

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2015, 7:00 P.M.**

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

Council Members Absent: Vice-Mayor Dale Yontz

Administration Present: Jason Childers, Town Manager; Brian Reed, Interim Town Manager; Lori Gynn, Clerk/Treasurer

Administration Absent: Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

Others Present: Tony Wright – General Services Director; Mike VanMarter; Edith VanMarter; Jack Trivitt; Bob Lewis; Jerry Hurt

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 Councilmember Viars, seconded by Councilmember Jonas to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2015 regular meeting. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Hall, Hash, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars; zero (0) against; one (1) absent: Yontz.

CITIZEN’S TIME

Mayor Litz stated he would like to allow Brian Reed to address the Council first this evening. Mr. Reed explained he will need to leave the meeting following his report due to the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC) sponsoring a discovery tour with representatives from the Virginia Tourism Commission, Friends of Southwest Virginia and a consulting firm that has been hired to develop a branding and marketing campaign for the 19 counties in the Southwest Virginia region in which he is serving as a host. He further explained a meeting for Wythe County will be held Thursday at 10:00 a.m. at the Wytheville Meeting Center. Mr. Reed stated he has provided information about Dr. Pepper and the Downtown Project but Rural Retreat needs to be represented at the meeting. He suggested Mayor Litz and

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Town Manager Childers attend this meeting and possibly a representative with the depot foundation. He explained the purpose of this meeting to collect data on what local people think about Southwest Virginia and what needs to be focused on in a marketing and branding campaign.

Mr. Reed reported the Rural Retreat Downtown Revitalization Project was not funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development. He stated he doesn't know where the project is on the list because the only information released by the Governor's office is the projects that were funded. He noted this is a very competitive process that is scored by points though it is possible if Rural Retreat is only one point short of the receiving the funding then partial or complete funding may be granted later. Mr. Reed explained he has requested a copy of the score sheet but it has not been received. He stated the worst case scenario is the two required public hearings will need to be held again and then resubmit the same application in March. Until the score sheet is received and the management team is brought back together to discuss where the strengths and weaknesses are, it will need to be discussed where the town should go from there, he explained. Mr. Reed stated the MRPDC will help with the entire process and write the application again.

Mr. Reed explained he had received the purchase orders from Tony Wright and Town Manager Childers on the flow meter project. He stated he will turn the information in tomorrow for reimbursement. Mayor Litz asked if he had everything that is needed for the grinders also. Mr. Reed replied yes. Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Reed for his time. Mr. Reed exited the meeting.

Jack Trivitt addressed the Council and stated he wanted to ask the town manager a question. He asked Town Manager Childers who was in charge of getting lots mowed in town. Town Manager Childers replied that would be him and Chief Mitchell. Mr. Trivitt commented to Town Manager Childers that he was not doing his job though he just got here. Mr. Trivitt stated the Town Council may mow theirs and they may not but they don't care who mows and who doesn't but something needs to be done about it. He then asked who is to see that the cars with no tags on them are to be moved. Town Manager Childers replied that would also be him and Chief Mitchell. Mr. Trivitt stated then get Chief Mitchell on the job because he isn't doing it. He added if he isn't doing it then hire him and he will get it done because he has the qualifications. Mr. Trivitt stated there are a lot of other things in town that needs to be checked on that aren't being done. He addressed the houses that everyone is afraid to talk to the owners about. Mayor Litz explained to Mr. Trivitt that the town is working on the house he is referring to and it is moving faster than it has been. He added it won't be done fast but the town is working on it. He explained there are at least two and probably more that the town is working on and have been for years but it is now going faster than it has been. Mr. Trivitt stated he would leave this up to the Town Council to get it done because they were elected by the people and some may have been appointed but the Council isn't doing their job or they don't care. Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Trivitt for his comments.

Mary Williams addressed the Council concerning the ditch located in front of her house. She explained she had been promised the town men would clean the ditch out some but Mr. James is

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now gone. Mrs. Williams explained she had spoken to the town employees and was told they were waiting on Mr. Litz. She explained the ditch belongs to the railroad and the dirt and gravel are filling up the ditch. She asked the Council to look at it because during the spring rains the ditch filled up and water ran into the street toward her house. Mrs. Williams explained the ditch looked like a river and her daughter was going to get her from the house but couldn't because the water from the railroad crossing down had the road blocked and she couldn't go below her house for the same reason. She further explained she had spoken to a gentleman with the railroad a week or so ago and he said he was there when the town helped clean out the hole because the town furnished the trucks and did the digging. She added a hole was dug but a rock was there that couldn't be moved though there is also a sewer line that crosses the ditch. Mrs. Williams pointed out the hole in the ditch holds water and mosquitos.

Town Manager Childers stated he and Tony Wright would visit with Mrs. Williams the next day and look at the ditch. Mayor Litz suggested contacting the railroad and talk to them about the ditch. Mrs. Williams explained the guy with the railroad told her they would clean the ditch out but they were waiting for the state to fix the crossing because they are to put another big culvert in so the tractor trailers won't get hung up. Mayor Litz stated it has been probably three years since the digging had taken place but the town has every intention of participating to fix it but sometimes the wheels grind backwards rather than at all. He added Mrs. Williams has a point. Mrs. Williams stated everyone is passing the buck; the railroad is passing it to the state, the state is passing it to the town and the town is passing it to the railroad but none of this helps her when the water rises and starts heading toward her house. She explained the gentleman with the railroad told her that they don't like standing water. Mayor Litz thanked Mrs. Williams for her comments.

Town Manager Childers readdressed the Downtown Revitalization Project with Jerry Hurt upon his arrival and explained the grant was denied for the project. He explained upon talking with Brain Reed he advised him there is a score sheet that he will obtain a copy of to see how the town's project was scored. He further explained there may have been a concern with the Weaver property because the town had not secured it or obtained in writing that it would be secured. Town Manager Childers stated Mr. Reed had advised that the town may receive partial funding for the project but another application will be submitted in March and two public hearings will need to be held prior to submission. He explained in his opinion the town needs to decide if they want to pursue the Weaver property and what is going to be done with it.

Mayor Litz commented Mr. Weaver wants \$104,000 for the building which is also the tax assessment. Councilmember Viars stated until the score sheet for the project is received we can only speculate. Mayor Litz explained part of the grant money applied for was to go toward purchasing Mr. Weaver's property. Bob Lewis commented when the first management meeting was held the representative with the MRPDC had stated that the fact the town turned down a previous grant may affect the funding of this project. Mayor Litz stated if this is the case then the town will have to deal with it though the funding was a lot more and it was a hotly contested project.

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Bob Lewis addressed Mayor Litz and stated he was aware the fire chief had spoken to him about the condition of the driveway and parking area at the fire house. He further stated he thinks the Council should take a look at the driveway before winter and make a decision though this isn't a budgeted item. He pointed out some patching may be needed. Mayor Litz stated paving work will need to be done but it will need to be looked at.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mayor Litz reported a request had been received to use the Pepper Stage on September 5, 2015, from 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. to host a benefit concert in honor of Abigail Parker to assist her family with expenses while she is a patient at St. Jude's Children's Hospital. The request has asked that the \$250 deposit be waived. Councilmember Hash made a motion to waive the \$250 deposit required to use the stage. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Jonas. Councilmember Viars asked if the \$250 deposit was mainly a security deposit. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn replied yes and it is refundable pending no damage to the stage. She explained there had been some confusion with the use of the stage because the organizers thought if they rented the community center then they would have access to the stage. Councilmember Viars reiterated the fee is a security deposit though it is refundable if there is no damage and to cover the cost of cleanup if not completed. Mayor Litz replied that was correct. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Hall, Hash, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars; zero (0) against; one (1) absent: Yontz.

Councilmember Jonas reported the town has an exposed water line in the ditch along the road beside Southwestern Equipment. Tony Wright, General Services Director, stated the line was patched and insulated today and VDOT will be performing similar work as was recently completed behind Ya-Hill Auto Parts.

POLICE REPORT

No report was given due to Chief Mitchell's absence.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DR PEPPER LOT PROJECT – Councilmember Lloyd reported he had spoken to Troy Harris and he had said a decision would be made in September. He stated if he hasn't received a response by October he will contact Mr. Harris. He explained the lady that is in charge of the Wayne C. Henderson School for the Arts visited with him today and she was asking why the town didn't pursue the Dr. Pepper story and advertising related to it. Councilmember Lloyd stated she had said there is a lot of money available for tourism grants but he is unsure if there is anything we can use. He suggested Town Manager Childers contact the lady and look into the grants that are available. Councilmember Lloyd is to provide Town Manager Childers with the contact information.

STATUS OF SINGLETON PROPERTY – There was no new information to report on this item.

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NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Lloyd explained Jamie Martin had approached him about the garage on the end of the Randy's Building and expressed interest in renting it for his business. He stated he had told Mr. Martin that the building wouldn't be available until November but he wanted to share this with the Council so they could be thinking about whether or not they would like to do this. Mayor Litz commented the garage section is the best part of the building and doesn't need renovating. He stated the Council doesn't have enough information but it is something that should be considered. He added there are pluses and minuses; the plus is there will be income generated from renting it and minus is the town doesn't have a grant right now. Mayor Litz asked Town Manager Childers to think on this and determine what would be wrong with doing this or not. He continued by stating the Council likes to have all the information prior to making decisions. Councilmember Jonas stated Mr. Martin used to work on vehicles and had several sitting around then when he was at the crossroads he had a towing business and had vehicles sitting around. Now, he explained, if there is a vehicle on the lot then he is working on it. He added a lot of vehicles won't be sitting around but a privacy fence could be put up if needed. Mayor Litz asked for this item to be placed on the agenda as unfinished business.

Bob Lewis addressed Mayor Litz and explained when the building was closed up, the windows were boarded up and he suggested doing this again since the time frame is being extended. Mayor Litz commented that is not a bad idea. Mr. Lewis stated the pieces may still be in the building. He added this will keep the town from having a building downtown with the windows knocked out. Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Lewis for his suggestion.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – No report was given.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – No report was given.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – Mayor Litz asked if the town had a new maintenance worker. Town Manager Childers replied yes, Kevin Smelser has been with the town for over a week. He added he will be a good employee for the town.

Chairman Hash stated on behalf of the Personnel Committee she would like to say that Town Manager Childers has been doing a fine job over the past couple of weeks. She added they are glad to have him and appreciated the information he is sending to them.

Tony Wright stated he would like to ask a question regarding the purchase of a new dump truck. He explained before, the purchase had to come before the Council for consideration though it was a budgeted item. He asked if this purchase would need approval from the Council again. Mayor Litz stated this is what the budget is for and it wouldn't need more approval. Town Manager Childers added an RFP will need to be sent out upon developing the specifications.

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PUBLIC UTILITIES – Mayor Litz stated he has been explaining the water projects to Town Manager Childers and they have discussed the potential project with Smyth County and hope to open a dialogue. Town Manager Childers stated he will be contacting Smyth County very soon. Mayor Litz explained the town has an asset in Staley Spring and the hope is to develop it so that it doesn't cost the people of the town.

Councilmember Hall reported that he, Mayor Litz, Tony Wright and Town Manager Childers met with Bobby Lane with The Lane Group last week to discuss the issues with the UV treatment. He stated they were told that the figures would be rechecked and if their engineering was off they would correct it. He asked Mr. Wright if he had received a response. Mr. Wright stated he was told the engineering was not off and they assured him everything was put in according to specifications.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Childers reported on the following items:

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT – As previously reported, a meeting was held with Bobby Lane and a meeting was held with Jeff Spickard on Thursday to discuss the UV disinfection concerns. Mr. Spickard thought there may be a blockage near the creek going toward the plant. A camera was run through the line and some items were found. A jetter was brought in to open the line but it will only go a certain distance from the plant toward the creek and from the creek toward the plant so we think there is an issue in the pipe. Tony Wright contacted the Town of Wytheville and in a few days we're going to borrow a better camera and jetter system to try to find the problem.

Councilmember Hall stated Mr. Wright was referring to the pipe from the outflow meter and the creek then he inquired about the upper pipe. Mr. Wright explained a camera had been run through the upper pipe and it is clear, there are no obstructions. Mayor Litz commented this is the most important line as far as overrun. Mr. Wright stated The Lane Group's opinion is if there is a blockage in the outfall then that is what is causing the backup to be so bad. Councilmember Hall commented this still doesn't solve the problem with the all UV bulbs burning at one time. Mr. Wright explained he had spoken to Mr. Spickard and he provided him with some insight on various things to try in house that will be trial and error.

WATER PLANT VARIABLE FREQUENCY DRIVE – A grant was received to purchase this drive. At this time we are waiting for the installation.

CROSSROADS PROPERTY – This property was discussed during the previous meeting and Mr. Lewis had pointed out the bushes may be on state right-of-way. Tony Wright followed up on this and the town removed the bushes and plastic underneath them. A local landscaper has been contacted about sowing grass seed and a written statement from the property owner will be obtained stating the landscaper will get paid for the work.

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SIDEWALK PROJECT – PHASE 8 – Roger Musser with VDOT was contacted and he had stated the project would be approved either late last week or early this week. Mr. Musser was contacted again today but a response hasn't been received. Anderson & Associates, Inc. advised that it helps if the town manager contacts VDOT consistently because sometimes it speeds up the process.

VDH WATER PLANNING GRANT – Anderson & Associates, Inc. is submitting a grant application to the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Drinking Water for a \$25,000 planning grant for hydraulic modeling and leak detection. The deadline is September 1 and all required paperwork was sent to Anderson & Associates, Inc. last week.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mayor Litz asked Clerk/Treasurer Guynn if she was prepared to discuss Beach Fest. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn responded not at this time and explained all invoices related to the event haven't been received.

Clerk/Treasurer Guynn reported Hicok, Fern & Company was in the office for three days during the week of August 10th. Documents and other information is being sent to them as it becomes available, she added. She stated the complete audit will take place September 10 and 11 by Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn explained the tax books should be received within the next month and tax bills will be prepared and mailed.

The invoices for August 25, 2015 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.

Jerry Hurt addressed the Council and explained Dr. Dean Sprinkle, President of Wytheville Community College is now residing outside of the Rural Retreat corporate limits. He suggested Mayor Litz send a personal note welcoming him to the area. Mayor Litz stated he is to meet with Dr. Sprinkle personally but they haven't been able to get their schedules to work out. He explained he met him at Heritage Days and they talked for a while. He thanked Mr. Hurt for the suggestion.

Councilmember Lloyd asked Mr. Hurt to inform the Council of the meeting they participated in on Saturday. Mr. Hurt explained he had received a call from Conway Link, son of O. Winston Link who was traveling to Damascus to look at their depot and he wanted to see the Rural Retreat depot also. Mr. Hurt, Mayor Litz and Councilmember Lloyd met with him at the depot then they went to the barber shop. Mayor Litz stated Mr. Link had commented he wanted to see a train come by so he told him to wait a minute and four came though while he was here. He explained Mr. Link spent several hours in Rural Retreat that morning.

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Councilmember Hash reported the new COO at Wythe County Community Hospital is living in Rural Retreat also. She stated he really likes the area.

Mr. Lewis addressed the Council and asked if they were aware that Joey's Country Kitchen is going to be closed on Sunday's now. He explained some time back there was discussion on the town trying to get a restaurant to come to Rural Retreat. He suggested sending letters to some of the restaurant chains because the time will come that another place for the citizens to eat will be needed. Discussion ensued on various locations for a restaurant. Councilmember Hash added the Rural Retreat Winery is open on Sunday's.

CLOSED MEETING – DISCUSSION OF REAL PROPERTY

A motion was made by Councilmember Viars, seconded by Councilmember Hash to convene to a closed meeting in accordance with §2.2-3711, A-3 of the Code of Virginia - discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

The motion was approved with the following voting in favor: Hall, Hash, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars.

Mayor Litz called the regular meeting back into open session.

Motion was made by Councilmember Lloyd, seconded by Councilmember Hash, 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.

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Roll Call Vote:

	Ayes	Nays
Jerrell Hall	X	
Peggy Hash	X	
Geary W. Jonas	X	
James N. Lloyd	X	
James P. “Sean” Viars	X	

Absent during meeting: Dale Yontz

Absent during vote: Dale Yontz

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mayor

Clerk