

The Richlands Town Council held a regular monthly meeting in the Richlands Council Chambers on January 12, 2016 at 7:30 pm with the following present:

Mayor:	Jannis White
Town Manager:	Tim Taylor
Town Attorney:	Brad Ratliff
Town Clerk:	Julie Cordle
Council Members:	Joe McCracken, Frances Meadows Mary Ann Strong, Rod Cury, and Larry Johnson
Absent:	Doug Ratliff

Mayor White called the meeting to order.

Mayor White gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor White ask if there was anyone that wanted to speak that was not on the agenda.

Mayor White asks if there were any corrections, additions, or deletions to the agenda.

Mayor White- I need you to add under mayor's comments a resolution for the Clinch River initiative.

Mayor White- Do I hear a motion to approve the agenda as amended? Rod Cury- made motion. Mary Ann Strong seconded motion. Motion carries 5/0

Mayor White- Do we have any additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes? Rod Cury-Page 2 should be changed to graduating LEAD classes.

Mayor White- Any other additions, corrections, or deletions to the minutes? If not do I hear a motion to approve the minutes as amended? Joe McCracken made motion. Mary Ann Strong seconded motion. Motion Carries 5/0

Mayor White- We have with us tonight a representative, Corbin Stone from Robinson, Farmer and Cox for our annual financial report. Would you please step forward?

Corbin Stone- I distributed the hand outs that I will be discussing tonight. You did extremely well. You received what is called unmodified opinion which is the best that you can do so you can't improve next year. Your staff does a very good job keeping the books. We do a lot of audits and we probably have fewer entries here than just about any other county we work in. If you will turn to page one of the hand out I will go through some of the numbers. You can see up at the top line the general fund balance is 1.1 million dollars that is just a slight difference from back in 2014 till now. When we say general fund balance that is the cash you have in the general fund plus any short term receivables less any current payables it's almost like modified cash account. In the enterprise funds the water and sewer fund net assets 10.8 million dollars that's down just a little bit from 2014 the reason we have the big decrease from 2013 to 2014 is because we went back and restated for new accounting standard saying that you were going to start reporting your pension liabilities. Electric fund net assets ended the year at 2.7 million dollars this is down from 2014 this is also due to reporting the pension liabilities. The thing that's

probably most important is the total cash in bank. At the end of the year its \$6,044,995 this is the highest it's been in the six year period. Total Outstanding debt-General Fund is \$425,595 this includes any approved leave or vacation balances that employees have. Total Outstanding debt-Enterprise Funds \$2,716,389 you can see the debt is coming down from looking back at 2010. The total outstanding debt \$3,141,984 does not include the pension liability. On per Capita bases is 540. In 2010 the average town had \$2,135 in debt per capita. Your town has a 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the debt of the average town per capita. The next page is the original tax assessments there is a slight decrease in the assessed value. That was caused by a decrease in public service corporation taxes. Annualized growth rates- real estate has been going up 1.6% a year on average. Over all your assessed values have been going up about 1.5%. The next page we had a couple of management comments or recommendations. One was on economic interest statements we had one person that didn't fill it out completely. The state asks us to review these things and make sure they have been completely filled out. If we find one that isn't we make a comment. Unclaimed property is the other thing the state asks us to look at. If you have any old outstanding checks that have been outstanding for more than a year you are supposed to turn those over to unclaimed property in Richmond. The next couple pages the state asks us to look into the pension plans. What we found, not here, was people were participating in Virginia Retirement System that hadn't worked for 20 years. They were still making contributions for people that hadn't worked or they had the wrong salary or the wrong birth date so they had the wrong retirement date in the system. On the next page we talk about this new Governmental Accounting Standards. Basically prior to this year local governments didn't record liability for the pension plans. Every month you send money up to the retirement system they put it in a pot for you to use later on for you to pay your retiree's. They track each one of your employee's separately. So they have a projected retirement date and an estimated amount that they will need. Any contributions that you make are shown as a differed out flow on your financial statements. VRS estimates that you are going to earn 7% on your investments. The next couple of pages we have this thing called, communication with those charged with governance that we are required to give you. Basically, if we come in to do an audit and people aren't responsive or they hide stuff its gets communicated to you in this letter. We didn't have any difficulties with this audit. If we asked for something it was given to us right away. That's really it; like I said you got the best audit that you can get. I will stop there and answer any questions that you may have.

Joe McCracken- In your opinion what does the forecast for future capital investments for our town look like?

Corbin Stone- You have got a healthy fund balance. Over all I think the town is in good financial shape.

Mary Ann- I would just like to thank Sue and Adrienne and the staff. They do such an excellent job at keeping the books.

Corbin Stone- They really do. You are very fortunate. We go a lot of places and do a lot of audits in places much bigger and they wish they had your staff.

Mayor White- I would like to add to what Mary Ann said we would like to thank our staff for doing such an excellent job. We really appreciate you.

Mayor White- We have David Woodard the Tazewell County Tourism Coordinator.

David Woodard- Clinch River Valley Initiative wanted me to come and give you an update on what they are doing. There are 2 pages that I have given you that you can read. They have worked on water quality which is improving the education side of CRVI. They are looking for a place on the Clinch to place an education center. I believe that this will be the year where the Clinch River state park comes to reality. The 3<sup>rd</sup> page that I gave you is a resolution that we are asking you to pass in support of making Cavitt's Creek the first step of that state park. There are other properties potentially, one in Tazewell, one in Cedar Bluff and one here in town. The difference in what we are doing and what the other localities are doing is we are saying here they are, we have built them and you can have them make it a state park. If you have not been to Cavitt's Creek lately the county has done a ton of work up there in the last year. I will answer any questions that you have.

Joe McCracken-I have viewed Cavitt's Creek Park and they have done a lot of work to it and it really is looking great.

David Woodard-They have done quite a bit of work and I can't take credit for any of it. In the last month they have accomplished a lot of work out there. From my house I can be at a WV State Park in 5 minutes. I can be at 5 WV State Parks in an hour and I can be one VA State Park in 1 ½ hours.

Rod Cury-Cavitt's Creek is a great place and the other parks that could potentially be here along the Clinch River; do you know where they might be?

David Woodard-The pieces of property that they are looking at is raw land that they are buying with state money. They are keeping this quiet because they don't want to start bidding wars or mass confusion. The piece of property that we would like in Cedar Bluff is where the mill was. The one that we were talking about looking at in Tazewell is maybe out Gun Ford Park. I'm not for sure what Tazewell is going to do. When I leave here I'm going to a meeting there so I don't know if they will decide that tonight or if they even want to be involved. With or without the town's property we are looking at some other property.

Joe McCracken-Those that don't know Dunford's Park is located across from the YMCA in Tazewell.

Mayor White- David, how many sources do we have in the county for promoting tourism? I know that you do it from your office but are there other little outlets like Bluefield?

David Woodard-Are you talking about organizations?

Mayor White- Yes.

David Woodard- The chambers do a lot. The towns do quite a bit of marketing. Bluefield has hired somebody. They are not calling her the tourism director but she is like a community director and she does a lot of tourism stuff. A lot of private owned businesses do a lot of private marketing. There is more than David Woodard setting in his office there is a whole network.

Mayor White-Do you have deadlines when people need to get things to you? Can you email us and let us know what the deadlines are?

David Woodard-Yes. They are really easy. You can look at the web site, but its 3 months. If it's just for a newsletter then we bill them about a month out. The earlier the better.

Mary Ann-I really appreciate the emails that you send about what's happening in Tazewell county. Because of that my small group from church went to Bramwell and visited the tour of homes at Christmas. It was amazing.

David Woodard- I want a church tour, a Christmas church tour and I can't get any momentum going on this. In Tazewell county all over the county you can start and end anywhere that you want and get a few charities involved and let them sell the tickets to it and they can make money from it. Megan Brown actually does the email even though my name is on it.

Mayor White-We can deal with this resolution right now if that's ok.

Mayor White-Read the resolution. Copy attached. We will entertain a motion to adopt this.

Rod Cury-I will make that motion.

Mayor White-Do we have a second motion?

Joe McCracken-Seconded motion. Motion Carries 5/0

**Scheduled Public Comments:**

Craig Earls with the Richlands Little League.

Craig Earls-Thank you for allowing me to come and speak and introduce myself. I am the new President of Richlands Little League. We have a lot of good things happening at Richlands Little League this year. I have been in the league for 8 years now and decided to take the president's position because I wanted to help build the league and wanted to help impact the community just as you do in the positions that you have here. We have over 150 volunteers, 400 kids and 30 teams. Several of our teams have gone to state competitions over the last several years. 2 years ago our girls team won second in the state and before that they won 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state. We have had a lot of success and there have been some bumps in the road as well. I want to partner with the community again and help build the league up and there are some ways that we want to do that. One of the things that I do in my professional life is soft were architect so one of the things that we have immediately done is created a new league management system which you will see there in your handout. You can get any of our information about our league on that web site. We are posting our meeting minutes. We are posting all of our contact information. You can see our game schedule from that site, when we are playing, where we are playing and the scores of the game. Everything will be made public. We want the best playing experience for our players. We want the best for our players because they deserve it. We also want to partner with the Richlands High School in their baseball and softball programs. It's the feeder program to them. We don't

want to forget about them after their 12 years old. We want to drive that feeder program so that we can improve our entire players all the way through. We are going to run our concession stand this year. We want you to come down and get a grilled hamburger or hot dog. I want to respect the heritage of the league. There has been a lot of great leaders that have come before and served in little league and a lot of great volunteers. One if the ways that I want to help bring the community together again is to have the open day parade again. We feel it's very important to have the parade again. That's one of the things I wanted to ask you about today. We are going to have opening day April 2, 2016. You have an invitation to come down and be a part of our opening day celebration. Do you have any objections to us doing the parade?

Rod Cury-I think it's a great idea.

Joe McCracken- I think we would have to ask our chief of police about it.

Frank Dorton- I don't have a problem with it we just need to notify the state.

Joe McCracken-I will make the motion to accept the little league to have the parade.

Mary Ann-I will second that. Motion carries 5/0

Rod Cury- Craig do you have a time set for the parade?

Craig Earls-April 2, 2016 at 10:00a.m. The only other thing that I have is the dugout roofs at Williams's field are in need of repair. They are actually leaking into the dug outs. Is that something that we could get fixed?

Mary Ann-Those roofs are probably about 12 to 13 years old so that's not surprising.

Tim Taylor- Fred and George can go take a look at the roofs and see what we need to do.

Mayor White- Craig I have something that I would like to ask you. One of the biggest events that the town does is the freedom festival and I would like to invite you to come and meet with us this Thursday night at 7:00p.m. at the Town Hall so that we can coordinate our dates so we won't be interfering with each other. If you would we would appreciate you coming.

Craig Earls-That's no problem at all. We will work with you on that. I really appreciate you allowing me to speak.

Mayor White- I enjoyed what you said.

Mary Ann-Craig, thank you for coming. I'm really excited about your passion and especially about what you said about process. Many years ago people would call and order their food from the concession stand even though they couldn't stay for the game. Also, the parade is so exciting to the kids so that's a great idea!

**Unscheduled Public Comments:**

**There were none.**

**Council Reports:**

**Rod Cury:**

The Planned Commission did not meet last month. We are waiting on results from the Community Planning Partners and also the meeting was cancelled because of the passing of Richard Smith's father at the same time. We want to remember him and his family. We will meet when we get word from Community Planning Partners. I have had several requests for different things and those have all been handled prior to the council meeting.

**Joe McCracken:**

I would like to welcome a new business in town, Balloons and Baskets at 2409 Front Street in Richlands. It's a new flower shop here in town. I would like to enquire about the fire hydrant on Buskill Avenue. Do we have any updates?

Tim Taylor- We have got to do some hydraulics on it.

Joe McCracken-It is in the making and hasn't been forgotten right?

Tim Taylor-Right.

Joe McCracken- The speed limit sign on Daw Road. Is there any update on that? I ask last month about getting that checked and they would really like to have the speed limit 25mph because of the curves on the road.

Tim Taylor-We will look at it.

Joe McCracken-We still have a trash problem on Vickey Drive in several different places. Do you know where we are on that?

Mayor White-I had a call today on one of the houses that burnt down on Vickey Drive. Has anything more been done on that?

Tim Taylor- We will try to take a look at that.

Joe McCracken-We discussed the house at Big Creek that's about to fall in the road. Did we ever hear anything more on that?

Frank Dorton-I think the original owner is deceased.

Joe McCracken-3<sup>rd</sup> street pot holes. The street really needs paved.

Tim Taylor-It's on our list to pave. I just don't know when it will be paved.

**Frances Meadows:**

I just want to say thank you to Mr. Tackett's son. He has done a few things in the trailer park. He has made it lighter over there, cleaned up and torn some places down. He is trying to clean up the whole park. I'm happy with what he is doing around there and so are some of the people that live around there. I am happy with the way our town looks. It's starting to look so much better.

**Larry Johnson:**

I spoke to Mr. Woodard a couple weeks ago and they got some really good ideas. As they start working toward our area I think it's very important to cooperate with them. We need to do something else around here to generate something besides coal because we don't have it anymore. I want to thank Craig Earls for coming I really appreciate what he's trying to do with our little league.

**Mary Ann:**

Craig, I thought about this after you set down but do we have any state tournaments scheduled for Richlands?

Craig Earls-Not this year for baseball but we could potentially have some next year for softball and baseball for the junior and senior year.

Mary Ann-With being a lot more public, when you do get to state tournaments next year you will have a lot more involvement. I think that you can count on us for volunteer support when you do these things. I would like to thank the police and rescue squad department for the shop with a cop. I think Frank Dorton probably headed that up. Several council members participated. Every year it truly is the highlight of my Christmas. I leave sometimes in tears but it truly is a wonderful event and I appreciate what you all do to contribute and for all the businesses that donate so that the kids can have a Christmas. Mr. Taylor is going to comment on the rec park floors but I want to thank you, Fred for all you have done and continue to do so that we have that facility in first class condition like it should be. The light is out on the Hidden Valley sign and I have spoken to Mr. Taylor and he is going to contact APCO to get the sign light taking care of. I think that good times are ahead for Richlands if we will all work together.

**Mayor White:**

We appreciate the Fire and Rescue for inviting us to the Christmas dinner. We appreciate the plaque and will get it placed out in the trophy case. Several of us attended. We really appreciate what you do for our town and for our citizens. Thank you again. I had a couple of people call me again about the trash through town again. Mr. Taylor have you checked on the littering signs?

Tim Taylor- I have and I guess to me it seems really tough to have to put up a 'Do not litter sign' in the middle of an urban environment. It's a shame that that there is not enough pride in our establishment

that we can't keep it clean. Some may think it's because of lack of effort on staff but it's just not that way. We clean up every day somewhere. I really thought that you might reconsider putting up a sign in the middle of town for littering. I can see them out in the rural areas but just not in the middle of town.

Joe McCracken- We are concerned with the trash also, but maybe we can consider putting lids on the dumpsters that may help with some of that. I know the birds also make a mess with pulling stuff out of the dumpsters.

Tim Taylor- We can get up with VDOT and see if they would allow us to put up the signs because we would have to get permission. I think the ramps are the worst but maybe this would help.

Mayor White-I think if you just put up a notation telling them what the fine is that would help especially on the exits.

Joe McCracken-The dumpster over by the town garage; I don't know where all that trash is coming from on that bank. Maybe the lids would help keep the trash from coming out.

Tim Taylor- We have lids on the newer ones but they get torn off and the other problem is people won't close them.

Rod Cury-To go back to what Frances and Mary Ann said, working together for the positive and the good of the community is what this is all about. Cleanliness breeds cleanliness and the more you trash it the more people don't care. It's an ongoing effort. We want to try to improve it. We could have a spring cleanup and it's more than just a spring cleanup it's something that you have to do year around.

Tim Taylor- We can put some signs up along the exits.

Rod Cury- We might want to look at programs in this country that can give us an overall view on keeping our environment clean and making our quality of life better.

### **Department Head Reports:**

#### **Brad Ratliff:**

Enterprise Zones are administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development across the state. They create business incentives and grants as well as tax incentives for job creation for real property investments. Giving better opportunities for new businesses. Minimum wage jobs don't count in this particular program. They are designated for the higher wage jobs. It's a really good program to drive business development in these areas. I wanted to provide some information for council to consider between now and the next meeting. I highly recommend that we pass this ordinance to get these incentives in place. It will provide better opportunities for businesses here. The actual draft ordinance will be in your package for you to view before next month.

Tim Taylor- We really need to do this next month because there is a dead line to this opportunity.

Rod Cury-Margie Douglas worked for the county and she came to some meeting that I was at and gave us the details to Enterprise Zones. I believe Dr. Willis engaged in Enterprise Zone. They helped to remodel some of his apartments. I'm sure this program is very helpful.

**Manager's Report:**

Tim asks members to look at the monthly check register and monthly bills so that he can answer questions that council may have.

Check # 55393 CDW-Servers and Software

Tim Taylor- The power bill was lower than normal because of the warmer weather that we had.

Joe McCracken- I make a motion that we pay the bills.

Rod Cury- I second the motion.

Mayor White- Motion carries 5/0

Tim Taylor-Fred has worked very hard on the rec park, painting, the floor and the roof. Fred tell us about the floors.

Fred Phillips-The floor is holding up great. No leaks in the roof. We have had positive feedback from everybody throughout the community. The score boards came in yesterday. The electrical crew is going to come later on in the week to put those up. We have approximately 300 kids that will be coming down on Tuesday nights and Thursday nights. We need a divider, some wall mats and some bleachers. We need to raise \$2,250. I have an idea to raise some quick money. Then we will move on to phase 2 which is to renovate the bathrooms and rearrange the weight room. I think that we can bring back the membership drive with all the remodeling, the weight room and the swimming pool.

Mary Ann-Now you can have tournaments over there since you have gotten a score board.

Fred- Craig has also volunteered to help us get this on the computer. We are really lucky to have Craig. We are also going to have a Richlands basketball camp this summer. A youth camp where we can implement the pool.

Mayor White-Thank you, Fred.

Tim Taylor- We had Kevin look at putting up lights with timers at Critterville and we found out we can do that it would take several hundred dollars. We have had a lot of vandalism over there. It's my recommendation to leave the lights as is and take the money that we would have used on the timers and fix the bathrooms that have been vandalized.

Joe McCracken- Do we keep all the bathrooms open at all times?

Tim Taylor- Just two of the bathrooms are left unlocked until 10:00 p.m. Maybe we can encourage people to walk down town for now until we get the lights fixed.

We received a poor grading on the Front Street bridge. We have to develop a plan of action to get this taken care of within 30 days. We are taking care of this now by replacing the bearings underneath the bridge and we already had those made. We are just waiting for the weather to cooperate with us. We will get this taken care of and report back to the state.

Regarding the two mirrors; we do have those in. We put one of them up that was broken but we have been working mostly on the bridge, but we will get the other one put up.

Tim Taylor- Brad, What about the fire contract with Tazewell County?

Brad Ratliff-It was the same as last year.

Tim Taylor-If it's the same exact contract as last year and all we have to do is sign it, is there any reason that we shouldn't sign it?

Rod Cury- I make a motion to sign it.

Joe McCracken-Seconded motion. Motion Carries 5/0

Mayor White-We need a motion to adjourn.

Joe McCracken-Made the motion to adjourn

Larry Johnson-Seconded motion. Motion Carries 5/0

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Jannis White, Mayor

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Julie Cordle, Town Clerk.