TOWN OF RICHLANDS

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Richlands Town Council held a "Regular Monthly Meeting" on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 6:00 pm in the Richlands Council Chambers with the following present:

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury
Interim Town Manager: Ronnie Campbell
Project Manager: Susan Whitt
Town Clerk: Absent
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 advised Brokk Hollenbeak from Teen Venture will not be speaking during Public Comments, Rosetta Hale is taking his place.

Mayor Cury requested to remove the Richlands Police Departments Annual Report presentation; it will be presented at the March meeting.

Upon a motion by Jan White 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 (January)

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

Mrs. Mollo asked how many ACH credit cards the Town has given out and does each one of them have their own card. Mr. Campbell advised that they do. Mr. White advised it was done that way so that they can track each individuals purchases.

Mrs. Mollo inquired if all purchases that have been made are within their budgets. Mr. Campbell advised it should be.

Mrs. Mollo inquired about a purchase from the Town Center Laundromat made by Keishia Cole. Mrs. Cole advised it was for tablecloths.

Mrs. Mollo also inquired about a purchase for $2200 to ESRI, made by Frank Dorton. Mr. Dorton advised it was for a subscription.

Mr. White asked the Director of Accounts Payable, Sara Lowe, if she itemizes each purchase once she receives the receipts. She advised the Council that she does.

There were no other questions about the check register.

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

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.

- Joint PH with the Planning Commission (5:30pm)- January 14, 2025
- Joint PH with the Planning Commission (5:45pm)- January 14, 2025
- Regular Scheduled Meeting- January 14, 2025
- Special Called Meeting- January 17, 2025
- Special Called Meeting- January 28, 2025

IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments

Sabrina Endicott, 507 North Street- Mrs. Endicott spoke to the Council regarding an issue with speeding on North Street. Mrs. Endicott asked the Council if there was anything they could do to help, such as speed bumps, signs, etc. Mayor Cury deferred the request to the Chief of Police.

Clyde Rowe, 2616 Brown Street- Mr. Rowe stated that he had read in the newspaper that the Town was looking to hire outside help to maintain the roads and asked the Council if the Town could purchase more trucks instead of hiring outside help. Mr. Rowe stated he thought hiring outside help is only putting a band aid on the problem. Mr. Campbell advised the Town was discussing different options for snow removal. Mr. White explained the issues during the last snowstorm and advised this was a backup plan for emergency situations only.

Dr. Glenn Harrison- Teen Venture- Mr. Harrison stated it had been a bad year at Teen Venture, and they are moving past it. Mr. Harrison advised that they had installed a camera security system, a fire safety system, hired a grant writer, completed the kitchen café, hired a new Director, and reorganized the Board. Mr. Harrison also spoke to the Council about purchasing the building from the Town.

Isaiah Goings- Student at Teen Venture- Mr. Goins spoke to the Council about his time at Teen Venture over the years and how it has helped him and changed his life for the better.

Rosetta Hale-Teen Venture- advised she was a previous member of Teen Venture over fifteen years ago and was eager to step in and help. Mrs. Hale stated Teen Venture changed her life and asked the Council to consider selling the building to Teen Venture.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

There were no Unscheduled Public Comments.

IN RE: 2025 Town Events

Mrs. Cole advised she had included an updated list of Events including approximate costs for each one. Mrs. Cole advised they have ceased seeking sponsorship money until events get approved.

Mayor Cury inquired about the Shamrocks and Slam Dunks event. Mrs. Cole advised they would be showing some of the NCAA Basketball Tournaments.

Mrs. White inquired as to why there was zero budgeted for Small Business Saturday and stated that other businesses have asked her why there was nothing planned for Richlands. Mrs. White asked if she could see what other Towns are doing for this.

Mrs. Cole advised that most of the time American Express will give swag away for this, but this year all they have found were downloads and marketing materials.

Mrs. Cole stated the Scavenger Hunts were one way that she was hoping to get customers into the businesses.

Mrs. Cole also stated that citizens miss the Facebook page and it's hard to promote without a social media presence. Mrs. Cole would like to talk about marketing ideas with the Council and suggestions are always welcome.

Mr. White spoke about different advertising options.

Mrs. Mollo suggested the Town use "Punch Cards" like the Town of Tazewell does. Mrs. Cole advised that one of the Main Street merchants does that. Mrs. Mollo would like to explore this idea for Richlands.

Mayor Cury suggested that Mrs. Cole could brainstorm ideas for Small Business Saturday and meet with some of the Council members to talk about it.

Mr. White stated two people were not enough to run an Easter Egg Hunt. Mrs. Cole advised she was going to ask local groups to help.

Mr. White suggested partnering with local churches and possibly using Critterville for the location.

Mr. White also suggested focusing on a few events instead of the full list they had prepared.

Mayor Cury suggested that Mrs. Cole set up a meeting with him and two members of the Council to talk about the event list.

Mr. Bales stated he supports Mrs. Cole with monthly movies but he agrees they need to pare down the major events.

Mayor Cury, Mrs. Mollo, and Mrs. White all agreed to meet with Mrs. Cole to discuss the list of events.

IN RE: CDBG Grant Update

Mrs. Cole advised the Community Development Block Grant has not opened yet for 2025, but she has been collecting data and pictures for it already. Mrs. Cole also advised they have already sent out the economic development surveys.

Mrs. Cole stated that Merchant Mcintyre will be the ones who write the grant, she will only be collecting the data for them.

Mr. White expressed how important it was to submit this grant.

Mrs. Mollo advised most of the work for the grant was already done prior to Mr. Mays arrival.

Mrs. Mollo also advised she had reached out to her contact with the DHCD, and she stated that during her last contact with Mr. May he advised her that he wanted to focus on flooding rather than the grant, so they had lost a year already.

Mrs. Mollo wants everyone to be on the same page with this grant and would like two council members, the mayor, and Mrs. Cole to set up a meeting with Mrs. Milton from DHCD to discuss the grant.

Mayor Cury thanked Project Manager Susan Whitt for the work that she had done on the grant previously.

IN RE: Zoning Amendments O-2025-02-01

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to dispense of the 2nd reading for Ordinance O-2025-02-01.

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson, seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt Ordinance O-2025-02-01.

Mrs. Mollo advised there was a typo in the first paragraph. Mr. Thomas advised he would correct it.

IN RE: Implementation of R-3 Zone O-2025-02-02

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to dispense of the 2nd reading for Ordinance O-2025-02-02.

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson, seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt Ordinance O-2025-02-02.

IN RE: Holiday Pay Policy

Mr. Campbell gave a brief overview and provided the Council with a draft of the amended Employee Holiday Pay Policy, to consider allowing the following language: "When an employee is required to work on one of these holidays, time and a half will be paid for hours worked on the holiday".

Mr. White inquired about what holidays this policy applies to and Mr. Campbell advised that they have a defined list.

Mrs. Mollo read the list of Holidays in the Handbook to the Council.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the proposed change to the Employee Holiday Pay Policy.

IN RE: Inclement Weather Policy

Mr. Campbell advised the Town currently does not have an Inclement Weather Policy.

Mr. Cambell provided the Council with a brief overview and a draft Inclement Weather Policy that states "During Inclement Weather, Town Hall will not close. Town Hall will be open as normal for scheduling strategic meetings and taking work orders. Should an employee not be able to report to Town hall, or if they will be late, they will need to notify their supervisor and take PTO for any regular working hours missed.".

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 proposed Inclement Weather Policy.

IN RE: Financial Policies

Mr. Campbell gave a brief overview of the proposed changes to the Financial Policy.

Mr. White asked if they removed the Contingency Fund Clause, would they still follow the normal procedure for procurement. Mr. Campbell advised they would.

Mrs. White asked in section 10.1 Inter-Department Transfers, it states "up to a specified limit, the Town Manager shall have the authority", will the Council set a specified limit for this. Mr. Campbell advised they would need to.
Mr. White asked Mr. Campbell if that part was important, and Mr. Campbell stated it was not.

Mr. White suggested removing section 3.7 and amending 10.1 to say, "and will be reported to Council at the immediately following meeting". Mr. White advised these could also be put into a consent calendar to review, the Council agreed.

Mayor Cury asked Mr. Campbell to send out the revised version to the Council for review.

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve the amended Financial Policies.

IN RE: Appointment to Planning Commission- Chester Price

Mr. Jackson advised it is the Planning Commission's recommendation to elect Chester Price to the Richlands Planning Commission.

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson, seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to appoint Chester Price to the Richlands Planning Commission to fill the unexpired term of Randy Smith.

Mr. White inquired what the process was in selecting a member to appoint to the Planning Commission, Mr. Jackson advised they only had one Letter of Interest submitted.

IN RE: Budget Amendment

Mr. Campbell advised the Council that the purpose of this amendment is to appropriate funds to the Police Department Other Grants Revenue Account and the Police Department Equipment Expense Account in the amount of $40,902 for the receipt of the JAG- LE Equipment Grant.

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: Request for Joint Public Hearing with Planning Commission (1472 Raven Rd)

Mayor Cury advised Stevens Rental Property has requested to change the zoning at 1472 Raven Road.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve a Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission on March 11, 2025, at 5:45pm.

Mr. Jackson explained where the property was, and Mrs. Mollo asked that a map be provided at the Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

IN RE: Monthly Financial Report

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

- General Fund- Year to Date Net Income Loss is -$1,048,559. The drivers for this loss are mostly timing.
- Water- Year to Date Net Income Variance $19,348. The driver for this loss is timing.
- Sewer- Year to Date Net Income Variance $199,130. The driver for this is timing.
- Water and Sewer Line Maintenance Year to Date Net Income Loss -$227,602. The driver for this loss is timing.
- Electric Year to Date Net Income Loss- $6,942,318. The driver for this loss is timing.
- General Fund- Reserved Cash Balance- $2,612,848.
- General Fund- Unreserved Cash Balance-$1,957,705.
- Water Department Reserved Cash Balance- $1,114,353.
- Water Department Unreserved Cash Balance- $752,005.
- Sewer Department Reserved Cash Balance- $491,618.
- Sewer Department Unreserved Cash Balance- ($418,803).
- Electric Department Reserved Cash Balance- $1,793,607.
- Electric Department Unreserved Cash Balance 574,980. This was a $654k decrease from November; this primarily results from the fourth milestone payment of $441k for Natural Gas Generator from unrestricted funds.

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

Mr. White asked if Mr. Campbell could move forward with an RFP for investment rates now that they had voted on the Financial Policy changes. Mr. Campbell advised they would need a motion for this.

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to authorize Mr. Campbell to put out an RFP to local and national banks to solicit investment rates.

IN RE: Attorney Report

Mr. Thomas gave a brief update on the proposed changes to the Charter and advised they passed the Senate 39-0 on January 16, 2025, and the House 96-0 on January 30, 2025. The changes will likely go into effect July 1, 2025, once the Governor signs them.

Mr. Thomas advised he reached out to Jamie Sullivan from American Tower, regarding the Cell Tower Contract, and she stated they are wanting to purchase the sole use of the tower. Mr. Thomas also advised the Verizon is the only other company using the tower at this time.

Mr. White asked how much the Town receives from the Verizon Lease. Mr. Thomas is not sure.

The Council came to a consensus that they do not wish to sell the sole use of the tower to American Tower.

IN RE: Town Manager Report

Mr. Campbell advised he received information from SGR wanting to establish a profile for the Town Manger position. Mr. Campbell advised he will start working on this, this week.

Mr. White advised the Council would like to schedule the kickoff meeting with SGR for the next Special Called Meeting as an Executive Session item.

Mr. Campbell gave a grief update on the generator project.

Mr. Cambell advised the RFP draft was sent to Quantum and he should receive feedback soon.

Mr. Campbell also advised the generator site leases and right-of-way agreements have been executed.

Mr. White stated Enbridge does not have to be paid upfront and is moving forward.

Mr. Campbell advised he is continuing to work on the grants and loans for this project.

Mr. White advised that he and Mr. Campbell need to schedule a meeting with Jonathan Belcher on the VCEDA Board and will need to go back and meet with the county IDA also to discuss loan options.

IN RE: Council Member Reports

Laura Mollo-

- Stated for years the Town of Richlands had not tried to collect delinquent property taxes, until the Council voted to use TACS, and now it is bringing in money and is reflected in the Financial Reports.
- Advised that events inside the Police Department are a public safety issue and Chief Holt had requested the Town to stop doing it.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to stop allowing events to take place inside the Police Department.

Mr. White stated he thought this was what the Town was already doing, it is a security risk.

Mayor Cury stated he agreed with this, would like the Council to consider where large events could be held in Town.

Jan White-

- Inquired why customers were not getting electric bills. Mrs. Whitt advised it was a postal service issue.

Jordan Bales-

- Inquired about the Tazewell Avenue mirror. Mr. Campbell advised he will follow up on this. Mr. White advised the first parking spot is creating a lot of the issues with this.
- Thanked the departments that cleared up the brush at REC Park.
- REC League Basketball- advised he is getting calls about the admission fees and would like to make the internal REC League Tournaments free admission. The Council came to a consensus to allow free admission to internal REC League Tournaments.

Rick Wood-

- Inquired if the Town was doing brush pickup. Mr. Campbell advised the Grapple Truck is broken down.

Gary Jackson-

- Stated there is a seat open on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Thomas advised he thought Glayde was in the position. The council asked for a follow up on this.

Seth White-

- Stated there is a property owner who wants to install a handicap ramp on the front that takes up some of the sidewalk, but he thinks it will work. Will bring this back when he has more information.
- Inquired about the Iron Street Property and using it as a lay down property for the generator project, for poles. The property is already fenced and will be graveled. Will follow back up on this.
- Inquired if Town Hall employees could have customer service training. Mr. Campbell stated the front office staff has done a good job dealing with some of the difficult customers and citizens they have encountered. Mr. White requested Mr. Campbell to look into this training.

Mr. Thomas advised after looking into the appointments for the Zoning Board of Appeals, there will be two open spots on June 30, 2025

Mrs. Mollo stated she does not like the new Town website and has received several complaints.

Mr. White asked why Mr. Keene is designing the website when it is not in his job description.

Mayor Cury suggested Mr. Bales could guide Mr. Keene on the website.

Mrs. Mollo asked if they could do an RFP for someone to build and maintain a website for the Town.

The Council came to a consensus to allow Mr. Campbell to put a new website in the budget.

IN RE: Mayor Comments

- Thanked the Town employees, crews, and to Mr. Campbell for all their work.
- Spoke about the passing of Jake Kincaid and Gordon Russ. Thanked them for their service to the Town.
- Thanked the Richlands Police Department for giving him a ride to the meeting tonight during the flooding.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

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- Responsibility Changes
- VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) Personnel- Salary Increases
- VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) Personnel- Starting Times
- VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) Teen Venture Building
- VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) - Lexcite Corporation

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Rick Wood 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 Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council certified that only VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) Personnel-Responsibility Changes, VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) Personnel- Salary Increases, VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) Personnel- Starting Times, VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) Teen Venture Building, and VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) - Lexcite Corporation was discussed during the Executive Session.

IN RE: Citizens for the Arts (CART)

Mayor Cury spoke briefly to Council regarding the letter they received from Ginger Branton, Executive Director of Citizens for the Arts (CART). Mrs. Branton advised of her retirement and stated the final curtain call at CART would be on June 30, 2025.

Mayor Cury spoke about Richlands and what CART has brought to the community over the past 44 years.

Mayor Cury suggested the Council have a Resolution honoring CART.

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Jordan Bales and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to move forward with the Town Attorney drafting a Resolution honoring CART for its role in the community.

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
Rodney D. Cury, Mayor

Amanda Beheler
Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk