

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Richlands Town Council held a "Regular Monthly Meeting" on Tuesday, July 9, 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: Amanda Beheler
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 by Elaine Holmes and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Rod Cury.

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

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:

- Morgan Earp
- Jacob Vandyke
- Ginger Branton
- Ernest Edgill

The following amendments were made to the agenda:

- Added Ezekial Mullins to (b)
- Moved (b) under 4
- Added Legal Consultation (A8) to Executive Session

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: Authorization to Pay Bills (June)

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

Mr. Wood:

- #15997- Thompson & Litton \$14,749.74- What is this for? Mr. May explained it was for the cost of re-advertising WWTP/WTP.
- #15962- Kabota of Kingsport \$23,166.22- Mr. May explained this was for the purchase of the approved side-by-side.
- #16009- W&L Construction \$5,198.49- Mr. May explained this was for asphalt.
- #15930- Carter machinery \$147,528.11- Mr. May this was for the WTP Generator Upgrade and the attachments for the Backhoe.

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 paying the bills for June.

IN RE: Minutes

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Laura Mollo and the roll call vote of all members present, with Gary Jackson sustaining from the June 11, 2024, and June 18, 2024, minutes, the Council voted to approve the minutes for the following dates:

- June 11, 2024, Joint Public Hearing

- June 11, 2024, Regular Scheduled Meeting
- June 18, 2024, Special Called Meeting
- June 25, 2024, Special Called Meeting
- June 25, 2024, Joint Public Hearing

Mr. May commended Amanda Beheler, the Town Clerk, on her minutes.

IN RE: Recognition of Jack Clem, Cooper Hurst, and Ezekial Mullins

Mayor Cury gave a brief speech recognizing Jack Clem, Cooper Hurst, and Ezekial Mullins on their recent Tennis accomplishments.

- Jack Clem- State Champion- undefeated for the second year in a row.
- Jack Clem & Cooper Hurst- 2nd place as a team- won 19 consecutive games.
- Ezekial Mullins- Shot Putter- 2nd place in the state.

IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments

Johnny Clay Lester, 129 Bragg Road- Mr. Lester spoke briefly to the Council about his issues on Bragg Road. Mr. Lester stated this has been an ongoing issue for many years and would like to have the weeds cut and potholes filled.

Mr. May stated he has looked at Bragg Rd. and advised he would have the weeds taken care of. Mr. May also expressed his concerns about the draining issues and fixing this road.

The Council discussed the problems on Bragg Rd. and possible solutions.

Mr. White stated once the right of way is determined the Town could explore some solutions for this property.

Mr. White asked Mr. Thomas if he could determine the right of way for this property and the Council would revisit this at the next meeting.

George H. Shelton Jr., 320 Bragg Road- Mr. Shelton also spoke to the Council about the problems on Bragg Road including the potholes.

Mr. Shelton stated this has been an ongoing issue for years and the Town has never helped with it in the past.

Mayor Cury advised the Council will work with both him and Mr. Lester on solutions for Bragg Road once the right of way is determined.

Mrs. Mollo and Mr. White advised the Town has a new Council, New Town Manager, and a new Director of Public Works, and they would address this issue as soon as possible.

Mr. Bales asked the Council to establish some follow-up dates on this.

Mayor Cury advised the Town Attorney will determine the right of way and suggested the Council follow-up with this at the September meeting.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

Morgan Earp, 1618 6th St.- Mr. Earp thanked the Town for the great job on the Freedom Festival and suggested a fan that blows water for next year's event to beat the heat. Mr. Earp inquired about the reflective mirror on Tazewell Ave. Mr. May advised that was replaced.

Jacob Vandyke, 721 Farmers Street- Mr. Vandyke stated the Freedom Fest was a huge success and his expectations were exceeded. Mr. Vandyke thanked everyone involved for all their hard work during the event.

Ginger Branton- Thanked everyone for their assistance on the Mural Re-Dedication and suggested the Town of the Richlands use the mural design as their designated design for murals in the community.

Ernest Edgil, 206 Terry Drive- Mr. Edgil asked if the Town was purchasing more speed limit signs for Hidden Valley. Mr. May advised the Town is working on this process and the Police Department has increased their patrols in these areas during this time.

Mr. Edgil inquired about trash cans being left out on the streets and Mr. May stated the Town did not have an ordinance on this.

Mr. Edgil also stated his concerns about parking in the streets, temporary signs being left up, and the deer.

Mr. Edgil asked if the Town is giving any assistance to the Food Panty, Mr. May stated they did not. Mr. Edgil asked if the Town could waive their dumpster fee. Mrs. Mollo advised that once a year the Town accepts applications from people and organizations for assistance from the Town.

Mr. Edgil thanked Mr. May and his wife for watering the flowers in Town.

IN RE: Fire Chief Retired Badge Number R-20214-07-03

Mr. May advised newly appointed Fire Chief Rudy Keith has requested to have Retired Chief Drew Puckett's Badge number un-retired to use.

Mr. Keith stated it would be an honor to use Mr. Puckett's badge number after working under him for many years at the beginning of his career. Mr. Keith advised he has been in contact with Mr. Puckett's family and has their blessing.

Mr. Thomas drafted resolution R-2024-07-03 for this and read it to 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 adopt Resolution R-2024-07-03.

Mayor Cury gave a brief speech to the Council about growing up with Andrew Puckett and thanked Mr. Keith for carrying on his legacy.

Mayor Cury called Mr. Puckett's son, Andrew Puckett, and advised him the Council passed Resolution. Andrew was very happy and thanked Mr. Keith.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

IN RE: Planning Commission Recommendations

Mayor Cury advised there are three vacancies on the Planning Commission.

Gary Jackson- Inaudible.

Mr. May stated the Planning Commission wanted to re-appoint Michelle Elswick and Elaine Holmes and there was also one open seat.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to reappoint Michelle Elswick and Elaine Holmes to a four-year term on the Planning Commission starting June 30, 2024.

Mr. White suggested the Planning Commission make recommendations for the open seat to the Council. Mr. White would also like the Planning Commission to rank the applicants.

IN RE: IEDA Recommendations

Mr. May advised Cody Harmon and Lynna Mitchell would both like to be reappointed to the IEDA.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to reappoint Lynna Mitchell and Cody Harmon to a four-year term on the IEDA Commission starting June 30, 2024.

IN RE: VDOT Resolution R-2024-07-02

Mrs. Mollo read Resolution R-2024-07-02 to the Council.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt Resolution R-2024-07-02

IN RE: Water Connection Ordinance O-2024-08-01 (First Reading)

Mayor Cury read Ordinance O-2024-08-01.

IN RE: Implementation of Transient Occupancy Tax O-2024-08-02 (First Reading)

Mr. Bales read Ordinance O-2024-08-02.

IN RE: Opioid Settlement Resolution R-2024-07-01

Mr. White read Resolution R-2024-07-01.

Mr. White inquired about the settlement. Mr. Thomas advised he does not know the amount, but it will go to the county and not the Town. Mr. White asked if the Town could receive some of these funds from the county and Mr. May advised he would follow up on this.

Upon a motion by Seth White seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt Resolution R-2024-07-01.

IN RE: Water and Wastewater Plant Upgrades

Mr. May gave the Council the following updates on the Water and Wastewater Plant Upgrades:

- RFP was sent out for re-bid.
- One bid was received.
- The bid received was very high, nearly 75% over budget.
- Has gone through the bid process on this three times.

Mr. May spoke briefly to the Council about plant upgrades and rate increases.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to authorize Mr. May to put out an RFP for additional engineering services.

Mr. White spoke to the Council about his concerns over the previous RFP not being placed on Electronic Virginia.

Rick Wood- Inaudible.

Mr. White asked if he could be a part of and attend the renegotiation with the PSA, Council agreed.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to allow Mr. May and Mr. Thomas to renegotiate a contract with PSA.

IN RE: Rescue Collections

Mr. May requested the ability to move forward with an RFP for Rescue Debt Collections.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to authorize Mr. May to seek an RFP for Rescue Debt Collections.

IN RE: Sanitation and Holidays

Mr. May spoke to the Council about the Sanitation Department and their holiday schedule. Mr. May stated they advised they would like to work on holidays (except for Thanksgiving and Christmas) and not fall behind. Mr. May requested the sanitation workers get paid time and a half for these days instead of comp time.

Mr. Wood- Inaudible.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to amend the Sanitation Department schedule and pay time and a half for holidays worked.

Mr. May stated that all six workers that work in sanitation agrees with this change.

Mr. Wood- Inaudible.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to reconsider the motion just passed.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to amend the Sanitation Department schedule and pay double time for holidays worked.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

IN RE: Monthly Financial Report

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

- General Fund- Year to Date Net Income is \$883,000, 88.7% of budget.
- Revenues are 86.5% of Budget.
- Water- Year to date net income is primarily the result of lower revenues, currently at \$373k or 77.2% of budget.
- Sewer- Lower revenues, currently at 80.4% of budget.
- Water and Sewer Line Maintenance- Currently at 75.7% of the budget.
- Electric- Currently at 84.4% of the budget.
- General Fund- Unreserved Cash Balance is 4.4 million.
- Water Department—Unreserved Cash Balance is 1.1 million.
- Sewer Department- Unreserved Cash Balance is 1.5 million negative.
- Electric Department- Unreserved Cash Balance \$2,092,782.

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

Mrs. Mollo and the Council thanked Mr. Campbell for this work and congratulated him on his one year with the town.

The Council had no other questions.

Mr. Wood- Inaudible.

IN RE: Attorney Report

Mr. Thomas stated he didn't have anything to report on at this time.

IN RE: Town Manager Report

Mr. May advised that the Yard Signs are back and growing. (Inaudible).

Mr. White stated it should be all or nothing, when removing signs.

Mr. Bales asked what other Towns do about this issue. Mr. Thomas advised the Town can clear the right of ways.

Mayor Cury- Inaudible.

Mr. May stated he would have procedures drafted for this and will bring it back to the next meeting.

IN RE: Council Member Reports

Laura Mollo-

- Stated there were several Little League teams battling for state titles and wished them luck.
- Freedom Festival- Thank Mrs. White for her work organizing the event and stated she had received several messages from citizens that were shocked to see Mr. May and his wife picking up trash and helping. Mrs. Mollo also thanked all the town workers.
- Stated she spoke to WVVA during Freedom Fest about the Towns unity and morale.

Jan White-

- Thanked everyone for their help with the Freedom Festival.
- Paving- Citizens thanked the Town for paving Kents Ridge.
- Grappler Truck- Citizens thanked the Town for this also.

Jordan Bales-

- Little League Teams:
 1. Coach Pitch Girls- 2nd Place in District and Sectionals
 2. Coach Pitch Boys- District 11 Champions and 3rd in Sectionals
 3. 9/10 Boys- District 11 Champions, lost to Woodstock in State.
 4. 9/10 Girls- District 11 Champions, will travel to McLean for State.
 5. 11/12 Girls- District 11 Champions, came in 3rd at State.
- Pool- Asked Mr. May about the Pool. Mr. May advised the RFP is currently out for bid and would like to have a mockup/design available as soon as possible. Mr. May advised the Town is open to all citizens' ideas for the pool.
- Solar- Would like to revisit this.

Rick Wood-

- Stated the Freedom Fest was great.
- Would like the Town to look at mowing on Birmingham Road.
- Stated citizens wanted to know if there would be a Carnival this year. Mr. May advised he would update on this in August.
- Mechanic Position. Mr. May advised he is pulling together the ad for this.

Gary Jackson-

- Inaudible.

Seth White-

- Freedom Festival and Fireworks were great.
- Thanked everyone for their hard work on the Freedom Festival.
- Would like to make a motion that all RFP's be advertised on Electronic Virginia.

Upon a motion by Seth White seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to advertise all RFPs on Electronic Virginia going forward.

- Stated he is working on an Opening Day for the CNX Building, there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony.

- Stated the Town looks good, and optimism and morale is great. Has received a lot of good comments lately.
- Advised there are many benefits from living in the Town.

IN RE: Mayor Comments

- Thanked Jan White, Laura Mollo, and all the Town workers for helping with Freedom Fest.
- The fireworks were great.
- Section House- thanked the Police Department and Town workers for helping paint a part of the Section House.

IN RE: Section House RFP for Painting

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to authorize the Town Manager to seek an RFP for painting to remainder of the Section House.

IN RE: Executive Session

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

VA Code Section: 2.2-3711 (A)(1)- Personnel

VA Code Section: 2.2-3711 (A)(8)- Consultation with Legal Counsel

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo 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 Gary Jackson 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)- Personnel and VA Code Section: 2.2-3711 (A)(8)- Consultation with Legal Counsel was discussed during the Executive Session.

IN RE: Normal Operating Line Maintenance RFP

Upon a motion by Seth White seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to file an RFP for the Normal Operating Line Maintenance, as needed.

IN RE: Emergency Operating Line Maintenance RFP

Upon a motion by Seth White seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to file an RFP for Emergency Operating Line Maintenance, as needed.

IN RE: Adjournment

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


Rodney D. Cury, Mayor


Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk

