

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Richlands Town Council held a “Regular Monthly Meeting” on Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 6:00 pm in the Richlands Council Chambers with the following present:

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury
Town Manager: Jason May
Project 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 and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Rod Cury.

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

- Mayor Cury added George Shelton to Unscheduled Public Comments.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Gary Jackson 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 (October)

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

Mr. Bales inquired about check #16617, Did MSP go up in price? Mr. May advised the extra was for the camera installation.

Mrs. Bales inquired about check #16560, is this for UPS (Uninterrupted Power Supply)? Mr. May advised he will check on this.

Mr. Bales inquired about check# 15570 for the Rec Park Roof, did anything come out of this? Mr. May advised there was some water that had gotten below the roofing material on the top. Long term, it will have to be replaced.

Mr. May advised Council that Mr. Campbell and the Finance team are working to get to a place where they are writing less checks. Will be more streamlined and faster.

Mr. Bales inquired about check# 16544 for camera upgrades, does all cameras at the Town Hall work now? Mr. May advised that they do.

Upon a motion by Jan White seconded by Gary Jackson and the roll call vote of all members present, with Jordan Bales abstaining, the Council voted 5-1 to approve paying the bills for October.

IN RE: Minutes

Upon a motion by Seth White seconded by Gary Jackson and the roll call vote of all members present, with Rick Wood abstaining, Council voted to 5-1 to approve the minutes for the October 8, 2024, Regular Scheduled Meeting

IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments

There were no Scheduled Public Comments.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

George Shelton, 320 Bragg Road-

Mr. Shelton spoke to the Council about his road issues at 320 Bragg Road.

Mrs. Mollo asked if this was Town or County property, Mr. May advised it is all county except a small portion. Mr. Shelton pays \$6.30 in taxes for the small portion located in Town.

Mr. May gave out copies of Mr. Shelton's property lines to the Council.

Mr. White spoke to Mr. Shelton and the Council about mapping technology and advised Mr. Shelton that he needs to reach out to Shanna Plaster at the County about their Orphan Road Program.

Mayor Cury suggested Mr. Shelton meet with the Street Committee and look at the property so that they can report back to the Council.

Kennith Musick-

Mr. Musick spoke to the Council about an issue he has with a tree on his property.

Mr. May advised that the Town has the right of way, but it does not own the tree.

Mayor Cury suggested that himself, Mr. May, and Mrs. Mollo visit the property the next day at 4:00pm with Mr. Musick to get a better understanding of the situation.

Mrs. Mollo advised this tree was on private property and everyone needs to be treated equally and fairly.

Mr. Wood asked if it was an easement or right of way, Mr. May advised it was an easement.

Mr. White spoke to the Council about the difference between right of ways and easements. Mr. White also advised that the Council only has certain powers and can't help with everything.

IN RE: Tourism Zone O-2024-11-01 (Second Reading)

At Mr. Bales' request, Mr. May gave a brief overview of this Ordinance.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to dispense of the 2nd Reading of the Tourism Zone Ordinance O-2024-11-01.

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 the Tourism Zone Ordinance O-2024-11-01.

IN RE: Technology Zone O-2024-11-02 (Second Reading)

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales, seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to dispense of the 2nd Reading of the Technology Zone Ordinance O-2024-11-02.

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales, seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt the Technology Zone Ordinance O-2024-11-02.

Mrs. Mollo stated this was an incentive to attract new businesses into Richlands.

IN RE: Amendments of Zoning Ordinance O-2024-12-01 (First Reading)

The Council had a brief discussion about this Ordinance.

Mayor Cury suggested the Planning Commission review this Ordinance and Council table it until the December meeting.

IN RE: Creation of R-3 Zone Ordinance O-2024-12-02 (First Reading)

The council tabled this Ordinance until December also.

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 MOU with the Tazewell County Library for the Imagination Library Program.

IN RE: **Creation of Generator Capitol Account Ordinance O-2024-12-**
04 (First Reading).

Mayor Cury read Ordinance O-2024-12-04 to the Council.

Mayor Cury declared a fifteen-minute recess to allow the Attorney to draft the appropriate wording for the Charter changes.

IN RE: Little League MOU

Mr. May advised the Council previously approved this MOU with the Little League in December 2023. The only difference is the year updated to 2024.

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 the Little League MOU.

IN RE: RYBC MOU

Mr. May advised the proposed MOU establishes the agreement between the Town and the Richlands Youth Baseball Club (RYBC) regarding the use and maintenance of Williams Field at Critterville Park.

Mr. May advised the Town was awarded the Litter Grant and will be adding additional trash cans at both fields.

IN RE: Section House RFP

Mr. May advised the Town solicited proposals through RFP 2024-10 for the restoration and repainting of the historic Section House located at 1542 Front Street. The project scope includes paint removal, wood repair, surface preparation, and complete exterior repainting of the structure.

Mr. May advised J Ross Painting was the lowest bid received at \$23,000. Project to be scheduled after July 1, 2025.

Mrs. White inquired about the time frame for this project and if the bid will still be good if the project doesn't start until after July 2025. Mr. May advised it would take 6-7 months to complete once it begins and once the Council votes to move forward, he will reach out to J Ross Painting to hold the bid.

Mrs. Mollo advised the bid states that it will be withdrawn if a deposit is not made within ten days and asked if the Town was able to do that. Mr. May advised the Town is able to pay the deposit.

Mr. White suggested allowing the Towns new Economic Development Director to work out of the Section House at least one day a week.

Mr. White stated that citizens are confused about the Section House and asking questions such as who owns it, what happens there, and who can use it. Mr. White asked Mayor Cury to explain to the citizens more about it.

Mayor Cury and Lynna Mitchell advised there are several groups who use the Section House for regular monthly meetings, weddings, photo backdrops, and many different community events.

Mr. Bales advised Project Graduation was also held at the Section House and the kids and parents all enjoyed it.

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to include the repainting of the Section House in the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

IN RE: Repeal of REC Commission Ordinance O-2024-12-03 (First Reading)

Mayor Cury gave the First Reading of O-2024-12-03

Mr. Bales stated he is not in favor of repealing the REC Commission and would like to propose different ways to handle it such as amending what is already in place. Mr. Bales would like to have a REC Commission in place before March 1, 2025, when baseball season begins and spoke about the importance of having the committee. Stated the Town would benefit from a REC Commission if operated properly.

Mr. White stated he thought the REC Commission never had a clear understanding of what they were supposed to do and took on tasks that were meant for the Council and Town Manager. Mr. White advised the REC Commission needs to have boundaries.

Mayor Cury suggested suspending the commission until the Council could establish their roles.

Mr. Bales also suggested cutting the number of members to five, due to the difficulty of having a quorum.

Mrs. Mollo stated she is in favor of repealing the REC Commission and possibly forming a REC Committee to be more productive.

Mr. Bales asked Mr. Thomas which would be faster, starting from scratch or updating what the Town currently has. Mr. Thomas advised both would need First and Second Reading, repealing the REC Commission would be faster at this point due to the Council just giving the First Reading.

The Council agreed to have a rough draft and revisit this at the December meeting.

IN RE: McGill Contract

Mr. May spoke to the Council about the proposed Master Services Agreement with McGill Associates as a professional consulting firm for the Town of Richlands.

Mr. White asked how many firms submitted bids for the RFP, Mr. May advised there was four bids received.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to award McGill Engineering the contract.

IN RE: Monthly Financial Report

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

- General Fund- Year to Date Net Income Loss is \$1,285,654. The drivers for this loss are October Budget Amendments and mostly timing.
- Water- Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$48,885. The driver for this loss is timing.
- Sewer- Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$28, 992. The driver for this loss is timing.
- Water and Sewer Line Maintenance Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$123,399. The driver for this loss is timing.
- Electric Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$2,580,033. The drivers for this loss is timing and the down payment on the generator.
- General Fund- Reserved Cash Balance- \$2,468,549
- General Fund- Unreserved Cash Balance-\$2.073.582
- Water Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$1,072,500
- Water Department Unreserved Cash Balance- \$855,329

- Sewer Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$489,822
- Sewer Department Unreserved Cash Balance- \$464,724
- Electric Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$1,792,313
- Electric Department Unreserved Cash Balance- \$2,458,307

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

Mrs. Mollo asked what was paid out for the Teen Center. Mr. May advised it may be for a fire inspection, but he was unsure. Mr. May and Mr. Campbell advised they would have that information for her and Council the following morning.

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

IN RE: Attorney Report

Mr. Thomas advised the Council that he received an e-mail from Eric Barton, the representative for municipalities in Virginia for the Opioid Settlement. Mr. Barton stated in the email that all settlement distributions are made on the county level. Mr. Thomas advised the Town can request a percentage from the county.

Mr. White advised it is important for the Town to participate and doesn't care to ask the county for a percentage of the money for Richlands.

Mrs. Mollo advised that the previous Council had already asked and was turned down.

Mr. White suggested the Council allow Mr. May to write a letter to the county requesting a portion of the money for the Town.

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to allow Mr. May to authorize the Town Manager to request the Towns share of the settlement.

Mr. Thomas advised he has drafted a Resolution for the desired changes to the Charter that will be addressed after the Executive Session.

Mr. May recommended that the Council have a Special Called meeting before Decemeber 1, 2024, to approve the section of the minutes pertaining to the proposed changes to the Charter.

IN RE: Town Manager Report

- Advised that the Towns Insurance does cover the Loader and the Town does not need to pay the additional fee, this information is a follow-up from the October meeting.
- Stated the Big Creek Railroad Crossing has been fixed.
- Advised that the Town is in the final stages of putting together a calendar for 2025, excited about the events and stated they tried to have at least one event per month and more in the warmer months.
- Stated that the Economic Development Surveys are currently being given out and also available online and at Town Hall.
- Spoke about the Veterans Day Breakfast at RED Park with almost 75 attendees and a very good program.
- Advised the next event is Small Business Saturday.
- Stated that there have been two large payments totaling 5.3 million dollars made on the Generator Project at this time.
- Advised his first quarterly update on the Generator Capitol Project will be done in December. This update will include the Grapple Truck, the Richlands Annex, and the Generator Project.

IN RE: Council Member Reports

Laura Mollo-

- Stated she loved the transparency within the Town.

- Spoke about the Police Department starting a new program where several of the officers received their EMT training. Mrs. Mollo stated that two weeks after the program rolled out, a mother called 911 when her baby was not breathing, and within two minutes after the call was received officers were on scene and performing life saving measures on the baby. The baby is healthy and currently at home.
- Excited about all of the new businesses coming to Richlands.
- Advised that people are noticing and complimenting all the new blue trash cans around Town and the grants that are being received. Mr. Campbell advised they were paid for by last year's litter grant.

Jan White-

- Thanked Mr. May for getting the Big Creek Railway Crossing fixed.

Jordan Bales-

- Has received compliments about the navy painting of the exterior.
- Has also received numerous compliments from citizens saying Critterville was the cleanest they have ever seen it and the blue trash cans throughout Town.
- Stated he was glad to see someone using the soccer field.
- Advised Volleyball has kicked off with around 200 kids playing.
- Complimented Halloween in Hidden Valley. Everyone had a blast and felt safe.

Rick Wood-

- Thanked the Street Department for taking care of the issue on Purcell Road.
- Thanked the Town for all of their hard work and stated that during previous times that he had served on the Council, grants were never mentioned, and he appreciates everything that everyone is doing for the Town.
- Wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Gary Jackson-

- Requested the Town to pick up leaves on Lee and Patterson Street. Mr. May advised the Town was in the process of doing this.

Seth White-

- Thanked everyone for doing a good job and stated grants are important.
- Stated he would like to utilize the abandoned railroad systems and spoke about its potential. Would like to start conversations about this next year.
- Stated he is proud of the Police Departments Accreditation, EMS Program, and everything they have going.
- Looks forward to next year.

IN RE:

Mayor Comments

- Leaf Collection- Has referred all requests from citizens to the Street Department and it is being taken care of.
- Veterans Day Program- Thanked all the Town Staff and stated it was an excellent breakfast and program.
- Thanked the following for their part in the program:
Richlands JROTC
Richlands High School History Club.
Richlands High School Choir
Sam Horn
Bailey Sparks
Phil Blankenship, VFW
Richlands Garden Club
Richlands Women's Club
All of the Veterans in Town, were honored by their presence.

Mr. White advised that tomorrow is the Opening Day at the new Coffee Shop and will be open from 7am-3pm.

Mr. Bales thanked everyone who came out to vote.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

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) Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding:
 1. Teen Venture
 2. Cell Phone Tower Contract
 3. Planning Commission
 4. Cedar Bluff Agreement
 5. Pocohontas Land

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 Rick Wood, seconded by Laura Mollo 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)(8) was discussed during the Executive Session.

IN RE: Cedar Bluff Agreement

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 Cedar Bluff Agreement, as amended.

IN RE: Charter Changes Resolution R-2024-11-01

Mr. Thomas read the Resolution to the Council.

Upon a motion by Jan White, seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve Resolution R-2024-11-01.

Mr. Thomas asked to clarify that the two changes listed in the Resolution are the wishes of the Council, Council agreed unanimously.

Mr. Thomas requested Council to set a date for a Special Called Meeting to approve the minutes for this Resolution.

The Council agreed to set the date for the Special Called Meeting on November 18, 2024, at 6:00pm.

IN RE: Adjournment

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



Rodney D. Cury, Mayor



Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk