

The Rural Retreat Town Council held a regular meeting on May 24, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. in the Rural Retreat Town Hall Council Chambers.

PRESENT RURAL RETREAT TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Timothy Litz, Vice-Mayor Keith Crigger, Ed Schaack, Scott Mecimore, Dale Yontz, Jerrell Hall, Peggy Hash

ABSENT

NONE

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Raymond Matney, Town Manager; Lori Guynn, Clerk/Treasurer; Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

ADMINISTRATION ABSENT

NONE

OTHERS PRESENT

Jay Hawkins, Administrator – Rural Retreat Volunteer Emergency Services

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Mayor Litz called the meeting to order and determined a quorum was present.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Rev. Ed Schaack.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Litz.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilmember Yontz, seconded by Councilmember Hash to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2011 regular meeting as written. The motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Mecimore, Schaack, Yontz; zero (0) against.

CITIZEN'S TIME

Jay Hawkins, Administrator for the Rural Retreat Volunteer Emergency Services provided a financial breakdown of revenue and expenses for August 2009 - July 2010 to the Council as

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requested at a previous meeting. Councilmember Hash commented the salaries for the paid personnel are included in the expenses. Mr. Hawkins added the salaries are for the months February thru July 2010 because the paid crew began in February. Mr. Matney asked Mr. Hawkins for the specific request from the emergency services. Mr. Hawkins replied they would like to receive enough money to purchase two heart monitors for two of the emergency trucks but if they can only purchase one then that is more than what they currently have. The current cost for a new monitor is \$25,000. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked Mr. Hawkins if the RRVES treasurer could provide them with a revenue and expense report to date. Mr. Hawkins responded the cash on hand balances are to date. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked Mr. Hawkins when the RRVES began billing for services. Mr. Hawkins replied they began in January 2010. Mr. Matney inquired if the emergency services have an annual audit conducted. Mr. Hawkins responded yes, it is conducted by Albano & Associates. Mr. Matney requested Mr. Hawkins bring a copy of the audit to the Council for review and a revenue and expense report to date. Mayor Litz advised Mr. Hawkins to furnish the report to Mr. Matney and it would expedite his request.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Matney announced the Town of Pulaski will be rededicating the Pulaski Train Station on June 11, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. and has invited the council members to attend. He stated the VML Town Section meeting was held in the train station and commented it was a nice facility.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell reported activities had increased during May. He added he will be in court the following day due to summons he issued. Chief Mitchell noted he is continuing to work on dog complaints and inoperative motor vehicles. Mayor Litz addressed speeding issues on Parsonage Avenue where the speed limit is 35 miles per hour. Mr. Matney asked Chief Mitchell to monitor this area more. Discussion ensued on areas the Wythe County Sheriff's Office has been patrolling. Councilmember Schaack asked Chief Mitchell about the wreck that occurred near Grace Lutheran Church. Chief Mitchell responded he wasn't contacted about it. Councilmember Hash inquired as to why Chief Mitchell didn't respond to the accident. Chief Mitchell explained he has repeatedly requested the Wythe County Sheriff's Office dispatchers contact him of activity but eventually they stop until he makes another request. Mr. Matney reported he will follow up with Sheriff King and attempt to resolve this issue.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

THE CROOKED ROAD – Mayor Litz has been corresponding with representatives of The Crooked Road but has not received responses to his inquiries. Last year the town contributed \$1,000 but did not receive a stop on the tour. Mr. Matney added other localities have contacted him about invoices they received for significant amounts and receiving no return on the investment. Mayor Litz reported if he receives a response he will share it with the full Council.

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NEW BUSINESS

NONE

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Chairman Yontz reported there were no changes since the previous meeting. Mayor Litz added he has seen the Christmas ornament and it was beautiful.

FINANCE – Chairman Crigger reported the third draft of the budget had been distributed to the full Council. In this budget the committee will be recommending increases in the water and sewer fees and taxes. Those increases will be reflected in the final draft and will be redistributed. A public hearing will be scheduled for the June 14 meeting. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked Mr. Matney to review the proposed increases. Mr. Matney reported the recommended increases and projected revenues are as follows: real estate tax increase from \$0.17/\$100 valuation to \$0.20/\$100 valuation with a revenue increase of \$32,000; personal property tax increase from \$0.45/\$100 valuation to \$0.50/\$100 valuation with a revenue increase of \$5,000; machine and tools tax from \$0.12/\$100 valuation to \$0.15/\$100 valuation with a revenue increase of \$8,500; water and sewer rate increase of four percent (4%); and an increase in the meals tax rate from four percent (4%) to five percent (5%) with a revenue increase of \$25,000. Mr. Matney added the increase in the meals tax rate will require an amendment to the current ordinance. The proposed budget also includes a one (1) step pay increase for all employees equivalent to two percent (2%). The draft budget distributed includes the proposed water and sewer rate increases and the employee pay increase but does not include the proposed tax increases. Vice-Mayor Crigger pointed out tax rate increases have been postponed for a long time and now the rates need to change in order to catch up. Mr. Matney added the increases are attributed to the mandates the General Assembly has imposed on localities. He asked for direction from the Council on including the proposed increases in the budget. The consensus was to proceed.

PERSONNEL – Chairman Schaack reported the committee had completed interviews with the four candidates. The committee will be meeting Tuesday, May 31 at 6:00 p.m. and hopes to make a recommendation at the next Council meeting. Chairman Schaack also pointed out that two of the candidates had asked for the Council's long range plan. He added he would like for the Council to consider forming one.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Town Manager's report is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes. The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

TEA-21 SIDEWALK PROJECT – The contractor has completed all curb, gutter and storm drainage on East Railroad Avenue. Street paving is scheduled for mid June. Work is continuing on Catron Street and should be completed within two weeks. The contractor will not resume construction on East Buck Avenue until schools are closed for the summer.

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WATER PROJECT OUT-OF-TOWN, DIVISION II – Due to wet weather the contractor has not been able to complete restorations to ditch lines and yards.

WATER PROJECT OUT-OF-TOWN, DIVISION III (RIDGE AVENUE) – As previously reported, a pre-bid conference will be held May 26th at 10:00 a.m. and the bid opening will be June 14th.

WATER PROJECT IN-TOWN – The contractor has completed the line construction on Maple Avenue, Frye Avenue and a portion of West Lee Highway. These lines have been pressure tested and disinfected and will be placed in service upon approval by VDH. Mr. Matney noted the current line on Frye Avenue has three leaks so the sooner we receive approval the sooner the line can be terminated.

STALEY SPRING PILOT STUDY – The equipment has been received and the unit should be completely set up today. The testing will begin this week and will continue for one month. The filters are being pre-soaked and should be installed tomorrow.

MOWING EQUIPMENT – The new mowing equipment has been received by Southwestern Equipment with training on the equipment with town personnel being conducted tomorrow. Mowing along town streets will begin later in the week.

Discussion ensued on abandoned properties and the town's current requirement to mow grass on the properties during the months of June and September. Vice-Mayor Crigger made a motion to amend the ordinance for the cutting and removal of grass, weeds and other foreign growth from residential properties by setting a height limit of twelve (12) inches. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Yontz. Councilmember Mecimore questioned the requirement on properties that are zoned residential and the grass is mowed for hay. Mr. Matney responded the property owner would be asked if they are planning to mow the property or use it for hay then allow the owner time to get the hay made. Mr. Matney added this will require a public hearing and adoption of an ordinance which will be presented in a draft form for consideration. There being no further discussion, the motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Mecimore, Schaack, Yontz; zero (0) against.

LINE OF DUTY ACT INSURANCE COVERAGE – This coverage is for first responders such as fire fighters, rescue squad personnel and police officers. VML is offering coverage for this program or the town can opt to stay in the state program being offered through VRS. Both options will require the town to pay the premiums. The quote received from VML for \$2,500 annually included the fire fighters and one police officer. The town must opt out of the program offered through VRS by June 30, 2011 or will irrevocably be included. This coverage offers benefits to first responders and their families should they be injured or killed in the line of duty and is required coverage imposed by the Virginia General Assembly.

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MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE – The American Legion Post 229 will be conducting a Memorial Day Service on Sunday at 3:00 p.m. at the Veterans Monument beside the fire house. Mr. Matney invited all council members to attend.

LEPC MEETING – The Local Emergency Planning Committee met last Thursday to discuss the recent storm event. Wythe County and the town of Wytheville have received flack for not having a warning system for the citizens. Councilmember Mecimore commented he felt another system should be installed to reach those that are not within distance of the current system. He added some people will not hear the warning during the night. Discussion ensued about conducting additional training with the citizens on the current system and what to do if they hear the warning.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The bills for May 24, 2011 were read and approved.

TALK OF THE TOWN

No one will be able to attend the *Talk of the Town* radio program at the WYVE/WXBX radio station on Wednesday morning.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Councilmember Schaack and was duly seconded and approved.

Mayor

Clerk