

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
NORTH CAROLINA

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The Richlands Board of Aldermen met in Regular Session on May 12, 2026, at 6:00pm at the Richlands Town Hall. Present for the meeting were:

Alderman Tom Brown
Alderman Kent Painter
Alderman Alice Betts

Alderman Paul Conner
Alderman Marilyn Bunce

Absent: Mayor McKinley Smith

Isaura Flores, Town Clerk

Also present were:

Chris Roberson, Town Administrator
Johnathan Jarman, Public Works Director
William Horne, Chief of Police

Keith Fountain, Town Attorney

There were 11 citizens present.

A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Brown called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Invocation – Mayor Pro Tem Tom Brown
2. Pledge of Allegiance – Alderman Alice Betts

B. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

Chris Roberson, Town Administrator, presented the agenda to the Board.

A **motion** was made by Alderman Marylin Bunce, seconded by Alderman Paul Conner, to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

C. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

1. 04-08-26 Special Call Meeting Minutes

A **motion** was made by Alderman Kent Painter, seconded by Alderman Marilyn Bunce, to approve the April 8, 2026 Special Call Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

2. 04-14-26 Regular Meeting Minutes

A **motion** was made by Alderman Kent Painter, seconded by Alderman Paul Conner, to approve the April 14, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

3. 04-20-26 Reconvened Meeting Minutes (**Forthcoming**)

D. PUBLIC COMMENT: Yes

- Sheryl Brown expressed concerns regarding aggressive dogs in her neighborhood and inquired about possible measures to address potentially dangerous animals.

E. PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Rezoning for Francktown Road

Town Administrator Chris Roberson presented a summary of the rezoning request for approximately 50 acres located off Francktown Road from RA (Rural Agricultural) to RM-6 (Residential) for residential development.

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Brown opened the public hearing.

Two individuals signed up to speak regarding the request.

- Josh Edmondson, representing Tidewater Associates, spoke in support of the rezoning request. Mr. Edmondson stated the property would be incorporated into a previously approved residential development and would provide a secondary access point to Francktown Road. He noted the request was consistent with prior rezoning approvals associated with the overall development plan.
- Robert Dixon expressed concerns regarding the impacts of continued development on roads, farmland, traffic, and the surrounding area.

A **motion** was made by Alderman Marilyn Bunce, seconded by Alderman Paul Conner, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously carried.

F. PRESENTATIONS: None

G. OLD BUSINESS: None

H. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Rezoning off of Francktown Road (ACTION):

Town Administrator Chris Roberson reviewed the Consistency Statement Worksheet and the requirements for consideration of the rezoning request for approximately 50 acres located off Francktown Road from RA (Rural Agricultural) to RM-6 (Residential).

A **motion** was made by Alderman Marylin Bunce, seconded by Alderman Paul Conner, to approve the rezoning request and adopt the Consistency Statement Worksheet as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

2. Resolution Changing the Form of Government to Council-Manager (ACTION):

Town Administrator Chris Roberson reviewed the process required to change the Town's form of government from Mayor-Council to Council-Manager, including the required public hearing and subsequent adoption procedures.

A **motion** was made by Alderman Paul Conner, seconded by Alderman Kent Painter, to approve the Resolution of Intent to Consider an Ordinance Amending the Town's Charter to adopt the Council-Manager form of government and to set a public hearing for June 9, 2026, regarding the proposed change in the Town's form of government. The motion was unanimously carried.

3. FY 26-27 Budget Update (REVIEW):

Town Administrator Chris Roberson provided an update regarding the FY 2026-2027 budget process and ongoing uncertainty related to county property revaluations and pending legislative action at the State level. Mr. Roberson discussed competing legislative proposals, statutory budget deadlines, and the potential need for a Special Called Meeting once additional guidance becomes available.

Discussion was also held regarding plans to pursue grant funding opportunities for future street improvement projects.

Alderman Marilyn Bunce inquired about the potential impact of pending legislation on the Town's property tax rate and budget process. Mr. Roberson provided additional clarification regarding budget adoption and revenue considerations.

I. DEPARTMENTAL MONTHLY REPORTS:

• Police (Review):

Chief of Police William Horne presented the Police Department monthly report and provided updates regarding department operations, staffing, training, and recruitment efforts. Chief Horne reported that a vehicle software issue affecting uploads had been resolved, Officer Saldaña was currently on leave, Officer Lessner recently attended training, and one applicant is expected to complete Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) in October.

• Finance – April 2026 Budget vs Actual Report (Review):

The April 2026 Revenue and Expenditure Budget vs. Actual Reports were presented for review. Mr. Roberson also provided updates regarding workers' compensation and insurance costs and discussed plans to limit expenditures through the end of the fiscal year. No action was taken.

- **Code Enforcement (REVIEW):**

Town Administrator Chris Roberson presented the April 2026 Code Enforcement Report for review, including notice of violation letters.

- **Public Works (REVIEW):**

Town Administrator Chris Roberson presented the April 2026 Public Works Report for review.

J. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

- Updates/Additional Information (Review)

Town Administrator Chris Roberson provided the monthly report for April 2026, including updates regarding street project grant funding, Venters Park construction, planning and development activities, budget preparation, website improvements, and ongoing discussions with the County Planning Director regarding a potential agreement for development review and code enforcement services.

K. BOARD MEMBER CONCERNS AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

Alderman Tom Brown: None

Alderman Paul Conner: Thanked those in attendance.

Alderman Kent Painter: None

Alderman Alice Betts: None

Alderman Marilyn Bunce: Provided an update regarding a conditional zoning request submitted to Onslow County and discussed ongoing development-related matters. Alderman Bunce also

discussed downtown revitalization opportunities and announced an upcoming open house meeting.

L. CLOSED SESSION FOR PERSONNEL – NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6):

A **motion** was made by Alderman Paul Conner, seconded by Alderman Kent Painter, to enter Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6). The motion was unanimously carried.

A **motion** was made by Alderman Paul Conner, seconded by Alderman Marilyn Bunce, to return to Open Session. The motion was unanimously carried.

Attorney Keith Fountain stated that the only action resulting from Closed Session was consideration of a family leave request in accordance with the Town's Personnel Policy.

A motion was made by Alderman Paul Conner, seconded by Alderman Kent Painter, to approve a family leave request for up to six (6) months in accordance with the Town's Personnel Policy. The motion was unanimously carried.

M. ADJOURN:

A **motion** was made by Alderman Paul Conner, seconded by Alderman Kent Painter, to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m. The motion was unanimously carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mayor Pro-Tem Tom Brown

Attest: Isaura Flores, Town Clerk