

Mount Jackson
Town Council Regular Meeting
January 10, 2023

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Regular Meeting

Mayor Pifer called the regular meeting of the Mount Jackson Town Council to order at 7:00 PM in the council chambers at 5901 Main Street. Roll call was taken with Councilmembers Rod Shepherd, Judy Fultz, Evelyn Burner, Bonnie Good, and Todd Holtzman in attendance. Also, in attendance, Neil Showalter, Town Manager; Erick Moore, Planning and Development Director; Keith Cowart, Police Chief; and Barbara Riggleman, Town Clerk. Visitors included Judi Wakeman, Brenda Foley, Brandi Freed Armentrout, Don Hindman with the Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership, Kelly Stauff, Pamela Sperry, Frederic Scott Conrad, Darlene Cowart, Leslie Johnson, and Officers Christina Whorton, Mark Johnson, Robert Young, and Sarah Campbell.

Agenda Additions/Deletions/Changes: Mr. Showalter reported that he received an email from Councilmember Holtzman with a resolution. Copies were provided to Council along with supporting materials. Mr. Holtzman has asked that consideration of the resolution be added to the Agenda as a New Business item.

Hear from Visitors: Kelly Stauff, Mount Jackson Rescue & Fire, gave the December Monthly Report. There were 100 total responses; 74 EMS responses and 26 fire responses. 45% of total EMS responses included volunteer members on the apparatus, the others were purely career. 42% of the fire responses included volunteer members on the apparatus; 66% of EMS calls responded to by a unit capable of Advanced Life Support Care. Total number of volunteer members taking calls was 19; total calls in Mount Jackson was 32; and total number of calls in the County was 68. Mr. Stauff reported they will start using the event center again in February with a Ham & Oyster Dinner rather than Turkey & Oyster Dinner. They were unable to find enough help with the turkey process, so they are taking a different path and trying ham. Mr. Stauff reported that they really want to get the event center back up and running and will do what they can to enable this. Mr. Stauff inquired as to the possibility of having this dinner mentioned in the Town's February Newsletter. Mayor Pifer stated that he believed there would be room for this and asked Ms. Riggleman to handle this addition. Mr. Stauff thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak. Mayor Pifer stated he was glad to hear they have an event scheduled. Ms. Good asked if they have picked a date for the Ham & Oyster Dinner. Mr. Stauff responded that it will be February 25, 2023. Ms. Burner asked if this would be an all day event. Mr. Stauff responded that the dinner will be from noon to till roughly 6:00 PM. Mr. Showalter informed Mr. Stauff that Aaron Painter from the Fire Company had met with him and had discussed that some old cars would be parked beside the burnt pad at AmeriGas. Mr. Stauff stated that they would be having an extrication class. Mr. Showalter stated that they wanted to be sure the Town was aware of this. Mr. Stauff reported that the cars would not be there long, just long enough for their practice maneuvers.

Mayor Pifer went back to the Agenda Addition. He stated that there need to be a motion to add this item.

Councilmember Holtzman MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Burner to ADD New Business Item #4 – Consideration of Rails & Trails Resolution.

Ms. Good stated that she felt this would be premature; it is a big topic and there was not enough information given to Council to change their minds and be a rebuttal or change from previous direction. There should be more information and more studies for a rails and trails option. Ms. Burner stated that it was her hope that this would be what was addressed, to have more information, and that was the reason she seconded the motion. Ms. Good stated that there were resources and information in the materials that were given, but more time is required for research. Mr. Holtzman stated that action would not be required tonight, just a discussion and a start to the process.

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ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Burner			
Councilmember Fultz			
	Councilmember Good		
Councilmember Holtzman			
Councilmember Shepherd			

4 AYES, 1 NAY, motion carried

Frederic Scott Conrad asked for permission to speak. Mayor Pifer granted Mr. Conrad permission. Mr. Conrad stated that he has been a town resident for about 20 years on Shenandoah Street. He stated that there are some concerned citizens with water bill issues that would like to address their issues with the Council. They are requesting next month's meeting as a time to do this, so that the Council has adequate knowledge ahead of time so that this doesn't come as a surprise and everyone is prepared for this. He stated that he is reminding everyone with issues that they are expected to maintain professional conduct. It is the Council's meeting and if they expect the Council to hear them, they must be matter of fact and in good conduct. Mayor Pifer asked for clarification, that they are requesting to be on the Agenda. Mr. Conrad answered that they would like to have an opportunity to speak, because not everyone has the same type of issue. Ms. Good started to make a motion to move that this be an agenda item, to which Mr. Shepherd was prepared to second. Mr. Shepherd stated that it would be helpful to Staff to know the issues being addressed ahead of time in order to be able to offer an explanation or a response. Mr. Conrad stated that there are numerous residents of Mount Jackson who have different concerns and he didn't have all of them written down. Ms. Good inquired as to whether Mr. Conrad could make some type of list in order for Council to check documentation, etc. to be prepared to answer these questions. Mr. Conrad stated that at this point in time, he was not prepared to do that. Mr. Showalter invited Mr. Conrad and anyone with a water bill concern to come to the Town Office. There are several sources of information about usage available, including daily usage information that will show usage every day for the last 90 days, and history information that goes back for years. Mr. Showalter stated that they have a lot of resources that can be utilized during these discussions, if they know what the situation entails. He stated that they try to respond to everyone completely and respectfully. Mr. Conrad stated that his intent was to make it possible for other people that have issues to come in without surprise; you don't want a mob walking through the doors and dropping complaints on the desk. Mr. Showalter stated that this is part of his job and he is happy to respond to citizens. Mr. Conrad stated that one person is interested in finding out what is going on, as many people in his neighborhood are having issues with the water situation, the common theme being that the Town tells people that usage averages out over a period of time, high one month and low the next month, and that's the only explanation offered. Mr. Conrad believes this is just enough of an answer to get people out of the office with no real accountability. Mr. Showalter stated that a report can be offered that will show your usage of the last 100 days, showing by day exactly how much has been used, so he doesn't feel that this response is accurate anymore because new metering equipment has been installed and has been up and running for 6 months now. Mr. Conrad stated that he is not the only resident who would like to hear this; they didn't want to all just come in and have 25 people with concerns. Mr. Showalter stated that he would be happy to spend all day going over each person's concerns until they are satisfied. Mr. Shepherd informed Mr. Conrad that council procedure entails that a packet is assembled on the Thursday/Friday before the Tuesday Council meeting. If Mr. Conrad would get information to Staff by that time, they can include it in the packet and councilmembers will see it and have a better idea of the issues. Mr. Conrad was appreciative of this information and stated his desire to follow procedures. Mr. Showalter stated that he would be glad to answer

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to the Council for any of the issues presented. Mr. Conrad confirmed the schedule for submitting information to the Council. Ms. Burner stated this would also be helpful in order to be prepared ahead of time if people had concerns they would like to address. Mr. Showalter stated that Staff and Council deal with issues every month and they are happy to help. Mr. Conrad stated that he would express this to the concerned citizens and thanked the Council.

Presentations: Chief Cowart expressed his gratitude to Council for allowing him to speak. For the last year or so, he stated he has been coming before the Council to give stats and numbers to show what the Police Department has been doing month by month. Honestly, that is not the truest measure of how the Police Department is doing. The best measuring system is how the community sees them and how the officers interact with our citizens. He stated that even some of their frequent-flying customers like them. Chief Cowart stated that he is not a participation trophy type person; recognition is earned. Tonight he was honored to recognize two officers, Officer Johnson and Officer Young, who went the extra step. Chief Cowart read the following: "On behalf of the Town of Mount Jackson, I want to thank you for your performance during the incident that occurred in Perry Trailer Park, Mount Jackson, Virginia on December 6, 2022. The suspect, Joshua Ryan Litten, was a fugitive from Rockingham County and had been wanted for a month for previous successes of eluding law enforcement during that time. A caller reported to authorities that Litten was alone in a residence at Perry Trailer Park and had a firearm. Your initial response and actions upon arriving on the scene set the tone for the remainder of the 19-hour standoff with Litten. Litten surrendered and was taken into custody without injuries to him, the citizens of Mount Jackson, or any law enforcement. Your teamwork and communication during this incident was critical in the apprehension of the suspect. Your training and execution lead to a successful outcome in this situation. Thank you." Chief Cowart stated that sometimes papers get faded and the ink wears out over the years. He presented both officers with actual shell casings from the scene that were used for the OC and pepper spray and CS gas that were launched into the trailer to help Mr. Litten surrender. They were retrofitted with wooden tips. Chief Cowart stated that this is just something to help both officers remember that night. Mayor Pifer thanked both officers, on behalf of the Town and from himself, for everything they do.

Chief of Police Report: Chief Cowart stated for the month of December 2022, there were 934 calls for service; year to date total was 14,269 calls. For the month of December, there was one report of a hit & run/DUI with injury that was closed by arrest. There was a report of a larceny that is inactive; waiting for further information, serial numbers, etc. There was a forgery that is still active. There is one hit & run that is active attempting to identify vehicle and driver; and one report of hit & run, inactive, depending upon the parties agreeing to mutual terms. There were 28 mutual aid calls and 3 open doors/windows in 3 different locations. A note of incident was read as follows: On December 6, 2022 an incident occurred in the area of the Perry Trailer Park. Our officers were the first to respond to the scene, shortly followed by officers from the New Market Police Department. Once on the scene, it was quickly realized the armed wanted subject was on the scene and that further assistance was needed. Responding officers and deputies were directed to surround the residence and contain the scene until the Shenandoah County Sherriff's Office TAC team arrived. Officers quickly evacuated adjacent residences to increase the safety of our citizens. Officer Young was on duty December 6, from 0600 that morning to 0630 the next day. So after his end of shift, he stayed on that scene to help out wherever he was needed. Officer Johnson came in at 6:00. The standoff lasted 19 hours with a satisfactory ending of placing the individual into custody with no injuries to him, citizens, or any officers. Chief Cowart stated that is the perfect outcome and what they look for in every situation.

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Town Manager Report: Mr. Showalter added that he was happy to see the newspaper come out with “Authorities Arrest Timberville Man After 19 Hours of Negotiations” and nobody was injured. Mr. Showalter stated that this is excellent police work.

Mr. Showalter reported that the sidewalk project continues. Crews are now on East Avondale working their way south. There has been some curb and gutter poured, also some sidewalks poured, and he has been told that they are going to pour some more on Thursday if the weather permits. They are getting close to having all of the sidewalks installed that can be installed without the concrete structures that have been ordered for months by Foltz’s. They have promised VDOT that they would do some passages underneath Route 11 and there is also structures involved with corners and crosswalks that need to be specially made and can’t just be formed on the spot. Crews may get to a point where they are shut down because they are waiting for forms to come in, but they are clearly ahead of schedule. Mr. Showalter stated that the aim is to be complete by July 4; the crews should be able to meet this goal.

Mr. Showalter reported that the annual report to the DEQ was due for the wastewater treatment plant, a report that tells them our test results for the year and how the Town did in comparison to our permit. There are two pollutants that are monitored, nitrogen and phosphorous, both powerful fertilizers that when introduced to the Chesapeake Bay, cause algae blooms and the death of aquatic life. The Town finished the year with each nutrient at only 26% of our permitted maximum. Mr. Showalter expressed congratulations to Joey Blankenship, Utilities Director, who is an excellent operator and is doing a good job. In another note about the WWTP, Jamie Silveous, Mr. Blankenship’s second-in-command, has left the Town to work for Stoney Creek, so the Town is now advertising for his replacement. Mr. Showalter stated that the ideal candidate would also have a water operator’s license, which would allow some flexibility in terms of operational times, as the plant can only be operational when a licensed operator, Mr. Blankenship or Randy Lonas, is on site. Another employee with a water operator’s license would be very helpful. He reported that they have received a couple calls and they hope to have this position filled in the next month or so.

Committee Reports:

1. Finance Committee Chairperson, Rod Shepherd reported that he still does not have an audit report to present. This is no error or fault of Staff, the accounting firm is just backed up. This is not any indication of a problem, just a need for more time. Mr. Shepherd stated that he is hopeful to have a report to present in February, which will work out better as there will be a complete Council at that time. Once the report is received, the Finance Committee and Staff will review the draft of the audit, accept the audit, and then review the audit with Council. Hard copies will be included in the council packets for review at the meeting. Mr. Shepherd stated that going further, we are at the midpoint of our fiscal year which means they will start thinking about next fiscal year. So for Fiscal Year 23-24, Staff will work up a budget with an introduction in April and a public hearing in May, vote on it in June, to go into effect July 1, 2023. This is the budget procedure. Mr. Shepherd reported that at this time, he doesn’t know if there will be any amendments to the current year budget. He spoke with Mr. Rosso yesterday, who stated that with an initial glance, everything appears to be on track, so we may not need any adjustments this year.

2. Ordinance Committee Chairperson, Evelyn Burner had no report.

3. Personnel Committee Chairperson, Todd Holtzman had no report.

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4. Public Safety Committee Chairperson, Judy Fultz had no report.
5. Public Services Committee Chairperson, Bonnie Good had no report.
6. Public Properties & Facilities Committee, seat vacant – no report.

Consent Agenda: Approval – Minutes of December 13, 2022 Regular Meeting.

Councilmember Burner MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Good to APPROVE the Consent Agenda item above.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Burner			
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Good			
Councilmember Holtzman			
Councilmember Shepherd			
5 AYES, motion carried			

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. Appointment to Fill Vacant Council Seat – Eligible for Action

Mayor Pifer reported that this seat has become vacant due to the resignation of Whitney Miller who has moved outside of town. Mr. Shepherd stated that he would like to nominate Brandi Freed Armentrout to fill the unexpired term of Whitney Miller. He stated that Ms. Freed Armentrout has interviewed with Council a couple times and she has been faithfully attending Council meeting to get a feel for procedures.

Councilmember Shepherd MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Burner to APPROVE the nomination of Brandi Freed Armentrout to fill the unexpired term of Whitney Miller to expire December 31, 2024.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Burner			
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Good			
Councilmember Holtzman			
Councilmember Shepherd			
5 AYES, motion carried			

2. Request by Special Use Permit Applicant for Special Meeting in Late February – Information Only

Mr. Moore reported that members of Mount Jackson Solar, LLC (Dynamic Energy) have been in the process of formally submitting a Substantial Accord and Special Use Permit to establish a new solar field on a 40 acre parcel consisting of about 20 acres of solar field. As of today, Staff still has not received an updated, revised SA or SUP application. During discussions last week, representatives decided they would like to request a Special Meeting to be heard ahead of any public hearing that the town would normally do. Mr. Moore reported that

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the applicants feel this would get them a “fast track”, which it actually would not do. When you look at dates and how things progress time-wise, they would only be gaining maybe 6-8 extra days for them to come before the Planning Commission to start the process. The Planning Commission, by code, has 100 days to make a recommendation to Town Council, but again, as of today, Staff hasn’t even received a complete application. Mr. Moore stated that they have been incomplete, not because of one or two small details, but because of significant details. He stated that he has worked continuously with the representatives and has nothing to present to Council. The applicant needs to meet the deadline for submittal by January 18, 2023. Mr. Moore stated that this is the hard date for Staff to be able to review the information, ensure all the items are by Town Code, make sure everything is correct on the site plan, and that details are there. Mr. Moore stated that most Special Meetings are for things like COVID or other emergencies that the Town might have, so this is quite an unprecedented request, normally not done, but it is in the Town Code that this request can be made. Mayor Pifer stated that this agenda item is information only, so no action is needed at this meeting.

3. Confirmation of Contract Award to Construct the WWTP EQ Basin to the Lowest Qualifying Bidder – Eligible for Action

Mr. Showalter stated that on December 16, 2022, there was a bid opening in Council Chambers. The four bidders to qualify were listed in the council packet, the low bidder being Patterson Construction at \$4,044,444.00. This is more than \$600,000 beneath the highest bidder, so Staff does feel they benefitted from a field of bidders and received a responsible low bid for the work that will need to be done. Mr. Showalter reported that immediately after receiving these bids, Staff made an application to the DEQ for permission to construct, which is actually the benchmark for the DEQ consent letter that the town is operating under, so this deadline was met. The final deadline is to have the EQ Basin up and running in about 500 days, which would be the end of September 2024. Staff has until then to get the contract signed, have work completed, get it working, and get the DEQ’s approval that it is working properly. Mr. Showalter stated that they are on track, possibly a little ahead of time, but in order to execute the paperwork with Patterson Construction, Mr. Showalter would like for Council to give him the power to sign those contracts.

Councilmember Holtzman MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Good to ACCEPT the bid of Patterson Construction in the amount of \$4,044,444.00 for construction of its Influent Equalization Project and authorize the Town Manager to sign on behalf of the Town of Mount Jackson any contracts, agreements, or other forms required to fulfill the Town’s role in the execution of an agreement with Patterson Construction for the construction of this project.

Mr. Shepherd stated that there are some new council members since the beginning of the project, and requested an overview of the EQ Basin project and why it is needed. Mr. Showalter stated that treating wastewater is a challenge because there is never the same mix of sewage received from one day to the next. What worked yesterday may not work today, or work as well, and there is the potential to overdue and waste chemicals. This equalization basin will allow the operators to catch 12 hours worth of sewage from the town, analyze it, and test it. There are twin processing units in the sewer plant which work on 12 hour shifts. It’s almost like two plants in one. This basin will allow the operators to look at the sewage received before it is introduced to one of the SBR’s (the processors), adjust the treatment to the influx of sewer, and most importantly, when there is a slug load, which is a load of nasty chemicals or something that has been introduced, it will give operators the opportunity to let additional wastewater in with the slug load. “Dilution is the solution” is the saying, which means they can dilute the powerful slug loads into a more manageable load, which will allow for more efficient processing. Mr. Showalter stated that it is a way to increase the

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capacity of the sewer and gives a margin of safety, should one of the processors go down because of a mechanical or other unseen problem. Operators can take one side offline and still get by with the other side operating. This project is basically a giant swimming pool that will hold approx. 12 hours of influent, but is oversized for that. There is a series of pumps and pipes to allow operators to collect the matter before it is introduced to the SBR's and the actual processing.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Burner			
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Good			
Councilmember Holtzman			
Councilmember Shepherd			
5 AYES, motion carried			

4. Consideration of Rails & Trails Resolution

Mr. Holtzman stated that the Rails-to-Trails is a fantastic idea, getting something viable back into the county instead of an overgrown, unattractive abandoned rail line. It's not officially abandoned, but for all intents and purposes, it has been. When the railroad decided to stop service to the county, there were a few customers remaining. At the time, Mr. Holtzman stated that he was concerned that it wasn't a step in the right direction for our rural community to not have rail service. There wasn't a choice in the matter, the railroad controls that, so when the Rails-to-Trails idea came along, that is certainly a better use for the railroad. A lot of work has been done to promote this, and Mr. Holtzman stated that recently it has been coming to light there may be an option to not have to choose between a railroad and a trail, but to consider both rails and trails. This could preserve the viability for the future, could allow freight and passenger traffic at some point; the resolution explains this in more detail. Mr. Holtzman suggested that he could read the resolution and then Council could decide if more information should be gathered, or if they want to support more research for a feasibility study for Rails & Trails. One has been completed for Rails-to-Trails, but a feasibility study has not been completed for Rails & Trails. A feasibility study is done by the State of Virginia. There has been \$90 million allocated for rail trail projects, potentially spread over 5-6 projects throughout the state, so there are government funds to facilitate this project. Mr. Holtzman expressed his hope that the State would consider a feasibility study for Rails & Trails and that there is the potential for the best of both worlds, not to have to choose.

Mr. Holtzman read the resolution as follows:

"Whereas,

1. Rail is valued infrastructure for the Town of Mount Jackson because it enables the achievement of the economic development, recreation, and tourism goals stated in its Strategic Plan.
2. The Norfolk Southern rail corridor that has been out of service for several years is unsightly and suppresses potential economic development and recreational uses.
3. The Town appreciates the Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership (Trails Partnership) and the persevering leadership of Dr. Don Hindman the past five years to create a vision and plan for converting this idle rail corridor into a multi-use trail.
4. For this reason, the Town of Mount Jackson became a partner of the Trails Partnership in its letter to Senator Obenshain, Speaker Gilbert, and Delegates Wilt and Wiley on January 15, 2022 (attached). The

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Town's support for the Trails Partnership's trails-only use was premised, in part, on the Feasibility Study dated November 1, 2021 by the State of Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation (attached).

5. The Town now acknowledges the Trails Partnership's plan for a trails-only use could potentially impair future commercial use of the rail corridor for freight, tourism, and passenger purposes thereby limiting the Town's ability to fully execute its Strategic Plan.
6. The Town acknowledges that a Feasibility Study for the commercial use of the rail corridor has not been completed.
7. The Town acknowledges the growing concern by respected citizens of Mount Jackson and Shenandoah County that a trails-only plan could significantly impair future economic development.
8. The Town cites the research and recommendation of the Virginia Rail Policy Institute (VRPI) dated January 30, 2022 (attached). The VRPI urges caution when converting an out of service rail corridor to trails only use because 'it is exceedingly difficult to resurrect them no matter the changed circumstances that may call for their return to rail use.'

Based on the above statements, the Town of Mount Jackson hereby resolves to:

1. Reaffirm its strong support for advocating the State Legislature to protect the named out of service rail corridor for future economic development (freight, tourism, and passenger) and recreational purposes.
2. Advocate the State to commission a Feasibility Study for the commercial AND trails use of the rail corridor. Experts on this matter, such as the VRPI and the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, should be involved in this study.
3. Withdraw itself as a named partner in the Trails Partnership pending the outcome of the Feasibility Study for the commercial AND trails use of the rail corridor."

Mr. Holtzman stated that this is a possible resolution. Along with that, materials included the original letter in support of Rails-to-Trails and a copy from the VRPI with some information about both projects for Council's consideration. Mr. Holtzman stated that he believed that once the word is out that Rails & Trails is an option, a choice doesn't have to be made between the two, it would be very difficult not to consider preserving the future viability of the railroad. Looking at traffic on I-81, thinking about the future possible movement of passengers by rail, and for a small rural community like ours, Mr. Holtzman stated he feels most small towns are going to need to consider this possibility before we agree to pull the trigger and convert the rail into a trail. Mr. Holtzman referred to Ms. Good's statement, Council may need more information, but this has now been introduced and Council can decide what information is needed to consider possible consideration of this project.

Mr. Shepherd asked Mayor Pifer if this would be a motion for tonight and if a second would be needed. Mr. Holtzman stated that he had not yet made a motion. Ms. Burner stated that she felt more information was needed in order to agree to anything. She stated that she thinks of a trail for kids and families riding bicycles and the last thing you would want is a train moving right next door and the potential for injury. Ms. Burner stated she would want to look at the safety aspect first, so she would need more information on several questions she has. Ms. Good stated that she feels, at this point, having the rails with trails compete with the Rails-to-Trails muddies the water a lot. She stated she would like to see some feasibility studies before Council starts comparing the two projects and withdraws their support from Rails-to-Trails. She stated that

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there is no information on the Rails & Trails, no studies have been presented to actually know what it means, and if it is even feasible, or whether it would have an economic impact on any of the communities, as opposed to just a handful of businesses that might want to use the rail. Ms. Good stated that there is a lot more that Council needs to take a look at; get those feasibility studies and economic development studies, how all of this would work, what could be the future with a rails with trails option. She stated that she needs more information and did not want to make a decision tonight on anything, and she certainly didn't want to say what Council approved previously should be withdrawn when she doesn't have any definitive information. Mr. Holtzman stated that it will take interest from municipalities like Mount Jackson to get the feasibility study done, because it will be expensive and will require State backing, State funding to do this. Ms. Good inquired that Rails-to-Trails has a feasibility study, does it not. Mr. Holtzman answered affirmatively that it does. Mr. Holtzman stated that this is what the resolution says, it states that Council is asking for a feasibility study. Ms. Burner stated that she is definitely in support of the trail, but she doesn't know enough about the rails and trails, the bridges that would need to be redone or if they would hold up, so more information is needed.

Mr. Holtzman stated a motion could follow that the Town of Mount Jackson is interested in supporting the pursuit of a feasibility study to determine the viability of both rails and trails. Mr. Holtzman stated his belief that there will be interest from other towns; when you're looking at economic development, the questions asked are about access to the highways, is water and sewer available, what kind of power supply you have, do you have natural gas, and do you have a railroad. These are pretty common and in the long term, for future economic development, a rail is certainly a consideration. Ms. Good inquired as to if there has been growth in rail service across the mountain in Page County, and if they are providing that right there, why would it need to be duplicated here at the expense that it could become. Mr. Holtzman answered that the Mount Jackson Industrial Park doesn't have access to that without a truck. Ms. Good stated that going across the mountain is still a truck, but not down I-81. Mr. Holtzman stated that it is still a truck, and if you want economic development, it's going to happen where you don't need a truck to get on a railroad in some cases. Mr. Holtzman stated that if Council is in agreement then he would like to present the motion as stated, and if more discussion is needed, the motion doesn't commit to anything other than to signal the Council's interest.

Councilmember Holtzman MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Burner that the Town of Mount Jackson is interested in SUPPORTING the pursuit of a feasibility study to determine the viability of both rails and trails.

Mr. Shepherd stated that he has had the privilege of being on a number of rails that have been converted to trails and they are absolutely sensational; they are building more of them, so clearly they are successful. Mr. Shepherd stated that he feels this is a real backwards step and he does not want Council to consider withdrawing their support for the Rails-to-Trail project, which is what this resolution ultimately points to, so he is not supporting this. Mr. Shepherd stated that if Council has more information, and the information turns out to be "silver clouds and rainbows", that both can exist together, hallelujah, but he doesn't feel this can happen and so he can't support the resolution. Ms. Burner stated that she is not interested in moving from Rails-to-Trails, but to get more information, cost factor, danger factor of having people riding bikes, etc. on a trail with a train right beside them; she stated she didn't want to back down from the Rails-to-Trails, but she doesn't want to say that Council shouldn't look at the other option either. She stated that she is a firm believer in the safety of the kids in the town. Mr. Shepherd inquired as to whether anyone present at the meeting would want their children or grandchildren riding bicycles right next to an active railroad. Mayor Pifer asked if councilmembers understood the motion. Ms. Burner asked if the motion stated a withdraw from Rails-to-Trails. Mr. Holtzman answered no, it is just that the Town of Mount Jackson would like to signal it's support

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for a feasibility study to consider both rails and trails. After a study is done, issues mentioned would be a part of this study.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Councilmember Burner			
Councilmember Fultz			
Councilmember Good			
Councilmember Holtzman			

Councilmember Shepherd

4 AYES, 1 NAY, motion carried

Closing Remarks by Council Members, Mayor: Mayor Pifer expressed his thanks, once again, to the Hometown Partnership for the Christmas Tree Lighting and for their work on that project. He also expressed his thanks to Pamela Sperry on behalf of the church for the refreshments.

Motion made by Councilmember Good, seconded by Councilmember Fultz, to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 PM.

Barbara M. "Barbie" Riggleman, Clerk

Donald "Donnie" I. Pifer, Mayor