

The Richlands Town Council held a “Regular Meeting” on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in the Richlands Council Chambers at 6:00 pm with the following present:

Mayor: Rod D. Cury

Town Manager: John O’Daniel

Town Clerk: Rebekah Hackworth

Council Members: Doug Ratliff, Gary Jackson, Rick Wood, Jordan Bales, Jan White and Laura Mollo.

Town Attorney: Michael Thomas

Mayor Cury opened the meeting.

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

Mayor Cury- First up, are there any additions or deletions to the agenda?

I have one addition myself, Regina Roberts contacted Susan, here at Town Hall this morning and explained that she was not on time, but she understands that. She also has another meeting to attend in Tazewell. She is here to report on the library along with Amanda Killen. So that being said, if council would entertain or wish to add her to the agenda, I would suggest an early addition or to add her to the scheduled public comments. Personally, I would rather see her added to the agenda. It would be a brief explanation.

Consensus of the council to add her as Roman Numeral IV (A).

Mayor Cury- Are there anymore additions or deletions to the agenda?

Laura- I have some. I was contacted by Rocky Hill to be on the agenda. This was kind of the same situation. I just want everyone to know that I never mind making an extension for our citizens. I want to give people as much time as they want. So, if we could add Rocky Hill, so he can get the 5 minutes time slot as well.

Mayor Cury- Okay, we will add him to scheduled public comments VI (B).

Laura- Mayor Cury, I also have 6 more additions.

1. Event Committee Discussion. If we could put that under Agenda Item K.
2. Pop-Up Richlands as item L.
3. Social Media Policy as item M.
4. Electronic Participation Ordinance as item N.
5. The Generator RFP as item O.
6. Power Cost Discussion as item P.

Mayor Cury- Okay, anything else? Mike, did you have something?

Michael- I believe we should put a closed/executive session right before agenda items.

Mayor Cury- So, that would be VIII (A). Executive/closed session pursuant to VA Code 2.2-3711 (A)(1)- Personnel.

Is there anything else we need to change or add to the agenda? Okay, the chair will entertain a motion to approve the agenda as amended.

Rick- I will make the motion to approve the agenda as amended. Jan seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, council. Alright, next we have added Regina Roberts and Amanda Killen is going to share her time with her.

Regina- Thank you all very much and congratulations and welcome new council members. I've been here a few times, but it's been a little while and I'm sorry about that. I wanted to kick this off with some good news, a good update about what's going on. For those who don't know me, my

name is Regina Roberts and I serve in Tazewell County as an appointed Trustee of the Tazewell County Public Library system appointed to that position by the Board of Supervisors from the county. In addition to this, I also served as the President, chair of the Foundation Board of Directors of Tazewell County Public Library System. So, I'm here this evening in that role to represent the foundation and what has been going on with that. So, is anyone unfamiliar with the Richlands Library project? We kicked that off about February of last year, so it's been really, really exciting. We're looking to renovate, remodel and revitalize the building. We plan to give it a facelift. It needs painting, gutters, and just an upgrade. That would be phase one, and phase two, we are going to do some work inside and phase three is to add an addition. So, we have a beautiful rendering of that in the library. If any of y'all would like to stop by and look at that. Huber Architect did those and they are beautiful and very detailed. So, for the new council members and any citizens here that may not be familiar with this building, I wanted to give a couple of details about it. This is one of the very first buildings that was built in the Town of Richlands. It originally was built when the coal miners came in here and they needed an office. So, that is what that was built for. Then shortly thereafter, it was sold to Doctor Williams, and it became the very first hospital in the Town of Richlands. So, this building is just part of us, it's part of the town, and it's a beautiful building and we want to preserve that. In 1983, the building was donated by the Williams family to the town, as a library. So, it has been a library ever since 1984. So that's exciting. Some of those areas on that siding looks like they haven't been worked on since 1984. So, we are really, really excited to move forward and get some of that upgraded and get that fixed. So, thanks to you all for last year. The ARPA money \$154,000, that is going towards phase one. So, I'm going to give you just a little bit of what happened in 2022. We did the Winter Honey book and yard sale events in February, which brought in around \$2,500 private donations. We brought in about \$10,000 with that Mad Hatter dinner that we had out on Suffolk Street here, which was a great success. Food City, this fall gave us \$25,000. The Thompson Foundation has donated \$100,000. The Shott Foundation matched that at \$100,000 and that totals around \$395,000. So that is a little bit over halfway of what our goal was of \$700,000. So, we are really, really excited for this year and we are looking to just blow this out in 2023 and totally fund this project. So, phase one has begun. The bid was awarded to a local contractor, SW Developing Inc, Jamie Tuggle, is who got the contract. They have already ordered the windows and they ordered those back before the holidays and said it would take about 16 weeks to get them in. They are projecting to have phase one completed by the end of May. We are looking forward to that. We also have the surplus and we were able to raise more than we had really expected for that first year. We are in the process of starting the phase two bidding process. So, look for that and who will get that bid. So, that is exciting, and Amanda is going to tell you a little bit about 2023.

Amanda- Hey everybody, I'm Amanda Killen. The Library Foundation hired me last year to begin this capital fundraising campaign. I am very happy with our progress so far. We have got a little over \$300,000 left to go. We are so happy to be able to be active with you guys with this project. If you don't know, the Richlands area has about 6,800 library card holders. That's a lot and out of that 6,800, you have about 2,500 that are kids. The children's area of the library is on the second story. The heart of this project is not only doing the outside of the building but making the second story accessible to all mobility levels. So, the first \$100,000 that we got from the Shott Foundation is going to go for not just a wheelchair lift which was what we hoped for, but now we are able to install a full-size elevator. I'm looking to recruit fundraising next year as well, so look for more dinners. So, we appreciate all the help we got with that last year. That was really smooth process to close the street and result was a phenomenal success and the community was excited about it, which was just awesome to see. So, we are looking for one of those in the spring and maybe one in the fall. Thank you for everything.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Amanda. I would ask that you, Regina, if you could bring those pictures of the projected renovation so the council could look at the process at our February meeting.

Regina- Yes, I will. Just go ahead and put us on the agenda and we will be here.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, ladies. Okay, next on our agenda is the consent agenda, which is an authorization to pay the bills in December and the Minutes of the meeting and the public hearing on December the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Jan- I have a question on check number 13066- Segra. What is that?

Heather- That is actually our phone system.

Jan- Okay, what about 13114- CDW Government, Inc?

Jordan- I can answer that. That is the malware and antivirus that the federal government requires.

Jan- Okay, what about 13156- Southern Software, Inc?

Heather- That is actually the Police Departments Software that they have to have.

Mayor Cury- Okay, anyone else?

Jordan- Yes, I have a couple. 13073- Tri-Cities/SW VA Regional Group. Is that like Job postings?

Heather- When we post with the Bristol paper, it actually goes online with all the major job sources at the same time. That's why theirs costs a little bit more than if you just run it in like the local paper, which a lot of times we still do, but depending on what the job is or if we haven't ran it recently. We want to make sure that we get it out to as many places as we possibly can.

Jordan- Okay, thank you. Also check number 13118- CMC Supply, Inc.

Heather- That is for water, sewer lines and wastewater.

Jordan- Okay, I have one more question. I see several things like for mailing, specifically 13122-DDP LLC. Do we offer a paperless option?

Heather- That is not necessarily just for bills, those window envelopes we use for pay stubs. Any kind of invoice that we have to send out that is not necessarily like an ongoing invoice. The bills that you are thinking that you get in the mail, those will be for other things. So, no not at this time. We have looked at a couple and they didn't really work out, but they are still ongoing with the one company to come in and redo the online payment and all that stuff and we are looking at that, but not necessarily right now.

Jordan- Okay, thank you.

Mayor Cury- Okay, anyone else?

Laura- I have one. Check number 13119- Coca-Cola bottling. This has been averaging between \$700 and \$900 every month.

Heather- I think that is for the Rec Park. When we have our meeting with them next week, we can discuss it then.

Mayor Cury- Okay, thank you. What about the two sets of Meetings. Does anyone have any deletions or corrections to the minutes?

Okay, the chair will entertain a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Laura- I make a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Rick seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, council. Next item on our agenda is Scheduled Public Comments-Derek and Maria White.

Maria White- Good evening, Mayor and members of council. I would like to offer my congratulations on the re-election and also to our newly elected members of the town council. So excited to see all of your faces and I look forward to seeing what kind of things the new council will be doing moving forward. I know that each of you have the interests of our citizens at heart and want to do what's best for our town. So, congratulations! Derek could not be here tonight because of work obligations, so he does offer his regrets because he cannot be here tonight. I'm here on behalf of Chasing the Wild Boar. Two years ago, in 2021 we were able to put on three day cycling event. It was approved by the USA Cycling Association; we had their support and was able to put on a three-day cycling event during the Memorial Day weekend on May of 2021 and it was very successful. We were very excited to see the turn out that we did. We had over 100 cyclists each of the three days that we it. It got lots of positive feedback. They were very complimentary of the town and the support that we had received, and they could see that the community was behind the event, and they were looking forward to racing. Unfortunately, we were not able to hold

it last year. The biggest reason was just because a lot of the races that were already in place that have been established prior to our event, during the Memorial Day weekend. A lot of those established races were opening back up last year. So that prevented us from getting the number of cyclists that we usually have. Our plan is to move forward again this year for 2023. We are moving the date. We have talked to other cyclists', teams, general guidance and just getting more feedback and we felt that maybe if we moved our date that might hopefully keep the cyclists from bumping up against other cycling events across the country. The dates on that are May 5,6, and 7. It is a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Same format as we had two years ago, we will start with the first day as a time trial event. The second day will be road a race event. Sunday, the last day of the event, would be a criterion, and that is held within the town limits. The other two would go into different parts of Tazewell County. So, we would also be working not only within the Town of Richlands, but also with Cedar Bluff and Baptist Valley areas. Again, we really appreciate the support we received in the past from Town of Richlands, Cedar Bluff, our local law enforcement, Sheriff's Office, police, our local EMS and we are hoping to have that same kind of support again for this year's event.

Mayor Cury- Maria, thank you. That sounds exciting. I think this is a positive thing for our town and it is healthy for our community as a whole. I personally support it and I feel like council will too. Have you worked out the race path and consulted with the Chief of Police?

Maria- Not with this year's race. Derek is pretty much going to follow the same courses that we had back in 2021. He had changed a couple things for last year's event. So, he may be tweaking it just a little bit, but should be generally the same thing. But yes, he is very much on board to work with our local Law Enforcement in getting that going.

Mayor Cury- I think it is terrific. I am very happy for the town. So, I think we probably need a motion on this. I would encourage you to work with Chief Holt on this and as soon as you can, get us a race route, so we can be looking at this.

Laura- I make a motion to approve Chasing the Wild Boar racing event put on by Derek and Maria White. Doug seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Maria and we wish you the best. Next, on our agenda, we have Rocky Hill.

Rocky- My name is Rocky Hill. Congratulations to the new council members and thank you, Laura for getting this approved. I am not here to get a vote or anything, I just want to get you guys to be involved and put this in your ear because we have new council members, basically everybody is new except Mr. Ratliff and the Mayor. Two years ago, I was actually on the board with the Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens, and they got approved by the Rec Commission and then you guys to update Lake Park and turn it into a senior type of playground. Well, they kind of dropped the ball. They didn't get the grant. I reached out to Regina Sayers, who is now retired. Brian Beck took it over, I spoke with Brian, he said the grant had fell through. He gave me his blessing on it. He said that I would probably do a better job and if anybody knows me, when I do something, it is big, we do it to the top-notch level. That being said, I'm going to take this to the Rec Park and try to get it approved. If they approve it, then we will come to you guys. But I wanted to give you guys an idea of what I would like to do there. To refresh memories, the senior swings. I don't know if you have ever seen the senior swings. They are basically wood. They are really nice. We actually have private donors that is willing to put their name on it and build them. So, we would have senior swings. I would like to purchase a giant shuffleboard for the seniors and for the park. We have a lot of private donors. Ramey's has come on board and Freddie Ellswick, they are going to support this totally. They are like our partners with this, but we also have a ton of sponsors. The biggest thing I want do is the wheelchair swings. I don't know if you have seen them or not, but they are about \$4,000. They are really nice. We actually have the materials donated already to build that for the wheelchair swings. That is for the special needs kids, handicapped kids, whatever. That's where I'm going with this. I don't want to leave the seniors out because that was Appalachian Agencies' dream. So, I would like to combine all of this because we have the room, and a beautiful park. Rusty Hess has already taken some playground material over there. However, we could really

make this over the top. I would also like to add a five-point harness swings. That is for the children that just have no mobility whatsoever. We have nothing like that. The schools have a couple, and I don't want to add to Critterville because it's already compacted, and I would like this to be their own little park. Just for the special needs kids, the handicap, and the seniors. I would also like to add some sensory toys outside. I don't know if y'all have seen those or know what they are, but it's just like the giant tic tac toe boards and little things they can come up and play with. Like I said, we have sponsors. If I get the approval, I can't fill out a grant until I get the approval.

We are called God's Rockstars, it is nonprofit. We will get behind this with as many grants as we can. My last thing I wanted to mention, it's nothing to do with building a baseball field. But I don't know if you've ever been to Kingsport, but my daughter plays down there, and they got what is called "Field of Dreams". It is for special need kids only. They actually do have kickball tournaments, and things like that, but it is an enclosed, maybe 100-foot fence with astroturf in the middle of it. We already have a field at Lake Park, but it has sand and big rocks in it. I actually maintained that during the summers. I would like to get that sand and that rock off. I actually have a brand new 200-foot fence sitting at my house that was donated by Lowes, but I only want a 100-foot fence for the special needs kids. This protects them from the road. But I really think with all the connections that I have and with God's Rockstars and with the backing, and Appalachian Agency still wants to be a part of it. They want to be a partner, but they want me to head it up. I just want to throw that out there, because I know you guys wasn't a part of that before. It was approved before and I know we will have to get it approved and redo all that, but I just wanted you guys thinking about it. Okay, that is all. Thank you, guys.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Rocky.

Rocky- One more thing, if anybody knows anyone that needs help, any widows, any veterans or just anyone down on their luck. We have partnered with V&V and we get 10 to 15 meals a night and we deliver them. So, if you know anybody in this town that needs a meal taken to them, please message me with the name and the address. Right now, we are just rolling people back and forth. We have over 20 right now, but I would like to get a lot more. So, if you guys could help me get the word out on that. Thank you.

Mayor Cury- Thank you very much. Moving on, do we have any unscheduled public comments? Is there anyone present who would like to speak to the council? There being no one here that wishes to speak, we will move on. Next, we are on agenda items, and we have added VIII (A) for Executive/closed session pursuant to VA code 2.2-3711 (A) (1) -Personnel.

I will ask for a motion to go into closed session for Virginia Code 2.2-3711(A)(1) -Personnel.

Laura- I make a motion to go into Executive/closed session pursuant to VA 2.2-3711 (A)(1)-Personnel. Jan seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- The chair will entertain a motion to return to regular session.

Rick- I make a motion that we came back into regular session. Laura seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Now, I will entertain a motion and in so doing, you are certifying that nothing was discussed except for the business at hand.

Laura- I make a motion certifying that nothing was discussed in our closed session except for the business at hand. Gary seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Thank you. Now, we are on Town Manager Appointment.

Doug- I make a motion to terminate the contract of the Town Manager effective immediately and include a severance payment of \$19,459.37. Rick seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- No, Rick- Yes, Jordan- No, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 4/2.

Mayor Cury- I request a 15-minute recess.

Mayor Cury- Now, we are on appointment of the Town Clerk. I would ask that we move this appointment to February. Next, we have the appointment of the Town Attorney.

Is there a motion to appoint the Town Attorney?

Rick- I make a motion to reappoint Michael Thomas as our town Attorney. Jan seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Thank you. Next, we have the selection of the Vice Mayor. The selection of the vice mayor is elected from members of the council. Is there someone who would like to suggest a Vice Mayor?

Laura- Mayor Cury, I make a motion that we have Jan White as our Vice Mayor. Doug seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Congratulations. Alright, next thing you have three vacant seats on the IDA. What is council's wish?

Laura- I suggest that we table this until our meeting in February.

I make a motion that we table this agenda item until a later date. Gary seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion?

Laura- I think all these appointments for these committees should be advertised and have applicants so that our citizens know and can let us to consider them for these appointments.

Mayor Cury- Okay, anything else? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Now we have the Planning Commission. It has two vacant seats, and one is the council's representative. Let me mention this, I have thought about council representatives, and I will ask, Gary. Gary, would you consider being the council's representative to the Planning Commission? It meets on the first Tuesday of every month, here at the Town Hall at 7:30pm.

Gary- Can I have some time to think about it?

Mayor Cury- Sure, let me know by the end of the meeting. Is there someone else council, you would want to mention for the other seat, or do you want to advertise?

Consensus of the council is to wait and advertise for the seat.

Mayor Cury- Next, we have the Recreation Commission. So, the Rec Commission currently has one vacant position for the council's representative, and I spoke with Jordan and asked him if he

would be willing to serve as council's representative to the Recreation Commission. Jordan, is that still your desire?

Jordan- Yes, I think that would be awesome.

Mayor Cury- I will ask for a motion to appoint Jordan as our representative.

Rick- I make a motion to appoint Jordan as council's representative for the Rec Commission. Jan seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Thank you. Congratulations. Okay, Executive Assistant Position. Do you guys have any thoughts from this?

Laura- I make the motion that we table this until a later date. Jan seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion?

Jordan- I am not sure who came up with this title, but I think we are asking for a lot and only agreeing to pay a little. I totally disagree with this title.

Mayor Cury- Jordan, I will add my thoughts. I don't think the title matches this description, nor do I think one person can do all of this.

Jordan- I agree.

Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second to table this, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Appalachian Voices -Emma Kelly. I think she had to leave. We will have to call and ask her to come back.

Okay, we have RFP Discussion and Contract Negotiation. Let's talk about the water treatment plant, high service pump re-bid. Correct me if I am wrong, this was a topic that we had an opportunity for the grant and we delayed this opportunity. Does that ring true with you, Heather?

Heather- Well, not exactly. Instead of doing it separately, the idea was that you could put it all together and get some of the funding sources available. Or since we only have the one bid, is that something that we are going to put back out for rebidding? Actually, we have no bids on that one. It was zero bids. But there was a lot of things on there at that time.

Mayor Cury- What is council's desire?

Rick- I make a motion that we readvertise The High Service Pump for the Water Treatment Plant and put it out for rebid. Gary seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- So Heather, thank you very much for taking care of that. Alright, next Forensic Audit Discussion Contract Negotiation. The chair will entertain a motion to go into Executive Session.

Laura- I make a motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to VA Code 2.2-3711 (a) (6) – Contract Negotiation. Jan seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- We are back in regular session/ I will call for a motion to return to open session, please.

Laura- I make a motion that we return to regular session. Rick seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Now we need a motion certifying that nothing was discussed other than our business at hand.

Laura- I make a motion certifying that nothing was discussed except for the Contract Negotiation pursuant to VA Code 2.2-3711 (a) (6). Gary seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Is there any action that council wishes to take it this time?

Laura- I make a motion that we direct our Town Administration to move forward with UHY Advisors for a forensic audit contingent upon the contract. Jan seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, council, and thank you town administration and town attorney. Okay, next is Public Safety Committee Update.

Laura- Safety Committee met in December and there was a lot of good things that came out of it. The Police Department right now is at 0 scheduled overtime, which is a huge savings to the town. That money has been utilized in better capacities in the Police Department and Fire Department still is in need of a person during the day. That's something we can't ignore when we go into this budget session. EMS has been getting a lot of grants and one of those grants and they have utilized that to get four new vehicle repeaters, which is pretty big for them. Public Safety is on the rise here.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Laura. Okay, Town Hall Use- Internal Policy. I would like to suggest that council will allow that we move this to our next meeting.

Consensus of the council to wait until the next meeting to discuss Town Hall Use- Internal Policy.

Mayor Cury- Next, 3150 Clinch St rezoning, first reading.

Mayor Cury conducted the first reading of 3150 Clinch Street Re-zoning (O-2023-01-01).

The consensus is to move on and have the seconding reading in February.

Mayor Cury- Next, we have Rooftop Solar Zoning Ordinance first reading.

Jordan conducted the first reading of Rooftop Solar Zoning Ordinance Amendment (O-2023-01-02).

The consensus is to move on and have the second reading in February.

Laura conducted the first reading of Utility Due Date Ordinance Amendment (O-2023-01-03).

The consensus is to move on and have the second reading in February.

Mayor Cury conducted the first reading of Utility Due Date Ordinance Amendment (O-2023-01-04).

The consensus is to move on and have the second reading in February.

The consensus is to wait and read Resolution- Interconnection Requirements (R-2022-12-01) in February.

Mayor Cury- Next, we have Events Committee Discussion, Laura?

Laura- Richlands used to have an Events Committee. We haven't had one for several years and I get comments all the time about how we just don't have things like other towns. There are people who are interested in serving on an Events Committee. I think the last time we really had one was



when councilwoman White organizing the Freedom Festivals, and people still talk about how incredible they were. So, I am asking you to form an Events Committee and let's start giving the citizens in Richlands something to do again.

Doug- I think it is a great idea.

Mayor Cury- I'm happy to do that. I'm glad to do that and I was like to do that in February, so I have time to think how to do that. Should we advertise for this?

Members of Council- Yes.

Mayor Cury- Before I do any appointing, I think we will put this out for advertising. Next, Pop-Up Richlands.

Laura- I have fielded a lot of complaints about Pop-up Richlands from participants and recipients. I think it is a little bit off track from what it was intended for. I think it was a good idea but has not been executed the way it probably should be. Some people now are having some trouble getting some money, and given our circumstances tonight, I'm wondering if it would be easier for us to go ahead and just write the checks to the winners and hold off on any more pop-up activity until we get things settled in our town administration and get a whole IDA and council will be able to get more of a grip on that. But like I said, there is still three winners who are going through the process of their checks, the money is there. So, I'm looking for ideas on what you guys think and how to proceed and that way we are not dragging it out anymore and making it more difficult. Just maybe write them the checks...

Doug- Could you maybe return the money back to the budget?

Laura- Well, the money that was there, we gave part of it from our ARPA fund. I wasn't on the council when that happened, but then the other money that is in there was given to us as solicited donations from elsewhere. So, I'm not opposed to keeping the money that is in there after we write these \$5,000 checks. I mean, I don't have a problem with keeping that money in there and maybe revisiting this in the fall to have another class once we establish some more guidelines. I mean, I don't know how at this point, how you would divvy up the money that is in there, because some of that money has already been spent.

Mayor Cury- I think some of that money was grant money.

Jordan- There was. I think the Thompson Foundation gave money to it. So, I will say it is not as simple as giving them \$5,000. They have to prove that they have spent the \$5,000.

Laura- I get that, because the rules say rent and utilities only. But there have been \$5,000 given to one person that some of it was rent, and some of it was supplies. There was also a situation where one person got an extension, and another person didn't. So, I think at this point, because the rules haven't been...

Jordan- I have kept up with all of that on the IDA. Supplies? We are pretty hard nose about it.

Laura- I wasn't there for the discussion of it. I just know the check was written for the supplies. So, at this point, I mean this is why I am bringing this to you guys because the rules have been enforced sometimes and haven't been enforced to others. I think to me, if I were a winner and I didn't get an extension made for me, and I saw someone else who received an extension .... And people have come up to me upset about it.

Gary- Will we still know how the money was spent for the business?

Laura- I mean, we could say that. I mean there have been things that were not covered in the rules that have gotten checks. If we keep it up the way that it is right now, it is just rough for me to hear business owners struggling and some people are getting an extension and this person isn't. I am open to writing the checks and I hope that they stay in touch with their mentor/business partner if we were to write that check. I just don't want to make it any more difficult, I don't think anyone here wants to make it more difficult for these people to get what they won. So, I am good with writing the checks and hoping they stay in touch with their mentor and continue to grow their business in Richlands and hold off until we can get a grip on enforcing some of these rules once things settle down for the town administration.

Jordan- We need to consider consulting with the SBA. They are helping with this as well and we probably need to pull them into the loop before we just cut those checks.

Laura- I mean, they can still talk to them, right?

Jordan- Of course.

Laura- Because it is us that is going through the money.

Jordan- It is the grants, but yes, we are administrating. I have also fielded complaints, but I have received several good things as well. I have always gone the extra mile anytime a Pop-Up winner has asked me, that is all I can say. I have also hunted people down to sign the checks for reimbursement. I was at every Pop-Up meet. Everybody seemed to enjoy it and learned a lot. I don't want to see this go away and I feel like if we cut these checks, it is essentially saying "Hey we are probably not coming back", because we don't have a lot of time as it is.

Laura- We still have the money in there even if we do cut the checks. If that is what everyone decides, we would still have that money in there maybe to do a fall session and see where it goes from there. Just from the complaints that I fielded people were saying you were the only one that was really helping them.

Jordan- I am just afraid the donors won't give if we go ahead and cut these checks, because they gave under the appraisals of we are only reimbursing for rent and utilities.

Laura- We have already broken that promise.

Jordan- Maybe we can discuss this later, but I don't think we have.

Laura- I am not going to call it out. I am not going to single any business out, but we have written reimbursements for supplies. There is a check that is about to request reimbursement for building repairs, and they need help. People are struggling. The time on the Town of Richlands has not been really invested on making sure this is done equally and fairly across the board. That is where I am coming from. Going forward, I don't want any more people treated unfairly. I think if we put it on hold until fall and take a step back and get an IDA who is focused on stuff like this. I would also like for our IDA to become an IEDA with economic development.

Jordan- So, I am with you on reevaluating. I agree it needs to be reevaluated, but I am very hesitant to cut those checks because of the donors. It was already so hard to get that money. If we cut those people \$5,000, they might not spend it on rent.

Mayor Cury- How many participants, who won have not received their \$5,000?

Jordan- 3 are left that have not received all of it. 2 have received part of it, one has yet to do a draw down.

Mayor Cury- Have they submitted for that?

Jordan- They have gotten in contact with us and asked for an extension. They said they had not got moved in time and they had something that were out of their control and asked for an extension.

Laura- That was one of the complaints that I received because in the contract that they signed it says if you are not done in this number of days that money is forfeited, and one person got an extension and one person didn't. What happens if four months go by, and they still haven't done anything? How long are we going to draw this out?

Jordan- Okay, lets enforce it and cut that money. I just don't want to see the program go down.

Laura- I don't think any of us do, I just think when it was done, maybe things were done a little too quickly.

Jordan- What if I take this to the IDA and get their thoughts on this, can I bring that back to us in February? Maybe we can try to revamp the program.

Mayor Cury- Jordan, let me think about this. When money is involved, it is a real difficult thing. On the other hand, we do not want to give it away either. Is it possible that maybe everyone needs a fresh start? You are welcome to talk to anyone that you need to revamp the program, I am just thinking maybe everyone needs a fresh start. What is everyone's thoughts on this?

Rick- We already have three participants.

Jan- We would have to let them close out first.

Jordan- Absolutely. We have two winners that are actively submitting receipts and one lingering from the last go around.

Laura- So, when is the date for that? How long are we going to let that hang in the balance?

Jordan- John was handling discussion with her. It was not the IDA. I haven't spoken to her since Novemberish, maybe?

Jan- I was on the IDA and I don't remember ever seeing anything that said you could be reimbursed for. We just always took whatever John signed off on.

Jordan- A lot of things were made clear once I went to all the classes and read through all the manuals. I actually learned a lot about the program. It is very similar if anyone has ever done the BCC Grant. We probably need to mimic that more in the structure of it and put more restrictions on it. That was the goal to start with. You have to have some guard rails.

Jan- I think you need to school the IDA, so to speak to question some of these things.

Rick- I think we need to follow the rules and revisit this because it sounds like we don't have any control of this.

Laura- What do we do about this third person that has an extension?

Rick- I would say we give them 30 days, or they lose that money.

Mayor Cury- It is hard when you have the IDA that is saying one thing and council is feeling another way. It is a conflict in how we do things. So, I think for clarity, if these people have been told they have an extension, we have to stand by that. However, we do not have to stand forever. Our name is on the table, years from now they will not remember the IDA, but they will remember the Town of Richlands. For that importance, if you tell someone something and then you back up on that, you are going to be a bad person. I would suggest that we stand behind that and by the end of the next council meeting if they have not met the requirements then that is it. What do you all think?

Jan- We need to make sure they have been properly notified.

Mayor Cury- Jordan, you know these people, do you care to notify these people in writing?

Jordan- Yes.

Mayor Cury- If you will do that in writing and then give a copy of that to our record keeper here at Town Hall so we have it on file what is being done with that money.

Rick- How long does it usually take for these people to draw their money down?

Jordan- I believe they have 6 months, because that is each round. We have two rounds a year.

Mayor Cury- Is that 6 months over?

Jordan- For the first person, yes. For the other two people, no.

Rick- Okay, I suggest we follow the guidelines until these 6 months is over and then we need to revisit this.

Laura- So, to clarify, we are giving this first winner 30 days to get her draw down and waiting the 6 months on the other two winners and just reimbursing rent and utilities until this is over and lets not schedule a spring class until we can get a handle on this.

Jordan- I also think this needs a council representative whenever this rolls back around.

Rick- We can discuss that then.

Mayor Cury- Okay, next Social Media Policy.

Laura- I am hoping that council will direct the Town Attorney to draw up a social media policy that is fair and legal for our Town employees. I personally saw on Facebook and social media how

our Town employees were disrespecting our Town. I think that should apply for the council as well. If you don't like working for the Town or serving the Town, then we will find someone who does. So, I don't want to infringe on people's rights, so I am looking to you, Michael for guidance on this. I understand people have a right to say what they want to say but after a certain time, they would be crossing a line.

Mayor Cury- I understand what you are saying, Laura. This is the First Amendment Rights. Michael, can you research this and have us an answer by our next meeting? Maybe see what other towns have done in regard to social media policy.

Heather- Prior to having him research that like we have VRSA. That is who does most of our policies, like the COVID policy. So, before we have the attorney do it, I feel like it would be best to get it from them and then send it to him.

Mayor Cury- Okay, that is a good thing. Is everyone okay with Heather doing that and then communicating that with Michael?

Members of Council- Yes.

Mayor Cury- Okay, next Electronic Participation.

Laura- The Electronic Participation Ordinance was brought up during COVID. Virginia law allows it, obviously it has to be adopted through the town. It does have safeguards in place that people can only use it twice a year so that people won't take advantage of it. We need an electronic participation policy because we saw what happened during COVID, there was an instance where Mayor Cury had a medical issue and was out and tried to participate through zoom but was not able to because council did not pass that electronic participation ordinance. So, we as a Town got into some unnecessary trouble. So, I would like to see that ordinance be brought back and passed so we can do that.

Mayor Cury- I think this is a very important thing. Michael, do you have access to that ordinance?

Michael- I have actually researched that before. I don't have something ready right now, but I can get something together for you all.

Mayor Cury- Okay, next is Generator RFP Discussion.

Laura- We have talked about gas powered turbine and we had talked about bringing that for the RFP in this meeting. The clock is ticking, and I think the quicker we get that out the better.

Mayor Cury- Heather, are you up to date on this?

Heather- I don't know if I could successfully write that, but I would ask that if it is okay with you all that I speak to Mr. White about a lot of that because he is the one who researched it. Then I could let everybody know if we feel like we have enough information to put it out there to receive a bid on what we are actually asking for.

Members of Council- Yes, that is fine.

Laura- I make a motion to authorize Heather to pursue an RFP for the Gas-Powered Turbine Generator for electricity contingent upon your discussion with Seth White. Doug seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Thank you. Now we are on Power Cost Adjustment Discussion.

Jan- We all know that we have had a bad cold spell so to speak and there are very few things that we can do in this budget cycle to alleviate for our citizens. One of the things that we did in years past when I was on the council was, we voted to move that power cost adjustment to zero. I would like for the council to consider this. It is not a lot, but it does help to take the cost of the bill down.

Mayor Cury- Alright, Jan is asking for discussion on the power cost adjustment. Is there any discussion?

Doug- I think it is a great idea. We did that when you and I were in council last time. I think with this cold spell it will help.

Jan- I make a motion to reduce the Power Cost Adjustment to zero for the next billing cycle. Doug seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, council. Okay, we are down to Town Manager Report. Heather, do you have anything?

Heather- I don't have anything.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Heather. Michael?

Michael- I know last month I asked you guys about moving forward with the Police Department on Code Enforcement, I haven't been able to spend much time on that because when I started looking through my codes and like I said I am going to have to go through previous months and probably years to see when that code changed, it has taken me a little bit more time to get all that figured out. I just wanted to let everyone know and Chief Holt that I am working on it and I will get it to you when I can.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Michael. Council Members Reports. Doug?

Doug- First thing, I have had a lot of complaints on the roads on Second Street and some of the streets in town, maybe Heather could talk to whoever is over the roads, is it George?

Heather- Yes.

Doug- Get him to check some of those roads because they are in bad repair. Next thing, two months ago, maybe three, the council passed a motion that we would name an Electric Committee and it would consist of maybe two residents and two council members, and I would like to propose...

Mayor Cury- I have it coming up in my reports, Doug.

Doug- Okay, thank you. That is all I have.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Doug. Gary?

Gary- I don't have a report but a question that maybe Heather you can help me on, on last month's meeting the check numbers started with 12812 I believe and then in the November checks it ended at 12807. So, I ask for confirmation on those missing checks?

Heather- I have to go back and follow up because I don't have that with me.

Gary- Can you just provide confirmation on that?

Heather- Yes. I will take care of that.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Gary and Heather. Rick?

Rick- I have nothing.

Mayor Cury- Okay, thank you, Rick. Jan?

Jan- I have several people from Hidden Valley complaining because their leaves and brush hasn't been picked up in a while. I also noticed some on Tazewell Avenue. Who is responsible for the trash on 460? That is in the town limits?

Heather- I would say we are.

Jan- Okay, well several people have complained about that, and Veteran's Drive is pretty trashy too.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Jan. Laura?

Laura- The only thing I have tonight is I was informed that Chief Holt had installed some antennas. For years, since I have been coming to these meetings people have complained about the radio

traffic and how the radios don't have good signal and Chief Holt took it upon himself with Matt Whited and some other gentlemen and had them installed and I have had officers in our town tell me how our radios are crystal clear now. I really appreciate them doing that and I know the Town employees do as well.

Mayor Cury- Thank you, Laura. Jordan?

Jordan- So, two quick things. Jan pretty much already hit on my main complaint. I've had several people reach out and say that the water is running over their streets due to their drains being clogged by the leaves. I have actually seen a few people take matters into their own hands and start burning the leaves because they don't have anywhere to put them. So, to avoid that, I was going to suggest that we maintain that at least once a month. I know you usually have to call and request to be put on a list. Just if they could go around and see what places need it.

On a better note, the Rec Park is kicking off their basketball program. It tipped off last night. If anyone wants to go see some young talent. They also had a New Year's dance and I've talked to Jessica and that was huge success. I would suggest following them on Facebook. They do all kinds of cool events that you would ever think of.

Mayor Cury- Jordan, thank you very much.

Rick- I do have one question. I have had people ask me when are we getting the carnival back?

Mayor Cury- I think it is something we need to consider, and it would take funding of course. I think, Laura, that would fall under the Events Committee, and we will form that after we solicit for invitations for that committee. I think that would be something you could request once that gets formed.

Okay, we are on Mayor Comments:

First, I had a petition sent to me for people to sign that live in Hidden Valley. They are very concerned about a couple things. I have shared this with Chief Holt, and he is going to do his best with the limited number of officers that we have. The next thing is we have new members here and we have old members here. Doug, you are one of the old ones. Don't feel bad, I am one of the old ones too. So welcome back, Doug. Gary, welcome. I'm glad you are here. Rick, you have been a face we have seen before, but you are back, and we are happy. Laura, you are the one who has labored intensively for the town in every capacity that you can. I am glad you are here and you will be a worker. Jan, you have experience with the county government and as mayor and now as a town council person and I want to welcome you. Last but not least, Jordan, I am so thrilled that we have a generation z man up here with us. Thank you. It's important that everybody is represented at the table. Welcome, everyone. I am so pleased, that you are here.

There are several things I want to do. We have committees before and then we don't have them. So, I'm going to appoint some committees. Gary, have you given that any more thought?

Gary- I will attend the meeting and then I will make my decision.

Mayor Cury- Let us just say as of right now, you are appointed and if you decide later, you can't do it then we will take care of that then. Okay, the Public Safety Committee and I would like, Laura to serve as the council's representative to the Public Safety Committee. Laura, can you do that?

Laura- Yes, Sir.

Mayor Cury- Okay and I will be glad to serve with you. Next, we have the Street Committee. Rick, would you be the chairman for the street committee? And I will ask Jan to serve with you.

Jan- Yes.

Rick- Yes, but can we add water and sewer to that also?

Mayor Cury- Okay, so we can call that water, sewer, and street committee. Now, we have an Electrical Committee, and I would like to appoint two citizens and that is Shea Cook and Seth White. I would like for Doug to be the council representative and Jordan will you serve on this committee as well?

Jordan- Yes.

Doug- Yes.

Mayor Cury- Okay, thank you. What I want to emphasize is all these committees are advisory. Everybody will report to the council and council will listen with a good heart and a good head. These are only advisory committees they do not make policies that is only up to the council. I want to make that very clear. Is there any question about what I have done? Anybody have a misunderstanding about their power or lack of power?

Members of Council- No.

Mayor Cury- Okay, before we adjourn...

Michael- Mayor, I have one question. I have a draft contract here for our annual audit and there is a place for the town manager to sign. We just need some direction on whether or not you all want to proceed, and I will give council copies of the original contract once I get it for you all to review.

Rick- I make the motion to give Heather the authority to go ahead and sign the contract with Bostic & Tucker to be our annual auditors once we receive the original contract. Gary seconded the motion.

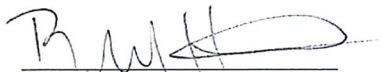
Mayor Cury- We have a motion and a second, any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say yes. All those that oppose say no. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Mayor Cury- Alright before I asked for the meeting to be adjourned our next regular scheduled meeting is going to be on February 14<sup>th</sup>, and we have a joint meeting with the Recreation Commission on January the 16th at the Town Hall. So, I have a couple of things to say. First, evenings like this are not always easy for anybody and I am going to leave it right there. The next thing I want you all to know is our clerk will not be with us anymore. She submitted a touching and moving letter of resignation and I want to thank you for the class act that you are and for an excellent job. We will miss you. You closed this letter which I have only shared with council, not publicly, that if you need me let me know. Well, I will be calling on you. Thank you. We wish you well and we pray blessing on your family. Thank you! Is there a motion to adjourn?

Rick- I make a motion we adjourn this meeting. Gary seconded the motion.

Mayor Cury- 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. Roll Call- Doug- Yes, Gary- Yes, Rick- Yes, Jordan- Yes, Jan- Yes, Laura- Yes. Motion carries 6/0.

Adjourned!

  
Rebekah Hackworth, Clerk

  
Rodney D. Cury, Mayor