

The Richlands Town Council held a regular monthly meeting in the Richlands Council Chambers on February 9, 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 Doug Ratliff

Mayor White called the meeting to order.

Mary Ann gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor White asks if there was anyone that wanted to speak that was not on the agenda. Kristi Beck was added to the agenda.

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

Mayor White- Do I hear a motion to approve the agenda? Joe McCracken- made the motion. Mary Ann seconded motion. Motion carries 6/0

Mayor White-Do we have any additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes? There are two sets; one for the public hearing and another set for the regular minutes. If not do I hear a motion to approve the minutes as presented? Francis Meadows made the motion. Mary Ann seconded motion. Motion Carries 6/0

Mayor White- We will move on to the scheduled public comments. For those of you that haven't spoken before, we have limits for the unscheduled public comments for three minutes and anyone on as scheduled comments has five minutes.

Scheduled Public Comments:

Ginger Branton- It is that time of year again where I am requesting money for the government challenge grant for the Citizens of the Arts. And again its \$5,000 which I think the town has donated for the past 30 years now. I will make it short and sweet. Yes or No?

Rod Cury- I think it's a good thing.

Mayor White-Do we have a motion to do the grant? Joe McCracken made the motion. Rod Cury seconded the motion. Motion carries 6/0

Ginger Branton-Thank you. I will leave the grant papers with Mr. Taylor.

Shea Cook-Several weeks ago I had the opportunity to go and look at the firing range at Lake Park. While I was there I had the opportunity to speak to someone who worked for the town. They indicated that only police officers and town employees could use the range. I talked to another town employee and he thought that anybody can use it as long as they went by the police department. There is not any place around here for people to go. I spoke to one person and they said they drive as far as Blountville, TN to have access to a range. I ask the gentleman that worked for the town about a box that I seen in the field and he told me that the town had intended on installing a pop up shooting range but the funds were not available to complete it. I want a study group to be formed so that the range can be developed, improved and utilized by citizens here in the town. I think a lot of citizens would take advantage of the shooting range. It could also be used as a form of revenue to the town. You could not only improve the range but you could also get your pop up system in place. The only concern that had been named to me is the concern of increased insurance rates. I can't imagine how those insurance rates would be affected. If insurance is the issue then how do the other ranges deal with it? This may be something that is unworkable but until you get together and form a study group you can't come to that determination. A lot of people would rather pay \$25 to \$50 than to drive and pay the gas to go somewhere else and then pay a fee to use some shooting range. I'm not aware of anything like that in Buchanan County or Russell County.

Mayor White-We have had several people ask about that and I think it's a good idea to for a committee to check on doing this. I like to shoot too!

Doug Ratliff- I would like to make a motion that we form a study group. I would like Rod Cury to be on a part of this since he is on the safety committee also I would like for Shea Cook and Frank Dorton to be on it.

Mayor White- Do we have a motion? Joe McCracken I second that motion. Motion carries 6/0

Mayor White-If everybody will give Rod their number maybe he can coordinate this. Do you have all the names Rod?

Rod Cury- I have Frank, Fred, Tim, Brad, Shea and myself as coordinator.

Mayor White-We will move on to unscheduled public comments.

Unscheduled Public Comments:

Kristi Beck- I'm here today on behalf of the 3rd annual winter honey festival which is on February 20th. I'm here to see if I can get your support on a vendor that I would like to have set up at the festival. We are going to have a beer vendor out of Roanoke which is a honey wine. They are going to be doing samplings and tastings. We also have Plum Creek in Tazewell. I have spoken with Blue Ridge Distillery and Wolf Hills out of Abingdon; they use to infuse local organic honey in to the beer. This is just a sampling and tasting. We have taken all steps for the event, insurance as well as the ABC license. We are setting a two cup max. I do want your support in bringing something a little bit different to the festival. Everyone will be stamped and ID's will be checked to make sure everyone is of age. Also,

there will be two different kinds of brew. One is from Wolf Hills which is a local brewery and the other is out of Roanoke. We will also have a root beer vendor and instead of using sugar cane they will be using honey to sweeten it. This festival will be from 10a.m. – 3:00p.m. at the Richlands Police Department.

Mayor White- Frank Dorton do you have anything to add to this? Frank Dorton- As long as all the ABC requirements is met.

Kristi Beck-The paper work has been completed and we are checking ID's. We only have two people serving. On the two cup max everyone gets a cup and we are marking through each serving to keep up with all of that. The cups are typically four ounces but the cups that we are going to have are eight ounce cups. We are charging \$4.00 each cup. Our vendors this year are different. We didn't have a good production on our local honey this year so we have pulled some honey out of North Carolina. We have an alpaca farm and each vendor has been asked to give one item of their craft for a prize. We have 40 vendors and the alpaca farm will be giving away a container of manure. It's actually very high priced. He called and asked me if that was ok and I told him I thought that would be great. We will also be having a free kid's corner all for the kids. We have gift bags for the kids and have implemented an educational piece which will begin teaching the kids in the knowledge of what a honey bee is and explain the process of making honey.

I was also able to find a local bee keeper who has put together many classes so we are offering a free bee keeping class with over 40 people attending. It's free to the public and it's a really young crowd. This will be great education for us to keep and sustain the bee's in this area. The classes will be held at the business incubator from 5:30p.m.-7:00p.m. on Wednesday the 17th. We are on Facebook so that we can keep the public informed of what we are doing.

Mayor White-Do we have a motion to accept the honey festival?

Joe McCracken-I make a motion to accept the Honey Festival as is. Rod Cury- Seconded the motion. Motion carries6/0

Kristi Beck-I also wanted to see if the LEAD organization would be allowed to begin to develop the farmer's market. We have some friends that are going to by milk goats and are going to make butter and cheese. We travel all the way to Abingdon to go to the farmer's market and we have a great place in our own community to develop our own framer's market and keep the money here in this town. I think someone is overseeing this or in charge of it so if we could just assist that person that would be great.

Joe McCracken-I think Sue is over that isn't she? Tim Taylor- Yes she is.

Joe McCracken- You need to get with Sue to do whatever needs to be done to get this started.

Kristi Beck-I think persistency is the key. I think if everybody in the area knows what days that we will be there rain or shine that the community would make use of it.

Mary Ann- I really appreciate the LEAD program wanting to take the lead and further develop the farmer's market.

Council Reports:

Rod Cury:

I don't really have much to report tonight. I want to say thank you to our town and crews for doing a great job at the snow removal and keeping our roads cleaned off. The Planning Commission doesn't have a meeting scheduled at this time.

Joe McCracken:

I don't have much tonight either. I didn't have any calls. I just want to follow up on the speed limit signs.

Tim Taylor- We put up two speed limit signs on Daw road.

Joe McCracken-Have we got the mirrors installed?

Tim Taylor-We have got one repaired and one installed.

Joe McCracken- The houses that need repaired. Do we have anything on that?

Frank Dorton-We are working on that.

Joe McCracken-Thank you. That's all I have.

Frances Meadows:

I was just looking on the sheet about the mobile home parks. Are these the main mobile homes they are working on now? This is not all the mobile homes that have issues right?

Frank Dorton-The list you have does not have them all listed. Do you know which ones you're looking for?

Frances Meadows-I have one on Farmer's Street. I think it's called Elkins Trailer Park. Is the trailer there at the road going to be torn down? The one that says, do not trespass.

Frank Dorton-There is some dispute over ownership.

Joe McCracken-The lady that owned that is incarcerated at this time. The owner of the park wants it moved but you can't remove it at this time.

Frances Meadows-How can we handle this matter?

Frank Dorton-That will be a civil issue. We will address any violations.

Frances Meadows-I was called several times this week about someone burning copper at hill creek. There is quite a bit of people around that area that uses oxygen and they are having trouble with the smell. Frank can you talk to the individual that is burning the copper?

Frank Dorton-Yes I can do that.

Frances Meadows-I went over to the rec park last weekend and the roof looks so good. I don't think I have ever seen so many people over there at one time.

Doug Ratliff:

Have you heard anything about the gas update?

Tim Taylor-The State Corporation Commission did approve of the merger. They have 90 days to get it implemented. That has only been about a week or so since that has happened. I thought we should probably give them a little time before we talk to them again. So we are looking at April before it would actually be finalized.

Larry Johnson:

I have had people ask me if we would consider putting, 'In God We Trust', on our police vehicles. Frank, have you considered that?

Frank Dorton-I would be totally against that.

Frances Meadows-Can I ask why?

Frank Dorton-I think it violates the 1st amendment.

Mayor White-Brad Ratliff could you get us a legal opinion on that?

Brad Ratliff-I sure can

Larry Johnson-If it comes down to money I will pay for it.

Mayor White-I will split it with you.

Mary Ann:

I had a few issues that I did discuss with Mr. Taylor and they were taken care of. I have one repeating issue about trash pickup and I have explained that it is very hard in the winter time because so many of our men are working to keep the roads clear of snow. I have also said that it would get better in the spring but people disagree with me on that. They say when the town does the mowing that they will cut up the trash with the grass. I tried to assure them this would not happen.

Doug Ratliff-What would be wrong with having some inmates do some trash pickup for the town? They do it at Cedar Bluff so why can't we organize the same thing?

Joe McCracken-The issue is we would have to go get them and take them back.

Mary Ann-Do we have to transport them or just stay with them?

Frank Dorton-We have to do both.

Doug Ratliff-Why can Cedar Bluff get all this stuff done and we can't? Can we coordinate with the Sherriff's office and have them bring the inmates down?

Mary Ann-One of the worst places people talk about the trash is on Veterans drive and 609.

Joe McCracken-I have seen the town take care of the trash and the very next day you can't even tell they have done anything.

Mary Ann-I didn't realize that we would have to go get the inmates and take them back as well. I know that times have changed. So we will have Frank look into it. The only other thing I wanted to mention is that everyone should have a letter from Mary Lawson about the Festival of the Arts and I know last year we decided as a council not to make a contribution. I hope that each one of us will make an individual contribution. If you need the address just let me know.

Rod Cury-Larry we haven't had a public safety committee meeting since I have been on except one time. Do we need to have a meeting?

Larry Johnson- What we usually did before is when an issue came up then we would have one but it has been very quiet lately so that's why we haven't had one, but Yes, we do need to have one.

Doug Ratliff- I want to add Larry Johnson to the committee that is being formed to look into the shooting range since he is the chairman of the public safety committee.

There were no department report comments.

Mayor White:

I was going to bring up the letter from Mary Lawson regarding the Festival of the Arts and a few other things that have already been brought up. So I will move on to the attorney's comments.

Brad Ratliff:

If council will notice I have provided a copy of the ordinance to establish an enterprise zone in the Town of Richlands.

I also want to mention that I have a client that has begun a nonprofit organization called, Hungry No More. Regardless of what the issues where this is a 501C3 organization that is accepting donations to ensure that the 3 local schools have a paid lunch account. My office is coordinating this if anybody wants to make a contribution. This organization was started by Judy Horne.

Mayor White-I do have one thing to add, the festival committee will meet here at 7:00p.m. on Thursday.

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.

Tim Taylor-The power bill for January was \$415,095.86

Check #52865, Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens-The transit for public transportation.

Check #52878, James Bussey-Snap on tools for the garage.

Check #52930, Schwartz & Associates- Bridge Safety Inspection-Annual Fee

Mayor White-Has the bridge been repaired on front street?

Tim Taylor-We took care of the major problems.

Check #52912, Lawson Products-Parts for shop supplies.

Mayor White-Tim are we under budget on salt?

Tim Taylor-We haven't used our budget. We have used 300 ton.

Check #52914, Liberty National-Employee's Insurance.

Joe McCracken-I would just like to say we need to keep the business we do in town. It helps our town and the business's in our town. If I need to be more specific next time I will.

Mayor White-Do we have a motion to pay our bills? Rod Cury made the motion. Mary Ann seconded the motion. Motion carries 6/0

Tim Taylor-Provided an update on Community Planning Partners. They have all the surveys compiled on the comprehensive planning part. The planning commission should be able to get that draft within the next 45 days. Hopefully we can get this adopted before June or at least by June and that is really what I would like to do.

Doug Ratliff-Will we have to have some closed sessions with council only?

Tim Taylor-The only thing that we will have to have closed session on would be things that qualify and there are a few.

Doug Ratliff-I just think we should have several closed sessions on the goals.

Tim Taylor-Greg Wilson thinks we can have it completed sooner than what I think would be possible.

Joe McCracken-I would like to ask the attorney to touch on the street vacation request concerning Mr. Young.

Brad Ratliff-We went ahead and prepared the letter for Mr. Young. He called my office yesterday and was very rude to my staff and said that he was not signing anything. I would not recommend allowing anyone to have the privilege of the use of town property. To my knowledge he hasn't signed it and has no intention to.

Joe McCracken-Do we need to pursue this further?

Tim Taylor-I think if he wants to change anything that he will come back and talk to us.

Tim Taylor-I wanted to let council know that we are on an accelerated schedule on budget. The staff has gotten their request in for the budget work sessions. We are having meetings concerning the budget and we will get it to you before the next council meeting. We want everybody to feel comfortable with what we are recommending to do.

Larry Johnson-On February 23rd @ 7:00pm the public safety meeting will be held.

Tim Taylor-We have had so many break downs on our equipment lately. So going forward we are going to have to look at some long term options. We need to try to get another truck in the budget next year. We have been breaking down every shift and sometimes two times a day. Some of our trucks are as old as 1990's.

Tim Taylor-We have some challenges with our bridges. We have got to get VDOT's attention.

Frances Meadows-I need to have closed session for about 5 minutes.

Mayor White-Do we have a motion to go into closed session? Frances Meadows made motion for closed session to discuss Personnel 2.23711 a (1). Larry Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carries 6/0

Mayor White-We need a motion to come back from closed session. Joe McCracken made the motion. Rod Cury seconded the motion. Motion Carries 6/0

Mayor White-Do all members affirm that the only business discussed while we were in closed session was that in 2.23711 a (1) Personnel? All members affirmed.

Mayor White-Do we have any other issues or items to discuss?

Mayor White-We will entertain a motion to adjourn. Do we have a motion? Frances Meadows made the motion to adjourn. Mary Ann seconded the motion. Motion carries 6/0

Jannis White, Mayor

Julie Cordle, Town Clerk