

TOWN OF RICHLANDS

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Richlands Town Council held a "Regular Monthly Meeting" on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 6:00 pm in the Richlands Council Chambers with the following present:

Mayor: Rod. D. Cury
Town Manager: Ron Holt
Town Attorney: Mike Thomas
Finance Manager: Ronnie Campbell
Project Manager: Absent
Town Clerk: Amanda Beheler
Council Members: Seth White, Gary Jackson, Jordan Bales, Jan White, and Laura Mollo.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm and opened with the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance by Mayor Cury.

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

The following additions/deletions were made to the agenda:

Mayor Cury requested the following changes be made to the Agenda:

- Add Karen Patton to Scheduled Public Comments
- Remove the following Minutes: September 9, 2025, Regular Minutes, September 23 (Financial Planning) Minutes, September 23, 2025, Public Hearing Minutes, and September 23, 2025.

Mr. White requested the following changes be made to the Agenda:

- Add VA Code Section: 2.2-3711(A)(6)- Contract Negotiation- Potential Contract with Teen Venture

Mrs. Mollo requested the following changes be made to the Agenda:

- Add Teen Venture Presentation to the second Agenda Item

Mr. Holt requested the following changes be made to the Agenda:

- Move the following Agenda Items to Executive Session under VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(6):
 - RFP for Energy Consulting Services
 - RFP for Utility Attorney

Mrs. Mollo advised the reason she voted no for this motion is because before the meeting took place one of the Council members went to Teen Venture to negotiate without the rest of the Council present. Mrs. Mollo stated it's not fair and the public has a right to see it.

Mr. White stated that Mrs. Mollo is accusing him of negotiating with Teen Venture and that is not what he did. Mr. White stated they had a conversation to try to resolve an issue that is a problem in their community and they need to find some common ground to work through that.

Mrs. Mollo requested it be done publicly.

Mr. White advised the law allows them to take contract negotiations into closed session. Mr. Thomas advised that was correct, it can be done under VA Code Section: 2.2-3711 (A)(6). Mrs. Mollo stated the law allows it but doesn't require them to do it.

Mrs. Mollo advised there had already been a number discussed with Teen Venture today before the meeting and asked what that number was. Mr. White advised there was a number discussed with Teen Venture a year ago and they had a conversation about previous conversations and that he did not speak to someone that was on the Teen Venture board, he had spoken to community members. Mrs. Mollo asked if he spoke to a third party that relayed the message back and Mr. White stated he did not know if that information was relayed back or not. Mr. White stated he spoke to a concerned member of the community, and they have a job to represent everyone in the community.

Mr. White advised the reason they got to the point they were at with Teen Venture is because there were some things going on that shouldn't have gone on and a director was arrested, charged, and convicted.

Mr. White stated he was there in the beginning and had many discussions about Teen Venture with Dr. Willis when it was still just a thought or an idea and he has always tried to come up with solutions to problems there. Mr. White also stated they have a job on the Council and if they can resolve an issue without having a fight or going to court, he thinks it's the Council's responsibility to do that. Mr. White advised he was very clear that he is only one vote but he would take the concerns they have back to the Council and that's what he is asking to do, to see if there is a possibility that they can come to an agreement, and if not that's fine, they can move on. Mrs. Mollo advised that she agrees with that, but it had already been decided, and the public has a right to see it. Mrs. Mollo stated she was not afraid to stand alone and will always stand up for what's right.

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Jordan Bales and the roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 4/1, with Laura Mollo voting no, to add VA Code Section: 2.2-3711(A)(6)- Contract Negotiation- Potential Contract with Teen Venture to the Executive Session.

Upon on a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 5-0 to approve the remaining additions and deletions to the agenda.

Upon on a motion by Jordan Bales, seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 5-0 to approve allowing Erica Galloway to speak during Scheduled Public Comments.

IN RE: Authorization to Pay Bills (September)

There were no questions regarding the Bills for September.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Jordan Bales, and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 5-0 to approve paying the bills for September.

IN RE: Minutes

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Laura Mollo, and the roll call vote of all members present, with Gary Jackson abstaining from all except the September 25, 2025, Special Called Minutes (due to not being present at the other Meetings), the Council voted to approve the following Meeting Minutes.

- September 9, 2025- Joint Public Hearing
- September 9, 2025- Public Hearing
- September 25, 2025- Special Called Meeting

IN RE: Executive Session

Mayor Cury advised the Council would be going into Executive Session pursuant to:

- VA Code Section: 2.2-3711(A)(6)- Contract Negotiation- Potential Contract with Teen Venture.

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Jordan Bales and the roll call vote of all members present, with Laura Mollo voting no, the Council voted 4/1 to go into Executive Session.

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

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council certified that only the following VA Code Sections were discussed during the Executive Session and that Mr. Thomas was not present when Dr. Glen Harrison was invited into the session with Council.

- VA Code Section: 2.2-3711(A)(6) – Contract Negotiation- Potential Contract with Teen Venture.

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Jordan Bales and the roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 4/1 for Mr. Holt to execute a lease purchase agreement with Teen Venture by October 31, 2025, subject to legal review.

Mrs. Mollo advised she voted no based on the price.

Mayor Cury declared a ten minute recess.

IN RE:

Scheduled Public Comments

Karen Patton, 2304 4th Street-

- Advised she was having issues with 18 wheelers in her residential neighborhood and has collected around seventy signatures from residents wanting to incorporate VA Code Section 46.2-13.04 regarding weight limit. Mrs. Patton stated they did not want to enforce it on Rockbridge Avenue due to the Tabernacle having the camping area.
- Advised the trucks are not stopping at some of the stop signs and tearing the roads up.
- Advised some trucks are traveling through after dark as well.

Mr. Holt advised the majority of the commercial vehicles are traveling to Frazier Auto. Mr. Holt advised he could have staff look into the issue and bring information back to the Council.

Mr. White stated that there is another business owner that owns a tractor trailer and lives in that neighborhood and inquired if it would affect him as well. Mrs. Patton advised that she went by his home to speak with him and no one came to the door. Mr. White stated he would like to have his input on the situation as well and he was not in attendance tonight. Mrs. Mollo asked if he was referring to Rick, and he stated he was.

Mr. White asked how often the trucks were coming through and Mr. Holt advised it was periodically.

Mr. White asked Mr. Holt if he could bring more information back to the Council, and he advised he would.

Mrs. Mollo inquired if Mr. Wood's home is zoned business, and Mayor Cury advised it was B2.

Mr. Bales stated this could also affect residents getting some deliveries that come on 18 wheelers and not on the standard UPS or FedEx trucks. Mr. Thomas advised that under that Code Section, that would be excluded.

Erica Galloway, Tazewell County Public Library-

- Advised they are about to wrap-up their Elevator unveiling.

- Thanked Mr. Jackson, Mr. Holt and Mrs. Whitt for helping with their fishing fundraiser on September 28.
- Spoke to Council about the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and advised they already have nearly 400 children enrolled throughout the county after only a month of being live.
- Also spoke on the importance of reading to babies.
- Advised the Library has lowered the age limit for Library Cards.

Mr. White asked if they have the registration forms in the local hospitals yet, and Mrs. Galloway advised they were going to start including them in goodie bags that they are already sending for newborns.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

There were no Unscheduled Public Comments.

IN RE: Recognition Richlands EMS & Richlands PD

Matt Whited, EMS Director, spoke to the Council regarding a 911 call they received on August 28, 2025, from Richlands High School stating a male student that was down on the track and not breathing. Mr. Whited advised the EMS crew arrived on scene within five minutes along with the SRO's and Richlands Police Department.

Mr. Whited stated that it was a positive outcome for Braden Mitchell, who is attending the meeting.

Mr. Whited presented a Lifesaving Certificate and Pin to the following crew members:

- Lt. Scott McCormack
- Lt. Josh Shelton
- Sgt. Jonathan Whited
- EMT Chris Lester
- EMT Billy Beavers

Mrs. Mitchell thanked the crew for everything they had done for her son.

IN RE: Teen Venture Presentation

Mrs. Mollo advised that before she starts her presentation she wanted to caution the audience in the council chambers and at home, if you have children, you may not want them to hear her presentation, it includes explicit language and material that is not appropriate for them to hear.

Mrs. Mollo stated that she wanted to explain to the citizens how they got to the point they were at with Teen Venture. Mrs. Mollo also stated she thinks the founders of Teen Venture would've never dreamed that any of what she was about to play for the audience would happen.

Mrs. Mollo stated that out of the twelve Teen Venture Board Members, only two of them live within Town limits.

Mrs. Mollo advised that about two years ago she was at an event when someone in the know of Teen Venture approached her and was making small talk and mentioned a story about a girl quite recently that had got in some trouble for an illegal THC Vape that she was given at Teen Venture. Mrs. Mollo stated that she asked the person if that had been reported to Chief Holt because she would like to see the police report, and she was told there would be no police report because they could not report the incident to Chief Holt because they didn't have the same agreement with him as they had with the previous Chief of Police. Mrs. Mollo stated that she asked what the agreement was, and she was told they don't report things like this to the police anymore because people don't like to donate to places where stuff like this happens. Mrs. Mollo advised the person went on to tell her about the sexual assault of a girl that was also never reported by Teen Venture. Mrs. Mollo stated that immediately after she left this event, she called Chief Holt and advised

him of what she had just been told. Mrs. Mollo advised that she trusted Chief Holt to handle it and out of that investigation the former Director was indicted and charged for embezzlement, drugs, etc.

Mrs. Mollo stated that she wondered how these things continued to not be caught by the Teen Venture Board, so she began to ask questions, and they froze up and refused to talk to her.

Mrs. Mollo advised she was going to play some legally obtained videos that were posted on the Teen Venture website and their Facebook page, that they have since blocked Mrs. Mollo from. The first video was of a concert held at Teen Venture a couple of weeks ago. Mrs. Mollo states the video is telling kids how to deal with people they don't get along with. The video included vulgar language and promoting violence in the presence of young kids and adults who had not gone through the proper background checks.

Mrs. Mollo advised she filed a FOIA request for the investigation once it was completed and she played several more videos for the audience that were legally obtained through that request. Mrs. Mollo advised that none of the incidents that were talked about in the recordings were reported to the police until the current Council started to question Teen Venture. Mrs. Mollo stated the Council had an obligation to not only protect the asset of the town-owned building but most importantly the children in the building.

Mr. White stated that what Mrs. Mollo just played was exactly how they got to the point they were at with *Teen Venture*.

Mr. White advised that he has always wanted to be able to work something out so Teen Venture could continue to operate. Glen's vision for Teen Venture is exactly what the citizens have shared tonight, it's a place for kids who don't fit in or don't place sports.

Mr. White stated the Board Members of Teen Venture are mandatory reporters and things were happening and not being reported.

Mr. White also stated that Mrs. Mollo's has received a lot of criticism for this, but her heart has always been in the right place, and she wanted to protect the kids.

Mrs. Mollo addressed a question from Mr. Edgell regarding the money that comes from the sale of the building, Mrs. Mollo advised it would be next to nothing, and they have no plans for it at this time.

Mrs. Mollo advised Mr. Edgel that they offered Teen Venture to buy the building and they said no so that's the reason they are putting it up for auction, they cannot allow these things to continue going on in a public building.

Mrs. Mollo stated that Chief Holt had been nothing but professional throughout all this and even asked the Sheriff's Office to come in and take over so it didn't become political in Richlands.

IN RE: _____

Deputy Chief Crouse advised that the Police Department had been successful in applying for grant funds through the Virginia DMV and purchased a portable radar sign.

Deputy Chief Crouse stated that the sign will alert drivers when they are speeding and it also collects data so that it can be used in areas where there have been a lot of speed complaints or issues.

Mrs. Mollo asked Deputy Chief Crouse and Chief Holt to explain to the public why there are new cameras placed at the entrance to Hidden Valley and other locations throughout the Town, to dispel the rumors circulating on Facebook.

Chief Holt advised the police department has applied for and received three rounds of H.E.A.T grant funding that has allowed them to purchase the LPR (License Plate Reader) cameras that are specifically designed for crime reduction, but also to prevent auto theft. Chief Holt stated that it

had been used as an investigative tool recently that assisted in solving the last two pedestrian hit and runs. Chief Holt advised the last camera that was set up, was the one in Hidden Valley because if a crime happens in that neighborhood, they would hopefully be able to catch them going in and out of the neighborhood.

Deputy Chief Crouse advised the camera was also placed at the entrance to Hidden Valley on Kents Ridge Road because it was the only other road that comes in or out of the Town that didn't already have a camera.

Chief Holt advised the cameras were only used as investigative tool and not to "spy" on anyone in Hidden Valley.

Mr. Bales inquired if the police department is following all laws regarding storage and Deputy Chief Crouse advised him, they are following all laws and state codes, and that they also have a policy in place for the cameras. Chief Holt advised that one of the great things about being an accredited agency is that they have a policy for just about everything.

Mr. Bales advised that they have had these cameras set up at their parks for over a year now and the main reason is in case of a child abduction.

IN RE: Food Truck Discussion

Mr. Holt stated that there is currently no Ordinance that requires food trucks to have a business license in Town and asked for Council's guidance. Mr. Holt suggested requiring food trucks to obtain a business license after 30 calendar days- not consecutive days.

Mrs. Mollo stated she was very supportive of all food trucks and brick and mortars in Town, but this topic had come to her attention when she received a complaint from a citizen about a Food Truck being set up in Town permanently and how it is not being fair to the restaurants in Town.

Mr. Bales stated he thought it would be hard to enforce, and he doesn't think the lemon is worth the squeeze in this scenario. Mr. Bales also advised he doesn't want to discourage food trucks and vendors from coming into Town.

Mr. Bales stated that one of the best restaurants in Town began as a food truck.

Mr. White inquired if Mr. Holt could gather more information for Council before they move forward.

Mr. Holt advised that staff could bring back more information and options for the Council.

Mayor Cury declared a five-minute recess.

IN RE: Enterprise Zone Ordinance- Second Presentment (O-2025-10-01)

Mr. Thomas discussed the number of employees listed in the Ordinance with Council and they advised him that they preferred it be two employees instead of three or five.

Mrs. Mollo advised there was one other change that needed to be made, the addition of "in the county or the county itself" be added into the language.

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 Ordinance O-2025-10-01, as amended.

IN RE: Zoning Amendment Ordinance- First Presentment (O-2025-11-01)

Mr. Jackson advised the Planning Commission recommends granting the submitted amendments to the existing Town Zoning Ordinance to allow the future placement of modular homes on lots to be located in the Towns R1 districts.

IN RE:

Late Fee Ordinance Amendment (O-2025-11-02)

Mr. Campbell advised he done an analysis- Inaudible.

Mr. Bales stated if they lowered it from 10% to 8% it would essentially be a \$30k loss, inquired what it would be if it was lowered to 5% and Mr. Campbell advised it would be a loss of around \$76k.

Mrs. Mollo stated she was going to fight for 2%.

Mr. Holt suggested they do it in a staged approach so it could be phased out of the budget.

Council had a brief discussion about the late fee percentage and agreed upon reducing the late fee to 7%.

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 -\$960,328
- Water- Year to Date Net Income Loss is -\$347,135
- Sewer- Year to Date Net Income Loss is \$31,441
- Water and Sewer Line Maintenance Year to Date Net Income Loss \$599,170
- Electric w/o Generator Year to Date Net Income Loss \$237,055
- General Fund- Reserved Cash Balance \$1,351,004
- General Fund- Unreserved Cash Balance \$893,195
- Water Department Reserved Cash Balance \$1,084,191
- Water Department Unreserved Cash Balance \$47,295
- Sewer Department Reserved Cash Balance \$496,494
- Sewer Department Unreserved Cash Balance -\$460,091
- Electric Department Reserved Cash Balance \$1,802,036
- Electric Department Unreserved Cash Balance -\$1,512,718

Mr. Campbell advised he is still working on the Pop-up Richlands account.

Mr. Bales inquired about the Gravel Truck and whether the \$1 fee has been impactful. Mr. Campbell advised the Grapple Truck costed \$227k and they paid a \$30k down payment out of the funds collected from the fee and the remaining payments are due annually. Mr. Bales asked if the \$1 fee covered the annual fees or if they were coming up short, Mr. Campbell advised they bring in around \$36k annually and the payment is \$48k.

IN RE:

Attorney Report

Mr. Thomas had nothing additional.

IN RE:

Town Manager Report

Mr. Holt advised of the following:

- Congressionally Directed Funding is frozen at this time, until the Federal Government opens back up.
- Urgent Need Funding- the Town was successful in pulling down around \$480k.
- Thanked the Council and staff for supporting him and his family during a loss in their family.

IN RE:

Council Member Reports

Laura Mollo- advised that a former council member stated that during Covid the Town employees did not show up to work, Mrs. Mollo stated this was not true.

Jan White- Nothing additional.

Jordan Bales-

Southwest Virginia Community College MOU- Mr. Bales advised they were approached about two months ago by the Athletic Director of the college wanting to use the basketball section of the REC Park to practice softball and baseball pitching during the colder months. Mr. Bales stated he was able to negotiate with them and since they don't pay to use any facilities, they agreed to put clinics on for them.

Mrs. White asked about the operating hours of 8am-3pm when the PEC Park doesn't open until 11:00am, Mr. Bales advised the employees will be there at that time.

Mr. Holt advised that the college has been a good partner to the Town and always show up to help with events.

Mrs. Mollo asked if the public would be allowed in at the same time, Mr. Holt advised that in the specific area where they would be pitching at, they don't see many folks coming in at that time due to school, etc. and doesn't see it being impactful or a problem for the REC Park.

Mrs. Mollo stated she doesn't think the Town of Richlands has any business signing anymore contracts with other people, without some sort of financial agreement.

Mr. Bales stated it could be terminated at any time if there were any issues.

Mr. White stated he knew this was something the college needed and he has no issues with the MOU.

Mrs. Mollo advised she was voting no because she just received a copy of the MOU tonight and wanted time to digest it.

Mrs. Mollo asked if they could terminate the MOU at any time if issues come up, Mr. Bales advised they could, and it does not automatically renew.

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales, seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to approve directing Mr. Holt to sign the MOU with Southwest Virginia Community College for utilizing the REC Park for softball and baseball pitching.

Detour Update- Asked for an update on the detour near the school, Mr. Holt advised they should be wrapped up within the next week.

Parade- Inquired how the parade went because he'd received mixed reviews. Mayor Cury advised they would discuss it off Council.

Trash Truck- Inquired if the Town has ordered a new Trash Truck yet and Mr. Holt stated they did not because there was some other equipment that they probably need to order before a Trash Truck, including a Pumper. Mr. Bales suggested they consider adding an additional \$1 fee for that when the next budget comes up.

Backboard at Critterville- Thanked staff for replacing the backboard that had gotten busted.

Brush Truck- Advised he had received tons of compliments about the Brush Truck following the Trash Truck, so that was a good idea.

Rick Wood- Absent.

Gary Jackson- Asked Mr. Holt for an update on the bridge, Mr. Holt advised the timeline looks promising and is on track.

Seth White- Advised he had received a ton of complaints regarding the sewage that is leaking out of the Trash Truck as they run through Town, so they are installing a new valve to be able to drain it off regularly.

Mayor Cury declared a five-minute recess.

IN RE: [Mayor Comments](#)

Mayor Cury-

- Section House advised they have hosted three successful events recently- Inaudible
- Veterans Day- advised they are working on the Veterans Day Program and dinner on November 10 at 5:00pm
- Thanked Mr. White for allowing them to use his building for the event.
- VA 250 Sign- advised they have the new VA 250 sign in front of the Section House.
- Halloween- October 31 from 5:30pm-8:00pm

IN RE:

Executive Session

Mayor Cury advised the Council would be going into Executive Session pursuant to:

VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(6)- Contract Negotiations:

- Debris Removal- RFP
- Energy Consultant RFP
- Utility Attorney RFP

VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8)- Consultation with Legal Counsel
- PSA Discussion

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

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson, seconded by Jan White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council certified that only the following VA Code Sections were discussed during the Executive Session.

VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(6)- Contract Negotiations:

- Debris Removal- RFP
- Energy Consultant RFP
- Utility Attorney RFP

VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8)- Consultation with Legal Counsel
- PSA Discussion

Mr. White stated he had received multiple calls in the past week regarding what seems to be an increasing problem with homeless in our community and advised that his response to it was “it’s not a crime to be homeless”, however the issue is when people are building camps under bridges, etc. they have even found them breaking into a shed and camping there.

Mr. White asked Chief Holt what could be done about this and Chief Holt advised that the public could call 911 and report it when they see someone camping on public property and the officers would politely ask them to move on.

Chief Holt advised that he and Deputy Chief Crouse had received a report of a man camping under the bridge at Hardees and they bought him a hot meal and asked him to move on, and the man understood.

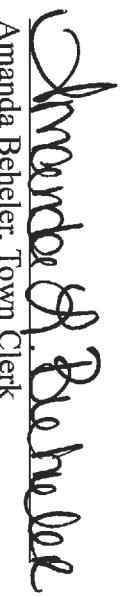
Mr. White asked if Chief Holt could bring back some suggestions regarding that issue and panhandling, and Chief Holt advised he would.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted to authorize the Town Manager to buy a new eagle for the flag.

IN RE:

Adjournment

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


Amanda Beheler
Amanda Beheler, Town Clerk


Rodney D. Cury
Rodney D. Cury, Mayor