

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN  
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2015, 7:00 P.M.**

Council Members Present: Mayor Timothy Litz; Vice-Mayor Dale Yontz; Jerrell Hall; Peggy Hash; James P. “Sean” Viars; Geary Jonas; James Lloyd

Council Members Absent: None

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

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Jerry Hurt; Michael Sobey

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

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

**INVOCATION**

The invocation was given by Geary Jonas.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Litz.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz, seconded by Councilmember Jonas to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2015 regular meeting. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Hash, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Yontz; zero (0) against; one (1) abstention: Hall.

**CITIZEN’S TIME**

Jerry Hurt with the Rural Retreat Depot Foundation, Inc. addressed the Council concerning the depot. He explained the depot is a critical part of the town, the history and the vision so he wanted to make sure the Foundation and the leadership of the town is kept well informed and there is communication therefore he will provide a report to the Council on a bi-monthly basis. This past year, the Foundation spent \$100,000 mostly on foundation repairs to stabilize the building, Mr. Hurt added. He stated a contract to replace the roof was recently signed for approximately \$30,000. Mr. Hurt explained the Foundation is working with history buffs now to get the original green that was on the roof during the 1920’s and 1930’s. Once the building is complete on the outside it will be painted bright white with green trim which is the way it looked

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historically. Mr. Hurt distributed a copy of the proposed plans for restoring the depot. He explained people continuously ask what work has been done so far because it doesn't look appealing or visible. He stated in April a park area will be built between the building and North Main Street so when people go by there will be something that is highly visible as the renovation work on the building begins. Landscaping and picnic tables will be donated by area businesses, Mr. Hurt stated. Councilmember Viars asked Mr. Hurt if the park area will impact the parking at the depot. Mr. Hurt replied yes, it will eliminate the five or so spaces that are there. Mr. Hurt then addressed the page containing floor plan for the depot and explained the deck on the back of the depot will be completed in the coming months and will be expanded to wrap around half of the west end. The fence will be installed on top of the brick on the back side and currently an application is being made to the Wythe Bland Foundation for grant funding to complete the fence on the west end to Church Street. He explained the vision is to complete the east end as a museum to highlight the culture of Rural Retreat to focus on the railroad, cabbage capital of the world, Dr. Pepper and the other things that are part of our heritage. Some of the space will be designated for caterers to use for events being held at the depot. The main entrance will remain where it is but will be converted to an ADA compliant door, Mr. Hurt explained. He stated the interior ramp that now goes to the freight room will be removed and a legal ADA ramp will be built on the back wall along with an ADA restroom that will sit partly in the freight room and in the middle room. The two doors in the backside of the freight room will be restored and French doors will be installed behind them that will open up to the back deck. The freight room will be renovated for community use with a proactive approach toward events. Mr. Hurt explained members of the Foundation have met with Virginia Tech twice to discuss a partnership with the Moss Arts Center to host performing arts events at the depot. A pilot program will be held this spring with Virginia Tech. Capital campaigns for individuals and businesses will begin this spring, Mr. Hurt explained. Grants are also being applied for though most don't want to be the last dollar but they want organizations to help themselves by getting their own money. Mayor Litz informed Mr. Hurt that the caboose can be moved, if needed, in order to gain parking.

Michael Sobey stated the Historical Society has artifacts that could be placed in the depot's museum. Councilmember Lloyd explained he had spoken to Gail Hall and she had told him all items will be moved to the Rural Retreat Community Center. Discussion ensued on the items the Historical Society has.

Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Hurt for his presentation and stated it was very informative. Councilmember Viars asked Mr. Hurt approximately how many people the freight room could hold. Mr. Hurt responded according to the engineer the fire code will allow 110 but he estimated 60.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Town Manager James reported a letter was received from the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water congratulating the Town for earning the 2013 Water Fluoridation Quality Award. He stated he appreciates the staff's hard work with the accurate reporting.

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### **POLICE REPORT**

Chief Mitchell explained his 2014 year end activity report. He pointed out there were significant increases in most areas such as verbal warnings, summons, investigations for fraud and vandalism. Chief Mitchell noted the areas that decreased the most were miscellaneous complaints and Wythe County assists. The other areas remained in line with previous years. Chief Mitchell stated he will average 17 reports turned in to the Virginia State Police for the year.

Chief Mitchell stated Vice-Mayor Yontz had asked him to obtain traffic information from the Virginia State Police about writing summons in town. He explained the information they gave him was for patrol during three weeks from the middle of November to the beginning of December in which 33 summonses was written. He further explained the rest of the time they are unable to break the numbers out because it is considered part of the county information unless it is a directive patrol.

Vice-Mayor Yontz explained there is a citizen that is recording traffic on Each Buck Avenue but due to email issues he is unable to forward the video to Town Manager James. He stated once the video can be viewed he would like for the Council to address any issues that are in the video. Councilmember Hash stated the citizen told her that there are 2,000 cars a day traveling East Buck Avenue. Chief Mitchell pointed out that is the same information that was received from the Wythe County Sheriff's Office traffic study. Mayor Litz commented the State Police has jurisdiction over state roads.

Chief Mitchell stated he had met with Sheriff Dunagan to discuss mutual cooperation and aid and they will continue to work together.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

SCADA SYSTEM – Town Manager James reported Wayne Littleton and Ryland Brown from Clearwater, Inc. were here today to review the equipment and program again for the SCADA system. He explained he and staff feel this system will meet the town's needs. The town will have to contract with Verizon for cell service and Clearwater, Inc. will install a 30' antenna at the water plant to increase reception. Upon installing the equipment, if the program doesn't work then the town will not have to pay any costs. Town Manager James referred to a handout that outlined points of interest for the project including a 60 day completion date, the locations of the remote terminal units and how the system will operate. He noted the system will be web based with a dedicated webpage to monitor the system and all alerts will be sent via phone, text or email. The total cost is a little more than \$24,000, Town Manager James stated. He recommended the Council proceed with the purchase of this system. A motion was made by Councilmember Hall to purchase the SCADA system from Clearwater, Inc. for approximately \$24,000. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Lloyd and was approved by a vote of six (6) for: Hall, Hash, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Yontz and zero (0) against.

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**PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS** – Town Manager James explained he and Clerk/Treasurer Guynn missed asking the Council to reappoint the two existing member of the Planning Commission that were interested in continuing to serve. He stated both would need to be made retroactively with George Reasor, Jr.'s term beginning June 1, 2014 and ending May 31, 2018 and Allan West's term beginning June 1, 2012 and ending May 31, 2016. A motion was made by Councilmember Lloyd to reappoint George Reasor, Jr. (term June 1, 2014 to May 31, 2018) and Allan West (term June 1, 2012 to May 31, 2016) to the Rural Retreat Planning Commission with their terms becoming effective retroactively. Councilmember Hash seconded the motion and it was approved by a vote of six (6) for: Hall, Hash, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Yontz and zero (0) against.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**HERITAGE DAYS** – No report.

**FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS** – Clerk/Treasurer Guynn reported the 2013/2014 Fiscal Audit report will be distributed for review.

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE** – Chairman Hall reported the committee will meet with the Wythe County Water Committee at 6:30 p.m. on February 11, 12 or 13 and at this time February 12 is more suitable.

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

**SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PHASE 8 & 9** – Staff is still awaiting word from VDOT on Phase 8 & 9.

**SOUTH FORK REED CREEK PROJECT** – DEQ is still working through their evaluation of the project plans and specifications. We expect to receive their approval within the next month.

**CARRINGTON PLACE AT RURAL RETREAT** – Carrington Place at Rural Retreat will be hosting a facility tour for the elected officials and staff members on February 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. We have invited the Wythe County Board of Supervisors and the Wytheville Town Council. Please let me know as soon as possible if you will be able to attend.

**FCC LICENSING** – This week we have finalized our FCC renewal license for all town frequencies. Our new license will expire in 2025.

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**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION** – The Downtown Management Team will be meeting tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. We will be going over project specifics including the budget, funding and estimated timeline. Changes will be made to the plan overall that will be better suited to our budget. The goal is to have a complete plan put together by March and to have funding finalized.

**BUDGET FY 2015-2016** – The Finance Committee / Town Council meeting schedule will be distributed to address the upcoming FY 15-16 Budget. Staff will begin to evaluate this budget year and provide information on our current financial standing, revenue / expense forecasts and upcoming projects in the Capital Improvement Plan. If Finance Committee members will please let us know if they will be available for the majority of these dates, we can ensure our schedule coordinates with your schedule.

**NORFOLK SOUTHERN RIGHT-OF-WAY** – Councilmember Viars asked Town Manager James if he had received word from Norfolk Southern about the right-of-way for the Downtown Project. Town Manager James replied no but with the recently announced job relocations it may take longer.

### **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Clerk/Treasurer Guynn reported she is continuing to gather information from other towns in order to get the correct wording to develop an ordinance to eliminate decals and to add the fee to the annual tax bills. The 2015 decals have been ordered and will expire on December 31. The decals will be sold on a pro-rated basis and the full fee will be added to the 2015 tax bills in October. A public hearing will be required to adopt the ordinance and will be scheduled for the second meeting in February.

Councilmember Hash stated she had spoken to a member of the Board of Supervisors and the Board is looking to begin selling decals again. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn stated she had heard the Board had discussed this previously but nothing had been done. She noted there are issues with the use of the convenience centers by non Wythe County residents. She further stated once the decals are eliminated it is hard to bring them back though a permanent decal would be idealistic. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn explained she still hates to eliminate the decals but with our revenue decreasing she doesn’t think it will get better. She noted with this being election year for the Board, bringing back the decals probably won’t be mentioned. Town Manager James stated he agreed he doesn’t think the concern for Wythe County is a revenue thing but more with the convenience sites.

The invoices for January 27, 2015 were read and approved.

### **TALK OF THE TOWN**

Town Manager James is to attend the *Talk of the Town* radio program at the WYVE/WXBX radio station on Wednesday morning.

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**CLOSED MEETING – CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL**

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz, seconded by Councilmember Viars to convene to a closed meeting in accordance with §2.2-3711, A-7 – of the Code of Virginia – Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body; and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. The motion was approved with the following voting in favor: Hall, Hash, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Yontz.

Mayor Litz called the regular meeting back into open session.

Motion was made by Councilmember Lloyd, seconded by Councilmember Jonas, to adopt the following Resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the Rural Retreat Town Council has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and,

**WHEREAS**, Section 2.2-3712, paragraph D, of the Code of Virginia requires a certificate by this Council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia Law;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Rural Retreat Town Council hereby certifies that to the best of each member’s knowledge, (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certificate resolution applies, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Council.

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>	<b>Ayes</b>	<b>Nays</b>
Jerrell Hall	X	
Peggy Hash	X	
Geary W. Jonas	X	
James N. Lloyd	X	
James P. “Sean” Viars	X	
Dale Yontz	X	

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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.

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Mayor

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Clerk