

TOWN OF RICHLANDS

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Richlands Town Council held a “Regular Monthly Meeting” on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at 6:00 pm in the Richlands Council Chambers with the following present:

- Mayor: Rod. D. Cury
- Interim Town Manager: Don Marr
- Town Attorney: Mike Thomas
- Finance Manager: Ronnie Campbell
- Project Manager: Absent
- Town Clerk: Amanda Beheler
- Council Members: Seth White, Gary Jackson, Rick Wood, 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 asked if there was anyone present that would like to speak under Unscheduled Public Comments.

The following were added to Unscheduled Public Comments:

- Bobbie Ray- 426 Buchanan Street
- Henrietta Johnson- 1107 Orange Street
- Penny Shelton- Address Not Given
- Tim Lester- Address Not Given
- Linda Ward- Address Not Given
- Jeff Casey- 215 Center Street
- Morgan Earp- Address Not Given
- Johnny Lester- Address Not Given
- Sharon Shinalt- 335 Birmingham Road
- Randall Sutherland- 161 Purcell Road
- Scotty Bostic- 123 Royal Street
- Kim Johnson- No Address Given
- Nancy McCoy- 1138 Orange Street
- Paula Richardson- 1158 Orange Street

Mr. White requested Executive Session Item (b) VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8)- Consultation with Legal Counsel be moved to Agenda Item (a).

Mrs. Mollo requested Agenda Item (k) Council Member Laura Mollo- Resolution be moved to Agenda Item (d).

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6-0 to approve the amended Agenda.

IN RE: Authorization to Pay Bills (February)

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Gary Jackson, and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6-0 to approve paying the bills for February.

IN RE: Minutes

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Jan White, and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6-0 to approve the following Meeting Minutes.

- January 13, 2026- Regular Scheduled Meeting
- February 10, 2026- Joint Public Hearing

IN RE: Scheduled Public Comments

Hope Hale, 1155 Orange Street- Mrs. hale spoke on the burdens of high-power bills on low-income families and inquired if they plan to offer any payment plans.

IN RE: Unscheduled Public Comments

Bobbie Ray- 426 Buchanan Street-

- Inquired if the Town has a Hardship Program in place to help citizens with the high Electric Bills. Mayor Cury asked Mr. Marr to address this after all Public Comments.
- Inquired where the \$800k PCA coverage and the 7% late fees go, asked if they will credit that back to the citizens or create a program with those funds to help citizens with their bills.

Mr. White asked Mr. Marr to take a few minutes to address the citizens' concerns, due to seeing a trend in the comments.

Mrs. Mollo advised she was the one who posted the PCA information.

Mayor Cury suggested they get the citizens' input first.

Henrietta Johnson- 1107 Orange Street-

- Asked why the citizens are still being charged for PCA if there is a surplus.
- Spoke on the effect the high Electric Bills will have on businesses, stated that it trickles down.
- Stated the citizens deserve to know what's going on.
- Advised she only gets \$1,200 a month to live on and has had to cut her grocery bill down to pay her bill.
- Stated that she did not want to offend anyone, but one day they will be up for reelection and if this continues, some of them may not make it.

Mr. White requested that Roberts Rules be suspended- to allow Mr. Marr to speak to the public regarding the Electric Bills.

Mrs. Mollo stated she didn't think they needed to suspend Roberts Rule to have this conversation and would like to give the citizens an opportunity to ask questions and allow Council to answer.

Mr. White stated he would like Mr. Marr to address the questions instead of engaging in a back and forth.

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Rick Wood-Motion was suspended.

Mr. Marr spoke to the citizens regarding the following:

- Gave a brief overview of his background, advising he came from a large family where costs were important, and stated the citizen comments about the high electricity bills are real to him.
- Explained how the weather affects the electrical bills.
- Stated that the Generator Project has nothing to do with the rates, yet.
- Advised the Generator Project is to help lower the bills, not raise them.
- Explained how municipalities do rate studies to determine rates to cover the cost of operating and maintaining the utility, it is a stand-alone fund.
- Advised they have 4 employees who maintain the Towns electrical grid and they are only being compensated for around 70% of what the market pays for their jobs, and if they were to leave, the Towns labor costs would go up significantly. Wages are less than competitive.

- Advised the Towns current financial position is, according to the Towns Financial Policy there should be 2 ½-3 million (up until February) in the Unrestricted Fund at all times, currently has -\$600k, there is no surplus to reduce rates.
- Stated that in 2023, when the Council passed a motion to reduce the Electric Rates by 10% for four months, it cost the Towns Electric Fund \$700k, it was then taken out of the Reserves.
- Advised the rate structure should cover the costs, PCA is used to make up the difference.
- Auditors recommended the Town carry 6 months (3-4 million) in the Un-restricted Fund and that would be adequate for the utility.
- If the Town runs out of money in the Un-Restricted Fund, they will use Restricted Funds. That account is headed in a direction that doesn't sustain the utility. The reserve is going down because the rate didn't cover operating costs.
- Currently the Town Unrestricted is in the negative and is down to around \$300-600k in the Restricted Fund. So, when they say they collected more in the PCA, they did, and they need to do that for many months to restore both Reserves if the Utility wants to operate in non-financial stress, to prevent someone from coming in and taking over the utility and setting the rate.
- Stated the rate structure should cover the cost of operating the utility, PCA should cover costs of unforeseen circumstances.
- Advised there are programs for low-income citizens, and the Town could look at ways to help those citizens apply for those programs.
- Stated that every Councilmember understands what this is doing to citizens and wants to help, but the rate reductions have created more of a problem.
- Advised that rates are going up across the United States. Not just in Richlands.
- Stated that even if Council wanted to give a rate reduction today, he would not advise it. They are out of money to do that and are in a Restricted Fund that should not be used for that.

Penny Shelton- Address Not Given-

- Stated that all she got from Mr. Marr was that they would not be getting a reduction and rates were only going to get higher.
- Stated her bills were between \$450-\$700 a month and despite working full-time, the amounts are unaffordable for the average household in Richlands.
- Richlands poverty rate is 30.2% which is more than triple of Virginias state rate.
- Advised that as an outreach worker she sees firsthand how these family's struggle.
- Stated that residents are having to choose between food, medicine, and paying utilities.
- Advised there are no homeless shelters in Richlands.

Tim Lester- Address Not Given-

- Advised that he didn't come to claim they were a bunch of crooks, because he doesn't think that at all, they have his sympathy for the situation they are all in.
- Asked what the timeframe for the Generator Project was and are they currently putting money towards the generator.
- Inquired whether business owners should look into other options such as solar panels, etc., and asked if the Town would with them in a policy sense to help them.

Linda Ward- Address Not Given-

- Advised she has the same concerns as the other citizens.
- Inquired if there are buildings in Town that they are not using, could they close them off when it gets cold.
- Stated she would like the Town to cut costs also, and inquired if they are still paying power bills for the Section House.
- Asked what the Town is doing to bring more businesses in.

Jeff Casey- 215 Center Street-

- Advised that he has a rental house next door to his house that his wife had used as an office space for several years and she moved out of it in the Fall. At that time, he had the water and sewer turned off and his electric bill was only \$24 a month, but since January it has continuously gone up each month, and the current bill is \$139.35 for lights and a

refrigerator only. Mr. Casey stated the bill doesn't make sense, it's a major increase, and asked the Council if they knew why it was that high.

Mr. White advised that if he could bring his bill to Mr. Marr, he would go over it with him.

Mr. Wood asked Mr. Marr if he thought they should pull some meters and see if there are any errors, Mr. Marr advised that it is worth evaluating.

Morgan Earp- Address Not Given-

- Welcomed Mr. Marr.
- Advised that a \$900 Electric bill is insane.
- Asked Mr. Marr if he had looked into the PPP Program, Mr. Marr advised he had not. Mr. Earp advised it would pay a percentage of the citizens' bill.

Mrs. Mollo advised that when Chief Holt was still there, they looked into the PPP Program, and it was not available for municipal owned electricity. Mrs. Mollo also advised that the Town had helped citizens sign up for other programs.

Johnny Lester- Address Not Given

- Inquired why his sewer bill was higher than his water bill, stated he had asked once before, and it dropped some.
- Inquired if they have driven around Richlands looking at the empty houses where people can't afford to live there anymore.
- Inquired why they don't have a decent restaurant.
- Inquired if thermostats set to 68 degrees would keep the elderly warm.
- Advised his meters were grown over.

Sharon Shinalt- 335 Birmingham Road-

- Stated that she retired from the Town of Richlands after 24 years and currently works for Social Security, and for the last four years she has noticed an increase in Town Employees, and inquired where they are being paid from. Mrs. Shinalt asked if it could be shortened down.
- Advised that Mrs. Ginger Mullins (Mrs. Shinalt is speaking for Mrs. Mullins) bill was \$757 in her two room apartment, that is insulated and she also has a storage building that they use as a yard sale building that has water on it but no shower and the heat pump stays on 50 and that bill is \$715, which is \$1460 total. Mrs. Shinalt asked how the seniors are going to buy their medications.
- Advised they had asked the Town to look at Mrs. Mullins meters and was advised that they never go bad, and she would appreciate it if they would check them out.

Randall Sutherland- 161 Purcell Road-

- Advised he moved to Richlands a few years ago from Grundy and has bragged on the cheap prices and convenience to stores etc., until recently.
- Stated that his electric bills have raised from \$100 to \$500 and didn't get any cheaper when he switched over to propane.
- Spoke on his Town and County taxes being over \$1700.
- Advised that Mason St. and Purcell Road are so bad they couldn't be scrapped when it snowed.
- Inquired where his taxes are going when his road can't be paved.

Mrs. Mollo advised the Town does not receive the money from the County taxes.

Scott Bostic- 123 Royal Street-

- Advised that when he first moved to Richlands in 2012, he had a wood furnace until his health got bad and he could cut wood anymore, so he switched over to propane. Mr. Bostic stated that he removed all vents, replaced windows and installed new insulation, and his power bill has still doubled in the past few months.
- Advised his mother-in-law receives \$800 a month and her bill is \$750.
- Stated his kids and mother-in-law are struggling to pay their electric bill and eat.

Kim Johnson- No Address Given-

- Stated that she does not live in Town but has been a merchant in Town for nearly 30 years, owns multiple business here. Has two of her friends with her in attendance, both are widows. And their bills were around \$600 and \$1100 and have cried about it.
- Advised she called the Town Hall and they advised her that her usage didn't increase but the rates did.
- Stated that she is trying to expand her business but wondering if it is worth it.
- Inquired if the Town is paying for housing for the new Town Manager that is outside of the Town limits.

Nancy McCoy- 1138 Orange Street-

- Stated that the Town was flooded last year on February 15 and a lot of people either lost their homes or are rebuilding and she seen a power bill that was \$1400.
- Inquired how many times have the received a power bill that said it had not been paid, and it had.
- Stated that the Town received \$950k for flooding, inquired where it went.
- Asked what the Town was going to do before it becomes a ghost town like Amanata.

Mrs. Mollo advised the Town did not receive \$950k, however the state approved \$50 million for hurricane and flood relief and is not allocated to any one town, it was allocated to communities in Southwest Virginia like Richlands that were impacted. It has not been given to the Town. Mrs. Mollo advised she walked through some of the flooded homes and followed the stories of the money, but it had nothing to do with the Town of Grundy. Advised them to call the County Administration Office, they were taking applications and can guide them.

**Paula Richardson- 1158 Orange Street- Inaudible-was not standing at the podium.
IN RE: Executive Session**

Mrs. Mollo stated she thought they were going into Executive Session due to her Item K on the Agenda and asked the public to hang out and wait for it to be over if they wanted more discussions about their concerns.

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

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

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Rick Wood and the roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6-0 to go into Executive Session.

Upon a motion by Jan 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 Rick Wood and the roll call vote of all members present, with Laura Mollo voting no, the Council certified 5-1 that only the following VA Code Sections were discussed during the Executive Session:

- VA Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) Personnel- Consultation with Legal Counsel

Mrs. Mollo stated that she voted no because when she was elected, like all the others, they were supposed to take FOIA training and they went into Closed Session for VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(8)- Consultation with Legal Counsel, and there have been many court opinions from FOIA that just because an attorney is present does not mean they can go into Closed Session. Mrs. Mollo also stated that tonight they went into Closed Session for a conversation that people are concerned about her discussing an investigation about the Towns Generator Project. Mrs. Mollo advised that when she brought it up that they should not be discussing it because they should only be in there for questions with their attorney and the conversation turned to her intentions to tell the public what was going on and into accusations against her and she once again she told them they are not supposed to be discussing it, and she walked out and cant in good conscious vote to certify that thew only thing they discussed in the room was to have a consultation with the attorney.

Mr. Thomas advised that with the lone departure, any statements that Mrs. Mollo had stated should be included in the minutes as well.

Mrs. Mollo advised the Clerk, Mrs. Beheler, that she didn't remember her exact statement, but when she came out, she did tell the public in the room that she walked out because she didn't believe what they were doing in there was in alignment with this FOIA code and she would explain later on camera.

Mr. Thomas stated that all he meant was the statement during the discussion part should be included in the minutes.

Mr. White stated that since the rest of the Council has been accused of doing something that they shouldn't do, he asked Mr. Thomas to give his legal opinion if they only discussed what allowed them to go into Executive Session regarding a legal matter.

Mr. Thomas advised that what goes into account is the vote of the Council and it was passed by a majority vote to certify that was all that was discussed.

Mrs. Mollo asked Mr. Thomas if that was his legal opinion or just the vote of the Council, Mr. Thomas stated that as far as his opinion it doesn't go into the minutes that would just be as far as what the Council voted for.

IN RE: Resolution Approving the WWTP Improvement Project &

Notice of Intent to Award the Low Bid (R-2026-03-01

Mayor Cury read Resolution R-2026-03-01

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Rick Wood and the roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6-0 to approve R-2025-03-01.

IN RE: Generator Project Update-Tobacco Commission/ Quantum Power

Mr. Jerry Silva, Director of Energy for the Tobacco Commission, advised that Delegate Morefield asked him to come and give the Council an update on how he was brought into the Tobacco Commission and in addition to how this project, at least from the Tobacco Commission standpoint, was funded and approved by the Commission.

Mr. Silva advised of the following:

- Advised that he had 36 years' experience in the Utility Industry.
- Advised he had worked on large capital projects, very familiar with construction projects.
- Advised he did a stint with the Department of Energy and is familiar with grant funding.
- Advised that he was asked to roll out a \$12 million dollar Energy Fund on behalf of the Tobacco Commission and from that he has been able to approve several projects.
- Stated that he was approached by former Town Manager Jason May about the Generator Project and advised he had the support of all the Council Members. Mr. Silva stated that he asked him a ton of questions and advised him that he was embarking on something that has never been done and it would be very innovative.
- Advised that he asked Mr. May what are the real challenges, and Mr. May advised they have been locked into the long-term contracts that have been really impacting the community.
- Stated that he thought it was going to be a great project for the Commission, he just needed to know how they were going to get there from Point A to Point B and Mr. May walked him through all of the education he had gone through, and he was very in formable with his energy knowledge and background, he could tell that he had been in the trenches with it.
- Advised that he asked Mr. May to speak to the Commissioners on this project on behalf of the Town of Richlands, and they were all convinced this was a great project so with that, the Commissioner and Chair at the time was Delegate Morefield and he asked Mr. Silva if it was going to be a good project for the community and he advised him it was, because they will be able to generate their own electricity and control their own destiny.

- Stated that after everything he has heard today, they are at the mercy of the utility and the transmission.
- Advised he recently authorized \$1 million dollars of the \$4 million dollars.
- Advised that he was recently brought in by the new Interim Town Manager, Don Marr, to help him get his hands around it, and he advised he was happy too.
- Advised that he had just met with Quantum and had been grilling them on the deliverables, and the critical milestones that have to be hit and the due dates, etc.
- Advised he has been able to mitigate 2 of the critical items that they brought up quickly.
- Advised he is looking at the stages to release the other money.
- Stated that he is pleased with where they are in the project.
- Advised that final engineering is a cost that can't be nailed down, until all the environmental studies have been done.
- Stated that some of the bills that he heard about earlier from citizens need to be investigated.
- Advised that he is there as a resource for the Town of Richlands.
- Stated that the one concern he raised to Delegate Morefield was that he was quite taken back by how many Town Managers have come after Jason May, because when you lose continuity, you lose information and it delays projects.
- Advised that Mr. Marr is knowledgeable in the area, and he can't stress enough how important that is in a Town Manager.

Mayor Cury asked Mr. Silva where he lives, and he advised that he lives in Richmond.

Mayor Cury asked Mr. Silva what he had said about his concern, that he had missed that part about Town Managers.

- Advised he was concerned about the number of Town Managers the Town has had, the continuity is important for projects of this size.
- Stated that he has already authorized \$2 million in low interest loans and another million in grant money to the Town.
- Advised he has read one of the contracts that was signed by previous Council many years ago and there are areas of the contracts that might give the Town an out, but they need the right legal counsel in order to do that.

Mr. White thanked Mr. Silva for being there and for taking the time to bring Mr. Marr up to spend on the project.

Mr. White asked Mr. Silva if what he heard today about high electric bills from the citizens if he is hearing the same thing from other places also. Mr. Silva advised he's hearing it coming from many other localities as well.

Mr. Silva advised the language in the contracts is 20-year-old language that doesn't apply in today's industry, everything has changed.

Mayor Cury stated that in his defense, he sat on the Council when the contracts were signed, everyone works in the best they can at the time, nobody purposely makes decisions to hurt the Town.

Mayor Cury advised no one knew transmission costs were going to go through the roof, and deregulation changed everything for the Town.

Mrs. Mollo stated that she clearly has reservations, not about generation, but with the way the project is being executed, they were promised the generator in 2025, and now they'll be lucky to see it in 2027.

Mrs. Mollo advised they are already paying for the generator and took out a loan that they will be paying on until 2050.

Mrs. Mollo advised that some of the contracts have saved them money and she is completely against breaking because they are over halfway into the 40-year contract where they will eventually own a portion of a hydro electric plant, which is generation.

Mrs. Mollo asked why they would throw that away.

Mr. Silva advised he only read one of the contracts, but it wasn't the one Mrs. Mollo was talking about, it was the one with AMP.

Mr. Silva stated that Mrs. Mollo was making a claim that he did not know if it was true or not, because he hadn't read that particular contract.

Mr. Silva stated that he hadn't heard anyone say they want to break the contracts, just that they would like to review and analyze them.

Mr. Silva also stated that out of the three critical issues they have with the Generator Project, he has already mitigated two of them.

Mr. Silva advised that working with Mr. Marr has been great because he gets it.

Mr. Silva stated that he is excited about the project, and he thinks there is a lot of opportunity with it on so many different levels, including data centers.

Mrs. Mollo inquired about data centers and if they are on the horizon for Richlands. Mr. Silva advised he has a colleague that is the Vice President of one of the largest data centers and he advised him if he can give him anything that has natural gas he will come and visit once its operational.

Mr. White asked Mr. Silva to clarify that at the time, no one from the Town had approached him about a data center, Mr. Silva confirmed no one has and a 5mw Generator isn't large enough to run a data center.

Mr. Marr thanked Mr. Silva for being a huge assist to him and the Town.

Mr. Marr advised that time is money in this project, and they need to be mindful of gaps when choosing the next Town Manager.

Mr. Marr stated that he plans to give Council monthly updates until the project is completed.

IN RE: Quantum Update

Mr. Zack Ramono thanked the Tobacco Commission for their help with the project.

Mr. Ramono gave the following project updates:

- CNX permit has been agreed upon, signed and paid.
 - Blackstone Agreement is in early phase discussions; they have received preliminary term sheets and maps and advised that Mr. Silva is working through those details diligently.
 - AMLAR documents have been sent to the Department of Energy for review for the 2025 approval.
 - Grading Plan is under review and the final steps to the storm water permit is in place.
 - VA Joint Application Submittal is in April, with a November approval date.
 - Critical Issue- Timber clearing window and the 2nd engineering of the line route; there is a bat habit and the timber clearing window is from November to March due to that.
 - Enbridge hot tap has an outage from October to April; they won't touch their pipeline during that time, so they can't start until May 1, 2027.
 - Need to complete the Enbridge Interconnection which is estimated September 2027.
 - Advised the Town would need to find and assign a Grid Operator to dispatch the Generator.
- Mrs. Mollo asked if that was someone they were going to have to hire full-time and Mr. Ramono advised it was not. Mrs. Mollo asked if they should put a new RFP out for the natural gas supplier since the original RFP didn't mention the dispatch of it. Mr. Ramono

advised when they did the economic dispatch modeling with the consultant that they hired, the natural gas prices were a very good price, so they are in a much better position. Mrs. Mollo inquired if they should put an RFP back out to try and get better terms, currently they are locked in with CNX for three years; Mr. Ramono stated that in his opinion, the price CNX gave them is very fair and he would wait until the end of that three-year process. Mrs. Mollo asked Mr. Marr what he thought about it, and Mr. Marr advised he would like to research it before giving her an answer.

- Advised that have spent roughly \$9.9 million dollars to date, and the estimated cost to complete is subject to final engineering.

Mrs. Mollo advised they were originally awarded the AMLAR money, but they didn't get the money even though they were awarded the money, because the proforma was changed.

Mr. Campbell said it had to go through the entire process.

Mr. White explained how the AMLAR grant timeline and grant worked and advised they decided to go into it during the Trump administration due to the Biden administration having a more rigorous set of things they had to do.

Mrs. Mollo stated they signed a contract with Quantum for around \$14 million dollars and they are now over \$17 million, and she advised she doesn't support the additional costs incurred and asked how the Town was going to fund it. Mr. Campbell asked if that includes the \$2 million from Enbridge, and Mr. Ramono advised it does not and that was separate. Mr. Ramono advised that the out-of-pocket expense based on getting the AMLAR grant and the rest of the money from the Tobacco Commission is actually zero.

Mrs. Mollo asked if the \$17 million was just for their services; Mr. Ramono advised it was not and would be glad to update her and invite her to one of the meetings. Mr. Ramono advised when they had to go with a different line route, everything had to be readjusted.

Mrs. Mollo asked if the entire \$17 million dollars is being given to Quantum or being sent to different companies such as Enbridge, etc.

Mrs. Mollo also asked that when everything is completed, how much money will the Town of Richlands have paid to Quantum Power. Mr. Ramono advised they signed the original agreement for \$14 million dollars and the asset itself that they purchased is \$9 million, then they also have to pay for engineering services, procure contractors that they have to involve, etc. Mr. Ramono advised they could have a sit-down conversation of the detailed breakdown of costs.

Mrs. Mollo advised that in the last meeting she asked them what the cost would be if they canceled the Generator Project right now and he advised he would need some time to get that number, Mrs. Mollo asked if he figured it out. Mr. Ramono advised the details of that is in the contract that they signed with the Town. Mrs. Mollo asked if the Town decided tonight to pull out of the project, what would that cost be. Mr. White advised they would also have to pay back the grants and loan money and there is no guarantee they can resell the Generator that they had built specifically for them. Mrs. Mollo advised she knows all of that, but she would still like to know the number. Mr. Mark Ramono advised there is no easy way to answer that question because attorneys would be involved and there is no easy way to unwind it without going through an excruciating exercise. Mr. Ramono also stated that he could give her a number, but at the end of the day its not going to mean a lot. Mr. Ramono advised if Council votes to halt the project, then he would be willing to do it, but he isn't going to spitball an answer that's not accurate.

Mr. Ramono advised the citizens that they were brought on by the Council to help with the rising costs that are forecasted and things have gotten tough, but this project is a huge win for everyone.

Mayor Cury noted that rates have not increased, the prices come from recent weather events.

Mayor Cury advised they were all in the same boat together.

Mr. Marr stated that the future is the judge of history.

IN RE: Resolution to Halt R-2026-03-08

Mrs. Mollo explained that she asked the Town Attorney to draft this because she has a lot of concerns about the Generator Project.

Mrs. Mollo advised she filed a FOIA request with the Virginia State Police asking if they have any open file on the Town of Richlands and the Generator Project, and they responded and said they are unable to fill the request because it is an open criminal investigation and given this fact she would like to halt the project until the investigation is complete.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, with no second, the motion to approve Resolution R-2026-03-08 to halt the Generator Project until later action by Town Council failed.

IN RE: GDS Block Power Purchase Recommendation

Mr. Campbell advised this is a recommendation from GDS to enter into more block purchases for 2026-2027 since there has been a delay in the Generator Project, current block purchases ended in December, so if they buy more it will be on the open market.

Upon a motion by Jordan Bales, seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6- 0 to allow the Town Manager to purchase block power.

IN RE: AMP Resolution R-2026-03-02

Upon a motion by Seth White, seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6-0 to approve R-2026-03-02 to pay AMP for power charges.

IN RE: I/EDA Emergency Housing Grant Resolution R-2026-03-03

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Seth White and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6-0 to approve R-2026-03-03 in support of residential housing for flood victims.

IN RE: VDOT Pipeline Resolution R-2026-03-04

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Gary Jackson and the roll call vote of all members present, with Laura Mollo voting no, the Council voted 5-1 to approve R-2026-03-04.

Mrs. Mollo advised she is voting no because some citizens have reached out to her about coal trucks coming through there.

Mayor Cury declared a 5-minute recess.

IN RE: Waiver of Noise Ordinance for VDOT during construction of 2nd Street Realignment Project

Mr. Marr advised that he had originally spoke with Mr. Thomas about doing a Resolution for this item for Council to pass, but after reading the Town Ordinance he realized that as Town Manager he has the authority to make this Waiver, without the Council. Mr. Marr stated that this was more of an informational item for Council.

Mr. Marr advised that VDOT was requiring a Noise Ordinance during the Construction of the 2ns Street Realignment Project.

Mr. Marr stated the project would be advertised on April 14 to contractors, Bids will be due in mid-May, and plans to award the project sometime in late July, which means the temporary Detour would likely occur sometime in September or October and that is when the Noise Ordinance Waiver would be tied to the road construction work.

Mr. Marr also advised that the Waiver will be for no longer than 60 days, but probably closer to 30 days, this would be contingent on the project and its timetable.

Mrs. Mollo inquired if they would be working at nighttime, Mr. Marr advised they would be.

Mrs. Mollo also inquired about the timeframe, stating they were originally told it would take two weeks, Mr. Marr advised that he was unsure and that he was only relaying the information that he had.

Council had no objections to Mr. Marr going forward with this Waiver.

IN RE: Freedom Festival Resolution R-2026-03-06

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6-0 to approve R-2026-03-06 to approve the Freedom Festival and event planning.

Mrs. Mollo asked why they needed a Resolution for Freedom Festival and not any of the other events coming into Town. Mr. Marr advised this particular one has always been council driven and Mrs. White has been the promoter is why he brought it forward.

IN RE: Future Salt Building and Public Works Site location at the Iron Street Property Resolution R-2026-03-05

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson, seconded by Rick Wood and the roll call vote of all members present, with Laura Mollo voting no, the Council voted 5-1 to approve R-2026-03-05 in support of approving the future Salt Building Site and the future Public Works Masterplan Site location at the Town of Richlands Iron Street Property.

Mrs. Mollo advised she is voting no on the Salt Building because it should've been budgeted in the Budget, not because they didn't need it.

IN RE: Local Health Choice Benefits R-2026-03-07

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Laura Mollo and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6-0 to approve R-2026-03-07 to approve the Local Health Benefits for staff.

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 -\$650,000
- Water- Year to Date Net Income Loss is -\$536,00
- Sewer- Year to Date Net Income Loss is \$236,000
- Water and Sewer Line Maintenance Year to Date Net Income Loss \$292,000
- General Fund- Unreserved Cash Balance \$2,000,000
- Water Department Unreserved Cash Balance \$512,142
- Sewer Department Unreserved Cash Balance -\$422,000
- Electric Department Unreserved Cash Balance -\$486,000

There were no questions from Council regarding the Monthly Financial Report.

IN RE: PSA/Cedar Bluff Draft Contract Amendments

Mr. Campbell provided Council with a copy and stated it is what the Council approved the previous month.

Upon a motion by Laura Mollo, seconded by Gary Jackson and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6-0 to accept the amendments to the contract and allow Mr. Marr to sign on behalf of the Town.

IN RE: Budget Amendment

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Jordan Bales and the roll call vote of all members present, with Laura Mollo voting no, the Council voted 5-1 to approve appropriating funds to the Fire Department by transferring from Capital to O&M in the amount of \$50,133for equipment and building repairs.

Mrs. Mollo advised she is voting no because she is trying to stay consistent on no with the Budget Amendments, the Council needs to be better about budgeting these things in as they go.

IN RE: Attorney Report

Mr. Thomas apologized for the Resolutions being late, he was sick during the end of last week.

IN RE: Town Manager Report

Mr. Marr advised April 7 is the ribbon cutting for the EV Charging Station.

IN RE: Council Member Reports

Jordan Bales-

- Thanked the Town for getting the reflectors at the intersection of Plantation and Cresswood.
- Advised that he has received several compliments on sanitation.
- Advised Spring is approaching and asked if it was possible to mark down dangerous turns when they are in the Trash Trucks so they can get them trimmed back for their bus drivers.

Gary Jackson-

- Advised he would like to follow up on the calibration due to the higher than normal electric bills.

Laura Mollo-

- Inquired about the Paving Schedule that was mentioned last month and haven't seen any RFPs for it.
- EV Charging Station- advised that when it was approved, she had a few questions regarding it and Chief Holt had advised her that he would answer those prior to moving forward, and now she sees on Facebook that it was approved. Mrs. Mollo said one of her questions was if Council would set the rate in relation to the PCA. Mr. Marr advised he would ask. Mr. Campbell advised they done a survey from other rates around the area.
- Advised they are getting some massive craters in the roads around Town.

Jan White-

- Advised that citizens have made comments about the Town looking trashy, especially around the 4lane when you come off of 67. Mayor Cury advised he had the same concern that he had conveyed to Mr. Marr. Mr. Marr advised it is a VDOT maintained road and they have turned it into them. Mr. White advised the Sheriff's Office does a good job by using inmates, he may need to check into that. Mrs. Mollo advised that since covid they weren't allowed to use the inmates anymore.

Seth White-

- Suggested breaking the power bills apart, to separate the utilities. Mr. Campbell said they are exploring options on that and will be bringing it to Council. Mr. Marr advised he is in support of this, to help the citizens better understand the bills.
- Advised that he believes in freedom of speech but there had been a lot of personal attacks and when people go online and say things that are untrue and not factual, they get into a problem.
- Advised he was not putting in a bit coin mining operation, and stated if he was going to do that, he wouldn't do it here.
- Stated that he has invested his life and millions of dollars in the Town and is only trying to make the Town better.
- Advised he has had to hire an attorney and issue cease and desist letters on individuals; it is out of control.
- Stated they are all sitting there to do something good for the community and it needs to stop.

Rick Wood-

- Inaudible.

IN RE: Mayor Comments

Mayor Cury advised of the following:

- Upcoming Holidays
- Strolling for Colon 5k- March 21

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- Town Manager Search

Upon a motion by Gary Jackson, seconded by Rick Wood and the unanimous roll call vote of all members present, the Council voted 6-0 to go into Executive Session.

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

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, seconded by Gary Jackson 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)(1) Personnel- Town Manager Search

IN RE: **Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Rick Wood, 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

