

JULY 8, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Rich Creek Town Council was held on Monday, July 8th, 2024, at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, located at 250 Old Virginia Avenue, Rich Creek, Virginia, with the following individuals present:

Roger Jones, Mayor
Mark Clemons, Council
Steve Buckland, Police Chief
Gary Thompson

Stuart Helm, Council
Darlene French, Council
Debbie Morris
Mason Boggess, RCVFD

William Kantsios, Council
Joyce Crawford, Council
Helen Swartout
Warren Wilson, RCVFD

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Jones opened the meeting followed by the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 10TH & 24TH, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

Mrs. Crawford moved to approve the minutes of the June 10th & 24th, 2024 meetings, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Kantsios. The motion was approved unanimously (5-0) by the following voting YES: Mrs. French, Mr. Kantsios, Mr. Helm, Mr. Clemons and Mrs. Crawford.

RICH CREEK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT (RCVFD)-Warren Wilson

- The Treasurer & Activity Reports were provided and reviewed.
- 4 Fire turn-out sets were purchased (pants & jacket)
- 1 Car Accident on Federal Street (Rt 219) and 1 on Rt. 460 at Shell Station
- Responded to a drowning and brush fire in Glen Lyn

Mr. Helm asked if the new law, allowing towns to determine the speed limit, will apply to Rt. 460 and Officer Buckland said “no, the law only applies to the streets”.

- The department competed in the Alderson Fireman’s Rodeo and won 1st place Overall, 1st place in the tug-of-war, 2nd place in the bucket brigade and 2nd place in the obstacle course.
- A benefit will be held on Saturday, August 3rd for Chris and Amy Thornton, at the Rich Creek Community Center. The consensus of the Council agreed to waive the rental fee and to not charge for the water used that day for the benefit car wash.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

OLD BUSINESS

A. UPDATE ON THE RICH CREEK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, at 6:00 PM. Mayor Jones encouraged all Council members to attend the meeting, which will include discussions on the flood plain areas of Rich Creek.

B. UPDATE ON THE NEW FIRE HALL

Mayor Jones reported the site plan is not complete, and reported when the plan is complete and the bore sites are determined, he will proceed with requesting bids for the geotechnical information that is being required by the Giles County Building Department.

C. UPDATE ON THE LEAD & COPPER SURVEY GRANT & CONSIDERATION OF A CUSTOMER INCENTIVE

The Clerk said there are currently 156 unknown connections on the customer’s side of the water system. She said information has been posted regarding the Lead & Copper study and mailers will be sent out to the unknown

connections soon. Mr. Clemons was not in favor of the incentive, explaining the owners of the locations where the water connection type of material has been determined, would not be given the same incentive opportunity, like the owners of the unknown locations would receive. Mayor Jones suggested CHA, Inc. proceed with sending out the mailer to all the unknown connection type material locations, to gather responses and then move forward with the door-to-door process.

D. CONSIDERATION OF THE OPTIMUM CABLE FRANCHISE RENEWAL

Mayor Jones said he has spoken to Mr. Chris McKlarney, Giles County Administrator, about the cable franchise and he said the agreement is non-exclusive and it won't affect Giles County's plans, if Rich Creek renews the contract. Mayor Jones said a Public Hearing is required and he suggested the discussion be tabled until the August meeting and then determine a date for the public hearing.

E. UPDATE ON THE UPGRADING OF THE CAMERAS AT WOODLAND PARK & THE COMMUNITY CENTER

The Clerk said the security cameras at the town park are working and the office staff and Chief Buckland now have the ability to view the camera footage off-site. Mrs. Crawford said when the security cameras were originally installed at the community center, the technician did not remove the protective film on the lens and the film has "melted" to the lens covers and the recordings are not clear. She reported the town crew is working towards completing the wiring for the additional camera(s).

F. UPDATE ON THE BRUSH DISPOSAL SITE, FALL CLEAN-UP WEEK & CURBSIDE BRUSH PICK-UP

A "draft" of the brush disposal site sign will be provided to Council, for comments, prior to ordering the signs. Mr. Helm said the Giles County PSA has agreed to supply the town, free of charge, with a dumpster for the Fall Clean-Up week. **Mr. Kantsios moved to approve a Fall Clean-Up Week and the motion was seconded by Mrs. French. The motion was approved unanimously (5-0) by the following voting YES: Mrs. French, Mr. Kantsios, Mr. Helm, Mr. Clemons and Mrs. Crawford.** There was discussion regarding the curbside brush pick-up, with Mr. Kantsios saying he has spoken to many of the town residents and the response has been favorable for the curbside pick-up idea. He said he requested the Clerk to forward to Council members information regarding the curbside pick-up, for any comments or suggestions. **Mr. Kantsios moved to approve October 14th through the 18th, for Fall Clean-Up Week and the motion was seconded by Mr. Helm. The motion was approved unanimously (5-0) by the following voting YES: Mrs. French, Mr. Kantsios, Mr. Helm, Mr. Clemons and Mrs. Crawford.** Mayor Jones requested the Clerk post the list of what can and cannot be picked up, prior to the clean-up week.

G. UPDATE ON THE MARY MOODY NORTHERN GRANT-PICKLEBALL

Mayor Jones said he has received notification that the town has a good chance of receiving grant funding for the pickleball court and said he won't know the grant award amount until he receives the official notification. Mrs. Morris, Asst. Clerk; said the Mountain Lake Hotel Mary Moody Northern grant committee awarded the Town of Pearisburg a \$25K Grant for a basketball court.

H. UPDATE ON THE PIGEONS & CHICKENS IN THE TOWN

Officer Buckland said the resident on Giles Avenue has been charged for the town ordinance violation of having chickens in the town limits and the case is scheduled for court on July 30th. He said if the judge should dismiss the case, he suggests the Town file a civil case against the homeowner.

Mrs. Crawford asked the status of the new tire shop on Virginia Avenue and Mayor Jones said he will be sending the Giles County Building Official the required flood plain letter soon.

NEW BUSINESS

A. DISCUSSION REGARDING TOWN SURPLUS PROPERTY

Mrs. Crawford said the town crew has been moving surplus items to the old sewer treatment plant for storage, until Council decides how to proceed with the surplus items. After some discussion, Mayor Jones suggested a list of the surplus items be compiled and he recommended sealed bids be requested on the items. It was agreed Mayor Jones, Mr. Helm and Mrs. Morris work on the surplus item list. Officer Buckland said he may have some items to include in the surplus sale and Mayor Jones said he will ask the fire department if they have anything to include.

Mrs. Crawford said the four new tires purchased recently for the lowboy trailer are no good and have been taken to Buck's Service Center twice for repairs and she said Mr. Wes Crawford recommends they need to be replaced. Mayor Jones said he looked at the tires when they were purchased from Kevin and Kenneth Smith, and he said the tires were in great shape. Mayor Jones said the tires were stolen from the town shop and later returned and he suspects the original tires purchased were not returned. Mrs. Crawford said the tires won't hold air and they need to be replaced. There was some discussion regarding the current cost of new tires and Mr. Kantsios suggested three quotes be requested and accept the lowest bid. **Mrs. Crawford made a motion to approve the purchase of four new tires for the lowboy trailer, \$148 or less per tire, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Helm. The motion was approved unanimously (5-0) by the following voting YES: Mrs. French, Mr. Kantsios, Mr. Helm, Mr. Clemons and Mrs. Crawford.**

Mrs. Crawford said Brad Riner passed the water works operator's exam and paid out-of-pocket the \$85 fee for the license. **Mr. Helm moved to reimburse Mr. Riner the \$85 for his license fee paid and the motion was seconded by Mrs. Crawford. The motion was approved unanimously (5-0) by the following voting YES: Mrs. French, Mr. Kantsios, Mr. Helm, Mr. Clemons and Mrs. Crawford.** Mrs. Crawford asked if Council is going to adjust his salary and Mayor Jones said it has been past practice of Council to award a \$1.00 per hour wage increase when an employee has received a water or sewer license and a \$0.50 per hour wage increase for obtaining a Commercial Driver's License. Mr. Kantsios suggested Council to establish a policy that would give all the town employees the opportunity to earn a pay increase. **Mr. Helm made a motion to approve a \$1.00 per hour wage increase for Mr. Riner, and a policy be drafted for future guidance to follow, regarding wage adjustments due to employee achievements and the motion was seconded by Mrs. French. The motion was approved unanimously (4-1) by the following voting YES: Mrs. French, Mr. Helm, Mr. Clemons and Mrs. Crawford and voting NO: Mr. Kantsios.** Mayor Jones agreed with Mr. Kantsios and suggested a policy be written for the Council to follow. Mr. Kantsios said the policy needs to allow all employees the opportunity to earn a wage adjustment and said he feels the office staff have been treated unfairly. He said, during his time as Mayor, the office staff was required to participate in a weeklong training session and required to learn new software for the utility and tax billing and their salaries were not adjusted by Council after completion. Mayor Jones said he would not agree or disagree with Mr. Kantsios' statement, but he believes Council wants to treat all employees fair. Mayor Jones asked Mr. Kantsios if he would draft a policy for the Council to consider and he agreed to do so.

Mr. Kantsios said when gathering public input regarding the curbside brush pick-up and Fall Clean-Up Week, one of the suggestions he received was for lights to be installed along the walking trail around the park and cemetery. Officer Buckland said there are residents walking the trail late in the evening. Mr. Helm said he plans to request additional lighting at the park for after-hours use of the pickleball court, if the grant is approved. Mr. Kantsios said his request came directly from the residents of the town and he noted a complaint he received was regarding the high grass along the streets, especially on the streets leading to the town park and cemetery. Mrs. Crawford stressed the need for additional employees to handle the workload of the town. She said she found out VDOT only has one mowing machine to rotate amongst five different counties, explaining the mowing time is very limited in Rich Creek and the other areas maintained by VDOT. Mr. Kantsios asked if she would ask VDOT to better maintain the side streets.

Mr. Helm said he would like to move forward with the speed limit study and asked Officer Buckland about the chicken ordinance violation. Officer Buckland said the fine imposed is \$5, per the current code and stated the court date is scheduled for the end of the month.

TOWN ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

CHIEF OF POLICE-Steve Buckland

June 2024 Activity Report

Accident Investigations: 1 Alarm Activations: 0 Animal Complaints: 0 Arrest: 4
Assist to Citizens: 1 Assist to Other Agencies: 1 Bulletins Received: 1 Court Related Activities: 14
Criminal/Narcotic Investigations: 12 Disturbance Calls: 1 Fire/Rescue Calls: 1
Property/Business Checks: 81 Reports Submitted: 5 TDO Transports: 1
Training Activities: 1 Town Ordinance Violations Investigated: 1

- High grass complaint Mercer Road
- Shoplifting (x3) and Indecent Exposure Dollar General

- Larceny (x2) Corner Market
- Driving Suspended, drinking while driving Church Street
- Fraud Old Virginia Avenue
- Domestic Dispute & Larceny Gateway Apartments
- Narcotics Violation Allen's Furniture Apartments

Officer Buckland said the police were able to locate the missing young girl, from Monroe County, WV, after Rich Creek's Flock cameras identified vehicles with the suspect's state license type.

There was discussion regarding the speed limits in Rich Creek and Officer Buckland said Virginia state law now allows the Town to lower the speed limit to as low as 20 or 15mph. Mr. Helm said he would like to see the speed limit lowered, stating there are many children in the residential areas and their safety is his main concern. Mr. Clemons said lowering the speed limit won't help unless the speed is monitored, and violations are issued and enforced. Mayor Jones said most judges will dismiss a violation if it is less than 10mph above the posted speed limit, explaining 35mph on Woodland Road is not safe. Mr. Clemons suggested additional police presence and a violation, or a warning be issued each time the driver doesn't obey the speed limit. Mr. Helm suggested the speed limit on Main Street be lowered, due to the diagonal parking. Mrs. French suggested the traffic flow on Mercer Road be changed to one-way travel only. Mr. Helm and Mr. Clemons agreed to assist Officer Buckland in gathering public input on the speed limit concerns in town.

Officer Buckland said the Town of Pembroke has purchased the Flock cameras and Giles County is waiting on approval to install the cameras.

Mr. Helm asked how Officer Broyles is doing in the academy and Officer Buckland said he is doing very well.

NEW BUSINESS-cont'd

Mrs. Crawford reported four pieces of the town's heavy-duty equipment is stored under roof. She said Mr. Tommy Kantsios has repaired all but three of the new streetlights and has found the lights and the parts to repair the lights, are obsolete. The consensus of the Council agreed to purchase dinner tickets for Mr. Kantsios, to the Wohlfahrt Haus Dinner Theatre, to show their appreciation for volunteering his time to repair the lights.

Mrs. Crawford said a part has been ordered for the unit at the GCSTP to maintain the proper temperature for the lab samples and new solenoids were ordered for the fan presses.

PSA REPORT-Stuart Helm

Mr. Helm provided a summary of the most recent meeting.

TREASURER’S REPORT-Pam Kantsios

- June water loss: 5.8%

Balance as of June 1, 2024	\$482,064.02
Receipts	122,264.49
Expenses	<u>95,098.30</u>
Balance as of June 30, 2024	\$509,230.21
Balance as of June 30, 2023	\$500,700.59

CERTIFICATE ZONING COMPLIANCE ISSUED

609 Woodland Road	New Deck construction & new storage building placement
Between 852 & 860 Woodland Road	New Modular home placement

The consensus of the Council agreed to approve the quote received from Mr. Ken Waddell of Ken’s Briteway Professional Window Cleaning services, to clean the office windows, at a cost of \$50 per month.

Mayor Jones thanked Council members for their assistance in overseeing the various town operations.

PAYMENT OF THE BILLS

Mrs. Crawford moved to approve payment of the bills, presented in the amount of \$39,997.08, to include any 2023/2024FY bills. There was some discussion regarding the \$185 booster cable and \$849 Husqvarna chainsaw purchase and the need for an inventory of all town equipment and tools. The Clerk said Mr. Crawford had asked her if he could purchase a chainsaw to replace his chainsaw, that he claims was damaged by a previous employee of the town, when removing trees in preparation for the new fire department site road entry. She said Mr. Crawford stated the employee and the previous Town Manager were both aware of the incident and he failed to get the saw replaced, prior to their leaving employment with the town. The Clerk said she told him he would have to get approval from the Mayor or Mrs. Crawford for the purchase, since no one was able to confirm the damage. She said he returned later and asked for a tax exemption form, explaining he had received approval from Mrs. Crawford to purchase a new saw from MoCo Outdoor Equipment, to replace his damaged saw. Mrs. Crawford said she did not approve of the purchase. **The motion to pay the bills was seconded by Mr. Clemons. The motion was approved unanimously (5-0) by the following roll call vote: Mrs. French, YES; Mr. Kantsios, YES; Mr. Helm, YES; Mr. Clemons, YES; and Mrs. Crawford, YES**

APPOINTMENT

RICH CREEK PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Helm moved to approve the reappointment of Mr. Warren Wilson to the Rich Creek Planning Commission, term September 1, 2024 until August 31, 2028, and the motion was seconded by Mrs. Crawford. The motion was approved unanimously (5-0) by the following roll call vote: Mrs. French, YES; Mr. Kantsios, YES; Mr. Helm, YES; Mr. Clemons, YES; and Mrs. Crawford, YES.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. French moved that Council convene in Executive Session for personnel matters, as allowed by VA Code §2.2-3711, A1, Personnel, regarding the Public Works Department and the Town Manager position and the motion was seconded by Mr. Helm. Approved unanimously (5-0) by the following roll call vote: Mrs. French, YES, Mr. Kantsios, YES; Mr. Helm, YES; Mr. Clemons, YES; and Mrs. Crawford, YES.

Mrs. Crawford moved to return to Regular Session and affirmed that the only thing discussed in Executive Session was personnel matters, as stated in the motion and the motion was seconded by Mr. Clemons. Approved unanimously (5-0) by the following roll call vote: Mrs. French, YES, Mr. Kantsios, YES; Mr. Helm, YES; Mr. Clemons, YES; and Mrs. Crawford, YES.

Mr. Helm made a motion to request a surveyor's quote to survey Sunrise Memorial Gardens Cemetery, to get the maps updated. Mr. Clemons asked if the Cemetery Board Committee should be asked to cover the expense and Mr. Helm said his motion was to only request quotes and then ask the Cemetery Board to approve the quote and pay the expense. Mayor Jones said there was a form of moss growing on the fence surrounding the cemetery and he submitted a quote, acquired by Mrs. Crawford, to Mr. Francis Epling, to professionally have the fence cleaned. He said Mr. Epling approved the quote, on behalf of the cemetery board. **There was no action taken on Mr. Helm's motion.**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Roger Jones, Mayor

Pamela Kantsios, Town Clerk

CALLED MEETING OF JULY 22, 2024, MINUTES

A called meeting of the Rich Creek Town Council was held on July 22, 2024, at 6:30 PM in Council Chambers Located at 250 Old Virginia Avenue, Rich Creek, Virginia, with the following individuals present:

Roger Jones, Mayor
Darlene French, Council
Steve Buckland, Chief of Police

Joyce Crawford, Council
William Kantsios, Council

Stuart Helm, Council
Mark Clemons, Council

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Jones opened the meeting followed by the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Jones stated the purpose of the called meeting is for a planning session to discuss the goals of the Town.

There was some discussion regarding problems with a lack of help and experience in the public works department. Mayor Jones said he has been called out and he has assisted with some of the water line breaks, locating valves in the water system, and meter problems, etc. and he has concerns.

Mrs. Crawford said Jamie Snider has recently installed the Giles County PSA's software on the public works department employee's cell phones, so they have access to the water tank levels, valve status, etc.

Mr. Helm began compiling a list of each department's required duties:

Public Works

Locating & maintaining the shut off valves in the water system
Maintenance of the flood grates/drains, removing any debris obstructing the flow
Regular monitoring of the grease traps
Regular Maintenance of the generators
Rolling Stock Maintenance (trucks, mowers, etc.)

Maintenance of the air compressors, aerators, etc. at GCSTP
Regular training on all town equipment and how to perform the maintenance
Management of the IWorq, asset management software
Flagger Certification & training to properly set up a work site
Inventory Control
Grounds maintenance (mowing, weedeating, etc.)

Mr. Clemons asked about the recent applicant's status and Mayor Jones said the applicant was sent for the fit-for-duty physical and a drug screening and declined the job offer, after the individual was offered a wage increase from his current employer. Mayor Jones said additional staff is needed, to include experience. Mr. Helm said Mr. Chris McKlarney has been asked to work on a proposal for Rich Creek's consideration, in the event the Town needs the county's labor and or equipment, to complete a job. There was some discussion of contacting with Greenbriar Job Services for temporary help or a Giles County ACCE student. Mr. Helm asked Officer Buckland to provide his required duties

Public Works-Cont'd

Read water meters monthly, maintenance of the meters, dials, and antennas
Respond to 811 Virginia Utility locates
Scheduling & planning jobs, projects, etc.
Utility Service Disconnections

The Clerk asked about a current application regarding enclosure of a carport and Mayor Jones said the applicant would only need a building permit from Giles County because the "footprint" of the carport isn't changing. She said another applicant wants to put up a fence and Mayor Jones said if both property owners can agree on the property line, the fence can be installed on the line, but if there are questions concerning the property line, the applicant needs to verify the fence is placed on their property.

Mayor Jones asked how the operations of the Town can be accomplished and Mr. Helm said he is discouraged by the number of empty buildings along Main Street, and he is concerned about the town's future. There was discussion regarding the vacant properties and the lack of anything being done with the properties and the future of the senior living facility/Giles County HeadStart program. The Clerk said she has confirmed with the director of the head start program in Rich Creek, the lease with Junkin Street Partners, expires at the end of July 2024. Mayor Jones said he will call Jason Buckland to see if he can provide an update on the head start program.

Mayor Jones shared information with Council, explaining the packet content can't be discussed this evening because the meeting was advertised for a planning session only.

There was discussion regarding the current job openings and how to fill the positions and manage the public works department. Mayor Jones suggested the Council consider offering the position of Superintendent of Public Works to the applicant from Gentry's Landing campground, who applied recently for the Town Manager position, and he said he would agree to train him for the job, if he would consider the position. Mr. Helm suggested the individual accepting the position would be required to oversee the current public works department employees and he suggested all additional labor or work be contracted out, when the expertise or town staff is not sufficient to complete the work. Mayor Jones said the current employees would be needed to continue with the maintenance of the buildings, grounds, streets, etc. and Mr. Helm agreed and suggested the superintendent assign the daily work orders, maintain the asset management software program, inventory control, etc. Mayor Jones said the applicants for town manager and the public works department have not been provided the training they need to perform the job they have been expected to perform and

they can be overwhelmed by the workload. He said the applicant must be able to prioritize the important jobs and focus on successfully completing a task before attempting to move on to a different job. Mr. Clemons asked the salary the applicant Mayor Jones is speaking of is requesting and he proceeded to read an email he received, stating the gentleman is asking \$62,400 and he is requesting a meeting with Council to be reconsidered for the position. There was discussion regarding the possibility of hiring a private contractor for the position.

There was some discussion regarding the packet of information shared with the Council by Mayor Jones, and he stated again the information can't be discussed this evening.

Mr. Clemons asked if Council should meet with the town manager applicant or proceed with advertising for a Supt. Of Public Works. Mr. Kantsios said the salary requested is more than the salary agreed upon by the Council, for the position. There was some discussion regarding the Town of Pearisburg's Supt. Of Public Works salary and consideration of retirement and seeking employment with a non-VRS employer. Mayor Jones asked Mr. Helm if Mr. McKlarney said when he may have a quote available for Council to consider, regarding assisting the town public works operations and he said he has only spoken to Mr. Kevin Belcher about the idea. Mr. Helm suggested Council meet with the county officials to discuss the proposal and Mayor Jones said he would suggest if the Town accepts the County's proposal, they would operate and maintain both the town's water and wastewater systems. Mr. Clemons asked if the contract would be on a temporary basis and Mr. Helm said it would depend on the town's financial status and if a suitable applicant would apply for the current job openings. Mayor Jones said when the Town of Glen Lyn turned over the garbage collection and maintenance of their water system to Giles County, the town operations declined. Mr. Helm clarified the Town would continue to read the water meters, process the bills for the public utilities and the County would only be contracted to take care of operations and maintenance of the two systems for the town. Mr. Clemons asked about the Giles County PSA (GCPSA) maintaining the town 's sewer system when sewer is not in the GCPSA's realm of work and Mr. Helm said he believes they would be interested in the idea and suggested they hire Rich Creek's licensed wastewater operator to operate the facility.

Mayor Jones paused the discussion for a short break.

There was some discussion about the current wastewater license holders and Mayor Jones said himself and Brad Riner both are licensed operators of the sewer plant. He asked Council if they are interested in advertising for a Superintendent of Public Works and to pursue contracting the water and sewer operations with Giles County. Mrs. Crawford said she is discouraged with the time and expense of advertising and suggested if the consensus of council is to continue advertising for the job openings, a time frame should be determined.

Mr. Clemons asked if the contract with Giles County would be temporary and Mr. Helm said if Council approves the agreement and allows the county to operate and maintain the Town's water and sewer systems and a qualified candidate applies for the advertised job openings, the town can terminate the contract with the County and return to regular operations.

After the consensus of Council, **Mrs. Crawford moved to advertise two-weeks for a Superintendent of Public Works and the motion was seconded by Mr. Clemons.** There was some discussion on the current job descriptions, and it was agreed a job description would not be provided at this time.

Mr. Helm requested the Clerk to compile a listing of all the administrative duties.

With no further discussion, Council adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Roger Jones, Mayor

Pamela Kantsios, Town Clerk