

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2014, 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: Gary Houseman – Wythe County Board of Supervisors; Geary
Jonas; Amy McBride; Libby Phillippi

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Rev. Gary Houseman.

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 Schaack to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2014 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 absent: Hash.

CITIZEN’S TIME

None

CORRESPONDENCE

None

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POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell reported an increase in dog complaints since the last meeting, primarily on Sherwood Avenue and Greever Street due to dogs running loose. He pointed out he has increased radar while on patrol on Sherwood Avenue, Greever Street and Gienow Road and has received positive comments since doing so. He is continuing to distribute the business check cards however no responses have been received. Chief Mitchell reported he attended the Emergency Operations Center meeting. The town of Wytheville expressed concerns about the day to day operations especially communications and dispatching issues. He noted dispatching issues are due to employee turnover because of low salaries issues but this is being addressed and salaries will be increased to \$24,000 plus to meet the Compensation Board's minimum pay for dispatchers. The meeting was productive though some of the issues didn't pertain to Rural Retreat, Chief Mitchell stated.

Mayor Litz noted there are always growing pains with a facility the size and importance of this. He asked Town Manager James if he felt comfortable with the upcoming budget related to the center. Town Manager James stated the budget will increase due to increased operations costs.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

TOWN NEWSLETTER – Mayor Litz reported the first town newsletter has been printed and is ready for distribution. Town Manager James thanked Councilmember Yontz for working on the newsletter to get it completed.

Vice-Mayor Crigger commented that Porter Sage has a copy of the original Rural Retreat Times that would be great to reproduce. Councilmember Yontz stated the copy that Mr. Sage has is a reproduction that the Woman's Club had reproduced several years ago. Mayor Litz added when the town hall moved a lot of records were left in the old office for the historical society. He suggested contacting Ms. Hall to ask about what they have.

NEW BUSINESS

VIRGINIA ENTERPRISE ZONE – Town Manager James stated the towns of Wytheville and Rural Retreat and Wythe County along with the Joint Industrial Development Authority are working to develop an Enterprise Zone. This will expand to areas around the interstate exits of the two towns in addition to the Progress Park area. He explained the proposal includes offering grants or rebates on utility connection fees and for machinery and tools, business, professional and occupational licenses, meals and transient occupancy tax for a five year term. He noted the proposal is based on the number of jobs that are created. Town Manager James asked the Council to review the proposal and stated this will be readdressed at the next meeting for approval.

Mayor Litz addressed the upcoming sale of the property owned by B. C. Umberger between the crossroads area and the interstate. He stated there is potential for good things to happen with this

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property. Vice-Mayor Crigger commented he would like to see the Council support anything that comes to that area. Mayor Litz added it will mean a lot to the town.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Chairman Yontz reported the committee will be meeting following the Council meeting.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Chairman Crigger reported the committee met prior to the Council meeting. Town Manager James will be bringing recommendations to the committee on utility increases and rate structure. He noted a draft budget will be available at the next meeting. Chairman Crigger thanked the committee members for their work and noted Councilmember Schaack sat in on the meeting and offered suggestions for consideration.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES AND LEGAL MATTERS – No report.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

RURAL RETREAT SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PHASE 7 & 8 – We are coordinating with King Contractors on the final completion of all clean up before the spring. Phase 8 design is complete and we have a preliminary budget estimate of \$525,000.

Town Manager James noted Phase 8 will extend the sidewalks on East Baumgardner Avenue from South Greever Street to South Main Street. He added he hopes this project will be ready to be put out for bid by late May or early June.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION – We are still collecting information about downtown Rural Retreat for Greenberg Development Services. We are tentatively scheduling a kick-off meeting and two day site visit in mid-May. This meeting will include businesses, town staff and the consulting and engineering firms.

VDOT STREET ADDITIONS – Our request for the inclusion of town streets into the state system has been remitted to the Richmond VDOT office. We hope to receive final approval this summer.

Town Manager James explained he received confirmation today that all streets submitted have been included in the state system. He stated due to the amount of mileage submitted in excess of the allowable amount per year, we can't request any additions until 2016.

RURAL RETREAT TOWN CHARTER – The General Assembly will receive the amended Town Charter for final approval on April 23rd. We anticipate a simple up-down vote, and it should be noted that no nay votes were received in prior committee meeting or general voting sessions in the House and Senate.

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IDA DIRECTOR – The IDA Board is still exploring possible candidates for a final selection. The process is ongoing and information will be presented to Council once an announcement is made.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS – KATHERINE PICKETT – BOZA members approved Mrs. Pickett's request last night for her road frontage variance on Sherwood Avenue. Mrs. Pickett is planning to relocate to Rural Retreat this summer.

Councilmember Schaack asked if new people that move to Rural Retreat receive a welcoming packet. Town Manager James replied yes, an informational sheet is given to residents when they establish their utility service.

EARLES ROAD WATERLINE EXTENSION – Staff has gathered a project cost estimate for the connection of the residents on Earles Road. We will contact the residents within the next week to follow-up on their interest and discuss the details of the connection process.

Vice-Mayor Crigger addressed the directional business signs located around town and stated some of signs have faded and can't be read. He suggested having the signs re-done.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The bills for March 25, 2014 were read and approved.

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

Prior to adjourning, Mayor Litz thanked the guests for attending the meeting.

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