

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN  
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON  
TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2012, AT 7:00 P.M.**

Council Members Present: Mayor Timothy Litz; Vice-Mayor A. Keith Crigger; Ed Schaack; Dale Yontz; Jerrell Hall; Peggy Hash; James P. “Sean” Viars

Council Members Absent: None

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

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Cheryl, Lily and Grayson Viars; Becky Langston; Angela Chandler; Ken Noble; Jack Trivitt; Gary Houseman – Black Lick District Supervisor

**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 July 10, 2012 regular meeting. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Schaack, Viars, Yontz; zero (0) against.

**CITIZEN’S TIME**

Becky Langston and Angela Chandler with the Rural Retreat Head Start addressed the Council concerning their funding from the Mountain Community Action Program (Mountain CAP). Mrs. Langston explained the program is currently receiving cuts and being placed out for bid and could possibly be taken over by another program. She stated the program has been in Rural Retreat for 39 years and she was proud to say she had been working with the program the entire time and would like to continue to do so. Mrs. Langston asked Ms. Chandler to explain the program more in depth. Ms. Chandler explained the head start program through Mountain CAP has served over 800 families with children in the Rural Retreat area by providing educational support and health screenings to ensure all immunization shots are up to date prior to beginning

## **COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – JULY 24, 2012 – PAGE 2**

kindergarten. She added they also ensure the children receive vision, hearing and speech screenings while participating in the program and each school day. They also receive lunch and two snacks per day, she noted. Ms. Chandler continued to explain they also provide partnerships with the parents to improve their lives by assisting them with registering for GED classes, support benefits including food, housing and clothing. This program is very much needed, Ms. Chandler explained because the children are ready to begin kindergarten upon completing their program. Mrs. Langston stated the grant deadline is Friday and she asked the Council to endorse the program to ensure it stays in Rural Retreat. Town Manager James asked Mrs. Langston if she needed a letter of support. Mrs. Langston replied yes. Mayor Litz commented he had been contacted by Mrs. Langston concerning the need of support but he had asked her to attend the meeting because he felt it should come from the entire Council. Councilmember Schaack made a motion to allow Town Manager James to write a letter of support for the Rural Retreat Head Start through the Mountain Community Action Program. Councilmember Yontz seconded the motion. Councilmember Hash stated she had previously worked with this program for several years and it was needed in Rural Retreat. There being no discussion on the motion, it passed by a vote of six (6) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Schaack, Viars, Yontz; zero (0) against.

Jack Trivitt addressed the Council next. He addressed a residence in town that currently has ducks on their property and questioned why he was not allowed to have chickens on his property. Town Manager James explained the Town Code states fowl is not allowed in residential areas. Mr. Trivitt commented it was not in the Town Code because he has a copy of it which he gave to Town Manager James. Chief Mitchell explained the resident Mr. Trivitt is referring to has been given a notice of violation and has until tomorrow to be in compliance or they will be cited with a violation. Mr. Trivitt then addressed parking on streets and asked if he can park his car along the street facing the opposite direction. Town Manager James asked Chief Mitchell to address Mr. Trivitt's concern. Chief Mitchell responded by explaining parking must be in direction of traffic. Mr. Trivitt commented this was not being enforced. Chief Mitchell stated he had not seen anyone parking in the wrong direction. Mr. Trivitt responded he will call Chief Mitchell when he sees this occurring. He then asked what the town was going to do about Heritage Days because people will be coming in and seeing that we are a sloppy town due to the brush not being picked up. Town Manager James stated this is a priority for this week. Mr. Trivitt offered to help if needed. Next, Mr. Trivitt addressed lot mowing in town. He asked if the town would mow the lot for a property owner if needed. Town Manager James replied the property owner will be charged for the labor. Mr. Trivitt addressed a lot near his home that hasn't been mowed in twenty years and wanted to know why the lot mowing hasn't been enforced. Town Manager James asked Mr. Trivitt to meet with him the following day to look at the lot he is referring to in which he agreed. Mr. Trivitt's next item was the mailing of monthly water bills. He asked the Council to consider mailing them every two months and to consider a private company to read the meters instead of the town crew taking two days to complete. Mayor Litz stated the citizens would complain if bills were only mailed every two months. Vice-Mayor Crigger commented people like to see their bill each month. Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Trivitt for his comments.

Ken Noble was the next citizen to address the Council. He expressed his concern with the debris around town four weeks following the wind storms. He added visitors are in town everyday plus

## **COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – JULY 24, 2012 – PAGE 3**

this weekend the town is hosting Heritage Days. Mr. Noble explained citizens in town are proud to own property here and quickly cleaned up the brush on their property. Town Manager James responded by explaining the brush removal is a top priority but it has taken longer than expected while continuing to perform other necessary duties. Mr. Noble asked if money is available to have someone to come in and assist with the cleanup if the town is understaffed. Town Manager James commented the town is being fiscally responsible by completing the cleanup efforts with our staff. Mr. Noble stated the appearance is not pleasing to visitors that may be in town looking for a community to retire to or visiting family. He thanked the Council for their time. Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Noble for his comments.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Mayor Litz stated he had received a letter from Appalachian Power regarding their electricity restoration and clean up efforts following the derecho that occurred earlier in the month.

### **POLICE REPORT**

Chief Mitchell stated he is continuing to work on animal issues and dog complaints on West Baumgardner Avenue. Letters were mailed addressing inoperative motor vehicles in which the owners have until tomorrow to become compliant. Chief Mitchell explained he has spoken to Town Manager James regarding applying for a vehicle grant through the Department of Criminal Justice for a police vehicle. The grant is available to departments with ten sworn officers or less. The application will be completed toward the end of the week and mailed prior to the deadline.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

NONE

### **NEW BUSINESS**

NONE

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

HERITAGE DAYS – Chairman Yontz reported the committee is ready for the festival and hopefully the weather will be cooperative. He complimented Jay Hawkins and Vance Gregory with RRVES for mowing the festival area and cleaning up the brush from the storms. This year we will have more vendors than in previous years, he noted. Chairman Yontz explained the John Conlee interviews have begun airing on 98.1 FM in Galax and WYVE with Danny Gordon and he is receiving positive feedback on Mr. Conlee's comments during the interview. He also stated he does a lot of work but could not do it without the committee working as equally hard. Mayor Litz told Chairman Yontz he appreciates the work he does for the festival and the other committee members as well.

## **COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – JULY 24, 2012 – PAGE 4**

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE – Chairman Hall explained following the installation of anchors the sound platforms will be complete.

### **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 20<sup>th</sup> from Square D.

TEA-21 PHASE VII SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – All easements have been signed. Attorney Sobey has received the easement agreements and will have them recorded this week. VDOT is conducting a final civil rights review of the project, approval should be forthcoming.

2012 CDBG PLANNING GRANT: RURAL RETREAT DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT – We held our first public meeting on July 11<sup>th</sup> and had a decent turnout. Those who attended provided quality feedback and direction for staff and we are thankful for their willingness to be involved and active in this process. The physical and inventory surveys are being conducted now. We hope to have those completed in the coming weeks. Councilmember Viars asked when the next meeting will be held. Town Manager James stated he is waiting to receive the surveys back from the businesses. He will then form a management team and present a similar presentation then another public hearing will be held.

STALEY SPRING PROJECT – Discussions are ongoing with Smyth and Wythe Counties.

DOWNTOWN RURAL RETREAT BEAUTIFICATION – The plants and barrels have been purchased and placed throughout Rural Retreat. We hope these will add to the look of downtown Rural Retreat and this project can expand with private business partnership.

GIS MAPPING – ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES – A&A has begun surveying all meters, hydrants, and valves, etc. This information will be incorporated into the Town’s GIS system. Just a reminder this project was funded with residual Rural Developments funds.

GOVERNOR MCDONNELL’S REQUEST FOR FEMA REIMBURSEMENT – The Governor has requested the release of FEMA funds for disaster response from the storm a few weeks back. We will monitor whether the federal government releases those funds. We would request fuel reimbursement for RRVFD activities and brush pickup.

COUNCIL QUESTIONS/CONCERNS – JULY 11<sup>TH</sup> MEETING – First, speeding on South Greever Street and danger for children playing near the road; VDOT will be placing a “Children at Play” sign on South Greever Street in the coming weeks. Second, East Railroad drainage ditch along NS tracks; staff met with NS representatives last week. They will setup a transit and

## **COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – JULY 24, 2012 – PAGE 5**

shoot the slope of the drainage ditch. The importance of fixing the issues was relayed to NS and we hope we can come to an agreement as to an adequate solution.

ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES MONTHLY UPDATE – A copy of Anderson & Associates monthly status report is attached for review.

WATER ACCOUNTABILITY – The current water accountability report for the month of June is attached. Mayor Litz expressed his appreciation to Town Manager James for attaching the report for their review.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer Guynn informed the Council the firm Hicok, Fern, Brown and Garcia will be in the office beginning August 13<sup>th</sup> to review the town's books and prepare them for audit. As of now the audit will begin September 6<sup>th</sup> with Robinson Farmer Cox Associates.

The bills for July 24, 2012 were read and approved. Treasurer Guynn presented a listing of checks that will need to be issued on Friday pertaining to the Heritage Days Festival and requested approval. The listing was approved by the Council.

### **TALK OF THE TOWN**

Councilmember Yontz is to attend the *Talk of the Town* radio program at the WYVE/WXBX radio station on Wednesday morning. He noted he will also be attending the live radio show at 7:15 the following morning.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Prior to adjournment, Mayor Litz expressed his appreciation to Supervisor Gary Houseman and the Board of Supervisors for Wythe County's donation to the Heritage Days Festival. Councilmember Yontz addressed the interest this year's festival has received. He pointed out calls have been received at the town hall from Connecticut, North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

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

---

Mayor

---

Clerk