

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
NORTH CAROLINA

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The Richlands Board of Aldermen met in Regular Session on July 8, 2025, at 6:00 pm at the Richlands Town Hall. Present for the meeting were:

Mayor McKinley Smith
Mayor Pro-Tem Tom Brown
Alderman Kent Painter

Alderman Marilyn Bunce
Alderman Paul Conner

Absent: Alderman Kandy Koonce

Also present were:

Gregg Whitehead, Town Administrator
Erin Juhls, Town Clerk
William A. Horne, Chief of Police

Keith Fountain, Town Attorney
Johnathan Jarman, Public Works Director

There were 5 citizens present.

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

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

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Arthine Thomas

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 Paul Conner seconded by Alderman Kent Painter to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

V. ADOPTION OF MINUTES (June 2025):

A **motion** was made by Alderman Paul Conner, seconded by Alderman Tom Brown to approve the meeting minutes of June, 2025 to include and to seal the closed session minutes. The motion was unanimously carried.

- VI. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None
- VII. **PUBLIC HEARING:** None
- VIII. **OLD BUSINESS:** None
- IX. **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **BUDGET AMENDMENT #1:**

Town Administrator Gregg Whitehead presented Budget Amendment #1 which will appropriate the necessary funds for the purchase of the Richlands Volunteer Fire Department property located next to town hall.

A **motion** was made by Alderman Tom Brown, seconded by Alderman Marilyn Bunce to approve Budget Amendment #1. The motion was unanimously carried.

2. **SUBDIVISION MAP APPROVAL:**

Town Administrator Gregg Whitehead presented a subdivision map that would create three commercial parcels as part of the Ellis Development project. The three parcels will be located along Hwy 24/258 and will be the main entrance to the development on the highway side. Since the proposed subdivision creates easements, the Board will have to approve the subdivision per the town's subdivision regulations.

A **motion** was made by Alderman Marilyn Bunce, seconded by Alderman Paul Conner to approve the subdivision map. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. **RESOLUTION 2025-01:**

Town Administrator Gregg Whitehead presented Resolution 2025-01 which directs the Town Clerk to certify a voluntary annexation petition received by the town that will annex approximately 96 acres between Kinston Highway and Richlands Loop Road in Onslow County. Once the petition is certified, the Board may schedule a public hearing on the proposed annexation.

Alderman Brown expressed his concerns with the property being so far out of town and feels it would put added stress on the Police Department and Public Works Department. He feels it would be a disadvantage to the town.

A **motion** was made by Alderman Tom Brown, seconded by Alderman Kent Painter to not move forward with Resolution 2025-01. The motion was unanimously carried.

4. **HIGHWAY 24/258 SPEED LIMIT DISCUSSION:**

Alderman Bunce requested that a discussion be held on the merits of requestion NCDOT to lower the speed limit on Highway 24/258 (Richlands Highway) at 35 MPH within the town limits.

Town Administrator Gregg Whitehead informed the Board that he met with the division engineer and other members of NCDOT regarding the all way stop downtown project. They discussed the possibility of reducing the speed limit downtown to 25 MPH in longer stretches as well as doing an updated safety study, the last one being in 2022. They plan to come back next year and look into reconsidering the project.

He also stated that NCDOT did not have a comment either way regarding lowering the speed limit on Highway 24/258 but expressed the town would need to adopt a resolution requesting the speed limit reduction and state that the town would make an effort to enforce it.

Alderman Bunce stated that she asked for the discussion on the speed limit because citizens have come to her in the past and present with their concerns of speeding on the Highway.

A **motion** was then made by Alderman Tom Brown, seconded by Alderman Marilyn Bunce to approve a Resolution requesting the speed limit be lowered to 35 MPH. The motion was approved with 3 Ayes (Alderman Brown, Alderman Painter, Alderman Bunce and 1 Nay (Alderman Conner.

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:

- Received a new bid on the Help Building for \$300,000.00 which included a \$15,000.00 deposit.

After some discussion, a **motion** was made by Alderman Tom Brown, seconded by Alderman Paul Conner to approve the Resolution authorizing the disposal of property through negotiated offer, advertisement and upset bids with a minimum bid of \$300,000. The motion was unanimously carried.

- Received a letter from the Onslow County Manager informing the town that they are going to create a strategic fire system plan. This will help identify what each fire department in the county is in need of. They also do not intend to approve any construction funding before the plan is finalized.
- The Police Chief asked to bring up the discussion regarding non-profit events in the town and whether or not to charge organizations for police coverage.

After some discussion, a **motion** was made by Alderman Marilyn Bunce, seconded by Alderman Tom Brown for the town to reimbursement the Police Department for any events that require police coverage. The motion was unanimously carried.

- Town Attorney Keith Fountain addressed the Board regarding the Offer to Purchase and contract on the land beside town hall. He stated that the contract has not yet been accepted and requested permission to alter the dates to the inspection period being 30 days from acceptance and closing date 60 days from acceptance.

A **motion** was made by Alderman Tom Brown, seconded by Alderman Paul Conner to allow the offer to be altered to the inspection period being 30 days from acceptance and closing date 60 days from acceptance. The motion was unanimously carried.

XI. POLICE REPORT:

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

- The new motor on car 8 is being replaced under warranty again.
- The new BLET candidate has resigned due to some family issues.

XII. BOARD MEMBER CONCERNS AND COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Alderman Marilyn Bunce: Inquired if ONWASA was working on some streets in town. Public Works Director Johnathan Jarman stated a sewer service had dropped down inside the main on W Foy Street and was being repaired by ONWASA.

Still waiting on the County to send the latest subdivision technical reviews but will update everyone as soon as she has them.

Alderman Kent Painter: Thanked Alderman Conner for putting together the ordinance information.

Alderman Paul Conner: Presented the noise ordinance from Greenville, NC, and a comparison of some categories between Richlands and Greenville which is incorporated and hereby made part of these minutes. He feels their ordinance has good information that the town could possibly use.

Town Attorney Keith Fountain expressed that a lot of the ordinances are subjective and almost impossible to enforce.

Mayor McKinley Smith: Thanked Alderman Conner for the ordinance comparison. Also stated that on Woodson Street there are no issues with motor vehicle noise until the high school releases in the afternoon. He also spoke regarding animal noise and how his Rottweiler only barks at night because of the coyotes.

XIII. PERSONNEL: None

XIV. CLOSED SESSION: None

XV. ADJOURN:

With no further business, a **motion** was made by Alderman Tom Brown seconded by Alderman Kent Painter to adjourn the meeting at 7:07 pm. The motion was unanimously carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mayor McKinley Smith

Attest:
Erin Juhls, Town Clerk

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