

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, JULY 10, 2012, AT 7:00 P.M.**

Council Members Present: Mayor Timothy Litz; Ed Schaack; Dale Yontz; Jerrell Hall; Peggy Hash; James P. "Sean" Viars

Council Members Absent: Vice-Mayor A. Keith Crigger

Administration Present: Michael James, Town Manager; Lori Guynn, Clerk/Treasurer

Administration Absent: Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

Others Present: Grayson Viars

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.

ORGANIZATIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Prior to proceeding with the organizational appointments, Mayor Litz stated he would like to take a moment and welcome Sean Viars to the Council. Mayor Litz explained town management uses acronyms when referring to town business and encouraged him to ask questions if there was an item he does not understand and to not be bashful to do so. He also thanked those recently elected for taking their oaths of office prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year. Mayor Litz then proceeded with the agenda.

Mayor Litz stated every two years the Council must reorganize or choose to remain the same. He opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice-Mayor. Councilmember Hall commented it appears the committee appointments were unchanged from the previous year therefore he felt all appointments should be made at one time. Councilmember Hall then made a motion to nominate Keith Crigger for the position of Vice-Mayor, Michael S. James as the Town Manager, Lori C. Guynn as the Town Clerk/Treasurer, Scott A. Mitchell as the Police Chief and Michael J. Sobey as the Town Attorney. Councilmember Yontz seconded the motion. Mayor Litz added the committee appointments will remain unchanged as Councilmember Hall had pointed out. Councilmember Schaack commented Councilmember Viars will be replacing Scott Mecimore on the committees. Mayor Litz stated that was correct. There being no additional

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discussion, the motion was approved by a vote of five (5) for: Hall, Hash, Schaack, Viars, Yontz; zero (0) against; one (1) absent: Crigger.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilmember Yontz, seconded by Councilmember Hash to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2012 regular meeting. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of four (4) for: Hall, Hash, Schaack, Yontz; zero (0) against; one (1) abstention: Viars – due to not officially being seated to the Council; one (1) absent: Crigger.

CITIZEN'S TIME

None

CORRESPONDENCE

Councilmember Hall explained he had a citizen that resides on South Greever Street to contact him and request a “Children at Play” sign be installed on the thrill hill area of this street. He noted there are eight children within three families in this area. Councilmember Hall stated the citizen understands it will not slow down all speeders but will make them aware that children are in the area. Mayor Litz directed Town Manager James to contact VDOT and make this request.

POLICE REPORT

Mayor Litz explained Chief Mitchell is absent tonight due to a family emergency. He referred to Chief Mitchell's monthly activity report for June and stated dog complaints are continuing to be on the rise.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NORFOLK SOUTHERN DITCHLINE ON EAST RAILROAD AVENUE – Mayor Litz inquired of Town Manager James on the status of Norfolk Southern completing the cleaning of the ditch line along East Railroad Avenue. He added he had received inquiries on this. Town Manager James responded by explaining he had emailed the contact for Norfolk Southern in which that person forwarded it to the appropriate person. A response has not been received, however he will follow up on the request, Town Manager James stated.

Mayor Litz then inquired on the telephone wire removal that was discussed during the previous Joint Governing Bodies meeting with the Town of Wytheville and Wythe County. Town Manager James responded he was unsure of the status of the request. Mayor Litz commented it will possibly be addressed during the next Joint Governing Bodies meeting and inquired when the next meeting will be held. Town Manager James stated the next meeting is scheduled for July 30th.

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NEW BUSINESS

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN – Town Manager James addressed the Emergency Operations Plan that he put together with assistance from Police Chief Mitchell, Fire Chief Dave Evans and Emergency Services Director Jay Hawkins. He explained this plan will assist with coordination and communication in Rural Retreat during emergency situations while working with the Wythe County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) when opened. The plan assists in coordinating our local resources with the town, fire department and rescue squad, communication numbers for people to be contacted, addresses shelter operations and VDOT road openings, Town Manager James explained. He noted this will be a living document and will be revisited on an annual basis and changed as necessary. Due to FEMA regulations, the plan will be reviewed every four years as a standard plan. Town Manager James asked the Council to consider adopting the proposed plan. Councilmember Schaack made a motion to adopt the draft Emergency Operations Plan as written. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Yontz. Councilmember Schaack addressed the Wythe County Emergency Operations Plan that allows for HAM radio operators in their communication room. He stated there are several operators in Rural Retreat that, if available, would assist with communications if needed. Town Manager James explained when he met with Wythe County several months ago about the Emergency Operations Plan they were concerned that Rural Retreat was trying to override their plan. He stated he assured them that is not what we are trying to do but to have a plan in place if Rural Retreat is involved in an isolated incident and to meet our needs. Mayor Litz commented the purpose is to coordinate with Wythe County because in a disaster we will not be leaving Rural Retreat. Councilmember Hash asked if Wythe County will be bringing supplies to us. Town Manager James explained we will contact the EOC when it is established but we can also rely on mutual aid if we overwhelm our own resources. Councilmember Yontz questioned if the town manager, fire chief, mayor, police chief or rescue squad administrator could sound the alarm if the town was in an emergency situation. Town Manager James responded yes, any of those named have authority to sound the alarm. He explained Wythe County is concerned if Rural Retreat sounds the alarm that citizens will go to the schools looking for shelter. The town does not operate nor able to afford to operate shelters, Town Manager James noted. He further explained if the alarm is sounded it should not be done prematurely but in an effective manner. Councilmember Yontz suggested mailing a handout to every household in the community to notify them of what they should do if they hear the alarm. He then noted the information could be given to new residents as they sign up for their utility services at the town hall. Town Manager James also suggested this be addressed in the *Rural Retreat Times* newsletter. He then stated he was impressed with how the fire department handled the recent storms and further stated how blessed the community is to have them. There being no additional discussion, the motion was approved by a vote of five (5) for: Hall, Hash, Schaack, Viars, Yontz; zero (0) against; one (1) absent: Crigger.

Councilmember Schaack complimented the town crew on the clean up work that was done following the recent storms.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Chairman Yontz reported advertising segments have been secured on WBRF 98.1 in Galax which they will be utilizing John Conlee in their ads. Other advertising includes WMEV in Marion and WYVE/WXBX in Wytheville. He noted the Army will be attending and handing out t-shirts and water bottles. Chairman Yontz pointed out the large tent will be put up on Wednesday prior to the festival and the vendor spaces will be marked off on Thursday. Councilmember Hash told Chairman Yontz that he was doing a good job with the festival. Mayor Litz added there is a lot of work being done for the festival as well as in the town hall. Chairman Yontz complimented the committee for working well together. He asked the Councilmember's to consider participating in the parade. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn suggested the Councilmember's be recognized during the opening ceremonies so that citizens will know who they are, especially Councilmember Viars since he is new on the council.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT DIVISION IV (WATER PLANT ELECTRICAL IMPROVEMENTS) – Work will begin when the materials are shipped August 20th. Sun Contracting & Developers will begin after the materials arrive.

TEA-21 PHASE VII SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – The acquisition of all easements should be completed in the coming days. We are still awaiting approval from VDOT on the final design. Upon speaking with Anderson & Associates, they will be contacting VDOT to inquire on the status of beginning the project.

2012 CDBG PLANNING GRANT: RURAL RETREAT DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT – Tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. we will hold our first public meeting that will provide an overview of DHCD planning grants, what the process will entail along with general information about downtown revitalization projects. We hope to gather strong participation from the community and be able to move forward with the planning portion. Town Manager James added he and Brian Martin will be conducting the meeting and they are hopeful there will be significant public feedback. A survey will be distributed to businesses in order to gather additional information.

STALEY SPRING PROJECT – We have met with the Wythe County Administrator on our proposal for Rural Retreat to own and operate the Staley Spring Water Treatment Plant to protect our supply. Mr. Dalton will forward this suggestion on to the Wythe County Water Committee. Discussions also included serving customers along US Route 11 toward Smyth County however Wythe County wants to serve those customers. The town will sell water to Wythe County who will then sell the water to Smyth County. We also discussed how the project will operate and with further discussions with The Lane Group and Smyth County we can finalize a plan to proceed. Staff will review the Town of Rural Retreat's budget, debt capacity and staffing capabilities well before any decisions are made. Town Manager James asked the Council

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member's to email him with any questions that they may have regarding this project and he stated he will continue to send them updates as information becomes available. Mayor Litz asked Town Manager James if there was still discussion on building the water line to Smyth County. Town Manager James stated Wythe County is planning to pursue this service area. Councilmember Viars asked for the history behind Staley Spring. Mayor Litz and Town Manager James provided an explanation to Councilmember Viars to bring him up to date on the status of Staley Spring and upcoming projects involving the spring.

RURAL RETREAT WWTP – Our application to the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission for construction funding was submitted last Friday. A total of 19 applications were received by the MRPDC. Our application was not as favorable as others due to the MRPDC being our sole funding application however the most funding we can receive from them will be \$53,000 which will pay for half the project if received. We hope to receive funding from Mount Rogers, DEQ and any other agencies whose mission will work in accordance with our disinfection upgrades. An application will be made to the DEQ next week. The PER and design specifications have been completed by The Lane Group.

RICHFIELD STREET – We are working with VDOT on all procedural processes of placing Richfield Street into the state system as well. The proposed paving work and connection with Richmond Avenue is being evaluated as we move forward.

BRUSH REMOVAL – Work in ongoing with brush collection. Maintenance crews have worked extremely hard to gather the brush in an efficient manner; we are asking all residents to be patient with us as we work to clean up the storm debris.

JOINT GOVERNING BODIES MEETING – The next JGB meeting will be held July 30th at 7:00 p.m. at the Wytheville Meeting Center. All who can attend please do.

Councilmember Schaack asked Town Manager James how the town beautification program was progressing. Town Manager James stated he had spoken to Brian Alexander earlier in the day and the barrel planters have been ordered. Upon the barrels coming in, the planters will be put together and distributed around town.

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

TALK OF THE TOWN

A Councilmember was not 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 Hash. The motion was duly seconded and approved unanimously.

Mayor

Clerk