

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Richlands Town Council held a “Regular Monthly Meeting” on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 6:00 pm in the Richlands Council Chambers with the following present:

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury
Town Manager: Jason May
Project Manager: Susan Whitt
Town Clerk: Absent
Town Attorney: Michael Thomas
Finance Manager: Ronnie Campbell
Council Members: Seth White, Gary Jackson, 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 asked to add September 10, 2024, Public Hearing Minutes to VI.
- Mayor Cury asked to remove (d) and (e) from IX, will take up at the November Regular Scheduled Meeting.
- Mayor Cury added Kennith Musick to VIII, Unscheduled Public Comments.
- Laura Mollo added Amy Street to VIII, Unscheduled Public Comments.

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson seconded by Jan White 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 (September)

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

Mr. Jackson asked what check #16498 was for and Mr. May advised this was the tow bill for the trash truck that was having transmission issues.

Mrs. White asked about check #16438 was for and Mr. May advised this was for testing equipment used in the Waste Water Treatment Facility to sterilize the equipment.

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

IN RE: Minutes

Upon a motion by Jan White seconded by Gary Jackson and the roll call vote of all members present, Council voted to approve the minutes for the following dates:

- September 10, 2024, Public Hearing Minutes
- September 10, 2024, Regular Scheduled Meeting
- September 24, 2024, Special Called Meeting

IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments

George Shelton Jr., 320 Bragg Road-
Mr. Shelton requested an update from the Council on Bragg Road.

Mr. Thomas stated the county engineer advised him that 1000 feet of the road was in the Town of Richlands and the other 4000 feet is in the county.

Mr. May advised Mr. Shelton that he had the Town crew clean up the road the day after he came to the last Council meeting. Mr. May explained his concerns with the road and its issues.

Mr. Jackson asked if patching would help the road.

Mayor Cury suggested that Mr. Shelton schedule a meeting with the Town Manager to discuss the road issues and taxes associated with it.

Mrs. White asked Mr. Shelton if he had contacted the county about this issue, he advised he had not.

Mr. Shelton agreed to meet with Mr. May.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

Amy Street-

- Spoke to the Town about her late father, Jim Street, and all his coaching accomplishments in Richlands.
- Asked the Council to consider purchasing and placing a plaque at Critterville to honor her father.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to move forward with getting a plaque placed at Critterville for Mr. Jim Street.

Kennith Musick-

- Spoke to the Council about trees that fell on his house that were supposed to have been removed by the previous Town administration.

Mayor Cury suggested Mr. Musick make an appointment with Mr. May to help resolve this issue.

IN RE: Accreditation Welcome Dinner, Chief Holt

Chief Holt read an invitation inviting the Mayor and Town Council members to the VALEAC Accreditation Team “Welcome Dinner” at the Police Department on October 28, 2024, at 6:00pm.

Chief Holt introduced the Police Departments newest addition, Canine Officer “Moose” to the Council.

Mr. May thanked Chief Holt for his hard work and leadership during Hurricane Helene.

Chief Holt thanked Mr. May and the Town workers for their help as well.

Mrs. Mollo advised the Council that Chief Holt was going to be honored by a local news station as the “Hometown Hero” during the month of October.

Mrs. Mollo spoke to the Council about her and her family’s experience with the Police Department during Hurricane Helene and expressed her gratitude.

Mrs. Mollo also thanked all the Town workers for their hard work.

IN RE: Clinch Valley Community Action- Sandra Corell

Mrs. Corell spoke briefly to the Council about the Housing Programs that are offered through Clinch Valley Community Action. Mrs. Corell advised there are five programs available and gave a brief overview of each. The programs ranged from housing assistance to weatherization assistance for citizens.

Information for the programs will be made available at the Town Hall and online.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

IN RE: Solar Ordinance O-2024-11-xx (First Reading)

Mr. May spoke briefly to the Council on this Ordinance.

Mr. Thomas gave the First Reading of the Ordinance to the Council.

IN RE: Tourism Zone O-2024-11-04 (First Reading)

Mr. May spoke to the Council about the Tourism and Technology Zone and why the Town is moving forward with these zones.

Mr. May gave the First Reading of the Ordinance to the Council.

IN RE: Technology Zone O-2024-11-03 (First Reading)

Mayor Cury gave the First Reading of the Ordinance to the Council.

Mr. White asked if the Town has established a map for these zones.

Mr. May advised these zones to be town wide.

IN RE: Enterprise Zone Adjustments

Mr. May advised the Town of Richlands established an Enterprise Zone in April 2016. The current Enterprise Zone doesn't include a large part of downtown. Mr. May stated the Town is working with the County to update this zone.

Mr. May suggested that Council Members reach out to the Board of Supervisor Members to advocate for the Town of Richlands to be able to keep its current zones and allow the Town to have more control over the placement of the zone downtown.

Mrs. Mollo advised the County is already moving forward with this.

Mr. White advised that he and Mr. May will speak with the County about this and bring back an update to the November meeting.

IN RE: 2nd Reading Business Electric Demand Ordinance O-2024-10-01

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to dispense of the 2nd Reading of the Business Electric Demand Ordinance O-2024-10-01.

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 the Business Electric Demand Ordinance O-2024-10-01.

IN RE: Monthly Financial Report

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

- General Fund- Year to Date Net Income Loss is \$1,145,384, variance due to timing.
- Water- Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$2,487, variance due to timing.
- Sewer- Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$28,509, variance due to timing.
- Water and Sewer Line Maintenance Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$84,335, Revenue is permanent, and Expenses are timing.
- Electric Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$2,351,934, variance due to timing.
- General Fund- Reserved Cash Balance- \$2,565,089.
- General Fund- Unreserved Cash Balance is \$2,267,411, this is a \$391k decrease from July.
- Water Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$1,079,619.
- Water Department Unreserved Cash Balance- \$893,642, this is a \$42k decrease from July.

- Sewer Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$489,447.
- Sewer Department Unreserved Cash Balance- (\$448,579), this is a \$11k decrease from July.
- Electric Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$1,792,313.
- Electric Department Unreserved Cash Balance- \$516,680, this is a \$134k decrease from July.

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

IN RE: Budget Amendments

Mr. Campbell presented the following Budget Amendments for Councils approval.

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 transfer of \$36,300 from the Fund Balance Allocation Account to the Machinery and Equipment Account to purchase Alamo mower attachments for the Public Works Street Department.

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 transfer of \$5,500 from the Fund Balance Allocation Account to the Donations and Misc.-Fire Account for donations received from the Gun Raffle.

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 transfer of \$13,634 from the Fund Balance Allocation Acct. Acct. to the Equipment Acct. to purchase Radios for the Police Department.

IN RE: Attorney Report

Mr. Thomas asked the Council if there were any other changes that the Council wishes to make in the Charter before the General Assembly.

Mrs. White asked when the deadline for these changes is, Mr. Thomas advised early December.

Mrs. Mollo asked if the Council wanted to add term limits.

Mr. May suggested the Council get all suggestions to him so that he can draft a list and schedule a Public Hearing.

IN RE: Town Manager Report

- Mr. May advised the Town is not closing Critterville and apologized for the wording on the agenda. Mr. May explained that the Town was awarded a grant to update Critterville and he would like to close Critterville from Veterans Day through Thanksgiving to begin the update.
- Mr. May spoke to the Council about Hurricane Helene and its impact on Richlands. Mr. May highlighted and thanked each department for their hard work and for everyone working as a team.

IN RE: Council Member Reports

Laura Mollo-

- Thanked Mr. May and all of the Town employees for their hard work during Hurricane Helene.
- Fire & Safety Day at the Police Department Saturday October 12, 2024 from 10:00am-2:00pm.

Jan White-

- Advised that citizens are telling her it's a great time to be in Richlands, Mrs. White credits the Towns leadership and teamwork.

- Thanked the Town workers and Mr. May.
- Advised she had a few citizens ask her to see if anything could be done about the Big Creek Railroad crossing, the road is rough on each side.

Jordan Bales-

- Thanked the Town for its response to the storm damage.
- Asked if there will be any technology on the Towns new app for the Bulk Pick-up service, Mr. May advised they are currently training someone on that truck and working on the app. Will have an update at the November meeting.
- Inquired about the parking issue at the REC Park. Mr. May advised the Town has looked at a space to move the Pickle Ball Courts to and are in the process of having a solution.

Rick Wood- Absent.

Gary Jackson-

- Thanked Mr. May and all the staff for their work.

Seth White-

- Thanked the Town workers and Leadership for their hard work during Hurricane Helene.
- Spoke to the Council about the Town becoming energy independent and the importance of it during times like this.
- Stated that he enjoys working with the current Council and is very happy with the way they can work together without arguing, even if they disagree with something.
- Also stated that a candidate's family members should be left out of politics.
- Thanked everyone for coming to the ribbon cutting for the CNX Building.
- Continues to see the progression in the Town and excited to see the direction it is going in

IN RE:

Mayor Comments

- Thanked the Town and all its workers for the work that was done during Hurricane Helene.
- Quoted his nephew saying, "People always favor unity over division and stay the course".
- Spoke to the Council about his friend, Elaine, that lives in Boone, NC and her experience with Hurricane Helene. Stated that he is grateful and thankful for what Richlands has.
- October 19, 2024- Car Show, Trunk-or- Treat, Historic Ghost Walk, the Wicked Forrest at Critterville, the Glowworm 5K, and Beetlejuice at Greenway Park.

IN RE:

Executive Session

No Executive Session.

IN RE:

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson 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

