

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Richlands Town Council held a "Regular Monthly Meeting" on Tuesday, July 11, 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 for the following changes be made to the agenda:

- Add Electric Rates, per Doug. (h)
- Add Park Discussion, per Laura. (i)

Mayor Cury asked citizens to sign their name to the sheet in the lobby if they wish to speak during unscheduled public comments.

Mayor Cury read the names that were placed on the list:

Morgan Earp
Dana Moats
Joella Farmer
Gavin Coleman
Damon Ball
Regina Roberts
Connie Martin Estep
Marguerite Smith
Wanda Lowe

Upon a motion by Jan White seconded by Gary Jackson and the roll call vote of all members present, with Jordan Bales voting no, the Council voted 3-1 to approve the amended agenda as amended.

IN RE: Authorization to Pay Bills

Upon a motion by Rick Wood 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 Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all member present, the Council voted to approve the following Minutes: Special Called Meeting June 8, 2023, Regular Meeting June 13, 2023, Special Called Meeting June 26, 2023, and Special Called Meeting June 29, 2023.

IN RE: Teen Venture

Carol Ann Lawrence, Executive Director of Teen Venture and Matther Vance, Chairman of Teen Venture spoke briefly to the Council about continuing their support of Teen Venture by paying the utility bills for another year and replacing the roof.

Upon a motion by Doug Ratliff seconded by Gary Jackson and the roll call vote of all members present, with Laura Mollo voting no, the Council voted 5-1 to approve paying the electric bill for Teen Venture at a rate of one thousand dollars per month for three months.

The Council plans to visit Teen Venture to further access their needs.

Laura Mollo advised she voted no on this motion due to the Town possibly having a contract that states it would not pay any utility bills.

IN RE: Recognition of Gods Rockstars/ Rocky Hill & Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens/ Brian Beck & Lynna Mitchell

Mayor Rod Cury read an e-mail he had sent to Rocky Hill, Brian Beck, and Lynna Mitchell inviting them to this Council Meeting to be recognized for their contributions to the community.

Mayor Cury thanked each one for their dedication and hard work on the Lake Park Upgrades.

IN RE: CART- Walking Book Tour

Ginger Branton spoke to the Council about a proposed Walking Storybook Trail through town. Mrs. Branton also requested the Council consider naming the park located on Front Street to be named "Whistle Stop Park".

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 Walking Storybook Trail.

IN RE: Planning Commission

Gary Jackson advised the Planning Commission met on June 27, 2023, to review four potential candidates. The Planning Commission recommended their top two candidates Glade Brown and Elaine Holmes to the Council for consideration to fill the vacant seat on the Planning Commission Board with term ending June 30, 2024.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to appoint Elaine Holmes to the Planning Commission.

IN RE: Personal Property Taxes

Laura Mollo spoke to the Council about the impact that Personal Property Taxes have on the citizens.

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 5-1 to abolish Personal Property Taxes.

IN RE: George West- Paving / Fencing/ Heat Pump Updates

George West advised the Council that W & L Paving will begin paving in September or October. Doug Ratliff suggested that Mr. West establish a five-year plan for streets that need to be paved.

West also advised the Council that funds for the fencing around the Water Treatment Plant have not been located yet.

Susan Whitt advised the heat pump also needs to be replaced.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Doug Ratliff and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve using the unreserved fund balance that is not appropriated in the amount of fifteen thousand five hundred dollars for the fencing and eight thousand dollars for the heat pump.

IN RE: Matt Whited- Grant Application

Matt Whited, EMS Director-Rescue Captain, advised the Council that on July 1, 2023, the Richlands Fire Department was awarded a RSAF Grant for Communication Equipment. The grant awarded is a 50/50 match. When the grant was initially submitted it was for an 80/20 match. Mr. Whited requested that the Town approve the additional funds to meet the grant requirements.

Laura Mollo suggested that Mr. Whited work with the Finance Manager on the budget before the grant deadline of September 1, 2023.

Mayor Cury suggested reviewing this matter again at the next meeting in August.

IN RE: Electric Rates

Doug Ratliff spoke to the Council about the current electric rates. Mr. Ratliff advised the Electric Department is averaging a sixty-to-seventy-thousand-dollar profit per month with an estimated one million dollars above what is required to have in the electrical reserve.

Mr. Ratliff proposed a ten percent cut in electric rates.

Upon a motion by Doug Ratliff seconded by Laura Mollo and the roll call vote of all members present, with Gary Jackson, Rick Wood, Jordan Bales, and Rod Cury all voting no, the Council voted not to approve the ten percent reduction in electric rates 3-4.

IN RE: Park Discussion

Laura Mollo spoke to the Council about receiving an email regarding updates at Lake Park and recent social media events.

IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments

Mayor Cury advised there was no scheduled public comments.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

1. Rocky Hill, Pounding Mill, VA- Mr. Hill spoke on recent events surrounding updates at Lake Park.
2. Duella Farmer- Chose not to speak.
3. Dahman Ball 628 Pounding Mill, VA- Mr. Ball spoke on his support of the Lake Park updates.
4. Gavin Coleman- Left
5. Regina Roberts- Mrs. Roberts gave a brief update on the Library renovations nearing the end of Phase 1.
6. Connie Estep- Mrs. Estep spoke to the Council about an ongoing issue she is having with her property lines.
7. Margaret Smith 524 Sycamore St. Richlands, VA- read a devotion to the Council and spoke on her love for the Town.
8. Wanda Lowe 292 Plantation Drive, Richlands, VA- spoke about her dislike of recent events on social media. Encouraged everyone to have more self-control.
9. Morgan Earp 1618 6th Street, Richlands, VA- spoke to the Council about his concerns over Lake Park and the recent social media events.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

IN RE: Attorney Comments

Mr. Thomas discussed his research on a noise ordinance for the Town. Mayor Cury suggested the Council review it and discuss it at the next meeting in August.

IN RE: Town Manager Report

Mr. Monday advised the Council after consulting with Mr. Thomas, he prefers to discuss the Quantum Power Agreement in closed session before making any motions. The council agreed.

Mr. Monday advised he had an engagement letter from Hicok, Brown, & Company, CPA. Mr. Monday asked for Councils approval before signing.

Mr. Monday welcomed the Towns new Finance Manager, Ronnie Campbell.

IN RE: Hicok, Brown, & Company

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the hiring of Hicok, Brown, & Company, CPA.

IN RE: Council Members Report

Laura Mollo-

- Thanked all of the volunteers and donors of the Freedom Festival.
- Advised the Towns Code Enforcement has been successful and thanked the Police Department for their hard work.

Jan White-

- Thanked everyone that helped with the Freedom Festival.
- Advised that she had received a few complaints of the mowers not picking up trash on Veterans Drive before mowing.

Jordan Bales-

- Advised the State Little League Championship is being held in Town on July 13- July 18.
- Thanked Rocky Hill and his team for all their hard work on the Lake Park updates.
- "Rock the Clinch" will be held on July 29
- Thanked Stream Sweepers for cleaning up the Clinch River.
- Stated he has received numerous complaints about trash pickup in the Town.

Rick Wood-

- Spoke to the Council about allowing free admission to the Rec Park for all players in Town for the State Championship.
- Requested that someone check the streetlights in Town.

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 free admission to the Rec Park on July 14-16, 2023, during the State Championship.

The Council requested that Mr. Monday ask Four County Transit to offer free shuttles to the State Championship games.

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 Mr. Monday to contact Four County Transit to negotiate shuttle services and to use his best judgement if there is a charge.

Gary Jackson-

- Stated he received an e-mail from Sara Price regarding the Iron St. property. Advised he will share the email with the Council, the Town Manager, and the Town Attorney.

Doug Ratliff-

- Requested the Town push the Power Cost Adjustment to zero for the next three months.

Upon a motion by Doug Ratliff seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to bring the Power Cost Adjustment for the next three months.

Mayor Cury-

- Shared a 2013 Freedom Festival Flyer with the Council and advised that he enjoyed this year's event.
- Spoke briefly on upcoming events and expressed his excitement for the Town's progress and growth.

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)
- b. VA Code Section: 2.2-3711 (A)(8)
- c. VA Code Section: 2.2-3711 (A)(6)

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

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to return to Open Session.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council certified that only VA Code Sections 2.2-3711 (A)(1) and 2.2-3711 (A)(8) and 2.2-3711 (A)(6) were discussed during the Executive Session.

IN RE: Adjournment

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



Rodney D. Cury, Mayor



Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk