PUBLIC HEARING
May 11, 1981

A Public Hearing on the proposed 1981-82 Budget was held May 11, 1981 at 7:00 P.M. in the council chambers with the Mayor Maurice W. Lough presiding. The following council members were present: V. L. Cook, Jr., S. P. H. Flick, L. C. Life, R. L. Snow and L. W. Winegard. Norma Leap, Clerk, Jim McIntyre, Chief of Police, and Gerald Monger, Superintendent were also present.

Mayor Lough stated the rules which were to be followed during the public hearing.

Mrs. Frances Stevens spoke in favor of keeping the police dispatchers and stated she did not want to see anything done to the municipal building. She feels we have the best police department since Mr. Norvelle was here.

Mrs. Nita Edmondson presented a petition to preserve the Jennings Building. The petition stated "we feel it would be better used as the library for the community and do not want to see it remodeled for city and police offices". Mrs. Edmondson stated that there are 109 signatures on the petition.

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Mr. B. W. Gooden stated he did not feel the town was in a bad financial condition. He did not feel the council had the right to earmark money for a Town Manager when a manager form of government was voted out several years ago. He felt it would be a waste of money to put electric heat in the municipal building and do extensive remodeling. He suggested perhaps moving the Treasurer's office back down town with the other offices.

Mr. Bill Holt corrected some figures he had given council at the last meeting regarding burglar alarm systems for businesses and the cost to run the lines into the county dispatching system, when lines become available which could be awhile. He had quoted a cost of $130.00 which was a bit high. It seems the figure is closer to $90.00 to possibly a little over a $100.00.

Mrs. Shirley O'Byrne expressed concern over the loss of police officers due to low pay and was opposed to doing away with the dispatching system. She suggested council operate with five policemen rather than six and then the salary saved would pay for two dispatchers and the town should be able to find enough money to hire the other two dispatchers. She also suggested using the money from the Law Enforcement Grant to give adequate raises to ensure keeping our officers. She was opposed to consolidation of the buildings. She stated that if the Town Superintendent needs more room, there is extra room in the police station. She felt if we need to make some cuts, maybe we should consider cutting someone in the maintenance department. Councilwoman Life explained to Mrs. O'Byrne that mainly we have been operating with a five man police force, not six.

Mr. Elzie Morris, Manager of the Elkton Branch of the Rockingham Co-operative Farm Bureau, Inc., came before council to express his satisfaction with the police protection they have had in the past and to encourage council to make every effort to continue providing adequate police protection for the businesses in the future.

Mr. Avery Whitfield, Town Electrician, came before council in regards to the equipment in the electric department. He pointed out that he is presently working part time for the town and could not understand how they could consider hiring a town manager when they do not have enough money to hire a fulltime electrician. He stated that 75% of the town's revenue comes from the electric, water and sewer departments and yet the town cannot afford new equipment to provide the necessary maintenance in these departments. He pointed out that the bucket truck he has to use is in such bad shape he puts his life in danger everytime he goes up in it, yet the police department is always getting new equipment. He felt the town should start putting some of the revenue back into better equipment for these departments which bring in the biggest portion of the town's revenue.

As there were no further questions or comments, the meeting adjourned at 7:25 P.M.

MAYOR: W. W. Lough
Maurice W. Lough, Mayor

RECORDER: Norma R. Leap
Norma R. Leap, Clerk