

## **MARCH 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

A meeting of the Rich Creek Town Council was held on Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 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  
Mervin Swartout, Town Manager  
Officer Britton Broyles

Stuart Helm, Council  
Darlene French, Council  
Steve Buckland, Police Chief  
Helen Swartout

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

## **INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

## **APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

**Mr. Kantsios moved to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2024 meeting, 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.**

## **RICH CREEK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT-Warren Wilson**

- The Treasurer & Activity Reports were reviewed.
- Mr. Wilson explained the reason for checks issued to individuals and his employer in the treasurer's report, stating the Lowes store would not accept a check from the department so he had to use his employer's credit card for the purchase and then reimburse his employer, as well as some members occasionally. Council members agreed the department be added as a sub account on the town's NBB credit card account, for the purchase needs of the fire department.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Wilson said he attended a birthday party for a family member at the Rich Creek Community Center and the facility was very cold. He asked if there would be a partial refund given and the Clerk explained everyone was contacted early to explain there was no heat in the facility and the parts needed were on backorder, giving everyone the option of rescheduling or canceling entirely. She said those groups opting not to cancel understood there would be no heat in the gymnasium or a refund issued.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. UPDATE ON THE RICH CREEK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Clerk reported a final draft of the RC Comprehensive Plan is being prepared by Bethany Peters (New River Valley Planning Commission), to present to the Virginia Department of Transportation and Town Council, for approval.

### **B. UPDATE ON THE NEW FIRE HALL**

Mayor Jones said the 3<sup>rd</sup> party review contractor & the Giles County Building Official is requiring the town follow the highest standard of requirements for the construction of the new fire department. He said he is in the process of scheduling a meeting of all parties involved, to discuss the project. He said the results of the survey of the town's property adjoining the state road does show the town borders up to the 50' right of way adjacent to the state road and United Hydraulics owns up to the 50' right of way on their side of the state road. He noted the survey shows United Hydraulics' fence is within the 50' right of way. Mayor Jones suggested he and Mr. Swartout schedule a meeting with the owners of United Hydraulics to discuss the findings of the survey.

### C. UPDATE ON THE LEAD & COPPER SURVEY GRANT

The Clerk said she has submitted all the data needed to CHA, Inc., they need to move forward with the Lead & Copper study.

### D. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE DRIVE THRU WINDOW AVAILABILITY

The Clerk said there has been very minimal use of the drive-thru services from noon until 1:00. Council agreed to return to the original hours of operation and close the drive thru from noon until 1:00.

Mrs. French asked Mr. Swartout about the request she submitted during the last meeting about the possibility of installing an additional fire hydrant on Market Road and he said the supplies are being ordered and the hydrant will be installed as soon as the workload allows.

Mr. Kantsios said he has been asked why the town(s) weren't notified by the Giles County PSA of the boil water requirement, prior to the emergency notification being sent out to the public, so they could have been prepared to answer any questions from the residents. Mr. Helm said he will bring this concern up at the next meeting of the PSA board members.

Mr. Kantsios said he understands a parking violation was issued by the Rich Creek department and he was told a council member told the individual they could destroy the ticket and he said he does not agree that any Council member has the authority to tell someone they don't have to pay a ticket issued by the town officers.

## NEW BUSINESS

### A. DISCUSSION REGARDING WOODLAND PARK RULES

Mr. Swartout said there have been some problems at the town park with teenagers trying to vandalize the playground and harassing individuals walking along the walking trail. There was some discussion regarding the installation of additional cameras, the posting of signs stating a child must be accompanied by a guardian, etc. There was some discussion of why the cameras aren't working and Mr. Swartout said the internet isn't accessible because of the trees surrounding the park and cemetery. Mr. Clemons said Council approved the hardwiring of the cameras at the park a while ago to eliminate the problem with the wireless communication issues and asked why the cameras are not working. Mr. Swartout said he will check with the public works department to see how soon the trench can be completed so Mr. Snider can proceed with the installation of the underground cable for the cameras. Mrs. Crawford suggested Officer Buckland and Officer Broyles observe the activities at the park and bring back a suggestion to the Council of any needs they observe (additional signs, cameras, etc.). Mayor Jones said there are things Mr. Snider was working on and asked Mr. Swartout to follow up on the status of those jobs and to create a list of things that need to be completed and to prioritize those items for Council members to review.

Mr. Helm said there is some interest in a pickleball court and asked Mr. Swartout to prepare a cost estimate for Council to review at the next meeting. He also asked Mr. Swartout about the fire suppression system consideration for the town offices, and Mr. Swartout said he has placed multiple calls but has received no response from any of the contractors.

Mrs. Crawford said there has been very little interest in the laborer position and suggested subcontracting the lawn maintenance. There was further discussion regarding the expenses related and the possibility of any petty crime offenders mowing the lawns for the town. There was concern about damages to the cemetery markers and all agreed Mr. Swartout request quotes from lawn maintenance contractors to present to Council for consideration. Mr. Swartout asked if he could reach out to the schools to see if they would be interested in a summer youth work program, with the school paying ½ of the

expense and the town paying the other ½ of the expense, for the student to take care of or assist with the mowing needs of the town. Council agreed that Mr. Swartout should contact the schools to see if there is any interest.

Mrs. Crawford thanked Council for the purchase of mulch for the islands along Main Street. She said she has not been able to complete the job because additional mulch is needed to complete the job. **Mr. Kantsios made a motion to approve the purchase of additional mulch to complete the job 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.** Council agreed to add a line item into the 2024/2025 Operating Budget for mulch, Christmas lights, flags, etc.

## TOWN ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

CHIEF OF POLICE-Steve Buckland

### February 2024 Activity Report

Accident Investigations: 0	Alarm Activations: 0	Animal Complaints: 1	Arrest: 3
Assist to Citizens: 4	Assist to Other Agencies: 3	Bulletins Received: 3	Court Related Activities: 10
Criminal/Narcotic Investigations: 6	Disturbance Calls: 1	Fire/Rescue Calls: 1	
Property/Business Checks: 90	Reports Submitted: 4	TDO Transports: 0	
Bulletins Received: 4	Training Activities: 2	Town Ordinance Violations Investigated: 2	

### February Activity

- Animal Complaint Church Street
- Failure to keep property clean Scenic Lane
- Trespassing Woodland Park
- Stolen Vehicle (Flock Camera) Rt. 460
- Public Intoxication Shell Station/Burger Boy
- Disorderly Conduct Old Virginia Avenue
- Damaged Property United Hydraulics

Officer Buckland reported the Flock cameras are working out well and Rich Creek is partnering with 56 other agencies, covering a wide range of areas along the north and southeast.

### PSA REPORT-Stuart Helm

Mr. Helm said the recent boil water notice was a result of a filter failure at the water treatment plant. He said the repair was made quickly and after further testing, the notice was lifted. After some discussion, all agreed a link be placed on the town's website and on the next water bill, for the Code Red notification alerts.

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT-Mervin Swartout

Mr. Swartout presented certificates of recognition to Chief Buckland and Officer Broyles for the recent administering of Narcam to a non-responsive female.

- December water loss: 9.7%
- Waiting on quotes from four contacts regarding the installation of a fire alarm system
- Inspection of the boiler at the town shop suggests the pipes be insulated. Mr. Swartout said the job has been added to the list of things to get done.
- Spoke with Mr. Charlie Mullins about the availability of someone to pick up trash along the streets in Rich Creek and he has agreed to send someone, when available.
- The heating system at the community center has been repaired but having issues with the thermostat.

- Wintergreen Commons reports no empty apartments and they have received notice from the Giles County Head Start program they will be closing the facility, after the end of the 2024 school year.
- The Mountain Valley Pipeline donated \$2500 towards the construction of the new fire department and a grateful citizen donated \$100 towards the project, in appreciation of the assistance provided to him and his wife, by Chief Buckland and Officer Broyles.

**TREASURER’S REPORT-Pam Kantsios**

Balance as of February 1, 2024	\$361,121.79
Receipts	170,735.24
Expenses	<u>91,635.46</u>
Balance as of February 29, 2024	\$440,221.57
Balance as of February 28, 2023	\$450,666.06

**CERTIFICATE OF ZONING COMPLIANCE ISSUED**

1561 Virginia Avenue                                      Remodel/Change of Use

**Tax Collection Report**

As of February 29, 2024	55%		
As of March 8, 2024	74%	As of March 11, 2024	78%
Dept of Motor Vehicle Stops Placed	28		
VA Dept of Taxations Debt Set Offs Placed	56		

Mayor Jones said the Army Corp of Engineers (ACE) is requiring Gentry’s Landing Campground prepare an evacuation plan. He said a draft plan has been prepared and submitted to ACE for final approval and after the plan is approved, a copy will be provided to the town and the RCVFD, for their records. He reported the caretaker at the campground has resigned and they are currently soliciting for a caretaker.

**PAYMENT OF THE BILLS**

Mrs. Crawford moved to approve payment of the bills, presented in the amount of \$48,340.59, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Kantsios. 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**

Mr. Helm moved to approve the re-appointment of Mr. Thomas Kantsios, to serve on the Rich Creek Board of Zoning (Term expiring August 2029) 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.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Offices will be closed on Friday, March 29, 2024 for Good Friday Holiday.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Kantsios moved that Council convene in Executive Session for personnel matters, as allowed by VA Code §2.2-3711, A1, Personnel, to discuss employee evaluations and consideration of salary adjustments and the motion was seconded by Mrs. Crawford. Approved unanimously (5-0) by the following roll call vote: Mrs. French, YES, Mr. Kantsios, YES; Mr. Helm, YES; Mrs. Crawford, YES; and Mr. Clemons, YES.

**Mr. Helm 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 Mrs. Crawford. Approved unanimously (5-0) by the following roll call vote: Mrs. French, YES; Mr. Kantsios, YES; Mr. Helm, YES; Mrs. Crawford, YES; and Mr. Clemons, YES.**

Mayor Jones said Council has decided to table the discussion regarding employee salaries, until there is additional information available.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

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Roger Jones, Mayor

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Pamela Kantsios, Town Clerk