

The Richlands Town Council held a regular monthly meeting in the Richlands Council Chambers on December 14, 2021, at 6:00 pm with the following present:

Mayor: Rod D. Cury
Town Manager: John O'Daniel
Town Clerk: Connie Allen
Council Members: Mary Ann Strong, Doug Ratliff, Jeff Hurst
Mike Street, Darrell Addison
Council Member Absent: Richard Brown
Town Attorney: Brad Pyott

Mayor Cury opened the meeting.

Richard Smith gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Cury – Additions/Deletions to the Agenda - Is there anyone who is not scheduled on the agenda that would like to speak under “Unscheduled Comments”? Please add Morgan Earp, Joe McCracken, Blake Ray, and Christin Bowman.

Mayor Cury - Are there any other deletions or additions to the agenda?

Darrell - I have “Pop-Up” Richlands and would like for Blake Ray to present.

John - Suggest putting him under Item IX (c1).

Mayor Cury - We will add under (c1) under IX.

John - Under Closed Session – Ongoing Litigations 2.2-3711(A).

Mary Ann - I would like to add under Executive Closed Session 2.2-3711(A) Contract negotiations – Front Street, Property Acquisition.

Mayor Cury - Is all this going to be under 2.2-3711(A)? Just want to make sure.

Brad – Yes

Mayor Cury - Any more deletions or additions to the agenda? If not, I will need a motion to approve the agenda as amended.

Mike - I make the motion, Mary Ann second the motion.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call –Doug- Yes, Jeff- Yes, Darrell - Yes, Mike – Yes, Mary Ann – Yes Motion carries – 5 /0. (Richard Brown Absent)

Mayor Cury - Approval of Minutes – Nov. 9-Public Hearing, Nov. 9 – Regular Council Meeting, Nov. 15-Recessed Meeting, Nov. 30- Work Session. Do we have a motion to accept the four (4) sets of minutes as presented?

Mike - I make the motion, Jeff second the motion.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call –Doug- Yes, Jeff- Yes, Darrell - Yes, Mike – Yes, Mary Ann – Yes Motion carries – 5 /0. (Richard Brown Absent)

Mayor Cury – Consent Agenda – Authorization to Pay Bills (November), Two sets - 11/10/21-12/10/21 and 12/14/2021.

Doug – Check 10984 James Brooks

John – The grant does not cover recreational activities for after school hours as it has in the past.

Doug - The grant I have here states it is covered under the grant for after hour activities.

Jerry - This year's grant does not cover after school activities.

Doug - This is this year's grant and it specifically says that it does.

Jerry - The grant coordinator says it does not cover after school activities.

Doug - Will you address at the next Council meeting?

Jerry – Yes, I can bring the documents and reach out to Michele Miles the grant coordinator get her to issue documents stating we are not allowed to do anymore.

Doug - Please bring some documentation to the next Council meeting.

Mayor Cury - Any other questions on the check register?

Jeff - I will make a motion to approve the "Consent Agenda" – (a) Authorization to Pay Bills-November, (b) Approval of \$500.00 allocation for Christmas Parade from GL, (c) Authorization line of credit drawdown #12 from National Bank for WWTP Rehabilitation Project (\$13,686.91) and WTP, Plant upgrades and improvements (\$1,184) cost for November billing for a total of \$14,870.91. Darrell seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call –Doug- Yes, Jeff- Yes, Darrell - Yes, Mike – Yes, Mary Ann – Yes Motion carries – 5 /0. (Richard Brown Absent)

Mayor Cury – "Scheduled Public Comments" – Laura Mollo – Misc. Concerns

Laura Mollo – 262 Linwood Drive –

- Wise man said to me, Government issues are easy to fix, if you admit you have a problem. 1. Figure out the problem 2. Fix the issue the problem created (3) Create a policy to keep the problem from recurring.
- We get a million dollars from VDOT but can't seem to fix the roads. Roads are in horrible condition, more pot holes on the bridge that should be allowed. If a citizen damages their car due to pot holes the Town can be liable especially if they have proof they reported it. We should have procedures to deal with pot holes.
- We should go back to the paving schedule for roads.
- We have one embarrassment with our lack of process, sometimes simple ordinance or appointment, ignoring citizen's request, disrespecting citizens.
- Town needs to have a procedure to schedule appointments.
- Huge problem with real estate taxes, no procedure or accountability how real estate taxes are collected. You raise the taxes on citizens that are actually paying them.
- Current Councilmembers, previous Councilmembers and representatives on committees who are on the delinquent tax list, lack of collections. Need to hire someone outside to collect the delinquent taxes. They are unbiased and will cost the Town of Richlands nothing. You will run into the same issue with personal property taxes.

- When you avoid the opportunities you are placing the burden back on the citizens who are actually paying their taxes.

Mayor Cury – Derek & Maria White – Bike Race

Maria White –

- First “Chasing the Wild Boar” bike ride was very successful. It was a three (3) day ride during Memorial Day Weekend.
- Would like to have Council’s approval to have the Bike Race again May, 28, 29, 30, in 2022. It will be time trials and similar format that we had before.
- Will make sure we have the safest possible routes.
- We had a lot of positive feedback and would like to have the race again in 2022.
- A lot of people, community and surrounding communities benefited financially from the bike race.

Mayor Cury - It was very popular and well received. It is positive for our community. Have you had the opportunity to talk to Chief Gilbert?

Maria - Derek is in the process of finalizing the routes.

Mary Ann - I would like to make a motion to approve the bike race, May 28, 29, 30, in 2022, Doug seconded the motion.

John - We just need to get a permit for our records.

Mayor Cury - Do you have a calendar that we could see?

John - The problem is we run out of time for our officers to provide traffic control. We received several permits for events last year. We need to manage in our budget. If we have a lot of events it is difficult to approve them all. We need to get on our calendar and prepare.

Mayor Cury - Is the master calendar filling up?

John – We will just run out of budget money. The sooner you get your event schedule the more likely you are to get it approved.

Mayor Cury - The events that the Town will have to support, just wanted to understand.

Maria - (Handed out flyer for the event)

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call –Doug- Yes, Jeff- Yes, Darrell - Yes, Mike – Yes, Mary Ann – Yes Motion carries – 5 /0. (Richard Brown Absent)

Mayor Cury – “Unscheduled Public Comments” – Christin Bowman

Christin Bowman – 253 Terry Drive –

- I am here to address 301 Fairfax Avenue. I am a representative for the family.
- I want on the record that we did attempt to work with the Town before it came to this, being demolished down due to the nuisance law.
- My grandmother passed away in 2016. We could not begin to sell the property until 2018, there were limitations on it. After that we did have someone interested in the property. Before we could sell the property in January of 2019, Mr. Whitaker was living in the basement and proceeded to burn it down. This all happened right before we were ready to sell the property. We had no insurance on the property. The home was part of an estate but no insurance.

- The burning of the house was an accident but Mr. Whitaker was ordered to pay \$60,000 in restitution in July 2020. As of today we have officially received \$300.
- There were loans against the property so we could not get a loan to try to do anything.
- December 2020 I had a phone call from Mr. Taylor and a follow up to the phone call I sent an email of everything that we had discussed. At that time we offered to give the property to the Town. No further follow-up from Mr. Taylor but on February 4, 2021 I received a phone call from Jerry Gilbert, wanted to address the selling of the property. I forwarded the same email that I sent to Mr. Taylor. I never heard anything else after that.
- I spoke with Mr. O'Daniel; he did not want a copy of the email that I had sent to Mr. Taylor. He said he would check with the Town Attorney and that is where we left it.
- The County has been in communication with us about auctioning the property. The County is planning on auction this property as soon as possible.
- I do want on the record that I did attempt to do something and I do have a copy of the email I sent to Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Cury - You have presented as clear as I have ever heard it. Please give the email to the Clerk and she will distribute it. Thank you

Mary Ann - Thank you for your time and explaining, I have better understanding now.

Christin Bowman - Anything posted on the Richlands page I am aware of it and I get that information first.

Mayor Cury – Morgan Earp

Morgan Earp – 1618 6th Street, Richlands

- Need clarification from Council, on November 15 you all made a motion and approved for the vacant seat, people from the Town of Richlands put their name forth to be appointed to that seat. During work session that motion was not overruled. Does that mean the motion to appoint or to overrule the previous on?

Mayor Cury - It is more of a procedure right now, your questions can be addressed but what we are hoping to do is not have a lot of questions between speaker and the Council. We would not want to mislead you in an incorrect answer. I will ask the Clerk to record your questions and ask the Manager to get back to you tomorrow. Is that OK?

Moran Earp –

- I would ask that the Council compromise on Charter Changes. Compromise is to move forward and any type of politics whether it is local, county or state, just help people move forward. Instead of based on emotions which is really not decisions at all they are just instincts.

Mayor Cury – Joe McCracken

Joe McCracken – 1411 Jewell Street

- Council has voted three (3) times that I know of, that a drain be taken care of on 1411 Jewell Street. It has been voted on and agreed but nothing has been done.
- The drain is stopped up right now and water is everywhere. It is a Town drain.
- I want to know where we stand why it has not been taken care of.

Mayor Cury - I suggest someone from the Town Hall or Manager contact you and give you a satisfactory answer.

John - I can contact him but the last time I looked at it we dug out everything I felt comfortable doing, the main line is on the railroad property and I don't like going on railroad property and doing things. They promised they would remove that pipe and ditch, which has not happened yet.

Joe McCracken – I showed John where the line was and where it was not rail road property. It is the same drain I have been talking about for eight (8) months now. The Council voted to take care of and it has not been taken care of. There is a concrete post that has N & W on it, front of the post is rail road, the back of the post over is not railroad.

Doug - We voted to replace the drainpipe. I would like a consensus from Council if it is not on the railroad that we instruct Mr. O'Daniel to replace that drain.

Mayor Cury – I respect what you are saying Joe and Doug. I suggest that someone contact W.T. Hedrick and maybe he will be able to clarify.

Joe McCracken - We have contacted him. He said they would take the pipe out but they have never taken the pipe out. The drain system is the Town of Richlands not the railroad. It is not the railroads decision to take the pipe out or clean the pipe. I would ask the Town to clean out the water is backing up.

Mayor Cury - This is my suggestion to clear up any misunderstandings what is Town and what is railroad, any concerns that John may have he would not want to do anything that would be improper. John will you contact Joe again and meet with W.T. Hedrick might get to the bottom of this of what we can do.

Joe McCracken - It is a Town system not Railroad. The attorneys have been talked to and if this system floods and the Town knows it and there could be lawsuits.

Mayor Cury - With the greatest respect, when we talk lawsuits, we need to hold right there. You have been well heard. We need to get the manager, W.T. Hedrick and Joe in the same area.

Doug - If we find it is Town property we have a consensus to instruct the Town Manager to replace the drain pipe before it floods. There are a lot of families over there and if something does happen we will be responsible. We have been on this probably five (5) years.

Mayor Cury - I think we need clarification before we have consensus.

Doug - We voted on it eight (8) months ago, if the Council votes on a motion if it is Town property, Town Manager go ahead and do what Council has ordered him to do.

Mayor Cury - Is there a consensus if it is found the Town has a drain that is stopped up and is on Town property, is there a consensus that the Town proceed.

Jeff - I think we should live up to what we voted on.

Darrell – I agree

Mike - If it's Town property.

Mary Ann – I agree but the Town Attorney has not do so because it is his understanding it's not the Town's property. I don't think the Town Manager should be, no one would go someone's property.

Mayor Cury - I think the consensus is to find out and from there move forward.

Mayor Cury - Blake Ray

Blake Ray – 426 Buchanan Street

- Couple things that have come up that I see concerning the zoning standpoint, zoning revisions that we did in 2013 is probably outdated at this point.

- I have been working with Seth White. He is looking at leasing a space that would be perfect for office space. Unfortunately the building is not necessary zoned for this.
- Thinking about what is coming down the pipe, I was in a meeting regarding the fish farm, will be having an influx capital coming into the area and other businesses coming into the area.
- If we are not careful those businesses will not fall under our current zoning guidelines.
- Brief conversations with John he can speak more about this, last meeting you voted to scrap Item No. 4 on the Charter change.
- It would take the zoning issue from completing an arch to something happening very quickly.
- Smart money moves quickly, will go elsewhere if it is easier to do business elsewhere.
- I see negative impact from this one (1) issue. If we are not careful we can miss out on a ton of opportunity.
- I would ask that you consider procedure changes in the Charter; I know it won't change until next year but five (5) year project and we want to be part of it.

Mayor Cury – Audit Presentation – Corbin Stone

Corbin Stone – Audit Presentation – (Handout)

- Audit went very well. We did have to make some adjusting entries but not very many. Overall you did very well.
- General Balance is negative (\$309,964), reason – Took possession of the new fire truck in 2021.

Doug - A town the size of Richlands, should it have at least \$2,500,000 in reserves for instances like this.

Corbin Stone - At least 25% of your operating budget, minimum of 10% of the operating budget.

Doug- We have around \$200,000?

Corbin – Actually it was negative at the end of 2021.

Doug - That is a big concern don't you agree?

Corbin – Absolutely, not something you are going to do overnight will take some time.

Doug - When we do our budgets we should allow for that.

Corbin – Balance budget and try to put something in there to put in your reserves.

Corbin - Discussed Page 1- 22 of the Audit Presentation

- Population Estimate 2021 – 5,224
- Long-term obligations per Capita – 5.224

Doug - We addressed VRS last month, I asked for a figure of what we were paying in interest on the seven (7) million, we have had for at least 15 years and have not started paying it back.

Corbin - It is a stand along program, you can make additional contributions to retirement. I would not recommend right yet, get the fund balance up.

Doug - How much interest are we paying?

Corbin - It is not so much interest they use a discount rate, 6 ¾ maybe 7%, they use discount rate.

Doug - You are saying we need to build our fund balance up first and then next we need to pay some of the debt because it is going to get a lot worse.

Corbin - Need to build up the fund balance first.

Corbin –

- Real Estate - \$271,804,900 PSA Tax – \$23,053,429
- Annualized Growth Rates – Real Estate 0.874%, PSC Tax 5.343%, Total 1.130%
- Audit Recommendations – Appropriations – The Town appropriates funds for expenditure annual with the approval of the budget; however, the level of appropriation is not specifically identified in the ordinance. We recommend that Council specify the level at which appropriations will be monitored (i.e. department level or fund level). Any time expenditures are expected to exceed appropriations at the monitored level. Council should consider approving supplemental appropriations.
- Audit Recommendations – Bank Accounts- During our review of bank accounts, we were unable to determine if four (4) accounts had been reported to the State Treasurer in accordance with the Security for Public Deposits Act. We verify the Town’s account against the Treasury listings to ensure accounts are properly reported as public deposits.
- Audit Recommendations – Street Maintenance Program - The Town receives State funding for the maintenance of eligible streets within the Town. The Town is currently allocating wages to the program based on actual time worked by employees. The Town also allocates fringe benefits using a multiplier against allowable wages. The current multiplier is 88.85%; however, this multiplier has not been updated in several years. We recommend that the Town update the multiplier either annually or biennially.
- Independent Accountants’ Report – Town’s payroll system does not produce reports that show VRS wages, employer retirement and employer local disability amounts. We are unable to reconcile these amounts to VNAV. We were able to reconcile employee VRS contributions to expenditures in the Town’s books.
- Copies of adjusting entries included in the report (Audit Presentation pages 9 – 12)
- Accounting Update – Summary of Upcoming Pronouncements by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). (Audit Presentation pages 13-22)
- Change that will affect the Town will be the leases.

Mayor Cury - We can contact you if we have any questions; your contact number is on front of the presentation. Thank you.

Corbin - Thank you

Mayor Cury – Mural Request – Ellen Elmes

Ellen Elmes –

- I would like to address the many Art Works that we have in Richlands. They need some upkeep including the Murals.
- I would like to speak tonight on the Richlands & the Rails – Stories of the Clinch Valley Line Mural that I painted in 2016. It was completed in time for the celebration of the opening of the Section House.
- We were able to have an event called the Mural Speaks. I gave you a narrative about what is in that Mural. Many of them lived here and their families, business people and others are represented in the Mural. Sixteen people were at the event to speak about a relative or themselves that are included in the Mural.
- It is not just a Mural and all the Art Works in our Town; they are not just for the purpose of leisure type of thing or pleasant things to look at but the history.
- Five (5) of the people who spoke at the event have passed away. The college recorded the event that day so their word is now visually on the log.
- Murals are subject to UV rays from the sun, which fades paint.
- I add sealer to the Murals when I paint them to protect them from UV rays, it only last from five (5) to seven (7) years.
- Richlands & Rails has not faded yet; I am asking that the Town supply the funds for having it refinished possibly this coming spring before it starts to fade.

- The Mural is on a free standing wall.
- My husband and I can do the refinishing work. I have given you a breakdown of the estimated cost for the material and labor.
- I am not here personally requesting for my artwork but focus on the Richlands & the Rails artwork now.
- Request that we use ARPA for preservation of Art Work in Richlands, and for ongoing preservation.

Mayor Cury - You are requesting a total of \$850.00. You will need assistance from the Town for scaffolding.

Ellen Elmes – Yes, we would need the assistance of the Town to put up scaffolding as they have done before on other occasions for other Murals.

Mayor Cury - Lynna Mitchell, Ellen and myself had met with John, Ellen presented the numbers but he preferred that we come to Council for approval to spend the money.

Mary Ann – Ellen’s work is absolutely beautiful. When I attended the REEC meeting at the Section House, I was shocked to learn that our Town has more Art Works than Roanoke. That is a compliment to you and your work. I think you are being very generous for \$20.00 per hour especially someone with your talent.

Mary Ann - I make a motion to allocate the \$850.00 to refurbish the Richlands and the Rails, Jeff second the motion.

John - Just for clarification this money will be given to the Section House and run thru their organization. There is more Art Work and this is something we will continue to do.

Mike - Where are you suggesting that we allocate from?

John – I don’t know yet, we have to go back and look at what we have. If you approve we will bring a budget amendment to next month’s meeting.

Mike - If there is a person who wants to donate to the cause who would they make it to?

Mayor Cury - We do accept checks and cash. You can make the check to the Town of Richlands and stub it Section House. We spent a good deal time with John and staff; we will have a separate account for the Section House. If you would like to donate it would be much appreciated.

Mike - I just want you to know that I think you are incredibly talented, I am a young guy but I do understand the importance of preservation. Sometimes we can take the Murals for granted. They add much character to our Town and an important part of our Town. I admire your effort, Thank you.

Ellen Elmes - I want to thank the Town for supporting me all these years. Ginger Branton gave you a brochure earlier of all the Murals in the County. The brochure could use an update for Tourism and other purposes.

Doug - I think we should support this I am all for it. I would like to make a suggestion on how we can fund it. Years past any private organization that had an event in Town they were required to reimburse the Town for the event. Every time someone has a public event it is taking \$2500/\$3000 from the Town to have the police force or town workers there. You can look back at the history. We could put that money toward the preservation of the arts.

John - We can discuss during our budget process some type of fee for events.

Mike - That is not a bad idea.

Doug - We will tell them what it would be to use the police/town staff. They could roll into their event what the expense would be.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call –Doug- Yes, Jeff- Yes, Darrell - Yes, Mike – Yes, Mary Ann – Yes Motion carries – 5 /0. (Richard Brown Absent)

John - Mayor if you will let us know if the cost goes up so we can adjust if needed.

Mayor Cury - Debbie Milton

John - Debbie was not able to be here tonight. I will give the update. We have received three (3) bids for the architect for the planning part of the revitalization. We have to complete this first before we decide which areas we are going to include. A million dollars sounds like a lot but when you start dealing with businesses there may be only 10 or 20 that makes it into the project. At some point we are going to have to make tough decision and decide who is included and who is not. We will work with staff to see where we will get the most benefit from. Unfortunately, you can't pick a large section and pick and choose who you want, you choose one block and every building has to be included. If owners are not willing to work with you it complicates things.

Mayor Cury - Are the meetings around 2:00pm?

John - We only had one meeting, the last one was cancelled. We may or may not need another meeting. At that time we will see if we need a committee or use staff at that time.

Mayor Cury - If the meetings are after school I may be able to make the meeting.

Mayor Cury - Blake Ray – Pop-up Richlands

Blake Ray –

- In 2008 Marion VA developed a program called Pop-Up Marion. (Ken Heath)
- Ken came to meet with a group of people in Richlands; people present were Darrell Addison, Blake Ray, Mike Street, Shannon Plaster, Tim Daniels, and Economic Development Director for the County and Misty Bandy- Small Business Development from SWCC.
- The program has won several nominations across the state for Revitalization of downtown Marion.
- Marion went from a vacancy rate of 25%, to a vacancy rate that is less than 4%. The program is responsible for filling the downtown businesses.
- Andrea Perkins from Ramp-Up Richlands and I drove downtown Richlands the other day, first of all I didn't realize there were that many office space, store fronts. There are over 100 which 30 need help. It goes hand and hand what you are trying to do with the revitalization.
- Will provide training and if people want to open a small business but don't have the education to do that. It is a five (5) week program help entrepreneurs walk from A to B, starting with writing a business plan, how to structure your business. It is all the things you think you want to do but logistics can be a headache. Helps to train the people.
- At the end of the program, the business owners make a presentation; they pitch their ideas and the go thru the judging process. The judges are not from the area. If chosen they are offered micro-grant, usually \$5000 reimbursement.
- Ken was here last week and we asked several questions on how things worked in the program.
- They started their program with a Fall and Spring session each year. They wanted to get the buildings filled quickly. The do maintenance sessions now.

- I come to you today; IDA wanted to adopt the plan to go forward in 2022 fully funded. I come to see if you willing to move up it the line. I have talked to Ashley and she will be running the show on that.
- Looking at the program we will need around \$50,000 it will fund three (3) rounds \$5,000 for marketing. It can come from public or private sources. It will be easier if I could say the Town is funding so much, can you match. Shannon Plaster is on board with helping with the County. There are private and public sources on board too.
- I think there was an ARPA allocation of \$25,000 but was not marked as an immediate item. I would ask that you reconsider.
- Meeting Friday with DSPC they have the infrastructure to support the educational portion. They have helped the County with the Small Business Challenge.
- This would be for Front Street and Second Street and to get those business filled.
- My request is to move to the top of the list and fund this project.
- I came to you last year, it is OK to steal ideas, it works let's do it.
- Other towns have similar programs.
- Please fund the project it is well thought out, we are not reinventing the wheel. We are copying something that works.

Doug - Did Marion get some bigger grants for their main street?

Blake Ray – It was funded thru a private financial institution. They may have since they started the program. It was a match between private and financial institution.

Doug - It is my understanding and I may be wrong but they did get some federal grants.

Blake Ray - Since they have become a Main Street Program it has opened up for more grant opportunities. They started with the Town giving \$14,000 and the financial institution matched it.

Mike - Are you focusing on Main Street?

Blake Ray - Focusing on filling the store fronts.

Doug - I think it is a great idea but I think we should look for grants. That is why we hired Ms. Harris. We have so many problems in Town and our budget is tight. Lake Park is not kept up. I was also going to mention to Chief Gilbert there is a lot of traffic at 3:00am in the morning.

Blake Ray - With all due respect the solution to the problem not having any money is to generate more revenue. You can do in two (2) ways, one (1) you can raise taxes which you are not in favor of doing, bring new business in town and pay into the system.

Doug - If we didn't raise taxes and electric rates and destroy the businesses that are here and are moving out we would not have that problem.

Blake Ray - I am not here for that discussion I am here to talk about Pop-Up Richlands and how it would affect the community.

Mayor Cury - I think it is a very interesting idea. You are asking that we move Item No. 9 on the ARPA list up for immediate release. The amount is \$22,000.

Blake Ray - We ask for \$25,000.

John - I have an updated list to reflect \$25,000.

Darrell - I know we need a lot of other things but if we can create more businesses in Town and fill up business and more money for them to spend on. You would have more tax money coming in that will

help the budget a lot. Seven (7) or Eight (8) of the businesses in Marion went on to buy the building that they were in.

Blake Ray - It generated approx. two million plus capital investment. There were eight (8) buildings purchased in the program and created around 158 jobs. The program works I would not be here having this conversation if I didn't believe in it. The businesses would be taking care of themselves allows the Town to get new sidewalks, etc.

Mayor Cury - Is it part of the revitalization?

Blake Ray - It is not part of the revitalization but works parallel. People and buildings are here just need to invest in them.

Doug - I am not downing the project.

Blake Ray - Money coming from public and private sources. Just asking for the Town to step up and be the first to invest.

Doug - If we don't make some major investments in infrastructure like a new Police and Fire Station and new Rec Center downtown and change the whole face of Richlands a few small businesses will not last.

Blake Ray - I am not making a request for million dollars just \$25,000.

Mary Ann - I just want to thank Blake, Darrell and Mike for taking the time, time is money. I agree with Blake we have to give first before we can expect people to help us. They need to see that we are first in the game. I don't think \$25,000 is a lot to ask for what Pop-Up Richlands can do.

Blake Ray - Ken has agreed to mentor Ashley, the start and finish of this whole program. The support infrastructure is there to make it a success. We have to take the first steps or we are just going to be talking about it.

Doug - We can't even put a drainpipe in for a guy that has asked for eight (8) years. It is part of the Town. If we can't keep up the Town's infrastructure, we need to do that first. We have 500 families affected by the flooding. I don't disagree with it but we have more major problems than that.

Blake Ray - My discussion topic is Pop-Up Richlands and getting that funded. I don't think \$25,000 is going to solve any of those problems. I am just asking for serious consideration.

Mayor Cury - Conditional Use Approval

John - The recommendation from the Richlands Planning Commission is in your packet. They have held their Public Hearing and now needs vote from Council.

Jeff - Read the Recommendation form Richlands Planning Commission.

Mayor Cury - Need a motion to accept or reject the recommendation from the Richlands Planning Commission. It is for Bad Axery.

Darrell - I will make the motion to accept the recommendation from the Richlands Planning Commission, seconded by Doug.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call –Doug- Yes, Jeff- Yes, Darrell - Yes, Mike – Yes, Mary Ann – Yes Motion carries – 5 /0. (Richard Brown Absent)

Mayor Cury - Charter Update Discussion

John - This item will fall under attorney comments but I know that Council was considering the top two out of the four and doing as part of the election and put on the ballot.

Mayor Cury - We had talked about putting on a referendum.

Brad - If voted yes would be included in the Election of 2022 and General Assembly for 2023.

Mayor Cury - We could hold a Public Hearing and take input and the Council vote on what they want based on Public Hearing then send to the General Assembly for approval. Is that correct?

Brad - Yes, the House and Senate decide, supported by public hearing, minutes, resolutions passed by Council, will be 2023.

Mayor Cury - If we get the language to the best of our ability and put as a referendum.

Brad – Referendum changing the language of the Charter. Put the changes on the ballot. That would go to the Legislative in 2023.

Mayor Cury – Whatever the citizens chose that would go to the Legislative in Richmond in 2023.

Brad - If they vote not to change it would stay just like it is now. If there is a change submit to the General Assembly. You would have a certified copy of the election results. The General Assembly would ask you to adopt the change.

Mayor Cury - We talked about in the last meeting we talked about going with Proposal #1 and Proposal #2 is that correct. Is that where we still stand John?

Brad – Could incur cost with the election.

Doug – With the election we do at the same time it would be a minor cost.

Brad - It would be a cost.

Doug – I think it would be a minor cost to give the citizens a voice.

Mayor Cury - Costs are always a concern, depends on the cost obviously. The first one is under Article 3.2- it is about term limits in brief. The second one we talked about was 3.5- Duties of the Mayor and the Vice-Mayor. Is this the two (2) that Council still feels comfortable working with?

Mike – I would like to know what the cost is. I think we need to table until next meeting until we know what the costs are.

Mayor Cury - It is wise not to rush thru this.

Mayor Cury - We can see what the people think about the Charter if that is what Council chooses. You can work on it for the January meeting, and we can take it up at that time.

Mayor Cury - My only question is are we all on board with the first two?

Council – Yes

Mayor Cury – ARPA Discussion Committee

John - Do we want to go thru a committee and if we do what does that mean? Is it going to be a separate meeting from the Planning Commission or they make a recommendation to Council and you decide or get together to have forum?

Doug - My vision was each person would appoint someone and work together on how the money is spent. The citizens and the Council would have a voice on which way the money would be spent.

Mike - I think we should use the Planning Commission and utilize Cumberland Plateau as well.

Mayor Cury - Part of the Planning Commission is the Comprehensive Plan.

Mary Ann - What would be the difference, we had two (2) Public Hearings so if we now form a committee is that being disrespectful to the people who spoke at the Public Hearing. To me it is just adding another layer it is duplicating. I will talk to any citizen as long as they treat me with respect. I am not in favor of committees since we had Public Hearings. As our Town Manager mentioned there are so many questions it is so vague. I compliment Shea Cook, I already had that same idea of involving the Planning Commission and possibly the IDA and when it comes to the Rec monies. The people we have already appointed to the Boards I think we should take their opinions.

Doug - We had open meetings and we had people speak on both sides. You can't get a good view from that. My vision is to have a committee with the citizens working together with the Council. If the Council decides to spend this money on their own, you are going to leave a real bad taste with the citizens and they are already at a low. The morale is low we have people moving out of Town. This is a once in a lifetime chance. You should let the citizens who live here; they want to work with us. The other Commissions can give their views. You could get the Council to work with six (6) citizens. I mean seven (7) Mayor is included. Working with the Council and the citizens, the Town would be behind us. If the Council makes the decision on their own, the morale is going to sink lower in Richlands. That is my view.

Jeff - This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the Town, there are not lack of shortages for great ideas for this money. We all have thoughts and ideas. As Councilmembers we need to hit this out of the park (figure of speech) and get it right. I think doing due diligence as far as researching ideas. We have had Public Hearings and maybe ideas from the Planning Commission, IDA, Rec Commission, and Cumberland Plateau.

Darrell - It is new to me, hard to wrap around. I can see having a committee. To me the Council is going to have the last say don't matter how many committees you have. You have to consider that. I do think business people should have a say in it. I am not against a committee but I go back on forth. I would suggest that John reach out to the Planning Commission because they are citizens. The IDA are citizens. I think we need to include them also. I have thought who I would want to appoint to the committee the one that would want to appoint another Councilmember stole them, but they called this afternoon and ask me to tell Mike that they didn't want to be appointed.

Mayor Cury - For my own selfish reasons, if I appoint someone I am going to appoint someone who will vote just like I do. I think we would all be like that. I think we need to be cautious and do it another way. There is no perfect way when it is all said and done someone is going to be aggravated. We hope the end result would be the greatest way for the number. It won't be perfect. I think involving some of our Boards such as the Planning Commission, IDA and the Rec Commission. I think we should involve Civic groups they have done a whole lot for this Town, like the Richlands Garden Club, Lions Club, Chamber.

Doug - You are going to choose someone out of the community that maybe thinks like you, sure, I am not worried about that, I am worried about not involving the community. We need to make them feel part of it. All the committees you mentioned are important and they are taking part, we need people in the community that is not taking part, business leaders and get their views and the whole citizens will feel better about it.

Mayor Cury - People who don't talk a lot they have feelings too and you are asking us to find who those people are. Is that where it is going here?

Doug - I want some people in the community, business leaders and regular citizens can be on the committee and voice their opinion and feel good when we spend that money. All the other people that you mentioned can be involved. I would hope that you would ask the whole Town different people to be part of the committee.

Brad - They can voice to each individual Councilmembers and can bring to Council.

Doug - That is not the same thing, you need real participation we need bodies here that can go out and say I was part of that. If you just send something in most of the time Council ignores anyway. They do what they want. If we have citizens here and participation and look at Mary Ann, Mike and all of us in the eye they have participation. If you just send a letter no one is going to pay attention to that. Just like I said a guy can't even get a drainpipe and he shows up. I am asking Council one time to ask the citizens let us appoint one and let them take part and of course we make the last decision. At least if they took part in it with us they would feel a lot better.

Mayor Cury - Doug is pushing hard for his idea and I give you credit for that. Consensus

Mike - I can see both sides, it is a very large decision. When I get my Council packet and I see ARPA Discussion Committee, who do I trust, who is unbiased. Who has made decisions on large sums of money? The person I had in mind even said "no". That is the reason I mention Planning Commission and Cumberland Plateau they are experts I want those opinions. I am not perfect, and I have not dealt with five (5) million dollars. I want to make the best decision that I possibly can, I refuse to rush into anything.

Jeff - Think about the situation of the environment that we would have at Rec Commission meeting or Planning Commission meeting. The atmosphere is a lot more relaxed. They are more apt to say what they feel on how we should spend the money. Does that make sense? The two (2) people I asked have said "no" too. They were a little apprehensive in the way we were going to discuss, does not make it wrong or right. Think about what we are asking them to do. The guy you were talking about, he probably has some great ideas, write it up, may be a better way to do it. My plan at the next Planning Commission we talk about this and present to Council.

Darrell - I have thought and thought who to appoint. The guy that me and Mike thought about is very smart and successful but he is considering two (2) projects in Town. One of the reasons he doesn't want to do it. I decided I was going to appoint myself. I think Jeff has a good idea.

Mike - Regarding the committee I won't say yes or no. I would like for John to reach out to Cumberland Plateau.

John - Maybe have a Town Hall meeting let them participate and get input.

Mayor Cury - I don't think the Council wants a committee right now that is what I am hearing.

Darrell - I would like for Council to at least consider appointing someone and come back with a name with it. The biggest thing I have with a committee you get one strong person making all the decisions.

Doug - We have a bunch of strong people right here.

Mayor Cury - Get ideas from the Planning Commission, Rec Commission, IDA, Cumberland Plateau get ideas from them, we are not ready to meet with them.

Mayor Cury - Jeff you get ideas from Planning Commission, Mary Ann you get ideas from Rec Commission. I am not ready to talk to Cumberland Plateau yet. We will stop it right here.

Jeff - What about Public Hearings?

Mayor Cury - I don't think we need one right now.

John - If we bring more people in it is going to be hard to explain how important the Wastewater is and the other projects and we are already committed to those projects. If we don't use some funds for that it going to result in rate increases above what is already planned.

Mayor Cury - Consideration of ARPA Fund Allocation

John - Items #1, #2, #3, #4 – those are the ones we had the Public Hearing for. If this is something you want to do we will need a motion to do that. I will check with the attorney to make sure there are no additional requirements to move forward. I will highlight SSES Grant Funding I have talked to staff and don't think we will need the additional \$20,000. I will discuss how else we can use.

Mayor Cury - So we need to discard SSES from ARPA?

John – Yes, at this time.

Mayor Cury - Mary Ann - Green Space Phase #2, Library, PD Body Worn Cameras

Mary Ann – Yes

Mayor Cury – Mike - Green Space Phase #2, Library, PD Body Worn Cameras

Mike – Yes

Mayor Cury – Doug - Green Space Phase #2, Library, PD Body Worn Cameras

Doug – I am not in agreement with any of them until we start filling potholes, drainpipes and doing things for the citizens. If the Council was in favor of helping the citizens with potholes, drainpipes, flooding, these are all worthy causes but not in favor of anything until we help the citizens.

Jeff – Yes on all three (3).

Darrell – Yes on all three (3).

Mary Ann - I would like to hear John's idea on for the \$20,000. I have an idea but I want to hear his idea first.

John – (Handed out 2021-2022 Capital Budget Proposal) The Street Department \$155,000, Fire Department \$29,000, we applied for grant for new air pack bottles; we did not get that grant this year. We had to come up with the money to buy those. We have a Dump Truck \$155,000 went to get a quote best case scenario will get 12 months from now. We can't spend that money this budget year. I would like to continue to chip away at our capital and whatever we were going to do next year we will do this year. I have \$24,000 for new air pack bottles; we don't know what the final cost is going to be. This is something we are going to have to have. I put \$20,000 from ARPA to offset some of those cost, will allow us to buy two (2) police vehicles and multi-task truck.

Mike - What is the guidelines in ARPA?

Brad - There are five (5) categories for ARPA, support public health response for Covid, address economic impact, replace public sector revenue lost, premium paid for essential workers, water and sewer & broad band infrastructure. You need to properly document what you spend to fit in one of the five (5) categories.

Mike - Do you think this fits in one of the categories.

Brad – It's above my pay grade. Whatever you do you are going to have to properly document whatever it is spent on. Council is going to have to be very creative and very specific. Your auditors can be very helpful in making sure from their interpretation that it fits.

Mike – The first three (3) items for the first round, we allocate them as long it is along the guidelines. I think we need to do some investigation and make sure they are going to fit, and they are going to work.

Brad - You will need to see how ties to Covid, how it is being spent and used for. I think you can be creative but to tell you exactly how to do it I don't know. I think it will take Council and John's staff to determine how it fits in these categories. I think it can be done but you will have to be very careful.

Doug - How is Tazewell building Sports Center? I guess physical fitness.

Brad - How it affected meal tax, job lost and how it would tie in, tourism and industry around tourism. I can't give you anything specific.

Doug - What about new Police Department?

Mayor Cury - Do we need to ask John's staff to research these three (3) (Green Space, Library, and PD Body Worn Cameras) to see if they qualify?

John - I would ask for a motion if it does fit then we could move forward. The Body Cameras, if we don't move forward the cost goes up at the end of the month.

Mary Ann - What John email us seems like all three (3) would be acceptable uses.

Mary Ann – For consideration could we discuss #9 – Business Recruitment Fund (IDA) what Blake Ray spoke about on Pop-Up Richlands.

Mike – Our Fire Department is important we need to take care of what we got, as long as it falls within the guidelines you can't go wrong with public safety. I would recommend to Council that all motion to allocate funds that we add the words "contingent upon". I want to make 100% sure that it can be spent on the things we vote on.

Mary Ann - I make a motion to use ARPA money contingent on each of these fall under the ARPA guidelines. Green Space \$25,000, Library \$154,000, PD Body Worn Cameras \$9,000, Business Recruitment Fund \$25,000 and \$20,000 Air Pack Bottles, Mike seconded the motion.

Doug - I think you are forgetting the basic needs of Richlands. The flooding, need potholes filled, we can't take care of the parks or anything. We need to take care of the basics before we do these things.

Mike - I have to disagree with you, I think these are basic needs and already in the works, Areas that we need to support in our Town, opportunities for us to move forward and show good faith and get to where we need to go. I understand what you are trying to say but these are opportunities for us to start to move forward. I agree with you 100% on what you are addressing, but these things will help the Town.

Doug - I would ask you to go ask those people in Hidden Valley that their house just flooded or the 500 families that were affected by the flooding see which of the four (4) or would they address the flooding. I am sure they are not going to pick these four (4). Once you have flooded and lost everything that you have they are not going to be in favor of this.

Mayor Cury – Points taken Members of Council.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call –Doug- No, Jeff- Yes, Darrell - Yes, Mike – Yes, Mary Ann – Yes Motion carries – 4- Yes/1-No. (Richard Brown Absent)

Mayor Cury - Capital Purchases

John - We just did it.

Mayor Cury - 10-minute Recess

Mayor Cury - Back in Session

Mayor Cury - Town Manager Report – Grant Updates

John – Grant Updates

- Green Space Phase II - Awarded \$50,000, Council just approved additional \$25,000, will move forward with Phase II as soon as Phase I is complete. Phase I has a deadline of February, need around 30 working days to complete.
- VRSA Safety Grant - We applied for a grant for some security cameras at the Rec Park, received \$2,096.00. Will have installed in the next two (2) or three (3) months depends on when they come in.
- Litter Grant - We apply for every year, we received \$3,774.00, not a lot of money but helps with pick up of trash on the side of the road.

John - I know our minutes are lengthy and you know Connie will no longer be our Clerk. Is it something we can trim down, very difficult to find things? Other places only have four (4) or five (5) pages for similar meeting.

Mayor Cury - This was discussed, maybe to get some kind of recording device. Former manager years ago only wanted the facts. I only skim the notes, I don't read them all. I think if we trim down to the facts, Council action.

Doug - What don't you keep the recording and do what you are saying.

John - We already do with the You Tube.

Mayor Cury - When we get a new Clerk we need to ask them to note who was not there to vote on each vote, Example 5/0 (mention who was not there to vote)

John - Conflict of Interest Forms - We can't hand out until after January 3, need back by February 1.

John - Miscellaneous – Fluoride

John - Fluoride - Just a few things to plumb up, they have to have the Engineering and Health Department to do the inspections. Don't know how quick it will happen with the holidays coming up. Will advertise once approved and then start to put fluoride into our water system. It should be January/February as long as they don't have any concerns.

John - We will no longer going to be using "Text My Gov" Program, we don't have the staff and capacity to do it to the level that we would like to.

John - Christmas Parade - Like to thank Ashley, Ramp-Up, churches and everyone who participated.

Mayor Cury – Attorney Comments – Brad

Brad - I will be working with the County on the Fairfax property. The Town cannot do anything at this time. Will keep you updated.

Mayor Cury – Council Member Reports – Mary Ann Strong

Mary Ann –

- Rec Commission has two (2) vacancies – I will make a motion based on their recommendations.

Mary Ann - I will make a motion to appoint Rocky Hill to take Cindy Smith's position as an out-of-town member, Patricia Sizemore Matney to take Chris Hess's position. Both Cindy Smith and Chris Hess resigned, Jeff seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury - All say "I" if in favor, unanimous vote.

John – Are the members good with appointing and not changing their By-Laws at this time?

Mary Ann - At this time, but we will continue to discuss.

- Meeting Monday 6:00pm at the Rec Park.
- Christmas - I want to applaud Ramp-Up Richlands, Ashley Harris, local churches and everyone who participated in the parade. Best Christmas Parade Richlands has had in a long time.
- Employee Christmas Luncheon – Thanked John and Staff, the employees appreciated.
- Shop With Cop - My favorite thing to do each year, last Saturday and Sunday at Walmart, each child given \$80.
- Received some pictures before the meeting tonight there was some vandalism at Lake Park.

Doug – Chief Gilbert could I ask you to patrol around 3:00 am/4:00am in the morning at Lake Park, lot activity going on down there.

Mary Ann –

- Attended the REEC meeting last week, Lynna hosted at the Section House. It was such a good meeting since we had been meeting by zoom. Compliment Mayor Cury on the Section House.
- Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and try to remember Christ is the reason for the season.

Mayor Cury – Council Member Reports – Jeff Hurst

Jeff –

- Applauded Chief Gilbert for the effort in fundraising. Great Event
- Mayor Cury hosted an event at the Section House, History Class attended, enjoyed the history lesson from the Town historian.
- Merry Christmas to Everyone.

Mayor Cury – Council Member Reports – Doug Ratliff

Doug -

- Is there anything we can do on the Bridge on Second Street and fill those potholes?
- Kents Ridge is awful especially in front of Richard's driveway, it is eating out and now out into the road. Ask John to look into it especially in front of Richard's house.

Mayor Cury – Council Member Reports – Mike Street

Mike –

- Wanted to echo Shop with Cop was fantastic, I didn't get to go but seen the pictures.

- Christmas Parade – Thanked Ashley Harris, I have been tasked to get Clydesdale horses to come next year.
- Merry Christmas to everyone.

Mayor Cury – Council Member Reports – Darrell Addison

Darrell –

- I was in meeting with Blake Ray and I am on Tazewell County IDA. Being involved in the Fish Farm from day one.
- We need camp sites for campers; will be 400 people when construction starts.
- They have already spent twenty to thirty million dollars.
- If we don't supply a place for the people to live along with restaurants they will go to Lebanon, Abingdon, Princeton, etc.
- Maybe we can change some of the zoning; if someone has a vacant lot would be a great opportunity to make some money.
- Going to be a housing problem, going to be 218 employees.
- If anyone has any ideas, please let me know.

Mayor Cury - Mayor's Comments

- Christmas parade was wonderful. Lots of people doing photography at the Section House.
- Unable to go with Shop with Cop, apologize for not being there.
- Merry Christmas to everyone.

Mayor Cury – Executive Closed Session - 2.2-3711(A) Attorney Consultation, Contract Negotiations, Property Acquisition, Teen Venture, ongoing litigation, Attorney consultation, separate contract negotiations, and property acquisition on Front Street.

Jeff – I make the motion to go into Executive Closed Session, Mike seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call –Doug- Yes, Jeff- Yes, Darrell - Yes, Mike – Yes, Mary Ann – Yes Motion carries – 5 /0. (Richard Brown Absent)

Mayor Cury – Council is now back in regular session, I will entertain a motion to return to regular session from Closed Session and in so doing with your vote you are certifying that Council has discussed nothing except what was proposed to be discussed in executive session, 2.2-3711(a) Attorney Consultation, Contract Negotiations, property acquisition, Teen Venture, ongoing litigation, Attorney consultation, separate contract negotiations, and property acquisition on Front Street.

Jeff - I make the motion, Mike seconded the motion

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call –Doug- Yes, Jeff- Yes, Darrell - Yes, Mike – Yes, Mary Ann – Yes Motion carries – 5 /0. (Richard Brown Absent)

Mayor Cury - Next regular Council meeting is January 11, 2021.

John - Legal Counsel is not available on January 11.

Mayor Cury - If we change regular meeting date it is a big deal.

Mary Ann - We depend on him a lot.

Mayor Cury – (Read Resolution of Opioid Epidemic). Is there a motion to adopt this Resolution and the accompanying documents?

Mike - I will make the motion, Mary Ann seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call –Doug- Yes, Jeff- Yes, Darrell - Yes, Mike – Yes, Mary Ann –Yes Motion carries – 5 /0. (Richard Brown Absent)

Mayor Cury - Our regular council meeting is January 11 but our attorney has informed us he will not be able to be here. I am requesting that Council agree with January 18, 2022. If it is accepted, I will need a motion to move the regular council meeting January 11 to January 18.

Mike - I will make the motion to move the Regular Council Meeting of January 11 to January 18, Jeff seconded the motion.

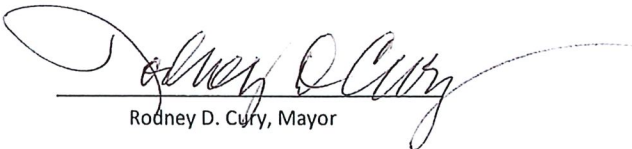
Mayor Cury - Voice Vote - All "I", motion carries unanimously. (Richard Brown Absent)

Mayor Cury - Thanked Connie for her service as Clerk.

Adjourned.



Connie Allen, Town Clerk



Rodney D. Cury, Mayor