

Town of Richey Council Meeting
Approved Minutes
Tuesday, June 10, 2025—Town Office/Fire Hall
6:00 p.m.

Open Meeting and Pledge of Allegiance: Meeting called to order at 6:18 PM following the CDBG Public Hearing.

Roll Call of the Council Members and Guests: Councilmember Ulrich, Councilmember Barnhart, Councilmember Gibson, Councilmember Clinton, Brandy Schipman, Lorraine Whiteman, Jodie Campbell (Finance officer)

Consent Items*: It was brought to attention by Councilmember Clinton that the minutes for the Income Survey Town Hall meeting held on May 21, 2025, did not have a title and a date. It was discussed that one should be added. Motion made by Councilmember Gibson to approve the consent items with the previously stated amendment. Seconded by Councilmember Ulrich. All in favor, motion carried. See attached voting record.

- Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting(s)
- Monthly Bank Reconciliation
- Monthly Payroll, Claims, and Journal Entries

** **Consent Items** are those upon which the presiding officer considers no discussion should be necessary. However, at the beginning of each meeting, any Council Member may request one or more items to be removed from the consent agenda for the purpose of discussion prior to a separate vote on the item(s). The presiding officer shall schedule such discussion and vote immediately following adoption of the consent agenda.*

Correspondence:

Sheriff's / Dispatch Report - Councilmember Barnhart had asked if the dog situation on the Sheriff's Report had been resolved. Mayor Brown responded that she did not know, though she was notified that it was responded to.

Build up Richey Community Open House hosted by Eastern Plains Economic Development - no comments.

Letter of congratulations from Governor of MCEP award of \$500,000 for Phase 3 Water Project - no comments.

Public Comment for items not on the agenda: None.

Mayor's Report: See attached report.

Council Reports and Concerns: None.

Committee Reports: Planning Board report, updates and actions

Councilmember Ulrich updated the Town Council on the recent Planning Board meetings. Ulrich stated that it currently is mostly covering wind farms and public hearings are now beginning. The first public hearing is this Thursday, June 12 and believed the time of the meeting to begin is 7 p.m.

Public Works / Clerk's Report - Delinquent accounts: Chance Senner updated the Town Council on delinquent accounts, having 2 at addresses 314 1st Street East and 212 Antelope Avenue West. Senner then updated the Town Council on recent/ongoing activities such as, a water service line replacement at 107 Elk Avenue East, a fire hydrant replacement at the corner of 1st St. NE and Porter Avenue, 2 curb stop replacements for residents, the paving of streets 2nd Street East and 2nd Street West, spreading millings along boulevards and dirt/gravel roads, preparing a Consumer Confidence Report, a recent DEQ inspection, removing the plow and sander from the dump truck, taking the mower to CHS for repairs, repair updates on the ambulance bay garage door, and setting up the transfer pump at the lagoon.

Old Business:

1. Income survey updates administered by Midwest Assistance Program (MAP) to qualify to apply for the CDBG grant funding.

Mayor Brown updated council that the Town of Richey qualifies for the requirements to apply for the CDBG grant with 60% of the received falling in the low to moderate income range. She reported from her communications with the MAP representative that currently 85 income surveys have been returned to MAP which exceeds the requirements of the percentile that need to be returned. Mayor Brown expressed thanks for residents who participated in the survey to help support possible additional grant funding for the Town. She expressed special thanks to community members Gail Miller for helping

with the stuffing and addressing of the envelopes for the mailing of the income surveys and to Bette Brown who called and went door-to-door to residents to encourage them to return the income surveys.

2. Discussion and updates for Interlocal Agreement between Town and County for Ambulance Services.

Mayor Brown stated that she met with the County Commissioners at their June 3 regular meeting to update them on the requirements from MMIA (the Town's insurance carrier) of an Interlocal Agreement with the County for the Town providing ambulance service to the County and to ask for assistance in monetary payment of \$2,000 annually to help cover the costs of running the Ambulance service which is a department of the Town of Richey. The interlocal agreement is a necessary requirement requested from MMIA so the ambulance personnel and the ambulance itself will be covered under the insurance policy outside of Town limits if something were to happen and a claim is issued. She also stated that she has been working with the Town's attorney on the updates to the drafted interlocal agreement and is hoping it can be finalized soon to be presented to the County Commissioners.

3. Discussion and possible action on ambulance procedure and billing policy.

Mayor Brown stated that she wants to ensure that the Town's ambulance service can continue for many years to come and that a billing policy needs to be in place for consistency because currently there is a great possibility that the ambulance fund will self-defund because there is not enough revenue coming into the fund to counter the expenses. The expenses are largely being funded by Town paid mills but services are also being rendered outside of town limits. This is not fair to the residents of Richey who are funding services in the County. There is also an inconsistency on who is being billed for ambulance services. The Mayor stated that this is not fair and equal practice. Councilmember Gibson agreed. The Town contracts with Med-Write for billing services, and Med-Write ~~dropped the Town as a client~~ (corrected text: *could not process the Town's Medicare claims*) because of the Medicare requirement of at least one submitted claim of payment every six months. The cost to reapply for Med-Write to become the Town's ambulance billing provider is \$750.00. Mayor Brown then gave the floor to EMT's Tammy Clinton and Brandy Shipman. Councilmember Clinton stated that she wants to ensure policy is in place to maintain funding and keep the ambulance services self-sustaining and comply with state regulations. Brandy Shipman expressed that much of the ambulance policy is currently being practiced; it just needs to be in writing for future reference. Policies from other towns have been collected, and an Ambulance Department meeting was held on Monday, June 9 with all EMTs invited and two (Brandy and Tammy) attending. Mayor Brown then asked for other public comments. There was none.

4. Muni-code ordinance recodification update.

Mayor Brown informed the council that muni-code updates were contained in their packets. Further, she noted that it is in the process of being cleaned up, and hopefully will not be long before it is online and ready to go. When administration receives the legal review and revisions additional meetings may be required for adoption. The ordinances and codes will become part of the website and maintained by Civic Plus. Councilmember Clinton pointed out on the check list that Civic Plus has Town of Richey, MI and not MT for Montana. Mayor Brown thanked her for the "good catch" and said it would be corrected. Mayor Brown then asked for public comment. There was none.

5. Discussion and updates on Montana Mainstreet Application

Mayor Brown referenced the letter from the Montana Department of Commerce containing the denial that the Town of Richey was not selected as a member of the Montana Mainstreet Program because of the lack of community support and multiple community members expressed opposition to joining at the Montana Main Street meeting in November that was held at the Senior Center. Councilmember Gibson commented on attending the meeting and Councilmember Clinton commented that she wished she would have attended. Mayor Brown asked for public comment. There was none.

6. Correspondence from County Sanitarian and action on nuisance properties.

Mayor Brown updated the Town Council that the County Sanitarian has reached the point of asking the Town of Richey governing body for action on how to proceed with mitigation of the nuisance properties. Starting with the property 319 1st Street West. Councilmember Clinton asked the name of the property owner. Councilmember Gibson responded that it was the property of Head's. It was noted that there has been significant clean up, correspondence with the sanitarian has been maintained, and they have produced receipts. Mayor Brown asked for Council's recommendation at this time. Councilmember Barnhart stated that he believes they have met the requirements. Motion made by Councilmember Barnhart to make a recommendation to the Sanitarian that the property 319 1st Street West has been remediated. Mayor Brown then asked for public comment on the matter. There was no public comment.

Motion then was seconded by Councilmember Gibson. All in favor, motion carried. See attached voting record. Moving forward to the property on 2nd Street East. Mayor Brown noted that the property had improved. Councilmember Clinton noted that the property owner is clearly making an effort to clean it up. Motion made by Councilmember Clinton to make a recommendation to the Sanitarian that the property on 2nd Street East has been remediated. Mayor Brown then asked for public comment on the matter. There was no public comment. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Barnhart. All in favor, motion carried. See attached voting record. Moving forward onto the property on 1st St. NE. Mayor Brown stated that the property is beyond repair, and the Sanitarian agrees it needs to be torn down. Correspondence had finally been made with the property owner via a phone call and text from Mayor Brown after the Sanitarian notified her that there had not been a response from the mailed certified letter and the letter had not been returned as undelivered. The property owner did then contact the Sanitarian. Through correspondence between the Sanitarian and the owner, the owner agreed to tear down the property and dispose of it on the family farm's property. The Sanitarian shared that per DEQ the property can not be disposed of and buried on the family farm's property and it has to be disposed of at a properly licensed waste facility. The owner (representative of the Candee Estate) stated he would need more time then the end of July to work out the details of disposal. Mayor Brown asked for Council's recommendation on the Candee Estate property. Councilmember Gibson stated that she would like to give the property owner August 30th, 2025 to remediate the nuisance property, with Councilmember Barnhart in agreement. Resident Lorraine Whiteman stated she believed this deadline to be fair. Motion made by Councilmember Gibson to give the Candee family until August 30th, 2025 to remediate the nuisance property on 1st St. NE. Mayor Brown asked for any further public comment. There was none. Motion seconded by Councilmember Barnhart. All in favor, motion carried. See attached voting record.

7. Corrective response to audit findings for 2023 audit

Mayor Brown stated that the Town of Richey is required to publish the audit findings as well as a corrective action plan to be submitted to the State Financial Services Division. She expressed that there were only 2 findings against the Town and felt that that was pretty good given that the Town had not had an official audit in almost 20 years. She also expressed that former clerk Jon Senner worked very hard to clean up the financial accounting of the Town. Councilmember Clinton stated that he was newly hired and only employed for a few months when the audit period began. Councilmember Gibson stated that the Town's governing body was all new and a lot was worked on to comply with State code. Mayor Brown stated that the Town's administration now requires the proper reports in the Council's packets for review and approval; a practice that did not happen with the former administration. Mayor Brown stated that this is not just an audit and audit findings against the clerk and financial officer of the Town, but also against the Mayor and the Council. She then gave the floor to Financial Officer Jodie Campbell. Jodie stated that this will be a relatively simple correction to respond to, as the audit was for the fiscal year of 2023, and most of the findings likely have already been rectified. She noted that it is important not to have the same findings in future audits or financial reviews as it could have impacts in receiving future state and federal funding such as gas tax monies being held from distribution to the Town.

8. Wharton paving completion - SLIPPA contract and reimbursement

Mayor Brown stated that street paving is now completed, and she and the clerk are working on SLIPPA reporting currently, it is due Friday, June 13th 2025. She expressed that she wished more could have been paved, but that was all that could be afforded at the time. Mayor Brown asked for comments or questions on paving from the public. There were none.

9. Discussion and possible action to move forward with funding on portable generator for emergency situations with possible grant funding from the Glendive Masons.

Councilmember Ulrich stated that he would need further information about the water plant to ensure that the generator the Town of Richey is in search of would be suitable to run it. Clerk/Public Works Senner and Councilmember Ulrich discussed that they would find a suitable time for them to go to the water plant to assess the requirements of the generator. Mayor Brown asked for comments or questions from the public. There were none.

New Business:

10. Discussion and action to remove nuisance property tax liens from 2016-2021 for property parcel RRT275 due to the nuisance buildings being remediated and removed from the land owned by a different property owner.

Motion made by Councilmember Barnhart to remove nuisance property tax liens from 2016-2021 for property parcel RRT275 due to the nuisance buildings being remediated and removed from the land owned by a different property owner. There were two agreements made by the public, Lorraine Whiteman and Brandy Schipman, to support the removal of the nuisance fines. Mayor Brown asked for

any further public comment. There was none. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Gibson. All in favor, motion carried. See attached voting record.

11. Discussion and possible action on property damage at 305 1st Street East from a failed service main before the curbstop.

With Mayor Brown being the claimant of the property damage, the meeting administration was turned over to Council President Clinton. During February of 2025, a service line leading to an adjacent property curb stop failed and flooded Mrs. Brown's property basement. Clerk/Public Works Chance Senner explained that a claim has been filed to MMIA, and he has been in contact with them. He further went on by stating that progress is being made on determining liability, as the Town of Richey is responsible for the failed service line, it's replacement was missed in the Great Wests Engineering's Plans. Resident Lorraine Whiteman questioned why the property owner cannot directly submit the claim with the contractor and engineer? Councilmember Clinton responded that since the contractor and the engineer contract with the Town of Richey, the claim and correspondence has to go through the Town. *Brandy Schipman left the meeting at 8:00 PM.* Councilmember Clinton recommended that this business item stays on this agenda for further updates and discussion. No action was taken. *Lorraine Whiteman left the meeting at 8:04 PM.*

Council President Clinton turned the meeting administration back over to Mayor Brown.

12. Discussion and possible action to accept bid to construct concrete apron around storm water drainage culvert by Greg Sodt house.

Mayor Brown stated that Greg Sodt approached her to discuss the drainage culvert in front of their property, noting the timbers around it that were in place originally are now failing. The plans detail a concrete skirt for the culvert and footing if needed. She further stated they were planning to have other concrete work done and thought this would be a good time to have a concrete apron done for the culvert as well. Greg sent a bid to Mayor Brown from Imperial Concrete. The bid is \$1,500.00. Councilmember Ulrich asked if the work was for one side or for both sides. Greg Sodt was then called briefly for confirmation. Greg Sodt did not answer. Councilmember Barnhart had asked how this projects effects the Town of Richey budget and funding wise. Mayor Brown noted that she had printed off budget to actual reports for the council to view. Brown then referred to Finance Officer Jodie Campbell for inquiries on which fund this project would come from. Jodie responded that it would come out of the general fund, and could come out of "roads & streets" if it is damaging the roads, with the "roads & streets" fund being at 87% expended. Mayor Brown pointed out the the whole General Fund is currently at 72% so the Town is in a good position and could handle the \$1,500.00 even for this fiscal year. Jodi Campell recommended that it could be part of next fiscal year's budget and most likely would be as we are already into the second week of June and the fiscal year ends June 30th. With no further discussion and no public in attendance for comment, a motion was made by Councilmember Clinton to accept the bid of \$1,500.00 but not to exceed \$1,500.00. Motion seconded by Councilmember Barnhart. All in favor, motion carried. See attached voting record.

13. Budget preparation and discussion.

Mayor Brown asked for budget input and stated that she will meet with Public Works and Water Plant Operator to discuss the fiscal year 2025 - 2026 budget. It was discussed to include a portable generator for emergency purposes in the budget. Jodie Campbell stated that the Town of Richey will not receive their numbers from the county for General Mill funds until July/August 2025 which is needed to complete the audit so the Town is not behind in budget preparation. There was no further discussion and no public in attendance for comment.

Adjournment: Motion made by Councilmember Gibson to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Councilmember Barnhart. All in favor, motion carried. See attached voting record. Meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Public comment is listed on the agenda for individuals to discuss any public matter not otherwise specifically listed on the agenda. If any individual desires to speak about an item specifically listed on the agenda, time will be allowed and identified by the mayor as "Any public comment?" when the item comes up for discussion and/or action.

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ATTEST: _____
Chance Senner, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: _____
NaDean Brown, Mayor