

Fries Town Council
December 2, 2025
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, Bill Davis, Jo Ann Gunter and Karen Snyder.

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

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. Yvonne Burr provided the second to the motion. All present voted aye, and the minutes and bills were approved as presented.

Police Report: Deputy Phipps provided the police report for November, which included: One warrant. Investigation of 2 felonies and 1 misdemeanor. Routine activities: 132 closed business checks, 21 service calls, 37 church checks, 66 directive patrols, 16 open business checks, and 14 forestry checks for a total of 172.5 hours. Mayor Grant thanked Officer Phipps for his report.

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

1. November 19th—Text My Gov training.
2. November 25th—Text My Gov training.
3. November 25th—Progress meeting with Lane Group and Steve Tate and Sons.
4. December 1st—Ordered coal for the Community Center building and received it.

Organization Updates:

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

The Historic Fries Theatre – Report to Town Council
December 2, 2025

Community Support Initiative

We have begun collecting non-perishable food items for the Community Center pantry during the Thursday Night Jam. Our first collection, held on November 20, was very successful. We plan to continue this effort as long as there is a need in the community.

Upcoming Events

The theatre will host Martha Spencer and the Wonderland Band on December 12. This will be a new style of show for us, as Martha and her band are well-known both nationally and internationally.

We also have a calendar of holiday-season activities underway:

- December 18: Holiday covered-dish meal during the final Thursday Night Jam of the year

- December 19: JAM students' recital
- December 31: New Year's Eve dance and celebration featuring the Whitetop Mountain Band and the Crooked Road Ramblers
- January 8, 2026: "Breaking Up Christmas" party at the first jam of the new year

Museum & Cultural Center Donations

We continue to receive meaningful contributions to support the theatre's museum and cultural center development. Recently, Alfred Jones donated the last roll of cloth produced at the Fries Textile Mill, which had been given to him by Willie Wilson. This is an important artifact and a valuable addition to our collection.

JAM Kids Program

The Grayson County JAM (Junior Appalachian Musicians) program—referred to as our "JAM Kids" to distinguish it from the Thursday Night Jam—is thriving. We now have 23 children enrolled. Each session includes:

- One hour of exposure to Appalachian music with rotating local musicians
- 30–60 minutes of instruction on fiddle, banjo, or guitar

Thursday afternoons are especially lively. Students arrive between 3:30–4:00 p.m., some by school bus and others brought by parents. The theatre stays active as lessons progress, and beginning around 5:00 p.m., jam-goers arrive, enjoy concessions, and visit before the 7:00 p.m. jam and the 8:00 p.m. cakewalk.

Art Mullins has donated \$500 to provide t-shirts for all the students who participate in the program and attend a certain number of sessions.

Tomorrow evening the JAM Kids will participate in a joint session with the Galax JAM program.

Building & Infrastructure Issues

We continue to address several ongoing maintenance concerns with the theatre building:

- **Roof Leaks:** The flat roof installed recently is not the source of the leak. The roofing company inspected the building and determined that the issue lies with the older shingle roof installed in the 2010s; the shingles were not installed correctly. We are awaiting a quote from the company.
- **Heat Pump Problems:** A smoke detector—required but not installed during the original installation—has now been added to the unit. We also had to correct wiring issues involving a faulty connecting box. Additionally, an AEP transformer connection failed, leaving us without heat temporarily. E&L Diamond responded quickly and restored the system.
- **Floor Finish Deterioration:** The floor, replaced after frozen-pipe damage a few years ago, is wearing out much faster than expected. It appears the finish applied during replacement was not appropriate for the heavy foot traffic we experience. We are in the process of obtaining a quote for refinishing.

2. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Tourism Director's Report to Town Council
December 2, 2025

Washington Inn Lobby Redesign

I worked closely with R.D. Willard at the Washington Inn to redesign the lobby displays with a stronger focus on local history and landscape. We incorporated historic photographs of Fries, the tourism office's Fries history video, and contemporary landscape photographs that I produced and framed. The refreshed display creates a much more welcoming, tourism-friendly environment for visitors.

Growing Interest in Fries History

There remains a strong and growing appetite among visitors for information about the town's history. Many tourists tell us that arriving in Fries for the first time is an unforgettable experience, and they are eager to understand how this "hidden gem" came to be. The theatre continues to help meet this need by providing historical context and interpretive materials.

PBS Interview

I was interviewed for the PBS Hometowns series—specifically the Grayson County episode. This segment is scheduled to air on Christmas Day and will give Fries additional visibility and positive exposure.

Oral History Preservation Efforts

Council Member Yvonne Burr and I met with representatives from Appalachian State University—Dr. Trevor McKenzie (Professor of Appalachian Studies) and Emily Kader (Curator of Distinctive Collections)—to discuss the long-term preservation of the oral history interviews I've recorded over the past few years. Protecting and housing these interviews in a stable, accessible archive is essential for safeguarding Fries' cultural heritage.

Council Member Burr and I also attended the Twin County Arts Council fundraiser, where we made valuable connections that may benefit our cultural and arts initiatives going forward.

I am currently working with a Radford University intern to edit and finalize these oral histories. Over the past three years, I have recorded interviews with community members about Fries' history, local music, and mill life, including:

Richie Pack, Dawn Patton, Ken Landreth, Mike Phipps, Jimmy Alley, Chris Beamer Cook, Martha Nichols, Billy Bourne, Cheryl Emory, Brian Grim, Joe Hicks, Susie Anderson, Willie Wilson, and myself.

Tourism Trends & Trail Closures

Tourist traffic has declined sharply in recent days, which is typical for this time of year. Recent challenges—including extreme weather and extended closures along the New River Trail—have also contributed to the slowdown. I encourage Council to consider writing to our state legislators, the Governor's office, and State Parks leadership to request that park maintenance closures be scheduled with local tourism cycles in mind.

New River Trail State Park Updates

The State Park has launched a new Fries Track Trail designed for children and families. A kiosk has been installed behind the former school building with pamphlets on Fries' history and local natural features. In addition, the park has reinstalled the color-corrected viewing binoculars that were lost during the flood. The Friends of the Trail group has also installed a bike repair station at the Fries access point.

Support for Local Businesses

As tourism slows for the season, I encourage everyone to support our local businesses. They depend heavily on visitor traffic and greatly appreciate local patronage during the winter months. Please consider inviting out-of-town friends and family to spend time in Fries during the holidays or for a winter getaway—our town is charming year-round.

Respectfully submitted, Kevin Combs

3. Fries Community Center: Joyce Brown reported the following:

- Free Community Thanksgiving Meal in November with over 175 plates served
- Hosted dining room/ gym parties - Continued to provide bingo prizes for the seniors
- Community food pantry continues to be open and stocked for the community.
- Installed new games in lobby: 3 claw machines for the kids to use
- Changed lobby winter hours: Monday-Thursday 3:30pm-6:30pm
- The community center bank account continues to remain stable and growing.

Thank you, Fries Community Center Board

The Mayor thanked Joyce for reporting.

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: No report was given. Karen Snyder announced that the Christmas Parade was scheduled for Saturday, December 6th at 4:00 p.m. She also noted that the fire department planned to host hot chocolate and cookies at the firehouse following the parade and would be giving away Christmas trees.
5. Fries Town Market: Karen Snyder reported that the next market would be held on Saturday, December 13th from 9am—1pm.

Old Business:

- 1. No old business discussed. The Mayor reported that some items had been submitted to the town attorney and she was waiting to hear back from them.

New Business:

- 1. The Mayor reported that while it had not been on the agenda, a concerned citizen had submitted a proposal concerning business licenses to a member of council for review. She reported that council would take the proposal under advisement and would submit it to the town attorney for review.

Announcements:

- 1. Reminder: The deadline to be included on the agenda is Tuesday, one week before the meeting.
- 2. Real Estate Taxes are due December 5th.
- 3. Next Indoor Market is Saturday, December 13th, from 9 am—1 pm.

With no further business to discuss, Karen Snyder moved to adjourn. Mary Ann Cabbage provided the second. All present voted Aye, and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
November 18, 2025
Minutes

Members Present: Mary Ann Cabbage, Bill Davis, Jo Ann Gunter and Karen Snyder.

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Kevin Combs, Tourism Director; Deputy Bobbitt, Grayson County Sheriff's Department; Joyce Brown, Fries Community Center and several town citizens.

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. Karen Snyder provided the second to the motion. All present voted aye, and the minutes and bills were approved as presented.

Police Report: Deputy Bobbitt provided the police report for October, which included: Arrests: 1 criminal. Investigation of 3 felonies, 1 misdemeanor and 2 K-9 searches. Routine activities: 224 closed business checks, 42 service calls, 73 church checks, 80 directive patrols, 21 open business checks, 23 forestry checks, 2 first responders, 2 civil papers, and 4 warrant service attempts for a total of 201 hours. Mayor Grant thanked Officer Bobbitt for his report.

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

1. October 11th—Cynthia and Karen volunteered at the market.
2. October 20th—Filter replacement at the water plant began.
3. October 23rd—Meeting with Dr. Werth from Tri-Area Health.
4. October 23rd—Planning Committee Meeting.
5. October 27th—Meeting with Grayson County Administrator, Steve Boyer.
6. October 27th—Virtual GLO closeout meeting.
7. October 28th—TextMyGov meeting.
8. November 4th—Rescheduled council meeting due to illnesses and various issues.
9. November 5th—Meeting with Grayson County Emergency Services Coordinator, Ryan Wilmouth to discuss stormwater issues and projects.
10. November 5th—VDH Infrastructure Project Progress meeting.
11. November 5th—TextMyGov meeting.
12. November 6th—Had new van inspected.
13. November 6th—Attended VDH Service Line Inventory Webinar.
14. November 6th—Meeting with Scout Master, Jason Burris to discuss possible project.
15. November 12th—Cynthia filled in and drove the senior bus for the District III Senior Program.
16. November 12th—Meeting with Town Attorney.
17. November 12th—TextMyGov meeting.
18. November 13th—Boiler was inspected. Passed inspection and is legal. New license on the way.
19. November 14th—Travis Jones volunteered his time to assist with I.T. in the town hall and security cameras.

Organization Updates:

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

Report from The Historic Fries Theatre

To: Fries Town Council

Subject: October Activity Report

1. Concert Event – Gap Civil (October 24)

The Historic Fries Theatre hosted Gap Civil on October 24. The band delivered an excellent performance, and audience response was enthusiastic. This event continued our commitment to presenting high-quality Appalachian music while supporting both regional artists and local cultural traditions.

2. Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM) Program Launch

The Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM) program began on Thursday, October 9, 2025. We currently have over 20 children enrolled. Students arrive at 4:00 p.m. and begin with a weekly program on Appalachian music heritage, lasting just under an hour. They then break into small group lessons for their chosen instruments—banjo, guitar, or fiddle. One of our biggest concerns prior to launch was whether the JAM program would interfere with the regular Thursday night jam session (attended primarily by adult musicians). We are pleased to report that this has not been the case. The Thursday jam regulars continue to arrive early, enjoy fellowship and hot dogs, and have been consistently supportive of the children. Many have expressed appreciation for seeing the youth carry on the musical traditions of Fries and Grayson County.

3. Thursday Night Jam – Continued Strength

Despite a seasonal decline in tourist attendance, the Thursday night jam remains strong, with 20-25 musicians each week and a robust number of dancers and spectators. Local participation has increased, helping to maintain the energy and community atmosphere. Each week, we continue to receive words of encouragement and thanks from attendees who value the Theatre as a cultural gathering place.

4. New Museum Exhibits

During October, we installed some new items in the Theatre's museum area:

- A poster from the 2nd Annual MerleFest
- Two posters from the Fries Fiddlers' Conventions (one from the 1980s and one from 2024)

These additions help us further highlight Fries' deep musical heritage and the long-standing role the community has played in Appalachian and old-time music traditions.

5. Heating System Issues

The Theatre experienced two heating-related problems during September and October—both discovered on jam days.

- First issue: A panel that required rewiring.

- Second issue: An outdated connection at the electrical meter that had burned out.

E&L Diamond responded promptly to both calls. They worked exceptionally hard—going above and beyond—to restore heat in time for our scheduled activities.

6. Roof Leak

During one of the few recent rain events, we discovered a roof leak inside the Theatre. The company that installed the new flat roof inspected the issue and determined that the problem originated with improperly installed shingles on the older roof section, unrelated to their work. We are currently pursuing options to correct this construction problem and prevent any further water intrusion.

Kevin also announced the following upcoming events: December 3rd, Joint session of the Fries/Galax JAM programs; December 12th, Martha Spencer concert in the Fries Theatre; December 19th, Christmas party at the Thursday Night Jam; December 31st, New Year's Eve Party at the Fries Theatre and January 8th, Breaking Up Christmas Party at the Fries Theatre.

2. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported the following:

- Fries Tourism – Monthly Report
Submitted by: Kevin Combs

- On October 5th, I photographed and filmed the Fries Fire & Rescue Fire Prevention Parade. This provided us with promotional material and documentation of an important annual event for the community.

Later that same day, the Fries Musical Heritage Committee hosted an appreciation dinner for the volunteers who worked at the Fries Fiddlers' Convention. It was a good opportunity to thank everyone who helped make the event possible.

- Throughout October, I spent a substantial amount of time working on a major grant proposal that would benefit both the Town and the Fiddlers' Convention. While I'm hopeful we will receive funding, the process itself was valuable in building our grant writing capacity. We will receive notification in December.
- Tourist activity slowed significantly over the month. This is expected as the leaves pass their peak, temperatures drop, and New River Trail State Park conducts seasonal maintenance—including intermittent trail closures, which impact visitation.

Even so, businesses in town appear to be holding steady, and the Theatre continues to draw consistent numbers. With tourists tapering off, we're seeing increased participation from local residents, which helps maintain momentum.

- I am working with The Washington Inn to create a display highlighting the history of Fries and to assist in decorating the Inn with locally made images. This collaboration will present a welcoming sense of place for visitors staying in town.
- I also met at the Washington Inn with PBS and the producers of the PBS Hometowns series. They are filming an episode on Grayson County, and I was interviewed to represent Fries. The episode

featuring Grayson County and Fries is scheduled to air on Christmas Day, which will give the town valuable exposure.

- Finally, the Virginia Outdoor Adventures podcast released its Fries-focused episodes over two weeks in October. This provided a statewide—and even regional—boost, with the first episode in particular putting a strong spotlight on Fries’ outdoor and cultural attractions.

That concludes my report for October. Thank you.

The Mayor thanked Kevin for both his reports.

3. Fries Community Center: Joyce Brown reported the following:

Fries Community Center

- Free Community Meal in October
- Hosted dining room/ gym parties
- Hosted kids Halloween dance
- Hosting Halloween Trunk or Treat at the ballpark. October 31st 5:30-8:00
- Continued to provide gas for the bus and bingo prizes for the seniors
- Community food pantry continues to be open and stocked for the community.
- Board members changes:
- Voted on 3 new board members.
- The community center bank account continues to remain stable and growing.

Thank you, Fries Community Center Board

Joyce also reported that their free Thanksgiving Meal would be held on Sunday, November 23rd from 4pm—6pm and they also planned to host a food drive in the coming weeks.

The Mayor thanked her for reporting.

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: No report given.

Old Business:

1. No old business discussed.

New Business:

1. No new business discussed.

Announcements:

1. Reminder: The deadline to be included on the agenda is Tuesday, one week before the meeting.
2. Real Estate Taxes are due December 5th.
3. Next Indoor Market is Saturday, December 13th, from 9 am—1 pm.

Mary Ann Cabbage asked if there was a new noise ordinance to review yet. The Mayor replied that she had met with the town attorney and discussed a new ordinance. He was working on one to present to council in the near future.

With no further business to discuss, Mary Ann Cabbage moved to adjourn. Karen Snyder provided the second. All present voted Aye, and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
October 7, 2025
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, Richard Hawks and Jo Ann Gunter.

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

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 as presented.

Police Report: Deputy Phipps provided the police report for September, which included: Arrests: 2 criminal, 1 warning ticket, and 1 DUI. Investigation of 1 felony and 3 misdemeanors. Routine activities: 179 closed business checks, 33 service calls, 43 church checks, 63 directive patrols, 8 open business checks, 24 forestry checks, and 1 EPO for a total of 182 hours. Mayor Grant thanked Officer Phipps for his report.

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

1. August 5th—FEMA meeting.
2. August 6th—VDH project update meeting with Tate & Sons and the Lane Group.
3. August 6th—GLO meeting. Met our new representative, updated report. No lead found in the Town of Fries water system.
4. August 9th—Cynthia volunteered at the market.
5. August 10th—Received a noise complaint about noise from the Windy River Café.
6. August 13th—Met with a contractor concerning drainage issues. Received a bid for \$9,000.
7. August 13th—Planning Committee meeting.
8. August 16th—She thanked Ed Rehkopf for working the market.
9. August 18th—Receive a grant award letter from DEQ. Will be receiving \$890,900 for the wwtp to address issues caused by Hurricane Helene.
10. August 18th—Received notification from District III that they would be donating a van for town use/senior use.
11. August 20th—Hydro plant construction meeting.
12. August 21st—conducted field inspections in the rain for storm drain issues.
13. August 21st—Friends of Fries meeting.
14. August 21st—submitted application to MRPDC for grant funding to reimburse for wwtp expenses due to pump failures.
15. September 3rd—VDH project update meeting with Tate & Sons and the Lane Group.
16. September 9th—met with another contractor concerning storm drain issues. Received a bid for \$600.
17. September 9th—short meeting with Brian Dixon.
18. September 10th—GLO meeting about potholing.

19. September 11th—GLO meeting about potholing.
20. September 13th—She thanked Karen Snyder for working the market.
21. September 15th—Public works found trees damaged/vandalized in town park.
22. September 16th—Cynthia attended the Lions Club meeting.
23. September 17th—attended the VDH Baseline Service Line Inventory Webinar.
24. September 17th—Textmygov.com virtual meeting.
25. September 18th—Call with DCR representative.
26. September 20th—She thanked Jill for working the market.
27. September 24th—Received offer from Grayson County Sheriff to pay half for two digital speed signs to install in town. Will discuss later in meeting.
28. September 25th—Hydro plant construction meeting.
29. September 26th—Unknown workers in town issue. Resolved.
30. September 27th—Thanked Ed Rehkopf for working the market.
31. September 29th—Field inspections of various projects.
32. October 1st—VDH project update meeting with Tate & Sons and the Lane Group.
33. October 1st—Supervisor Mike Hash meeting.
34. October 2nd—Picked up donated van from District III. She thanked District III for their generosity.
35. October 2nd—Attended open house at Willing Partners Client Choice Food Pantry.
36. October 3rd—Received another noise complaint.
37. October 4th—She thanked Jill for working the market.
38. October 6th—Textmygov.com virtual meeting.
39. October 6th—received a two-week notice from an employee.

Organization Updates:

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

Report from The Historic Fries Theatre

Submitted by: Kevin Combs, Representative to the Fries Town Council

Date: October 2025

Donation Toward New Sound Board: Yvonne Burr and I recently received a payment from the Fries High School Class of 1975 committee for photography services at their reunion. We have jointly donated that payment to The Historic Fries Theatre, designating it toward the purchase of a new sound board. This equipment will be an important step forward in improving audio quality for concerts, jam sessions, and other public events held at the theatre.

Upcoming Event: Gap Civil: The next concert at The Historic Fries Theatre will feature Gap Civil on Friday, October 24 at

7:00 p.m. The evening will be structured as a concert and community dance, combining lively traditional music with an opportunity for audience participation and socializing. This event is part of our ongoing effort to keep the theatre active and to promote the living traditions of Appalachian music.

Thursday Night Jam Sessions: The weekly Thursday night jam sessions continue to be lively and well-attended. We are

consistently seeing strong participation from musicians and audiences alike. Many visitors express how much they enjoy the experience of hearing traditional mountain music in an authentic setting and appreciate the family-like atmosphere and sense of camaraderie that define these gatherings.

Museum Donations and Loans: The theatre has recently received several music-history–related artifacts for the developing museum area. These donations help strengthen the theatre’s role as a cultural center that preserves Fries’ heritage. We encourage anyone who may have items connected to Fries’ history—particularly related to the mill, the community, or the town’s musical past—to consider donating or loaning them for display. We are fully capable of handling temporary loans, and we have established agreements with donors who wish to have their items returned at a later date.

2. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Tourism Director’s Report

Submitted by: Kevin Combs, Tourism Director

Town of Fries, Virginia

Date: October 2025

Pickleball Court Planning: I met with consultants to discuss the proposed pickleball court project. They have requested that I identify a suitable location for the court, after which they will take the lead on preparing a grant application to pursue financing. This could be an excellent addition to our recreational offerings and provide another activity for both residents and visitors.

Website Updates: I worked with Nan Chase on reviewing and updating the town’s website. Nan carefully went through the site, noting areas where updates were needed, and drafted new copy for several listings that had become outdated or required expansion. We plan to meet again soon to implement these updates and ensure the website presents an accurate and engaging picture of Fries for visitors and prospective residents. Internship Partnership with Radford University I have been in contact with David Rivers, Professor of the Business of Music at Radford University, about the possibility of securing an intern to assist with Fries tourism initiatives. Professor Rivers has students who may be a good fit, particularly those with interests in marketing, arts management, and community engagement. An intern would be a valuable asset as we continue to grow our tourism and cultural programming.

Fries Musical Heritage Committee: The Fries Musical Heritage Committee is in good spirits following the success of our second consecutive Fries Fiddlers’ Convention. Attendance and community engagement were strong once again. Attached is a financial report detailing the results of this year’s convention and our financial position after two years of operation.

Podcast Feature: I recently recorded an episode with Jessica Bowser for the Virginia Outdoor Adventures podcast, which is scheduled to air in mid-October. The episode highlights Fries’ history, our music heritage, and current cultural and tourism initiatives.

Summer Concert Series: The final concert in the Summer Concert Series at The Depot drew a good crowd and was well received. The Fries Dam Steakhouse once again provided meal delivery service to concertgoers, an arrangement that has proven mutually beneficial for both the restaurant and the event series. This collaboration helps support our local businesses while keeping revenue within the community rather than

bringing in outside food vendors.

Media Relations: I continue to press for better coverage of Fries events in The Gazette. Although we advertise with the paper, our events often receive less attention than comparable ones in neighboring communities. I have been in regular contact with their staff and will continue to advocate strongly for fair and consistent coverage.

The Crooked Road Venue Applications: The Crooked Road recently opened its application period for new venue designations. I submitted applications to have both the Fries Fiddlers' Convention and The Depot recognized as official Crooked Road venues. Some of the information currently listed for The Historic Fries Theatre is out of date, but I am in the process of submitting corrections so that all Fries-related listings accurately reflect our community's growing role in preserving and celebrating Virginia's musical heritage.

The Mayor thanked Kevin for both his reports.

3. Fries Community Center: Joyce Brown reported the following:

- Free Community Meal in September
- Hosted dining room/ gym parties
- Held Fall Festival and 5k- Run in the park. We had a good turnout.
- Hosting Halloween Trunk or Treat at the ballpark. October 31st 5:30-8:00
- Continued to provide gas for the bus and bingo prizes for the seniors
- Community food pantry continues to be open and stocked for the community.
- Board members changes: - Christy Moore, Johnny Moore, Kaitlyn Griffin, Candance Hyatt and Kodie Hyatt all resigned from the Fries Community Center Board. Alicia Jeffery will sit in as Chair until we have new members join. We will continue to serve our community as we work through these changes. We plan to vote on new members at our October meeting.
- The community center bank account continues to remain stable and growing.

Thank you,

Fries Community Center Board

Joyce also reported that the Christmas Party for the District III Senior Citizen group would be December 19th. She was looking for donations to help fill stockings for the seniors. The Mayor thanked her for reporting.

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: Chief Randy Lineberry had submitted a report to Town Hall that the weather warning siren was operational. It had a 3-minute solid activation and would be activated 24/7 as needed. The fire siren activation registered up and down and was only to be operated between the hours of 6 am and 10 pm. After some discussion, the question was raised whether the siren was being activated for fire calls only or rescue calls as well. The Mayor responded that we would check into it and get an answer.

Old Business:

- 1. Brian Dixon Water and Sewer Project Discussion:** Brian Dixon presented his current plans to extend water and sewer service to the river lots recently sold at auction, as well as to his own river lots and store located in Carroll County. If approved, the proposed project would add at least eighty (80) new hookups to the Town's utility systems, thereby generating additional revenue for the Town. Mr. Dixon stated that he intends to administer the project, obtain all necessary permits, and oversee installation of the system before transferring ownership to the Town upon completion. He reviewed the proposed plan with Council and responded to questions. Mr. Dixon further reported that, in order to obtain an easement for installation of a new water line under the New River Trail State Park to serve the river lots, he must be appointed as a legal agent of the Town. According to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), only the Town may apply for such an easement. Therefore, Mr. Dixon requested that Council authorize the Town Attorney to prepare an agreement to protect both parties and formally appoint him as a legal agent of the Town for the purpose of pursuing the project. After discussion, Council Member Richard Hawks moved to proceed with obtaining legal counsel for the preparation of the agreement. Council Member Jo Ann Gunter seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, and the motion carried. Mr. Dixon thanked the Council for their cooperation and willingness to work with him on the project.

New Business:

- 1. Digital Speed Signs Discussion:** The Mayor reported that Sheriff Vaughan had recently contacted Town Hall and offered to share the cost of two digital speed signs that flash when vehicles exceed the speed limit. The signs would be installed within the Town limits to promote traffic safety. After discussion, Council Member Mary Ann Cubbage moved to approve the expenditure for the Town's portion of the cost. Council Member Yvonne Burr seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, and the motion carried.
- 2. TextMyGov.com Proposal:** The Mayor and Town Clerk reviewed the TextMyGov proposal, which included features such as utility service notifications, targeted communications, automated responses, emergency alerts, multilingual support, and issue reporting for Town customers and citizens. The proposal also included marketing materials such as a website widget and flyers, as well as training and ongoing support. After reviewing the proposal and accompanying contract, Council Member Mary Ann Cubbage moved to proceed with the contract. Council Member Yvonne Burr seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, and the motion carried.
- 3. Citizen Comment – Al Griffith:** Mr. Al Griffith addressed Council during the citizen comment period. He first expressed appreciation to those responsible for clearing the brush from around the stop sign at the corner of Riverview Avenue and Firehouse Drive. Mr. Griffith then reported the presence of a pothole on Riverview Avenue, located below the pool area, which he requested be repaired. Lastly, he expressed concern regarding the volume of music from local restaurants, noting that it was excessively loud and disruptive to nearby residents. Mr. Griffith requested that Council consider adopting a noise ordinance to help preserve the peace and quiet within the Town.

4. Closed Session: 2.2-3711A: 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).

Karen Snyder moved to exit the closed session. Jo Ann Gunter 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, Richard Hawks, Jo Ann Gunter, and Cynthia Grant.

Announcements:

1. Reminder: The deadline to be included on the agenda is Tuesday, one week before the meeting.

With no further business to discuss, Karen Snyder moved to adjourn. Jo Ann Gunter provided the second. All present voted Aye, and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
September 2, 2025
Minutes

The September meeting was canceled due to the lack of a quorum, as several members were unable to attend for various reasons, including medical issues.

Signed

Attest

Fries Town Council
August 5, 2025
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, Bill Davis, Richard Hawks and Karen Snyder.

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Deputy Bolling, Grayson County Sheriff's Department; and several town citizens.

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

Minutes & Bills: Bill Davis 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 as presented.

Police Report: Deputy Bolling provided the police report for July, which included: Arrests: 4 criminal, 2 traffic, 1 fourth search, and 1 warrant. Investigation of 2 felonies and 1 misdemeanor. Routine activities: 202 closed business checks, 32 service calls, 68 church checks, 80 directive patrols, 18 open business checks, 24 forestry checks, 2 warrant service attempts, 1 EPO, and 6 civil papers for a total of 199 hours. Mary Ann Cabbage asked if any of the tickets given were for speeding. Deputy Bolling was unsure as the report didn't have the tickets broken out by detailed category. Mayor Grant thanked Officer Bolling for his report.

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

1. July 2nd—Interviewed and hired a part-time wastewater treatment operator.
2. July 2nd—Had a conference call with a representative of MRPDC.
3. July 2nd—Spoke with Baker Roofing concerning the Theater roof leak.
4. July 5th—She thanked Jill for staffing the market.
5. July 6th—Performed field inspections for drainage issues and for grant projects.
6. July 11th—Had new router installed in the Town Hall.
7. July 11th—The Mayor attended the depot music with the Bogtrotters. Wonderful event.
8. July 12th—She thanked Karen for staffing the market.
9. July 13th—The Jesuit High School students from New Orleans, LA, arrived. The students cleaned the dam at the water treatment plant, painted the chlorination building at the wastewater treatment plant, painted a house on Main Street, cleaned out many gutters, and performed an abundance of yard work for local citizens. Thank you to the citizens, churches and local restaurants that helped provide meals for the students while they were here. The students left on July 24th.
10. July 25th—Reviewed shop drawings for the new water treatment filters.
11. July 26th—She thanked Mary Ann for staffing the market on yard sale day. This was also the first meeting of the Reading by the River Book Club.
12. July 29th—Composed and mailed several letters, including one to District III concerning a bus for the senior program.
13. July 30th—Approved a change order for the water treatment plant filter and signed payroll.
14. August 1st—Performed field inspections while it was raining to check drainage issues.

15. August 2nd—She thanked Jill for staffing the market.
 16. August 5th—She and Jill attended a FEMA virtual meeting.

Organization Updates:

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

Report to Fries Town Council from The Historic Fries Theatre Board

Date: August 5, 2025

The Historic Fries Theatre continues to thrive as a center for cultural engagement and Appalachian music in our community.

Below is a summary of our recent activities and accomplishments:

- **Regional Outreach:**
 We set up a table at the Sparta/Alleghany Fiddlers' Convention to represent both The Historic Fries Theatre and Fries Tourism. We spoke with numerous attendees about the town of Fries and promoted the upcoming Fries Fiddlers' Convention. This kind of regional presence is crucial to raising awareness of Fries as a destination for traditional music and cultural tourism.
- **Community & Institutional Partnerships:**
 We met with representatives from Carter Bank on behalf of the Theatre and also in coordination with the Fries Fiddlers' Convention (Fries Tourism) to strengthen our financial planning and explore opportunities for support. The Theatre also hosted a meeting of the Friends of the New River Trail. We used this occasion to advocate strongly for increased investment and maintenance attention from the park service, emphasizing the importance of Fries as a key anchor of the Trail.
- **Facility Improvements:**
 We continue to refine our displays inside the Theatre and have made adjustments to lighting to improve visibility and presentation. With the help of visiting students from New Orleans, we scraped and repainted the Theatre's front door, cleaned out long-cluttered closets, and reorganized them for more efficient storage and future use.
- **HVAC Maintenance Issue:**
 On July 31, we discovered that the air conditioning was not working just prior to the evening jam session. Despite attempts to reach local HVAC companies, no one was immediately available. Eddie Bond contacted a personal connection who was able to come out that evening. He restored temporary function to the system and will be preparing a repair estimate to address the underlying issues.
- **Public Events & Programming:**
 The Thursday Night Jam sessions continue to be a major draw, with large and enthusiastic crowds each week. These events regularly bring new visitors to town who are eager to experience the music, dance, and hospitality Fries is known for. In partnership with Fries Tourism, we co-hosted the New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters for a successful concert at The Depot, helping to maintain musical momentum and community engagement throughout the summer.
- **Support for the Fiddlers' Convention:**
 The Theatre has proudly supported the 58th Annual Fries Old-Time and Bluegrass Fiddlers' Convention as a Blue-Ribbon level sponsor. We view the convention as an essential piece of Fries' cultural identity and are proud to be involved.

- **Merchandise and Visibility:**

We've placed an order for branded shirts for The Historic Fries Theatre. These will help raise visibility, build identity, and offer volunteers and supporters a way to show their connection to the Theatre.

As always, we thank the Council for its support of The Historic Fries Theatre. Our work continues to be powered by volunteers, community partnerships, and the shared goal of preserving and promoting the musical heritage of Fries and the greater Appalachian region.

Respectfully submitted, The Board of The Historic Fries Theatre

2. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Fries Tourism Report to Town Council

Submitted by Kevin Combs, Tourism Director

August 5, 2025

Tourism efforts this past month have focused on continued outreach, promotion, and planning— both for the upcoming Fries Fiddlers' Convention and for the broader goal of telling Fries' story in a way that invites both visitors and residents to appreciate what makes our town special.

Sponsorship & Promotion

- Met with Carter Bank to discuss their support of the 58th Annual Fries Fiddlers' Convention. I'm pleased to report that they have come aboard as a sponsor, and I represented both the Theatre and the town in thanking them for their commitment to local culture and community.
- Set up a booth at the Sparta/Alleghany Fiddlers' Convention to represent Fries and The Historic Fries Theatre. We spoke with dozens of festivalgoers about Fries, answered questions about our town and events, and promoted the upcoming Fries Fiddlers' Convention. It was an excellent opportunity to network and make personal connections.
- Recorded a radio ad for the Fries Fiddlers' Convention, which will air on WBRF in the coming weeks to promote the event.

Fries Fiddlers' Convention – Planning Progress

The Fries Musical Heritage Committee is now meeting weekly to prepare for the August 15–16 event. Several important steps were taken this month:

- Purchased event infrastructure, including two 10x20 and two 10x10 canopies for use during the convention.
- Held a workday at Providence School, where we:
 - Pressure washed the exterior of the stage.
 - Cleaned the interior carpeted area.
 - Installed tarps to protect the structure from weather in the coming weeks.
 - Ordered branded shirts to be sold as a fundraiser and souvenir at the Fiddlers' Convention.

We are entering the final stretch, and I remain confident that this year's event will be the most successful yet, both financially and in terms of visitor experience.

Media & Storytelling Initiatives

- Launched a new video series, titled "...And That's How We Got to Fries", which highlights the stories of people who live in Fries or visit regularly. These short-form video profiles aim to deepen the personal connection viewers have with the town, showcasing its charm through the voices of real people.

- Met via Zoom with David Rivers, Director of the Music Business Program at Radford University, to explore placing an intern with the Town of Fries. The conversation was encouraging and could lead to meaningful help in both marketing and event support.

Community Engagement & Local Pride

- In response to negative commentary on social media, I posted messages designed to reframe the narrative and encourage a positive view of the town. As Tourism Director, I see my role as not only promoting Fries to visitors but also helping residents see and appreciate what we have here.
- This philosophy is reflected in the ad I submitted to the Fries Fiddlers' Convention program, which speaks not only to tourists, but also to the people who live here— reminding them why Fries is worth celebrating (copy attached).

Welcome to Fries, Virginia
Where Music Rises with the Mountains

Proud sponsor of the 58th Annual Fries Fiddlers' Convention

Tucked along the scenic New River in the heart of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, Fries is a small town with a big musical soul. Once a bustling mill town, today Fries is a haven for lovers of old-time music, Appalachian culture, and outdoor adventure. Walk or bike the New River Trail, paddle the river, or just sit back and enjoy the rhythm of a town that helped give birth to country music.

Fries Tourism exists to celebrate and support what makes our town special—and to share it with the world. In the past year alone, Fries Tourism has:

- Brought numerous visitors to town through events like the Summer Concert Series, Honky Tonk Fridays, and "Jam at the Dam."
- Created videos, ads, and publications that tell the story of Fries and its musical heritage.
- Helped support The Historic Fries Theatre and other cultural venues.
- Advocated for the reopening of the New River Trail—our town's most vital tourism link.
- Promoted local businesses, musicians, and events through targeted marketing and outreach.

When Fries shines, we all benefit—from stronger community pride to increased economic opportunity.

The Crooked Fiddle
Virginia's Historic Music Trail

Grayson County, VA
Chartered by Statute

Fries
Virginia

Fries, Virginia
Where Music Rises with the Mountains

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

3. Fries Community Center: No report was submitted. Joyce Brown reported that there would be no night swim that night, the board was losing several members, and that the remaining members were working on planning their Annual Fall Festival. The Mayor thanked her for reporting.
4. Fries Fire & Rescue: No report was submitted.

Old Business:

1. No old business was discussed.

New Business:

1. Town Park Slide Incidents: The Mayor reported to Council that there had been two incidents in the town park this summer involving children falling from the slide. One child sustained a broken arm, and another required overnight observation in the hospital. The Mayor asked if Council wished to take any action in response. Several members expressed concern for the children and were relieved to hear that both were recovering. Richard Hawks inquired whether the parents had been present at the time of the incidents. He further suggested that, if not already required, signage should be posted reminding parents that children are not to be left unattended in the park. The Mayor responded that the parents had been present in both cases, but the accidents occurred very quickly. She also noted that it has long been a rule that children must be supervised while using the park. After further discussion, no decision was reached at this time. The Mayor asked Council to give the matter additional consideration and be prepared to make a recommendation at a future meeting.
2. Town Mural, Latasha Spencer: Latasha Spencer presented her ideas for a mural on the town's flood wall for Council's review. She offered to complete the painting once a design is approved, with the cost of materials to be covered through donations. After discussing several possible design concepts, Ms. Spencer agreed to continue refining the proposal and return to a future meeting for Council's consideration and further discussion.

Announcements:

1. Reminder: The deadline to be included on the agenda is Tuesday, one week before the meeting.

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

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
July 1, 2025
Minutes

Members Present: Mary Ann Cabbage, Bill Davis, Jo Ann Gunter, Richard Hawks and Karen Snyder.

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

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. Karen Snyder provided the second to the motion. All present voted aye and the minutes and bills were approved.

Police Report: Deputy Barnes provided the police report for June, which included: Arrests: 2 traffic and 5 warning tickets. Investigation of 1 misdemeanor. Routine activities: 274 closed business checks, 34 service calls, 69 church checks, 62 directive patrols, 24 open business checks, 22 forestry checks, and 6 civil papers for a total of 170 hours. Officer Barnes reported that he has been monitoring speeding in town during the evenings and has issued several warnings to drivers traveling in the 40-mph range. Council Member Richard Hawks thanked Officer Barnes for his efforts on Main Street and requested additional patrols on Riverview Avenue. Mr. Hawks noted that he owns a home on Riverview and regularly observes vehicles speeding, raising concerns for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists who frequent the area. Officer Barnes stated he would pass along the information. Mayor Grant thanked Officer Barnes for his report.

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

1. June 4—Final storm drain pipe installed behind the steakhouse. The pipe was working well and the flooding had stopped.
2. June 4—Final meeting with our first FEMA representative Zach, who was relocated. Met with our second FEMA representative, Guy Tervene.
3. June 5th—Emergency Siren installation began.
4. June 6th—Held the budget workshop.
5. June 7th—Thanked Karen for staffing the market.
6. June 9th—Replaced the roof on the Chlorination Building at the wastewater treatment plant.
7. June 10th—Began storm drain repair work on Vaughan Street.
8. June 11th—Replaced the roof on the Lab Building at the wastewater treatment plant.
9. June 11th—Removed a dangerous section of sidewalk at the old pedestrian bridge site. Filled in and seeded the area as well.
10. June 11th—Visited the worksite on Vaughan Street for inspection.
11. June 13th—Installed safety railing at bridge site.
12. June 13th—Received notice that the Grayson County Board of Supervisors had approved the town request for \$250,000 to replace the second filter at the water treatment plant in their FY 2025/2026 budget. The Mayor reported that with that funding, the town had enough funding to replace both filters and move forward with upgrading the plant.

13. June 14th—She thanked Jo Ann Gunter for staffing the market.
14. June 16th—Tate & Son mobilized to begin the VDH-funded infrastructure grant. Construction was to include replacing antiquated water lines, hydrants, meters, and setters.
15. June 16th—Met with Beth Harris, Civil Engineer for the hydro plant, concerning the repairs that were to be made on the canal beginning in the fall.
16. June 16th—Inspected the safety railing at the bridge site.
17. June 17th—Had another influent pump fail at the wastewater treatment plant due to stormwater issues. The estimated cost to replace each pump, in the event it cannot be repaired, is approximately \$9,000.
18. June 17th—Tate & Son had the water turned off at the school due to the installation of a new hydrant.
19. June 19th—Addressed a water leak on Top Street.
20. June 21st—Market Day—staffed by Jill and Mayor Grant.
21. June 25th—Had several water issues after the water had been turned off at the school. Went out and addressed the issues with our citizens face-to-face and resolved them as best we could.
22. June 25th—Picked up the cattle panels for the community garden to use as fencing. The t-posts were donated by Brian Dixon. The garden ladies planned to put the fencing up quickly to keep the deer and other animals out.
23. June 27th—The Vaughan Street storm drain project was finished, and the site was inspected.
24. June 30th—Addressed an issue with Core & Main, signed payroll, mailed out the annual water quality reports, submitted our annual CCR certification to VDH, completed our application for 599 funding for law enforcement, submitted a sinkhole for repair to VDOT and submitted several street lights to AEP for repair.
25. August 1st—Composed a thank you letter to Mount Rogers Planning District Commission for granting the Town of Fries \$100,000 toward water filter replacement at our water treatment plant.
26. August 1st—submitted town approval for the ferry road entrance to VDOT.
27. August 1st—received \$15,000 in 2025 ATL fund for the Fries Fire Department. A check would be sent to the department for the funds as soon as possible.

Organization Updates:

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

To: Fries Town Council
Reporting Period: June 2025
Submitted: July 1, 2025

The Historic Fries Theatre monthly report

The month of June began with a meaningful tribute to Terry Gleason during the Thursday Night Jam on June 5. The memorial brought a large and supportive crowd to the Theatre. Funds raised that evening were donated to the Galax JAM (Junior Appalachian Musicians) program in Terry's memory, a fitting way to honor someone so connected to the local music community.

Thursday Night Jam sessions have remained lively and well-attended, with many first-time visitors expressing delight at the music, dancing, and warm community atmosphere. The regulars continue to be generous with their time and patient in teaching newcomers a few dance steps during the evening. The cakewalk at the 8 p.m. break remains a highlight.

We are fortunate to have NEA National Heritage Fellow Eddie Bond leading the jam most weeks. When Eddie is unavailable, we are proud to have talented young musicians step in. On June 27, high school student Savannah Hodges led the session with great poise and musical skill—an encouraging sign for the future of old-time music in Fries.

The Theatre, in collaboration with Fries Tourism, hosted another successful outdoor concert at The Depot in June. The event drew a good crowd, and Fries Dam Steakhouse provided food service in place of a food truck, helping create a welcoming and enjoyable experience for attendees.

Progress continues toward the Theatre's vision of becoming a museum and cultural center for Fries. More historical exhibits are being added incrementally, and efforts are underway to actively procure additional artifacts and items for display.

In a significant development, The Historic Fries Theatre is working to establish a Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM) chapter in Fries. Despite the fact that the JAM program's multi state administrative office is located in Grayson County (Independence), there is currently no active chapter in the county. JAM leadership has secured \$4,000 in grant funding to support a Fries-based program, and we anticipate that scholarship funds raised through the Fries Fiddlers' Convention will further support this effort. We are currently seeking a qualified, paid director and hope to launch the program for local students by the fall.

On a facilities note, a roof leak was discovered following the heavy rainfall on June 26. Jill has contacted the roofing company to address the issue. Additionally, the Theatre has taken on lawn maintenance duties thanks to the generous donation of the use of a mower by Coy Emory, helping us reduce operational costs.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Combs, On behalf of The Historic Fries Theatre

2. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Fries Tourism Report

July 1, 2025

Submitted by: Kevin Combs

The summer season is in full swing, and activity in Fries has remained strong throughout June. Each weekend has seen a steady influx of visitors, which is a positive reflection on our ongoing tourism efforts and the community-wide commitment to showcasing Fries as a destination for Appalachian music, outdoor recreation, and small-town hospitality.

One of the most exciting recent developments is the acquisition of the Fries Dam Steakhouse by Tlaquepaque. The transition appears to have gone smoothly, and the restaurant is now open six days a week, operating with two distinct menus. This new phase has already proven beneficial to our local events and visitors. For instance, during the most recent Summer Concert Series performance presented by The Historic Fries Theatre and held at The Depot, the steakhouse was utilized in lieu of a food truck. They received approximately 30 food orders directly related to the event—not including the many attendees who dined before or after the concert. This kind of synergy between events and local businesses is exactly what we aim to foster through tourism development.

The Summer Concert Series itself is proving to be a valuable attraction, bringing in both locals and out-of-town guests to enjoy high-quality old-time music in a scenic, welcoming environment. With concerts continuing through September, we expect a strong finish to the series and continued support for nearby businesses.

The Thunder by the River Classic Car Cruise-In continues to grow in popularity. Organizers have added a new show date in October in response to public interest. These events are becoming a seasonal staple in Fries, contributing not only to community spirit but also to foot traffic for local restaurants and shops.

Planning is progressing well for the 58th Annual Fries Old-time and Bluegrass Fiddlers' Convention. The Fries Musical Heritage Committee has successfully acquired the stage from Fries Fire and Rescue, and plans are underway to upgrade it before the August event. Importantly, we have secured enough sponsorship funds that we are not financially dependent on ticket sales alone to meet our budget. The recent fundraiser brought in approximately \$5,300, a testament to the community's support for this longstanding cultural tradition.

Finally, The Historic Fries Theatre remains one of the most consistent and effective tourism draws in town. Weekly Thursday Night Jam sessions continue to bring in large crowds—many of them first-time visitors. These guests often extend their experience by dining at local establishments such as the Fries Dam Steakhouse or Windy River Café. The Theatre's cultural programming, combined with the town's welcoming atmosphere, leaves a lasting impression on visitors and encourages return trips.

As always, I appreciate the Council's continued support of tourism in Fries. Together, we are strengthening our identity as a destination rooted in music, history, and Appalachian charm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Combs

Tourism Director, Town of Fries

3. Fries Community Center: No report was submitted.

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: No report was submitted.

Old Business:

1. FY2025/2026 Budget: The Mayor reported that the budget had been advertised as required, a public hearing had been held where the budget had been reviewed and then she reviewed the proposed budget once again. It was as follows:

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 15.1-16.2 of the 1950 Code of Virginia as amended, of a public hearing on the proposed Town of Fries budget for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2025. The public hearing will be held in the Historic Fries Theatre at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, June 18, 2025. Town residents are welcome to attend and express their views. The Final Budget meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 1, 2025, at 7:00 pm in the Historic Fries Theatre.

The tax rates will remain as follows:

- \$.36/\$100 value—Real Property
- \$2.25/\$100 value—Personal Property
- \$2.25/\$100 value—Machinery & Tools
- \$.36/\$100 value—Public Utility Real Estate

Water, Sewer & Garbage rates will remain as follows:

- \$ 28.50 for 1st 2000 gallons—Water
- \$ 5.25 for each additional 1000 gallons—Water
- \$ 24.25 for 1st 2000 gallons—Sewer
- \$ 5.75 for each additional 1000 gallons—Sewer
- \$ 18.00 per month—Garbage

The proposed budget shall be for planning purposes only and obligates the Town to no expenditures.

Town of Fries Proposed Budget FY2025/2026

Revenue

General Fund

Real Estate, P. Property, M&T Tax	\$197,000.00
Del. Tax	\$15,000.00
Pen. & Interest	\$ 2,500.00
Utility Tax	\$12,000.00
BPOL	\$ 4,000.00
Meals Tax	\$35,000.00
CATV	\$ 9,000.00
Vehicle License Fee	\$ 5,000.00
Refunds, Gifts, Misc.	\$20,000.00
Lodging Tax	\$13,000.00
VDH Infrastructure Grant	\$1,631,650.00
<u>Misc. State Funds:</u>	<u>\$59,500.00</u>

Sub Total: \$2,003,650.00

Enterprise Fund

Water, Sewer, Garbage, Penalties & Deposits \$326,900.00

Sub Total \$326,900.00

TOTAL REVENUE **\$2,330,550.00**

Expenditures

Gen. Government	\$102,721.00
Police	\$ 36,000.00
Public Works	\$132,756.00
Rec., Fire, Admin., Grants & Reserves	\$1,665,174.50
Water	\$177,049.75
Sewer	\$163,673.75
Garbage	\$ 53,175.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURES **\$2,330,550.00**

After Mayor Grant reviewed the budget, she opened the floor for public comment. There were none. She asked the council for their recommendation. Mary Ann Cabbage moved to adopt the budget as presented and advertised. Richard Hawks provided the second. All present voted Aye, there were no Nays, and the FY2025/2026 budget was adopted.

New Business:

1. Fireworks in Town Limits: Jo Ann Gunter reported receiving several complaints regarding illegal fireworks being discharged within the town limits during the July 4th, 2024 holiday. She inquired whether the town had an ordinance addressing the issue. The Mayor responded that while an ordinance does exist, it is outdated and difficult to enforce. He further noted that, after consulting with the Virginia State Fire Marshal’s Office, they recommended that residents report violations directly to their office. The Fire Marshal’s Office also indicated that they planned to have an officer in the area during the July 4th holiday

Announcements:

1. Cliff & Top Street Traffic will be delayed Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm starting July 2nd through July 11th. We ask for patience as we work to improve our water system in our town.
2. Reminder: The deadline to be included on the agenda is Tuesday, one week before the meeting.

With no further business to discuss, Mary Ann Cabbage moved to adjourn. Karen Snyder provided the second. All present voted Aye, and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
June 3, 2025
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cubbage, Jo Ann Gunter, Richard Hawks, Karen Snyder and James Young.

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

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

Minutes & Bills: James Young 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 May, which included: Arrests: 2 criminal, 3 traffic, 1 DUID, 2 fourth searches, 2 warrants and 2 warning tickets. Investigation of 1 felony and 3 misdemeanors. Routine activities: 245 closed business checks, 36 service calls, 72 church checks, 103 directive patrols, 20 open business checks, 24 forestry checks, 1 civil paper, 1 ECO/LE ECO and 5 warrant service attempts for a total of 199 hours. Richard Hawks asked why the tickets had been issued. Officer Brannock reported that he knew that one had been for reckless driving and one was for DUI but he wasn't sure about the other. The Mayor thanked Deputy Brannock for his report.

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

1. May 8th—presented the request to fund the second water filter to the Grayson County Board of Supervisors.
2. May 9th—Held the second public hearing for the DHCD funding application.
3. May 12th—Met with the Director of Grayson Parks and Recreation.
4. May 13th—prepared letter to VDOT for six-year planning.
5. May 17th—Market Vendor Meeting.
6. May 21st—Took down the pedestrian bridge due to safety issues and held meeting with storm drain contractor behind steakhouse.
7. May 24th—Opening Market and Cruise-In. She thanked Yvonne for working the first market of the season.
8. May 27th—Secured \$5,000 from MRPDC for influent pump/bypass pump at WWTP.
9. May 27th—Starlink officially installed!
10. May 28th—Received second roof estimate for lab & chlorination buildings at WWTP. VRSA Insurance funds will pay for the new roof work.
11. May 28th—spoke with Hydro Plant Manager to discuss their repair plans that will start in the fall. The town is trying to help them find a staging area to store supplies and equipment.
12. May 28th—Price comparing influent pumps for the WWTP.
13. May 28th—Preconstruction meeting for the filter project at the WTP.
14. May 28th—Final inspection for final payment of the wall/dam project at the WTP.
15. May 31st—Market Day, thank you to Mary Ann for working the market.

16. June 2nd—Conference and inspection of storm drain with contractor.
 17. June 3rd—Clarified billing with Baker Roofing.

Organization Updates:

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

The Historic Fries Theatre Monthly Report to Fries Town Council

Submitted by Kevin Combs on behalf of the Theatre on June 3, 2025

May was a vibrant and eventful month at The Historic Fries Theatre. Key highlights include:

- Honky Tonk Friday (May 2): The Rise and Shine Band delivered a lively performance to a packed house. It was an energetic evening that brought in a great crowd and lots of positive feedback.
- Summer Concert Series – Opening Night (May 23): The concert featuring the Whitetop Mountain Band was moved indoors due to chilly, windy weather. Attendance was strong, and The Fries Dam Steakhouse provided food service for the evening, adding to the community atmosphere.
- The Crooked Road App Launch (May 29): The Theatre was honored to host the press conference announcing the new Crooked Road app. Representatives from the Crooked Road and regional tourism officials attended, staying afterward to experience a packed Thursday night jam session—further highlighting Fries’ significance in Virginia’s musical heritage. Tyler Hughes brought a new road sign announcing the Town’s affiliation with the Crooked Road.
- Fries Fiddlers’ Fundraiser (May 30): The fundraiser at the Theatre raised over \$5,000 to support the Fries Fiddlers’ Convention. Thanks to everyone who participated, donated, and bid in the auction. Nan and Saul Chase were especially helpful in securing and donating auction items. The evening brought together community members and supporters from across the region.
- Thursday Night Jams: Attendance remains high each week, drawing both participants and listeners from across the region. Many guests dine locally before or after the jam, creating a boost for local businesses.

Facility & Grounds Maintenance:

- The Theatre has assumed its own mowing responsibilities to save costs, thanks to Coy Emory’s generous donation of mower use.

When the HVAC system failed on May 28, Chad Reeves stepped in to diagnose the issue when commercial help was unavailable—demonstrating the strength of our volunteer network.

The Theatre continues to serve as a central gathering place for music, community, and heritage. We thank the Council and the community for their continued support.

2. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Fries Tourism Department Monthly Report to Fries Town Council

Submitted by Kevin Combs, Tourism Director on June 3, 2025

May was an exceptionally active month for Fries tourism, with strong participation and several notable events:

Fries Tourism Public Engagement:

- Manned the tourism table at the Hippies Only! VW Festival (May 2–3), with support from Yvonne Burr representing The Historic Fries Theatre.
- Participated in the Fries Town Market on May 24, distributing event information and engaging visitors.

Summer Concert Series – First Show (May 23): The Whitetop Mountain Band performance was relocated indoors due to weather, but the turnout was excellent. Food was provided by The Fries Dam Steakhouse. The event showcased strong collaboration between Fries Tourism and The Historic Fries Theatre.

Crooked Road Press Conference (May 29): Fries was the launch site for The Crooked Road’s new mobile app. It was a privilege to host this regional event, and the press conference was followed by a well-attended Thursday night jam—further cementing Fries’ place on the musical map.

Fries Fiddlers’ Fundraiser (May 30): The event raised over \$5,000 and brought together musicians, supporters, and bidders. It will go a long way in supporting this year’s convention and the purchase of a permanent stage.

Weekly Jam Sessions: These Thursday evening events remain one of Fries’ strongest tourism draws, consistently bringing in visitors who spend time—and money—in the town.

Thunder on the River Classic Car Cruise-Ins: These monthly events will continue throughout the summer and fall, drawing auto enthusiasts and visitors downtown on a regular basis.

Event Calendar: A comprehensive list of upcoming events is always available at friesva.com/events. Council members and residents are encouraged to subscribe to the calendar to stay informed.

Summary

Fries continues to grow as a heritage and music-based tourism destination. With strong community partnerships, a packed events calendar, and growing regional recognition, we are positioned for a busy and impactful summer season.

3. Fries Community Center:



Fries Community Center

Hello,

Here is the community center report for June. We do have one new member Amy Parks. We have been working hard to get the pool ready and passed inspection this week with plans to open on June 4th. We have already scheduled our first free night swim and several pool parties. We've been busy serving concessions for baseball, softball, coaches pitch and tball. We held the free meal in May. We will be joining the fire dept in July to help purchase fireworks, have a DJ and some Popsicles/other goodies. We continue to support the seniors and provide gas for the bus as well as bingo prizes. Nothing further to report at this time. Our bank account is stable. Thank you!!

Christy

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: James Young reported that the siren would be up and running as of Friday, June 6th. AEP donated a 40ft pole and their time to install it for the project. The siren will have two different tones. One for fire calls and one for natural disasters. The siren will operate for fire calls between 6am and 10pm. The new siren will be covered on the news. The Mayor thanked him for his report.

Old Business:

1. Storm Damage Update: The Mayor presented photographs showing various areas in town that had sustained damage from the recent storm, along with images of how those areas appear following repair efforts. She reported that while work is still ongoing, she wanted to share with the Council the progress that has been made to date.
2. Baker Roofing Invoice: The Mayor presented an invoice from Baker Roofing for the completed work on the flat section of the Community Center roof. Although VRSA funds were available to cover the expense, the Mayor requested Council approval due to the size of the invoice. Mary Ann Cubbage moved to issue a check for the invoice. Yvonne Burr seconded the motion. All members present voted Aye, and the motion carried.
3. WWTP Roof Bids: Following discussion regarding the two bids received for roof replacement on the lab and chlorination buildings at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Junior Young made a motion to proceed with the lowest bidder and replace both roofs. Karen Snyder seconded the motion. All members present voted Aye, and the motion carried.
4. Pedestrian Bridge: The Mayor requested input from the Council regarding the invoice for the recent work at the pedestrian bridge. She explained that the structure had clearly

become a safety hazard, with large sections of concrete falling and support beams deteriorating. After three years of efforts to preserve the bridge, the situation had escalated into an emergency due to liability concerns, necessitating its removal. Following discussion, Junior Young made a motion to issue a check for the invoice. Karen Snyder seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, and the motion carried.

New Business:

1. CDBG Resolution:

The Mayor read the following resolution aloud:

RESOLUTION

AUTHORIZING THE PREPARATION AND FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR URGENT NEED ASSISTANCE RELATED TO HURRICANE HELENE THROUGH THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is making available Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for urgent needs related to Hurricane Helene response programs, and

WHEREAS, Town Council for the Town of Fries has determined that there is a need as well as community and regional support for a CDBG project to address the need for a generator at the Water Treatment Plant after loss of power that resulted in loss of water or boil notices for four (4) days during Hurricane Helene.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town wishes to apply for up to \$1,000,000 in CDBG funds to address the needs of the local water system, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council authorizes the Mayor, in conjunction with the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, to sign and submit all appropriate documents for submittal of the CDBG application and administration of the grant if awarded.

Dated this _____ day of _____ 2025.

After some discussion, Mary Ann Cabbage moved to approved the resolution. Richard Hawks provided the second. All present voted Aye and the resolution was approved.

2. Saul Chase: Fries Nutrition Project 2026: Saul Chase presented his plan to launch a new nutrition initiative sponsored by the Fries Lions Club, to be administered in partnership with the Fries Community Center and Tri-Area Community Health. The proposal includes the establishment of *The Fries Free and Healthy Pantry* at the Community Center, the introduction of a *First Saturday Nutrition School* for six SNAP-qualified Fries families, and the hiring of a part-time Nutrition and Cooking Coordinator to implement the program. After outlining the

details of the project, the Council thanked Saul for his presentation and expressed their support for his efforts.

3. Budget Workshop Date: Friday June 6th @ 11am.

Announcements:

- 1. Reminder: The deadline to be included on the agenda is Tuesday, one week before the meeting.

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

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
Public Hearing
May 2, 2025
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, Jo Ann Gunter and Richard Hawks.

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Kevin Combs, Tourism Director; Brian Reed, MRPDC and several citizens.

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

The Mayor stated that the purpose of the meeting was to solicit public input on local community development and housing needs in relation to Community Development Block Grant funding for a potential project in our community. She then introduced Brian Reed from Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, and a former Fries Town Manager, and turned the meeting over to him to explain. Mr. Reed explained that this was the first of two public hearings required in order to apply for a Community Development Block Grant. He briefly reviewed several successful projects the Town had completed through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in the past, and noted that this application would be for a Hurricane Helene Relief project. The proposed project includes replacing water filters as needed, installing an emergency generator, and implementing additional measures to strengthen the water treatment plant and improve its flood resilience. The Town is eligible to apply for up to one million dollars to address these needs. Mr. Reed stated that more details would be available at the next public hearing. He also noted that the Council would need to pass a resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign the grant application. The Mayor then invited questions or comments from citizens in attendance; there were none

With no further business to discuss, Mary Ann Cabbage moved to adjourn. Richard Hawks provided the second. All present voted Aye, and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
April 1, 2025
Minutes

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

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Kevin Combs, Tourism Director; Deputy Brannock, Grayson County Sheriff's Department; Joyce Brown, Fries Community Center; and several town citizens.

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 Brannock provided the police report for March, which included: Routine activities: 220 closed business checks, 16 service calls, 55 church checks, 58 directive patrols, 20 open business checks, 10 forestry checks, and 1 ECO/ LE ECO for a total of 164 hours. The Mayor thanked him for his report.

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

1. March 5th—Meeting with the Lane Group and GLO.
2. March 11th—Lions Club Meeting.
3. March 13th—Interviewed 5 potential public works staff, 1 wwtp staff and a candidate for the Caboose rental.
4. March 14th—VDOT conference call. Also received approval to proceed with community center roof quote from insurance adjuster.
5. March 17th—Meeting with County Administrator concerning funding for two town projects.
6. March 19th—New River Kickoff Webinar- Water Supply Plan that will be required by DEQ.
7. March 20th—Meeting with County Administrator and a contractor concerning storm damage in park.
8. March 21st—Meeting with another contractor concerning the crushed storm drain behind the steakhouse and the sinkhole on Vaughan Street. The county will be providing the funding for both projects.
9. March 21st—Also met with Garden Committee. Scheduled a community garden meeting on April 4th at 2pm at the depot.
10. March 24th—Aflac Insurance meeting. Also attended a conference call with Locke Lane Construction.
11. March 26th—Attended a meeting with VDOT and Brian Dixon
12. March 26th—Conference call with Eric Testerman
13. March 26th—Conference call with Brian Reed.
14. March 26th—New Control Panel installed at WWTP.
15. March 27th—All 4 influent pumps broke down. We rented a bypass pump to handle the flow until we could get at least one new one installed.

16. March 28th—Installed the one new influent pump we had at the WWTP. Took two of the others to be repaired. Two were not salvageable.

17. March 28th—Attended a meeting concerning the pedestrian bridge.

Organization Updates:

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

To: Fries Town Council

From: The Historic Fries Theatre Re: Monthly

report

The Historic Fries Theatre is starting the year with a bang! A couple of dances and concerts have already brought many people into the theatre, kicking off the new year with strong community engagement. The Thursday night jam sessions continue to be a popular gathering place, attracting not only local residents but also visitors from surrounding areas.

The long-anticipated Sunday afternoon concert by Shelton & Williams has faced its share of challenges. Originally scheduled for earlier dates, it has been postponed twice due to inclement weather. The concert has now been rescheduled for April 13th, and we look forward to finally hosting this much-anticipated performance.

In an exciting development, we recently met with Tyler Hughes of the Crooked Road and secured a new Crooked Road banner for the Theatre. This addition further strengthens our connection to Virginia's heritage music trail and enhances our visibility within the network.

To improve communication with our patrons, the Theatre has added a telephone number that people can call for information on upcoming events, as well as to check for weather-related cancellations. The new phone number is 276-235-9286.

Facility improvements are also underway. Thanks to the shelves made and donated by Dave Cabbage, our display cases are now ready for service. One case has been designated for the sale of Fries-related merchandise, souvenirs, and memorabilia. Items available for purchase include glasses, bottle openers, hats, coasters, and more.

The remaining two cases will serve as museum displays. We have already received several mill-related exhibits on loan, which will help preserve and share Fries' rich history with visitors.

Looking ahead, the Theatre is proud to co-sponsor the Summer Concert Series with Fries Tourism for the third consecutive year. Details on concert dates can be found in the tourism report.

Please see separate reports for financial statements and financial transactions.

We appreciate the continued support of the Town Council and the community as we work to make The Historic Fries Theatre a hub for entertainment, culture, and local history.

2. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Monthly Report to Fries Town Council

From: Kevin Combs, Tourism Director, Town of Fries Date: April 1,

2025

Activities

Ongoing meetings with the Fries Musical Heritage Committee. The Fries Fiddlers Convention is officially set for August 15-16, 2025. The committee is purchasing the stage from Fries Fire & Rescue and plans to renovate it for safety and aesthetic improvements. Fundraising may be more challenging this year as the initial relief over saving the convention has subsided.

As I reported last month, the ongoing closure of the New River Trail was impacting tourism in Fries. I organized an effort to speed up repairs of the trail by contacting various appointed and elected officials. It seems to have paid off as the trail was opened from the low water bridge to Fries junction ahead of schedule.

I submitted an ad today to the Gazette for the Spring Visitors' Guide.

Tourism is collaborating with the Theatre to have the Summer Concert Series again at The Depot. There are four concerts planned.

Upcoming Events & Activities

- Weekly Jam Sessions: Every Thursday at The Historic Fries Theatre.
- Shelton & Williams Concert: Rescheduled to Sunday, April 13 at The Historic Fries Theatre. Rise and Shine band, May 2nd, 7 p.m.
- Summer concert series in conjunction with Fries Tourism
 - •May 23 - Whitetop Mountain Band
 - •June 20 - Leftover Biscuits
 - •July 11 - New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters
 - •Sept 19 - Twin Creeks String Band
- Returning Annual Events:
 - Hippies Only! VW Festival – Expanded to two days this year.
 - Thunder on the River Classic Car Cruise-ins this summer.
 - Fries Fire & Rescue Events: 4th of July Parade and Fireworks, drive-thru meals, horse shows, and more.

- A full list of events can be found at friesva.com/events. I encourage council members to subscribe to the calendar to stay updated.

- New River Trail Races (April 2025): The event will be expanded to include a 10k and a 100k race, promising to bring hundreds of visitors into Fries.

Additional Tourism Efforts

- Historic Fries Theatre Museum: The Theatre's museum efforts will assist with tourism, as many visitors express interest in the history of Fries.

- Theatre Souvenirs: The Theatre's new souvenir offerings will support tourism by providing visitors with keepsakes to remember their trip.

Conclusion

Fries continues to build upon its reputation as a heritage tourism destination with a strong music scene and growing events calendar. It appears that this will be another busy Summer with lots of activities for guests and residents alike.

For further details, visit friesva.com/events.

3. Fries Community Center: No report given.



Fries Community Center

- Free Community Meal March, 17th
- Hosted dinning room/ gym parties
- Added fooseball table to the lobby downstairs
- Hosted student group from Holy Cross Purchased supplies for them to paint the outside of the dinning room door and the porch handrailings
- Severed concessions for home Basketball games
- Cleaned out the ballpark bathrooms, concession stand and dugout to prepare for baseball season
- Hosted our annual auction fundraiser and it was a huge success
- Purchased paper towel holders for the mens bathroom for upstairs and downstairs
- Continued to provide gas for the bus and bingo prizes for the senior program
- Starting to prepare for pool season
- Community food pantry continues to be open and stocked for the community.
- Board members remained the same
- The community center bank account continues to remain stable and growing.

Thank you,
Fries Community Center Board

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: The Mayor reported that one of our own had been injured in the line of duty in an altercation in his job as a police officer. She said that her thoughts and prayers were with him and she was praying for a quick and complete recovery.

Old Business:

1. WWTP Influent panel update: The clerk reported that the new influent pump control panel had finally been installed. She reported that as soon as the check cleared, she would submit the required paperwork to SERCAP for reimbursement for the \$31,575.00 for the panel and also \$9,000.00 for an influent pump we purchased in July of last year.

New Business:

1. Eric Testerman, New River Trail State Park: Postponed until May meeting.
2. Regional Water Supply Plan Resolution: The Mayor read the following resolution aloud:

RESOLUTION of the Town of Fries, Virginia

A Resolution Regarding Local and Regional Water Supply Planning and Application for a FY2025 Water Supply Planning Grant

Whereas, the Virginia General Assembly has mandated the development of regional water supply plans throughout the Commonwealth and the State Water Control Board has developed regulations to implement this planning process; and

Whereas, based upon these regulations the Town of Fries is required to contribute towards a regional water supply plan that fulfills the regulations by deadlines established in 9VAC25-780-50.A, specifically:

“Each locality in a regional planning area shall assist its regional planning unit in developing and submitting a single jointly produced regional water supply plan to the Department within five years from October 9th, 2024”

Whereas, regional planning areas are designated by 9VAC25-780-45.B, and a local government may request that the Department change its designated regional planning area to an adjoining planning area in accordance with 9VAC25-780-45.C.

Whereas, the following elements must be included in regional water supply plans in accordance with 9VAC25-780:

- A description of existing water sources in accordance with the requirements of 9VAC25-780-70;
- A description of existing water use in accordance with the requirements of 9VAC25-780-80;
- A description of existing water resource conditions in accordance with the requirements of

9VAC25-780-90;

- An assessment of projected water demand in accordance with the requirements of 9VAC25-780- 100;
- A statement of need for the regional planning unit in accordance with the requirements of 9VAC25-780-100;
- An alternatives analysis to address projected deficits in water supplies in accordance with the requirements of 9VAC25-780-100;
- A description of water management actions in accordance with the requirements of 9VAC25-780- 110 and 9VAC25-780-120;
- A description of drought response and contingency plans for each local government in the RPU, in accordance with the requirements of 9VAC25-780-120;
- An identification of water supply risks and regional strategies to address identified risks in accordance with the requirements of 9VAC25-780-125; and
- A map identifying important elements discussed in the water supply plan that may include existing environmental resources, existing water sources, significant existing water uses, and proposed new sources, and

Whereas, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has announced the availability of grant funds to assist Regional Planning Units and offset some of the costs related to the development of these Plans and are encouraging RPUs to submit applications for grant funds; and

Whereas, for purposes of this DEQ water supply grant fund program, the Town of Fries will participate within the New River 2 planning unit, and

Whereas, the Regional Planning Unit, through the lead agent wishes to apply for and secure DEQ grant funds to help offset the cost of regional water supply plan development.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Fries agrees to participate with all local governments and water authorities within the New River 2 Planning Unit in the development of a regional water supply plan that will comply with mandated regulations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the lead agent is authorized to develop an application for water supply planning grant funds to offset, to the extent feasible, the cost of developing said regional water supply plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the lead agent agrees to manage all grant funds received and allocate these shared funds towards the tasks and deliverables proposed in the grant application for the benefit of the entire Regional Planning Unit, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that Aaron Sizemore, Executive Director, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, is authorized to sign the DEQ contract and other appropriate documents related to the water supply planning grant and the regional water supply plan.

Upon the Motion of _____ and second by _____, this RESOLUTION is hereby approved on this the __day of April, 2025.

Signed: _____

Mayor

Attest: _____

Clerk/Treasurer/Asst. Manager

After some discussion, Yvonne Burr moved to approve the resolution. Mary Ann Cubbage provided the second to the motion. All present voted Aye and the motion carried.

- 3. Caboose Lease: The Mayor presented the council with the final draft of the 2025 Caboose Lease for their review and approval. Following a brief discussion, Mary Ann Cubbage moved to approve the lease as presented. Yvonne Burr seconded the motion. All members present voted Aye and the motion carried.
- 4. Public Hearings Schedule: The Mayor reported that Brian Reed of the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission had agreed to assist the town with a grant application to DHCD to request funding to address issues caused by Hurricane Helene. As part of the procedure, the town would be required to advertise and hold two public hearings to gather public input. After some discussion, it was tentatively decided to hold the hearings on April 11th and April 25th pending timely publication of the required notice.
- 5. Town Market: The Mayor asked the council for their thoughts on operating the market for the 2025 season. Several members expressed satisfaction with how it was managed in 2024 and saw no need for changes, offering to continue taking turns as they had previously. After some discussion, it was decided to hold a vendor meeting on Saturday, May 17th at 9am, with the market’s opening day set for Saturday, May 24th from 9am—1pm. Vendor fees will remain the same as last year--\$5.00 per table space.
- 6. Pedestrian Bridge: The Mayor acknowledged that the bridge held significant meaning for many residents, but explained that its condition had become hazardous since the September storm, posing a liability to the Town. She stated her intention to continue seeking funding for engineering and construction of a new bridge, but felt that the first step toward rebuilding was to remove the existing structure. Following discussion, Mary Ann Cubbage moved to proceed with the removal of the bridge upon approval of a contract. Yvonne Burr seconded the motion. All present voted in favor, and the motion carried
- 7. Letter of project support request: Brian Dixon: Mr. Dixon was unable to attend the meeting but had requested a letter of support from the Council for his two proposed projects. The Council discussed the request and, while expressing support for the Town’s growth, indicated a desire to speak with Mr. Dixon directly about the projects. It was agreed that the matter would be tabled until he could attend a future meeting.

Announcements:

- 1. Large Item Curbside Pickup: May 19th. No registration is required this year.

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

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
March 4, 2025
Minutes

Members Present: Yvonne Burr, Mary Ann Cabbage, Bill Davis, Jo Ann Gunter, and Karen Snyder.

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

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 Phipps provided the police report for February, which included: 1 warrant and 2 traffic tickets. Investigation of 1 misdemeanor and 1 felony. Routine activities included: 206 closed business checks, 30 service calls, 59 church checks, 74 directive patrols, 24 open business checks, 12 forestry checks, 2 ECO/ LE ECO and 3 warrant service attempts for a total of 171 hours. The Mayor thanked him for his report.

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

1. February 5th—Meeting with Fries Community Center representatives.
2. February 6th—Meeting with Rejected Cornerstone representative, The Lane Group representative, the Grayson County Administrator and a representative from New River Machine concerning the pedestrian bridge.
3. February 7th—Meeting with Jones Construction representatives concerning storm damage.
4. February 13th—Attended a FEMA virtual meeting.
5. February 18th—Attended a GLO virtual meeting.
6. February 19th—Virtual meeting to price compare merchant processing software.
7. February 25th—Conference call with VDOT representative.
8. February 25th—Met with service technician concerning security cameras.
9. February 26th—Researched the town archives at the Virginia Tech Special Collections Library. The Mayor reported that the collection is available for anyone who would like to view it with an appointment.
10. February 27th—Met briefly with Brian Dixon.
11. February 28th—Deadline for Caboose proposals. One proposal was received and reviewed.
12. The Mayor congratulated Dillon Gunter for being awarded the 2024 Excellence in Waterworks Operations/Performance Award from the Virginia Department of Health.
13. She read aloud a thank you note from a customer thanking the public works employee who went above and beyond cleaning the bank off downtown.
14. She also expressed her condolences to the family of Larry Boyles, a long-time employee of the town who had recently passed away. Mrs. Linda Boyles sent a thank you card the Mayor read aloud.

Organization Updates:

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

To: Fries Town Council

From: The Historic Fries Theatre Re: Monthly
report

The Historic Fries Theatre is starting the year with a bang! A couple of dances and concerts have already brought many people into the theatre, kicking off the new year with strong community engagement. The Thursday night jam sessions continue to be a popular gathering place, attracting not only local residents but also visitors from surrounding areas.

The long-anticipated Sunday afternoon concert by Shelton & Williams has faced its share of challenges. Originally scheduled for earlier dates, it has been postponed twice due to inclement weather. The concert has now been rescheduled for April 13th, and we look forward to finally hosting this much-anticipated performance.

In an exciting development, we recently met with Tyler Hughes of the Crooked Road and secured a new Crooked Road banner for the Theatre. This addition further strengthens our connection to Virginia's heritage music trail and enhances our visibility within the network.

To improve communication with our patrons, the Theatre has added a telephone number that people can call for information on upcoming events, as well as to check for weather-related cancellations. The new phone number is 276-235-9286.

Facility improvements are also underway. Thanks to the shelves made and donated by Dave Cubbage, our display cases are now ready for service. One case has been designated for the sale of Fries-related merchandise, souvenirs, and memorabilia. Items available for purchase include glasses, bottle openers, hats, coasters, and more.

The remaining two cases will serve as museum displays. We have already received several mill-related exhibits on loan, which will help preserve and share Fries' rich history with visitors.

Looking ahead, the Theatre is proud to co-sponsor the Summer Concert Series with Fries Tourism for the third consecutive year. Details on concert dates can be found in the tourism report.

Please see separate reports for financial statements and financial transactions.

We appreciate the continued support of the Town Council and the community as we work to make The Historic Fries Theatre a hub for entertainment, culture, and local history.

2. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Monthly Report to Fries Town Council

From: Kevin Combs, Tourism Director, Town of Fries Date: March 4, 2025

Meetings & Activities

- February 3 – Met with the Fries Musical Heritage Committee. The Fries Fiddlers Convention is officially set for August 15-16, 2025. The committee is purchasing the stage from Fries Fire & Rescue and plans to renovate it for safety and aesthetic improvements. Fundraising may be more challenging this year as the initial relief over saving the convention has subsided.
- February 4 – Met with Tyler Hughes, Director of the Crooked Road, to discuss potential collaborations and opportunities for Fries.
- February 26 – Visited Virginia Tech to review materials donated by the Town of Fries.

Tourism Concerns

- The ongoing closure of the New River Trail is negatively impacting tourism. Reports indicate a decline in Airbnb rentals as a result of the closure.
- Request for Action: I urge Town Council to pass a resolution urging the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to expedite trail repairs to mitigate economic losses.

Upcoming Events & Activities

- Weekly Jam Sessions: Every Thursday at The Historic Fries Theatre.
- Shelton & Williams Concert: Rescheduled to Sunday, April 13 at The Historic Fries Theatre.
- Returning Annual Events:
 - Hippies Only! VW Festival – Expanded to two days this year.
 - Thunder on the River Classic Car Cruise-ins this summer.
 - Fries Fire & Rescue Events: 4th of July Parade and Fireworks, drive-thru meals, horse shows, and more.
- A full listing of events can be found at friesva.com/events. I encourage council members to subscribe to the calendar to stay updated.
- New River Trail Races (April 2025): The event will be expanded to include a 10k and a 100k race, promising to bring hundreds of visitors into Fries.
- Summer Concert Series at The Depot:
 - May 23 – Whitetop Mountain Band
 - June 20 – Leftover Biscuits

- July 11 – The New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters

- September 19 – Twin Creeks String Band

- Now in its third year, the series continues to bring visitors into downtown Fries, providing positive publicity and boosting local businesses.

Additional Tourism Efforts

- Historic Fries Theatre Museum: The Theatre’s museum efforts will assist with tourism, as many visitors express interest in the history of Fries.

- Theatre Souvenirs: The Theatre’s new souvenir offerings will support tourism by providing visitors with keepsakes to remember their trip.

Conclusion

Fries continues to build upon its reputation as a heritage tourism destination with a strong music scene and growing events calendar. However, the New River Trail closure remains a significant issue, and I urge the Town Council to take action in advocating for expedited repairs.

For further details, visit friesva.com/events.

3. Fries Community Center: No report given.

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: No report given.

Old Business:

1. VDH Infrastructure Grant Update: The Mayor reported she had signed the notice of award and the agreement with the contractor to proceed. The contractor would have 240 days to complete the project once started. She planned to meet with The Lane Group again the following day to discuss the details further.

New Business:

1. Resolution concerning the repair of the New River Trail: Kevin Combs presented a resolution addressing the repair of storm damage and the reopening of New River Trail State Park near Fries. He emphasized that the trail’s closure had adversely affected residents, visitors, and businesses that depend on its access. Kevin urged the council to adopt the resolution and forward it to the appropriate government entities. After some discussion, Mary Ann Cabbage moved to approve the resolution, with Yvonne Burr

seconding the motion. The resolution was unanimously adopted, with all present voting in favor.

- 2. Agenda Deadline: The Mayor proposed that the council establish an official deadline for items to be included on the meeting agenda. She noted that some matters require research to develop an informed response or solution. After further discussion, Jo Ann Gunter moved to implement a one-week deadline before the meeting date for agenda submissions, requiring individuals to contact town hall within that timeframe. Mary Ann Cabbage seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved, with all present voting in favor
-

Announcements:

- 1. Household Hazardous Waste Collection & Personal Document Shredding, Sat., April 5th, 2024. 8am—11am @ Galax Public Works and 1pm—4pm Grayson County Public Works.
 - 2. Large Item Curbside Pickup, May 19th. No Registration Necessary.
 - 3. No kid sleeps on the floor bed build. 183 S. Main St. Rural Retreat. (110 kid’s beds requested by DSS & Local Schools in 2024).
-

With no further business to discuss, Karen Snyder moved to adjourn. Mary Ann Cabbage provided the second. All present voted Aye, and the meeting was adjourned.

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
February 4, 2025
Minutes

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

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Kevin Combs, Tourism Director; Deputy Vernon Landreth, Grayson County Sheriff's Department; Christy Moore, Fries Community Center 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. 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 January, which included: 4 fourth searches, 1 warrant, 3 warning tickets and 1 traffic ticket. Investigation of 3 misdemeanors. Routine activities included: 226 closed business checks, 30 service calls, 53 church checks, 83 directive patrols, 19 open business checks, 14 forestry checks, 11 civil paper, 1 ECO/ LE ECO and 2 warrant service attempts for a total of 177 hours. The Mayor thanked him for his report.

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

1. January 16th- Meeting with Core & Main.
2. January 17th—Thanked Jones Construction & VDOT for installing rip rap near the pedestrian bridge that had flood damage.
3. January 21st—Our public works men removed the stalls in the dining room restrooms as requested by the community center board.
4. January 21st—She attended the water infrastructure bid opening. One bid was received and it was within the budget. She also attended a FEMA webinar and was asked to reschedule a meeting with the Fries Community Center. Rescheduled for January 28th.
5. January 22nd—Our public works men installed a washer for the community center board.
6. January 23rd—Pre-site inspection call with FEMA.
7. January 24th—Site inspections with FEMA.
8. January 28th—FEMA final site visit.
9. January 28th—Public works employee rescued an injured owl.
10. January 28th—Met with Baker Construction concerning roof quotes for Community Center and WWTP.
11. January 28th—Attended FEMA webinar.
12. January 28th—Was asked to reschedule community center meeting again due to family meeting health issue. Planned to set date after council meeting.
13. January 29th—GLO meeting planned, but had to re-schedule due to federal freeze.
14. Feb. 4th—Attended Mark Warner Federal Funding Webinar
15. Feb. 4th—Met with contractor about storm damage.

Organization Updates:

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

2024 Year-End Report to the Fries Town Council

Report to Fries Town Council

From: Kevin Combs on behalf of manager Yvonne Burr and The Board of Directors of The Historic Fries Theatre

Date: February 4, 2025

Subject: Monthly Report – January 2025

Theatre Condition and Maintenance:

During January, we remained vigilant in monitoring the theatre's condition, particularly during the period of extreme cold. We ensured the facility remained in good shape and took proactive steps to maintain accessibility by keeping the sidewalk and ramp clear of ice. V&H Heating and Cooling conducted a service check on our HVAC system, confirming that it is in good working order.

January Activities:

- We hosted our regular jam sessions on January 9, 16, 23, and 30.
- Our January 9 session was a special Breaking Up Christmas Party, which was well attended and enjoyed by all.
- Due to snow and icy conditions, we had to postpone the January 12 concert with Shelton & Williams. This concert has been rescheduled for February 16, and we encourage everyone to attend and support this performance.

Upcoming Events:

- Shelton & Williams Concert – February 16 (Rescheduled from January 12)
- The New Spring Valley Boys – February 28
- In cooperation with Fries Tourism, we are planning another round of The Summer Concert series and will release that schedule shortly.

Theatre Gift Shop and Museum Expansion:

We are actively working on an inventory of high-quality souvenirs to sell at the theatre. Once the cabinet shelves are completed, we will stock the inventory for the gift shop, providing additional ways for patrons to support the theatre. Entire proceeds of the sale of inventory will go to the theatre, as inventory items are being donated.

The new shelving will also enhance our museum offerings, allowing us to better showcase Fries' rich musical and cultural heritage.

We appreciate the town's continued support and look forward to another successful month ahead. Please let us know if you have any questions or need further information.

Respectfully Submitted, Kevin Combs

The Historic Fries Theatre

2. Tourism Report: Kevin Combs reported the following:

Fries Tourism Report to the Fries Town Council February 2025

Presented by Kevin Combs, MFA, Fries Tourism

Fries Tourism aspires to build on our successes of 2024 and continue to grow business from tourism in 2025. Our primary objectives include elevating the status of the town in the region, maximizing community pride, and attracting outside investment to support economic development. We are committed to fostering partnerships, expanding events, and enhancing our promotional efforts to achieve these goals.

Meetings and Partnerships

This month, I met with Tracy Cornett of Grayson County Tourism to advocate for Fries and strategize our initiatives for 2025. This collaboration is essential in ensuring Fries remains a key player in regional tourism efforts.

Additionally, I attended my first meeting with the Mount Rogers Regional Partnership and plan to continue working with this organization to increase Fries' visibility within the broader regional tourism network.

Events and Economic Impact

Several ongoing and new events will play a vital role in our tourism strategy for 2025:

- Summer Concert Series at The Historic Fries Theatre – This successful event brought a large number of visitors to Fries in 2024, benefiting local restaurants and businesses. I will collaborate with The Historic Fries Theatre to schedule and promote the 2025 series.
- 58th Annual Fries Old-Time and Bluegrass Fiddlers Convention (August 15-16, 2025) – I am working with the Fries Musical Heritage Committee to plan this event, which is a significant draw for musicians and fans of Appalachian music.
- New River Trail Races 50K/100K – This endurance event continues to bring runners and their families to the area, boosting local commerce.
- Thunder by the River Cruise-Ins – A popular attraction that brings car enthusiasts and visitors to Fries throughout the year.
- Hippies Only VW Festival – This festival has become a unique and engaging event that attracts a dedicated audience of VW enthusiasts.

Digital Marketing and Promotion

To enhance Fries' reach, I have launched a YouTube channel dedicated to the town, which will serve as a platform to showcase our history, culture, and events. Additionally, I will continue to produce promotional videos for Facebook and Instagram to attract more visitors and investors.

Physical Marketing and Promotion

In cooperation with The Historic Fries Theatre, I am preparing an inventory of souvenirs to be sold in the theatre. The objective is to increase the desirability of Fries in the minds and eyes of tourists and give another boost to tourism.

Conclusion

The momentum we have built in 2024 positions Fries for continued success in 2025. By strengthening partnerships, enhancing tourism events, and expanding our digital marketing efforts, we aim to increase visitor engagement, bolster local businesses, and attract outside investment. I appreciate the council's continued support in making Fries a premier destination in the region.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Combs

Fries Tourism Director

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



Fries Community Center

- Free Community Meal in January
- Hosted dining room/ gym parties
- Hired a new lobby attendant, Randy Shinualt. He's phenomenal and is doing a fabulous job.
- Weight Room memberships continue to grow.
- Added new equipment to the cardio room (treadmill & Sotting Elliptical)
- Basketball has started through the FCA program. Some teams are having practice is the gym.
- Hosting a Valentines dance for the kids. February 8th.
- Community food pantry continues to be open and stocked for the community.
- Board members remained the same
- The community center bank account continues to remain stable and growing.

Thank you,

Fries Community Center Board

After reading the report, Mrs. Moore continued by stating that she wished to address the issue of the organization, Rejected Cornerstone's, use of the third-floor space. The community center permitted the Rejected Cornerstone organization to use the third-floor space without obtaining prior approval from the town council, which was not in accordance with their contractual agreement. In an effort to work with the community center, the town council executed an agreement with Rejected Cornerstone for the use of the property. However, the community center had since, encountered difficulties in maintaining a cooperative relationship with the organization and was requesting that the town council take action to vacate them from the premises. The Mayor thanked Mrs. Moore for her report and stated that council would consider her comments.

4. Fries Fire & Rescue: James Young reported the following 2025 events:

- February 16th—Taco Dinner Drive Thru, 12 pm—2 pm at Fries Fire Dept.
- March 22nd—Bingo, 5 pm—Until end at Fries Fire Dept.
- April 6th—Pancake Drive Thru, 12 pm—2 pm at Fries Fire Dept.
- April 26th—Cruise In & Music, 2 pm—6 pm at The Jamie Hyatt Arena/Old Providence School.
- May 2nd—Touch-A-Truck, Additional date may be scheduled.
- June 28th—Horse Show, 6 pm at The Jamie Hyatt Arena/Old Providence School.
- July 4th—Parade lineup 1 pm, Parade starts at 2 pm.
- July 5th—Celebrate the freedom and family on July 5th starting at 5pm. Food will be available. Fireworks to start at 15 minutes past dark.
- August 23rd—Draw Down Dinner, 6 pm at Fries Fire Department
- September 13th—Horse Show & Awards Dinner, 5 pm at Jamie Hyatt Arena/Old Providence School.
- October 5th—Fire Prevention Parade—4 pm.
- October 18th—Chili Drive Thru, 12 pm—2 pm at Fries Fire Dept.
- October 31st—Halloween with Fries Community Center at Fries Ball Park.
- November 8th—Bingo, 5 pm—until end at Fries Fire Dept.

Old Business:

1. No old business was discussed.

New Business:

1. Council Vacancy: The Mayor asked if there were any nominations for the council vacancy. Mary Ann Cabbage nominated Karen Snyder. Jo Ann Gunter provided the second. There were no other nominations. The Mayor called for a vote. The vote was by paper ballot. The results were 5 yes, 1 no. Karen Snyder was appointed to council. The Mayor reminded Ms. Snyder that she would have to go before the Clerk of Court to be sworn in before the next meeting and welcomed her to council.

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

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

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

3. Theatre Contract: The Mayor reported that the Theatre contract was up for renewal and asked council how to proceed. Mary Ann Cabbage moved to renew without changes. James Young provided the second. All present voted Aye and motion carried.

Announcements:

1. The Town of Fries was accepting proposals for the use of the Caboose for the 2025 season. Deadline for proposals was 5 pm on February 28, 2025. The formal request for proposals was available on the town website at friesva.com.

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

Signed: _____

Attest: _____

Fries Town Council
January 14, 2025
Minutes

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

Others Present: Cynthia Grant, Mayor; Renee Nester, Grayson County Clerk of Court; Zachary Hill, Grayson County Director of Elections and General Registrar; Randy Shinault, Grayson County Asst. Registrar; Kevin Combs, Tourism Director; Deputy Matt Barnes, Grayson County Sheriff's Department and several town citizens.

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

Certificates of Election: Zachary Hill, Grayson County Director of Elections, presented certificates of election to each of the new council members verifying their election.

Induction Ceremony: Renee Nester, Grayson County Clerk of Court, delivered the oath of office and swore in all members of the Council, the Mayor and the Clerk.

Minutes & Bills: Jo Ann Gunter 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 Barnes provided the police report for December, which included: 1 criminal arrest, 2 warrants and 2 traffic tickets. Investigation of 1 misdemeanor and 1 felony. Routine activities included: 249 closed business checks, 63 service calls, 67 church checks, 90 directive patrols, 57 open business checks, 14 forestry checks, 1 civil paper and 9 warrant service attempts for a total of 214 hours. Charlie Lawrence asked the officer to let the Sheriff know that he had purchased his own radar gun and had been checking traffic from his front porch. He had clocked several speeders and asked that the sheriff's department help with slowing down the traffic in Fries. Deputy Barnes stated that he would pass the information on to the Sheriff and the other deputies. The Mayor thanked him for his report and his assistance.

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

1. December 10th- Met with Sheriff Vaughan concerning solar-powered signs that display speed. Sheriff Vaughan committed to adding a request for two of the signs to a DMV grant that he was working on.
2. December 10th -- Attended a Federal Assistance Webinar for AARPA funds.
3. December 11th - Had multiple virtual meetings with FEMA & GLO.
4. December 13th – Attended virtual meeting with Gavin Blevins at MRPDC.
5. December 16th—Sent out Town Christmas Cards.
6. December 16th – Signed FEMA grant application and submitted.
7. December 16th – Met with Steve Boyer, Mitch Smith, Mike Hash and Gus Hill.
8. December 16th – Met with Library Director, Amy Adams.

9. December 17th – Met with the Director of Rejected Cornerstone Organization, Abria Jones.
10. December 19th – Attended Town Christmas Luncheon for Council and staff.
11. December 20th – Held the bid opening for the wtp generator project. Only one bid received.
12. December 20th – Attended the District III Seniors Christmas Party.
13. December 20th – Hosted FEMA meeting in Town Hall.
14. December 20th – Attended virtual GLO meeting.
15. December 20th – Properly advertised a called Council meeting for December 27th to approve a memorandum of understanding to obligate the remaining ARPA funds.
16. December 27th – Attended called Council meeting.
17. December 30th – Attended the bid opening for the wtp filter project. One bid was received.
18. January 3rd – Had contractor reassess the wtp filters.
19. January 7th—Attended the pre-bid conference for the VDH infrastructure grant.

Organization Updates:

1. Fries Historic Theatre and Tourism Joint Annual Report: Kevin Combs reported that the following:

2024 Year-End Report to the Fries Town Council

Presented by Kevin Combs,

Volunteer Tourism Director, Board Member of The Historic Fries Theatre Dear

Members of the Fries Town Council,

I am providing this joint year-end report from my roles as Tourism Director and as a board member of The Historic Fries Theatre because the two roles are so closely connected. The theatre has been indispensable in my efforts to drive tourism into Fries.

The past year has been marked by significant strides in advancing both tourism and cultural initiatives that enhance our town's identity, promote economic activity, and honor our historical legacy. The close relationship between the Historic Fries Theatre and tourism activities has been pivotal in these achievements. Our combined efforts have brought tax dollars into the town and revenue to town businesses. Please refer to our report for a detailed list of our activities for the year. Also please refer to our financial reports for the year. Our goal is to provide total transparency in the conduct of our activities.

Below is a summary of our colleagues progress in 2024:

Theatre Achievements

1. Cultural and Historical Advancements:

- Launched efforts to create a museum and cultural center within the theatre.
- Installed Fries historical photograph displays and a presentation outlining the theatre's mission.
- Acquired and utilized fixtures for museum and sales displays.
- Created a slideshow of photographs of Southwestern Virginia culture and landscape for exhibition at the theatre during jam sessions and any time the theatre is open
- Hosted a well-received exhibition and slideshow of photographs of the Fries area by well-known photographer Mark Sanderford.

2. Community Engagement and Events:

- Hosted dances, concerts, and weekly jam sessions, drawing visitors to downtown and supporting local businesses.
- Sponsored the revival of the Fries Fiddlers' Convention and donated \$250 to Fries Fire and Rescue for a new siren.
- Raised over \$1,000 toward Hurricane Helene relief.

3. Promotions and Collaborations:

- Created and implemented new branding, including a logo for the theatre and an alternate logo for "Jam at the Dam."
- Advocated with The Crooked Road to increase traffic and visibility.
- Hosted events such as a music video shoot for Jamie Collins and a PBS feature.
- Broadcast jam sessions via Facebook Live to create interest.

4. Facility Improvements:

- Installed free Wi-Fi for patrons.
- Maintained grounds and made sure area was picked up before each event (Much litter is generated and many cigarette butts left during the week).
- Maintained and repaired the theatre's historic neon sign.

Tourism Accomplishments

1. Promotional Activities:

- Produced a range of videos showcasing Fries and its attractions, including the New River Trail, local businesses, and seasonal highlights.
- Ran social media campaigns promoting major events such as the Summer Concert Series and Fries in Winter.
- Distributed thousands of rack cards in welcome centers and placed ads in Visitor magazine.

2. Events and Community Engagement:

- Sponsored wildflower walks on the New River Trail and coordinated other events with New River Trail State Park.
- Organized a scavenger hunt in partnership with the theatre to increase trail and theatre traffic.

3. Partnerships and Projects:

- Collaborated with Emory & Henry College on the Watershed project and oral history interviews with Fries residents.

- Worked with Grayson County Tourism and Virginia Tourism Corporation to advocate for Fries and to become familiar with tourism efforts in the county and state

4. Ongoing Duties and IT Support:

- Managed the town's website and social media accounts, posting scenic photographs and updates.
- Maintained a town calendar of events and provided IT support for various town functions.

Shared Impact

The synergy between tourism and the theatre has been essential in driving traffic to Fries, fostering community pride, and showcasing our town's charm to visitors. By building on this year's successes, we aim to further cement Fries as a cultural and recreational destination.

I want to finish tonight with a thought that has guided me in my work and in my life: "When your memories exceed your dreams, the end is near." But I prefer to put it positively: "The spirit soars when vision surpasses the shadow of memories."

Fries is a town steeped in history, a place where the echoes of hard work, innovation, and community spirit still resonate. But I believe that the best days of Fries are not behind us—they are ahead of us. This belief fuels everything I do in promoting our town, from sharing its rich heritage to envisioning its brighter future.

Global movements have changed the mission of Fries. Once a thriving mill town, we are now called to redefine ourselves for a new era. And in doing so, we honor the legacy of Col. Francis Henry Fries and the generations who came before us. They built this town with resilience and vision, and it's our duty to carry that forward.

Yes, we face challenges—outdated infrastructure and the influence of those who might prioritize self-enrichment over collective well-being. But we also have incredible assets: the stunning New River, the New River Trail, the beauty of our natural surroundings, the traditional music that connects us to our roots, the charm of the mill houses, and above all, the strength and character of our people.

These are the building blocks of our future. They give us the tools not just to preserve what is special about Fries but to create a new chapter—a chapter where Fries becomes a place where history inspires progress, where pride in our past drives us to dream bigger and reach higher.

I ask for your continued support—not just for the tourism office or the theatre, but for the vision of Fries as a vibrant, thriving community that honors its roots while embracing its future. Together, we can ensure that the spirit of Fries continues to soar, carrying us all toward those better days.

Thank you.

The Mayor thanked him for his diligent efforts and report.

2. Fries Community Center: Joyce Brown reported the following:



Fries Community Center

- Free Community Meal in December. We served a Christmas meal. Meal was postponed and held at a later date due to the roof leaking in the dining room.
- Hosted dining room/ gym parties
- The center will be open from 4:30 - 7pm Monday through Friday.
- We have hired a new lobby attendant. Randy Shinault
- 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.
- Packed and delivered nearly 200 Christmas food boxes for the community.
- Hosted a kids Christmas party in the downstairs lobby and there was a good turnout.
- Board members remained the same with no changes
- Weight Room Membership: We voted for the fire fighters on the Fries Fire Department to use the weight room free of charge.
- Helped provide a Christmas dinner for our seniors.
- Planned and provided transportation for the seniors to go see the Christmas lights in Galax.
- Paid for repairs to the bus due to an incident that damaged the tires and wheels.
- Started planning for our yearly auction fundraiser.
- The community center bank account continues to remain stable and growing.

Is there any update on time frame of the insurance adjuster coming to look at the roof? To prevent any more damage?

Is there any updates from the insurance on the repairs that need to be done to the van from the incident?

Thank you,

Fries Community Center Board

3. Fries Fire & Rescue: James Young reported that the department had serviced 165 fire calls and 780 rescue calls for the year. He also stated that the department would have their 2025 events schedule available in the near future. The Mayor thanked him for his report.

Old Business:

1. No old business was discussed.

New Business:

1. Appointment of the Mayor: Bill Davis nominated Cynthia Grant. Richard Hawks provided the second. There were no other nominations. Council voted by ballot. All votes were for Cynthia Grant.
2. Appointment of the Vice Mayor: Bill Davis nominated Jo Ann Gunter. Richard Hawks provided the second. There were no other nominations. Council voted by ballot. All votes were for Jo Ann Gunter.
3. Appointment of the Clerk: Yvonne Burr nominated Jill Hill. Mary Ann Cabbage provided the second. There were no other nominations. Council voted by ballot. All votes were for Jill Hill.

4. Closed Session: 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).

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

5. Revised WTP Filter Bid: Upon careful consideration, James Young moved to accept the revised bid from Locke-Lane Construction. Mary Ann Cabbage provided the second. All present voted aye and the motion carried.
6. Library Contract: Yvonne Burr moved to approve the draft library contract as presented and to present it to the Library Director for review. James Young provided the second. All present voted aye and the motion carried.
7. Hazard Mitigation Resolution: After a thorough review, James Young moved to approve the resolution that would adopt the 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan prepared by the Mount

Rogers Planning District Commission. Mary Ann Cabbage provided the second. All present voted Aye and the resolution was approved.

8. Water Treatment Plant Meter Quote: After some discussion, Yvonne Burr moved to approve the purchase of an influent meter for the water plant. James Young provided the second. All present voted Aye and the motion carried.

9. Fire Department Parking Lot: James Young requested that the front parking lot at the fire department be included in the town snow removal efforts in the future. The department did not have a snow plow or any way to get it plowed. After some discussion, Richard Hawks moved to include the lot with the town snow removal. Mary Ann Cabbage proved the second. All present voted Aye and the motion carried.

Announcements:

1. There were no announcements.

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

Signed: _____

Attest: _____