

**TOWN OF RICHLANDS**  
2024/2025 Budget Retreat

The Richlands Town Council held the 2024/2025 Budget retreat on Saturday, March 23, 2024, at 9:30am at the Historic Crab Orchard Museum, 3663 Crab Orchard Rd, Tazewell, VA 24651 with the following present:

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury  
Town Manager: Mr. 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.

Absent: Seth White & Mike Thomas

The 2024/2025 Budget Retreat was called to order at 9:30am and opened with the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Cury.

**Welcome**

Mr. May gave a brief speech to the Council and Staff about the upcoming budget year. Mr. May stated he has several projects going and is looking forward to the next 3-5 years, not just 2025. Mr. May expressed his desire for everyone in the Town to work together as a team.

**Ice Breaker**

As an Ice Breaker to start the meeting, Mr. May asked that everyone complete a Conflict Management Assessment that was handed out and share the results with one another.

**General Government (Mr. May May)**

- Plans to create new departments in the Budget (ex: council, town manager, finance). Everyone's salary is currently listed under "Finance". The goal is to become more efficient going forward.
- Creating an HR Department.
- Will begin quarterly performance reviews of employees.
- Plans to become more efficient, update processes, and have the needed equipment.

**Finances (Ronnie Campbell)**

- Gave his Job Description for daily and monthly reviews.
- Suggested it would be easier for one person to handle all Grants.
- Mayor Cury thanked the staff for the Packets and Summaries.
- Mr. May stated he and his team are here to assist the Council with their decisions, providing them with as much information as possible before they have to make important decisions.
- Mr. May advised upcoming projects (water, wastewater, and electric) will require more project management and accounting aspects. There may be a need in the future to bring on an extra staff member to assist with this.
- Mr. Campbell gave a brief description of the Accounting Clerk.
- The Accounting Clerk currently balances 27 accounts.
- Mr. May advised he would like to begin making some payments online instead of printing checks for everything. The current process is time consuming.
- Mr. May is currently working on 8 grants, looking at around 10 more.
- Mr. Campbell advised they are currently working on putting policy and procedures in place.

**Police Department (Ron Holt)**

- Chief Holt spoke briefly about teamwork and thanked everyone for everything they do for the police department.

- Personnel- Gave a breakdown of the department personnel and their jobs.
- Community growth- brings added responsibilities, community policing, events, etc.
- Will continue to look for grants but will need expanding and that may require more personnel.
- Fleet & Equipment- purchased two new vehicles from surplus sales.
- Will need to work on replacement vehicles in the future.
- New Patrol rifles were purchased from Virginia State Police.
- New sidearms have also been purchased.
- Would like to see officers wearing class A uniforms.
- Mobile Radios- County grant approves. Have applied for a state JAG Grant.
- Accreditation- First assessment to be done sometime in November, first mock was successful.
- Unexpected costs have come with accreditation, needs to be addressed in next budget.
- Buildings & Grounds- The work that has been done over the last year is remarkable.
- Leaks- the police department has many leaks right now; the department needs the roof repaired.
- Community Events & Current Location- Will continue phasing events out at the police department due to safety reasons.
- Conclusion- Were ambitious! Willing to grow with the demands of the Town. We are a young department with tremendous potential.
- Mr. May spoke about an HR issue with officers working holidays and other employees.

#### **Fire (Rhudy Keith)**

- Call Totals:
  - 2020- 306
  - 2021- 399
  - 2022- 434
  - 2023- 456.
  - 2024- On track for 500 for 2024.
- Mr. Keith stated that increasing call volume creates an increasing operational cost.
- Equipment that is needed:
  - Tanker
  - Full Time Fire Fighter
  - Command Vehicle
  - 10-Scott SCBA
  - 20-Scott SCBA Cylinders
  - 10-Scott SCBA Mask
  - 2- Draeger 4 Gas Monitors
  - Doors and Locks at the Fire Station
  - New Badges and Name Plates
- Plans to buy complete turnout gear for all fire fighters in January 2025 (Pants, Coat, Helmet, gloves, boots). The gear will be paid for by ATL Money (3-4 months for delivery).
- Wants every fireman to have their own mask. Members would like to do a gun raffle and split the cost of the masks 50/50 with the Town.
- 50/50 Forestry Grant submitted on 3/13/21. Reward Date June/July 2024.
- 2024 Burn Building Grant for New Heat Monitor System 100% through VDFP.
- 2024 VDFP Get Alarmed Grant install smoke detectors for residence in the community (up to 30).
- 2025 FEMA AFG Grant for Equipment.
- 5-year plan. – New Fire Station, Replace Engine 514, Replace Rescue 526, Replace Support 516.
- Would like to begin doing Pre-Incident Surveys and Fire Inspections for local businesses.
- Continue Smoke Alarm campaign and Fire Prevention events for the Public.
- Mrs. White asked if most calls are structure calls, Mr. Keith advised mostly car crashes.

- Mr. May advised the fire station is a problem, cannot fit a tanker in the current department and there are no living quarters.
- Currently the Town can't apply for volunteer or municipal grants. Needs lodging/living quarters to be classified as municipal.
- Mr. Bales asked Mr. Keith if he knew why call volume has increased, he advised out-of-town calls is what has increased, not in Town, and he's not sure why.
- Mr. May advised the Town has received funding from the County, will ask for more funds in the future.
- Mrs. Mollo asked if it would be more beneficial to stay in town. Mr. May advised it would not, not in these rural areas. Would lose most of the grant funding if this was done.
- Mr. Bales asked if they can also work with the schools and colleges because they have chemistry labs for the Pre-Incident Surveys, Mr. May advised yes.
- Mrs. Mollo asked about the Command Vehicle, will it need to be replaced or repaired.

**Rescue (Matt Whited)**

- 6 Full Time Employees (1 empty ALS position Open)
- 11 Part Time Employees
- Advised the current Rescue Station was built in 1952 and in need of a lot of repairs. The station needs 3 new bay doors, the roof sealed, the outside painted, and the bay needs new electric or propane heaters.
- Mr. Whited gave the current mileage on vehicles:  
 #550 Captains Vehicle, 2022 Chevy Tahoe 4wd- 4,200  
 #551 Ambulance 2014 Ford F350 2wd- 112,629  
 #552 Ambulance 2019 Ford F350 4wd- 95,499  
 #555 Ambulance 2010 Chevy 3500 2wd- 111,380  
 #556 Ambulance 2012 Chevy 3500 4wd- 86,835

The Station has had a new Ford F450 Ambulance on order since July 2022, and should get delivery in June 2025. This ambulance was purchased on an 80/20 RSAF Grant.

- Capitol Projects for the next 2-5 years:
  1. #551 Ford F350 & #556 Chevy 3500- The current build and delivery time of a new ambulance is 3 years.
  2. EMS Station #2- Current EMS Main Station needs immediate repairs.
- 2024/2025 Rescue Budget Adjustments Needed:
  1. Salaries + \$10,000.00 to help cover overtime and 2<sup>nd</sup> crew call outs.
  2. Office Supplies +\$1,000.00
  3. Equipment Maintenance +\$1,000.00
  4. Vehicle Maintenance Outside +\$3,000.00
  5. Building Repairs +35k-50k
  6. Cleaning Supplies +\$500.00
  7. Medical Supplies +\$1,000.00
  8. Electric +\$2,000.00
  9. Water, Sewer, Garbage +\$1,500.00 (\$500.00 each)
  10. Bad Debt Collections +\$500.00
  11. Dues/Memberships +\$500.00

**Public Works (Mr. May Shepard & George West)**

- Mr. Shepard gave a brief overview of his daily duties and job description.
- Advised the Council regarding equipment that is outdated.
- Stated their lack of employees versus equipment is the biggest issue.
- Advised the morale among employees has picked up after getting the new equipment.
- Mr. May would like to contract out general mechanic things such as oil changes. Equipment Maintenance Discussion between Mr. May Sheppard, Mr. May and the Council.
- Used Equipment versus New Equipment Discussion.
- Mr. Bales asked if the Town could rent a Grader, Mr. May advised yes.
- Mr. West gave a personnel overview.

- Due to not being able to drive to the transfer station and having to go to the landfill, it's creating a huge problem.
- Also due to having to drive to the transfer station, the Town is having to buy more diesel, buy more tires, and pay more overtime. Drivers must wait in line, sometimes up to an hour. Not an efficient process at this time.

Staff began a working lunch.

### **Vision & Mission Statements**

Mr. May shared a PowerPoint during lunch on the Towns Vision, Mission Statement and Goals.

**Vision Statement:** “*Creating a better tomorrow for Richlands*”.

**Mission Statement:** “*The Town of Richlands delivers fiscally responsible, highly dependable services to the citizens in the community and the region with integrity and professionalism*”.

#### **Goals:**

1. Increase Tourism while respecting and maintaining our small-town values.
2. Bring economic vibrancy and additional employment through strategic uses of our community assets.
3. Protect life, health, and safety of the community, its residents, while preparing for our future generations.
4. Gain efficiency while maintaining the effectiveness of Town services through the use of technology and formalized procedures.

### **Parks & Recreation (Anthony Cox):**

- Anthony gave an overview of his personnel and some of the projects they have been working on recently.
- Anthony has been employed as the REC Park Director for 5 ½ months.
- Advised the Town helped him create more parking spaces.
- Cameras at Critterville- will be installed soon.
- MOUs with Little League have been updated.
- A Porta John has been installed to cut down on vandalism.
- Has revamped the concessions.
- Held the First Annual Basketball Debriefing.
- Future Plans- Pickleball Tournaments, adult programs, more tournaments, would love to get soccer through the REC Park, and pool concession.
- Advised the party room upstairs is being used a lot.
- Good on staff- may possibly need one more part-time.
- Mr. May advised the current pool is a problem.
- Mrs. Mollo asked the party room fee. \$20 per hour in 2–4-hour increments.
- Mrs. Mollo inquired about how the sports fees work.
- Looking at possible Fee increases.
- Anthony would like to begin rental agreements for the party room.
- Mrs. Mollo inquired about expanding Parks & Recreation. Mr. May spoke of some ideas for this.

### **Utilities (Eric Johnson, Billy Shelton, & Jimmy Keene):**

- Mr. May spoke briefly about the needed upgrades.
- Expansion plans / Economic development funds
- Advised that upgrades are a 2-year process.
- The Salmon Farm & Coronado Coal will be needing water soon.
- Will be receiving the 2023 Excellence in Waterworks / Operation Performance Gold Award.

### **Electric (Allen Compton):**

- Advised they are a finalist for the Ingenuity Grant.

- Mr. Compton gave a brief overview of his staff.
- Mr. Compton also gave an overview of Job.

**Tourism & Cultural Vitality (Jason May):**

Downtown Anchor

- Current Status- Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) for FY 2025 opens April 1, 2024.
- 2025- FY 2025- The IRF Grant requires a one-to-one match. The town would like to utilize the CPROP Grant, another grant, or in-kind donations to meet this match in FY 2025.
- 2026- Town will begin to work on Downtown Anchor if awarded IRF grant. If not, the Town will reapply for IRF grant.
- 2027- Town will begin to work on Downtown Anchor if awarded IRF grant. If not, Town will reapply for IRF grant.

Road Diet Downtown

- VDOT will utilize STARS program funding to begin the engineering and design work.
- FY 2025 will be the year that VDOT completes engineering and design. Town has no cost for this. Town will be looking for construction dollars in FY 2025 for use in FY 2026.
- In FY 2026, if construction documents are ready, the Town will start applying for smartscale, Build American Bureau grants, and other VDOT grant programs.
- Additional funding for street beautification may be needed by FY 2027. An additional staff member may be needed to keep up with beautification efforts.

Rec Park Swimming Pool

- Pool is only 6ft deep; no slides and no diving board.
- Pool needs to be replaced.
- Design and engineer new pool and splash pad in 2024.
- Construct new pool in fall and winter of 2024 and finish in the spring of 2025.
- New pool summer 2025.
- Estimated cost is \$400,000, debt service would be \$40,000 per year.
- Rec Park revenues will pay for debt service.

Side by Sides

- Current Status: Town staff are working with Spearhead Trail reps to look at ways to bring side by sides into Town.
- 2025- No funding is planned for FY 2025. The work for FY 2025 is conversations and setting the stage for FY 2026.
- 2026- The Town will need to begin looking at policies related to side by sides in Town. Noise ordinances and parking will also be discussed.
- 2027- Additional funding may be needed at this time for street signage. Marketing will become an expense at this time.

River Walk

- Current Status- Town has signed engineered drawing from CDAC.
- 2025- The Town is actively working on a Transportation Alternative Program Ready Set Go grant. This grant provides technical assistance and pushes a project as close to construction as possible.
- 2026- The Town intends to apply for the Appalachian Regional Commission POWER grant in FY 2026. Any match for this project will be made through in-kind staff hours.
- 2027- The Town hopes to have the project into construction phase by this year. Additional funding may be needed for signage and wayfinding in town.

New Property at Mall

- Current Status- Town is in the final stages of acquisition.
- 2025- The Town needs to discuss the intended purpose of this property and the Iron Street property. Any planning related to this property will need to be grant funded.

- 2026- Depending upon the preferred use of the property, the town will pursue a planning grant for either recreation, economic development, or some other purpose to prepare for FY 2027.
- 2027- If planning has been completed, any construction costs for the town or matches for grant funding would be needed this year.

#### Rails to Trails

- The railway to Jewell Ridge is no longer in use.
- No funding planned for FY 2025. The Town needs to start building relationships with Norfolk Southern. This will be a 10-year long project.
- The Town hopes to have found the right person to speak to by the start of FY 2026, the Town will begin to utilize Congressman Griffith, Senator Hackworth, and Delegate Moorefield to assist with the project.
- At the three-year mark, the Town hopes to have found the right people and to be having high level conversations on steps to convert the railway to a trailway.

#### **Economic Vibrancy and Employment**

##### Energy Generation

- Finalist for the Energy Ingenuity Grant from the Tobacco Commission
- Applying for AMLER Grant Cycle.
- Speaking with VDEM about retention pond at Wastewater Treatment facility.
- Retention Pond could be used for Water Filtration Plant Expansion and Hydroelectric Power Generation.
- Retention Pond would mitigate flooding for the Town.
- Additional funding may be needed in FY 2026 for debt service depending on final capital costs.

##### Water Capacity

- The Salmon Farm has gone to bond- we expect to see movement in the next year.
- The Coronado Mine is starting back up- we know they will need water, we do not know how much.
- FY 2025's goal is to begin the permitting process with Virginia Department of Health. Town is working with Go Virginia.
- FY 2026's goal is to continue the permitting process- this will be a two-year long process.
- FY 2027's goal is to get to construction documents and begin looking for funding on this project.

##### Main Street Program

- 2025- Officially gained exploring Main Street status for FY 2025.
- FY 2025- will be spent on ensuring Wisteria Station is a success.
- 2026- Town will look to gain Mobilizing Main Street in 2026.
- 2027- The Town of Richlands would like to gain Advancing Main Street community by the end of FY 2027.

##### Merchants Association

- Hold the first meeting before the end of FY 2024.
- During FY 2025, the Town will work to organize the association and assist in filing for 501c3 status.
- No additional funding is seen as a need in FY 2025.
- Long term this should not be an expense for the Town; the association should be holding fundraisers and other activities to have funding for their events.

##### Business Site Readiness

- I/EDA started to pull together potential sites for new economic development projects.

- The States's Business Site Readiness program requires at least 25 acres of contiguous land for their program. We do not have that...
- Smaller sites can still be located and prepped by the Town with grant funding.
- Setting the stage for potential economic development projects in the future is the goal now.
- No additional funding is needed for this work currently.

#### Zoning Update and Comp Plan Update

- The Town's current Comprehensive Plan is now 7 years old.
- The Town's Zoning Ordinance is over 10 years old.
- Both will need to be updated within the next 10 years, but in the interim, they can be updated.
- Currently have 7 zoning districts.
- Town will begin a community engagement process in FY 2025 utilizing grant funds for the process.
- Community engagement process will lead to updates on zoning and planning in FY 2026.

#### **Life, Health, and Safety**

##### Fire Station/Rescue Station

- Current stations do not work and cause additional inefficiencies.
- RFD is not a VFD nor a municipal Fire Station- issue with grants.
- Cleared out space at Public Works barn for site placement.
- Town has 100k from county for fire prevention work.
- Town has 40k from county for Capital expenses.
- Construction in FY 2025.

##### Water and Wastewater Upgrades

- Prequalifying happening now.
- Construction documents and RFP Summer 2024.
- Bid opening Fall of 2024.
- Bid awarding January 2025.
- Construction completed Fall of 2026.
- Capacity expansion started now.

##### Farmers Market

- Starting back up this Spring.
- Open on Wednesdays and Saturdays.
- Working with Tazewell to have farmers come to Richlands.
- Placement- Stay or move.
- Incorporate into Downtown Revitalization work.
- No immediate need for additional funding.
- May need additional staff member in the future.

##### Flood Mitigation

- Town will apply for Flood Mitigation Grant from VDEM this year.
- Staff will work with consultants to see what mitigation techniques are cost effective and work for Richlands.
- Levies, channel modification, and a retention pond are being explored.
- Retention pond allows multiple actions on one space.
- Town will need major grant funding to complete any of this.

##### Critterville Playground

- Volunteer Day on April 13.
- Fix broken pieces, sand wooden surfaces, and painting.

- New cameras are almost ready to be installed.
- Applying for a Keep Virginia Beautiful grant for additional trash cans.
- Grant search for playground replacement start in FY 2025.
- Need flood mitigation before playground replacement.

#### Active Seniors

- Town staff are meeting with AASC and other groups to understand what is currently being offered.
- FY 2025 will be spent on surveying and community engagement.
- Team will begin building a senior program in FY 2026.
- Look to expand offerings at the Congregate Nutrition site in FY 2027.

#### **Efficient, High-Quality Service**

##### Human Resources

- Only one FTE to start; spends large majority of time working on payroll.
- Recently added payroll tech position.
- Start updating personnel regulations, on-boarding, and exit interviews.
- Updating and conforming job titles and job descriptions.
- Small increase in personnel for FY 2025.
- Additional training, membership, and travel funding in FY 2026 and FY 2027.

##### Town Website

- Last updated 5 years ago.
- Organization is changing, need to update website.
- Need a central location for information sharing other than Facebook.
- Team working on Communication Strategy.
- Need policies for website and social media.
- Mobile friendly.
- Branding opportunity.

##### Classification Study

- Currently, no classification, no pay bands, very little job descriptions.
- Minimum wage increases are causing compression.
- Inflation over 9% for an extended period and effects are reaching SWVA.
- Team has obtained Compensation Survey System data from VIG.
- FY 2025 will be spent developing compensation plan.
- FY 2026 funds will be needed for implementation.

##### Fund Structure

- Currently have five funds- General, Water, Distribution, Wastewater, and Electric.
- Distribution Fund has no revenue; creates massive amounts of work to provide revenues.
- Funds are an accounting tool to ensure separation of funds.
- Combine Water, Distribution, and Wastewater into one fund for FY 2025.
- No financial impact.

##### General Management Service Fee

- Allows the cost sharing of comingled expenses in a transparent way.
- Total cost for Council, Town Manager, Legal, Finance, HR, and IT.
- Divide these costs by budget, customer numbers, and amount of work completed.
- Each fund sends a General Management Service Fee to the General Fund for the Funds share.
- A small increase in the monthly charge for the Utility Funds will cover any increases for this process.

##### Vehicle Software



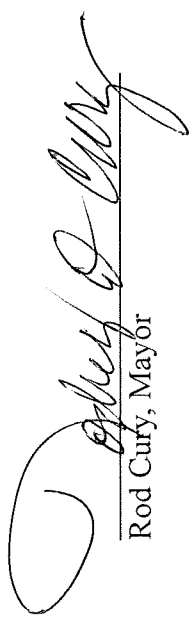
- GPS capability.
- Sends codes to the mechanic.
- Creates and updates spreadsheets on usage and maintenance.
- Need a life cycle process for vehicles and equipment.
- Phase approach for FY 2025 and FY 2026.
- Annual maintenance expense.

Equipment

- Mowing equipment purchased.
- Equipment across the Town is old and unmaintained.
- Contract out regular maintenance on vehicles.
- Mechanic focuses on larger equipment.
- Pole barns will be needed to cover and care for new equipment.

Closing- Big Plans, Big Actions.

  
Amanda Beheler, Clerk

  
Rod Cury, Mayor



**TOWN OF RICHLANDS**  
**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING**

The Richlands Town Council held a "Special Called Meeting" on Saturday, March 23, 2024, at 9:00 am at the Historic Crab Orchard Museum 3663 Crab Orchard Rd, Tazewell, VA with the following present:

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury  
Town Manager: Jason May  
Finance Manager: Ronnie Campbell  
Office Manager: Susan Whitt  
Town Clerk: Amanda Beheler  
Council Members: Gary Jackson, Rick Wood, Jordan Bales, Jan White, and Laura Mollo.

Absent: Seth White and Mike Thomas

The meeting was called to order at 9:00am and opened with the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Cury.

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

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 agenda as presented.

**IN RE: Request for Proposal (RFP) for Oriole Street Bridge**

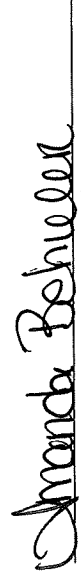
Mr. May gave a brief overview of the bids received.

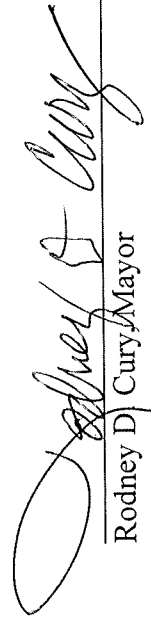
Jones Road & Bridge, Inc was the lowest bid received, the bid was for \$308,450.00.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to accept the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Engineering, Design, Construction, and Delivery Services for a slab on grade bridge replacement of the Oriole Street Bridge by Jones, Road & Bridge, Inc for \$308,450.00.

**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

