

The Richlands Town Council held a "Regular Meeting" on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in the Richlands Council Chambers at 6:00 pm with the following present:

Mayor: Rod D. Cury

Town Manager: John O'Daniel

Town Clerk: Rebekah Hackworth

Council Members: Jeff Hurst, Doug Ratliff, Kristen Thompson-Whitt, Darrell Addison, Mike Street, and Seth White.

Town Attorney: Michael Thomas

Mayor Cury opened the meeting.

Mayor Cury gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Cury- Council, you should have your agenda packets before you and several handouts including wastewater treatment plant and system DPT improvements. Our wastewater treatment upgrades and other assorted things, so we shall begin.

First, we have additions/deletions to the agenda. John, you had a change?

John- I had a couple changes, and I am just going to pass out a new agenda so you can visualize what changes I'm asking for. We have a number 9 and number 10. Those are the two closed sessions. We will not need closed sessions this evening, but instead of getting rid of those agenda items, I've added an IDA update from Phillip Horton at number 9. Then a county economic development incentive discussion at number 10 has been added. So essentially, we just get rid of those two closed session lines and add in those two speakers in those numbers.

Mayor Cury-Okay, so the updated agenda, for the benefit of the audience, members of council, and those present, Roman numeral 9 has been changed to IDA update from Phillip Horton, the chairman of the board. Roman numeral 10 has been changed to county economic development incentive discussion by Tim Danielson. Okay, are there any other additions or deletions to the agenda? Okay, thank you. Before we approve the agenda, I would like to ask those who are present who would like to speak in unscheduled public comments, which is a 3-minute comment period, to please raise their hands so we can acknowledge it. Morgan, would you mind going and getting me the sign-up sheet? So, we'll have that, and I will make sure everybody's name is on the list that wishes to speak. Thank you very much for your patience. Thank you, Morgan, I appreciate that. So, this is for the public comment period 3 minutes. I'll read these names and add them first, and then we'll take other members who are here to be added. So, we're looking at Roman numeral 8 and have Patricia Sparks, Dana Altizer Moats, and Morgan Earp. Now, is there anyone else here that would like to speak under the three-minute public comment section? I see a hand. What is your name?

Donnie Wade

Mayor Cury- Okay. Thank you, Donnie. Let's add Donnie Wade. Is there anyone else who would like to speak to council tonight in the three-minute public comment? I see no one else asking to be acknowledged for this so we will move on. We are back to additions or deletions to the agenda. Are there any other changes to the agenda? Okay, there being no further changes the chair will entertain a motion to accept the agenda as amended.

Jeff- I make a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Kristen 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- Jeff- Yes, Doug- Yes, Kristen- Yes, Darrell- Yes, Mike- Yes, Seth- Yes. Motion carries -6/0.

Mayor Cury- Next on the agenda is the consent agenda. We have authorization to pay the bills for May. Approval of the minutes: regular meeting May 10<sup>th</sup>, public hearing May 24<sup>th</sup>, regular meeting May 24<sup>th</sup>. Authorize a line of credit from the National Bank for water treatment plant upgrades and improvements for \$19,536. Is there anything that someone would like to discuss before we have a motion on the consent agenda?

Seth- Mr. Mayor, it's on the check registry. I reached out to the town manager today and he sent me this information with the Gillespie Heart Altizer Whitesell bill. This is the April Town Attorney's fees, and it was almost \$11,000, and I haven't finished going through everything, but there's a breakdown of all the billing for that. I know we've talked about this previously. I don't doubt that they're doing a fantastic job, but if this is going to be our average billing, we can hire a full-time attorney at less than it's costing us to do this. So, do you know how much we paid this year to our attorneys? That would just be their bill through April so that's four months of the year.

John- So, the month you are referring to, I looked at it and \$4,400 of that was trying to get the budget ready which is some different things that we had to make sure we got in place. Then, about \$2,200 was when we had two members of council resign and that kind of put us shorthanded trying to figure that out. So, we have had some unexpected expenses. I have the one that just came in for May and it's closer to what I think is the average, which is at about \$5,700.

Seth- Okay.

John- So, we've had a couple months where they were higher because something just unusual, or out of the norm, or things like the budget, and the time they spend on the budget this year. Now that it is in place, we won't have to do it next year. There will just be an update. It was higher than what the average is for that month.

Seth- I understand that we have a need, and you have to have a Town Attorney, but my thought process on this is, if you're going to spend this amount of money then you're getting to the point where we can potentially hire a full-time town attorney and pay less money than we're paying out. How much did we budget this year for the Town Attorneys?

Doug- I think it was about \$90,000. It was \$125,000 and they took it down to \$90,000. Three years ago, we were paying \$4,500 caps for attorneys monthly. At this rate, we're going to pay over \$100,000 this year. So, I think we should hire a full-time attorney.

Seth- Well, I want you guys to know, I'm not criticizing you at all. I'm just trying to make the comparison. I think that the rate that they're charging us is in line. I don't see anything astronomical about any of that. I wish that I would have been here when you negotiated it because I probably would have asked if you exceed X amount of billable hours in a month you should get a reduction on that cost. Also, if it's one of the partners that's doing the legal work, maybe there's a rate for that. I think there's a few things, if you enter into another agreement like this, that you could look at to save some money. Also, if you are going to exceed a certain amount, then you need council authorization. I just think there needs to be some figures in there where you say we're going to exceed \$7,000 this month or \$6,000 or whatever it is we probably should get approval for that. Just some thoughts from my perspective. I think that it definitely warrants a discussion of whether or not we should hire someone full time because that person could do some other things. If they're on your full-time salary, they can also pick up some additional items.

Doug- My thoughts - I asked for caps if it went over a certain amount. I was turned down by the whole council, but I brought up all those issues, and I was turned down.

Jeff- There were only two council members here at the time. It was only Mikey and me. Right?

Doug- I brought up caps, and you guys turned me down.

Jeff- Not to them.

Mayor Cury- Doug, I can help you out some with this. You did bring up caps, and we had already interviewed the firm, and they stuck with what they had proposed.

Seth- So, it's just my thought. I just wanted to mention that, and again, I'm not arguing with the rate they charge or anything like that. I'm just saying that this is something we should look at.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Seth. I think we could take that to heart. I do want to add, regarding your firm, you've been doing excellent work. It's not a reflection of your work; it's just purely economics.

Doug- I would add that also. It is nothing against your firm.

Mayor Cury- I think this is something that we can consider. I think it would be a workshop that we could look at these things. Thank you, Seth, and Doug.

Are there any other questions about the consent agenda? We have two check registers, minutes, and the authorization for a line of credit drawdown.

Jeff- I make a motion to approve the consent agenda. 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- Jeff- Yes, Doug- Yes, Kristen- Yes, Darrell- Yes, Mike- Yes, Seth- Yes. Motion carries -6/0.

Mayor Cury- Next on our agenda is wastewater project update and discussion by Rick Chitwood.

Rick- Thank you, Mayor. I wanted to come and update the council on both of your capital projects: your wastewater treatment plant upgrade and your water project. I handed out two handouts earlier. I know several of the council members were not present when we started this project back in 2017. I just want to say that this is the first time in my 38-year career that I have had to come and get direction on something like this.

In 2019, we submitted a funding application to the Department of Environmental Quality for your wastewater and treatment plant upgrade. At that time, the project cost was \$10,916,316. As we progressed and moved forward and we got our funding offer from DEQ, they offered that amount of money to the Town of Richlands at a half a percent interest for a 25-year term. We were doing your water treatment plant and water system evaluations at that time when we submitted the funding applications, and I know y'all heard this before, these funding agencies look at a lot of the community's ability to pay the debt payments. They look at your overall budget, general fund. A lot of these things that come into play, and at that time, the Town of Richlands water and sewer rates were so low they would not give the town principal forgiveness money. You did not qualify for disadvantage money. That's what they call low interest or principal forgiveness, or both combined at that time. I think shortly thereafter the town hired a third party, Mr. Brown, to do a rate study based off your capital projects. He did that study and came up with some recommendations on the rates to pay your proposed debt. I think you folks are going through that stage right now, with raising your rates, just to get to the \$10.9 million budget for the sewer and the \$3.8 million budget for the water. Once you got your rates, or you showed them you were going to do those rates over time, DEQ came back and reduced that \$10,916,316 and offered you \$2,734,864 in grant because your rates were going to be at that level you are now. You are considered a disadvantaged community.

For your water, the health department offered you \$3,889,000 and they looked at it and came back and gave you a \$415,000 grant to reduce that loan amount because of rates you plan to raise. So, that's a little history on how it was going, and during this time frame, I had come to council a couple of times. I shared with the council our concerns on seeing the cost escalation in construction just going up, going up, and going up. I think last time we gave an update we figured about a 35% increase in your construction cost which added about \$3 million to the project on the sewer plant and about \$1,000,000 on the water. Well, with that in mind, it brought the revised total project for the sewer to \$13,296,937, and that's based off our estimated increase. Unfortunately, we opened bids with three contractors, and English construction, a very reputable contractor out of Lynchburg, VA. They were the low bidder at \$12,653,797. When you look at that, and look at your overall project budget, that puts you \$4 million over the original funding offer. At that time, John and I called and met with the DEQ and asked them would they consider providing the additional funding to the town and we would like it if they could provide it all in principal forgiveness grant, which I kind of doubted they would do that. Now, our bid documents have a 90-day award period. From the time you open the bids the contractor has to honor that bid for 90 calendar dates. So, his bid was going to run out June 1<sup>st</sup>. We didn't get word back until right close to June 1<sup>st</sup>. Heather, John and I were in here meeting and talking with DEQ and they came back with another counteroffer. That counteroffer was another \$1,000,000 in loans which was going to require another rate increase, and \$1,455,000 in change grant if the town would match that with the \$1,455,000 grant from your ARPA money. So, I went back to the contractor and asked him would you give us 30 more days to just work this out because his bid was getting ready to run out. He turned us down, and he said he is not able to hold the price longer than the period required. He had already received multiple notices of supplier's price increases. So, we

talked to the funding agency again and I'm just not man enough to stand here tonight and ask you all to raise your rates again. I think the construction market is totally out of control. I think the supply and demand is killing everybody. I asked and John asked both funding agencies if they would hold your original offer of funding that they provided to you for another year and let us try to get through for another year and try to readvertise next fall. Is it going to be down by next fall? I don't know. I'm struggling right now. I know folks in town, just like everywhere else, are having a hard time getting gas and groceries and everything else. Already you're faced with doing rate increases just to get the original offer. To move forward, you're going to have to do another rate increase. You are going to be faced every month with the contractors coming in wanting more money. Like I said, this is the first time in my career I've ever been in a position like this. I just don't think I can ask the council to move forward with these projects right now. I think we can get by another year.

The high service pump at the water plant might have some issues, but I think they have replaced one before and they could do it again. I talked to the guys down at the sewer plant. He thinks they can get through for another year, but I'm here tonight to tell you, if you decide you want us to move forward, I just want everybody to move forward with their eyes wide open. Know what we are faced with and know that each month that contractor is going to be coming in asking for more money and more time, and it's not the contractor's fault. They can't get quotes longer than 15 days, so they're having to bid and bid high to protect themselves.

I want to mention in that handout Kelly Ward, she is the lady in Richmond that's over the funding for the water projects, and I thought she summed it up well, "The market has lost its ever-loving collective mind..." and that's statewide, but, Mayor, I'm fully prepared. I've got some draft letters behind these tabs if you wanted us to stop effective tomorrow. We can stop everything we are doing and put it on the shelf. We can send a letter to the funding agencies telling them to honor your original loan. If you would like to revisit next year, or if you want to move forward, I'll try to get everything, but I cannot make any promises with the contractors.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Rick, I'm sure council has some questions. Just for my clarification, if we do not move forward for a year, are you suggesting that we can make it with our water supply that we have?

Rick- I think so. I've asked our engineers, and I've talked to Brad at the water plant. The only thing with the water project, we have a lot of tank painting, but I think it could go another year. We have some new lines we are putting in.

The big thing at the water plant was the backwash and then also the high service pump. If the high service pump goes out, I think you could probably fix it for about \$100,000. The last one that went out the town put it in themselves. It may last another year, but that's a whole lot cheaper. If you do it, then that will be one less thing when you do have to replace when you crank back up again.

Mayor Cury- Money notwithstanding and of course it always is standing, but what about the quality and the safety of our drinking water for our citizens?

Rick- I do not think it will suffer one bit.

Mayor Cury- That's a critical question.

Rick- I do want to commend all your water people and the sewer people. You got that longevity out of those facilities because of their attention to maintenance, and so it's really got longer life than what you would expect.

Mayor Cury- Okay, council, thoughts on this demise? The floor is open. Would anyone like to speak?

Doug- I trust Mr. Chitwood's evaluation. I am all for waiting because you know what you're doing.

Rick- I do want to add, I know the town has held on to some of your ARPA money or COVID money, and I think you may want to hang on to some of that in case something was to happen.

Mayor Cury- Thank you. Doug, you have expressed your thoughts. Would anyone else like to say anything?

Mike- I have a couple. Let's say for instance nothing changes with the market in the next 12 months. What does that look like? What's worst case scenario look like?

Rick- I think the worst case would that be the Funding Agency would probably want to come back and withdraw your money. I don't think that's going to happen. I think if they withdrew it like they would come back and realize it's not just Richlands and Southwest Virginia. It's all over the state. I think they would still honor those commitments. I can't help but believe in my mind it may even get a little bit better, if we slow this demand down. We had 14 pre-qualified contractors for both Richlands and Tazewell. They were pre-qualified with a knowledge of how to build wastewater facilities. The Town of Richlands had three bidders and the Town of Tazewell had two. The rest of the contractors are loaded up and have a lot of work going on. So, maybe the market will slow down, and if anything, maybe the contractors will get a little bit hungrier. As far as the supply and demand, I wish I could look that far in.

Mayor Cury- This is not surprising that this has happened even in very small jobs around the home. Anyone that has done them knows that the cost has gone up exponentially. So, thank you, Mike. Did you have something else you wanted to ask?

Mike- Yes, just one more question. Concerning the risk factor for the maintenance of current standing operation, would you say that that is a low risk?

Rick- I'd say it's 50/50, Mike, because you are working right now on the extended life facilities.

Mike- Okay.

Rick- It's outlived its normal life. Again, I'll come back to you on your maintenance staff and crew. They do excellent work and keep on top of it. I think that any of your high-ticket stuff, I think will be okay. When I say high-ticket stuff, I mean \$300,000 to \$400,000 type stuff. Pumps, you may have a bearing or something like that and a lot of parts for the sewer plant. You just can't get anywhere. Jimmy's done a good job looking at eBay and over places trying to get parts.

Mike- Would you have a suggestion or recommendation regarding how much money we should potentially set aside from what we call our ARPA funds for additional maintenance needed within the next 12 months.

Rick- I would suggest 100,000 per each facility. I do want to mention this. John asked me a good question. In the back of each one of these, I gave you a detailed breakdown of our invoices to date what we charged them for those projects. These funding agencies will not close the loan until you awarded construction contract. So, you might have two options. You may talk to your bond counsel and see if they'll do a loan closing on just your upfront cost to date, or if you talk to your local banks that finance it and see if they will give you an extension on your time. Right now, they won't close it and reimburse you that money until you award it to construction.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Rick. Any other comments.

Mike- That topic led me to another question. So, if we put this on hold the work that T&L has already completed, are we at risk of repeating any of those costs?

Rick- No sir. We will put that on the shelf. You might have to do the readvertising again.

Mike- Okay.

John- Rick, can you clarify the question that Mike asked earlier. You said we needed \$100,000 for any unexpected repairs but for the matches that DEQ...as of right now we kind of error-marked like 4.1 million.

Rick- Yes, I think if you wanted to keep that in place, that would be great. Then that would cover any unexpected problems that might come up and you would still have your money to match when you get ready to go to do the project again.

Mayor Cury- I appreciate that, John. I was wondering about that same thing. John or any other members of council, do you all have any other comments?

Doug- Are there any stipulations on when we must spend that money?

John- We are working with our auditor. So, essentially, it is not going to be called ARPA money anymore. It will all just be general fund/reserves. So, there won't be any restrictions or anything on that.

Seth- So, we've already almost paid Thompson & Litton over \$1,000,000. Where did that money come from?

Rick- It came from local financing interim.

John- Interim financing. We would have to reach out and see if they will extend that loan. We can't close on that loan in the bigger project.

Seth- Is that VRS or local banks?

John- It is from National Bank.

Seth- Okay, are we done paying Thompson & Litton, or are you all going to continue to bill us?

Rick- We will be done tonight if that is what you guys choose. I have a letter here for the mayor to consider. It's a draft to send to us telling us to stop effective tomorrow. We will put this project on the shelf and there will be no more billings. The other letter is a draft for you to consider sending to the funded agency telling them you would like for them to hold the original offer and that you would consider readvertising next fall.

Mayor Cury- I think that's reasonable. Are there any other questions from council before I ask for direction?

Doug- I have a question. What was the interest rate from National Bank?

John- I would have to look that up. That was before I came here.

Doug- Could you look that up, Heather, and let us know?

John- Yes, we can get that to you.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Doug. Does anyone else have questions for Rick?

Rick- I hate to be here telling you this, but like I said, I'm struggling right now. I know a lot of folks are struggling hard. I know each and every one of you are struggling with this budget and having to do things. I know you don't want to hear this, but you got this offer on the table based off your previous rate that you agreed to increase. You must make sure that you get this original offer.

Mike- So, what you are saying is, if we don't do that because we are holding off, it could potentially jeopardize all of our money?

Rick- Yes. Virginia Resource Attorney is the one overseeing that.

Mayor Cury- Thank you. I would appreciate a motion from council approving Rick's recommendations so that I have council's backing to sign these letters. Seth, did you have another question?

Seth- Yes, Sir. I'm just curious, and I know we'll get into this discussion in a minute, but if we raise the rate and there's this vast increase over \$1,000,000, I believe was the change from last year to this year, what are you going to do with that money? Where does that money go? Are you going to put that money into a reserve account? Is it going to be held in the water and sewer fund?

John- There are two parts of it. One are the organizations that gave us the financing. They said our rates were too low. Also, the money is going to be in the reserves because we had to build the reserves to that certain level. So, we have been slowly building those with the newer rates.

Seth- I get that, but you can't reallocate that money into anything else.

John- No. It is water fund/reserves.

Rick- And VRA controls that. (Virginia Resource Authority)

Mayor Cury- Any other thoughts, Rick, that you would like to share with us?

Rick- No. I think that pretty much covers it.

Doug- I have one more question. How much did our water rates go up? 30%?

Rick- I can't remember, Doug. I know Mr. Brown was the one who done them. I know he looked at our rates, looking at where you were, and looking at the debt. He wasn't working towards getting it at a level to get grant money. He was working to get it to a level to meet your debt payment.

Doug- I know you are asking us to raise the water rates, and I am willing to vote for it, only if the town will agree to stop taking money out of the fund. What are you taking out, Heather? I think it is \$200,000 out of the general fund.

Heather- Are you talking about shared expenses?

Doug- Yes, supposedly shared expenses. I will agree to vote for it if the town will stop taking money out and allocating it for something else. But that is the only way I will vote for an increase.

Mayor Cury- Do you have these draft letters that you would like for me to sign?

Rick- Yes, Sir. They are in that handout I gave everyone.

Mayor Cury- Do we have a motion from council giving me direction signing these draft letters?

Seth- I make a motion that the mayor signs three letters stopping the project with Thompson & Litton. 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- Jeff- Yes, Doug- Yes, Kristen- Yes, Darrell- Yes, Mike- Yes, Seth- Yes. Motion carries -6/0.

Doug- I have a question for John. Why can't we stream these meetings on the Richlands Channel?

John- It is on there. It's been back on there since April 22, 2022.

Doug- Okay, thank you. Good job.

Mayor Cury- Okay, we are moving on to Scheduled Public Comments by Laura Mollo. I have a personal announcement to make. Bryan Stillwell will no longer be able to continue being our volunteer timekeeper. He is going to be relocating to Bristol but commuting, and because of the distance, time constraints prohibit him from continuing this duty. I want to say thank you, Bryan, publicly for being such a good citizen and stepping forward from day one to be the timekeeper and doing it so diligently, carefully, and respectfully to the council, to the mayor, and to the citizens. It really makes a big difference. Bekah, I will draft a letter and would you please transcribe that on a letter head and mail that to him with my personal thanks on behalf of the council. Thank you. So, tonight, Chris Hale is here and has agreed to become our new volunteer timekeeper. Thank you, Chris.

Okay, We have Laura Mollo, who is going to speak about our dispatch.

Laura Mollo 262 Linwood Drive, Richlands, VA.

"First may we have an update regarding the charter changes that are coming into place on July 1<sup>st</sup>? We were unable to have a public hearing so we could fast track them through the General Assembly but never heard anything else about the changes. Also, regarding the economic development position, you guys have already passed the budget with that built into it. I do not believe that's a necessary position at this point. My suggestion is, since it's already in the budget, let the county help us see what they can do for four - six months, and, if at the end of those six months we decide we need more, then you guys can revisit hiring that position.

After the last meeting, a conversation took place in this room, and during that time, our police chief, Jerry Gilbert, made the comment about 911 that it had went down over the weekend and the calls had to be paged out by Richlands. I FOIA'd the calls from the Town of Richlands and that Tazewell County 911 Center and found the CAD sheets from Richlands that said things like "Tazewell County Sheriff's Office had to page out due to their equipment not working." After

comparing the calls and the communications from the original calls given to me by Jerry, the proof shows that 911 never went down. I don't think anyone is expecting any council member to have a magic wand to fix things or to have all of the answers, but we do expect you to operate with the correct information. The Town of Cedar Bluff had to mention a council member by name at their last meeting and correct the wrong information given by him. This is embarrassing to this town and damaging to the decisions you are making. You can't make the decisions with the wrong information. I am now going to read my FOIA response and e-mail from Sheriff Brian Hieatt regarding the matter.

Mrs. Mollo, after looking over the request you emailed me along with the follow up questions you gave me, I've gathered the following information. After speaking with my 911 Director and our Radio Technician, along with looking at the call logs and recordings, it appears that we were contacted on January 26th of this year by Captain Whited. He requested us to call down to the Police Department with any rescue calls that did not come across their pagers (which ended up being 8 calls during those six days) because the Richlands Rescue Squad was having problems with their pagers. Part of the problem may have been that during the week there was a lot of snow and ice which affects the different agencies tower sites throughout the county. Tim Honaker, our in-house Radio Technician, went to their Rescue building along with a member of Richlands Rescue Squad and tweaked up a system in their station which ended up taking care of their problem. Please remember that the 911 Center does not own, purchase, repair, or maintain any pagers through the agencies throughout the county. They belong to the individual agencies. However, we have worked together with various agencies when they have a problem and Tim went and offered help when needed.

As for your other questions:

You asked if we lost power or had equipment failure during the last week of January, No- the 911 Center was not down or out of power during the days of January 26<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup>. We have been fortunate that in the 11 years the 911 Center has been in this building we have not lost power, nor has our communications equipment been down. We do have a backup procedure where the 911 lines would be transferred to Russell County 911 Center if that were to ever happen, as only other 911 Center would be able to take over the calls coming in from 911 lines.

Another question you have asked is if there were any paging problems with any other agency during those days throughout our county. The answer is no. There were no problems with any other emergency agency throughout the county during those days. There are times when another agency will have problems with their pagers or tower, as Richlands did, and when that happens, we do everything we can to work with the agency and assist them with their equipment.

You also requested our call volume for those days. During the days of January 26<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> the 911 Center received a total of 1,297 calls. Of those calls -513 came in on the 911 lines. (The others came in on non-emergency lines). Of those 1,297 total calls -55 were for the Richlands area. Of those it looks like 8 were given to the Richlands Police Department upon request due to their pager problems. The other ones were paged out were heard across their pagers and we received a response. I would also note that during those days, even when their pagers did not pick up on those 8 calls, their radios worked fine, and we were able to dispatch and communicate with them on each call. Their CAD alert text messages were also not affected during the time showing each call we paged out.

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely, Brian Hieatt, Sheriff."

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Ms. Mollo

Okay, that concludes scheduled public comment. We are moving on to Unscheduled Public Comments. First up, we have Patricia Sparks.

Patricia Sparks 130 Dalton St Richlands, VA.

"Good evening, Mayor Cury, and distinguished members of the board, as well as the citizens of the great town of Richlands. My name is Patricia Sparks, and my husband was Fred Sparks. Fred was born and raised in Richlands, and his father was a coal miner here most of his life in the 1980's. When Fred was 17, his family moved to Daytona Beach, FL. I was also raised in Bristol,



VA, and when I was 13, my father, mother, and my four siblings moved to Daytona Beach, FL. Fred and I met in Daytona Beach and married in 1999 and returned to Richlands in 2010 for the first time since we moved away. We fell in love with the people and the area all over again, and in 2012, we purchased a home here located at 130 Dalton Street hoping that one day we would be able to spend at least half of our retirement here. Sadly, Fred passed in January. Most of Fred's family and my family consider ourselves Virginians more than Floridians at heart. We would like to keep the dream of spending more time here alive. I humbly come before you today to ask the board to grant me and my family an extra portion of land which contains our front yard, our driveway, our mailbox, our parking area, our picnic and play area which we have been maintaining since our original purchase in 2012. We are interested in making plans to add to the property to accommodate more of our friends and family in the future. I have a survey of the property if you would like a copy. Thank you for hearing me tonight, and I sincerely hope to speak and meet with some of you about this matter in the future. Thank you."

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Ms. Sparks. Have you submitted your request to the Town Manager?

Patricia- I called when I was still in Daytona, and the person I spoke with said for me to come to this meeting as a start.

Mayor Cury- Okay, that seems like a good start. I would suggest that you present your request to the Town Manager. That is protocol, and then it will go before the Planning Commission, and they will come back with their recommendation.

Next, we have Dana Moats.

Dana- "My name is Dana Moats, and I live at 542 Terry Dr. Hey everybody. I was watching Mike while Laura Mollo was speaking, and I got really aggravated. You know one of the problems we have here is you all do not listen. Especially Mike. You know people get up to talk, and you're fiddling with your phone and looking down. The first time I came to a meeting after Hidden Valley was annexed, you guys were playing with your cell phones like it was musical phones. That's rude. I was a manager twice, and you darn well better not bring your phones to any meeting that I'm over. Mike, I hear some good ideas out of you, but that's very rude. You had your phone out and you never listened to one minute of what Laura said. Then you wonder why you are getting negative comments about you. I just think it would go a whole lot better if you would listen to us, and we would listen to you. That's all I have to say."

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Dana. I want to let everyone know that we take all your comments to heart. I'm speaking on behalf of the council, and we are trying to have remarks made generally to everybody not to just one person in particular. Thank you. Okay, next up is Morgan Earp.

Morgan Earp- "1618 6<sup>th</sup> Street. One thing I want to know is if there's any updates relating to the constitutional matter I brought up last week? Secondly, Point Broadband coming is amazing. I think they are expensive. However, I didn't know, but I follow ACP (Affordable Connectivity Program) and basically, I got \$30 off a month. I just wanted to let the town know about that. If any of the citizens wanted to look into that for their internet. Spectrum is a part of it too. So, my third point is, what do we get into here? I feel like we all just do the tango together and we dance around for everything until elections come around or until something happens. You should just let the people lead this dance and you should just follow. That's pretty much all I have to say."

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Morgan. Next, we have Donnie Wade.

Donnie- "My name is Donnie Wade. I live at 218 Lake Park. Thank you for letting me speak to you guys tonight. I would like to ask that you might consider passing to allow 4-Wheelers on the streets. If they do buy a sticker that says Cedar Bluff and Richlands, then both could combine forces and charge \$50 for the sticker. The money would then be split between the two towns. We need to get them to carry liability insurance, and they will have to show proof of insurance when they get their sticker. I think that would be a way to generate revenue without having to raise taxes and stuff. Thank you for allowing me to speak."

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Donnie, and thank you ladies and gentlemen for speaking tonight. Your input is great because we need it in a democracy. Okay, so we are moving on, and I don't see attorney comments on here, but I'll add that for you so you can speak about an update to Morgan Earp.

John- We are going to address it under my miscellaneous.

Mayor Cury- Okay, so we have an altered Roman numeral 9 for the IDA update by Phillip Horton chairman of the IDA.

Phillip Horton- "Well, good evening, and I appreciate the opportunity to be here. Mr. Mayor, council members, and town manager, I want to thank you for your confidence in me by appointing me to the IDA board. Also, I want to thank you for the job that you do. It's a thankless job in many, many ways, just ask Justice Kavanaugh, but I thank you for your service. I certainly hope, pray, and plan to make a positive impact for the town.

I've already hit the ground running and want to update you all. We have had two IDA meetings and the first one was on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022. That was a very busy day for me. My wife Carolyn was scheduled for a heart Cath, so we got up at 4:30 in the morning to be at the hospital at 6:00. We got home after two in the afternoon and the IDA meeting was scheduled here at 6:00 o'clock that evening. I want to say this publicly. I want to acknowledge Peter Mulkey and the staff that he's assembled at the hospital. We could not have been treated better or more professionally than we were at Clinch Valley Medical Center, and the results were good as well.

I introduced myself to the IDA board by presenting my vision for the future for the Town of Richlands. I want Richlands to get back into the electric generating business. I want Richlands to become energy independent, not totally energy reliant on AEP or anyone else. Richlands had electricity when the surrounding areas were still using kerosene lamps. In 1945, when my family moved here from adjoining Russell County, my older brothers Don and Ralph would sit mesmerized for hours looking at the single bulb hanging from the ceiling in the house. They were so used to living in darkness at night.

The Town of Richlands was started by the Clinch Valley Coal and Electric Company in 1890. They launched the Richlands water, electric light, gas, and power company in 1891. After the panic of 1893, the economic recession, caused by Grover Cleveland's re-election, caused the stock market crash, and they deserted the town. Then five entrepreneurial citizens bought the bankrupt company's assets and real estate here in Richlands. They were called the five Bills. There were electric lights in Richlands by 1907. Richlands started its municipal utility in 1922. You have the plaque out here in the hall honoring GW Bill Hagy who lived from 1900 to 1995. He was an electrical engineer. He was the Superintendent of the electrical generating plant in Richlands from 1933 to 1946. He was Tom Hagy's father. We have a rich heritage in Richlands. I can remember as a boy coming down where McClure concrete is; there was a large well-constructed two-story building that was empty. It was a beautiful structure with concrete and glass. I looked inside it, and it was totally empty. Richlands went out of the electric generating business.

Radford built a hydroelectric plant in 1934. Initially, it made most of the electricity for the city of Radford. As Radford's population grew, their ability to generate electricity shrank to 5%. A 2014 flood damaged the generator and Radford totally relied on electricity bought at wholesale rates from Appalachian Power. In 2017, Radford City officials decided to replace the 80-year-old generator and controls. Radford had had difficulty generating enough revenue because all of Radford University is tax exempt, and so they were having difficulty maintaining services. Now, Radford's electric department generates significant revenue for the city. Radford's mayor made this statement: "I think long term Radford's independent city viability has been and will be linked to the ability to provide and generate electric power for the city of Radford." I certainly believe Richlands' future viability rests upon Richlands ability to produce electricity for our residents and businesses. We currently have no capacity at all to produce electricity. We have a large generator beside the water treatment facility. It was built to at least keep the water plant operating during an emergency, but the EPA has determined that it is non-compliant because of carbon emissions, and it's cost prohibitive to make the necessary upgrades, so we are stuck. We have no ability to generate any electricity.

Please allow me to back up to the first meeting I had with the IDA. I left the IDA meeting at 7:30 PM that Tuesday evening. I went home and went straight to bed at 8:00 o'clock. Our Christian School kids were on their Virginia history trip, and we were scheduled to tour at the State Capitol on Wednesday. Senator Hackworth had arranged for our kids to come into the Senate chambers and do an interactive Senate session. They actually swore the students in to act

as temporary Senators. They argued bills and learned so much about how the Senate actually works. Plus, Senator Hackworth had invited me to be with him and Angel at the private bill ceremony with the Governor at the Patrick Henry building. I was exhausted, my wife was sick, and I asked the Lord to help me as I laid down that night. I woke refreshed at 1:17 AM. I showered and dressed and drove to Richmond. I was at the capitol parking lot before 8:00 AM. Travis and Angel picked me up. Travis said I'm going to ask the Governor if he will allow you to pray with him when we get through signing the bills. We arrived, and the pictures were made, and the bills were signed. All three of us were standing there together and Travis said, "Do you mind if pastor Horton prays for you?" The Governor immediately stuck out his hand and he said, "Absolutely." So, we joined hands in prayer, and when I finished praying, he said now will you let me pray. Governor Younkin then prayed with us and prayed for us. When he finished, I said, "Governor, I have just been appointed on the IDA board for the Town of Richlands. We had our meeting last night and they asked me to be the chairman. We desperately need help in Richlands. Our utility rates are high, and we are having problems meeting budgets and all that. There is a large natural gas pipeline just north of Richlands. Could we tap into that and build a natural gas electric generating facility there on that site? There is probably 600 to 700 acres of reclaimed strip mine land that is south facing. Could we not put in a huge solar array there?" As quick as I said that he grabbed Senator Hackworth by the arm and he said, "Senator, I think that's a great idea." Then I told him some other needs that we had here. Since then, we've had a three-hour meeting with Senator Hackworth and Delegate Morefield, and they're working on initiatives that will tremendously help us. They can't discuss that now.

We currently own small portions in some generating facilities. We are very limited in our maneuverability right now. We contract to buy electricity at projected electrical needs. Richlands contracts and buys power at wholesale rates for our projected normal usage. The pricing system, as you know, is designed to discourage buying electricity at high demand times. We almost always are able to live within those parameters except for unforeseen weather events, and for those short periods of time, electricity must be bought at an open wild bidding market. Richlands paid over \$700,000 in extra money in two days the last polar vortex that we had. Y'all know that, right? So, we lost over \$700,000 that has to be passed on to, we, the consumers. We desperately need peak generating capacity to avoid those times. The cost of capital investment and operations to generate our own power at peak demand is doable. We can, and must, get back in electric generating business. Richlands is a beautiful place with great climate and lots of potential, and together, we can do this. We have the Governor's ear, Delegate Morefield absolutely will help us. Senator Hackworth has millions invested here, and he surely will help us. We had, at our June meeting, Tal McBride from McBride Electrical service to present to our IDA board his ideas and plans. He has a bachelor's degree in pre-Med from the University of Virginia, and he has a master's degree from the University of North Carolina. He has knowledge, experience, expertise, and resources. He has resources to immediately help us. He said that solar panels are the fastest and the easiest generating system to get them approved and installed. What I'm asking you to do tonight, is for the council to expedite the ordinance for residential and commercial solar panel electrical production. If you will get this done, we can have a backup system before the next polar vortex. I'm not new at wanting solar. I have wanted that for my house for many years. Dr. Hudson, who retired as Vice President of Finance from the college, he invited our children to come up to his farm. We had seen articles about Clinch River Farms, but I'd never been there. It's amazing. You should take the time and go up there and see what he has done, and the facility he's created there. He captures all his rainwater and sends it down to the river and flushes the commodes in the campers and the restrooms. He uses rainwater to run his clothes washer and flush all his commodes in his home. He has a three-story home, but he has the solar panels. When Senator Hackworth was doing the addition on his house, he and I were going to put in solar panels. I got the letter in January of 2021 that said we could not do solar panels because Richlands does not have an ordinance to allow you to put in solar panels. You can in the county, but you can't in Richlands.

I believe grant funding will be available to us, and we can become prosperous again. Just like the Radford mayor said I think long term Radford's cities viability has been and will always be linked to the ability to provide and generate electrical power for our citizens. I hope that you will please move as expeditiously as possible to get the ordinance for solar panels for residential and commercial both. Thank you very much."

Mayor Cury- Thank you very much, Phillip. That was very passionate and something we should definitely consider.

Doug- What does council need to do?

John- At this point, we have done everything we need to do. I have reached out to GDS, and I received confirmation from Legal that there were no issues with the procurement with moving forward with them to do the study and draft the ordinance. We are looking at the 1<sup>st</sup> of next month to have the ordinance done, and I am sure there will be some back and forth with council before our final version is ready to start doing the public hearing and get it to the passing process. Then, the other part is a little more complicated, and that is the electric generation. We will have to look at some of our contracts and have further discussions on if there's something that council wants to pursue.

Mayor Cury- I think that is reasonable to pursue the discussion. Members of council? So, John, will you facilitate that process and keep us up to date?

John- Yes.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Phillip. Phillip, I would like to get with you separately and have a meeting with you.

Doug- I think we have got to watch that Blue Ridge doesn't hinder our efforts. I am afraid they will try to hold us back because we will be in direct competition with them if we produce our own electricity. The more power we produce the less we are going to have to buy through open market through Blue Ridge. I just think when John goes to talk to them about this that they will be biased.

John- I don't think it will have any impact. What they are doing is residential and commercial. It has nothing to do with us generating our own. Some of the other people generate their own and they are still active members.

Mayor Cury- I follow what you are saying, Doug. Maybe we can just see what happens.

John- I want to also add that we will have to look at zoning. We are not going to want people putting up 40 solar panels in their front yards. It is considered constructable. We are going to have to consider where we are going to allow them and how we are going to allow them. Are we only going to allow them on the roof and that sort of thing? Before people start putting them up everywhere, we need to have something in place.

Seth- I would encourage you to go ahead and reach out to the Town of Bluefield and Town of Tazewell and see what they have.

John- I reached out to the Town of Tazewell to see what they had, but I don't think they had it in place yet. They are working on it.

Seth- Maybe Abingdon. Just someone who already has this in place. I will say though, given this unique situation that we are in Richlands with excessive power, we need to err on the side of the citizens and the residents. So, if we need to be more aggressive, it doesn't bother me at all. Let them put them all over their roofs or wherever. It doesn't bother or offend me at all. You can zone anything to death. So, I caution you now, don't do that. Let's be very open to what we allow because we are losing businesses and people. I just want us to be very open-minded about that.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Seth. Thank you for your report, We're moving on Economic Development Incentive Discussion by Tim Danielson.

Tim- "My name is Tim Danielson. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak before you. Some of you might be aware but we had been working with a business that's been expanding here in Richlands. They are expanding Appalachian Millwork and Cabinetry and they acquired the old Magic Mart property. The county IDA approved a grant following the guidelines that was approved roughly 8 months ago to provide them with a grant based upon their job creation. It's a \$2,000 per job up to a maximum of \$30,000 and it's paid typically in the rear, so you have to perform before you receive your grant proceeds. What I would like to recommend is for Richlands to consider contributing something to this effort if this business

expanding here in in the town of Richlands. An idea that I have in my mind, that I've shared with John, is perhaps a property tax rebate on any increase in value that encourages the business to actually invest additional money in the property. It doesn't cost the town a single dollar. I intend on presenting something like that at the next Board of Supervisors meeting. I'll be using a 5-year formula based upon declining scale 100% 80, 60, 40, 20, but again, it's only on the increase in the assessed value. So, whatever you're collecting now you are going to continue to collect. It's just something you might want to consider for businesses as they're growing and expanding in Richlands, and it shows good faith."

Mayor Cury- Tim, I heard Appalachian Millworks. Did you say rebates? What was your word?

Tim- Well, the idea is a rebate of property taxes. So, typically, a business would pay their property taxes normally and then you would do the mathematics and you would send them a rebate check following the guidelines that you established. So, typically, it's one month, but what I am going to share with John are the incentive guidelines that our IDA had established. You guys could consider adopting something similar to that maybe at a lower level.

John- I asked him to come and talk about what they were looking at. I think he can submit something to me about what they are looking at presenting to the county. It is something we have talked about on and off but never really put in place, and it would allow us to do some incentives for economic development. But I wanted to get a feel from council before we spend a lot of time working on this.

Mayor Cury- I think it's certainly a possibility. Tim, are these rebates applicable to other eligible businesses?

Tim- I mean sure they could on the property tax side. I think you need to take that on a case-by-case basis. I would look at our incentive guidelines. We have it divided into two categories: retail businesses and manufacturing. So, basically, it's your prime job creators/manufacturing, your office, and your distribution. So, the idea has the discretion to offer for retail up to \$1,500 per job and then on the manufacturing side up to \$3,000 per job. But it gives them a complete broad spectrum of their discretion. However, it's a set of guidelines that if you establish those guidelines, and you follow those guidelines you're not treating anybody any differently than you would any other business. I'm a believer that you need to perform. We, and we in government as you know, are fiduciaries of the taxpayers' dollars. So, you want to make sure that you, as a business, can perform before you receive something on the back end. We are not a venture capitalist. I want to see the business perform. They must enter into a development agreement. So, what they agree on is to create jobs or capital investment, and if they don't hit their numbers, they may have to pay some of that money back.

Mayor Cury- So, there is a feeling of equitable treatment.

Tim- Correct. It's 100% equitable. It's a set of guidelines and as long as the business is performing, then everybody wins.

Doug- Is the \$30,000 a one-shot deal?

Tim- So, I present a package to our leadership on a 5-year time horizon. If a business, after 5-years is still growing, I want to encourage them to remain in my community and they're welcome to come back and give me another measure of performance that they're willing to commit to.

Doug- So, the \$30,000 is over a 5-year period.

Tim- Yes, it's over a 5-year period.

Seth- You know another area, Mr. Mayor, we could look at if we do these downtown revitalization grants, the more money you spend on your buildings the more your property tax goes up. It would be a good opportunity to do that same type of incentive. In the town of Abingdon, if you are in the historic district, there's a dollar for dollar. So, if you spend \$10,000 (I think it's up to \$10,000) you get a rebate on your town taxes. So, you can get dollar for dollar for what you spend, you get that off.

Mayor Cury- They are a certified community, and we are not.



Seth- Right, but it doesn't matter. We have the opportunity to do whatever we want. We can establish whatever rules. I think that's what Tim was saying, but the only thing I ask is that we do it fairly and that we are not doing this just for one person. This is open to anyone who wants to create jobs or help our community grow.

Mayor Cury- I am fine with the program. I mean in general, we often do it for this one but not for this other person. So, we must be fair and that was the drive of my question, and I think you answered it. So, thank you.

Tim- Thank you, Mayor, and thank you, council, for your time.

Darrell- Tim, I would like for you and Phillip to meet each other and exchange information.

John- Is there anyone on council that wants us to look at this or move forward with this?

Darrell- I think we can let Phillip and them start it, and if you can get people to start spending money on their properties.

Seth- I mean we are doing it now and getting nothing in return, so I think it is a great idea.

John- Okay, so we will move forward with that, and I will keep you guys updated.

Mayor Cury- It seems like there is an interest in what you were saying, and the Town Manager has indicated that he is going to move in some direction of research. It seems like you are already in some contact with John. So, I would ask that you facilitate the ideas so we could have more concrete things come before the council.

Tim- Absolutely.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Tim. Moving right along to ATV Ordinance Discussion by Shanna Plaster and Rick Wood. We would like to welcome them to our council meeting. Thank you, Shanna. Thank you, Rick.

Shanna- Thank you all so much for having us. I just wanted to say that I really think this is something that we really need to do. We really need to get our 4x4 or side-by-side access into the Town of Richlands. I am originally from a small place in southern West Virginia, and in fact, they just had a McDonald's. That's all they had. Then, when the coal industry crashed, they lost that. I went over about two years ago and they looked completely different. They had hotels, a brewery, and coffee shop. We already offer a lot of those businesses, and I think we need to get this approved so the ATVs can access them. We need that extra revenue.

We met a couple months ago. We had our representative from VDOT, our director of tourism for Tazewell County, and I had two members of the town council and from the representative from VDOT. I think one of our issues was what part are we going to allow open to ATV access? The VDOT representative really stressed that we did not need to connect Cedar Bluff and Richlands in order to get approved from VDOT. We originally talked about going around the circle of Front Street and 2nd and stop at Bad Axery and go all the way to McDonald's and then a little section over to Food Lion and to the ATV shop. He said, in order for us to get approved, he feels that's the way that we need to go. Cedar Bluff will be able to hit the other part of Richlands.

Another thing, VDOT usually recommends only 5 miles on the main road.

Rick- So, we need a trailhead in Richlands and one in Cedar Bluff and we need one in Jewel Ridge. So, we're actually connecting three communities together. It would be nice to come up the four-lane, but that's impossible. So, we are going to have to do it this way, but I really don't want them to come through the red light there at the rec park and on up because I need people back on trails. I don't want people running back and forth on the roads through your town. It will get out of hand and that is what you are going to have. I want people on the trails as much as possible, and that will help us control the traffic as much as possible.

Mayor Cury- I haven't had time to look at this or the ordinance, but Shanna and Rick, what are your proposals for tonight?

Rick- The proposal that we need is an ordinance that you have drafted for us to get approval from VDOT.

John- Really, tonight was just to start the discussion. I wanted you guys to just have it and read it before we open it up to a public hearing and have our first reading on it at our next scheduled meeting. We will have to add the actual street name into the ordinance and figure out which streets are allowed.

Doug- Do you have a time limit that you are needing this done by? Do you need us to have a special meeting to get this passed?

Shanna- Well, I am still working with the county on it. I would like it passed as soon as possible. When is your next meeting?

John- Our next meeting is July 12<sup>th</sup>.

Shanna- Okay, that should be fine and that will give me more time to work with the county as well.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Rick, and Shanna. Rocky, are you wanting to speak? I will make an exception and you will be allowed to have 1 minute. I'm going to get in deep trouble for this and you better be ready to defend me.

Rocky Mollo- 262 Linwood Drive. So, Rick and I have been talking about this for years. He has a very good idea of how to make this work. It is a very practical plug and play way to bring some recreation to Richlands. I hear a lot of feedback from the town, and it would be a very beneficial way to create a draw for the town. I think this would be a great way, a very practical way that is a plug and play for our town to bring as an outlet for revenue. Regarding the noise, which I think is people's biggest question, it's not louder than some Harleys driving up and down the streets. I mean, if we can tolerate the motorcycles, then you can definitely tolerate this.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Rocky.

John- Before we move on, I need a consensus on two questions: the first is which streets do we want to be added to the ordinance? So, when we advertise there is a copy of the ordinance of the exact plan and then we'll need some input on the fine penalty. There is another town in the county that already has one in place that we were planning on just mirroring what they currently do.

Mayor Cury- John, I'm just speaking up here. I haven't read the ordinance, and she just said there's not a provision for night riding. I don't know that I can say what streets from my point of view. Maybe other council members can say it. I know Front and Second Street, but I would think we need to be very specific.

John- So would you also be okay with the little cut between First and Second where Kidd Tire is?

Seth- I mean they are going to do it anyways. Might as well add it so Jerry isn't having to ticket everyone.

Darrell- John, I would suggest talking to Rick and listening to him. He has done this so many times, and he'll know what they're going to do anyway.

Seth- I agree and have everything ready and we can even pass it as an emergency ordinance in July if we need to.

Michael- One thing the council needs to look at is by state code you have to define what an off-road recreational vehicle is. It will just depend on what you guys want to include. Whether that be ATVs, motorcycles, dirt bikes, that sort of things. It is your decision on what you want that to look like.

Darrell- Just ask Rick. He would know.

John- Okay, so you all are all good with that?

Council Members- Yes.

Mayor Cury- Members of Council, thank you all for your patience. Next, we are on Economic Development Discussion. John, would you like to say something about this?

John- At our last meeting, you all asked me to get a copy of what the job description was from Tim Danielson that just presented earlier. This is a letter that I got from Eric, the county administrator. It's not a job description, but essentially, Eric said it details exactly what his job duties are. Then, I have also included our job description that we currently have for economic development position.

Doug- One of the citizens had a great idea. Why don't we wait five or six months because our budget is in such a condition? We don't need to add personnel with our budget. That is just my opinion. That is probably 40 or \$50,000 that we can save in our budget. We can lean on the county and let them help us. What do think, Seth? Darrell?

Seth- Well, we discussed this last time. This job description is still the same description you had originally advertised, correct?

John- Yes.

Seth- I still think this is very broad, and we discussed if we're going to go down this path. We all need input, and I think we need input in the hiring. If we decide to go down this road, I think we could have some input. Also, to the Mayor's point, I think this job description is just too broad. It's too many duties. It's not a narrow focus. If you read this letter of what Eric gave to Tim, there's a lot of duties on here, but they're very focused duties on what results you want, if that makes sense.

Mayor Cury- Okay, thank you. Doug has had a thought. Seth has had a thought. Would anyone else like to say anything? Darrell?

Darrell- I'm the Vice chair of the Tazewell County IDA. So, I may not be the best to speak on this because I am going to sway probably towards the county where I have been on that board for probably 12 years or longer. How many economic development directors has Richlands had in last 12 years? 2 or 3 at least?

Heather- The thing is we did not have one. "We had someone that was a community developer, which was Connie. Also, she was the clerk at the time but those are two separate jobs from my understanding. Then was John's idea - instead of focusing on the things that could possibly be taken care of like community events like the yard sales, and we were hoping to move her into more economic development. That's why it's kind of separated. Like there's a little bit of the community development still on the job and some focused more on the businesses and economic development.

Darrell- I think the county has a lot of connections, and there are state programs that is available. I feel like if you hire someone, they are going to have trouble ever getting up to speed to do what the county can do. I would rather see the \$50,000 divided up among the town employees that we have now and bring their wages up rather than to hire someone. And again, I'm swayed towards the county because I have been on that board so long and I know what it can do. I think that you need to use the county and let the county get funding. I don't think you could ever get a town employee to do what the county can do.

Doug- I am sure at any time they could call Tim or Darrell and get help.

Seth- I don't think that you will ever get the person that you need in economic development for the salary that you are offering. With this job description, this is a \$90,000 minimum job. I just think the job that you are describing is not an economic developer job.

Heather- I understand what Seth is saying. There are several things that we need help with that we can't just stop doing and a lot of these jobs are just once a year. No, it's probably not economic development jobs. I guess we just need to come up with another name for the job. All of our job descriptions are pretty broad because you never know what you're going to have to ask someone to help do.

John- A lot of things that we need this person to do is not considered economic development.

Darrell- I don't think this person needs to be called economic development. I think we need to come up with another name for this job and maybe drop the salary down some and rely on the county for economic development.



Mike- So, hypothetically, let's just think about it. We wait to hire this position. We can't call it an economic development director. I think we have established that it is a vague portion of the job. Let's say we don't go with this position, and we are right in the middle of this revitalization grant.

John- We won't get there. Right now, we have \$75,000 received to start doing the planning. We haven't contracted out with the planner yet because it doesn't make sense to spend the \$75,000 if we are not going to have somebody to do the next planning for that project.

Mike- I think what some members of council are saying is that we want Tim to do that.

John- Nothing against Tim, but it gets in that weird spot where I am signing my name saying these funds are used a certain way and then the records are not here.

Darrell- I don't think Tim would do that.

Mike- But that would be what they are asking, correct? Because you do not have the manpower to do it, right?

Seth- No, what we need to do in the interim is you guys need to move forward with that. I know you got a lot on you, but we do need to move forward with that. Like I said, I understand, and I see that you need somebody to help, but that person is not an economic development person. However, these grants are substantial, and it's potentially a lot of money. I am not against you saying you need help, but you do need to move forward with the grants now because we don't want to miss out on that opportunity. That stuff has been laying there for a year now.

Mayor Cury- Are you talking about downtown revitalization?

Seth- Yes. I think that needs to move forward now because what happens is we get awarded this grant; we fail. Then, the next time we go to ask them for something, they are not going to give it to us because we didn't execute on what we asked for, and we are getting nothing. So, I don't know what has to happen, and I know you don't have the person, but you guys have to allocate some time and pull in whoever you need to pull in to do it and the town has to go forward.

Heather- We only have 7 people in our department. That doesn't include John. But we do not have 10 people running this office like they are saying.

Seth- I get that you are needing some help and that there is a need for this job. Regardless, you are going to have to do whatever you need to do to find the time to get working on this grant before we lose it.

Heather- Budget wise, I would have to know what jobs they are doing for what department, so I would know how to charge it to each department.

Mayor Cury- You are absolutely right, and this job description doesn't say that.

Doug- At our next meeting, would you give me a printout of everyone in your office with their duties?

Heather- Yes.

Mayor Cury- What is council's wish here? I agree we need something. When I read this description, I just don't think someone could hop in here and be familiar with all these things. Is it possible that we could zero in on the revitalization of Richlands and let that be our focus?

Seth- I don't think that's a \$50,000 job either.

Darrell- I think if you get this job down to what you need it to be then you would know who to hire.

Seth- You are not going to get an economic developer for this pay. I think you need to come back to us with a better job description, more focused on the downtown revitalization, town coordination, that looks more like what this job would entail.

Doug- Why can't we work with the county and Tim on the downtown revitalization?

Seth- No, that is a waste of Tim's time. He is working to put people into empty buildings.

Doug- I understand that, but when we get the buildings filled and we get a grant, you just check the list off with the grant and I think you have enough personnel to do that. We used to have four people in that office now you're full and with our budget, we can't afford it. Everybody in town is ashamed of our workers. They don't have trucks. They are rusted down. The departments have nothing to work with. This town is pitiful because they spend the money in the wrong places. Now we have a switch that if the water plant goes down, we don't know how we will come up with \$100,000 to replace the switch. Yet, we are wasting our time in this meeting over some zoning person. You better take care of what you have, and what you have is falling apart. You have no infrastructure because you bleed all the money in other directions.

Mayor Cury- We need some direction, so we don't just keep going in circles. John, would it be possible to just narrow this down to what you would consider economic development?

Darrell- I don't think this position needs to be called economic development. I think this position needs to go back to community development and let them help with grants when we need them to and pay them a lot less than \$50,000.

Mayor Cury- Any other thoughts from council?

Mike- We have just been talking about the revitalization, but that is not the only thing that we have going. We literally have the USDA trying to just give us money for a revolving loan fund. Someone has to manage that. That would be a duty that would fall under that job description. That's why it is so important to have somebody to manage that. That is just free money for businesses in our town.

Seth- I also think in your job description you should say this person has to go to the Planning Commission meetings. They need to go to the IDA meetings. They need to go to the County IDA meetings. Whatever it is that you want them to do. They need to just to be as involved in this town as they can be.

Doug- I have as many businesses as anyone in town, and no one in economic development has ever come and visited or offered to help me.

Seth- One thing we did with the county is someone came around with camera equipment and videoed people and made a book that said this particular person does this for the town. I think that would be a great thing to have in our town and help people support local businesses. The best thing is to grow a business in town to help your existing business to grow.

Darrell- 90% of your economic development comes from within.

Heather- Just so I am clear, are we redoing this job description and bringing it back?

Seth- Yes. Start fresh, and line out what you need them to do.

Darrell- And don't call it an economic developer.

Heather-Right. So, do I need to just email it out to you all before the meetings, so we are not having such a long discussion about it?

Mayor Cury- I think that is a great idea. Is that acceptable to members of council?

Members of Council- Yes.

Mayor Cury- Thank you John & Heather. Okay, we are on Proposed 2022-2023 Budget-Second Reading and Adoption.

Seth- I make a motion that we dispense of the Second Reading of Ordinance-2022-05-03 Utility Schedules and Riders. 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- Jeff- Yes, Doug- Yes, Kristen- Yes, Darrell- Yes, Mike- Yes, Seth- Yes. Motion carries -6/0.

Mayor Cury- Now, I will entertain a motion to adopt the Ordinance.

Mike- I make a motion to adopt the Ordinance-2022-05-03 Utility Schedules and Riders. Jeff seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion?

Seth- The only thing that I would ask is Thompson and Litton were here tonight and we are not pursuing the building of the plans which was the whole reason that we were told we were increasing the water and sewer rates, correct? So, I think it would be prudent before you vote on this to go over what the rates are now and what the rates are going to be for each of these.

Mayor Cury- You just want to read the highlight? What it was and what it is proposed to be.

Seth- Correct. I just think that's something that we need to consider, and everyone keeps saying this is what VRA said that we have to have our rates at. Well, I'm not seeing that document and are we putting it at exactly what VRA said our rates need to be? Are we \$2 above that? Are we \$1 below it?

Mayor Cury- Seth, I don't know, I am unaware of that.

Seth- I just keep hearing that repeated, but no one has tangibly said this is what they're saying it has to be.

Mayor Cury- Well, as a starter, John, or Heather, do you have what we were and what the proposed rates are going to be?

Heather- Not off the top of my head, but I could get it.

Doug- Can I say something? We know everything has to increase with time, but we have accelerated the increases by taking close to \$1,000,000 out of these utilities and putting it in another department and using it for other things. We could look at that \$1,000,000 and not take it out of the utilities and not raise these electric rates, water rates, and sewer rates and cut the budget for things that we don't need. I mean there's a lot of fat in that budget. I have been on this council for almost 20 years, and I can never remember when the budget was really cut once it was handed to us. I don't mean to bring up anything about 911, but there is \$300,000- \$400,000 that we know, at some time if we get a new council in November, we are going to switch to 911. Hopefully that will save \$300,000 - \$400,000. We are paying \$600 to the county that we are not able to use. There are other things besides that \$300,000 or \$400,000 in that budget that we don't have to spend that we could save and not raise these utility rates. For that reason, I'll vote no. Knowing that things have to increase but you don't have to accelerate it on wasteful spending.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Doug.

Seth- The reason I am asking this, I just think people need to know this is what you have been paying and after today, this is what you will be paying. I just think that is a reasonable request. I have not seen the study that says this is where your levels need to be at, and I am fine with that. But how does this change the budget? No one told me until I received my packet that we were not moving forward with these projects. That absolutely has to change our budget for this year because we budgeted money in for these projects, correct?

John- No, there were no money budgeted in because it is all loans.

Doug- Seth, may I address that. You are talking about the rates and what they were and what the future of the rates are. It is completely skewed by what money is being taken off of the top. I keep harping on this, but the rates are not correct. Let's take water for example, if you take \$200,000 off the top that is going to make your rates rise. So, I don't even understand how you can look at the rates correctly if you are taking something off the top. You are completely throwing those rates out the door because you're taking so much money out and using it for something else. Does that make sense?

Seth- Yeah, and I understand what you're saying, Doug and I've heard you say this, and I also understand what they are saying. They are allocating the department because there are people that work in here that are collecting the bills and that's part of their time.

Doug- Well, I would like to have a job to run the department and do the billing for \$200,000. I would love to have that job.

Seth- What they are doing is an accounting principle.

Doug- I understand what you're saying, but the employees are paid within that department already. You are forgetting that. That is not included. They are already paid. They are just taking it off the top. We didn't used to do that. We didn't take anything out of the electric fund 10 years ago, and we made it fine.

Mayor Cury- Points well taken. We have a motion and a second. Is there any further discussion?

Mike- It was easy for me, Mr. Mayor. Mr. Chitwood did an amazing job explaining that the rate increase is based on the debt that we are going to occur. It is very risky for us to not do the upgrades yet. He literally said there is a 50/50. That tells me that this needs to happen so we can continue to serve our citizens with water. It is just one of those things we have to deal with.

John- Our plan is to have the rate study done in the next 4-5 months so we will be able to look and see exactly where we are and where we need to be.

Mayor Cury- Any other discussion?

Seth- You guys have literally raised every single thing when you did our last budget and people missed it the first time. People didn't get angry until they received their bills which is exactly what I said was going to happen. You already had two council members resign over this. Other people have left, and the reality is, people are angry. When I sit here and ask, what is the old rate and what is the new rate going to be? And no one can tell me that. That is not right. That is not transparency. People just need to know that this is the rate now and after this vote this is what the rate is going to be. I am not saying the principle is incorrect, but no one has said, hey Seth, this person said we have to raise the rates to this exact number, or we are not going to get this grant money. You are basing your information off of what Rick Chitwood is saying or something someone else is saying, but there are no hard facts. At the county, if something was going to change, we would have a PowerPoint saying this is what our rates were and this is what they are going to be, very transparent.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Seth.

Seth- I am sorry.

Mayor Cury- No, No, No. No need to apologize. We are all speaking our minds. Heather, or John, is there anything that you all want to add?

Heather & John- No.

Mayor Cury- Okay, I think we need to have our roll call vote. All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call- Jeff- Yes, Doug- No, Kristen- No, Darrell- Yes, Mike- Yes, Seth- No. It is a tie. I cannot break the tie on an ordinance. Motion fails. -3/3.

Michael- It is a tie, so there is no change to the ordinance. The rates will stay the same as they were before. If you want the rates to stay the same as last year, then you will need to entertain a motion to adopt the current rates.

Mayor Cury- So the motion is a tie. There is no action on this motion. I will entertain a motion to adopt the current rates.

Doug- I make a motion to approve the Utility Schedules and Riders to incorporate into the code of ordinance without any rate changes but with the current rates we have today.

Darrell- I have a question. How is this going to affect our funding to upgrade? We won't get any funding? The town will have to pay for everything?

Heather- Well, the study that Seth is talking about is we are not where we are supposed to be, but it gives you an idea of how you are supposed to increase within a certain period of time. I have no idea if the rates are not adopted how that will work.

Mayor Cury- I have a question. If we come back and we know more about this, can we alter this, at the will of the council?

Seth- Well, that is what they told us when we were talking about dispatch?

Heather- Yes, as far as the budget is concerned. Yes.

Darrell- If we seen it was going to affect our funding and cost the town \$15,000,000.

Heather- Yes, you would be able to go back and change it.

Mayor Cury- Okay, I just wanted to make sure we had that safety net. Okay, we have a motion made by Doug. Do we have a second?

Seth- I second the motion to approve the Utility Schedules and Riders to incorporate into the code of ordinance without any rate changes but with the current rates we have today.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion?

Mike- I think Mr. Chitwood made it very clear on what we needed to do. We had a plan in place, and I get that it didn't go this way. I fully support the increases here based on the current plan that we have. For that reason, I will be voting no to leave our rates the way they are. I don't think that's the right call. However, obviously, I am just one person. I just wanted to let council know.

Darrell- I think as long as we can come back later if it is affects funding...

Mayor Cury- To be clear, can we alter the budget?

Heather- Yes.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion?

Mike- I just want to be thorough here and I want everyone to understand what this looks like if we are going to go back and raise rates later... the only thing I would urge is each council member seek the information that you that you need to understand why this needs to happen.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Mike. Any other discussion?

Seth-I'll just say that if you are going to do something, have your information available. Be public and transparent. When I ask what's the rate today? What's the rate tomorrow? Where is the study that says this is what it has to be? I feel like those are three things that should have been here tonight. I would have it available so everybody could see it. Does that make sense?

Kristen- I agree with Seth. I would like to see this study and why we are needing to make these changes.

Jeff- Do we still have copies of that Great Rate. com that Carl Brown had. It is in a binder here somewhere.

Mike- John, can you get us copies of that?

John- Yes.

Doug- I also think you need to add in there on how much money you are going to be taking off the top for shared expenses because those change everything.

Mayor Cury- Thank you. Any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call- Jeff- No, Doug- Yes, Kristen- Yes, Darrell- Yes, Mike- No, Seth- Yes. Motion carries -4/2.

Mayor Cury- I just want to say this... I hear this all the time and I must say, as the Mayor of Richlands, that people look to us for entertainment, and if they do, that's okay too. Because I'd rather have a vibrant discussion than everybody just going yes, yes, yes, and let's go home. That is not a healthy way to have a democracy, and even though we all disagree vehemently sometimes, that is okay. Thank you. So, to the outside world, please take Richlands seriously. This is a good town. I have spent my life here, as most people have, and I'm very proud of it, and I just wanted to stay that. Thank you.

Jeff- Well said.

Mayor Cury- John, we are on Town Manager's reports.

John- So, the first item, we had the Planning Commission meeting and they had three items for discussion at their last meeting. They have essentially requested all three for joint public hearing with town council. After I spoke to legal, there is one that deals with a medical drug rehab. We have had this in the past and our zoning is not clear on how that's allowed or where. So, I would

like to ask counsel to allow them to look at it and draft something for discussion. So, that is one, and the other two I am fine if council will have a joint public hearing. We will have that at our next meeting.

Mayor Cury- So, you are suggesting we have a joint public hearing with the Planning Commission at our next regularly scheduled meeting in July, regarding two properties.

John- Correct. The other one is more complicated, and I will let our attorney speak on that one.

Michael- We will need you to have a definition of what this company is wanting to do but from the definition there's no way to put it into the zoning or you don't allow for it to be in the zoning. So, we would have to look at the zoning if that's something you want to entertain, but it sounds like the Planning Commission is wanting to at least have the hearing on it and let you all be a part of it and hear them out.

Mayor Cury- That's important to have councils' input, and then they can send it back to the Planning Commission. Okay, what is next, John?

John- So, we put out the RFP on Electronic Virginia for the engineering services that we currently have with Thompson and Litton, we only received one bid. It was Thompson & Litton. So, at this point, we're planning on doing that and them basically being the sole source and moving forward with writing up an agreement with them to continue to provide that service similar to how they have been over the last few years.

Doug- Is that for the retainer?

John- Yes,

Doug- How much is it?

John- It hasn't been set yet. That is for any project up to \$100,000 anything over that we have to go back in for full procurement.

Michael- In Virginia, in the Richlands code, their procurement policy in the state of Virginia allows up to \$80,000 and Richlands only allows up to \$10,000 for procurement. So, you all may want to look into that to allow it to be as broad or whatever you all want it to be. That is totally up to you.

Seth- I think that's probably too broad. Just my opinion. The state allows you to be very aggressive sometimes on things. However, that doesn't necessarily mean it's the best thing for all of us. I really want to revisit our entire procurement policy.

Mayor Cury- Okay, we are on Board Member Updates and New Appointments. Kristen, do you have any thoughts on appointing someone to the Planning Commission?

Kristen- I make a motion to appoint Greg Horn to the Planning Commission. 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- Jeff- Yes, Doug- Yes, Kristen- Yes, Darrell- Yes, Mike- Yes, Seth- Yes. Motion carries -6/0.

Jeff- Whose seat will he be taking?

Mayor Cury- Unfortunately, Richard Smith has voiced that he is no longer going to serve. He wanted to express his gratitude for being able to serve the town. I served with Richard on the Planning Commission and he's very thorough and very thoughtful on everything for the best of the town and the citizens and how zoning effects business and residents and that's an important thing. So, Richard, thank you.

Jeff- Do we need to reappoint Barry Alley to the Planning Commission?

John- Yes. We received word that he was going to serve again.

Mike- I make a motion to reappoint Barry Alley to the Planning Commission. Seth 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- Jeff- Yes, Doug- Yes, Kristen- Yes, Darrell- Yes, Mike- Yes, Seth- Yes. Motion carries -6/0.

Mayor Cury- John, I think we had two vacancies on the IDA.

John- Yes, when we had our meeting, they recommended Joseph Vance for the IDA board. And if council did not have anyone else in mind for the other seat then they would give it some thought and come back with another suggestion.

Darrell- I make a motion to appoint Joseph Vance to the IDA board. 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- Jeff- Yes, Doug- Yes, Kristen- Yes, Darrell- Yes, Mike- Yes, Seth- Yes. Motion carries -6/0.

Mike- I make a motion that we reappoint Larry Whited to the Zoning Board. Jeff 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- Jeff- Yes, Doug- Yes, Kristen- Yes, Darrell- Yes, Mike- Yes, Seth- Yes. Motion carries -6/0.

John- Before we move on, I just wanted to note that Richard Smith served on the board for 12 years, and I just wanted it to be known that we really appreciate his time.

Mayor Cury- Next, we have Property and Liability Insurance Renewal.

Heather- Basically this is our Property and Insurance Renewal. It is the same as last year with no real increase.

Seth- I make a motion to approve the Property & Liability Insurance Renewal. 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- Jeff- Yes, Doug- Yes, Kristen- Yes, Darrell- Yes, Mike- Yes, Seth- Yes. Motion carries -6/0.

Mayor Cury- John, we are moving on. We are on Year End Reporting Contract Agreement. (6/27/2022)

John- This is something we put out. It is a RFP. It was something we used to do in-house, but we don't have the staff that is capable of doing the year end reporting. I reached out to our auditor and put it on EVA to try and get some bids on this additional work. It basically helps us get the yearly reports ready for the auditor. So, we can get that process started as soon as we get the bids in. So, we can move forward with one of those organizations.

I have several things for miscellaneous. I wanted to give an update. We had some issues with the landfill at the transfer station in Cedar Bluff. I think that we finally resolved those issues.

The library, we met with them, and we have some issues we are working through on how to get that money that we set aside for their building revitalization, as well as their grant and fundraisers that they have for that building downtown. We are working on that. I wanted to let you know that's still something we're working on.

Mayor Cury- John, were you able to clarify that that the money is a drawdown?

John- I think so, but the more we met and talked, the more questions we had. I think they were fine with the drawdown money, but we have to figure out some things because they have a nonprofit status. So, we have to figure out how all that would work to make sure there is no legal issue.

I've heard back from TACS. They had a conference this week so they were not able to present so I've asked them and hopefully they will be able to present at our next council meeting. That is the tax collection organization that council asked me to reach out to.

Then, we have the bridge on Second Street. They plan on starting to work on that June 20<sup>th</sup>. This is a little bit of a push back from when they originally planned. So, I wanted to give you all an update. If you see something going on there, that's what it is.

Then dispatch, we have a meeting scheduled this week. I know Jeff just let me know that he had something come up, so he won't be able to make it. The meeting is Thursday at 2:00 o'clock.

So, it was brought up earlier, but the letter to the attorney general has been sent off. They have had some follow up with our legal and you are continuing to work on that. Hopefully, they can get some answers back as soon as possible.

Michael- They have requested some more information from me which I'm in the process of getting together for them.

John- Then ramp up just recently released their flyer for summer fest. If you don't have those dates down, it's June 24<sup>th</sup> and June 25<sup>th</sup>. We are excited for that event to be coming up soon. If you are around, please attend and share that because it's a great free event for the community. They did send the request that I wanted to get council to approve. This year, the fireworks came in at \$1500 more than they were last year. So, they have requested the town to help sponsor that expense. We have \$7,800 in the downtown community budget. So, I just wanted a consensus or motion from council to move forward with giving them that money for the fireworks.

Kristen- I make a motion to pay \$1,500 for the fireworks for the community event. 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- Jeff- Yes, Doug- Yes, Kristen- Yes, Darrell- Yes, Mike- Yes, Seth- Yes. Motion carries -6/0.

John- Last thing, I am going to pass around these pictures of 168 Mountain Road. I am needing a consensus from council if this is something that you're fine with condemning, and if so, then we will start the process with legal. It is just hard because we do not have any funds allocated for projects like this. We have discussed this before, but decided it wasn't really a top priority. But the neighbor of this property has called and called wanting us to clean this property up.

Mayor Cury- Who owns this property?

John- I do not know right off. I think they owe like \$33.00 in back taxes. So, it's not enough to really do anything.

Seth- Have you been able to reach them?

John- I don't know for sure. I don't handle that side of it. Our code enforcement officer does that. I know he has been working on it for a while.

Mayor Cury- I have a suggestion. Until we have more information and know how hard we have tried to reach these people, then I don't think council is in a position to do anything about it.

John- Okay, that's fine. I just wanted to make you guys aware of that.

Mayor Cury- Okay, we are on council member reports.

Darrell- I just want to encourage John to watch and be sure we don't mess up any funding for the water and sewer and be sure to give the council a heads up and in plenty enough time in case all of the sudden something changes.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Darrell. Doug?

Doug- What are we doing with the Gomez house? Is the county taking it over?

John- I haven't heard anything since the last time we talked about it in council meeting.

Mayor Cury- Can someone find out about it?

John- I can try.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Doug. Mike?

Mike- Nothing from me.



Mayor Cury- Thank you, Mike. Kristen?

Kristen- Nothing from me.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Kristen. Seth?

Seth- I have an electrical update. John and I talked by e-mail to a lady from AEP and she does have everything that she needs, and she will be back in touch with us hopefully soon. They are doing some other initial analysis now. The second thing, I had a citizen down in Lake Park, Mr. Arnold, reach out to me and send me pictures of bears that were destroying their garbage cans. I think it's been a continual issue. Have you guys looked at that or is there anything we can do?

John- They have talked about putting bear bars on some of those trash cans. If we can't get voluntary compliance and get people to use them, it defeats the purpose. I think that's the issue they are running into, but I'll follow up with it.

Seth- See if you could do that, and then he said there's some drainage issues down there too.

John- I have been down there to look at that, but it has been a few months. I can check it out.

Seth- Just let me know what's going on or what we can or can't do that way I can explain it to him.

Doug- I know that has been going on for three years. Where the flooding is, he's saying the ditch was created wrong. The ditch is pointed towards the road, and it's throwing all the water on the road and then into the homes, but that's been going on for years.

Seth- Okay, just let me know something so I can explain it to him.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Seth. Jeff?

Jeff- The Rec Commission has a meeting on Monday. So, I will be able to report back on that after our meeting on Monday.


John- The Rec Park is having an event that you can swim with a mermaid.

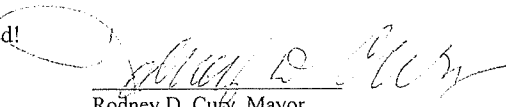
Mayor Cury- Next, we have Mayor's Comments. I will make mine very brief. The first thing is I've been going through old papers and cleaning up my house, and we talk about things here that we've talked about for years. I'm not going to read this whole thing, but this is a 1969 newspaper at the Richlands News Press. Floodwaters had dropped to a foot from the highest level at the Doran bridge at 9:00 AM Wednesday. We are still working on Mother Nature and we're trying. One that caught my attention while reading this paper was the alternate highway system changed Richlands. I thought that was really neat. So, when you see the pictures, and there is a video that is circulating on Facebook, it was created by the Main Street community and the Section House is in charge of that. That is a combination of a lot of videos from Old Richlands, and I don't think Richlands will ever be that again. But I think Richlands will develop in a new way because that is what you do. You devise a new way to make this place go. However, it is still something to look at. Last thing I want to mention is today is Flag Day. Flag Day was established on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1777, when we had our first introduction of an American flag officially adopted by US Congress. So, I want to thank the town for putting up all these flags and making it very patriotic and pretty. That is why we are doing it, to recognize this symbolic freedom of the American flag. The last thing, the section house is going to dedicate the patio on Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, at 11:00am. So, if you want to meet a little bit of Old Richlands and be New Richlands, it is the past and the future. You don't get any better than that. Again, for those people who talk about our council and Richlands, I don't appreciate it because this robust discussion is so important it makes us vibrant and young. Thank you.

Do we have a motion to adjourn this meeting?

Mike- I make a motion to adjourn this meeting.

Mayor Cury- Thank you. This meeting is adjourned!

  
Rebekah Hackworth, Clerk

  
Rodney D. Cury, Mayor