for their animals, etc.

Eric Krohn reported that he had recently read that the Virginia Code had changed and now allowed localities to reduce speed limits without having to perform traffic studies. The Mayor stated that we had looked into that in July, but would check on the specifics.

With no further business to discuss, Yvonne Burr moved to adjourn. James Young provided the second. All present voted Aye and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
August 6, 2024
Minutes

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

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

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

Minutes & Bills: Mary Ann Cubbage 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 July, which included: 2 fourth searches and 1 traffic arrest and an investigation of 1 felony and 1 misdemeanor. Routine activities included: 162 closed business checks, 22 service calls, 63 church checks, 78 directive patrols, 41 open business checks, 12 forestry checks, 2 civil papers, 1 EPO and 2 warrant service attempts for a total of 174 hours. The Mayor thanked him for his report.

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

1. Staffed the market with Jill on July 6th & 13th. Reminded everyone of the Yard Sale Market Date on August 10th.
2. July 8th -- Met with VDOT.
3. July 9th – Met with Grayson County Sheriff.
4. July 9th – Attended the Lions Club Meeting.
5. July 12th – Attended the Summer Music at the Depot.
6. July 14th – Our Jesuit students arrived.
7. July 18th – Meeting with Eric Testerman of the New River Trail State Park.
8. July 20th – Thanks for Jo Ann Gunter for staffing the town market.
9. July 22nd – Attended both the Planning Committee and the Board of Zoning Appeals meetings.
10. July 23rd – Public Works employee baby boy born. Welcome to Colton Vaughan!
11. July 23rd – Attended Chamber of Commerce Meeting.
12. July 24th – Hired our temporary public works employee to full-time.
13. July 24th – Interviewed a part-time employee for the water treatment plant. Hired him. He was to begin work on August 12th.
14. July 25th, 26th & 27th – Volunteered at Smoke on the Mountain as a representative of Fries.
15. July 29th – Conference call with Brian Reed, of Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and Kevin Heath of Lane Group on extending the deadline for one of our grants.
16. July 29th – Inspected new wall at the water treatment plant. The project took 3 years to complete. She reported that the contractor, Locke/Lane, had been a pleasure to work with.
17. July 30th – Met virtually with the New River Trail State Park representation from Richmond. Also met with a prospective town attorney and worked on various town contracts.

18. August 1st – Met with a contractor, Pedro Sanchez, to look at a roof leak on the Community Center. He repaired the leak and the town paid for the repair.
19. August 3rd – Staffed the market with Jill.
20. August 5th – Attended the Planning Committee Meeting.

Organization Updates:

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

Report to Fries Town Council
 By Kevin Combs, Tourism Director
 August 6, 2024

July continued a marked increase in traffic in town that began in May.

Acton taken:

- In conjunction with The Historic Fries Theatre held the third in a series of 5 outdoors concerts at The Depot.
 - o All three have been heavily attended
 - o Brought business into Fries
 - o Lots of rave reviews
- Heavily marketed the concert series to get the word out about Fries and get people into town.
 - o Purchased ad buys on WBRF and WPAQ
 - o Heavily promoted them on free social media
 - o Purchased ad buys on Facebook
 - o Granted live interview to WPAQ
 - o Shared another video about the concerts
 - o Printed posters and flyers and distributed them
- 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
 - o Distributed posters and flyers for the event at various music festivals in VA, NC, and WV.
 - o Continued social media presence promoting the event
- Represented the town in numerous festivals and public gatherings.
- Began working on a flyer and a video to promote the Fries access of the New River Trail. The idea is to draw people in from the Galax and Foster Falls access. I have secured a permit to video on the New River Trail.
- Continued scheduling events on the 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 4 mill houses, the Fries RV Park, the Washington Inn, the Fries condo, the two Blevins properties, the Windy River Café, Li'l A Mart, and the Fries Dam Steakhouse in social media posts so far.
- Distributed rack cards, concert posters, and visitor guides around the region.
- Accomplished the placement of rack cards at state welcome centers. These cards will be at the perimeter of the state. Grayson County Tourism paid for the Fries rack cards and placement of them at Virginia welcome centers
- Saw many visitors come into Fries to attend the Summer Concert Series at The Depot, Thunder on the River Classic Car Show, July 4th Parade, and the Thursday Night Jam Session at The Historic Fries Theatre.
- Facilitated programs by the New River Trail Park Service

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 August 8 – Jam session canceled due to Galax Fiddlers' Convention
 - o August 10 - 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Town Market
 - o August 15 - Noon: Fries Ballpark opens for fiddling campers
 - o August 15 – 3:00 – 4:30 pm: Osprey Watch on the NRT
 - o August 15 – 5:00 – 6:00 pm: Walking Tour of Fries by NRT staff
 - o August 15 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
 - o August 16 – 6 pm: Fries Fiddlers' kicks off
 - o August 17 – 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Town Market
 - o August 17 - Noon: Youth competition and folksong at Fries Fiddlers'
 - o August 17 – 2 pm: Thunder by the River Classic Car Cruise-in
 - o August 17 – 7 pm: Night 2 of Fries Fiddlers'
 - o August 22 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
 - o August 24 – 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Town Market
 - o August 29 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
 - o August 31 – 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Town Market
 - o August 31 – 9:30 – 11:00 am: Wildflower Walk by naturalist Ashley Decarme
 - o Don't forget our restaurants in town: The Fries Dam Steakhouse, The Windy River Café, and The Caboose, and just outside of town – Li'l A and New River Side Store & Deli.

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.

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

August 5, 2024

**Fries Town Council
Fries, Virginia**

August Report to Fries Town Council

Report Overview

This report provides an update on the recent activities and developments at The Historic Fries Theatre. It also presents financial statements for the year-to-date period ending July 31, 2024, and a listing of financial transactions for the non-profit corporation for the year-to-date.

Dedication to Community and Economic Growth

The Theatre board and management remain dedicated to maximizing the town's assets by diligently leveraging the Theatre to attract visitors to Fries and stimulate economic activity. Collaboration with Fries tourism has been instrumental in positioning the Theatre as a hub for cultural enrichment and community engagement.

Cultural and Community Impact

The Theatre is a cherished venue for both young and old. Young people learn about Appalachian culture and heritage, traditional instruments, and the importance of dance in connection with music. Older individuals enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie of hearing familiar tunes. The weekly jam sessions have attracted a significant number of visitors to Fries. Many people from out of town plan their vacations around the jam sessions, staying from Thursday to the following Thursday night to attend twice. Recent visitors have come from Holland, France, England, Canada, California, New Mexico, Colorado, New York, Florida, Ohio, and many other states.

Evolving into a Cultural Center

Gentrification, the process where local residents are priced out of their homes by newcomers who are attracted to a trendy area, has impacted Fries to some degree. This complex phenomenon elicits varying opinions but is often driven by uncontrollable forces. Effective management is crucial, as gentrification can erode local culture. The Historic Fries Theatre addresses this by preserving the community's heritage through weekly jam sessions, Friday night concerts, and displays celebrating Fries' history and culture.

Notably, the Theatre is evolving into more than just a music venue. We are shaping it into a museum and cultural center that tells the story of Fries, the mill, and their connection to Appalachian music and dance. Visitors and residents come not only to enjoy music and dance but also to immerse themselves in the town's rich history and heritage.

Recent Updates and Financial Information

We recently repaired the neon sign. The cost, expected to be around \$800, isn't reflected in the current financial statements as they are on a cash basis and the final bill has not yet been received. Donations for the repair totaling \$200 were received from Tina Privette, James Danford, Eddie Bond, and Bonnie Bond.

July Highlights

Throughout July, the Theatre achieved several milestones:

- 1. Continued collaboration with the Fries Musical Heritage Committee to restart the Fries Fiddlers' Convention. Plans are shaping up well and we are just at the mercy of the weather at this point. The convention has been publicized on social media, on radio, in newspapers and by posters in the region and at live music events.**
- 2. Hosted a couple of Facebook Live sessions from the jam.**
- 3. Secured three display cases to use in the theatre for museum and cultural displays.**
- 4. Continued publicizing outdoor concerts, with bands booked for performances through October.**
- 5. Bought a sandwich board style sign to publicize music on Thursday nights at the jam and Friday nights at The Depot.**
- 6. Successfully hosted the concerts in May, June, and July with the Whitetop Mountain Band, the New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters, and Trish Fore & the Wildcats.**
- 7. Held highly successful jam sessions, drawing 90 to 110 visitors per session in July, providing entertainment and fellowship for locals and visitors alike.**
- 8. Continued efforts to maintain the cleanliness of the Theatre and community center grounds.**

Conclusion

The Historic Fries Theatre remains committed to 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**

***A detailed financial report was also given to the council for The Historic Fries Theatre.**

The Mayor thanked him for both his reports.

3. Fries Community Center: Joyce Brown reported the community center had accomplished following:

- Free Community Meal in July
- 4th of July Celebration down at the river, with the Fries Fire Department, we sold popsicles and had kid games. We had an awesome turnout in the community.
- The pool continued to run and served many swimmers. Including the recent group of students that came.
- Hosted many pool parties
- Provided free swim night for the community.
- Purchased new games for the lobby that the kids will be able to play for free.
- Removing games that required kids to pay to play them.
- Continued exercise classes.
- Weight Room memberships continue to grow.
- Provided bingo prizes for the seniors.
- Appointed Joyce Brown as the new senior liaison.
- The sports booster club met and set some goals for the fall sports and the 5k/Fall Festival.
- Fall Sports registration is open.
- Finalized details for the 5K and Fall Festival for October.
- Added 3 new board members: Candance Hash, Tayler Hyatt, and Kodie Hyatt.
- The community center bank account continues to remain stable and growing.

Thank you,
Fries Community Center Board

The Mayor thanked Ms. Brown for her report.

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: No report given.

5. Friends of Fries: Mary Ann Cubbage reported that the group had provided a meal for the Jesuit Students in July and were planning to plant some evergreen trees near the fountain to replace a dead tree that had recently been cut down and removed. The Mayor thanked her for her report.

Old Business:

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

Mr. Edenfield thanked the council for the recent approval to build three homes on his property and asked if the town planned to provide water to the property. The Mayor replied that he should have received a letter from the planning committee that outlined their decision, but yes, the town would provide water to his property. He then reported that after meeting with the Virginia Department of Health, he had decided to withdraw his request for

zoning approval for the R.V. park at the end of Carrico Street. The Mayor thanked Mr. Edenfield for his update.

New Business:

1. 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).

Yvonne Burr moved to exit the closed session. Mary Ann Cabbage 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, Richard Hawks, Jo Ann Gunter, Bill Davis and Cynthia Grant.

2. Proposed Agreement: The Mayor presented for council consideration, an agreement to engage the services of Farthing Legal, PC as attorney for the Town of Fries as well as Mr. Farthing's resume. After reviewing the document and some discussion, Yvonne Burr moved to approve the agreement. Mary Ann Cabbage provided the second to the motion. All present voted Aye, no Nays, and the agreement was approved.
3. Influent Panel Quote: The Clerk presented a quote for a new influent panel for the wastewater treatment plant for council consideration. After some discussion, Jo Ann Gunter moved to approve the expenditure. Richard Hawks provided the second. All present voted Aye, no Nays, and the expenditure was approved.

Announcements:

1. Fries Board of Zoning Appeals Organizational Meeting, Wednesday, August 7th @ 2pm
2. Tri-Area Health Clinic Pharmacy Ribbon Cutting: Friday, August 9th @ 11am
3. Fries Town Market Every Saturday @ 9am
4. Fries Fiddlers Convention, August 16th & 17th
5. Thunder by the River Cruise In – August 17th @2pm
6. Autumn Wildflower Walk – August 31 @ 9:30am
7. Fries Community Center Fall Festival & 5K Run-Walk, October 5, 2024 at the Fries Park from 9am—2pm.

With no further business to discuss, Richard Hawks moved to adjourn. Mary Ann Cubbage seconded the motion. All present voted Aye and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
July 2, 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 Landreth, Grayson County Sheriff's Department; Shania Stockton, Galax Gazette; Brian Edenfield, Johnny Moore, Karen Snyder and several town citizens and guests.

Call to Order: The Mayor called the meeting to order and Jo Ann Gunter 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. Richard Hawks 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 June, which included: 2 fourth searches, 3 criminal arrests, 2 traffic, 1 warrant, 1 warrant/summons served and investigation of 1 felony. Routine activities included: 287 closed business checks, 31 service calls, 63 church checks, 83 directive patrols, 46 open business checks, 4 forestry checks, 5 civil papers, and 3 warrant service attempts for a total of 173 hours. The Mayor thanked him for his report.

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

1. Met with Anna Mahan from SERCAP concerning mapping the town's infrastructure.
2. Attended the VML Small Town Conference in Abingdon, VA.
3. Had public works install safety railings at the depot/farmers market structure.
4. Attended the GLO conference on June 18th that pertained to the service line inventory.
5. Attended Planning Committee meetings on June 21st and June 26th.
6. Attended a meeting concerning the footbridge replacement.
7. Opened a new checking account for the WTP wall project.
8. Had public works attended to roof leaks above the theater and gym.
9. Applied for and received SERCAP grant to replace failing equipment at the WWTP.
10. Presented a check for \$15,000 in ATF grant funds to James Young of Fries Fire and Rescue.
10. Thanked the council members who had volunteered and worked at the town market on Saturdays.
11. Signed checks and had various planning/work sessions in the town hall.

Organization Updates:

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

**Report to Fries Town Council
By Tourism Director
July 2, 2024**

June saw a marked increase in traffic in town that began in May.

Action taken:

- **In conjunction with The Historic Fries Theatre held the second in a series of 5 outdoors concerts at The Depot.**
 - Both have been heavily attended
 - Brought business into Fries
 - Lots of rave reviews
- **Heavily marketed the concert series to get the word out about Fries and get people into town.**
 - Purchased ad buys on WBRF and WPAQ
 - Heavily promoted them on free social media
 - Purchased ad buys on Facebook
 - Granted live interview to WPAQ
 - Produced another video about the concerts
 - Printed posters and flyers and distributed them
- **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
 - Distributed posters and flyers for the event.
 - Continued social media presence promoting the event
- **Represented the town in numerous festivals and public gatherings. Set up a tent at the Beerfest and engaged with many people about Fries.**
- **Began working on a flyer and a video to promote the Fries access of the New River Trail. The idea is to draw people in from the Galax and Foster Falls access. I have applied for a permit to video on the New River Trail.**
- **Attended a working session hosted by Grayson County to design and implement signage around the county, with my emphasis on directing tourists into Fries.**
- **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 reposting 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 4 mill houses, the Fries RV Park, the Washington Inn, the Fries condo, the two Blevins properties, the Windy River Café, L'il A Mart, and the Fries Dam Steakhouse in social media posts so far.**
- **Distributed rack cards, concert posters, and visitor guides around the region.**
- **Arranged for rack cards to be distributed to state welcome centers. These cards will be at the perimeter of the state. Grayson County tourism paid for the Fries rack cards and placement of them at Virginia welcome centers**
- **Saw many visitors come into Fries to attend the Summer Concert Series at The Depot, Thunder on the River Classic Car Show, Go with the Flow Beer Fest, and the Thursday Night Jam Session at The Historic Fries Theatre.**
- **Facilitated programs by the New River Trial Park Service**

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 July 4 – Jam session canceled due to July 4 holiday
- o July 4 – 2 p.m. Fries parade o July 4 Fireworks
- o July 6 - 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Town Market
- o July 11 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
- o July 12 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Concert at The Depot – Trish Fore & Wildcats
- o July 13 – 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Town Market
- o July 18 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
- o July 20 – 9:00 – 1:00 pm: Town Market
- o July 20 – 2:00 – 7:00 pm: Thunder by the River Classic Car Cruise-In
- o July 25 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm: Jam session at The Historic Fries Theatre
- o July 27 – 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:

July 2, 2024
Fries Town Council
Fries, Virginia

Report Overview

This report provides an update on the recent activities and developments at The Historic Fries Theatre. It also presents financial statements for the year-to-date period ending June 30, 2024, and a listing of financial transactions for the non-profit corporation for the year to date.

Dedication to Community and Economic Growth

The Theatre board and management remain dedicated to maximizing the town's assets by diligently leveraging the Theatre to attract visitors to Fries and stimulate economic activity. Collaboration with Fries tourism has been instrumental in positioning the Theatre as a hub for cultural enrichment and community engagement.

Cultural and Community Impact

The Theatre is a cherished venue for both young and old. Young people learn about Appalachian culture and heritage, traditional instruments, and the importance of dance in connection with music. Older individuals enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie of hearing familiar tunes. The weekly jam sessions have attracted a significant number of visitors to Fries. Many people from out of town plan their vacations around the jam sessions, staying from Thursday to the following Thursday night to attend twice. Recent visitors have come from Holland, France, England, Canada, California, New Mexico, Colorado, New York, Florida, Ohio, and many other states.

Evolving into a Cultural Center

One notable transformation 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, the mill, and their connection to Appalachian music and dance. Visitors and residents come not only to enjoy music and dance but also to immerse themselves in the rich history and heritage of our town.

Recent Updates and Financial Information

We recently repaired the neon sign. The cost, expected to be around \$800, isn't reflected in the current financial statements as they are on a cash basis and the final bill has not yet been received. Donations for the repair totaling \$200 were received from Tina Privette, James Danford, Eddie Bond, and Bonnie Bond.

June Highlights

Throughout June, the Theatre achieved several milestones:

- 1. Continued collaboration with the Fries Musical Heritage Committee to restart the Fries Fiddlers' Convention.**
- 2. Hosted a Facebook Live session from the jam.**
- 3. Received mention on Blue Ridge Public Television in a broadcast recorded at the Theatre.**
- 4. Continued publicizing outdoor concerts, with bands booked for performances through October.**
- 5. Successfully hosted the first concerts in May and June with the Whitetop Mountain Band and the New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters.**
- 6. Held highly successful jam sessions, drawing 100 to 120 visitors per session, providing entertainment and fellowship for locals and visitors alike.**
- 7. Continued efforts to maintain the cleanliness of the Theatre and community center grounds.**

Conclusion

The Historic Fries Theatre remains committed to 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

*A financial report was also given to the council for The Historic Fries Theatre.

The Mayor thanked him for both his reports.

3. Fries Community Center: Johnny Moore reported the following:

Fries Community Center Update July 2024

Completed Baseball/Softball Season.

- 2 Boys Teams
- 2 Girls Softball Teams
- 2 Combined T Ball/Coach Pitch Teams.

Pool opened – May 24th

Over 400 swimmers so far this season.

Free Family Night Swim the 3rd Thursday each month (over 50 attended in June).

Closed for a week in June due to all 3 Lifeguards being on Vacation.

Senior program bus has been repaired, has 2 new tires and a new inspection.

Bingo with prizes each week during the meal proved by District Three at the community center.

Superfit classes on Tuesday evenings.

Weight Room open for daily or monthly membership.

Joint effort with the Fries Fire Dept. to offer a celebration in the Fries Park before the fireworks on July 6th. Band/Cornhole/food.

Free Community Meal offered Feb, March, May and June and plan to continue monthly.

Foodbank open inside the gym on M, W, F when the library is open.

Working on the Duck Pin Bowling Alley hoping to open it to the public by fall.

Football/Cheerleading registrations will begin mid-July.

5k Fun Run/Fall Festival planned for October 5th by the river.

Financially stable and bank account is growing.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Moore for his report.

Karen Snyder reported that the seniors were ecstatic that the bus had been repaired and was up and running. She thanked the Community Center for the new tires and for getting the bus

repaired. She hoped they could now take the seniors on more trips. She reported that the group wants to go to Mt. Airy once a month to Aldi's for grocery shopping. She reported that they had recently lost one of their long—time members, Mrs. Wanda Dowling, and that she would be greatly missed. The Mayor thanked her for her report.

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: James Young reported that the Independence Day parade would be held on Thursday, July 4th at 2 pm. Fireworks were planned for Saturday, July 6th at 9:30pm. The Fire Department and the Community Center also planned to host a Fun Day in the Town Park on July 6th from 6pm—9:30pm. He also reported that the next horseshow would be held on September 21st. Rain date was scheduled for September 28th. The Mayor thanked him for his report.
5. Friends of Fries: Mary Ann Cabbage reported that they were just trying to keep the plants alive through the current drought watch. The Mayor thanked her for her report.

Old Business:

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

Mr. Edenfield reviewed his proposed plans within the town. He reported that the hotel and condo rentals had greatly improved and were doing great. He and a business partner had recently purchased the New Riverside Store and Deli and he asked that people come and see the changes they were making. He also stated that he had no plan to move the outfitters that was currently located in the store. Then he asked that council and the planning committee review the proposed plans that he had recently submitted as he would like to have approval as soon as possible. The Mayor thanked Mr. Edenfield for his report.

2. Fries Community Center Letter: The Mayor reviewed a recent letter that she had written to the Fries Community Center concerning the rental agreement signed in April.

New Business:

1. SERCAP Grant for WWTP Influent Panel & Pump: The Mayor reported that the town had applied for and had been awarded \$40,275 to replace the failing panel and pump at the wastewater treatment plant. She read the award letter aloud.
2. Fire Department 2024 ATL Funds: The Mayor presented James Young of Fries Fire and Rescue with a check for \$15,000 in ATL funds that the town had applied for and received on behalf of the FVFD.
3. 2023 Paving Bill: The clerk presented a bill for \$33,462.95 that had been received for the paving work that had been completed in 2023 and asked for approval to pay the bill. After some discussion, Jo Ann Gunter moved to table the matter until legal representation could be secured and review the matter. Richard Hawks provided the second. The Mayor called for a vote. Bill Davis, Yvonne Burr, Johnny Dickson, Jo Ann Gunter and Richard Hawks voted Aye. Mary Ann Cabbage and James Young voted Nay. The matter was tabled.

4. WWTP Grinder Control Panel: The clerk presented an estimate for a new grinder control that had recently failed at the wastewater treatment plant for council review. No action was taken.
5. Jeff Key: Fries Community Center/Theater Parking Sign: Mr. Key stated that he had come to the meeting about the theater parking sign, but had seen that it had been corrected to say Thursday night. He also stated that he didn't think the sign was fair and that it should be removed.
6. Angela Shupe: Fries Community Center/Theater Parking Sign: Mrs. Shupe spoke briefly about her background and how the community center was an important place for her and her family. She stated that she was blindsided by the sign and felt that the sign was unnecessary. She asked that the sign be removed and that council look into making the bottom floor of the community center handicap accessible.
7. Michelle Shupe: Fries Community Center/Theater: Ms. Shupe spoke concerning the division of the theater from the community center. She felt that there was a good group of volunteers trying to give kids things to do at the community center and she hoped everyone would start working together.
8. Valerie Archer: Fries Community Center: Mrs. Archer spoke briefly about her background with the community center. She stated that she felt that the theater parking sign gave the impression that the youth sports programs were less important than the theater. She stated that she was sure that had not been the intention of the sign installation, but she felt that the sign was not inviting and should be removed. She suggested a possible solution of designating the entire parking lot handicapped parking only.
9. Rebecca Johnson: Fries Community Center: Ms. Johnson spoke briefly about her background and then commended the new board of the community center for cleaning up the center and the pool. She stated that she felt it wasn't fair to prioritize one part of the community over the other and that the sign should be taken down. She also suggested making the entire parking lot handicapped parking only.
10. Eddie Bond: Fries Theater: Mr. Bond spoke about the history of the Thursday Night Jam, explaining that it had been going on for 40 years, and since joining The Crooked Road Music Trail it now drew visitors worldwide. He explained how volunteers had spent time and money renovating the theater, making it a beautiful venue for young and old. He then addressed the parking issue. He stated that parking is limited around the center and since a large number of the people who attend the jam were elderly, it caused them issues. He asked for the cooperation of the community center with scheduling on Thursday nights, since it was only one night a week for a few hours.

The Mayor then asked for council opinion concerning the sign. Bill Davis asked if things were working before the sign. Eddie Bond responded no they were not. Jo Ann Gunter stated that we all needed to work together and that one night from 5—10pm shouldn't be too much to ask. Johnny Dickson did not like the wording on the sign. Richard Hawks thought the sign should be removed. James Young thought the sign should be removed. Mary Ann Cabbage discussed the option of making the lot handicapped parking only. Yvonne Burr stated that the sign would not help and that scheduling was the real issue.

She then read aloud a letter from the Community Center Treasurer that stated that they would not schedule events on Thursday night unless it was unavoidable.

11. Johnny Moore: Fries Community Center: Mr. Moore read aloud the Community Center's response to the Town letter of concern and spoke about many things he felt were issues. Mr. Moore went over his allotted time to speak and when reminded, he refused to yield the floor. Mr. Griffith, a Fries citizen, intervened and asked Mr. Moore to lower his voice and be respectful.

After some further discussion, the Mayor stated that we all wanted the town to thrive. All of us. The sign was installed in an effort to alleviate a problem. It may not have been the solution, but it was not intended to divide.

With further business to discuss, JoAnn Gunter moved to adjourn. Yvonne Burr seconded the motion. All present voted Aye and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

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 14th. 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 25th. 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 24th.
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 4th. Fireworks would be held on Saturday, July 6th at 9:30pm. The Fire Department also planned to host a Fun Day in the Town Park on July 6th 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 5th. If you didn't receive your statement, please contact town hall.
3. Don't forget to vote in the Primary Election, Tuesday, June 18th.
4. New Orleans Jesuit High School Students will be in town July 14th through July 25th. 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 5th.
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 24th.
 - *May 11th 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 30th 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 18th 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 13th 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 25th 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:

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

Attest:

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 14th at 11am. The Budget Public Hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, June 4th 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 25th. Interested Vendors need to contact Town Hall.
3. Large Item Curbside Pickup: Monday, June 3rd.
4. New Orleans Jesuit High School Students will be in town July 14th through July 25th. 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) 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 20th. 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).

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 24th 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 9th. Baseball signups were underway and registration forms were available in the Fries Library. The center hosted 10 students from Holy Cross starting March 1st. 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 6th. He announced their upcoming events were: a live auction, pinto bean supper and music by Elizabeth & Phillip Vaughan would be held on Saturday, March 9th beginning at 5 pm and an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 23rd 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 9th, 10th, and 11th. 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).

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 10th 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 14th 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 1st. 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).

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: _____