

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2013, 7:00 P.M.**

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

Council Members Absent: Peggy Hash

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

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Jim Lloyd

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Dale Yontz.

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 December 11, 2012 regular meeting. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Crigger, Hall; Schaack, Viars, Yontz; zero (0) against; one (1) absent: Hash.

CITIZEN’S TIME

Jim Lloyd addressed the Council and provided an update on the Concert Series. He noted this was a building and learning year however there were approximately 100 people at each event held. Mr. Lloyd stated there is a need to work on the advertising for all concerts because the community wasn’t aware of the events. He pointed out there were a few people in attendance at the Christmas concert but he felt that citizens may have thought it was being held for the depot because he had allowed the Foundation to attend and sell fundraising items. Another concert was scheduled the same night of a home football game and was canceled due to the band not wanting to compete with the football game. Mr. Lloyd suggested beginning the concerts at least two months earlier. He addressed some of the acts he would like to schedule due to the

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performers being in the general area for other commitments. Readdressing the concert series advertising, Mr. Lloyd stated he would like to use more money to increase the advertising of the concerts. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked Mr. Lloyd what he would like to see done differently and also asked if he wanted the town to handle the advertising or if he wanted to. Mr. Lloyd suggested compiling a booklet to distribute at the concerts that will contain information about the performers and the upcoming concerts scheduled and to have them available at the town hall for citizens to pick up. He added he thought if the music was more diversified then more will attend. Councilmember Viars suggested utilizing the town's Facebook page more to spread the word by listing the events and adding pictures. Councilmember Yontz suggested inserting a one page flyer in the Chamber of Commerce newsletter and utilizing the Wytheville Department of Museums. Town Manager James commented he and Mr. Lloyd should work together to compile an advertising package for review. Mayor Litz asked that this be presented at the next meeting. Mr. Lloyd asked the council members if they had heard any comments on the concert series. Councilmember Viars stated he had heard some and the individuals were pleased. Councilmember Yontz added he heard positive comments on the concert with Wayne Henderson. Mr. Lloyd added he doesn't want to have the same performers each year but would rather bring them back at least every other year.

Mr. Lloyd then informed the Council that a documentary is being done by BBC America on modern working class Appalachia. He will be conducting interviews with other locals to send to them and if they like what they see then they will come to Rural Retreat for more in-depth interviews.

CORRESPONDENCE

Councilmember Yontz addressed problems with speeding on East Buck Avenue and noted he has received multiple complaints. He added the Wythe County Sheriff's Office has now increased their patrol but the public wants to see summons issued. Chief Mitchell commented he doesn't have a good place to setup radar on East Buck Avenue. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated he wanted to make it clear that during his tenure on Council the Police Chief has never been told that he can't write tickets. Councilmember Yontz commented the concerns he is hearing are the same as on Chinquapin, Sherwood and Parsonage Avenues and the public's perception is that no one wants to deal with the issue. Chief Mitchell stated he will write tickets if he sees fit to do so. Councilmember Viars commented if tickets are written it is not taken seriously and this is a public safety issue. Councilmember Yontz added the citizens don't understand that VDOT controls the signage on all streets. He also stated there are citizens concerned with disrespect of crosswalks and the lack of signage or that the signs are not where they can be seen. He had spoken to Officer Trivitt with the Sheriff's Office and he offered to allow the town to use a handheld radar system and there was discussion of installing a radar unit on the sign polls that will help to determine the problem areas and times on East Buck Avenue. Vice-Mayor Crigger pointed out there is a school resource officer in the area that can also assist but being seen on East Buck Avenue will help make a difference. Town Manager James commented the town only has one officer and only so much can be done unless the number of officers is increased. He added he had also received a complaint from an individual and had discussed the same issues.

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Councilmember Yontz stated he felt the citizens had concerns with how the previous complaints were handled because citizens were told that the Police Chief didn't write tickets due to it taking up too much of his time in court. He added he felt the citizen's concerns shouldn't be handled that way. Councilmember Viars stressed the problem is public perception. Mayor Litz asked the council member's to be aware of what is going on in town so that when citizen contact them they can tell them what is happening. Councilmember Viars stated he will not micromanage the employees but would like to address the problems as a Council not as an employee problem. Councilmember Schaack stated the citizens should be encouraged to attend the meetings to express concerns. Vice-Mayor Crigger added it is hard to address problems because no one wants to come forward. Councilmember Schaack noted he has noticed the traffic problems are around the hours of school beginning and ending and the Klöckner shift changes. Councilmember Schaack asked what the Council's plan is to address this. Town Manager James stated he and Chief Mitchell will talk and contact the Wythe County Sheriff's Office to find out what they are doing. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn stated complaints are received in the town office each day and citizens are encouraged to attend the meetings but the usual response is the town council won't do anything. Councilmember Viars volunteered to look into the cost of a speed trailer.

Councilmember Viars asked if the Council was planning to do anything to recognize the opening of Dr. Michael Spraker's new dentist office downtown. He stated he had called and was told the Chamber of Commerce generally handles this activity. Town Manager James stated the Chamber of Commerce will be holding a ribbon cutting. Councilmember Viars stated he wanted to be proactive and make sure Dr. Spraker was recognized.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell explained his monthly activity report for December. He noted a correction to the number of dog complaints which should be two. Currently he is working on Chinquapin Avenue and there is a lead on one dog but the owners will not come to the door when attempting to contact them, Chief Mitchell pointed out. He added the Wythe County Animal Control officers will be working on North Greever Street due to continuing problems with dogs getting into residents trash. Chief Mitchell then addressed his 2012 activity summary. He explained he had compared the report to the activity over the past two years and it is average.

Chief Mitchell informed the Council that representatives from VML (Virginia Municipal League) came by the office a few weeks ago and donated a micro video camera to the police department that can be used in the police car for protection and evidence purposes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTIONS – Town Manager James reported he and Clerk/Treasurer Guynn are continuing to work on this as time allows.

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NEW BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Chairman Yontz reported the advertising package is being finalized. He added the Sunday afternoon show is being moved to Friday night at the Rural Retreat High School Auditorium. He stated he hopes this will draw a larger crowd due to being indoors and climate controlled.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Clerk/Treasurer Guynn stated the audit has been received and will be distributed at the next meeting.

PERSONNEL – No report.

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT DIVISION IV (WATER PLANT ELECTRICAL IMPROVEMENTS) – All work at the water treatment plant has been finalized. The only remaining work is the placement of the stands underneath the VFD units. Anderson & Associates and Rural Development are working with the Town to close out the project.

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT DIVISION III (Chinquapin & Lee Highway) – We have three connections remaining on this project.

TEA-21 PHASE VII SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – We are expecting to receive the authorization to advertise the project within the next two weeks. Staff will meet with A&A to discuss a project start date and anticipated completion date.

DR. PEPPER LOT – Please look over the preliminary designs of the proposed Dr. Pepper lot project. These designs and estimated costs are being critiqued over the next few months. Funding sources will be contacted again soon as well as the National Endowment for the Arts grant that will be submitted by the end of this week. Any feedback on the design from Council will be much appreciated. Town Manager James noted the estimated cost came in higher than he anticipated. He added he would like to organize a citizen committee to review the plans and to change as they see fit.

WATER / WASTEWATER OPERATOR – JOB ADVERTISEMENT – We have received several applications over the past few weeks. The opening will be formally closed on January 17th. We will then review the candidates with the Personnel Committee.

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CIP & BUDGET SCHEDULE – Please also see the tentatively scheduled dates for the budget review and adoption process. These dates are flexible to the Finance Committee's schedule. We hope to have a completed CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) and budget to Council well before the adoption deadline for a thorough review.

RECREATIONAL FIELDS – RURAL RETREAT – I would like to receive Council's opinion on a possible project. Councilmember Yontz initially spoke with Gary Cody, Wythe County Parks & Recreation Director in December about the possibilities of a recreation field being constructed in Rural Retreat. I have met with Gary personally about the opportunity and he is working on the feasibility of use, placement and design. In the early stages I see this as a partnership between the Town and the County as well as being largely funded by the Wythe Bland Foundation. Town Manager James stated this would allow for sports activities to be moved from the field at the Rural Retreat Community Center. He will be meeting with Mary Walters and Wes Poole to further discuss this.

FIRE DEPARTMENT PUMPER TANKER TRUCK – Chief Evans came to Town Hall towards the end of this past year to discuss the purchase of a new pumper-tanker truck that would replace two older vehicles in the fleet. I met with the department last night and asked for detailed specifications and equipment that would be included in the Request for Proposal and grant applications. We hope to have detailed information available to Council early in the budget planning stages to gauge the funding possibilities for FY 2013-2014. Town Manager James stated this information should be available for the Council by the end of February or early March.

WWTP UV DISINFECTION – Final designs and plans have been submitted to the Town by the Lane Group, Inc. We are awaiting a final credit summary being prepared by the Virginia Resources Authority for the CWRLF. DEQ is reviewing the final plans and design; once we receive their approval we should be given the go ahead for advertising.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The bills for January 2 and January 8 were read and approved.

Vice-Mayor Crigger commented on the spending at the town shop and stated it needs to be controlled. He suggested expenditures be approved by the Town Manager and/or the Town Council. Town Manager James stated the process is being worked on. Discussion ensued on developing a purchasing system for all town purchases.

TALK OF THE TOWN

No one was 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 to discuss, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Councilmember Viars. The motion was duly seconded and approved.

Mayor

Clerk