

The Richlands Town Council held a regular monthly meeting in the Richlands Council Chambers on September 12, 2017 at 7:30pm with the following present:

Mayor: Jannis White
Town Manager: Tim Taylor
Town Clerk: Connie Allen
Council Members: Mary Ann Strong,
Rick Wood, Rod Cury, Larry Johnson, Doug Ratliff
Council Member Absent: Vickie England
Town Attorney: Brad Ratliff

Mayor White opened the meeting.

Mayor White gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor White - We will move the "Resolutions" for the Girls Soccer Team and Girls Softball Team after the approval of the minutes.

Mayor White - Do we have anyone who would like to speak that is not on the agenda?

Mayor White – Please add Ginger Branton, Robin McGlothlin, Mickie Smith and Ernest Edgell.

Mayor White - Do we have any other additions/deletions to the agenda?

Mayor White - If not, do we have a motion to approve the agenda as amended? Rod made the motion, Larry seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Mayor White - We have (3) three sets of minutes - Regular Council Meeting – August 8, Public Hearing – August 8 and Special Call Meeting- August 29.

Mayor White - Do I have a motion to approve (3) three sets of the minutes as presented?

Mary Ann - I make a motion to approve (3) three sets of the minutes as presented. Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries - 5/0.

Mayor White - Mary Ann will read the "Resolutions" for the Girls Soccer Team and Girls Softball Team.

Mary Ann - It is my honor and pleasure to read the "Resolutions". (Asks the teams to come forward) I will start with the "Resolution" for the Soccer Team. We are very proud of both teams. The Girls Soccer Team finished in the Top 4 in the Commonwealth of Virginia Group AA for the second consecutive year. Read the "Resolution" for the Girls Soccer Team. - (Ask Head Coach LaRhonda Lindsey to come up front with the girls). We are very proud of you and expect you back next year.

Mayor White - Do we have a motion to adopt the "Resolution"?

Rick- I make the motion to adopt the "Resolution", Larry seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Mayor White - We will ask the Clerk to sign the resolution and then we will present it to the Team.

Mary Ann - Read the "Resolution" for the Girls Softball Team. (Asks Coach Ronnie Davis, Coach James Cochran and the girls to come up front) Season ended with a record of 22-3, resulting in the team's accomplishment as second place in the state Group AA Division, and having advanced to the state championship game. We also expect for you to come back next year.

Mayor White - Do we have a motion to adopt the "Resolution"?

Mary Ann- I make the motion to adopt the "Resolution", Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Mayor White - We will present the "Resolution" to the Girls Softball Team.

Mayor White - "Scheduled Public Comments" – Joy Rumley, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

Joy Rumley - I would like to discuss the Virginia Main Street Program. You should have a handout in your packet. It is a State coordinated Program. We have 28 Virginia Main Street Communities. You have to meet certain criteria on the National level to become accredited. It is a good time to look at your town for economic development and revitalization. You look at everything downtown and do a little at a time. The program is action-oriented and builds on existing assets. You want your Town to be known as having quality events and building projects. It is also about changing attitudes. The people in the community should want to see change in downtown Richlands and their community. I would be happy to come back and discuss in more detail. We do have other opportunities and resources. You don't have to set a date tonight but would like to have a point of contact. I have been in contact with Larry and can continue to work with Larry if you would like.

Mayor White - Several years ago, we had a committee that worked on the Main Street designation. It was very competitive. You can only do so many a year.

Joy - Correct, and it is not annual. We don't always have the resources. It also depends if we get additional funding from the State to continue the service.

Rod - I think have we reached affiliate status. Does that help us pass the first hurdle?

Joy - It is your beginning step. You must be active in that status within the year. I think your status is inactive. Looks like you are doing things to move forward.

Larry - If we have any other designations does that put us ahead of the crowd? I will contact you by email.

Joy - Absolutely, it all paints a picture as part of your application for designation. It shows what you are working on and doing. It shows us you are serious. We don't have any future deadlines yet, will probably be 2019. I will give you my business card and will work with Larry.

Mayor White - "Scheduled Public Comments" - Dr. Joe Addair

Dr. Joe Addair – I promised a member of this group I would come back and apologize for my ill spoken words in August. So, I am here to apologize. I would also like to give you a "Facts" sheet about fluoride and hope you act in a positive manner in the future. Thank you.

Mayor White - "Unscheduled Public Comments" – Ernest Edgell

Ernest Edgell – 206 Terry Drive – Thank you for the miniature speed bump in front of my house. If I had been there I would have asked them to make the speed bump bigger. The trash is building up at the red light again. At Elkins Trailer Park, there is trash piles and trash everywhere. The junk yard at the old Bowling Alley has an old car there with the trunk up for at least (2) two years. Do you have a Code Enforcement Officer now?

Tim - At the present we don't have.

Mayor White - "Unscheduled Public Comments" - Ginger Branton

Ginger Bryant - I am here to present you with your CART membership. The Town of Richlands is the longest standing community that has continually been a supporter of the Government Challenge Grant. We presented you with a certificate for that and you are still in top place. I hope it continues for many years. Our first performance is September 21st; it is going to be a Comedy Show. I hope you will be there. I give them facts about Richlands to share with the audience Thank you.

Mayor White - "Unscheduled Public Comments" - Mickie Smith

Mickie Smith - Concerns - It was my understanding that East 2nd Street was going to be paved last year but it didn't get paved. Sycamore Lane needs paved now. Someone said that the wall that was falling in was not a Town problem. It is my understanding that when the Town put the street in they could not have done it unless they put in the wall. I believe that the Town built that wall. At one time when Officer Gilbert lived in the area the Town repaired the wall. I don't know why you can do something for one person and not do for someone else. There is also a vehicle on the street with flat tires and rusted down. There is a house in the area that decorates for each season but puts trash at the side of the house and old furniture. Kids are taking over the street.

Tim - We have already agreed to do the wall repairs but have not had a chance to get to it. Pavement won't be done until improvement in the sidewalk and wall. We will make the wall safe. We will patch the potholes.

Mayor White - "Unscheduled Public Comments" - Robin McGlothlin

Robin McGlothlin - 600 Sycamore Lane - I have pictures if you want to see what Mickie was referring to. If it was on your street, I am sure you would have already taken care of it. Per the Town Charter - Read page 2, Section 12. Also in the by-laws, read No. 14 – East 2nd Street has many violations. That is by Code of Richlands.

Tim - Charter is the empowerment - gives the Council the power to take care of.

Robin McGlothlin – On East 2nd Street - They let their dogs run lose all the time. By the Code of Virginia – Read Section 18, 2 -324 - Handed out copies of Codes. There is a house on East 2nd Street that tore out a wall. There is gravel, mud, rock, trash, glass, and every time the wind blows or it rains, it comes out into the road. It is a mess. We have called the Town on it for (5) five years, nothing has been done. It is going down in the drainage system of the Town of Richlands. It could be part of the problem with the drainage system. Please respect our property and do something about the issues on East 2nd Street.

Mayor White - Do you have the address on the house you were referring too?

Tim - I know where it is at, they tore out the wall to make a driveway. We talked to them about getting it paved.

Robin McGlothlin - They allow their dogs to run everywhere.

Rod - The owners have allowed this to happen?

Robin McGlothlin - Yes, and they have (2) two dogs now.

Tim - Is it the same person that lived there (5) five years ago?

Robin McGlothlin – No, it is not the same person. It is a mess. (Showed Pictures)

Larry - I will say no one on the Council has ever had anything fixed over another person.

Robin McGlothlin - Some of the metal handrails are broken off, they need to be fixed. Kids play on the handrails.

Rod - I don't have a solution right now but I believe the revitalization we are working on will make positive changes. It can be the Town you are referring to again.

Robin McGlothlin - The blue house has cats running in and out. We call it the cat house. It has been vacant for (10) years that I know of. The house number is 716 East 2nd Street.

Tim - We will get someone to look at it.

Mayor White - Thank you for bringing this to our attention and we will make an effort to look at the issues.

Doug - I make a motion that we send someone out to look at the house.

Mayor White - Do we have a second? Rick seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Doug - Can we have consensus to following thru with what needs to be done?

Mayor White - We will follow thru with necessary measures.

Mayor White - "Council Member Reports" – Rod Cury

Rod –Request from C. W. Settle - Planning Commission met last Tuesday and we have studied the proposal and request a Joint Public Hearing with the Council in October to take into consideration. After the Public Hearing the Planning Commission will recess and give the Council a recommendation.

Mayor White - We will need a motion for the Public Hearing.

Rod - I make a motion to have a Joint Public Hearing in October. Mary Ann seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Rod - I have had several complaints about ditches/yards and other issues. I have already conveyed to Town Manager.

Mayor White - "Council Member Reports" – Rick Wood

Rick - I have had several calls about vehicles sitting on the side of the road without tags, from First Street up to Fourth Street. We need to look into these issues.

Tim - We will look into the issue.

Mayor White – “Council Member Reports” - Doug Ratliff

Doug – Are we supposed to get some updates on the gas issue?

Tim - We have a “Closed Session” scheduled to discuss this.

Doug - What has been done on the buzzard issue?

Richard - We received the permit yesterday.

Doug Ratliff - How many can you take out at a time?

Richard – It is a lengthy process, you must hang the birds up after killing. I have not read the permit yet, but think you can kill (10) ten a week.

Doug - What is the process and have we done this before?

Richard - Yes

Mayor White - “Council Member Reports” - Larry Johnson

Larry – I would like to remind everyone Saturday at noon we are having Home Town Clinch Designation Event and a ribbon cutting for the access point at Critterville. Some of the CRVI people were in town for a meeting at the Rec Park. They were impressed with the facilities and basketball courts and wanted me to let you know. Fred, thanks to you and your staff for doing a great job. I went to the Steering Committee Meeting and afterwards they had a Public Meeting. Basically, we are the only ones moving forward on everything. It puts us on the map for other things. We now have (3) launch sites.

Mayor White - I would like to commend Larry. This was my first meeting. I was impressed with what Larry has been able to get going for Richlands and they were very complimentary.

Mayor White - “Council Member Reports” - Mary Ann Strong

Mary Ann – In your packets is information on Hydroelectric Pump Storage Project. I would like to thank Ginger Branton; this was brought to our attention at the REEC Meeting. These meetings are open to anyone. I would encourage you to attend. (Read information from Fact Sheet- “Pumped Hydroelectric Storage Power in Southwest Virginia”). We were originally going to ask that the Council endorse these Hydroelectric Power Facilities but it is my understanding they have already approved the site in Bluefield. Tim since you have the expertise in utilities, would you like to comment on the subject?

Tim - You explained very well, basically the idea is using water to pump to an upper reservoir during off peak times, when the price of electricity is lower. General Assembly, they have to get the permitting, possibility to have revenue sharing in the local coal fields. Tazewell County is participating. We can provide support if the Council agrees.

Rod - I think we should support this.

Mary Ann - I think the goal is to support, be a team player and be available to assist and promote.

Tim – There may be a time to do a permitting process, they could call and ask us.

Mary Ann - I make a motion that we be supportive of the Hydroelectric Storage Power Facilities in our County and we will help anyway possible. Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Mary Ann - I would like to talk about our Town considering hiring a Downtown Coordinator. Several years ago, we had a position similar; it was extremely beneficial. Vickie England and I meet with Mr. Taylor, Adrienne and Sue about the position. Vickie was not able to be here tonight but very involved with the committee meeting. A job description has been provided to you for this full-time position. It has been emphasized tonight how badly we need this position filled. Richlands is falling far behind. People are asking what we are doing in Richlands. They say Tazewell is doing something all the time. I think the Mayor and everyone else is doing the best they can. We have an excellent staff at the Town Hall but their plates are full. The person would report directly to Mr. Taylor. There are a range of duties and work objectives. (Read the Work Objectives) Their hours would be flexible and their office would be at the Town Hall.

Rod - I think we need a Coordinator. Our Town staff is overwhelmed and they can't continue to do these things. The Council is overwhelmed too. We need to employ someone and it is a positive thing. We have different things going on in Richlands and our people can't continue to try and take care of everything. We need someone to oversee these things. I guess we will need to advertise for that position, is that correct Tim?

Tim - Yes

Rod - Does this require a motion?

Tim - Yes, we must allocate the funds for the position.

Rod - I would like to make a motion to support the Downtown Coordinator position and if we see a need to modify based on applicants that we have flexibility to modify as needed. Larry seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Mayor White - I suggest that you don't put a two-week time frame but a little longer to see what kind of interest and applicants you get.

Tim - There is a lot of different skills and managerial responsibilities in this position.

Rod - Can we advertise longer if we don't have the right applicants apply? How does this work?

Tim - Sometimes we don't get enough applicants to get a good mix.

Rod - There is countless hours on projects going on in Richlands. I would like to reference Ginger Branton, thru the Chamber they have given their time and effort and made a career of doing positive things for the Town. She is getting ready to retire and the Chamber will become a consolidated Chamber. We need someone who is multi skilled and has a high-energy level.

Doug - Tim, would this person be directly accountable to you?

Tim - Yes, but for the Council. This person will assist in any form or fashion. It is a big task and we need the right person. It is going to take a little while to get the right person.

Doug - Will you have a meeting with them every morning just like you do the other department heads?

Tim - Yes, and they will have a lot of reporting.

Mary Ann - I appreciate everyone's support. We don't want to rush and fill the position. We have to have the right person.

Mary Ann - Last meeting we appointed Barry Alley to the Richlands IDA, he has accepted the position. I would like to welcome him to the IDA. He attended the last joint meeting we had recently. We have full member IDA now.

Mary Ann - Are we having the Trunk or Treat this year?

Richard - We have not had anyone to step up and organize it, that's why we need a Coordinator.

Mary Ann - I expect next year our Coordinator can plan a very successful Trunk or Treat for our Town.

Mary Ann - The Chamber is continuing meetings for County Wide Chambers. There will be a meeting on September 28 for Richlands at 6:00 pm at the Town Hall. If you are for or against a County Wide Chamber it is your time to speak. If you can't attend this meeting, you can get with Ginger for the other locations and dates. This meeting is very important.

Ginger - There will be a meeting in Cedar Bluff on September 26 at 6:00pm at Cedar Bluff Town Hall.

Mary Ann - Coalition at the College on September 19 from 5:30 to 8:30, reservations are required, dinner will be served. You can get in touch with Ginger or myself regarding this.

Rod - The Thompson Foundation has been very supportive of our community. They are trying to approach this as a community effort.

Mary Ann - Young Life is now alive going strong in Richlands. If you could let your Pastor/Youth Pastor know we are having a meeting on September 21 at 8:30am at Huddle House to explain what Young Life is all about. It is a program to build youth but not to take away from anyone's youth group. You don't have to be a Pastor to attend, everyone is welcome.

Mary Ann - Rec. Commission met on August 21. We are changing our meeting time to 7:30 pm. Next meeting will be September 18 at the Town Hall. You were also given information in your packet about a meeting scheduled by Cumberland Plateau on September 20 at 10:00 a.m. at the PDC offices in Lebanon with Virginia Community Capital.

Mayor White - Does anyone have questions on Department Head Reports?

Rick - Richard, what is the time for trick or treat this year?

Tim - Last year it was from 5:30pm to 8:00pm.

Rick - I make the motion to celebrate Halloween on Tuesday from 5:30pm to 8:00pm. Larry seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Larry - How many officers have we lost in the last month?

Richard - We have lost (2) two officers and a dispatcher leaving for employment elsewhere.

Larry - We are in the worst situation now as far as the Police Department than we have ever been. We are losing people faster than we can hire them. If we lose all our seasoned people we won't have anyone to teach the new employees. We need to decide soon on what to do to solve the problem. It is an emergency situation in my opinion.

Tim - I did some research, we pay the lowest in the area.

Richard - We have had only (1) person to apply that was qualified.

Rod - We must do something, people live here for police protection. We need quality police protection. Tim, can you bring the information to Council or do you need too?

Tim - Yes, I will get details for Council. It is a budgetary issue; we can't borrow from the utilities to fund. This is totally different from the Coordinator position. We must have police protection. We will get a plan together. I was just waiting on a directive.

Mary Ann - We did discuss using electric funds for the Downtown Coordinator, but that is short lived and must pay it back. There should be grant money and other sources.

Tim - We could take from utilities. We have to see what the market is for a Coordinator type position.

Doug – Can you do some scenarios of how we can raise some money to take care of the issue?

Richard - It may be too late to wait until next meeting for officers.

Rod - This would be a case for emergency meeting.

Doug – If you could get information together maybe we could meet next Tuesday.

Tim – We may be able to address this in the budget if it was for only one or two. The Police Department wants to know that Council is working on a solution. You can't give to one or two and solve the problem, that is not fair.

Richard - We need a permanent solution. We at one time had a cigarette tax that brought in money.

Doug - I am against cigarette tax. I will never vote to hurt a merchant.

Tim - We should work on a plan as soon as possible. It is hard to find Police Officers.

Doug - Can we have an emergency meeting?

Rod - We need to give Tim time to get the information together.

Tim - We can address this and let them know we are working on a plan.

Mayor White - We can call an emergency meeting when you get the figures together.

Tim - The biggest discussion will be the source of funding, so be thinking about that. There are not very many options.

Doug - People will go outside the Town limits to buy cigarettes. We have 22 employees at the Police Department.

Richard - I think the pay increase should be 10% across the board. We have officers that qualify for food stamps.

Tim - I will work on the facts and let Council know.

Mayor White - Once Tim gets the figures together then we can figure out how to get the funds.

Mayor White - The POW 50 State Flag Tour will be in Richlands on September 23. Karen and I are coordinating this. We are supposed to feed 500-600 bikers. We are looking for donations. We are contacting the churches. The Fall Yard Sale will help pay for the Christmas Parade. The yard sale will be October 7. Angie has already scheduled the Veterans Day Parade. We have not scheduled the Christmas Parade yet. I am checking with other towns for the date they are having their parade. I don't want to take away from their event. I am contacting schools to get the bands to participate. I talked to Bruce Miller the Band Director; he would like to have on a week day.

Mayor White - Brad do you have anything?

Brad - No, I have some things to discuss in "Closed Session".

Rod - Is there an assembly at the schools regarding the POW 50 State Flag Tour?

Mayor White - I don't think so, Karen may have contacted the school.

Mayor White - Manager's Report - Tim Taylor

Tim - You have a copy of the Check Register in your packet. Please let me know if you have any questions. Check 56673 – Rogers Group, Inc. \$650,422.06 was for paving. Check 56609 – Blue Ridge Power Agency - \$17, 241.20 – Part of that is Dues.

Mayor White - What is 56686 – Town of Richlands - \$7000?

Tim - Annual fee for Drug Task Force.

Mary Ann - I make a motion we authorize our Town Manager to pay the bills. Rod seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Tim - Section House - House is sitting on the foundation and a lot of other work has been completed. Pay Request #3 is for \$37,725.05 to Twin Enterprise. We already received approval from architect.

Rod - I make a motion to pay the \$37,725.05, Rick seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Tim - West Fork Sewer Line Extension Update - The Cumberland Plateau did get monies; we do have an application in at the Cumberland Plateau.

Tim - Strategic Planning Update – Already covered.

Tim - VDOT - We are fully funded - Read the Resolution for Blanket Project Funding Commitment and for Blanket Signature Authority.

Rod - I make a motion that we adopt the "Resolution" as presented. Mary Ann seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Tim - We do have two other bridges that are on the list when funds are available. First one is the bridge on Front Street. The next one is on 2nd Street at Hardees and the third one will be the Allegheny bridge.

Mary Ann - When we talked about the first bridge, we discussed closing the traffic to one lane. Businesses were upset.

Tim - The part of how the traffic will flow has not been discussed. The Council will be fully engaged. There may be Public Hearings, I'm not sure at this time.

Mayor White - We need a motion to go into "Closed Session" for Section 2.2-3711(A) 7 Litigation and Section 2.2-3711 (A) 5 Prospective Business.

Rod - May I ask that Sue and Adrienne to attend the meeting.

Tim - Fine with me.

Rod - I make the motion that Sue and Adrienne come into "Closed Session". Rick seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Mayor White - Do I have a motion to come back in to "Open Session"? Doug made the motion, Rick seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Mayor White - Do all members agree the only business discussed in "Closed Session" was Section 2.2-3711(A) 7 Litigation and Section 2.2-3711 (A) 5 Prospective Business. Rick – Yes, Doug-Yes, Mary Ann- Yes, Larry- Yes, Rod- Yes.

Mayor White - The Richlands High School Project Graduation will start soon and has asked for financial support.

Rod - I make a motion that we donate \$100 to Project Graduation.

Tim - Why did they move the location?

Rod - I can't answer that.

Tim - Maybe you can let them know that Council would like them to move back to Richlands.

Doug - Everyone on Council gives to Project Graduation. We can't give money out all the time.

Mary Ann - I make the motion to adjourn, Larry seconded the motion.

Mayor White - We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Motion carries 5/0.

Jannis White, Mayor

Connie Allen, Town Clerk