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TOWN OF RICHLANDS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

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

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury (Remote)
Interim Town Manager: Ron Holt
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 by Vice Mayor, Jan White.

IN RE: Mayor Cury / Remote

Mayor Cury requested to participate by electronic means from home, due to having Covid.

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 to allow Mayor Cury to lead the meeting remotely.

The Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Jan White.

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

Mayor Cury requested to move C.A.R.T to VII, before the Richlands Police Departments Annual Report.

Mr. White requested to add “Town Manager” to Executive Session “D” VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1)- Personnel/Overtime, Mr. White advised he cleared this with Mr. Thomas first.

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 (February)

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

Mrs. Mollo stated she had some questions regarding the Check Register and the ACH Reports that she had brought to Chief Holt right before the meeting began, but he hasn’t had the opportunity to research them yet.

Mrs. Mollo advised that the Council doesn’t receive the Check Register until they arrive at the meeting and that it doesn’t allow them enough time to review it before the meetings begin.

Mr. Holt advised that going forward, the Check Registers will be emailed to Council before the meetings to allow enough time for review.

Mrs. Mollo inquired about Check# 17074 for \$75 and Check# 17080 for \$28.

Mr. Campbell advised those checks were “Per Diem” checks for two employees who worked late during the storms and asked for meals. Mr. Campbell stated he will look into this.

There were no other questions about the check register.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Seth White, and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve paying the bills for February.

Mr. White inquired about the Credit Card Reimbursement Policy and stated he would like to have the statements ahead of time.

Mr. Holt advised they will clean up their process and distribute the Statements and Check Register to the Council earlier.

Mr. Campbell advised checks have not been mailed at this time, only printed.

IN RE: Minutes

Mrs. Mollo advised the Council that she had caught a clerical error, and it was corrected by Mrs. Beheler.

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 the following Minutes.

- Regular Scheduled Meeting- February 11, 2025
- Special Called Meeting- February 26, 2025
- Special Called Meeting- March 4, 2025

IN RE: C.A.R.T. Resolution (R-2025-03-02)

Mayor Cury read Resolution R-2025-03-02 to the Council.

Upon a motion by Jan White, seconded by Jordan Bales, and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt Resolution R-2025-03-02.

Mayor Cury stated he was grateful for the Town of Richlands and the Council for its continued support of CART.

Mayor Cury also stated that on behalf of the Council he wanted to congratulate CART for its many years of service and the hundreds of volunteers who have given their time and resources to help promote the artistic culture in our community.

Mayor Cury advised many people have careers that were inspired by CART.

Mayor Cury mentioned four people, who are only a fraction of those who have supported CART but have passed on, Carol Clear, Charlotte McVey, Dr. Sam Schulken, and Larry Addison

Mr. Jackson thanked everyone for their years of dedication to CART.

Mrs. White also thanked everyone for their work and for making it possible for the children in the community to attend and have this opportunity.

Mrs. Mollo agreed with what Mr. Jackson and Mrs. White have said. Mrs. Mollo stated that CART was so much bigger than any one person, it was a collaboration of all the volunteers.

Mr. White stated that Mrs. Lawson founded CART in 1981, and that was amazing. Mr. White also stated that while growing up in this community, CART was something that everyone looked forward to and it exposed our area to some unique cultural events. Mr. White thanked everyone for their years of dedication and devotion.

Mr. Bales thanked everyone and stated CART was impactful to everyone, including himself.

Mr. Wood thanked everyone for everything they have done for the community and the children.

Elaine Holmes stated that she appreciated all the comments made about CART by the Council. Mrs. Holmes also stated that she believes CART has been able to expose so many students to finer arts including dance, art, music, and culture. Mrs. Holmes wanted to thank the past

presidents Sylvia Boyd and Rod Moore. Mrs. Holmes said the person she wanted to thank the most was the Organizer who has done all the hard work behind the scenes, Ginger Branton, the Executive Director of CART.

Ginger Branton stated it had been a true joy for her over the years and was a very humbling experience. Mrs. Branton stated she had developed friendships from all over the world by being a part of CART. Mrs. Branton thanked the Council for their support and stated that “Art is within our hearts”.

Richard Hudson stated that after him and his wife moved to Richlands in 1988 and advised that they bragged to their friends and family about cart and stated that they had moved to the right place. Mr. Hudson thanked everyone.

Ellen Elms thanked CART for all the wonderful things that have already been mentioned and said that as a local artist, she had been very much supported by CART. Mrs. Elms advised that her and her husband had moved to Richlands after growing up in New Jersey and said that her parents had asked how she was ever going to make a career in art in such a rural area. Mrs. Elms advised that CART supported her first mural on “The History of Richlands” on the old White’s Hardware building and from there on her career took off. Mrs. Elms wanted to especially thank Ginger Branton and Mary Lawson.

Don Elms thanked Ginger Branton for all her hard work over the years, but wanted to also thank her husband, Doug.

Renee Wineke stated that she wanted to give a heartfelt “Thank You” to Ginger, Doug, and this community. Mrs. Wineke stated that she moved to Richlands about seven years ago from Baltimore and this art community has been so wonderful and encompassing.

Mayor Cury advised that he received a message from Mary Lawson stating that she was unable to attend the meeting, due to being sick. Mrs. Lawson wanted to express her appreciation to the Council for this Resolution and many years of support.

Mayor Cury stated that CART began from a discussion in Mary Lawsons home and has grown into this momentous group.

Mayor Cury declared a ten-minute recess.

IN RE: Police Department 2024 Annual Report

Chief Holt provided each member of Council with a copy of the 2024 Annual Report and read his “Welcome Letter” to the Council.

Chief Holt briefly went over the following highlights from the report:

- Crime reduced by 14% in 2024.
- Training done by all employees including Chief Holt and Captain Adam Crouse attending the Southern Police Institute and LEAD Leadership.
- Grants totaled \$332,940 for the year.
- New Equipment
- Academy Graduates- Draven Baldwin and Landon Shelton
- Promotions- Noah Brown, Aaron Haywood, and Greg Layne.
- EMS First Responder Program and it’s success.
- Chaplain Program- has been a spiritual asset.
- Goals and Objectives- CALEA, Classes, Grants, etc.
- 5yr. Strategic Plan
- Accreditation
- Community Outreach
- Current Staff

Mayor Cury stated that he was very appreciative of all the hard work Chief Holt and his team has done.

Mrs. White thanked Chief Holt and his staff for all their hard work and stated that she appreciates them on a daily basis more than they know.

Mrs. Mollo stated that it was still so surreal to see how far they had come as a police department in Richlands and also stated that they are doing a great job and couldn't be prouder.

Mr. White thanked Chief Holt and stated that it was amazing to see how the employees are cross training. Mr. White advised he has no complaints, only compliments for the department.

Mr. Wood thanked Chief Holt and stated cross training the officers to do EMS was a smart move.

Mrs. Mollo stated that Richlands was leading the way for Public Safety in the County and had received numerous compliments on how they handled the recent flood.

Mr. Jackson thanked Chief Holt and the entire department.

Mayor Cury advised they are grateful for the service that the police department provides.

IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments

Sabrina Endicott, 507 North Street- Mrs. Endicott spoke to the Council regarding an issue with speeding on North Street and stated something needs to be done about it.

Chief Holt advised they have been in contact with Mrs. Endicott regarding this issue and have increased patrols on this street.

Chief Holt inquired if it is happening at certain times during the day and Mrs. Endicott advised it was all the time and traffic gets heavier during the summertime.

Chief Holt advised the Council that he had applied for a grant to purchase Mobile Speed Signs and hopes to hear about it soon.

Mr. Woods asked Mrs. Endicott if it was a certain vehicle, and she advised it was not.

There were no other Scheduled Public Comments.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

There were no Unscheduled Public Comments.

IN RE: US Army Corps of Engineers Flood Study-Update

Mrs. Mollo gave a brief update on the US Army Corp of Engineers Flood Study.

Mrs. Mollo advised that she had been in contact with a representative from the Army Corp of Engineers during the last flood and that they advised the Final Report had been sent to the previous Town Manager and nothing was done about it. Mrs. Mollo stated they would be willing to meet with them again if they wanted to pick this back up.

Mr. White advised that Shea Cook had reached out to him about this as well and has interest in the project.

Chief Holt advised the discussions they have had with elected officials at both the state and federal level and VDEM are particularly sensitive to the Towns' needs regarding flood mitigation.

Chief Holt advised there was money available for things such as moving the public safety buildings and critical infrastructure out of the floodplain. Chief Holt stated they had been working with Merchant McIntyre (Grant Writers for the Town) over the last few weeks on emergency funding.

Council came to a consensus to become reengaged with the Army Corp of Engineers.

IN RE: Bob Brandenburg-Auditor

Mr. Brandenburg thanked the Council for selecting Tucker, Brandenburg, & Company to perform the audit.

Mr. Brandenburg advised that staff answered all their questions and provided them with the documentation, making it was a smooth audit process.

Mr. Brandenburg gave a brief overview of the Audit to the Council with the following highlights:

Pg. 2 Paragraph 2- Independent Auditors Report stated “In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, and each major fund of the Town of Richlands, Virginia, as of June 30, 2024, and the respective changes in financial position, and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.”

Pg. 19- General Fund Balance Sheet- Assets exceed liabilities by about 3.9 million dollars at June 30, 2024. This means on June 30, 2024, the Town had sufficient current assets to pay off current liabilities 2.27 times compared to 2023 when the Town had sufficient assets to pay off current liabilities 2.72 times. Mr. Brandenburg stated that anything over 1 time is a good thing.

Pg. 20- Income Statements for Governmental Funds- there was a net loss of \$353,000. On June 30, 2024, the Town had 9.08 months of expenses on hand in the form of cash. In 2023, the Town had 10.89 months on hand. Mr. Brandenburg stated 3-6 months is a good baseline for the minimum of where they need to be, therefore the Town is currently in a good position.

Pg. 23- Proprietary Funds- In the Water & Sewer Fund, the assets exceeded the liabilities by 8.5 million dollars. For the Electric Fund, the assets exceeded the liabilities by 4.5 million dollars.

Pg. 24- Water & Sewer Fund had a net loss of \$482k. The Electrical Fund had a net loss of \$628k.

Pg. 25- Cash Flow Statement- The cash position in Water & Sewer decreased by \$267k for the year ending on June 30, 2024. The cash position in Electric decreased by \$269k over the same time period.

Pg. 76- Budget/Actual Comparison Schedules- Schedule 1 focuses on the Revenues and Schedule 2 focuses on the Expenses.

Pg. 90- Independent Auditors Report- Stated there was a continuation of a finding from prior years that needs to be monitored. Mr. Brandenburg stated the Town had underspent on the State Highway Funds and it needs to be caught up. As of June 30, 2024, the Town was still \$2.048 million dollars behind on this. This was reduced by \$100k from the previous year.

Mr. White stated he thought the large-scale paving project was going to reduce this by more than \$100k. Mr. Campbell advised it was reduced by around \$700k but the Town still had some carryover from the prior.

Mr. White stated it was their responsibility to get this to as close to zero as they can.

Chief Holt advised they are working on reducing this and have projects planned for the next Fiscal Year.

Mr. Campbell thanked Mr. Brandeburg and his firm for catching the Town up on their audits by doing 3 audits in around 18 months.

Chief Holt thanked Mr. Campbell for all of his hard work.

IN RE: Resolution R-2025-03-03 Town of Richlands Cafeteria Plan

Mr. Thomas read Resolution R-2025-03-03 and stated this is a yearly Resolution to continue providing healthcare to the employees of the Town of Richlands.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Jordan Bales, and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to adopt Resolution R-2025-03-03.

IN RE: Natural Gas Supply RFP

Mr. Campbell explained that the Natural Gas Supply RFP was for the potential supply of the generator and stated it was one of the many contracts they are currently working through. Mr. Campbell advised that he worked with Quantum Power to draft this RFP.

Mr. Campbell stated that he would need to revise the dates and Town Managers name on the RFP.

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 subject to legal review.

IN RE: REC Committee/ Letter of Interest

Mr. Bales read a letter from Sara Lawson requesting to be considered for the REC Committee as an out-of-town member.

Chief Holt spoke to the Council about the process of appointing members to the REC Committee.

After a brief discussion, the Council came to a consensus to share their recommendations for the REC Committee with the Mayor over the next few weeks.

Mayor Cury stated he would take all recommendations into consideration and with proper concern and care he would make the appointments at the next meeting.

IN RE: Monthly Financial Report

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

- General Fund- Year to Date Net Income Loss is -\$1,295,354.
- Water- Year to Date Net Income Variance \$7,067.
- Sewer- Year to Date Net Income Variance \$190,159.
- Water and Sewer Line Maintenance Year to Date Net Income Loss -\$368,093.
- Electric w/o Generator Year to Date Net Income Loss -\$ 1,785,633.
- Electric w/Generator Year to Date Net Income Loss -\$6,603,146.
- General Fund- Reserved Cash Balance -\$2,470,280.
- General Fund- Unreserved Cash Balance -\$1,990,131.
- Water Department Reserved Cash Balance \$1,081,185.
- Water Department Unreserved Cash Balance \$709,952.
- Sewer Department Reserved Cash Balance \$492,039.
- Sewer Department Unreserved Cash Balance- (\$480,948).
- Electric Department Reserved Cash Balance \$1,795,192.
- Electric Department Unreserved Cash Balance \$19,285

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

The Council had a brief discussion on PCA.

Mr. Campbell will be bringing an analysis to the Council for review.

Mrs. Mollo inquired about the Insurance, Life Insurance, and Retirement Plans being “through the roof”. Chief Holt advised that they had identified the issue a few weeks back and are working to address it.

Mrs. Mollo stated she appreciates their proactiveness.

IN RE: Pool Update

Mr. Campbell advised the proposal for the pool updates and repairs were never executed or scheduled.

Mr. Campbell stated at this time they have competing priorities for funding from the General Fund for other needed equipment.

Mr. Campbell advised that they plan to get the leaks repaired to get the pool running for the upcoming season and can revisit adding upgrades at a later date.

Chief Holt advised it is not financially possible for the upgrades at this point, staff is looking at the priorities for the upcoming budget year.

Mrs. Mollo expressed her frustration regarding being told by the previous administration they would be getting a new pool with the upgrades. Mrs. Mollo stated it has nothing to do with anyone currently employed with the Town.

Mrs. White inquired about the status of the paving for this year. Mr. Campbell advised they plan to have some done by July, the same as the previous year.

Mayor Cury declared a five-minute recess.

IN RE: Attorney Report

Mr. Thomas stated that Matt Whited had sent him some driver policies to look over, to help get them up to accreditation standards.

IN RE: Town Manager Report

Bridge Construction & Detour

Chief Holt updated the Council about the Bridge Detour and the impact that it will have on citizens and businesses.

Chief Holt advised that he plans on assigning extra police presence around the detour for the first couple of days to help guide citizens until they learn the pattern.

Budget Prep

Chief Holt stated the Budget Committee will have their first meeting on Thursday and will discuss the first draft of the Budget with the Council on March 25.

Trash & Bulk Schedule

Chief Holt advised the new Grapple Truck should arrive soon, and staff are working on a Trash & Bulk Pick-up schedule that will be brought back to the Council at a later date.

Events & Parades

Chief Holt stated that from a budget perspective the Town will have to tighten the belt on Events and Parades for the upcoming year. Chief Holt also stated they will focus on their traditional events and will have an updated schedule soon.

Chief Holt advised they will not be able to have large scale parades in Town until the bridge repairs are completed.

Mayor Cury suggested asking that semi-trucks not be allowed so that the parades would not have to be canceled, and Chief Holt advised they are open to those conversations.

Recommendation for Resolution- VA Beach & Bristol Fire Departments

Chief Holt expressed his appreciation for the Virginia Beach Fire Department, the Bristol Virginia Fire Departments, and the local National Guard for their assistance during the recent floods and asked the Council to consider adopting Resolutions for both departments.

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to move forward with these Resolutions.

Chief Holt also spoke to the Council about the staff members who went above and beyond to help keep the Town going during the floods.

New Format for Joint Meetings w/ Planning Commission

Chief Holt advised he has been in discussions with Gary Jackson and the Planning Commission Chairperson regarding the Joint Public Hearings with the Planning Commission. Chief Holt advised they would like to have the Joint Public Hearings then allow the Planning Commission to discuss it at the next meeting where they will have a fair amount of time to discuss these important matters and bring back their recommendation to the next Council meeting.

Mr. Jackson stated that his only concern is that the people that are waiting for these approvals will be put behind another month. Chief Holt advised that if it is easy and doesn't require much consideration, they could go ahead and approve it.

Appalachian Community Corrections Alternative Program (CCAP)

Chief Holt stated that their inmate workforce came over to help clean up Critterville and the Little League Fields. They are also painting the Police Department gym. Chief Holt wanted to offer his thanks and appreciation to the inmates for their work.

IN RE: Council Member Reports

Laura Mollo-

- Acknowledged and thanked everyone for their hard work during the floods.
- Advised she had state officials reach out even before the storm happened from Morgan Griffiths Office, Travis Hackworth's Office, and Will Morefield's Office. Mrs. Mollo stated that Will Morefield went above and beyond with everything and if she could describe him in three words, they would be his insane work ethic

Jan White-

- Advised she had already forwarded her citizen request to Mayor Cury and he forwarded them on to Chief Holt.

Jordan Bales-

- Thanked all employees for their hard work during the floods.
- Wrapped up Basketball Season at the REC Park, it was a fantastic year.
- Tiny Tots will be coming up next month.
- Gave a shoutout to the Electric Dept for putting up the new Mirror on Tazewell Avenue.

Rick Wood-

- Thanked the Electric Dept for putting up the new mirror as well.
- REC Park- stated that a lot of people appreciate the basketball games.
- Inquired if the old Grapple Truck had been taken to Freightliner.
- Inquired if there was any help from FEMA yet. Chief Holt advised they are still waiting for the major disaster declaration through the President's office to pass. Chief Holt also advised that he had been in discussions with Will Morefield and Travis Hackworth regarding individual assistance through the state, and they are working on it.
- Thanked Will Morefield, Travis Hackworth, and Glenn Younkin.

Gary Jackson-

- Thanked everyone for their hard work.

Seth White-

- Thanked everyone for their help.
- Advised the Travis Hackworth was out at midnight during the floods on the phone with the Governor and the Governor stated that whatever they need, they will get it there. Mr. White stated that the connections that Travis Hackworth and Will Morefield have with the Governor is imperative for Southwest Virginia. Mr. White thanked both Hackworth and Morefield for doing a great job.
- Stated that he and Mr. Bales was on a phone call with the County a couple of weeks ago and the School Board continues their disinformation campaign and continues to blame

the Town for the flooding at the school, Mr. White advised the flooding at the school was not caused by anything the Town has done and the school does not sit inside the Town of Richlands. Mr. White stated that he would like the School Board to accept responsibility and come to the Town and County again and they would help fix the problem.

IN RE: **Mayor Comments**

No comments at this time.

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- Water/Wastewater Agreement
- b. VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(7)- Consultation with Legal Counsel - Pending Litigation - Armes Estate
- c. VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8)- Consultation with Legal Counsel - Meals Tax Enforcement.
- d. VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1)- Personnel- Overtime/Town Manager
- e. VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8)- Consultation with Legal Counsel - VDOT Subcontractors Discussion
- f. VA Code Section 2.2-371 (A)(6)- Contract Negotiations- Iron Street & Electrical 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 go into Executive Session.

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

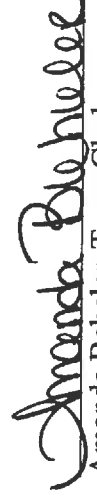
Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council certified that only VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8)- Consultation with Legal Counsel - Water/Wastewater Agreement, VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(7)- Consultation with Legal Counsel - Pending Litigation - Armes Estate, VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8)- Consultation with Legal Counsel - Meals Tax Enforcement, VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1)- Personnel- Overtime/Town Manager, VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8)- Consultation with Legal Counsel - VDOT Subcontractors Discussion, and VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(6)- Contract Negotiations- Iron Street & Electrical Department was discussed during the Executive Session.

IN RE: **Armes Estate**

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to empower the Town Manager to discuss with and potentially hire an attorney regarding the Armes Estate.

IN RE: **Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the meeting was adjourned.


Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk


Rodney D. Cury, Mayor