

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

The Richlands Town Council held a "Regular Monthly Meeting" on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 6:00 pm in the Richlands Council Chambers with the following present:

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury  
Town Manager: Jason May  
Office Manager: Susan Whitt  
Town Clerk: Amanda Beheler  
Finance Manager: Ronnie Campbell  
Council Members: 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 Rod Cury.

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

Mayor Cury asked that Scheduled Public Comments and Unscheduled Public Comments be moved to Item # 4 on the agenda.

Mayor Cury asked if there was anyone present who would like to speak to the Council during Unscheduled Public Comments, there was no one.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood 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 (October)**

Mayor Cury asked the Council if there were any questions regarding the bills, there was none.

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

Laura Mollo stated the purchase of the four new Tahoe's for the Police Department were purchased on a grant.

**IN RE: Minutes**

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 Regular Meeting Minutes for October 10, 2023.

**IN RE: Recognition of Noah Spencer**

Richlands native, Noah Spencer, recently performed on NBC's *The Voice* which features performers from various communities.

Mayor Cury thanked Noah Spencer and his mother for attending the Council Meeting.

Mayor Cury and each of the Council members recognized Mr. Spencer for his successes and expressed their excitement about Noah bringing something positive to the Town of Richlands.

**IN RE: Introduction and Welcoming of New Town Manager, Jason May**

Mayor Cury and each of the Council members spoke briefly and welcomed Mr. May as the new Richlands Town Manager.

On Mr. Mays first day of work, November 6, 2023, he was welcomed with a drop-in Meet and Greet at the Town Hall.

**IN RE: Presentation of the FY 2022 Town Audit**

Brandon Brandenburg, with Bostic, Tucker, and Company presented the highlights from the FY 2022 Town Audit to the Council.

Mr. Brandenburg asked if the Council had any questions regarding the Audit that was presented. There was none.

Mr. Brandenburg thanked the Town and its employees for all their help in the process and advised the FY 2023 Town Audit would be available around the first of 2024.

**IN RE: Consider Resolution for the Town to join the Virginia Main Street Program**

Mayor Cury read Resolution R-2023-11-01 to the Council.

The Virginia Main Street Program provides local service and access to grant funding. By joining the program, the Town could potentially be considered for future revitalization grants and other grants that may only be available to members of the program.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to join the Virginia Institute of Government

**IN RE: Water and Sewer Rate Increase Discussion**

Mayor Cury advised that during the Special Called Meeting on October 2, 2023, the Council heard a presentation about the age and condition of the plant, equipment, and infrastructure of the Water Treatment Plant and the Wastewater Treatment Plants.

Following the Public Hearing on today's date, the Council voted to approve and move forward with authorizing Water and Sewer Rates for facility upgrades at both plants.

Mr. Bales read Ordinance O-0-2023-11-01 to the Council.

The second reading of Ordinance O-0-2023-11-01 will be placed on the December 12, 2023, Town Council Meeting Agenda.

**IN RE: 2nd Reading, O-2023-10-01, Surplus Property Town Code Revision**

Mayor Cury advised during the October Town Council meeting, a proposed revision to the Town Code on Surplus Property was read and approved unanimously by the Council.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to waive the second reading of Ordinance O-2023-10-01 Surplus Property Town Code Revision.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt Ordinance O-2023-10-01, Surplus Property Town Code Revision.

**IN RE: 2nd Reading, O-2023-10-02, IDA/EDA Name Change**

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to waive the second reading of Ordinance O-2023-10-02 to update the name of the Industrial Development Authority of the Town of Richlands to become the Industrial/Economic Development Authority of the Town of Richlands.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to pass Ordinance O-2023-10-02 to update the name of the Industrial Development Authority of the Town of Richlands to become the Industrial/Economic Development Authority of the Town of Richlands.

**IN RE: Discussion on Revenue Stream for Bulk and Limb Pick-Up**

Laura Mollo spoke to the Council about an idea that Jordan Bales had previously suggested. Mr. Bales suggested adding a fifty-cent fee per month to the citizens as a revenue source to purchase a needed Grapple Truck for the Town.

Mrs. Mollo suggested raising the amount to a one dollar per month fee to the citizens, to pay it off quicker. Mrs. Mollo asked Mr. Campbell and Mr. May if they could bring their recommendation on the amount back to the Council in December before a decision is made.

Jan White asked if there would need to be a Public Hearing on this, Mr. Thomas advised there would need to be a Public Hearing.

**IN RE: Discussion of the Town's Interest in Potentially Closing the Northeast End of S. Center Street.**

Mayor Cury advised that several citizens have contacted the Council requesting the Northeast End of S. Street gate be closed to traffic due to speeding complaints.

Mr. Thomas stated the gate is owned by AEP (American Electric Power) and the Town does not have the authority to close the gate.

Mrs. Mollo suggested placing a rumble strip at this location to possibly help with the speeding complaints.

**IN RE: Update on Paving of Town Streets, Jason Shepard, Street Department**

Jason Shepard gave a brief update to the Council on the Paving of Town Streets.

Mr. May stated that Virginia Avenue and Kents Ridge are the worst at this time and recommended holding on Front Street and Second Street.

Mr. May also stated the current contract was for paving only, milling and striping will need to be added.

Mr. Wood advised he would like to cancel the current contract and rebid for paving, milling, and striping. Mr. May agreed.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to cancel the current contract with W&L.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to rebid for a new RFP to include asphalt, paving, milling, and striping all in one contract with a deadline date of July 1, 2024.

**IN RE: Update on 2023 Mowing Operations and Next Steps**

Jason Shepard advised all mowing is caught up except on Kents Ridge due to the Tractor being broken down.

Mr. May stated he is preparing to do some strategic planning in the Spring on mowing in the Town and would like to work with the Council to find a balance and solution to all the mowing issues.

**IN RE: Update on Oriole Street Bridge Replacement**

Mr. Campbell stated the Town has started to receive some RFPs for this project and will bring those back to Council for review. The RFPs are for the engineering, design, and construction services of the Oriole Street Bridge.

**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.

- Summary Income Statement- overall financial results show a three hundred-thousand-dollar shortfall. Mr. Campbell stated the majority of this amount is due to the timing of tax revenues that are received throughout the year.
- Water and Sewer- is staying flat, no major changes to report.
- Electric- Some effects of the ten percent rate reduction are beginning to show, will continue to monitor.
- Mr. Campbell encouraged the Council to reach out to him if they have questions or have areas of concern moving forward etc.
- Reserve Balances- Balances held constant. There is a 2.4 million surplus on the General Fund.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

**IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments**

No Scheduled Public Comments.

**IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments**

No Unscheduled Public Comments.

**IN RE: Attorney Report**

Mr. Thomas stated he attended a REC Commission Meeting and was asked to draft some MOU's regarding Little League Field Usage. He advised it would need to be approved by the Council and he would speak to the Town Manager about it. Will place it on the Agenda for the December Council Meeting for Council to review.

**IN RE: Town Manager Report**

Mr. May thanked the Council, staff, and citizens for being so welcoming to him and his family.

**IN RE: Council Member Reports**

Laura Mollo-

- Stated she loved the new structure of the meetings, and the Staff Summary Reports were very informative.
- Thanked Mr. Campbell for his Financial Reports.
- Advised the Police Department just received four new Tahoe's estimated over a on a grant. Tahoe's are over a two hundred-thousand-dollar value.
- Thanked Jan White for all her hard work on the Christmas Parade.
- Stated the Christmas Parade will be on December 1, Noah Spencer will be the Grand Marshall.

Jan White-

- Advised she had received complaints about 18-Wheeler Trucks speeding through the residential district of Hill Creek Road. Mr. Wood suggested a "No Thru Trucks" sign to solve the issue.
- Stated businesses have come together and planned a Small Business Saturday on November 25 from 10:00am-5:00pm.

Jordan Bales-

- Stated he has two Appointments to bring to the Council.

**IN RE: Industrial/Economic Development Authority Appointment, Cody Harman**

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to appoint Cody Harman to the Industrial/Economic Development Authority, with a Term ending date of June 30, 2024.

**IN RE: REC Commission Appointment, Aaron Buchanan**

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to appoint Aaron Buchanan to the REC Commission, with a Term ending date of December 31, 2025.

- Stated the Electrical Committee recommended moving forward with a Gas-Powered Generator and gave a brief overview of the potential timeline for this. Mr. Bales stated they planned to pursue grant money for this. The Council gave several other funding options.

**IN RE: Gas-Powered Generator**

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to allow staff to move forward with the gas-powered generator project in regard to the engineering and financial feasibility of the project.

- Mr. Bales stated he has received several great comments about the Greenway.
- Recognized the Electrical Department for their help with the Rec Park. Opening day of Volleyball Season was fantastic.
- Thanked the baseball and softball volunteers for helping mow the fields at Critterville.
- Stated the bathrooms at Critterville have been vandalized again within one month of being prepared.
- Asked the Council to consider installing cameras for safety and to prevent future vandalism.
- Mr. Wood and Mrs. Mollo stated they would like to speak about this but would like to have Chief Holt in attendance.
- Mayor Cury would like to invite Chief Holt to the December Meeting to discuss this.

Rick Wood-

- Advised limbs are hanging over Purcell Road.

Gary Jackson-

- Stated he toured the Wastewater Plant, and it is in desperate need of the Upgrades.
- Thanked the Street Department for all of their work.

Doug Ratliff- Absent

**IN RE: Mayor Comments**

- Spoke briefly to the Council about Thanksgiving Blessings.
- Expressed his excitement about upcoming Christmas activities such as the Parade and Carriage Rides.
- November 25 is Small Business Saturday.
- Stated the Section House is preparing to get painted.
- The Section House will have Guided Tours on November 25.
- Section House will have an Open House on December 2.
- Recognized the Section House Volunteers for all of their hard work.

**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)(3)- Acquisition of Property- Iron Street Property, Fletcher Bright Properties, and Buchanan Street Property.

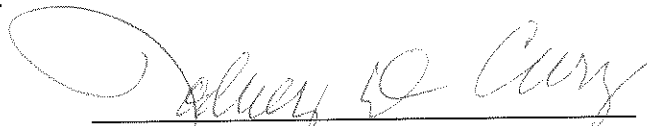
Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to go into Executive Session.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood 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 Laura Mollo 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)(3) was discussed during the Executive Session.

**IN RE: Adjournment**

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

  
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Rodney D. Cury, Mayor

  
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Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk