

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2013, 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: None

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 Hall, seconded by Councilmember Yontz to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2013 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) abstention: Hash.

Councilmember Schaack referred to the minutes and asked if the speeding issues on East Buck Avenue and other areas in town had been resolved. Town Manager James stated he and Chief Mitchell had discussed the concerns and Chief Mitchell will be increasing his presence on East Buck Avenue. He asked Chief Mitchell to address the issue. Chief Mitchell stated he would be addressing this further during his report and asked to defer further discussion to that time.

Councilmember Hash commented it appeared the previous meeting was very productive and the minutes were very nice.

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CITIZEN'S TIME

None

CORRESPONDENCE

Councilmember Yontz explained he had received a message from Lt. Chad Trivitt with the Wythe County Sheriff's Office commending the fire department and rescue squad for the great job they did during the snow storm. Lt. Trivitt stated he was the only deputy on the end of the county and he could not have handled the situation without them. Mayor Litz asked Town Manager James to convey Lt. Trivitt's compliment to the first responders.

Councilmember Viars stated he had received compliments from several citizens regarding the snow removal and street cleaning during the snow storm. Councilmember Hall added he had received the same comments from citizens. He also addressed concerns from the Rural Retreat Community Center Board about the tree located near the Pepper Stage. The tree has a dead section in it and should be removed to prevent damage to the stage or potentially to event attendees. Mayor Litz directed Town Manager James to look into removing a portion or the entire tree.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell explained since the last meeting he and the Sheriff's Office have been working together to address the speeding on East Buck Avenue especially during the evening hours. He added he is running radar at Rural Retreat High School during the Klöckner evening shift change. Chief Mitchell stated dog complaints are continuing to be worked on North Greever Street in conjunction with animal control. Town Manager James asked Chief Mitchell if animal control accepted cats. Chief Mitchell replied no. Town Manager James explained he has been working to resolve a cat issue on Maple Avenue and has attempted to contact various organizations to foster the cats but has had no luck.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTIONS –Clerk/Treasurer Guynn reported she has contacted a law firm regarding the collection of delinquent taxes but has not received a response. She explained she would like to obtain information from the firm on their process and cost to pursue the collections prior to sending letters to the delinquent taxpayers. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn stated when the letters are sent, the taxpayers will be notified they have a minimum of 30 days to pay the tax due or the collections will be forwarded to an attorney at which point they will incur collection fees and if the account remains unpaid a tax sale may be held and their property will be sold. She added until the details are worked out there is no need to send letters. She stated if information is received prior to the next meeting she will provide additional details.

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NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Yontz addressed the distribution of papers around town and stated the streets are being littered due to the papers not being picked up. He explained Wythe County and the Town of Wytheville have passed ordinances forbidding the distribution. Councilmember Yontz added he had one citizen to tell him they had seen the paper be thrown out and approached the carrier and instructed him to pick the paper up which the carrier did so. He suggested the Council consider doing the same to keep the papers from being all over town. Town Manager James stated he has a copy of Wythe County's ordinance. The consensus was to pursue the ordinance and to schedule a public hearing for the second meeting in February. Councilmember Yontz asked what the ordinance would address. Town Manager James explained it addresses loose items being taken out of a vehicle and placed in a driveway or along a highway. Councilmember Schaack asked if the County ordinance would cover Rural Retreat. Town Manager James stated the Town needs their own ordinance. Councilmember Viars stated he has called the distributor multiple times to request one not be thrown out as his house but it hasn't stopped yet. Vice-Mayor Crigger echoed Councilmember Viars' comment.

Vice-Mayor Crigger stated he had several items to be addressed. The first he explained was the town was in violation of their own Personnel Policy. He referred to and read the section of the policy addressing the hiring of employees: "The Personnel Committee with input from the Manager and with approval of the Town Council has authority for hiring, promoting and discharging employees in accordance with these policies. The Manager has the responsibility for administering the personnel system established by these policies." Vice-Mayor Crigger added the Council hasn't voted to approve the hiring of Tony Wright for the General Services Director position. Mayor Litz asked if this was a policy we would want to continue. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated it is the policy that is in place at this time. Councilmember Viars made a motion to officially hire Tony Wright as the General Services Director and Councilmember Hash seconded the motion. Town Manager James stated he questioned the policy during the process and asked the Personnel Committee if they preferred to follow the policy or allow him to handle. He added the town manager generally handles the hiring and firing of employees. Mayor Litz suggested a review of the policy. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated he wasn't be picky about the individual but only keeping us within our policy. There being no further discussion the motion was passed by a vote of six (6) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Schaack, Viars, Yontz; zero (0) against.

Vice-Mayor Crigger then explained he left the last meeting thinking about several things. He then addressed the need for a purchase order system. He made a motion to establish a purchase order system stating that purchases over \$100 must be approved by the town manager and/or clerk/treasurer, purchases over \$1,500 must be approved by the town council and Tony Wright only as the General Services Director can make purchases for the public works departments. Councilmember Yontz seconded the motion. Vice-Mayor Crigger added letters should be sent to all vendors notifying them that a purchase order is required for orders or it will be void. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated this will also apply to the fire department. Councilmember Viars questioned if approval applied to the purchase of goods only and asked about emergency situations. Town Manager James suggested composing a policy for review outlining the

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stipulations set forth for review at the next meeting. Vice-Mayor Crigger commented he would like to see the changes in effect February 1. Town Manager James added the leeway below \$100 is good and but the \$1,500 limit prior to Council's approval hinders. Vice-Mayor Crigger added he is trying to control the unnecessary purchases between \$800 and \$1,200 and it will not affect the purchase of budgeted items. He added the figures can be changed if needed. There being no additional discussion, the motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Schaack, Viars, Yontz; zero (0) against.

Vice-Mayor Crigger made a motion to purchase and install a time clock in the town shop for maintenance employees. Councilmember Yontz seconded the motion. Councilmember Schaack questioned if there was a need. Town Manager James stated he had discussed this with the Vice-Mayor before but he hasn't done it because he hasn't seen a need for it. Councilmember Hash asked Vice-Mayor Crigger if there was a reason a time clock was needed. Vice-Mayor Crigger responded there would now be documentation of being late, leaving early and extended lunches. Councilmember Hash asked Town Manager James if this occurs a lot. Town Manager James replied it is happening a lot less frequently but the employees should be accountable for being on time. Councilmember Hall commented the town will have to come into the 21st century eventually and punch a time clock. Councilmember Yontz added he supports having the documentation if we are having employee issues and need to take corrective action it will protect us in the long run. Mayor Litz explained he had questioned the need to work after regular hours and Vice-Mayor Crigger stated the maintenance employees will need to go to the town shop before beginning work. Discussion ensued on various time keeping options. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated this will be for maintenance employees and will keep employees from punching co-workers out and will ease the job for Tony Wright. Mayor Litz stated there is an upside and downside to doing this and will be controversial. He added he would rather see it done on a trial basis instead of permanent. Vice-Mayor Crigger commented this should ease Tony's mind in regards to monitoring the employees time. Councilmember Viars explained Mr. Wright will be able to say this was a Town Council decision. This enforces accountability, Councilmember Yontz commented. Town Manager James stated this can be done without a time clock and it will take time to make changes because the employees have been used to the same culture for a long time. Councilmember Viars asked who tracks the time the employees work. Town Manager James explained Mr. Wright does and he completes a time sheet each day to turn in for payroll processing each week. Vice-Mayor Crigger added he feels this is best for the citizens of Rural Retreat. Councilmember Hall stated it will promote clarity and help Town Manager James with what he is trying to achieve. Councilmember Viars asked Town Manager James if he had asked Mr. Wright what he thinks about this. Town Manager James replied he hasn't asked him but doesn't see how a time clock will make the employees more efficient. Mayor Litz asked Vice-Mayor Crigger if this was against the town manager. Vice-Mayor Crigger replied no and he was not micro-managing but only attempting to put a system in place to make the town shop accountable through their actions, work and spending. He added a cheap time clock can be installed with minimal cost. There being no additional discussion the motion passed by a vote of four (4): Crigger, Hall, Viars, Yontz; two (2) against: Hash, Schaack.

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The next item Vice-Mayor Crigger addressed was selling supplies to individuals in town and asked Town Manager James if we are or aren't selling supplies to contractors such as Jack Trivitt. Town Manager James commented the town was but is no longer doing so. Vice-Mayor Crigger explained over that past 20 years high pressure pipe has been installed and can't be purchased at local hardware stores. For many years the town has been promoting the installation of these high pressure water items. He asked Town Manager James to review the change and consider making water and wastewater supplies available to citizens and contractors for purchase. Councilmember Viars asked who determined the town would quit offering the supplies. Town Manager James responded he did but the town doesn't need to be in the business of selling supplies. He added he would review this further. Mayor Litz asked if sales tax would be collected. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn commented the citizens and contractors are charged a markup fee for all purchases. She added now Mr. Wright will have better control over supplies being sold.

Vice-Mayor Crigger then addressed employee communication. He stated he would like all employees communicating with each other and he was tired of hearing that employees aren't talking to each other. He added all employees need to communicate with each other, their supervisor, the town manager and clerk.

Vice-Mayor Crigger asked Town Manager James if Tony Wright was as salary exempt or non-exempt employee. Town Manager James responded he is salary exempt.

Vice-Mayor Crigger asked Chief Mitchell what time he signed off duty on Thursday. Chief Mitchell replied 3:00 p.m. He commented he had covered all he had to address this evening.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Chairman Yontz reported the committee met prior to the meeting. Discussions included conducting the Hall of Honor inductions on Friday night. He added help will be needed to talking to organizations about sponsorships.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Clerk/Treasurer Guynn reported the audit has been distributed for review and asked that upon completing the review of the audit to return all copies to have on file for future distribution as needed. She added she did not include the Management Letter with the audit but will distribute it at the next meeting. Mayor Litz asked if there were major concerns outlined in the letter. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn stated the lack of adequate controls was addressed but due to having two employees it is expected.

PERSONNEL – No report.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

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

TEA-21 PHASE VII SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – We are expecting authorization to bid the project soon, after confirmation from the Richmond office. Town Manager James interjected he had received an email from the Bristol VDOT office and they are expecting the Richmond office to approve the project. The AP pole relocation portion of the project should begin in the coming weeks. We have met with AO and discussed their work that will be done. We will also be meeting with Dennis Amos from A&A to discuss a Phase 8. The application is due in February and the placement of the project will be decided soon. Council will be made aware of the details at that point.

DR. PEPPER LOT – The National Endowment for the Arts grant was submitted last week. We will also be meeting with the Dr. Pepper Company in February to discuss a partnership on this project.

WATER / WASTEWATER OPERATOR – The job opening has been closed. The applications will be reviewed this week and candidates will be chosen for interviews. Approximately 15 applications were received and have been narrowed down to five or six for interviews which will be scheduled over the next week or so.

RURAL RETREAT SUMMER CONCERT SERIES – Mr. Lloyd and I met to discuss needed improvements with the RR Summer Concert Series. We are putting together a budget and detailed plan for how the concert series will be run. We hope to have that information to Council by the February 12th meeting for your review and approval.

GENERATOR CAPABILITY – There has been ongoing discussion of emergency power outage issues with our water and wastewater plants and lift station. I have asked Allen West to prepare a quote on all work that would need to be done so both facilities can be powered by a generator. I know the County has applied for funding to purchase generators that would be available to the Town in most cases and also VML Insurance offers a program through a policy that would provide generators within 24-48 hours of an emergency. The cost to the town would be for the transportation of the equipment but in discussions with VML I believe those costs are covered by VML under certain conditions. When the estimate is completed we can look at this project under our CIP.

SNOW EVENT – I can't say enough about the continuously professional emergency efforts performed by the RRVFD, Rescue Squad and town staff. We had a significant snow with little to no issues in Town. Please thank them for the wonderful work they do for our community. Town Manager James added he had no complaints other than the occasional mailbox.

WATER ACCOUNTABILITY – Mayor Litz stated the town has spent a lot of money but the accountability numbers haven't changed. Town Manager James stated town leaks have been identified in the water system and plans are being made to repair both. Mayor Litz added he

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hates to see the town losing 40% of the water produced. Town Manager James stated the Virginia Department of Health requires 30% accountability.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Clerk/Treasurer Guynn informed the Council there would not be a Joint Governing Bodies meeting in January. She added January customarily has five Monday’s however the calendar falls differently this year.

The bills for January 22nd were read and approved.

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.

ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjourning, Councilmember Yontz stated Mark Obenshain, a candidate or Attorney General will be at his auction house Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. He invited the Councilmember’s to attend.

Vice-Mayor Crigger stated he would like to apologize to the Town Council, Town Manager and Police Chief if he offended anyone.

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