

The Richlands Town Council held the regular monthly meeting in the Richlands Town Council Chambers on Tuesday, July 14, 2015 at 7:30 pm with the following present:

Mayor: Janis White

Town Manager: Tim Taylor

Town Attorney: Brad Ratliff

Town Clerk: Sue Wade filled in for Kelly Goodman

Council Members: Joe McCracken, Larry Johnson, Doug Ratliff, Mary Ann Strong, Frances Meadows, and Rod Cury.

Mayor White called the meeting to order.

Mayor White led the prayer and she also led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor White asked to add Mike Mosley under unscheduled public comments; he was requesting money for 9-10 year olds. Mayor White then asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda.

Mary Ann Strong requested that the council go into a closed session to deal with personnel matters. She stated that Brad Ratliff had the code numbers for the personnel matter. Brad Ratliff stated that the code was 2.2-3711-A1.

Mayor White asked for anymore additions or deletions to the agenda. She also made sure that there was anyone who wanted to speak who was not already on the agenda.

Angie Johnson stated that she would like to speak at the meeting.

Mayor White asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak.

Robert Jessee stated that he would like to make a few comments about the Teen Center.

Mayor White asked again if there was anyone else who would like to speak that was not on the agenda.

No one else wanted to speak; therefore, Mayor White asked to hear a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Rod Cury made the motion; Mary Ann Strong seconded the motion. Mayor White asked if anyone opposed or declined the motion. The motion carried.

Mayor White asked if there were any additions, corrections, or deletions to the minutes.

Mayor White also stated that the town clerk had an illness in the family, and that was why she was not attending the meeting. She also thanked Sue Wade for filling in for her. Mayor White then asked again if there were any additions or corrections. She then stated if there was not, could she hear a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Joe McCracken made the motion; Larry Johnson seconded it. The motion carried.

Mayor White stated that under scheduled public comments, Rick Cooper was in attendance. He is the division director of gas and oil of the Commonwealth of Virginia. He was there to award a presentation to the fire department.

Rick Cooper thanked everyone for allowing him to attend the meeting to give this presentation. He explained how he was the director of the Virginia division of gas and oil. He said that they are a regulatory agency that oversees all of the oil and gas drilling in the state of Virginia. He stated that for the first time ever, there was a collaborative effort between the regulatory agencies and the representatives in the industry and they have developed an award program for anyone who has contributed to the gas industry in the state of Virginia. He also stated that it is not just for Southwest Virginia, but for the entire state. He said that with this they have had an award nomination given and that he would like to read it. The nomination stated that the award is to acknowledge the Richlands Fire and Rescue Department for developing unique firefighting training facilities for the gas and oil industry. He stated that in 2014, representatives of the the Richlands Fire and Rescue Department worked with Console Energy and CNX Gas to develop a fire training school in Richlands, Virginia He stated that the new training facility serves to local fire departments to be prepared for hazards they may face during a natural gas emergency. He also stated to the ones who may or may not know that we have eight thousand oil producing companies in the state of Virginia, and Tazewell County has about seven hundred. He said that new training facilities serve to assist local fire departments to be prepared for hazards they may face during a natural gas emergency. He said it also benefits gas company employees

and contractors to receive real world training, in order to prepared for potential hazards in their day to day jobs. He said the training of the local firefighting got this nomination by Console and CNX Energy for the training of local firefighters as a huge benefit to the partnership as is the ability to build a better working relationship with local first responders. Rick Cooper also stated that plans are currently being negotiated to expand their training ability to other departments around the localities, such as Tazewell, Buchanan, and Russell counties. He said these personnel, such as the Richlands personnel, have the possibilities of responding to emergencies involving natural gas in their coverage area. He also said that additionally, gas company's employees are able to partake in training to be able to maintain their fire safety training requirements. Rick Cooper also stated that this partnership has not only benefitted the gas companies in their training, but also allows emergency response personnel to be better prepared for the hazards they may experience in the field. He said that Richlands Fire Chief, Keith Reynolds and Assistant Fire Chief, Rudy Keith coordinated the construction and installation of the plans. Rick also stated that he wanted to thank the Town of Richlands because they contributed the land where the facility is located. He stated that it was his pleasure and honor to give this first annual award that was given out at the 38<sup>th</sup> Virginia Oil and Gas Association at Virginia Beach last month to the Richlands Fire and Rescue Department.

Mayor White called upon Phillip Horton to speak.

Phillip Horton told everyone good evening and he said he appreciates living in the beautiful Town of Richlands, Virginia. He stated that he would like to address the problems they are having with Cliff Street. He said that it was his old farm while growing up and that his dad bought the land in 1958 and built a new brick, ranch style house on 16 acres. He said, but there are four homes that are on the road that are listed at \$120,000 or more; one possibly over \$200,000. Phillip also said there are twelve trailers on the street. He said there are twelve families that live on that part of Cliff Street. Phillip said that he rents his old home place out, but it is still a very nice home. He then showed pictures of the potholes and the condition of the road that all of the people have to travel in and out on. He then asked the council to please do something before winter. He said that one of the problems is the town and garbage trucks coming in and out, and the salt. He said that Mr. Dale Keen owns the trailer park part, and he had it paved, but now the road is just broken all to pieces; the upper part is not paved at all, but is in fairly good shape. Phillip Horton asked for the pictures to be passed around and for the council to do what they can to help. He also said that he appreciates the opportunity to speak.

The council noted how bad the road looks from the pictures.

Phillip Horton also stated that he does what he can to keep the upper part of the road maintained.

Tim Taylor noted that the road was in bad shape and in obvious need of repair, but was not on the list because it is a private road.

It was also noted that the road could not be brought into the state system because it does not meet the guidelines; the road is not wide enough. If the road had proper right of way and was paved, it could actually be brought into the state system and it could be a part of the highway system.

The council also mentioned patching the road, in order to help the families out.

It was stated that the original goal was to meet the trailer park requirements to have a paved street, but the problem is that it was not built for roadway standards, and that is the reason why it has not held up like it should. There was not enough base and not enough asphalt, but it has lasted quite a few years, maybe around ten year, and has been graveled occasionally. The town used to gravel the street once a year.

Phillip Horton stated that these people who live in these trailers pay taxes. He also mentioned that his taxes are over \$500 a year.

Joe McCracken stated that the town does not usually go on private properties and work on private property. It was said that it was a dilemma because it is private property. Joe also stated that it has been said time and time again that the town does not go on private property, unless it affects some kind of danger; trees obstruction in the wire line, or something like that. Joe also said that he is open to any of it.

Rod Cury said that he agrees with what Joe said. But Rod also mentioned that since the town trash truck goes up there.

Mary Ann Strong stated that she had a question for Mr. Taylor. She stated that she agrees a hundred percent with Joe, but she mentioned that sixteen families are affected, and she asked if he knew of any other roads that are private and could come back and say that the town helped Cliff Street, that affect that many families.

Tim Taylor replied by saying that all the mobile home parks where the town goes to get garbage, all of those roads are private, except for the main road up through the middle. He stated that the town does not patch those, but if they do work on those roads, they usually have the land owner pay for it. Mr. Taylor said that sometimes people will ask the town to patch a hole because they can't find anyone else to do it.

Rod Cury stated that that there is some history of the road being graveled and he does not know why that was, but he was thinking about the taxes being paid. He stated that the mobile home owners pay \$20 in taxes, while the land owner, Dale, pays taxes on the real estate. While the four privately owned homes pay the larger taxes. Rod stated that he was not opposed to it, and that he wants to find some way for the council to help out a little bit. But they need to be cautious because of all the other mobile home parks in Richlands, because it could cause an issue that the council needs to consider. He stated that it was just something to think about.

Phillip Horton stated that there was a tractor that comes up and mows and the upper part of the road that has been graveled. He mentioned only patching the lower part of the road where the people come up.

Rod Cury asked would Phillip be willing to take in any of the cost in that.

Phillip Horton replied that he could speak for himself, but he could not speak for the others. Rod Cury agreed with this.

Mary Ann Strong asked Mr. Taylor if the street department could give the council an estimate on what it would cost to gravel and/or patch the road.

Mr. Taylor asked a street department member and they said it would cost several hundred dollars.

A council member stated that someone could go look at the road and make an actual estimate and present it to Dale, the owner of the mobile home park.

Mary Ann Strong said her issue is that she does not want to see the people have to wait another month, in order for the council to vote on it.

Rod Cury stated that Phillip Horton said that he would like to have this done before winter, so that leaves time to get estimates.

Phillip Horton asked for the council to put down \$280, and then go get the estimates and then ask Dale for permission.

A council member stated that Dale has to agree to pay for the asphalt.

Mary Ann Strong said that if Dale paid \$280 for the asphalt and then the labor would be the town's contribution.

The motion passed that if Dale Keen, and/or other residents pay for the asphalt that the Town of Richlands will provide the labor for the asphalt to be laid down.

Next on the agenda were Jaime Looney and Dr. Debbie Thomas.

Doctor Debbie Thomas thanked the council for the opportunity to speak and that she was coming as a concerned parent and citizen. She stated that she knows that the council has been addressed by Dr. Harrison, but she is coming to speak out of her concern for this community and the future of our youth. Debbie said that some people may know who she is and some may not, she said that she has done a lot of things in her life such as being a figure skater, a two time national champion, a world champion, an Olympic medalist. She stated that she has an engineering degree from Stanford and is an orthopedic surgeon. She stated that somehow God brought her to Richlands; she said that she has even met three presidents. She said she has been on a council and has seen people coming with nothing more than problems and requesting help. She said that God brought her here, but she does not thank that he

meant for her to be an orthopedic surgeon. She stated that she met the love of her life, Jaime Looney, here, as long with his boys. Doctor Thomas said that when Ethan broke his wrist, and he has been on a very complicated journey, but she believes God brought her here so she could see the bigger picture. She stated that she is a person who has been fortunate in life to have accomplished things that people said were impossible. She said that she is looking at the bigger picture and that she is looking as an outsider looking in, and she has been exposed to the socioeconomic distress of this area, as well of the problems of this area that really need to be addressed. Doctor Thomas stated that if we do not focus on our youth and believe in them, we are missing out on investing in the bigger picture. She stated that she put together a video and she said that Ethan has just graduated from fifth grade, which meant he was old enough to go to the Teen Venture Center. She stated that on his day of graduation he said that he wanted to go to the Teen Center. Debbie said that she has been here for almost four years and she has driven by the Teen Venture Center and seen it and thought that they must play video games in there or something, but she did not really know what it was really all about. She said that she went down to the center and she was amazed at what she saw. Doctor Thomas stated that she thought the members had not personally been to the center and have not got to see what it really is about. She said she put together a video that is about eight minutes long that she would really like for the council to watch. She also stated what she would really like them to do is pay very close attention to the statistics mentioned at the beginning of the video because this is something that she sees that if we do not address as a community, we are never going to get where we want to be. She stated that they are so new to the Teen Venture Center that they have got some ideas on how they think they can help them in the long run actually sustain themselves financially. She said that she read in The Voice about some of the requests for finances. She stated that at this point, anything that the town could do would be great. She said things in the form of utility would be great. She also mentioned some of the ideas they have to sustain financially in the long run will take some time. She said it will also take time to get the community involved with these ideas, but there are mechanisms that she believes will work. She stated that she would like to get personally involved herself to help them do this. She said what they are asking is for some temporary relief because the kids who have all showed up here are fabulous. She said that she made this video on her iPhone 6 and she showed them the video and they loved it and they all want to learn how to do it. Doctor Thomas said that these are kids that are going to be our future and are going to make a difference. She also said she hopes everyone enjoys the video.

After the video, Doctor Debbie Thomas said she appreciates it and she wishes that she would have had more sound, but she hopes this would give the council a little better of an idea of what they are sitting on and what is at stake. She said that if they are not able to sustain this Teen Center, but she thinks it is something that can go beyond what they already have. Debbie mentioned that she is very new to this and this has only been going on since school has let out. She said that Ethan asks everyday if he can go to the Teen Center. She said that she wants to be able to ask for any kind of assistance that the town council could give. She also said that she knows we have support for things like the ball field, and not all kids are going to be athletes and not all kids are going to have that opportunity. Doctor Thomas said that this center gives them the opportunity to try just about everything. She mentioned that she has a background in engineering and things like that. She said there's enough space to do beyond what they are already doing. She also said they have some ideas on how to eventually sustain themselves, but that is going to them time with meeting with the board and showing them ideas, and basically getting the community involved, as well. Debbie said that if there is something that the council can do in the meantime, over the next year or so, even just getting the utility bill paid. She said that she read the article in The Voice, the utility company is losing \$750,000, and she said that is because people cannot pay their bills. She said the bottom line is that this is a socioeconomic distressed area that needs some help and we have got some ideas that will turn that around. She said that is going to take getting out there and talking to the right people, getting it out to the press, and really making it a full priority, which she believes is possible. Doctor Thomas said she wants to give the council some hope that there really are some people out there who are willing to help and roll up their sleeves in order to do something for the long term, if they can get some help in the short term. Debbie thanked the council for their time.

A council member stated that there are many companies out there that have grants, like Wells Fargo. The council member mentioned that one of their friends, two years ago, here in Richlands got a \$10,000 grant from Wells Fargo for one of her charity activities. The council member said that a lot of these large companies have a grant provider and love these kinds of things.

Debbie replied that grants are an idea. She said they have done that in the past and applied for grants. She said that it takes a long time. She said she doesn't know how many times she has gone on and looked for grants and things like that. Doctor Thomas stated that it is not a quick fix, but the mechanism they are planning on using will actually work a lot better than a grant, but that's something that's a whole other presentation. She said what she is saying is they are needing something to stop the bleeding for just this year. She mentioned that they are willing to roll their sleeves up and really work to

try and help them become sustained for life. Debbie said that this is something that will slowly come out into the community as they get out to the public, and get them to understand how this whole concept works. She said that they are in a situation naturally where everybody is strapped money. She said that is because there is eleven trillion dollars of short somewhere and not getting taxed. She stated that the distribution of wealth problem is a big problem, and that is why they are always struggling to find money, and she gets all that. She said that this something and they cannot let the kids down because the kids are going to be the future, and the kids have to stay in school, and they have to stay out of trouble. She said they do not want to go down that route, and she said that it is costing them a lot of money. Debbie said that prevention is much more cost effective. She said that is what they are looking at and she said that she is not asking for large amounts of money; she is asking for immediate, what you can do, what you can find, stop the bleeding, let us come in and work with the board and let us see what we can try to do to get more people involved. Doctor Thomas said that she does think that people get inspired when they see young people actually wanting to make something of themselves. She said you get that and you have to jump on it. Debbie said she appreciates it.

Robert Jessee stated that he can answer any questions about the grants before he goes into his comments. He stated that they do write grants just about every day, and the nature of grants has changed in the past couple of years since the economic shift. He said it is no longer just a grant for being a wonderful, charity organization, and here is \$10,000 to keep operating. He said it is now a grant for being a used organization, what are doing to fight diabetes, here is \$10,000 to do a fitness program and you can only use it for fitness programs and that's it, and you must send them a receipt for what they used the money for. Robert stated what they really need and they do get some of those grants, but the majority of those grants, the money can only be used on certain things. He said if they get a music grant, all they can do is but equipment Robert said if they get a skate grant, all they can do is update the skate park. He said what they really need is money to continue operating. He said that him and Laura, and he has been at the Teen Center for about a year, and Laura came in about two or three months before he did, and they have cut the costs of operation almost in half. He said they check how much they are wasting electricity on, and he is constantly going to turn the lights off. He said he constantly tells the kids to go and use the bathroom and turn the lights off, or if they are in bathroom to not let the water run, or if you leave the room turn the light off, and those sorts of things. Robert stated that they have cut down on the air conditioning, as well as the heating in the winter. He said in the winter, the kids complain because they are cold, and in the summer the kids complain because they are hot, and it is always those sorts of things. Robert asked before he went into his speech, if they were anymore questions that someone would like to ask him.

Robert said that he is the assistant director at the Teen Venture Center, and he started volunteering in July 2014 and they had to close for a week in the middle of August. He said instead of letting them close, he offered to volunteer everyday that week. Robert stated that after that, a few emergency situations happened, which he handled efficiently. He mentioned that he had a girl have a stroke on him on his first day of volunteering; he said that it was terrifying, but he said they took her to the hospital and took care of her, and then they offered him the job the next week when the board met, which he is thankful for. Robert stated that he is a full time student at Concord University, he studies geography and he is involved with on-campus activities. He also mentioned that he is the president of a national fraternity, Sigma Tau Gamma. He also stated that he is not a resident of Richlands, and he has never been a resident of Richlands. Robert said he has never lived in the town limits, and he never has as far as he knew. He said he does work within town and he does spend most of his time here in Richlands, even though for most of the year he lives over an hour away in Athens, West Virginia. Robert stated that he grew up here and he went to Richlands High School. He stated that he spends almost all of his money here in town, and that he keeps Redflower and Hardees's in business. He stated that Richlands is very special to him. Robert said that studying geography, he has learned a lot of things, even though it sounds like a useless, specific degree, but he stated that it was not. He stated that he has learned about cultures, he has learned about languages, he has learned about history, geology, and some climatology and political science; all of these things are in the field that he is researching. Robert said that one thing he can say that he can brag about is that he knows a little bit about how the world works, how countries and people work, and how economies work. He said that looking at these things; you begin to see patterns develop. He stated that the pattern he wants to talk about today is that most cultures around the world today, whether it be modern cultures, or traditional societies, know that focusing on our children, is the thing that will save the future and make the culture last. He said most cultures, because not all cultures focus on child bearing. He stated that there are two tribal cultures that practice a very basic form of child bearing. He said there are two traditional tribes that give just enough for the children to survive. He stated that they, the children, have to learn to fend for themselves in harsh environments and are told that they owe their elders thanks for the fact that they were cared for at all, because it takes resources. Robert said that it is no surprise to most anthropologists and geographers that these are some of the only people today that commit geronticide, which is the ritual abandonment or killing of

their elders. He said the story sounds awful, but it holds great significance to him because it is a metaphor for our area of the world and our town. He stated that we are American, and even before that we were Appalachian, he stated that which to itself a separate culture to the rest of the country and he is sure that most would agree with that statement. Robert stated that we too have reason to be studied by geographers and anthropologists. Robert said that from the studies they have, he sees a resemblance in these traditional cultures. He stated that to the rest of the country, we seem backward and behind the times, but that is really just a hold on our past and our traditions. But sadly, just like the traditional cultures around the world, we are losing a hold on our past and it is becoming increasingly impossible to keep our traditions alive. He said with every generation becoming more acclimatized to the way the rest of the world works, our old ways are becoming scarce, and that is scary. He stated that, that is the way of the world and we must move forward. He then stated the way his metaphor he mentioned earlier comes into play because we focus more on other sections of the society rather than our kids. He said to understand that, that is a very controversial statement to make and that most on the council will disagree with this. He said that he has a position that is somewhat, not to insult anyone, privilege compared to theirs. Robert stated that he does not sit in that position of power to make the decisions, and he stated that it was a hard position. But he said that does not mean he sees our town through rose tinted lenses. Robert said that this is not meant to be an insult to the council and he is not implying that the council is not blind to what is happening in our area. He stated that all he is saying is that he is blessed with an outsider's perspective and he sees how other countries and towns treat their children, and more than that he works with our children daily. Robert stated that he sees and he hears what the children think of our town, and he is here to say that the children themselves and now him, and many people in his generation believe that we have done the bare minimum for these children. He stated that gone are the ways that guys, the ladies, and even he were raised. He said that where instead of having to offer a youth center to these kids, most people in this town and the parents, have the mind that most kids should go home, do their homework, mow the lawn, talk to their parents and their grandparent, and be happy with what they have and become better citizens. He said the truth is in today's age, which just doesn't cut it anymore. He stated that kids are feeling less and less connected to our town every day. Robert stated that we must give them that connection and that it is our responsibility to give them that connection to our town. He said that if he had a dollar for every single time he has heard a kid say, "I am going to leave this town the minute that I can," or "as soon as I turn eighteen I am going to leave Richlands for good and I am never looking back," "as soon as I turn eighteen, I am leaving Southwest Virginia, I am moving to the beach and I will never be back here again." He said that he would have enough money to fund the Teen Venture Center for another thirty years all by himself. He then stated that he does not blame these kids for thinking this way. Robert then went on to say that he loves Richlands, but it is becoming an increasingly desire less place to raise a family. He then stated that the graduation rates at Richlands High School are not the lowest, but neither are they anywhere near the highest in Virginia. He then said that we are no longer the prescription drug capital in Virginia, but Tazewell County is in fourth place, and he said he knows because he has done research on this. He then asked if we should be complacent with this, and his answer was no, we should not. He then asked how we are going to fix it, and his answer was that fix it for our youth, by giving them a reason to stay here, more than just little league, rec center, and football. Robert stated that not every child can or wants to play sports, and that we must give them other things; things that interest them, things that make them stay off drugs, and things that make them stay in school. Robert stated that the Teen Center may not be the best answer, but it is more than the bare minimum than what we have and that it is a start. Robert stated that their members are the future of this town; their art students will be the ones that make our town beautiful with murals, their music students will be the ones who put our town on the maps with concerts, if we give them the time to hone their skills. He said the leaders they build through their programs will be the leaders of our community and our future council members. He said that these kids will make Richlands the next Fayetteville, West Virginia or Asheville, North Carolina, successful small town who turn their economic disparity around. Robert stated that if we give them the skills to stay and a reason to, these kids will fix our problems. He mentioned that we have already lost most of his generation; he said the people his age and close to it, mentioning that he is not that old, are fleeing our town and our county. He knows because he keeps in contact with them, and that he is one of them and that he lives mostly in West Virginia now. Robert stated, let's not lose this generation because we cannot spare the money for them; we give them as much as we can and there is no room for them.

Larry Addison asked how many students that the town has served at the Teen Center.

Robert Jessee answered that in March, the Teen Center has 157 members, and that number is going to drop because kids age out and the school year has not started. He said but once that number drops, there will be 120-135.

Mayor Jan White said she is sure the council will take this under advisement and do what they can, and that is about the best that they can offer tonight. Mayor White stated that they have been through their

budget process and approved their budget, so they will ask them to take it under advisement and see what they can do.

Mayor White then called up Anthony and Crystal Hunnel. They were not present.

Mayor White then moved on to Mike Mosley.

Mike Mosley stated that what he is attending for is that they have a group of 9-10 baseball players who are heading to Newport News, Thursday morning to play in the state tournament. He stated that their two teams and the entire little league will be heading out of town, and the 11-12 will be heading out the week after. But what he is asking for is a donation to help the funding involved in this and he knows a couple council members have been involved in the funding and they really appreciate that. Mike gave a quick rundown of what happened in the district tournament which was they played three games and the scores were 46-1, they allowed one score on them, he stated that that is the caliber of kids they have playing in this game. Mike said that they hope that when they go out to Newport News, that they can do the same thing out there. He stated that they will be going out and representing Richlands, and they are hoping that the council can help out in the funding to send the boys out there.

Frances Meadows stated that she knows personally that these boys have worked, along with the parents, very hard and they have done fundraiser after fundraiser, they have done car washes, they have done everything that they can do to make their money to go, so she is happy that there are people going to represent the small town of Richlands with little league and she is so proud of these young men, because both of these groups are a very mannered bunch of boys. Frances stated that they are very polite. She stated that just like Mary Ann did in the fall, that she would like to challenge them to give a little bit, if they can because it is a long way out there and she knows that money is tight, and they cut what they can and they are trying to raise all of the money that they can, so the parents won't be out of anything, because it is hard because they have other kids. Frances mentioned that it is hard to spend all of this money with their families.

Mike Mosley said the parents are obviously expecting to have funds to pay, and they are not expecting for the whole thing to be paid for. He stated that they were originally looking at around \$15,000 total, which would be around \$1,500 per parent with ten parents, and then each coach. He stated that motels in that area are very expensive and they are looking at a little over \$100 per night, per family with traveling expenses, food, he mentioned that they are going to have to feed these boys as much as they can. Mike said they know they will be there at least four days, and they are hoping to be there the full term to bring home that state title.

Doug Ratliff donated his council salary for the month and he challenged the rest of the council to chip in as well.

Mayor Jan White offered a donation and told Mike Mosley to come by her office.

Mayor Jan White called upon Angie Johnson.

Angie Johnson thanks the council for letting them come forward. She stated that she wanted to keep this brief and short. Angie said that she is aware that there are a couple of ordinances coming before the council tonight. She handed out a handout giving the council something to think about. She stated that if we lived in a perfect world, their animal shelter would not be full. She said that for anyone who has not seen a perfectly, healthy animal be taken down, she is going to tell them a little a little bit about it. Angie said first the animal will be taken from its kennel on a leash, and the animals always look happy and are wagging their tails until they get to the room, she mentioned that we all know what the room is. Angie stated once they get to the room, the freak out and they stop once they get to the door. She stated that evidently they know death or they can feel the sad souls that have left there. She said the dog or cat will be restrained and held down by one or two of the shelter workers. The shelter worker will then find a vein in the front leg, and they're going to inject the pink medicine. The animals do not just go to sleep as to what a lot of people think. They sometimes spasm for awhile and they yelp. The animal does not just go to sleep. Almost 9 millions animals die in shelters everywhere. She asked the council to think of this when they review their ordinance tonight.

Mickey Smith from 524 Sycamore Lane spoke and said that she does not need any money. She stated that she had hesitated on bringing this issue up, but she just needed some clarification. She thanked Rod Cury for his attention on the subject she is bringing up. She said that during the week of the Freedom Festival, she said that she had a dead deer on her property and for a couple days her neighborhood did not know the extent of it. She stated that Sycamore is a very wooded area and the community members

did not think much of it. Mickey stated that after a few days, everyone started noticing the stench and vultures around the carcass. She stated that her husband went up to investigate and her property is 200 feet from the water meter. She stated that up there, the town has buried electrical wire. She said there was a huge, dead female deer. Mickey stated that she called the police station and reported it to Ashley Gilbert. Officer Bender then came and looked and talked to her husband. Officer Bender stated that he would notify someone. Mickey stated that by that evening nothing had happened and she noticed about thirty vultures up there. She said that she came by the town to report it, but Mr. Taylor was in a meeting, so she left a message, and nothing that happened that day. She then said the next day; a town truck drove by after she called Mr. Cury. At this point, she still had not heard anything from the police department. The driver of the town truck stated that the dead deer had been reported. She said the next day, she came back to town hall and when she came home there were two town employees in her yard. She said she talked with the two men and she told them that she thought the deer was a health hazard. She said the town employee asked her why she thought that was a town problem. She stated that she raked up the deer, through her yard, loaded it up in her truck, and took it to the landfill. She stated that her main point of her speech is that senior citizens need help.

Joe McCracken stated that he went to the town manager and he felt comfortable that Mr. Taylor was aware of all of these. He mentioned the fence at Lake Park was still up and wanted to know how to proceed. The Council agreed to give the owner's 30 days to take the fence down. Brad Ratliff stated he would send a letter to the owners revoking the agreement on the fence. Joe McCracken also mentioned the drainage problem at 505 Lake Park Road and the railroad tracks on Railroad Avenue need to be looked at. He also wanted an update on the cleanup at the mobile home parks. Tim Taylor asked Gary Childress if Frank updated him on the progress. Gary Childress stated Frank left papers with updates, he stated some notices have been delivered to several place in town. Frank mentioned Crestview Mobile Home Park, another mobile home park on 4<sup>th</sup> street and 4 additional streets for cleanup. Joe McCracken stated there was a vacant trailer on Iron Street that had caught on fire and burned. He stated the mobile home needed to be repaired or moved out. He stated another concern for the Street Committee concern was on the corner of Norfolk and Front Street on the right side of the street where it's a two way coming in and out of the street. He has been asked if the yellow line could be extended for turning. He stated that was all he had to mention and thanked everyone.

Mayor White mentioned the cleanup in Brooklyn Addition. It's the Walt Keene property on the corner of Shenandoah and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The property is in bad physical shape and needs to be cleaned up. Brad Ratliff stated that they had a couple of summons for him but he failed to appear in court. Mary Ann Strong stated that Mr. Keene's health is really poor, that he is taking chemotherapy and radiation treatment for cancer. She also stated that she didn't think he was physically able to do the cleanup. Joe McCracken stated that he knew he had been gravely ill for quite some time. Rod Cury stated that he was sorry that Mr. Keene was sick but this issue was not a new problem. Mary Ann Strong asked if he would be arrested for failure to appear. Brad Ratliff stated that he would be arrested, there was a Capias issued for his arrest. He also stated that it could be forced cleanup by the town. Frances Meadows asked if the town could use community service workers that need the hours. Tim Taylor stated that there were liability issues that came along with using community service workers. Brad Ratliff stated there would be problems with the property being private. Larry Johnson asked could Mr. Keene allow the community services workers to do the cleanup. Mary Ann Strong added that Mr. Keene's wife would probably be agreeable and Larry Johnson stated that the Keenes probably didn't have the means to clean up the property. Mary Ann Strong also wanted to know how the town was going to approach the problem. Brad Ratliff stated that he could call the Keenes, but he didn't know if he would respond given he didn't respond to the summons; he will research it and see what he can find out. Joe McCracken stated that they have tried to contact Mr. Keene before; the town cannot treat this issue any different from anyone else. If the town does a force cleanup then they will have to charge Mr. Keene.

Frances Meadows thanked the Council for allowing Mike Mosley to speak on behalf of the All Star Team for donations. She stated that everyone was proud of the boys and hope they bring back a state championship. She also congratulated Fred Phillips on becoming head coach of the Richlands High School boy's varsity basketball team. She also stated that Fred was not leaving his position with the town and he was a good employee for the town. She stated that the Rec. Park was getting closer on getting the new roof.

Doug Ratliff asked Tim Taylor if he would brief the Council on the gas issue. Tim Taylor stated he had a conference call a couple weeks ago with the consultant that is doing the study. They basically went through a list of responsibility and who is going to be responsible for what providing they get those things in a form that Council can have a work product they can make decisions from. The engineering intern, Zack Frazier, from Virginia Tech is present at the meeting tonight. He's been collecting data from Mr. Daniels from Houston and has been working on that. More information will be available in August.



Doug Ratliff stated that his main concern is that the budget is tight and with people coming in asking for help the gas would be a boost to the budget. He stated that Appalachian Gas is dragging it out; they're collecting money from the hospital that should go to the town. If the process is not completed any additional business that come into the town, Appalachian Gas is going to lay claim on the business, and they are dragging it on and on. The town needs to hire someone to construct a model for a partnership with Appalachian Gas or takeover the gas themselves for the budget and to make prices low and to help the citizens of the town. Joe McCracken wanted to know if there was a response from Mr. Ebert regarding the letter that was sent to him. Tim Taylor stated the he met with Mr. Ebert and will meet with him again with the Council. Doug Ratliff stated that it could be a substantial amount to the budget, anywhere from \$400,000.00 to \$500,000.00 and that the town could keep the gas prices low. He also stated that the gas situation is taking too long. Tim Taylor stated he would try to see what he could do. Doug Ratliff stated that Tim had been doing a great job, he was just concerned with the time frame.

Larry Johnson stated that he speaks for the rest of the council when he thanked the town crew for the work they did during the power outage. He stated that he knew they answered more than 1,000 calls in a 24 hour period. He also thanked Mayor White and Karen for their help with the festival this year. He also stated that the park renovation in Lake Park is good. Larry also mentioned Raven Assembly and Lowe's did a good job making that happen.

Mary Ann Strong thanked Mayor Jan White for the festival. She mentioned how good the fireworks were. She also said that the annual 5k run was a lot of fun and challenged the council to run it next year. Mary Ann also thanked Fred Phillips at the rec park for the annual tennis tournament.

There were no comments on the department head reports.

Brad Ratliff mentioned two proposed ordinance. The first ordinance was animals confined in vehicles during hot temperatures. Joe McCracken stated that the state code protects animals from this cruelty and he wanted to know does it already cover this issue. Brad Ratliff stated that there is a specific code. Larry Johnson said that there is a state code that does protect animals from cruelty.

Mary Ann Strong made the motion to dispense with the second reading.

The motion passed.

The motion was made to pass the ordinance.

The motion passed.

Brad Ratliff stated that the second ordinance that was requested was a draft ordinance requiring the spaying and neutering of dogs and cats within the town boundaries. He stated that there was no state law mentioning this and the town has this kind of authority to pass this with the Dillon's rule. Brad stated this ordinance was meant to reduce the number of animals going into shelters. If anyone wants to breed, they must go to the town. Joe McCracken wanted to know how to keep up with licenses and see if the animals are spayed and neutered, and who is going to keep up with this. Rod Cury said he has thought about this a ton, he mentioned that Angie Johnson is very passionate about this. Rod stated that he thinks the ordinance needs to be thought about more before it is acted upon. He stated that he is not opposed to this, but it just needs more thought. Brad Ratliff stated that he will research this topic more. Angie Johnson said she will put together a slide for the council to show why it is important to spay and neuter and help the animal population. Joe McCracken stated that he thinks that it is not fair to make the people of the town spay or neuter their animals, but he is not against this. The council wants a second reading, and they want to give citizens an opportunity to voice their opinion on this topic.

Tim Taylor stated that in the handout, and stated that check 51765 went to rescue suppliers for the rescue squad and the fire department. Tim Taylor stated that there was a check for Clatterback Pavement Markings for check 51677 for \$19,000. He stated that another fairly large check was 51785 to Cooper Industries.

Frances Meadows made a motion to pay all of the pills. Mary Ann Strong seconded that motion. The motion carried.

Tim Taylor stated that in the handout was a document that had been talked about delivering to the council. He stated that it is a very important document concerning utility financial solutions. He stated that this policy insures companies to participate in any company that may be subscribed. It is good for

credit rating and portfolio. Tim Taylor also stated that we had no problems, but other areas had a lot of problems, AEP had over 50,000 customers during the storm. He also stated that AEP was very diligent in getting power back on. This document states what the minimum cash reserve should be. Tim Taylor stated that electronic meter readers provide a quick way to read all meters. He stated the water meters we are maybe a little under 50%, and electronic reading helps with a more accurate reading. He stated that we have absolutely no debt in the electrical department. He stated that minimum cash reserve of \$1,668,274. He stated that this shows good faith on the town's part and can change in the future.

Tim Taylor read the Cash Reserve Policy Resolution where the Town of Richlands accepts the electric cash policy.

Rod Cury made the motion to make this resolution active. The motion carried.

Tim Taylor said the pre bid conference for paving the streets and the bids are due this Thursday. He stated that the streets that are going to be paved are Valley Drive, Linwood Drive, Plantation Drive, Washington Square, Fairfax Avenue, Rockbridge Avenue, Suffolk Avenue, Third Street, Big Creek Road, and Hill Creek Road. He stated that most all of this was identified years ago. He stated that he does not know what the bids will be, and they may have to prioritize. Rod Cury made a motion to approve the bid, seconded by Doug Ratliff. Motion pass 6/0.

Tim Taylor stated that we are at the 99% completion rate for the national weather service. He stated that they are going to try and have some kind of press release stating what this is. He hopes that this time next month to have everything on.

Mary Ann Strong thanked all town employees for their help with the carnival.

Tim Taylor stated that Danville has issues because it depends on the electric fund in lieu of taxes. The city has been given a hard time because it is felt that they need to lower their tax rates. Draft legislation has authority to take away local authority on rates.

Mayor Jan White asked if there was any other business and asked if there was a motion for the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 P.M.

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Jan White, Mayor

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Kelly Goodman, Clerk