

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Richlands Town Council held a "Regular Monthly Meeting" on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, at 6:00 pm in the Richlands Council Chambers with the following present:

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury
Town Manager: Jason May
Office Manager: Absent
Town Clerk: Absent
Town Attorney: Michael Thomas
Finance Manager: Ronnie Campbell
Council Members: Seth White, Gary Jackson, Rick Wood, Jordan Bales, Jan White, and Laura Mollo.

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

The following amendments were made to the agenda:

- Move Additions, Deletions, or Corrections to the Agenda to before Recognition - Virginia Phoenix Cordle- 14U Travel Softball Team

Upon a motion by Seth White seconded by Gary Jackson and the roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the agenda as amended.

Mayor Cury asked if there was anyone present who would like to speak during unscheduled public comment.

The following citizens were added to Unscheduled Public Comments:

- Patricia Sparks

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson seconded by Rick Wood and the roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the agenda as amended.

IN RE: Recognition- Virginia Pheonix Cordle 14U Travel Softball Team

Mayor Cury and the Council recognized Head Coach Tom Cordle, Asst. Coach Jeff Osbourne, Asst. Coach Shannon Fuller, and the following players for all their achievements: Addison Moore, Brandy Moore, Mckenzie Cordle, Payton Barnette, Camie Spencer, and Justice Hill. The team is ranked 1st in the USAASA Softball Organization in the 14U Class and ranked 5th in the nation under the USAASA Softball Organization in the 14U Class. Nine out of ten of the girls on this team are from Richlands.

IN RE: Authorization to Pay Bills (July)

Mayor Cury asked the Council if there were any questions regarding the Check Register.

Mrs. Mollo:

- #16028 Thompson & Litton \$9,067.92- Mr. May advised this is the last payment.

Gary Jackson:

- #16032 W & L Construction \$701,150.44- Mr. May advised this is the full payment for paving on Kents Ridge, etc.

Rick Wood- Inaudible.

Upon a motion by Seth White seconded Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve paying the bills for July.

IN RE: Minutes

Mr. May advised the Clerk is out sick and the minutes were not included in the packets, so he would like to postpone approving the minutes until the September Meeting.

The Council gave consensus to wait on approving the minutes.

IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments

There were no Scheduled Public Comments.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

Patricia Sparks- Mrs. Sparks spoke to the Council about retiring and moving from Florida to Richlands with her late husband. Mrs. Sparks stated she fell in love with the town and wanted to let the Council know that everyone has been so friendly and welcoming to her. She also advised of some positive interactions that she'd had with Town workers. Mrs. Sparks hopes to get more involved in volunteering in the future.

The Council thanked Mrs. Sparks for her kind words about the Town.

IN RE: 2nd Reading Water Connection Ordinance O-2024-08-01

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to waive the 2nd Reading Water Connection Ordinance O-2024-08-01.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt Water Connection Ordinance O-2024-08-01.

IN RE: 2nd Reading Implementation of Transient Occupancy Tax O-2024-08-02

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 2nd Reading Implementation of Transient Occupancy Tax O-2024-08-02.

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 Transient Occupancy Tax O-2024-08-02.

Mr. Thomas advised this will go into effect September 14, 2024, 30 days from today.

IN RE: Loader Contract

Mr. May advised the last piece of large equipment that the Street Department needs is a Loader. The current Loader is over fifteen years old, has major brake issues, and is no longer safe during road construction or other street-related scenarios. The Town has worked with Carter Cat through a source well process, a state-sponsored procurement that does not require an RFP and has received a capital lease agreement with a balloon payment of \$68,800. Utilizing a capital lease allows the Town to use the equipment now and incur the final balloon payment in the future.

Mr. May stated the Street Department will cover the first year's payment, and subsequent years' payment as well as the balloon payment which will be included in future budgets.

This motion was tabled until September 2024.

IN RE: Residential and Commercial Solar Ordinance

Mayor Cury read the following Staff Summary regarding Residential and Commercial Solar that during previous Council meetings, several Council Members voiced their interest in allowing residential and commercial properties to install solar arrays on their property. Currently there is

no statute or ordinance to prevent anyone from doing this, but an Ordinance would codify residents' and commercial businesses' ability to do so. Another path to do this would be to include rooftop solar (with special exception permit) into each zone and have a policy held in Town Hall for what each landowner would need to do to apply for that permit. Mr. May stated that the Staff would like direction from Council on what the best next steps are for this process.

Mr. Thomas advised that he has been researching this subject and advised codifying this into a Richlands Code under General Provisions might be a better route to adopt this.

Mr. Jackson suggested having an Ordinance that would make it safer.

Mr. White agreed with Mr. Jackson and recommended adding in the Ordinance that the Town cannot buy back any of the solar generated power.

Mrs. Mollo and Mr. Wood also agreed.

Mr. Bales stated he had done some research on the subject as well.

The Council agreed and asked for Mr. Thomas to draft an Ordinance for the Council.

IN RE: Tazewell County Fire MOU Update

Mr. May advised that Tazewell County is providing a one-time grant of \$100k of funding for FY 2025 to support Fire Suppression in the Town of Richlands. The County has asked the Council to update the MOU between the County and the Town of Richlands.

Mr. White thanked Mrs. Mollo for her work on helping get this for the Town.

Mr. May stated the MOU would be dated for July 1, 2024, through July 1, 2027.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the Fire MOU between Tazewell County and the Town of Richlands.

IN RE: Leaf Truck

Mr. May stated that as Autumn approaches, the Town of Richlands faces its annual challenge of managing fallen leaves throughout the community. Efficient leaf collection is crucial for maintaining clean streets, preventing clogged storm drains, and ensuring the safety and aesthetic appeal of our Town. Currently, the Town does not have any equipment for leaf collection. The Staff would like the approval of the Council to move forward with the purchase of a trailer-based leaf collection system. The Staff has located several new and used and expect the cost to be under \$40,000. This item is not budgeted and will require fund balance usage.

Mr. Jackson asked if this was a trailer that is towable, Mr. May advised it was towable by an F-2500 or F-3500 already owned by the Town.

Mrs. White said this is a necessary purchase for the Town.

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve purchasing a trailer-based leaf collection system.

IN RE: Banking Investments RFP/RFQ

Mr. Campbell advised the Town currently has thirty bank accounts at five different banks and stated the Staff would like to do an RFP/RFQ to seek higher investment deals and investment returns. Mr. Campbell also stated some of the accounts are separated by the various departments in the General Ledger. This structure creates a very manual process for making payments, deposits, transfers, and impacts the potential return on the balances and would like to create a more uniform system.

The Staff would like to work through the operating efficiencies and requested approval from the Council to issue an RFP/RFQ for banking investments.

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 an RFP/RFQ for banking investments.

Mr. White stated this should have been done a long time ago and thanked Mr. Campbell and Mr. May for their work on this issue.

Mr. White also stated this was a recommendation from the Auditors.

IN RE: Yard Sign Resolution- R-2024-08-01

Mayor Cury read Resolution R-2024-08-01.

Mr. White asked that the Town be consistent with this and for the police department to not be the enforcer of this. Mr. May agreed with this.

Mr. Bales and Mr. White expressed their concerns about rights-of-way. Mr. May advised he would have a map online for citizens and would provide the "enforcer" with a copy to refer to when removing signs.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve Resolution R-2024-08-01.

IN RE: 1st Reading Richlands Annex Capital Project Ordinance- O-2024-09-01

Mr. Thomas read Ordinance O-2024-09-01.

Mr. May gave handouts to the Council regarding this and gave a brief overview of the project.

Mr. May advised over the past six months, Staff has been working on this capital project to create a new Fire Station/Rescue Squad, a new Public Works space, a new Salt Building, and spaces for all apparatus and equipment. This is the Capital Project Ordinance to begin this project.

IN RE: Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Campbell gave a brief overview of the Monthly Financial Report for July as follows:

- General Fund- Year to Date Net Income Loss is \$257,142.
- Revenues are lower in consumer/consumption utility tax, personal property taxes, sales tax proceeds, other revenues and garbage collections for a hurt.
- Water- Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$135,162.
- Sewer- Year to Date Net Income- \$314,443.
- Water and Sewer Line Maintenance Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$397,738.
- Electric Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$671,203.
- General Fund Reserved Cash Balance- \$2,648,402.
- General Fund- Unreserved Cash Balance is \$4,976,109. A \$599K increase from May.
- Water Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$1,111,932.
- Water Department Unreserved Cash Balance- \$1,109,944. A \$17k decrease from May.
- Sewer Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$487,956
- Sewer Department Unreserved Cash Balance- (\$1,468,372). A 12k increase from May.
- Electric Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$1,789,615.
- Electric Department- Unreserved Cash Balance- \$2,983,426. A \$890k increase from May.

Mayor Cury asked the Council if they had any questions about the Financial Report.

The Council had no questions.

IN RE: Attorney Report

Mr. Thomas spoke to the Council about making changes to the Town Charter. Mr. Thomas advised if there was anything else needing to be changed, he needs to know as soon as possible.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

IN RE: Town Manager Report

- Free CPR/First Aid Classes- Advised the Richlands Fire and Rescue are hosting these free classes. Information will be posted on the Town website and social media.
- Subdivision Ordinance Update- Advised the Tobacco Commission is putting forward around 2 million dollars to assist in workforce housing and in anticipation of this, the Town is looking at making necessary changes to the current Subdivision Ordinance. Will bring this back to the Council with a 1st Reading with these adjustments.
- Generator- the Town has made the initial deposit on the generator. Looking to close on the Line of Credit.
- Fire/Rescue Fundraising Update- will bring this back in September.

IN RE: Council Member Reports

Laura Mollo-

- Requested an update on the Oriole Street Bridge- Mr. May advised equipment has been moved in and starting the abutment process at the end of this week and looking to have this project completed by the end of September.
- Asked Mr. May if the Town was still advertising in The Voice newspaper as well as the Bluefield Daily Telegraph. Mr. May advised they were.
- Thanked the Town for the concert, stated she received several compliments from citizens.
- Small Businesses- People are noticing the Town is trying to help everyone.

Jan White-

- Stated she talked to Mr. May about a scam currently going around where people are impersonating AEP employees.

Jordan Bales-

- Potholes at Kelsey Tire- Mr. May advised these have been fixed.
- Stated he had been receiving complaints that citizens aren't able to get through to Town Hall. Mr. May advised the main line goes to Mrs. Whitt's office and she has been out.
- Stated he received many compliments regarding the concert.
- Clinch River Soccer will be having their Field Fest next Tuesday.
- Halloween- stated there is no school the following day after Halloween in Tazewell County. Would like to set Halloween Trick or Treating on Oct. 31 5:30pm-8pm. The Council agreed.

IN RE: Halloween

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to observe Halloween Trick or Treating on October 31, 2024, from 5:30pm-8:00pm, in the Town of Richlands.

Rick Wood-

- Lake Park- Stated citizens were asking for "Children at Play" signs and speed limit signs as well. Mr. May advised the Town is in the process of doing this. Will have an update at the September meeting.
- Advised he spoke to Jacob Hess and Mr. Hess suggested placing a permanent sign on his property to inform citizens of upcoming Town events, possibly an LED sign.

Gary Jackson-

- Advised he had a complaint today about speeding on Henderson Street. Mrs. Mollo advised she had already passed this onto Chief Holt. Mr. White advised he had complaints of parking on this street as well.

Seth White-

- The Council discussed several solutions for the speeding issue on Henderson Street.
- Has received great comments about the concert but needs to look into easier parking for the elderly at the next event.
- The Town is looking good.
- Thanked Mrs. Sparks for coming to share her experience and perspective in Richlands during Public Comment today.

IN RE: Mayor Comments

- Enjoyed the Phantom Concert and the Grand Opening of the Greenway Park.
- Thanked the Town employees for all their hard work.
- Thanked the Tazewell County Chamber of Commerce and Keisha Cole for attending the event.
- Don't Stop Believing 5k will be held on August 31, this is a Fundraiser for St. Jude.

Mrs. White stated that she hoped with all the events being held on Saturdays in Town it will encourage more people to visit and businesses can start opening on Saturdays again.

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)(8) Consult with Attorney- Teen Venture
- b. VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) Consult with Attorney- Rec Commission
- c. VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) Economic Development Project
- d. VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) Land Purchase
- e. VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) Personnel


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 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 Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council certified that only VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1), VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3), and VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(8) was 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