

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE WYTHEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2018, AT 7:00 P.M.**

Members present: Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Jacqueline K. King, Thomas F. Hundley, Joseph E. Hand, Jr., Beth A. Taylor

Others present: Town Manager C. Wayne Sutherland, Jr., Assistant Town Manager Stephen A. Moore, Town Clerk Sharon G. Corvin, Town Attorney Christopher R. Menerick, Danny Gordon, Cathy D. Pattison, Stacy Terry, Angela Pennington, Jeffrey Kyle, David Akers, Ikey Davidson, John Matthews, Rhonda Sechrest, Patricia Snapp, Becky Grubb, Mark Bloomfield, Matt Fiebig, Kenneth Browning, Police Officer Chastity Russell

RE: CALL TO ORDER, QUORUM, PLEDGE

Mayor Crewe called the meeting to order and established that a quorum of Council members was present. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Joseph E. Hand, Jr.

RE: CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Crewe presented the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of March 26, 2018. He inquired of the Council if there was a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented or to somehow be amended. Councilwoman Taylor noted that under Citizens' Period, the word "else" needed to be added to last sentence in the last paragraph so it would read "there being no one else to address the Council." A motion was made by Councilwoman Taylor and seconded by Councilman Hand to approve the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of March 26, 2018, as amended. Mayor Crewe inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to approve the consent agenda. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results: For: Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Thomas F. Hundley, Joseph E. Hand, Jr., Beth A. Taylor. Against: None. Abstention: Jacqueline K. King.

RE: CITIZENS' PERIOD

Mayor Crewe advised that the next agenda item is Citizens' Period. He noted that Mr. David Akers stated on the sign in sheet that he wished to address the Council during Citizens' Period.

Mr. David Akers was recognized and stated that he wished to address the Council on behalf of the first responders. He noted that he met with first responders earlier in the day and found out that there are a lot of issues with the space that they have in the bay for the firetrucks. Mr. Akers explained to the Council that two of the main things that the fire department needed include a new pump truck and a new fire station. He continued to explain to the Council what he discussed with the fire department in terms of what they would like to see in the future at the fire department. He noted that the Town could possibly apply for grants for these items. Mr. Akers thanked the Council for allowing him to speak. Mayor Crewe inquired of the Council if anyone had any comments or questions. Councilman Hundley thanked Mr. Akers for bringing the issues to the Council's attention, and he explained that like other issues, things are sometimes more complicated. Vice-Mayor King remarked that it is complicated especially when it also involves Wythe County. Mayor Crewe stated that the Town has an equipment replacement program, and the Town participates with the County in joint purchases of equipment. He noted that the Town has the newest firetruck in the County even if there are a lot of old trucks, as well, but the trucks are constantly maintained and circulated. Mayor Crewe explained that with a volunteer fire department, the Town cannot require anybody to appear at any time, but the Town's response times are very short and good. He advised that the Town's citizens get a reduced insurance rating because of the Wytheville Fire Department's response times, equipment and training. Mayor Crewe continued to explain the way the Wytheville Fire Department operates. He explained that regarding a new fire station, this has been explored over the last 10 years, and he cannot say that it will never happen, however, funding is a big factor along with other reasons. Mayor Crewe thanked Mr. Akers for his comments.

Mr. Matt Fiebig was recognized and stated that there is a topic that he would like to discuss with the Council. He noted that at the Work Session on Thursday morning, the Council mentioned a fee for water meters and that they are \$2,500.00 each. Mr. Fiebig remarked that he discussed this issue with Mr. Jen Wu yesterday and earlier today. Mayor Crewe inquired of Mr. Fiebig if he was referring to the water connection fee. Mr. Fiebig stated that is correct. He continued to explain to the Council the conversation that took place between Mr. Wu and him regarding the water meters. Mr. Fiebig stated that he wanted to get more information regarding the water

meters. Town Manager Sutherland explained that this is an ongoing topic. He noted that the fee is currently a policy, and the policy was established because the Town provides this service and a dwelling with multiple units tends to have situations arise. Town Manager Sutherland remarked that each residence in the Town of Wytheville pays at least a minimum bill to have water and sewer service. He commented that this is not the situation if there is a master metered situation. Town Manager Sutherland explained that when consumption goes up, the amount of money paid by the customer goes down, therefore, this is the reason for the charge so that it is fairer to everybody. He continued to discuss the reason for the fees to Mr. Fiebig. Mr. Fiebig inquired if the fee is, in fact, \$2,500.00. Mayor Crewe stated that the surcharge fee is actually \$1,500.00. Mr. Fiebig inquired if that includes the equipment. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that the \$1,500.00 surcharge does not include the equipment. Mr. Fiebig inquired of the Council as to why an 18-unit apartment complex needs to have 18 different meters and not just one meter. Town Manager Sutherland explained that this was the nature of the discussion and why it was being discussed at the Council Work Session. Mr. Fiebig stated that he told Mr. Wu he would find out and report back to him. Mayor Crewe explained that Mr. Wu has had this explained to him several times before. He noted that Mr. Wu is very knowledgeable of the process. Mr. Fiebig thanked the Council for allowing him to address them. Mayor Crewe thanked Mr. Fiebig for his comments.

Mayor Crewe advised that there being no one else to address the Council, he would proceed with the agenda, but he would reserve the right to revisit Citizens' Period, if any other citizens arrived later in the meeting who wished to address the Council.

RE: OLD BUSINESS

Under Old Business, Town Manager Sutherland reported the following:

1. The Council Work Session will be held on Tuesday, April 10, 2018, at 7:00 a.m., in the Council Conference Room.
2. The Wytheville Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, April 12, 2018, at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers.
3. The Wytheville Industrial Development Authority will hold its annual meeting on Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 9:00 a.m., in the Council Chambers.
4. The New River Regional Water Authority will meet on Thursday, April 19, 2018, at 10:00 a.m., in the Council Chambers.
5. The Council Personnel Committee will meet on Friday, April 20, 2018, at 8:15 a.m., at the Water Treatment Plant.
6. Mayor Crewe read a letter from Mr. Tommy Anders and Mrs. Gina Anders thanking the Town of Wytheville staff for picking up the brush from the snow storm, keeping the snow removed from the streets, etc.

RE: BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Vice-Mayor King, reporting for the Budget and Finance Committee, stated that the Town has received notice from David Manley, Executive Director of the Joint Industrial Development Authority, that the current agreement with The Retail Coach is up for renewal on May 15, 2018. She explained that the JIDA acts as facilitators to the Town of Wytheville, Wythe County and the Town of Rural Retreat in this project. Vice-Mayor King noted that, currently, the Town is in an agreement with The Retail Coach to provide data that is important for effective retail strategy efforts. She commented that under the current year, the total project expenditures are \$45,000, which were paid out 45 percent by each the Town of Wytheville and Wythe County, and a 10 percent contribution from the Town of Rural Retreat. Vice-Mayor King expressed that the second year agreement is a contractual amount of \$25,000, once again with 45 percent paid by each the Town of Wytheville and Wythe County, and a 10 percent contribution from the Town of Rural Retreat. She explained that if the Council proceeds with the contract in the upcoming year, the Town's portion of this project will be \$11,250. Vice-Mayor King stated that under this initial phase of the work with The Retail Coach, they have provided a vast amount of demographic and statistical data that is used to recruit businesses to the community. She noted that the year two component of this project takes all of this information and provides yet additional demographic and strategic information that could be used for recruitment purposes. Vice-Mayor King stated that a meeting will be scheduled in the very near future with all three of the governing bodies to determine if they are going to proceed forward with this project. She explained that the Council does believe that the project has been effective, and it will, in fact,

take several years for all of this information and these efforts to prove to provide a return on the Town's investment. Vice-Mayor King advised that there is no action required by the Council at this time, but the Budget and Finance Committee did want everyone to be aware that the renewal of The Retail Coach project will need to be determined on or before May 15, 2018, and, obviously, is something that if the Council chose to proceed will need to be something that the Council will need to include in the adoption of the upcoming budget.

Vice-Mayor King, also, reported that as the Council has noted previously, the Town has received information from its health insurance carrier that it will be facing an approximate ten percent increase in the health insurance premium for the upcoming year. She explained that the Town's health insurance is provided in a statewide program administered by The Commonwealth of Virginia. Vice-Mayor King advised that Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the provider for the program. She stated that the pool in which the Town participates is a large pool, and it includes both local and State employees. Vice-Mayor King noted that, currently, the Town provides three levels of health insurance to its employees. She remarked that the programs known as Key Advantage 250, which establishes a deductible of \$250, Key Advantage 500, which has a \$500 deductible and a higher deductible health plan where the deductibles are a minimum of \$2,800. Vice-Mayor King explained that the Town pays 93 percent of the premium for the employees' health care coverage, and the employee pays all expenses associated with spouse or family coverage. She remarked that, currently, 122 employees participate in the Key Advantage 250 program, 32 employees participate in the Key Advantage 500 program and one employee participates in the high deductible health plan. Vice-Mayor King stated that the Council believes that the health insurance program that is provided to the Town's employees is a very good plan and a very important part of our benefit program. She explained that, at this time, the annual premium for employees is \$1,167,596.00, and, with a ten percent increase, the Town is, obviously, looking at an approximate \$120,000 in increased premiums. Vice-Mayor King remarked that, as such, the Council thought that it was important to explore the potential to hold expenses down as much as possible while maintaining a high-quality health insurance program. She stated that the Council explored the potential to offer programs with different contributions from the Town, and three plans the Town would be considering would be the \$250, \$500 and the high deductible plan. Vice-Mayor King noted that the Council believes that these three plans still provide its employees with a high-quality health insurance, and the Council believes that it is the direction that needs to be taken. She explained that, obviously, as the Council goes forward, health insurance costs will increase and is something of which the Town is going to have to be cognizant. Vice-Mayor King advised that having said that, it would be the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that the Town offer as its health insurance program the Key Advantage 250, the Key Advantage 500 and the High Deductible Plan with the Town paying the blended rate of 90 percent per employee. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor King and seconded by Councilwoman Taylor that the Town offer as its health insurance program the Key Advantage 250, the Key Advantage 500 and the High Deductible Plan with the Town paying the blended rate of 90 percent per employee. Mayor Crewe inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to approve the health insurance program. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results: For: Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Jacqueline K. King, Joseph E. Hand, Jr., Beth A. Taylor. Against: Thomas F. Hundley. A copy of the Budget and Finance Committee report is attached and made part of these minutes.

RE: PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

Councilman Hundley, reporting for the Public Works Committee, stated that over the past few years, the Town has focused on providing incentives that will promote business and industry. He explained that the Town has participated with the Joint Industrial Development Authority on a number of occasions in providing incentives to both Progress Park and Fairview Park for the creation or the expansion of industrial activities. Councilman Hundley noted that, recently, the Town has focused on providing incentives in the downtown area both through a Local Incentive Program and through incentives that are available through the Virginia Enterprise Zone Program. He commented that at the Work Session this week, the Council received information from Town Treasurer Michael Stephens about the level of incentives that have been provided to local businesses. Councilman Hundley remarked that the meals and lodging grant program is the most significant incentive thus far totaling approximately \$490,000 through March 2018. He commented that these are meals and lodging taxes that have been collected by establishments and then granted back to them. Councilman Hundley stated that the grant period is only applicable for a five year period, and, thereafter, no incentives are provided to these business establishments. He explained that stated differently, the Town is approximately one year away from many of these grants that have been provided through the years being revenues for the Town. Councilman Hundley expressed that these grant programs have been valuable in establishing local meals and lodging businesses and have created an avenue for increased revenues to the Town as it moves forward. He stated that the Council has also provided several

other incentives in the downtown area including incentives for the Sign Program totaling approximately \$4,000, the Façade Program totaling approximately \$68,000 and Business License grants in the area of \$6,300. Councilman Hundley noted that all of these incentives are for the purpose of stimulating the economic environment in the downtown area and in other locations. He commented that the Council believes that this has been a very effective program and has created a new vitality, especially in the downtown area. Councilman Hundley advised that there is no action required by the Council, but the Public Works Committee did want to point out that the Town has been very active in trying to promote additional businesses in its community, and the Public Works Committee believes that the program is working and will be beneficial in the future.

Councilman Hundley, also, reported that recently, the Town has made several changes to traffic control devices at the intersection of Fourth Street and Commonwealth Drive. He explained that the Town has revised the length of the green time for traffic on Commonwealth Drive east of North Fourth Street as it proceeds into the shopping center. Councilman Hundley remarked that, previously, the green time for this approach resulted in very little traffic being able to travel through the intersection. He expressed that the Town has increased the green time, and it appears that this increased green cycle has been beneficial to the traffic flow. Councilman Hundley stated that Town staff will continue to monitor this to be sure that it is effectively moving traffic through the intersection. He remarked that the most recent revision that the Town is attempting to evaluate over the next month is the elimination of the “No Right Turn on Red” signs for the traffic on Commonwealth Drive attempting to turn right on to North Fourth Street. Councilman Hundley stated that the Town had many inquiries about the need for the prohibition of right turns, and, as such, the Town wants to experiment with traffic to see if eliminating this turn is effective. He noted that the “No Right Turn on Red” on this approach was originally implemented as a break in traffic that would provide more flexibility for traffic turning off of North Fourth Street into the Food Lion shopping center and the McDonald’s restaurant. Councilman Hundley commented that Town staff will monitor the traffic to determine that there is still sufficient time for motorists to execute these turning movements. He advised that there is no action required by the Council at this time, however, the Public Works Committee would ask that everyone observe this intersection and see if these changes have helped traffic movement. A copy of the Public Works Committee report is attached and made part of these minutes.

Mr. Fiebig inquired of the Council regarding the incentives program. He inquired of Mayor Crewe how the grant works with the incentives. Mayor Crewe explained the incentive program to Mr. Fiebig, and he noted that the Town makes approximately \$3 million dollars each year from meals and lodging taxes. He explained that the refund is money paid to the Town by the businesses over five years. Mr. Fiebig commented that it is a zero sum in the end. Councilman Hundley expressed that 100 percent of nothing is nothing. He remarked that if there are vacancies in the downtown area, the Town is not receiving anything at all, therefore, whoever the tenant is that occupies the vacant property in the downtown area will receive a five year rebate. Councilman Hundley continued to explain that the tenant would have to pay the taxes up front and then the Town grants the money back to the business. He explained that there are zero tax dollars being paid from the Town of Wytheville.

RE: ORDINANCE NO. 1337

Mayor Crewe presented Ordinance No. 1337, an ordinance amending and reenacting Chapter 12, Solid Waste Collection and Disposal, Article VI. Condition of Premises, Division 1. Generally, Section 12-77. Depositing of Filth, Garbage, Etc., on Land of Another, and Division 3. Unsanitary Accumulations of Refuse, Etc., Section 12-106. Duty of Owner of Property, of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, on third and final reading. Mayor Crewe inquired if there is a motion concerning Ordinance No. 1337. A motion was made by Councilman Hundley and seconded by Councilwoman Taylor to adopt Ordinance No. 1337, an ordinance amending and reenacting Chapter 12, Solid Waste Collection and Disposal, Article VI. Condition of Premises, Division 1. Generally, Section 12-77. Depositing of Filth, Garbage, Etc., on Land of Another, and Division 3. Unsanitary Accumulations of Refuse, Etc., Section 12-106. Duty of Owner of Property, of the Code of the Town of Wytheville, Virginia, on third and final reading. Mayor Crewe inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to adopt the ordinance on third and final reading. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition:

FOR: Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Jacqueline K. King, Thomas F. Hundley, Joseph E. Hand, Jr., Beth A. Taylor

AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Ordinance No. 1337 was adopted on third and final reading.

RE: RESOLUTIONS – GEORGE WYTHE HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLASTIC BOWL TEAM, MACC TEAMS AND INDOOR TRACK TEAM

Mayor Crewe advised the next agenda item is to consider resolutions honoring the George Wythe High School Scholastic Bowl Team, the George Wythe High School MACC Teams and the George Wythe High School Indoor Track Team. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor King and seconded by Councilwoman Taylor to adopt the resolutions honoring the George Wythe High School Scholastic Bowl Team, the George Wythe High School MACC Teams and the George Wythe High School Indoor Track Team. Mayor Crewe inquired if there was any discussion on the motion to adopt the resolutions. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Jacqueline K. King, Thomas F. Hundley, Joseph E. Hand, Jr., Beth A. Taylor. Against: None.

RE: CITIZENS' PERIOD

Mayor Crewe advised that he reserved the right to revisit Citizens' Period earlier in the meeting if anyone came in that wished to address the Council. He noted that Mr. Kenneth Browning stated on the sign in sheet that he wished to address the Council during Citizens' Period.

Mr. Kenneth Browning was recognized and stated that there were a couple of reasons why he stopped by the meeting. Mr. Browning explained to the Council that he would be running for the United States House of Representatives Ninth Congressional District. He remarked that in the time that he was in Wytheville campaigning in the area, he found a lot of homeless people who do not have a place to live because the area does not have a homeless shelter. Mr. Browning stated that he felt he needed to address the Town to see if they had a solution for the homeless people in the area. He remarked that no one ever knows when they could be homeless, including the members of the Council and himself, and would have to call upon the shelter for help. Vice-Mayor King inquired of Mr. Browning as to where he encountered the homeless people. Mr. Browning advised that he encountered people on Main Street, Fourth Street and near Walmart. He noted that two different times that he has campaigned here, he counted 22 homeless people. Mayor Crewe commented that the Town has a program that tries to meet those needs. He explained that the Town does not operate a shelter, however, there have been four shelters in Wytheville over the years, but, for whatever reasons, they have closed. Mayor Crewe commented that there are at least three programs operating in the Town now to make housing available for individuals needing assistance. He remarked that the problem that the Town has had over the years is that in order to do help the homeless, generally some contact with a police officer is involved, and, therefore, the individuals do not choose to go through the process. He noted that he is not referring to a background check or anything of that nature, but, rather, any type of contact with the police deters the homeless. Mayor Crewe continued to explain to Mr. Browning the resources for the homeless including the HOPE Ministry Center and the Mount Rogers Community Services Board. He commented that even though there is not a shelter, per se, there are resources to help those in need. Mayor Crewe explained that there are some shelters close by and people who are considered homeless are even able to receive hotel accommodations for a limited period of time. He thanked Mr. Browning for bringing the matter to the Council's attention, and he noted that the Council can certainly inquire more to see if the resources that are available to those in need are advertised more so that the general public is aware that there are services available to them if they need them. Mr. Browning stated that he did not understand why the Town could not start a shelter with an abandoned house or industry to help the 93 homeless people and allow them to take a shower, eat, sleep, gain job skills, etc. He remarked that this would be 93 people who would then be able to get jobs and pay taxes in the town or county. Vice-Mayor King inquired of Mr. Browning if he is a resident of Wytheville. Mr. Browning stated that he is originally from Smyth County, and he lives in Sugar Grove. He reiterated that he is running for Congress. Vice-Mayor King commented that starting a homeless shelter would be a good job for Mr. Browning. Mr. Browning remarked that if the Town Council wanted, he would work to help provide a homeless shelter in Wythe County. He noted that a homeless shelter and more jobs would be two of his projects if he were to win the election. Mayor Crewe thanked Mr. Browning for addressing the Council.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was duly made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting (7:30 p.m.).

Trenton G. Crewe, Jr., Mayor

Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Town Clerk

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

APRIL 9, 2018

1. We have received notice from David Manley, Executive Director of the Joint Industrial Development Authority, that the current agreement with The Retail Coach is up for renewal on May 15, 2018. The JIDA acts as facilitators to the Town of Wytheville, Wythe County and the Town of Rural Retreat in this project. Currently, we are in an agreement with The Retail Coach to provide data that is important for effective retail strategy efforts. Under the current year, the total project expenditures are \$45,000, which were paid out 45 percent by each the Town of Wytheville and Wythe County, and a 10 percent contribution from the Town of Rural Retreat. The second year agreement is a contractual amount of \$25,000, once again with 45 percent paid by each the Town of Wytheville and Wythe County, and a 10 percent contribution from the Town of Rural Retreat. If we proceed with the contract in the upcoming year, the Town's portion of this project will be \$11,250. Under this initial phase of the work with The Retail Coach, they have provided a vast amount of demographic and statistical data that is used to recruit businesses to our community. The year two component of this project takes all of this information and provides yet additional demographic and strategic information that could be used for recruitment purposes. A meeting will be scheduled in the very near future with all three of the governing bodies to determine if we are going to proceed forward with this project. We do believe that the project has been effective, and it will, in fact, take several years for all of this information and these efforts to prove to provide a return on our investment.

There is no action required by the Council at this time, but we did want everyone to be aware that the renewal of The Retail Coach project will need to be determined on or before May 15, 2018, and, obviously, is something that if we chose to proceed will need to be something that we will need to include in the adoption of the upcoming budget.

2. As we have noted previously, we have received information from our health insurance carrier that we will be facing an approximate ten percent increase in the health insurance premium for the upcoming year. The Town's health insurance is provided in a statewide program administered by The Commonwealth of Virginia. Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the provider for the program. The pool in which we participate is a large pool, and it includes both local and State employees. Currently, the Town provides three levels of health insurance to its employees. The programs known as Key Advantage 250, which establishes a deductible of \$250, Key Advantage 500, which has a \$500 deductible and a higher deductible health plan where the deductibles are a minimum of \$2,800. The Town pays 93 percent of the premium for the employees' health care coverage, and the employee pays all expenses associated with spouse or family coverage. Currently, 122 employees participate in the Key Advantage 250 program, 32 employees participate in the Key Advantage 500 program and one employee participates in the high deductible health plan. We believe that the health insurance program that is provided to the Town's employees is a very good plan and a very important part of our benefit

program. At this time, the annual premium for employees is \$1,167,596.00, and, with a ten percent increase, we are, obviously, looking at an approximate \$120,000 in increased premiums. As such, we thought that it was important to explore the potential to hold expenses down as much as possible while maintaining a high-quality health insurance program. We explored the potential to offer programs with different contributions from the Town, and three plans the Town would be considering would be the \$250, \$500 and the high deductible plan. We believe that these three plans still provide our employees with a high-quality health insurance, and we believe that it is the direction that needs to be taken. Obviously, as we go forward, health insurance costs will increase and is something of which we are going to have to be cognizant. Having said that, it would be the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee that the Town offer as its health insurance program the Key Advantage 250, the Key Advantage 500 and the High Deductible Plan with the Town paying the blended rate of 90 percent per employee.

Jacqueline K. King

Beth A. Taylor

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

APRIL 9, 2018

1. Over the past few years, the Town has focused on providing incentives that will promote business and industry. We have participated with the Joint Industrial Development Authority on a number of occasions in providing incentives to both Progress Park and Fairview Park for the creation or the expansion of industrial activities. Recently, we have focused on providing incentives in the downtown area both through a Local Incentive Program and through incentives that are available through the Virginia Enterprise Zone Program. At the Work Session this week, we received information from Town Treasurer Michael Stephens about the level of incentives that have been provided to local businesses. The meals and lodging grant program is the most significant incentive thus far totaling approximately \$490,000 through March 2018. These are meals and lodging taxes that have been collected by establishments and then granted back to them. The grant period is only applicable for a five year period, and, thereafter, no incentives are provided to these business establishments. Stated differently, we are approximately one year away from many of these grants that have been provided through the years being revenues for the Town. These grant programs have been valuable in establishing local meals and lodging businesses and have created an avenue for increased revenues to the Town as we move forward. We have also provided several other incentives in the downtown area including incentives for the Sign Program totaling approximately \$4,000, the Façade Program totaling approximately \$68,000 and Business License grants in the area of \$6,300. All of these incentives are for the

purpose of stimulating the economic environment in the downtown area and in other locations. We believe that this has been a very effective program and has created a new vitality, especially in the downtown area. There is no action required by the Council, but we did want to point out that we have been very active in trying to promote additional businesses in our community, and we believe that the program is working and will be beneficial in the future.

2. Recently, we have made several changes to traffic control devices at the intersection of Fourth Street and Commonwealth Drive. We have revised the length of the green time for traffic on Commonwealth Drive east of North Fourth Street as it proceeds into the shopping center. Previously, the green time for this approach resulted in very little traffic being able to travel through the intersection. We have increased the green time, and it appears that this increased green cycle has been beneficial to the traffic flow. We will continue to monitor this to be sure that it is effectively moving traffic through the intersection. The most recent revision that we are attempting to evaluate over the next month is the elimination of the “No Right Turn on Red” signs for the traffic on Commonwealth Drive attempting to turn right on to North Fourth Street. We had many inquiries about the need for the prohibition of right turns, and, as such, we want to experiment with traffic to see if eliminating this turn is effective. The “No Right Turn on Red” on this approach was originally implemented as a break in traffic that would provide more flexibility for traffic turning off of North Fourth Street into the Food Lion shopping center and the McDonald’s restaurant. We will monitor the traffic to determine that there is still sufficient time for motorists to execute these turning movements. There is no action required by the

Council at this time, however, we do ask that everyone observe this intersection and see if these changes have helped traffic movement.

Thomas F. Hundley

Joseph E. Hand, Jr.