

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 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

Administration Absent: Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

Others Present: Scott Mecimore; Dayton Yontz

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 Hall, seconded by Councilmember Viars to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2012 regular meeting. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Schaack, Viars; zero (0) against; one (1) abstention: Yontz.

CITIZEN'S TIME

Scott Mecimore addressed the Council on behalf of the Rural Retreat Depot Foundation. He explained he began a journey over a year ago to purchase the depot and was able to close on the loan today. He thanked the town council for the donation because they helped make it possible. Mr. Mecimore stated there are now a lot of people involved and there are some new directors and officers that have been appointed. Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Mecimore for his comments. He added not everyone is happy but in the two years he would like to reflect back and see that this was a good decision. Councilmember Hall stated in two years he feels like the amount donated will seem paltry. He commented the Council made an investment in the Foundation that will aid in receiving money from the Tobacco Commission, DHCD and possibly railroad related funds. Mr. Mecimore stated the Foundation is working to apply for funding that when received will

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help with making progress. Councilmember Yontz added he had the opportunity to speak with Terry Kilgore with the Tobacco Commission and he is very much looking forward to the upcoming meeting on the 28th about the depot. Councilmember Hall commented he had received some complaints about the Council donating money to the depot. Councilmember Viars added he had received two complaints. Mr. Mecimore thanked the Council again for their support. He then left the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

LETTER FROM RURAL RETREAT DEPOT FOUNDATION – Town Manager James read a letter from the Rural Retreat Depot Foundation expressing their appreciation for the \$30,000 donation from the town.

POLICE REPORT

Mayor Litz noted Chief Mitchell is absent due to personal matters.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

CERTIFICATION OF PPTRA RATE – Town Manager James referred to the handout distributed by Clerk/Treasurer Guynn comparing the 2012 tax assessment and revenue to be billed with figures from 2011. He added there was a slight decrease in real estate revenue but overall the numbers were good. Mayor Litz asked if the PPTRA rate required action. Mrs. Guynn explained the Council would need to certify the 2012 personal property tax rate at 51.02%. She further explained the personal property revenue reflected on the handout will be the amount billed to the taxpayers. She noted the town received \$17,068 from the state to apply toward personal property tax relief. Vice-Mayor Crigger made a motion to certify the personal property tax relief rate of 51.02%. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Yontz. Councilmember Viars asked for an explanation of the personal property tax relief. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn explained the history of the Personal Property Tax Relief Act. There being no additional discussion, the motion was approved by a vote of six (6) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Schaack, Viars, Yontz; zero (0) against.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Chairman Yontz reported the next meeting will be held October 23rd at 6:00 p.m. prior to the Council meeting. He asked Town Manager James and Clerk/Treasurer Guynn to execute the contract with Battle Artist Agency and to remit the \$1,000 deposit to secure the main act.

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FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Chairman Crigger explained he and Clerk/Treasurer Guynn had, prior to the meeting, briefly discussed decals due to Wythe County looking at eliminating them. Discussion included the need for the town to make a decision in the coming months on the town's decals and if eliminated additional steps to be taken to proceed. Chairman Crigger noted the possibility of pursuing delinquent taxes was also discussed. He also stated the 2011 collection rate looks good but there are outstanding amounts. Mrs. Guynn commented the collection rate for real estate is 96.50% and the personal property rate is 98.6%. Chairman Crigger explained they had also discussed the costs involved in pursuing the delinquent taxes because some tickets are years in arrears. Mrs. Guynn explained the tax can be pursued through bank liens, tax sales and other methods. The collection fees can be added to the amount due which would lessen the town's expense, she added. She further stated she is not in favor of eliminating motor vehicle decals because it is a great collection tool and citizens can't purchase a decal until they have paid their personal property taxes in full. Mrs. Guynn continued by stating her concern with keeping the decals is vehicle owners changing their garaged jurisdiction to Wythe County to avoid purchasing a decal which causes the town to lose tax revenue. She added this is an issue now because vehicles aren't listed in the correct jurisdiction and the collection process will have to be more advanced if the decals are eliminated. Additional discussion began concerning collection methods and the best way to pursue this. Town Manager James asked if letters had been sent to the delinquent taxpayers. Mrs. Guynn responded letters haven't been sent however the original tax tickets plus two delinquent notices are sent each year. Mr. James and Mrs. Guynn are to draft a letter to be sent to the delinquent taxpayers.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT DIVISION IV (WATER PLANT ELECTRICAL IMPROVEMENTS) – Today contractors were finalizing setup of the VFD system. The telemetry system had to be modified and we will be running one of the motors using the VFD technology for a period of time to work out any issues that may arise before we put both motors on the new system. There have been problems at the water plant today with the telemetry system. Currently Square D and the electrical engineers are at the plant to try to resolve the problems.

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT DIVISION III (Chinquapin & Lee Highway) – Reconnect work is ongoing.

TEA-21 PHASE VII SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – VDOT has not responded with a formal written response. Last week we provided the easement acquisition confirmation letter to VDOT. We hope to have their formal response by this week. Upon receiving this response we will change the design if needed.

911 CONSOLIDATED DISPATCH CENTER – The Mayor and I met with Wythe County and the Town of Wytheville. The project is approaching completion but we have a few issues to iron out with equipment purchases and setup. The final operation and maintenance projections have

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not been confirmed as of now. When those numbers are finalized discussions over cost allocation will then begin. As always we will work to ensure Rural Retreat is getting a fair deal with a consolidated dispatch center. More information will be available in the coming weeks.

Mayor Litz addressed the meeting and explained Wythe County has taken the stance that Rural Retreat needs to pay their portion because they dispatch the police and fire departments. Town Manager James stated the first year the shared cost should be based on population because the number of calls can't be projected. He added the town should only pay for the calls within the town limits.

DHCD PLANNING GRANT – RURAL RETREAT DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT – We held our final Management Team meeting last week. We are now compiling all the necessary information to provide DHCD with all the requirements they requested to be met. We will then send out a final response to DHCD with the goal of securing a full planning grant. Brian Reed is now handling this through the MRPDC due to Brian Martin having to step down. We are still trying to build a group to move forward with this project. Hopefully as the depot restoration moves forward the excitement will cascade to the town and we will get more participation.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT – RRHS – To go along with our Summer Concert Series the Town will be hosting a Christmas Concert at the high school on December 15th. More details will be made available as the time approaches.

GENERAL SERVICES DIRECTOR – We have begun advertising for the newly created position that will absorb Rodney Hurt's current position and add additional responsibilities to supervise both the public works and utilities departments.

DEQ REVOLVING LOAN FUND – Last week we received notice that our application for a DEQ loan was approved for the WWTP Disinfection System. The funding was applied for when we applied for the Mount Rogers grant money, which we did not receive. We are continuing to look for grant funding to make this project at no cost to the taxpayers. The loan amount will be available to us for about a year and during that time we hope to have enough grant matches to minimize the loan amount. The amount from DEQ is \$107,000 which will cover the entire project cost at this time. The Council will have final approval.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Clerk/Treasurer Guynn informed the Council that a Joint Governing Bodies meeting with the Town of Wytheville and Wythe County will be held on October 29th at the Wytheville Meeting Center. She added notification should be forthcoming.

The bills for October 9, 2012 were read and approved.

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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.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Councilmember Hall. The motion was duly seconded and approved.

Mayor

Clerk