

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
NORTH CAROLINA

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The Richlands Board of Aldermen met in Regular Session on March 11, 2025, at 6:00 pm at the Richlands Town Hall. Present for the meeting were:

Mayor McKinley Smith	Alderman Marilyn Bunce
Mayor Pro-Tem Tom Brown	Alderman Paul Conner
Alderman Kandy Koonce	Alderman Kent Painter

Also present were:

Gregg Whitehead, Town Administrator	Keith Fountain, Town Attorney
Erin Juhls, Town Clerk	Johnathan Jarman, Public Works Director
William A. Horne, Chief of Police	Officer Madison Pool

There were 4 citizens present.

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Mayor McKinley Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Alderman Kandy Koonce

III. INVOCATION: Mayor McKinley Smith

IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

Gregg Whitehead, Town Administrator, presented the agenda to the Board.

A **motion** was made by Alderman Marilyn Bunce seconded by Alderman Kandy Koonce to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

V. ADOPTION OF MINUTES (February 11, 2025):

A **motion** was made by Alderman Tom Brown, seconded by Alderman Kandy Koonce to approve the meeting minutes of February 11, 2025. The motion was unanimously carried.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

VII. PUBLIC HEARING: None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS: None

IX. NEW BUSINESS:

1. RESOLUTION 2025-01 (ANNEXATION PETITION):

Town Administrator, Gregg Whitehead presented Resolution 2025-01 which directs the Town Clerk to certify an annexation petition received by the town that will annex a 95.5 acre tract along Richlands Highway and across from the Waverly Place Subdivision.

A motion was made by Alderman Marilyn Bunce, seconded by Alderman Kandy Koonce to approve Resolution 2025-01. The motion was unanimously carried.

2. RVFD Fire Protection Service Contract:

Town Administrator Gregg Whitehead presented a draft contract between Richlands Volunteer Fire Department and the Town. The contract is for five years and provides fire protection services, medical first responder services and additional emergency response calls as directed by Onslow County 911 Center. The contract also calls for a \$50,000.00 increase in funding to RVFD spread over the term of the contract, or an additional \$10,000.00 per year. The Town currently pays RVFD \$40,000.00 per year for fire protection services.

Town Attorney, Keith Fountain recommended three changes:

- 1) That the Fire Department under their responsibilities, make their primary operations within one mile of the town limits as a condition of receiving this money.
- 2) That the lease on the property at 113 N. Wilmington Street end as soon as they are located somewhere else.
- 3) That the payments be split equally on a quarterly basis.

A **motion** was made by Alderman Kandy Koonce, seconded by Alderman Paul Conner to approve the contract as amended. The motion was unanimously carried.

3. BUDGET AMENDMENT #5:

In order to properly account for \$44,703.50 in expenditures for the stormwater project, Budget Amendment #5 needs to be approved. The next payment application submitted by the contractor for the stormwater project will be the final one. Fine grading and the final walk-through are the items left to complete. The total project is projected to come under budget.

A **motion** was made by Alderman Tom Brown, seconded by Alderman Kandy Koonce to approve Budget Amendment # 5. The motion was unanimously carried.

X. ADMINISTRATOR NOTES AND UPDATES:

The Town Administrator, Gregg Whitehead, presented a copy of notes and updates to the Board which is incorporated by reference and hereby made part of these minutes. He also reported on the following:

- Brightspeed has come out with fiber optic for businesses. Currently we have Spectrum and pay around \$190.00 a month, which includes one cable box. The best speed the town could get with Spectrum is around 95 MB. Brightspeed is offering a new pricing system for new customers:
 - 200-300 MB/\$89.00 a month
 - 500-600 MB/\$119.00 a month
 - 1 GB/\$159.99 a month
 - 5 static ip addresses/\$25.00 a month

The Board agreed this would be a better option.

- Will be taking a picture of the Board tonight for Onslow County. They are putting together a county wide information packet which will be distributed county wide.

XI. POLICE REPORT:

Chief William A. Horne presented a copy of the Activity Report for February 2025 and is incorporated by reference and hereby made part of these minutes. He also reported on the following:

- The two new watch guard in-car camera systems have been installed. The video will automatically be uploaded when the cars pull into the parking lot. Currently, the town's upload speed is too low. Upgrading to Brightspeed could potentially help.
- Annual Inservice Training has begun and hope to be done by August.
- Pool was scheduled for patrol rifle class, but it was cancelled due to weather.
- Attended ballistic and body armor demonstrations.
- Liberty Christian Academy had their 5K run on Saturday. About 311 people signed up.

XII. BOARD MEMBER CONCERNS AND COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Alderman Kent Painter: Inquired if there were any updates on the street paving project.

Town Administrator, Gregg Whitehead stated that we are waiting on the environmental review for USDA.

XIII. PERSONNEL: None

XIV. CLOSED SESSION:

A **motion** was made by Alderman Paul Conner, seconded by Alderman Kandy Koonce to go into closed session to discuss a proposed acquisition of real property. The motion was unanimously carried.

Mayor McKinley Smith called the meeting back into open session.

No action was taken in closed session but there was a discussion regarding acquisition of real property.

A **motion** was then made by Alderman Tom Brown, seconded by Alderman Kandy Koonce to authorize Mr. Whitehead to continue negotiations of the acquisition of a piece of real property and to execute a draft of an offer to purchase and contract contingent upon the approval of the full board. The motion was unanimously carried.

XV. ADJOURN:

With no further business, a **motion** was made by Alderman Paul Conner, seconded by Alderman Kandy Koonce to adjourn the meeting at 6:42 pm. The motion was unanimously carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mayor McKinley Smith

Attest:

Erin Juhls, Town Clerk