

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Richlands Town Council held a “Regular Monthly Meeting” on Tuesday, September 10, 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: 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 asked if there was anyone present who would like to speak during unscheduled public comment.

The following citizens were added to Unscheduled Public Comments:

- Ernest Edgell
- Mark Cordle

Mr. May requested to add (k)- Quantum Power Contract under Agenda Item

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

IN RE: Authorization to Pay Bills (August)

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

Mrs. White:

- #16139 Appalachian Aggregates- Mr. May advised this was for stone that was purchased for one of the Towns projects.

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 paying the bills for August.

IN RE: Minutes

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

- July 9, 2024, Regular Scheduled Meeting
- July 23, 2024, Special Called Meeting
- August 13, 2024, Public Hearing
- August 13, 2024, Regular Scheduled Meeting.

IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments

George Shelton Jr. was scheduled for Public Comment, but did not attend the meeting.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

Ernest Edgell-

- Complimented the Police Department on slowing down the speeders in Town.

- Inquired if anything could be done about the trash on Veterans Drive that’s being thrown out of vehicles- Mr. May advised the Town is currently looking to hire a Beautification Person to oversee workers picking up trash throughout downtown.
- Asked if there was an Ordinance about residents leaving their trash cans out all week. Mr. White advised there was not.
- Advised there was a lot of people parking sideways in the streets. Mayor Cury and Mrs. Mollo asked Lt. Whited to pass this information along to the Chief of Police. Mr. White advised Mr. Edgell to call these complaints into dispatch when it is happening, so the Police Department could address it easier.

Mark Cordle, 129 Honaker Rd.-

- Advised he has come to the Council before about his neighbors throwing trash in their yard, tires up, and has a porta potty and several vehicles on their property. Mr. Cordle advised it was affecting the value of his property. Mr. May gave Mr. Cordle his business card.

IN RE: Imagination Library

Mrs. Mollo advised she has put a packet of information together about the Imagination Library for the Council to review.

Program Overview:

- Provides children from birth to age five with a book delivered by mail monthly.
- Participation requires locality agreement and secured funding.
- Parents can sign up online or via paper forms at schools, libraries, hospitals, etc.

Local Implementation:

- Mrs. Galloway from the Tazewell County Public Library has agreed to be the “Local Champion” for the program.
- To join the program, it would require a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Town and the Tazewell County Public Library.
- The Town would have to agree to fund the project, and the library would take the role of the “Local Champion”. This arrangement would be beneficial to the Town and the Library.

Program Benefits:

- Studies show early access to books increases high school graduation rates.
- Facilitates parent-child bonding through reading.
- Home delivery increases likelihood of parents reading to their children.
- Not income-specific; all children from birth to age 5 in Richlands are eligible.

Financial Impact:

- Estimated costs start lower in initial years, increasing as participation grows.
- At 100% participation in Richlands, cost would be less than \$5,000.
- Funding Options:
 1. Town Budget Allocation
 2. Community Partner Donations
 3. State Code 22.1-382 provides 50% matching funds until Jan. 1, 2029.

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 Towns participation in the Imagination Library and allow Mr. Thomas to move forward with the Memorandum of Understanding with the Tazewell County Public Library.

Mr. White thanked Mrs. Mollo for bringing the Imagination Library to the Council and the Town.

Mayor Cury also thanked Mrs. Mollo.

IN RE: 2nd Reading Annex Capital Ordinance (O-2024-09-01)

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to dispense of the 2nd Reading of Ordinance O-2024-09-01.

Upon a motion by Jan White seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt Ordinance O-2024-09-01.

IN RE: Fire Grants and Fundraising

Mr. May advised the Richlands Fire Department recently launched a commendable initiative to enhance its emergency response capabilities. In a collaborative effort with the local rescue squad, the fire department embarked on a fund-raising campaign aimed at acquiring crucial safety equipment. They aimed to purchase four Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) units, vital gear that allows firefighters to operate safely in hazardous environments.

Through their diligent efforts and the generous support of the community, the fire department successfully raised \$4,500. This amount represents half the total cost required for the SCBA units, which are priced at \$9,000 for the set of four. The fundraising achievement not only demonstrates the departments proactive approach to improving their resources but also highlights the string community bonds and support for our local first responders.

While the fundraising effort has been impressive, there remains a balance of \$4,500 to fund the purchase of these critical pieces of equipment fully. This funding will need to be covered by budgeted funds, but additional funding may be needed at the end of the year.

IN RE: Greenway Stage Rental

Mr. May advised the Greenway Stage Project is approaching its final stages of completion. The staff is actively working to schedule monthly activities in the downtown area, with a focus on utilizing the new stage.

Mr. May advised the Town is already receiving inquiries from community partners and members about renting the space for events.

Before proceeding, Mr. May wanted to confirm if the Council is in favor of allowing rentals for this space or not. The decision will impact how the Town moves forward with managing and promoting the venue.

If the Town Council is in favor of providing the space for rental by the community, staff will work to benchmark the rental rate versus other venues in the area. This would be a revenue generating option for the Town.

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve allowing the community the option to rent the area and stage once policy and rates are set.

Mrs. Mollo asked if there would be consistency when renting to all groups and not picking and choosing.

Mr. May said there would be no discriminating on who is allowed to rent the space.

IN RE: AMLR Grant

Mr. May advised the Town has recently been awarded a significant grant through the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation (AMLR) program. This grant, totaling \$2,000,000, has been earmarked to assist our community in purchasing a 5MW natural gas generator. This development represents a major step forward in our efforts to enhance our local power infrastructure and energy resilience.

The AMLR program, which typically focuses on addressing the impacts of past mining activities, has recognized the importance of our project in supporting community development and sustainability. By providing this substantial funding, the program is enabling us to make a critical investment in our Town's future.

The 5MW natural gas generator that we aim to purchase with this grant will significantly boost our local power generation capabilities. This addition to our infrastructure will enhance our ability to meet peak demand periods, provide backup power during emergencies, and potentially reduce our reliance on the broader power grid.

Upon a motion by Seth White seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to accept the AMLR Grant.

Mr. White thanked Mr. May and the staff for all their work on this grant.

Mrs. Mollo thanked Mr. May and Mr. White for their work on this project.

Mrs. Mollo also thanked the Council for working together as a team on it.

IN RE: Engineering Service RFP/WTP

Mr. May advised the Town is in the midst of critical upgrades to the Water and Wastewater infrastructure. As the Town moves forward, its essential that it has the right expertise to guide them through the complex phases of these projects, from planning and design to implementation and financing.

After careful consideration of the three submitted bids, staff has identified McGill Associates as the top candidate for this crucial role. The evaluation was based on several key factors including Regional Expertise, Local Experience, Technical Proficiency, Responsiveness, and Fresh Perspective.

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 McGill and Associates.

IN RE: Detour Resolution (R-2024-09-01)

Mayor Cury read Resolution R-2024-09-01 to the Council.

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt Resolution R-2024-09-01.

IN RE: VA 250 Resolution (R-2024-09-02)

Mr. May gave a brief overview of this to the Council.

Mr. White said he thought this was great.

Mr. Jackson asked if the Council would need to form a committee for this. Mr. May advised there would be members of his staff working with the Section House Committee and other community partners to do this. This committee will be formed at a later date.

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt Resolution R-2024-09-02.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

IN RE: Resolution Authorizing Note Financing (R-2024-09-03)

Mayor Cury and the Council took turns reading this Resolution.

Mr. Bales asked Mr. May to give the Council a brief overview of this Resolution 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-2024-09-03.

IN RE: Loader Contract

Mr. May advised the last piece of large equipment the Streets 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 capitol lease agreement with a balloon payment. The lease payments are 30,000 annually for 60 months with a balloon payment of \$68,000. Utilizing a capital lease allows the Town to use the equipment now and incur the final balloon payment in the future.

Mr. Wood advised he went to look at the Loader and it is in a lot worse shape than originally described.

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 the lease from Carter CAT and budget for future payments.

Mr. White asked about the included insurance. Mr. May advised he will check on this and advise Council at the October meeting. Mr. Campbell advised it would be covered under VRSA.

Mr. Jackson asked if this was a new Loader, Mr. May advised it was.

Mr. Bales asked if the warranty would include the maintenance, Mr. May advised the Town will do the maintenance.

IN RE: Quantum Contract

Upon a motion by Seth White seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to accept this contract.

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 \$441k.
- Revenues were lower in all categories due to timing.
- Water- Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$8838
- Sewer- Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$11k.
- Water and Sewer Line Maintenance Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$9879
- Electric Year to Date Net Income Loss- \$2,219,646
- General Fund- Reserved Cash Balance- \$1.3 million decrease from June.
- General Fund- Unreserved Cash Balance is \$2.7 million.
- Water Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$174k decrease from June.
- Water Department Unreserved Cash Balance- \$288k decrease from June.
- Sewer Department Reserved Cash Balance- \$51k decrease from June.
- Sewer Department Unreserved Cash Balance- \$112,000 decrease from June.
- Electric Department- Unreserved Cash Balance- \$2.3 million decrease from June.

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

Mr. White asked if the Town has been able to put the RFP for savings out for bid. Mr. May advised not yet.

IN RE: Budget Amendments

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

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 \$93,929 from the Retirement of Debt Acct. to the Vehicle Capital Acct. to purchase two vehicles for the Wastewater Dept.

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the transfer of \$8,500 from the Fund Balance Allocation Acct. to the Capital Project for Buildings and Improvements Acct. for AC Replacement and Repairs.

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 the transfer of \$35,000 from the Fund Balance Allocation Acct. Acct. to the Vehicle Capital Acct. to purchase a Leaf Vacuum Truck.

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 transfer of \$13,600 from the Fund Balance Allocation Acct. to the Capital Project for Buildings and Improvements for AC Replacement at the Police Department.

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 transfer of \$25,000 to the Police Department from a grant acct. for overtime.

IN RE: Attorney Report

Mr. Thomas advised there would be several Ordinances at the October meeting.

Mrs. Mollo asked Mr. Thomas if he could reach out to Erica within the next two months about the Imagination Library MOU. Mr. Thomas advised he would.

IN RE: Town Manager Report

- Kents Ridge Mobile Home Property Cleanup Update- advised the Town has cleaned this property up and will put a lien against the property for the costs of the cleanup.
- The Police Department is getting a new gym floor beginning next week.
- BLS/EMS Program has begun at the Police Department.
- Oriole Streete Bridge is now complete. Mr. May advised he drove on the bridge today.
- Mr. May advised when staff was working on the Bulk and Brush pickup fees they discovered many residents that were getting their trash picked up and not being charged for it. Letters will be sent out to those residents.
- Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program has a due date for the end of October.
- REC Park Pool Pressure Testing will begin soon.
- UpAhead SMX Texting- Will start tomorrow on 9-11-2024.
- IWorkx Discussion- Mr. May advised this software program is almost ready to go live. This program helps residents create work orders and the Town can track them easier.
- Henderson Street 4-way Stops- Will be installing 3-way stops at each intersection and will be placing “No Parking” on one side of the road.

IN RE: Council Member Reports

Laura Mollo-

- Spoke about the significance of the new BLS/EMS Program at the Police Department.

Jan White-

- Stated she didn't have anything other than residents having complaints on Henderson St. and it was being taken care of.

Jordan Bales-

- Stated he had no complaints.
- Advised Soccer starts next week on September 17.
- Volleyball & Basketball Registration will be through the end of October.

Rick Wood-

- Advised he was excited the Town will be able to rent the Greenway Park. Thanked Mr. May.

Gary Jackson-

- Advised a family from Russell County reached out to him and wanted to thank the EMS and Officer Neil Turley for his kindness and respect during an incident while they were in town and wanted to recognize him.

Seth White-

- Stated the Town has a policy for Businesses on Demand for power that is 30-40 years old, would like the Council to change this policy to better accommodate businesses.

Mr. Bales would like the Town to offer an incentive for businesses to install smart thermostats.

The Council came to a consensus to hold a Special Called Meeting on September 24, 2024 at 6:00pm for an Electric Demand Ordinance Change.

IN RE: Mayor Comments

- Blue Tornado Band Booster Request- Mrs. Whitt will let them know the policy on submitting requests.
- Upcoming Events:
 1. Sept. 21- Richlands Flavor of Music Festival/ Battle of the Bands/ Chili at the Section House.
 2. Oct. 5- Tornado Soap Box Rally at V & V
 3. Oct. 12- Kids Safety Day at the Police Department
 4. Oct. 18- Haunted Trail at Critterville
 5. Oct. 19- Car Show at the Police Department
 6. Oct. 19- Fall Festival / Trunk or Treat at the Police Department
 7. Oct. 19- Haunted Historic Ghost Walk Tour
 8. Oct. 19- Beetlejuice at Greenway Park
 9. Oct. 24- Homecoming Parade
 10. Oct. 25- GlowWorm 5k
 11. Oct. 26- "A Quiet Place" Movie Night at Greenway
 12. Oct. 31- Trick or Treating

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)(1) Personnel
- b. VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) Teen Venture

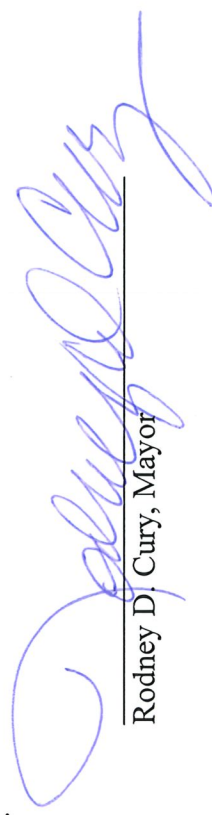
Upon a motion by Laura Mollo seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to go into Executive Session.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood seconded by Jan White 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) and VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(8) was discussed during the Executive Session.

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
Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk