

The Rural Retreat Town Council held a regular meeting on April 10, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. in the Rural Retreat Town Hall Council Chambers.

PRESENT RURAL RETREAT TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Timothy Litz; Vice-Mayor A. Keith Crigger; Ed Schaack; J. Scott Mecimore; Dale Yontz; Jerrell Hall; Peggy Hash

ABSENT

NONE

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Michael James, Town Manager; Lori Guynn, Clerk/Treasurer; Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

ADMINISTRATION ABSENT

NONE

OTHERS PRESENT

Lori Rhodes; Donna Meredith; Teresa Williams; Mrs. Roy Williams; Stephen Creger; Sarah Creger

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 Hall to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2012 regular meeting. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Schaack, Yontz; zero (0) against; one abstention: Mecimore due to his absence from the meeting.

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CITIZEN'S TIME

Lori Rhodes addressed the Council and stated she resides in the lower section of Sherwood Avenue and feels they have a bad speeding problem. She explained the speeding seems to be occurring between 6 a.m. – 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. - 9 p.m. Mrs. Rhodes noted that Chief Mitchell patrols the street but drivers slow down when they see him. She pointed out the concern is not only children but adults that are walking or running and those walking their animals. Mayor Litz asked Mrs. Rhodes if she is suggesting Chief Mitchell patrol Sherwood Avenue during the times she stated. Mrs. Rhodes responded she thinks if Chief Mitchell would sit in one place on occasion instead of driving thru, it would help make a difference. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked if there was a speed limit sign posted on Sherwood Avenue. The residents responded no. Teresa Williams, a resident on Sherwood Avenue, explained there is a “Children at Play” sign in front of her house but it is blocked by the trees. Discussion ensued on posting speed limit signs and basic driver’s education rules. Chief Mitchell explained there is not a place to park other than at the church to set up radar because he has to be parallel to the street. Councilmember Mecimore asked if the problem is the citizens that live on Sherwood Avenue or citizens cutting through from Westfield Avenue. Mrs. Rhodes responded both, but traffic has increased since the upper end of the street was opened. Donna Meredith also expressed concerns about the safety of kids riding bikes in the road but added she is glad she lives in a community that the kids can do so. Mrs. Roy Williams addressed drivers speeding on East Railroad Avenue due to traffic coming from the factories. She noted there is a 25 mph speed limit sign near the intersection of Four Seasons Road and Milk Plant Road and there used to be one near the junkyard on Milk Plant Road but it was removed when the ditch was being cleaned. Councilmember Hash stated speeding is a problem throughout the town. Mayor Litz asked Town Manager James who installs the speed limit signs. Town Manager James stated VDOT is responsible for the sign installation and the signs must be requested. Mayor Litz asked Chief Mitchell to monitor Sherwood Avenue more and Town Manager James to contact VDOT about additional signage. Mrs. Williams also expressed concern over unauthorized drivers on Milk Plant Road and East Railroad Avenue especially those that are driving ATV’s on the road.

Mrs. Roy Williams then addressed the ditch in front of her house along East Railroad Avenue. She explained the railroad cleaned part of the ditch out and the residents were told the water would drain better but the ditch has not been completed resulting in standing water standing that stagnates. Town Manager James explained it was his understanding that Norfolk Southern hit rock and could not complete the work the way they wanted too so they were to come back to finish but have not. Mrs. Williams also addressed Norfolk Southern spraying the vegetation along the railroad tracks. She stated they do not spray in front of her house but the town does not mow there either. Mayor Litz asked Town Manager James to contact Norfolk Southern about completing the ditch work. Mrs. Williams addressed the residents at the corner of East Railroad Avenue and South Greever Street and stated they are putting their trash out in boxes instead of tied bags then the wind blows the trash into the ditch. She asked if the town could put a stop to them doing that. Councilmember Mecimore stated the town has an ordinance that states trash must be in tied bags. Town Manager James stated the maintenance crew has gone above our trash guidelines and picked up trash even at the locations that are not in compliance, as a

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courtesy. Mrs. Meredith asked Town Manager James if the trash bags have been torn open by birds if the maintenance crew has to pick up the trash. Town Manager James responded the crew picks it up but they are not required too.

Mayor Litz encouraged the citizen's to contact the Wythe County Sheriff's Office when they see driver's speeding or unauthorized driver's on the streets so that Chief Mitchell or a deputy can respond. He expressed his appreciation to the citizen's for attending the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Town Clerk/Treasurer Guynn asked the Councilmember's if they received the email VML about an upcoming Town Section Meeting in our area. She then explained the meeting will be held in Marion on Friday, May 11th at 10:30 a.m. and will include lunch. She asked the Council to contact her if they are interested in attending the meeting so she can register them.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell explained his monthly activity report for April. He pointed out he had given five verbal warnings that were traffic related. Chief Mitchell referred to the two dog complaints he had received and stated he had spoken to the owners. Letters will be mailed later in the week addressing inoperative motor vehicles. The feedback he has received on the warning system test has mostly been that the system is not being heard very well on the north side of town. Discussion ensued on hearing the system and the ability to hear if a person is speaking through the system. Vice-Mayor Crigger explained weather conditions affect whether the system is heard or not. He also added Wythe County's reverse 911 system will be beneficial upon it being established. Mayor Litz commented he is glad to see there is awareness of the system because if citizens are talking about it then they are aware of it. Councilmember Yontz explained recently the Town of Marion, in conjunction with the American Red Cross, hosted an event where the weather radios were sold at a special price. The radios were then programmed by the first responders, Councilmember Yontz added.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VACATING CUL-DE-SAC ON SHERWOOD AVENUE – Town Manager James reported he thought VDOT owned the cul-de-sac but after talking to them he was told it is owned by the town. He explained he will be speaking with the property owners next week that live at the cul-de-sac and ask if they want to keep it or vacate it. Town Manger James noted some of the property owners use the cul-de-sac for parking. He also explained if the cul-de-sac is vacated the homeowners will gain more property.

NEW BUSINESS

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD™ - Mayor Litz read the proclamation as follows:

**Proclamation
Week of the Young Child™**

WHEREAS, the Town of Rural Retreat and Smart Beginnings Wythe Bland in conjunction with the National Association for the Education of Young Children, are celebrating the Week of the Young Child™, April 22-28, 2012; and

WHEREAS, these organizations are working to improve early learning opportunities, including early literacy programs, that can provide a foundation of learning for children in Rural Retreat; and

WHEREAS, teachers and others who make a difference in the lives of young children in Rural Retreat deserve thanks and recognition; and

WHEREAS, public policies that support early learning for all young children are crucial to young children's futures;

NOW THEREFORE, I, Timothy G. Litz, Mayor, do hereby proclaim April 22-28, 2012 as the Week of the Young Child™ in Rural Retreat and encourage all citizens to work to make a good investment in early childhood.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Town of Rural Retreat, Virginia, to be affixed this tenth day of April in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve.

Vice-Mayor Crigger made a motion to adopt the proclamation recognizing April 22-28, 2012 as Week of the Young Child™. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Yontz and passed by a six (6) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Mecimore, Schaack, Yontz; zero (0) against.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Chairman Yontz reported the Committee will meet at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 24th. He invited the Councilmember's to attend and encouraged them to invite anyone who is interested in participating to attend the meeting also.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Chairman Crigger reported the committee will possibly meet next week and will have the first draft of the FY13 Budget.

Councilmember Mecimore reported on the status of the Rural Retreat Depot Foundation. He explained the Foundation has received their 501(3)(c) organization. Councilmember Mecimore the final step is being completed on the depot being listed on the National Historic Register. He also noted there is a lot of interest in the depot from people outside the Rural Retreat area.

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TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT DIVISION IV (WATER PLANT ELECTRICAL IMPROVEMENTS) – We are still waiting on final shop drawing approval from Sun Contracting & Developers. We are in continuous contact with the contractor and A&A. Installing the variable speed drives will not take longer than a few days once the materials are approved by the electrical engineer.

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT DIVISION V (CHINQUAPIN AVENUE & WEST LEE HIGHWAY) – We are processing a change order to expand the project to replace a 1.5" line under Highway 11 that has been prone to leaking. A new 2" line will be installed.

Maintenance staff is currently relocating water connections on Highway 11. We are attempting to finish at least one reconnection a day, and as soon as all line tests have been approved by VDH the line will be put into service.

IN-TOWN WATER PROJECT – CrossPointe Contractors, Inc. is continuing to execute the reconnections while completing yard and sidewalk repairs. Town Manager James reported three reconnections were completed today.

TEA-21 PHASE VII SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – Staff is working to secure all the necessary easements with property owners and utility pole relocations with CenturyLink and AEP.

BUDGET PREPARATION – Staff is scheduling meetings with the Finance Committee for the coming weeks. We will then have a drafted budget ready for Council’s review.

SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION – We will be meeting with Anderson & Associates, Rural Development and both contractors this Thursday for the substantial completion meeting for both water projects.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The bills for April 10, 2012 were read and approved.

TALK OF THE TOWN

There was not a Councilmember available to attend the *Talk of the Town* radio program at the WYVE/WXBX radio station on Wednesday morning.

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ADJOURNMENT

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

Mayor

Clerk