

**TOWN OF RICHLANDS**  
**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

The Richlands Town Council held a “Regular Monthly Meeting” on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, at 6:00 pm in the Richlands Council Chambers with the following present:

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury  
Interim Town Manager: Clarence Monday  
Office Manager: Susan Whitt  
Town Clerk: Amanda Beheler  
Finance Manager: Ronnie Campbell  
Council Members: Doug Ratliff, Gary Jackson, Rick Wood, Jordan Bales, Jan White, and Laura Mollo.  
Town Attorney: Michael Thomas  
HR Director: Kim Fields

The Town Meeting was called to order at 6:00pm and opened with the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Phillip Cook.

**IN RE: Additions, Deletions, or Corrections to the Agenda**

Mayor Cury asked if there was anyone present that would like to speak that is not on the agenda.

Barbara Cook and Anne Marie Burks were added to Unscheduled Public Comments.

Mayor Cury declared a five (5) minute recess.

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson seconded by Rick Wood and the roll call vote of all members present, with Jordan Bales, Jan White, Laura Mollo, and Mayor Cury voting no, the Council failed 3-4 to approve the agenda as amended.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the agenda as presented.

**IN RE: Authorization to Pay Bills (September)**

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve paying the bills for September.

**IN RE: Minutes**

Mr. Thomas requested the Clerk to change the wording from Resolution to Ordinance.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all member present, the Council voted to approve the following Minutes: Regular Meeting September 12, 2023, Special Called Meeting September 26, 2023, and Work Session October 2, 2023, as amended.

Mayor Cury declared a five (5) minute recess.

**IN RE: Gold Award Presentation**

The Virginia Office of Drinking Water presented the Town’s Water System with the 2022 Excellence in Water Works Operations Gold Award.

Mayor Cury read the letter to the Council and stated that this special recognition indicated that the Towns water treatment plant met the Virginia Optimization Program goals for clarification, filtration, and backwash during 2022.

The Water Treatment Plant Chief Operator Eric Johnson was presented with the certificate and pictures were taken.

Mayor Cury and the Council each thanked all of the workers for their hard work and dedication.

**IN RE: Downtown Revitalization**

Debbie Milton from the Cumberland Plateau PDC and Blair Buegler from the Virginia Main Street Program spoke on the upcoming potential Grant for Downtown during a presentation about the Virginia Main Street Program.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve adopting a Resolution to move forward with the Virginia Main Street Program.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve appointing Debbie Milton as the project manager.

**IN RE: Library Renovation**

Regina Roberts from the Tazewell County Library Foundation Board gave the Council a brief update on the library renovation and advised that Phase 1 of the renovation is nearing completion.

Mrs. Roberts advised that Mr. Hubert, the architect, recommended Phase Two be done in two parts. Part 1 would be to build the elevator shaft and install the elevator. The new elevator shaft would take part of an office space that would need to be rebuilt in a different location. Part 2 would be the children's area upstairs.

Mrs. Roberts also advised bids for Phase Two would be going out soon.

**IN RE: Teen Venture**

Carol Lawrence and Blake Ray requested to stretch out the remaining funds from the already allocated three-thousand dollars that the Town previously approved. These funds would allow Teen Venture to pay their electric bill through the end of the year.

Laura Mollo asked that the Council abide by the lease with Teen Venture.

Doug Ratliff advised the Town already allocated the three-thousand dollars.

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales seconded by Doug Ratliff and the roll call vote of all members present, with Laura Mollo voting no, the Council voted 5-1 to approve using the remaining funds to pay the electric bill for Teen Venture while funds last.

**IN RE: Water/Sewer Rate Increase Public Hearing**

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve to set a Public Hearing on November 14, 2023, at 5:30pm.

**IN RE: Pavement Line Painting and Reflector Replacement**

Mr. Monday advised the Town had to re-bid portions of the original bid for line painting and reflector replacement. No firm submitted a bid at that time, necessitating another bid solicitation that is now underway. The bid period closes on Thursday October 19, 2023, at 1:00pm.

Mr. Monday advised that the Council does not meet again until November and the paving will start before that time, so he recommended that Council make a motion to approve the low bid submitted on October 19, 2023, provided the bid is responsive and from a responsible bidder,

and not to exceed the total program budget already approved by the Council for this years paving project.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the low bid submitted on October 19, 2023, provided the bid is responsive and from a responsible bidder, and not to exceed the total program budget already approved by the Council.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

**IN RE: Hazardous Duty Benefits**

HR Director, Kim Fields, spoke to the Council about Hazardous Duty Benefits for EMS Staff.

The Council had previously requested the Town to inquire as to the steps and cost of this added benefit for the EMS staff.

Mrs. Fields advised an actuarial study would need to be done. The cost of the actuarial study will be three thousand dollars and will be billed directly to the employer upon completion of the study. Each additional scenario, such as adding the 1.85% multiplier will be an additional one thousand dollars. Therefore, the cost of actuarial study to determine the employer rate for both the 1.7% retirement multiplier and the 1.8% retirement multiplier will be four thousand dollars. The cost to each individual member is not affected if enhanced benefits are made available. However, the cost to the employer will increase. The amount of such an increase is included in a revised employer contribution rate applicable to the total compensation of all covered employees, not just to those eligible for the enhanced benefits and will be determined by the actuarial study.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Doug Ratliff and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to proceed with the actuarial study and bring the cost back to the Council for further consideration.

Gary Jackson asked if this would be for so many employees. Mrs. Fields advised it is for full-time EMS workers only.

Rick Wood inquired about the Firefighters receiving these benefits also. Mr. Monday advised there are currently no full-time firefighters for the Town and the Code of Virginia states only full-time employees are eligible.

Doug Ratliff stated he would like the Council to start paying the debt owed to VRS.

Laura Mollo requested that Mrs. Fields get the exact amount owed and e-mail it to her and the Council.

**IN RE: Outside Agency Funding Request Policy**

Mr. Monday stated the Council had recommended staff to create a revised policy setting guidelines and boundaries for outside agency funding requests.

A new policy for Outside Agency Funding Requests was presented to the Council.

The proposed policy would set clear guidelines and boundaries for all funding requests to be submitted only during the open request time period each year.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the new Outside Agency Funding Request Policy.

Jordan Bales requested the Town to advertise this.

**IN RE: Special Event Request for Veterans**

The Town received a Special Event Request for the Annual Veterans Day Event to be held on November 11, 2023, at the Police Department. Chief Holt gave his support and approval for the event as requested as the event does not interfere with the operations and security of the Police Department.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the event request for the Annual Veterans Day Event.

**IN RE: Public Auction of Surplus Property**

Mr. Campbell advised the Council five fleet police cars have been sold, paid for, and waiting for the buyer to take possession.

Mr. Campbell stated the next step will be auctioning non-vehicle smaller items such as laptops, docking stations, and various police car equipment. The third step will be to auction and sell broken or inoperable equipment and vehicles on GovDeals.com.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to declare these items as surplus property and authorize the sale to the highest bidder.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve pricing option B2 for items auctioned on GovDeals.com

**IN RE: Monthly Financial Report**

Mr. Campbell gave a brief overview of the highlights of the Monthly Financial Report that was given to the Council.

- Report shows the first two months into the new budget year.
- The report runs one month behind.
- Advised the ten percent electric rate reduction would not show until the September report.
- Advised that if he sees an account getting out of sync, he will note it in the Monthly Financial Report for the Council to further discuss.

**IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments**

Mayor Cury advised there is no Scheduled Public Comments.

**IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments**

**Barbara Cook, 264 Plantation Drive-**

- Thanked the Council for their work for the Town and for helping Teen Venture.
- Thankful for the Town providing good water.
- Requested the YouTube Stream be fixed following issues at the previous meeting.
- Stated it was important for the Council to work together in unity and focus on the vision for Richlands.

Mayor Cury advised Mr. Monday would address the YouTube issues during his Town Manager's Report.

**Ann Marie Burks, 505 Kents Ridge Road-**

- Stated her and her son recently moved to Richlands from Richmond, VA.
- Spoke about the importance of Teen Venture for the youth in this area.

Mayor Cury thanked Mrs. Burks for volunteering in the Town.

**IN RE: Town Surplus Property Code Revision**

The Town Council directed Mr. Thomas to bring back an Amendment to the Town Code for Surplus Property at the previous meeting.

Mr. Thomas presented the Council with a proposed revision that would allow the Town Manager authority to declare items surplus, to sell said items in a timelier manner and to bring the Town Code in line with modern practices.

Mr. Thomas read the revised amendment to the Town Code for Surplus Property NO.:O-2023-10-01 to the Council to be considered as a First Reading. The second reading will be at the next meeting.

**IN RE: IDA Name Change**

Mr. Thomas read the Amendment to Existing Ordinance NO. O-2023-10-02 for the IDA name change to be considered as a First Reading.

**IN RE: Britt's Park MOU**

Mr. Thomas advised he made all changes to the MOU that was submitted by the Council.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to allow the Mayor, Town Attorney, and Town Manager to execute the MOU between the Town and "God's Rock Stars".

**IN RE: Town Manager's Report**

Mr. Monday apologized for stepping out to take a phone call at the beginning of the meeting, he advised one of the Towns Fire Trucks had been in an accident on Kents Ridge Road.

- Advised there was a gate on South Center Street behind Food Lion that a resident had concerns with and wanted it closed. Mr. Monday stated he is working on a solution for this.
- Advised the Grapple Truck has been received and currently getting licensed and insured.
- Advised the Director of Parks and Recreation, Jessica Reynolds was stepping down to a part-time position.
- Anthony Cox is the new Director of Parks and Recreation.
- Stated all software and firmware has been updated to resolve recent issues with live-streaming Town meetings.

**IN RE: Council Member Reports**

Laura Mollo-

- Apologized for her phone usage during the meeting- was due to the Fire Truck Accident.
- Inquired about heaters that were previously received on a grant. Would like to have heating stations during the Christmas Parade.
- Advised she spoke to a business owner about moving their business to Richlands and was told they would not, due to Facebook posts and rumors. Did not want their business associated with that.
- Spoke about the New Town Manager's salary compared to other surrounding Towns.
- Thanked Jan White and the Events Committee for their hard work on the Christmas Parade and apologized for her absence at the last two meetings.
- Advised the CNX Groundbreaking was a huge success.
- Stated the Town recently received a Zodiac Rescue Boat on a fifteen-thousand-dollar grant.
- Thanked Mr. Monday for his time as the Interim Town Manager.

Jan White-

- Thanked Mr. Monday for everything he done for the Town.
- Inquired about the status of the electrical pole at Hill Street. Mr. Monday advised he would find out the answer to that question.

- Advised the Christmas Parade will be December 1, 2023, at 6:00pm.
- Also advised there would be no charge for entering a float into the parade this year.

Jordan Bales-

- Thanked Mr. Monday for his time as Interim Town Manager also.
- Advised the Fall Festival and the Trunk or Treat will be held at the Police Department on October 28, 2023.
- Stated he has received three complaints about people speeding on Crestwood Drive.
- Advised he has been talking to several members of the business community and has proposed developing a business community that partners with the Town.
- Asked the Council if they could work with the business owners and possibly do something for Black Friday. Jan White advised she was already working on this and planning a Small Business Saturday.
- Asked for Councils consensus for the REC Commission to work with the Town Attorney on negotiating MOUs for the fields this upcoming season and to charge at Williams Park.

The council gave consensus for this.

Rick Wood-

- Advised he thought it would be great to have a Small Business Alliance in Town.
- Stated he had received complaints of potholes in a few alleys.
- Inquired about the paving and if it would be done by the end of the year. Mr. Monday advised he would check on this.
- Asked how many more times the Town would be mowing this year. Mr. Monday advised it would be weather dependent.
- Stated he appreciated and thanked Mr. Monday.

Gary Jackson-

- Stated the Anne of Green Gables event was a success,
- Thanked Mr. Monday for his time as Interim Town Manager.

Doug Ratliff-

- Stated the Town moved a million dollars from ARPA funds to VDOT for paving.
- Advised the Town has Reserves to do the paving. S
- Suggested moving those funds back to ARPA and moving it to the Government bank in Richmond to grow interest until the Town needed it.

Mr. Monday stated he has spoken to Mr. Ratliff about this and understands the concept of what Mr. Ratliff was saying. Mr. Monday also stated he is currently working with the Town's Finance Manager on this and other investment options.

Laura Mollo questioned the Town getting penalized for this.

Mayor Cury advised this topic needs more research done.

- Stated the County promised to reimburse the Town 100% per load of trash. Inquired if the Town has checked on that.

Laura Mollo advised she has the e-mail confirming the County would reimburse 100% of this.

Upon a motion by Doug Ratliff with no second, the motion to approve moving the million dollars back into the ARPA funds failed.

**IN RE: Mayor Comments**

- Spoke briefly to the Council about welcoming CNX and expressed his excitement for them to be in Town.
- Advised Halloween would be observed on October 31, 2023.
- Also advised the Veterans Day Program would be held at the Police Department on November 2, 2023.
- Thanked Mr. Monday for his time as Interim Town Manager.

**IN RE: Executive Session**

Mayor Cury advised the Council would be going into Executive session pursuant to:

- a. VA Code Section: 2.2-3711 (A)(1) Personnel- to discuss specific salaries of public employees, specifically Town employees A, B, C, and D.
- b. VA Code Section: 2.2-3711 (A)(3) Acquisition of Property- Iron Street Property, Fletcher Bright Properties, and Buchanan Street Properties.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to go into Executive Session.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to return to Open Session.

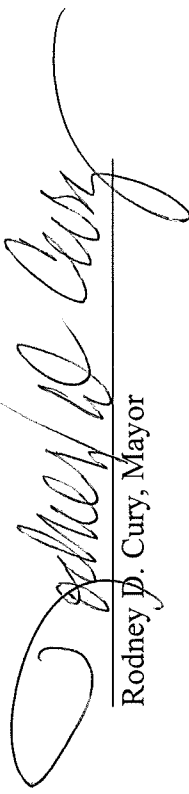
Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council certified that only VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1) and VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3) during the Executive Session.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to authorize the incoming Town Manager to complete a Pay and Classification Study for all Town employees so that the report is completed for discussion and consideration in the upcoming budget cycle.

**IN RE: Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the meeting was adjourned.

  
Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk

  
Rodney D. Cury, Mayor

