

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Richlands Town Council held a “Regular Monthly Meeting” on Tuesday, September 12, 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

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

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.

Donna Altizer, Micky Smith, Ernest Edgell, and Barbara Cook were added to Unscheduled Public Comments.

Laura Mollo requested the addition of:
p. IDA Name Change
q. IDA Vacancy Advertisement

Laura Mollo requested each Unscheduled Public Comment change from (3) three minutes to (5) five minutes each.

Laura Mollo requested to add Personnel 2.2-3711 (A)(1) to the Executive Session.

Upon a motion by Jan White seconded by Laura Mollo and the roll call vote of all members present, with Jordan Bales voting no, the Council voted to approve the agenda as amended.

IN RE: Authorization to Pay Bills

Laura Mollo asked for verification on check #1143 for Teen Venture. Mrs. Mollo asked if the amount included only electric fees or all utilities. Mrs. Whitt advised it was for all utilities.

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 paying the bills.

IN RE: Minutes

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all member present, the Council voted to approve the following Minutes: Regular Meeting August 8, 2023, and Special Called Meeting September 5, 2023.

IN RE: Dialogue & Design: Reed Muelman (Zoom)

Reed Muelman with Dialogue & Design provided the Council with an overview of the results of their planning assessment for the downtown area revitalization project.

Rocky Hill inquired about contractors for this project.

Jan White asked about the grant deadline.

Mr. Monday suggested this be put on the agenda for October 2023. The council agreed.

Laura suggested filling the role of engineer.

IN RE: Sheriff Brian Hieatt & 911 Director Randy Ann Davis

Sheriff Brian Hieatt spoke briefly to the Council regarding 911 Operations for Richlands the past year. Mr. Hieatt advised the transition has gone well. There was a total of 9,924 calls answered for the Town of Richlands from September 2022 to September 2023 by dispatch.

Jan White inquired about the Smart 911 program. Sheriff Hieatt described this program to the Council. Citizens can preprogram any disabilities, special needs, etc. to their residence free of charge.

Gary Jackson asked Mr. Hieatt if the lobby cameras at the police department can monitor the outside of the building. Mr. Hieatt advised it cannot.

Doug Ratliff suggested the Town get a camera that will monitor the outside as well. The Council agreed.

Mayor Cury declared a five-minute recess.

IN RE: Carl Brown- Water/Sewer Rate Analysis (Zoom)

Mr. Campbell introduced Carl Brown with “Getting Great Rates” to the Council and provided the Council with a packet of information regarding water/sewer rates. Mr. Brown (via zoom) discussed the Rate Analysis that was done in 2020/2021 with the Council. Mr. Brown also gave the Council suggestions on rate adjustments.

Mayor Cury and the Council asked Mr. Brown if he could return at a later date once the Council has digested the information provided to them. The council agreed.

IN RE: Richlands Garden Club

Christy Asbury and Donna Altizer with the Richlands Garden Club requested approval from Council to do artwork on utility boxes.

Mayor Cury inquired about the safety of doing this.

Mr. Monday advised he would meet with staff for safety recommendations.

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 the Richlands Garden Club to work together with the Town if Richlands to safely do artwork on utility boxes.

IN RE: Personal Property Tax Ordinance/ R-2023-09-01

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to waive the second reading of the Repeal of Personal Property Tax Ordinance.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the roll call vote of all members present, with Jordan Bales voting no, the Council voted to adopt Resolution R-2023-09-01.

IN RE: Electric Rate Change Ordinance

Mr. Thomas advised he does not have an ordinance drafted for this yet.

Mayor Cury asked if the new rate changes are in effect at this time.

Mrs. Whitt advised the new rates will be reflected on next month's bill. September activity will be billed in October.

IN RE: Halloween Trick-or-Treat Dates

Mr. Monday advised Chief Holt recommended continuing to celebrate Halloween Trick-or-Treating on October 31, 2023, from 5:00pm to 8:00pm.

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 Halloween Trick-or-Treating be held on October 31, 2023, from 5:00pm-8:00 pm.

IN RE: Donations Policy and History of Donations

The Council discussed donations and the donation policy.

Mayor Cury requested clarification from the Council on how to appropriately move forward.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all member present, the Council voted to approve establishing the amount of money that will be given in donations each fiscal year during budget session.

Applications will be accepted for donations before the amount is determined.

IN RE: Festival of the Arts Donation Request

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all member present, the Council voted to deny the donation request from the Festival of the Arts.

Mrs. Mollo stated the reason this request was denied was because the money was not in the budget for it.

IN RE: Four County Transit-Activity Report for the Fiscal Year

Each Council Member was provided with a copy of the Activity Report from Four County Transit for the Fiscal Year.

Mayor Cury asked if there were any questions regarding the report.

Jordan Bales asked if it was possible to share Four County Transits new web app on the Towns website.

Mayor Cury advised they could.

IN RE: Milling, Line Painting, and Reflector Replacement Bid Award

Mr. Monday advised the Town has awarded a bid for the paving and work is expected to start around the end of the month.

Mr. Monday also advised only one vendor placed a bid for milling and that was W & L Construction.

Rick Wood inquired about the prices and the amount of milling needed.

The Council briefly discussed the bid.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to award the milling contract to W & L Construction.

IN RE: Sale of Surplus Police Cars

Mr. Monday stated Mr. Holt advised him that the Police Department currently has five obsolete police vehicles that he has deemed unusable. Mr. Monday advised those vehicles were considered surplus property and per Town Code he was authorized to solicit sealed competitive bids for the vehicles. The Town received three bids, the total amount of all bids received was twenty-two thousand and six hundred dollars.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to declare the five obsolete vehicles as surplus property and authorize the sale to the highest bidders per vehicle.

IN RE: Cumberland Plateau Regional Housing Authority- Payment in Lieu of Taxes for Fairfax Court Apartments

Mr. Bales asked the Council to give him some background on this.

Mayor Cury read the letter from the Cumberland Plateau Regional Housing Authority and the Council discussed the request.

Upon a motion by Doug Ratliff seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to deny the request to accept payment in lieu of taxes from the Cumberland Plateau Regional Housing Authority.

IN RE: EMS / VRS Update Request

Mrs. Mollo stated EMS was promised the Hazardous Duty Pay after a motion was made by Council several times over the years and the Town had not followed through with the motion.

Mr. Monday discussed the importance of this to EMS and advised that most localities offer this to their employees. Mr. Monday advised the Town would need to adopt a ordinance for this.

Mr. Thomas advised he would draft a ordinance and present it at the October meeting.

The Council discussed overtime.

Mayor Cury respectfully requested the Council continue their discussion on overtime once the Council receives the Resolution.

IN RE: Community Development Building Discussion

Mrs. Mollo stated that she does not think the building is being used to its full potential and requested the council consider renting it out as a shared workspace.

The Council discussed different options for this building.

Mayor Cury asked the Council to consider C.A.R.T, its current tenant, and requested the Council do more research before making any decisions.

IN RE: IDA Name Change

Mrs. Mollo advised the IDA has voted and approved for their name to be changed to I-EDA.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to change the IDA name to I-EDA.

Jan White inquired about the bylaws.

Mr. Thomas advised he would research the bylaws on this if it were the desire of the Town by consensus.

Mrs. Mollo withdrew her motion and Mr. Bales withdrew his second.

It is the consensus of the Council for Mr. Thomas to research the bylaws.

IN RE: IDA Vacancy

Mrs.Mollo advised the IDA had requested the Town advertise for their vacancy.

Mayor Cury advised the Town would advertise for the vacancy.

IN RE: Bulk Pick-up, Brush Pick-up, and Mowing

Mr. Monday introduced George West and Jason Shepard from the Public Works department to do a presentation.

Mr. West gave a presentation on the following:

- Daily Operations
- Getting the Day Started
- Street Department Responsibilities
- Work Distribution
- Common Items for Bulk and Brush Pick-up
- Storm Damage
- Flood Clean-up
- Grapple Truck/ Out of Service
- Mowing

IN RE: Request for Bids for Grapple Truck

Mr. Monday discussed the importance and need for a Grapple Truck.

Mayor Cury asked Mr. Monday to explain the RFP to the Council.

Mr. Monday advised they have located a used Grapple Truck for less than sixty-five thousand dollars.

The Council discussed buying a Grapple Truck and how to fund it.

Mr. Wood suggested selling all the old equipment/scrap that is not being used by the Street Department to help fund the grapple truck.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to sell all old equipment/scrap that is not being used by the Street Department.

Mayor Cury asked Mr. West if he could draft a list of such equipment for the Council.

Mr. Ratliff suggested the Council use funds from Community Development.

Upon a motion by Doug Ratliff seconded by Gary Ratliff and the roll call vote of all members present, with Jordan Bales, Jan White, Laura Mollo, and Mayor Cury voting no, the Council failed to pass the motion to use a maximum of sixty-five thousand dollars from the Community Development funds to purchase a used Grapple Truck.

Mr. Bales suggested adding fifty cents to each bill to fund a new Grapple Truck.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Gary Jackson and the roll call vote of all members present, with Laura Mollo voting no, the Council voted to approve using Unreserved Funds to purchase a used Grapple Truck, not to exceed sixty-five thousand dollars.

IN RE: Oriole Street Bridge Update

Mr. Monday advised the next step on the Oriole Street Bridge is to procure engineering services to design a replacement bridge and to procure the replacement bridge that is engineered.

Mr. Monday also advised the Town will be able to use the VDOT Highway Maintenance Funds.

IN RE: VRSA Grant Received

Mr. Campbell stated the VRSA Grant for four thousand dollars to purchase AEDs for the Town will be received in November.

No further Action needed by Council.

IN RE: Audit Update

Mr. Campbell advised he currently has a copy of the draft for the Fiscal Year 2022 Financials in hand and reviewing. Mr. Campbell hopes to be back on track by 2024.

IN RE: Water Plant Pump Bid Solicitation

Mr. Campbell advised the Town will be sending out bids to replace the pump or to get it repaired. Mr. Campbell will update the Council if any are received.

IN RE: Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Campbell advised he included Income Statements, Cash Reserve Analysis, and other details in the monthly meeting packets to help keep council more informed about the Towns finances. Mr. Campbell offered to meet with council members to talk more in depth about this.

Mayor Cury thanked Mr. Campbell for his offer to meet with council members.

IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments

Rocky Hill, 352 Pounding Mill Branch Road- Mr. Hill thanked everyone for their help at Lake Park and advised there had been an average of 20-50 people visiting the park daily.

Mr. Hill asked the Council for their permission to begin updates on Britts Park. He would like to stain everything, refurbish the basketball court with new sealer, replace the picnic tables, and add an ADA approved ramp to the gazebo.

Mr. Monday advised if the council wishes to allow Mr. Hill to move forward there would need to be an MOU in place between Mr. Hill and the Town.

Mayor Cury asked Mr. Thomas to work with Mr. Monday to develop an MOU for this project.

Upon a motion by Doug Ratliff seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to allow Mr. Hill to move forward with the Britts Park project.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

Micky Smith, 524 Sycamore Lane- spoke to the Council briefly about her concerns for the Town including paving on East Second Street and Sycamore Lane. Mrs. Smith also expressed her excitement for the Downtown Revitalization Project.

Barbara Cook, 264 Plantation Drive- spoke to the Council about her love for C.A.R.T. and its importance to the community.

IN RE: Attorney Report

Mr. Thomas spoke to the Council about the Towns Procurement Policy. The Towns current procurement amount is set at ten-thousand dollars. Mr. Thomas gave the Council examples of higher amounts set by surrounding counties and asked if the Town would like to amend their amount.

Mr. Bales suggested adjusting the amount for inflation.

The Council came to a consensus to move forward with an ordinance for the sale of surplus property.

Mr. Thomas re-read VA Code Section 2.2-3712 and stated the Council will form together for the purpose of interviewing potential candidates for Town Manager at an undisclosed location and time.

IN RE: Town Manager Report

Mr. Monday stated he had nothing to discuss at this time.

IN RE: Council Members Report

Laura Mollo-

- Gave an update on the Flood Study and advised they are almost ready to present their findings to the Council.
 - Thanked everyone for their help with welcoming her UVA Political Leadership Group, stated they were in Richlands for three days.
 - Inquired about why some employees have cell phone allowances and others don't. Would like to amend this to include employees that are using their cell phones for work.
 - Stated she would like to change Unscheduled Public Comments to a time limit of five minutes each instead of three minutes each.
- Jan White-
- Stated she received a complaint regarding Sayers Street, the ditch is getting filled with grass and citizens were worried about the rain and would like this checked out.
 - Advised she also received a complaint about a tarp on the bank near the Second Street Bridge, would also like this checked.
 - Stated she has received multiple complaints about how often meters are read, would like it to be more consistent.
 - Advised the Christmas Parade has been scheduled for December 1, 2023, at 6:00pm.

Jordan Bales-

- Advised the REC Commission is looking for two members.
- Also advised they are looking for a Front Desk Attendant and a REC Director.
- Thanked Lowes Home Improvement for their help with the mulch and fence on the greenway and thanked the Street Department for their help installing this.
- Stated the Homecoming Parade is scheduled for September 28, 2023.

Doug Ratliff-

- Requested an update on the Forensic Audit at the next meeting.

IN RE: Mayor Comments

Mayor Cury advised he would like to have Carl Brown back for a work session.

The Council gave consensus to hold a work session on October 2, 2023, from 6:00pm-8:00pm.

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)

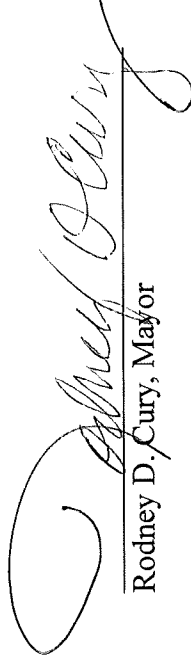
Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to go into Executive Session.

Upon a motion by Jan White 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 Gary Jackson seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council certified that only VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1) Town Manager and Town Attorney was discussed during the Executive Session.

IN RE: Adjournment

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the meeting was adjourned.



Rodney D. Cury, Mayor



Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk