

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Richlands Town Council held a "Regular Monthly Meeting" on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 6:00 pm in the Richlands Council Chambers with the following present:

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury (Digitally)
Town Manager: Jason May
Project Manager: Susan Whitt
Town Clerk: Amanda Beheler
Town Attorney: Michael Thomas
Finance Manager: Ronnie Campbell
Council Members: Seth White, 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 Seth White.

IN RE: Mayor Cury Request to Attend/Lead Meeting Digitally

Mayor Cury requested to attend/lead the meeting digitally.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve Mayor Cury to attend/lead the meeting digitally.

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

- Jason Herndon was added to Unscheduled Public Comments.
- Mrs. Mollo requested that Jonathan Hankins from the Tazewell County Sheriffs Office to speak following the Richlands Police Departments Initial Accreditation Award Presentation.

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 agenda as amended.

IN RE: Authorization to Pay Bills (November)

Mayor Cury asked the Council if there were any questions regarding the Check Register. There was none.

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 paying the bills for November.

IN RE: Minutes

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 the following minutes.

- November 12, 2024- Public Hearing
- November 12, 2024- Regular Scheduled Meeting
- November 18, 2024- Special Called Meeting

IN RE: Richlands Police Department Initial Accreditation

Todd Clingenpeel, DCJS (Department Criminal Justice Services) Accreditation Program Manager, spoke to the Council about the Richlands Police Departments Initial On-Site Accreditation Assessment that took place on October 27-29, 2024.

Mr. Clingenpeel advised that on December 5, 2024, in Yorktown, VA, the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission voted unanimously to approve the department's Initial Accreditation (the first in the department's history).

Mr. Clingenpeel commended the department for their hard work, dedication, and professionalism while presenting the department with their Certificate of Accreditation.

Sheriff Matthew T. Ward (VLESPC Commission Member) from Botetourt County Sheriffs Office also spoke to the Council about the department and their achievements. Mr. Ward stated that it was almost unheard of for an agency to go through an assessment and have zero returns. Agencies are given thirty-six months to complete an Initial Assessment, and the Richlands Police Department was able to finish it in just twenty months.

Chief Holt also spoke to the Council and expressed his pride in the agency and his staff. Chief Holt stated the men and women of the Richlands Police Department who have worked so hard to make this happen over the past two years are to be commended. Their professionalism and commitment to serving their community was evident during the on-site and as a result they received high praise from Commission members and in the Final Report.

Chief Holt presented Accreditation Manager Amanda Beheler with a Certificate of Appreciation for her outstanding dedication, professionalism, and commitment to excellence in leading the Richlands Police Department to achieve their first ever accreditation. Chief Holt stated that her tireless efforts significantly contributed to this accomplishment.

Chief Holt thanked his staff, the Town Council, the Town Manager, and his family for their support during the process.

Captain Jonathan Hankins from the Tazewell County Sheriff's Office also spoke to the Council and expressed his pride in the Richlands Police Department for their hard work and dedication to the accreditation process.

Each member of the Council congratulated Chief Holt and his staff on achieving one of the biggest milestones in Richlands history.

IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments

There were no Scheduled Public Comments.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

Jason Herndon- Mr. Herndon spoke to the Council regarding a rumor he had heard that the Town might be considering shutting down the thru street located between the CNX building and the Railway Depot. Mr. Herndon stated that his trucks use that route and if they couldn't use it they would have to go the long way around. The Council advised that it had been mentioned, however no action is being taken at this time and that they would have to hold a Public Hearing before anything could be done.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess after being advised the Audio/Video Live Feed was not working.

IN RE: Creation of Generator Capital Account O-2024-12-04 (2nd Reading)

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to dispense of the 2nd Reading of the Creation of Generator Capital Account Ordinance O-2024-12-04.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt the Creation of Generator Capital Account Ordinance O-2024-12-04.

Mrs. Mollo asked Mr. May to explain to the public why the meeting was being recorded and not streamed live.

Mr. May explained that the software agreement had run out and they were currently working to get it back.

Mrs. Mollo also asked Mr. May to give a brief summary to the public regarding what they had missed up to this point.

Mr. May gave the public a brief summary of what had already taken place.

IN RE: Capital Accounts- Grapple Truck/Annex Updates

Mr. May advised that over the past seven months the Town has brought in \$22,894 from the one-dollar fee per account on a monthly basis for the Grapple Truck.

Mr. May advised the Town is in the final stages with financial advisors to be able to bring some financing packages for the Richlands Anex Project to Council. Mr. May stated he hopes to have this back in front of Council in January or February to discuss the full-term price of this project.

Mr. Bales asked Mr. May how much a new Grapple Truck would cost. Mr. May advised it would be around \$200k-250k.

IN RE: Professional Collections RFP

Mr. May advised the RFP closed in October and the Town received two bids. The staff recommended going with Nationwide Credit Corporation, a Virginia-based Collection Agency. Mr. May stated one of the largest contributing factors was the cost structure, NCC was 20% across the board, whereas the other applicant was not.

Mr. Wood asked what collection accounts this was for, and Mr. May advised it was for anyone who was billed through the Rescue Squad.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to accept the bid from Nationwide Credit Corporation.

IN RE: Cell Tower Contract

Mr. May advised that he was approached back in early Spring by ATC (American Tower Corporation) regarding their easement for the tower on Christmas Tree Hill that provides multiple communication services to the Town. Mr. May advised they are currently paying an annual easement that is around one thousand dollars and have offered a perpetual easement for \$130k.

Mr. May advised the staff has researched this and thinks it is a good offer.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to accept this contract with the American Tower Corporation.

IN RE: Paving RFP

Mr. May advised the staff has done road assessments and put together a list of potential roads to be paved starting in the Spring of 2025.

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to accept the Paving RFP.

IN RE: Council Dates for 2025

Mr. May gave a brief overview of the Council Dates for 2025.

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 Council dates for 2025.

IN RE: Short Term Disability

Revenue Account (restricted funds) in the amount of \$308,450 for the Oriole Street Bridge Replacement.

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 this Budget Amendment.

IN RE: Monthly Financial Report

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

- General Fund- Year to Date Net Income Loss is \$1,506,794. The drivers for this loss are Budget Amendments and mostly timing.
- Water- Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$17,037. The driver for this loss is timing.
- Sewer- Year to Date Net Income Variance- \$85,373. The driver for this is timing.
- Water and Sewer Line Maintenance Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$186,518. The driver for this loss is timing.
- Electric Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$5,783,231. The capital purchases of \$5.3M represent the deposit and first milestone payment on the natural gas generator. This was funded from the note payable (First Bank & Trust).
- General Fund- Reserved Cash Balance- \$2,742,816
- General Fund- Unreserved Cash Balance- \$1,600,738
- Water Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$1,072,676
- Water Department Unreserved Cash Balance- \$841,460
- Sewer Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$490,209
- Sewer Department Unreserved Cash Balance- (\$452,281)
- Electric Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$1,792,313
- Electric Department Unreserved Cash Balance- (\$1,243,584)

Mr. Campbell asked the Council if they had any questions about the Financial Report, there were none.

Mr. Campbell provided the Council with a handout showing the Bank Statement Balances.

IN RE: Attorney Report

Mr. Thomas gave a brief update on the proposed changes to the Charter and advised they have been submitted.

IN RE: Town Manager Report

- Commended the Richlands Police Department and Chief Holt for their work in the accreditation process. Stated this is the end result of almost two years' worth of hard work to get to this place.
- Advised the camera has been installed at the Police Department.
- Also advised after just receiving state accreditation the Richlands Police Department will now begin the process of seeking national accreditation through CALEA
- Stated the Richlands Police Department will also begin the process to become a Certified Crime Prevention Community. The first step in this is to create a Citizen Advisory Board and plan a Public Safety Committee Meeting after the first of the year.
- Gave a brief review of the AMP Smart Thermostat.
- Advised the Council that there have been several instances lately of disorderly conduct by customers to the front desk staff at Town Hall. Mr. May cautioned citizens about their actions and language towards the staff.

Mr. Wood asked Mr. May what is the number that citizens can use to report potholes, etc. Mr. May advised he will have that information on the January Agenda.

IN RE: Council Member Reports

Laura Mollo-

- Stated that she appreciated Mayor Cury for participating in the meeting via zoom, it showed his dedication to the Town.
- Advised the Fire Department has just accepted a new grant and stated all departments have stepped up the past year in applying for and receiving grants.
- Stated the Town has gotten so much accomplished in the past year and over 6 million dollars in grants has been brought in.
- Appreciates Mr. Campbells Monthly Financial Reports.
- Advised she had received a couple of phone calls regarding Teen Venture and that she had been blocked from their public posts. Stated the Town has done everything they can to support them.
- Stated that when the Council interviewed for a Police Chief, Accreditation was a huge thing for her and briefly spoke about the changes that have taken place in the last twenty months.
- Stated she has read the 13 page Final Report and that it states the agency had zero returns during their recent on-site assessment and highlighted the agencies professionalism.
- Advised the Town was headed in the right direction and excited that the police department is now going to seek national accreditation.

Jan White-

- Agreed with Mrs. Mollo that the Town is headed in the right direction.
- Inquired about the Front Street Bridge. Mr. May advised the RFP for VDOT will close today or tomorrow on that project.
- Wished everyone a Merry Christmas

Jordan Bales-

- Stated he had several citizens reach out to him regarding the truck being down for bulks item pick-ups. Mr. May apologized for the undue burden it puts on the citizens while the truck is down and advised he hopes to have bulk items placed out on the same day as the regular trash is put out going forward after the first of the new year. Mr. May advised the Town will post an update for this on social media.
- Advised he has received numerous compliments about the Towns Christmas decorations.
- Complimented the REC Park, stating the volleyball tournament had wrapped up and that he had received zero complaints.
- Advised basketball is starting next week with over 270 kids signed up for this.

Rick Wood-

- Thanked the Town employees, especially the Water/Sewer and Sanitation department.
- Stated the Town had an excellent Christmas Parade this year.
- Advised the new Japanese restaurant is opening this week.
- Wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Seth White-

- Stated the Town had a great Christmas Parade, despite the temperatures.
- Wished everyone a Merry Christmas.
- Invited everyone to the ribbon-cutting and Grand Opening of the Richlands Coffee Shop tomorrow.

IN RE: Mayor Comments

- Thanked the Council for allowing him to lead the meeting via zoom.
- Stated the Christmas Tree Lighting was a wonderful occasion and the Parade was wonderful.
- Wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

IN RE: Executive Session

Mr. White asked that VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(8) Legal Consultation be added to the Executive Session.

Mayor Cury advised the Council would be going into Executive Session pursuant to:

- VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(8) Legal Consultation
- VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1) Personnel- Performance Review
- VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(6) Contract Negotiation

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

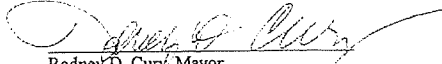
Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council certified that only VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1), VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(6) and VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) was discussed during the Executive Session.

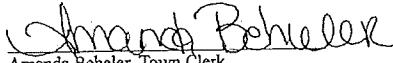
IN RE: EnBridge

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the Rough Order of Magnitude with EnBridge and authorize the Town Manager to sign the Order subject to legal review.

IN RE: Adjournment

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


Rodney D. Cury, Mayor


Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk