

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 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; Lori Guynn, Clerk/Treasurer; Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Bob Lewis; Brenda Maxey; Jerry Hurt; Jack Weaver

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 Jonas, seconded by Councilmember Lloyd to approve the minutes of the November 10, 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) absent: Hall.

CITIZEN’S TIME

Jack Weaver addressed the Council and stated he was watching the national news prior to coming to the meeting and the discussion was about a police involved shooting in Chicago two years ago. He stated he likes to do research on things and when listening to the news there are always reports of police shooting people. Mr. Weaver then provided statistics from the United States Crime Statistic Bureau for 2015. Based on the statistics, Mr. Weaver provided, the police are less involved in shootings than what is presented to the people.

Mr. Weaver stated he is attending tonight because everyone is getting ready to celebrate Thanksgiving and it is a good time to pause and give thanks for our many blessings. He stated

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – NOVEMBER 24, 2015 – PAGE 2

another day to do this is also the National Day of Prayer that will be held May 5, 2016. Mr. Weaver presented a CD of the event to Mayor Litz and to Vice-Mayor Yontz because he participated in the event. He encouraged the Council to begin working on the planning for the 2016 event. Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Weaver for his comments and added the event was well done.

Jerry Hurt invited the council to attend the first live streaming event from Virginia Tech's Moss Arts Center on Thursday, December 3rd to the Rural Retreat Community. He stated originally he was told to keep the attendance limited but he has now found out Virginia Tech wants a high turnout. Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Hurt.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell reported the new police vehicle still isn't ready but the radios should be switched out early next week. He stated he hopes to have the vehicle complete and in service soon. Chief Mitchell reported there have been issues with the old section house on Church Street with people breaking into it. At the request of the Town Manager he has contacted the Norfolk Southern Police and the department was unaware that the railroad owned property in Rural Retreat. Mayor Litz commented the people that knew about the section house have retired. He added the town has been commissioned to remove that house. He stated he apologized to Jeff George before he retired because the town hadn't destroyed the house for two reasons being he hated to spend the money and second he hated to destroy something nice but the house is becoming less nice all the time. Mayor Litz added the house is a pine structure and isn't worth much.

Jack Weaver stated he had mentioned this to previous town managers then he suggested the town reach a deal with the railroad to obtain the lot because it has no value to the railroad. He added they only want enough space for right-of-way. Mayor Litz explained when the town was working with the railroad about the depot property Norfolk Southern told them they do not sell land. He stated Norfolk Southern instead made a lateral move with the depot property.

Chief Mitchell explained Norfolk Southern will be looking into the complaints and will possibly close up the house and put no trespassing signs up. Town Manager Childers stated he contacted the Wythe County Sheriff's Office and they are patrolling the area more in the early morning hours. He explained two juveniles are squatting in the house and bragging about it at school. At this time, no one has been caught, he stated. He further explained the county is interested in finding out if the railroad would allow them to use the property for training purposes.

Bob Lewis inquired if the railroad gave the property to the town approximately seven to eight years ago. Mayor Litz replied the house only. He stated the town was commissioned by the railroad to get rid of the house. Mr. Weaver commented the town was commissioned to destroy

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – NOVEMBER 24, 2015 – PAGE 3

the house but actually the town doesn't own it, it is owned by the Wythe County tax department. Discussion ensued about selling the house for taxes. Chief Mitchell stated in the short term something needs to be done with the house. Mayor Litz stated it appears the liability will fall onto the town.

Councilmember Lloyd stated he and Chief Mitchell had discussed this and he had also discussed it with Town Manager Childers about the complaints on speeders. He added Mr. Lewis may have suggestions also. Councilmember Lloyd explained it is difficult to write tickets in this town because if you stop one then everyone knows you are there. Mr. Lewis stated it is easier to write moving violations than stationary. Councilmember Lloyd stated one thought he had though he is unsure if it would work is to keep the car the town manager is currently using and install a radar unit in it to park around town in an effort to slow people down. He added Chief Mitchell thinks another speed sign would be sufficient. Mr. Lewis commented instead of having a house vandalized there will be a car vandalized. Chief Mitchell stated he was discussing this with Town Manager Childers earlier today and there isn't one real solution to this problem because one thing is done and it stops working so another is tried and it also stops working. He noted all localities have this issue. Councilmember Lloyd stated this will also allow Chief Mitchell to switch out with the car.

Councilmember Viars commented when the speed sign was purchased the goal was to put the sign up for a time then take it down and patrol the street. He stated he isn't trying to tell anyone how to do their job because after a while people aren't going to pay attention but in a small town like Rural Retreat three to four tickets per month is probably enough to get the job done. He added this was his understanding of why the speed sign was purchased. Town Manager Childers stated the problem is Chief Mitchell needs a laptop for the speed sign to obtain the data. Chief Mitchell explained he can't change the speed on it right now. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn explained Chief Mitchell is waiting for the council to make a decision on whether or not they want tablets because Councilmember Jonas's laptop is the newest so it can be transferred to Chief Mitchell. If tablets aren't purchased then a laptop needs to be purchased for Chief Mitchell she added. She requested that a decision be made about the tablets. Councilmember Viars commented the holdup should not be waiting on retrieving data. Councilmember Lloyd stated he thought all three methods should be tried. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn explained the speed sign is defaulted to 25 mph so it can only be put in areas with this speed until Chief Mitchell gets a laptop and can reprogram it. Chief Mitchell stated Gienow Road and Chinquapin Avenue are 35 mph. Discussion ensued on the need to change out speed limit sign poles.

Mayor Litz stated there are few issues and a decision needs to be made. He further stated if Chief Mitchell needs a laptop then he needs one. Discussion ensued on the purchase of tablets and it being a budgeted item. Councilmember Hash made a motion to purchase tablets for each councilmember. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Lloyd. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn asked what specifications they wanted. Councilmember Viars stated he had sent a link to Town Manager Childers for a Samsung 9.7" tablet that he recommended. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn asked if the Council was in agreement to transfer Councilmember Jonas's laptop to Chief

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – NOVEMBER 24, 2015 – PAGE 4

Mitchell. The Council concurred. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Hash, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Yontz; zero (0) against; one (1) absent: Hall.

Mr. Lewis asked Mayor Litz if he could comment about the radar sign. Mayor Litz granted the request. Mr. Lewis stated he is hearing a lot of comments about the radar sign and people are observing it and like it. He stated he thinks it has made a difference. Chief Mitchell explained he has had requests to put it on specific streets but there is the issue of available poles. Mayor Litz asked Town Manager Childers to work with Chief Mitchell. Mr. Lewis added he is unsure if Chief Mitchell will agree but there will be problems with finding a place to park the empty car. Mayor Litz stated this is only a suggestion at this time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DR PEPPER LOT PROJECT – Councilmember Lloyd reported he will call Mr. Harris on Monday after the holiday weekend. He stated he and Town Manager Childers are planning to go to Roanoke to meet with Mr. Harris.

STATUS OF SINGLETON PROPERTY – No update.

NEW BUSINESS

OFFICE COMPUTER UPGRADE – Clerk/Treasurer Guynn explained the two office computers on the front counter are approximately 12-14 years old and are in need of being replaced. She stated they were formerly work stations until those were upgraded a few years ago. Issues are occurring with the counter computers and they are operating on Windows XP. She stated she asked Jeff Hooper to provide a quote for computers that would meet the town's need. A quote was obtained from a vendor that the Town of Wytheville also uses. The quote was for \$1,564 and will upgrade the operating system to Windows 10 and allows for a larger screen and wireless keyboard and mouse, Clerk/Treasurer Guynn explained. She further explained as the Council can see the computers have a long life with the town. She requested the Council consider approving this purchase to upgrade the two counter computers. Mayor Litz stated this isn't a budgeted item and asked how the town would pay for it. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn explained the purchase could be made from the computer maintenance account or there is a lot of money in the General Fund undesignated account that this could be payed from also. Councilmember Lloyd made a motion to approve the purchase of two computers for the office. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hash. Councilmember Viars asked if the accounting program is compatible with Windows 10. Clerk/Treasurer Guynn replied yes. There being no further discussion the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Hash, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Yontz; zero (0) against; one (1) absent: Hall.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Chairman Yontz reported the committee will meet in January.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – NOVEMBER 24, 2015 – PAGE 5

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Clerk/Treasurer Guynn reported the draft FY 15 audit report has been received and she is reviewing it.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – Chairwoman Hash reported the committee met and will be advertising the position after Thanksgiving.

PUBLIC UTILITIES – No report.

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

Town Manager Childers reported on the following items:

RANDY’S INC. BUILDING – Marlin Miller will be providing a quote for the guttering work on the side of the building. The guttering is missing on the south side of the building and water is running into the street. Town Manager Childers asked Mayor Litz if Mr. Miller was going to evaluate the roof also. Mayor Litz replied he has asked Mr. Miller to look at it. He explained he has been driving around and looking at the roof and he keeps seeing metal that needs to be attended too. He added the interior needs to be dried up.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT – In March the town will reapply for the Community Development Block Grant for this project. A meeting was held with Brian Reed to review the application and scorecard for the project and it seems optimistic. Mr. Reed asked that financial numbers be obtained from Parkway Gas, Joey’s Country Kitchen and Michael Spraker regarding the improvements that have been made to their respective properties so the town can include in the application the private investment made to the area.

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT – Inspections were conducted on the water tanks, water and wastewater treatment plants, and lift station and trash truck. We passed all inspections with flying colors and we are doing things great compared to other municipalities.

PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE – At the previous planning commission meeting, it was pointed out new zoning maps are needed because the current ones are dated from 2000. Zoning changes have been made since then. The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission can no longer print the maps for us so he suggested we contact Anderson & Associates, Inc. since they maintain our Web GIS system. Clerk/Treasurer explained the current maps don’t include the Sherwood Estates and Hillcrest Divide Subdivisions. Councilmember Viars inquired about the charge to print the maps. Town Manager Childers stated he will contact Anderson & Associates, Inc. to get a quote.

CLERK/TREASURER POSITION – The Personnel Committee met Thursday, November 19. The position will be advertised in the *Wytheville Enterprise*, on the radio and with the Virginia Employment Commission. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Town Manager Childers stated based on what he is hearing from the public there is a lot of interest.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – NOVEMBER 24, 2015 – PAGE 6

TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION – Town Manager Childers explained he and Brenda Maxey attended a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) workshop at Wytheville Community College this week. He noted this was a free meeting and both found it very useful. Town Manager Childers stated he will be attending a newly elected official's workshop in Blacksburg next week that will cover FOIA, conflicts of interest, zoning and land use, capital needs, budgeting, economic development and law issues and discipline. He added when he was interviewed he said he would do anything he needed to in order to get the knowledge needed and this is a step in the right direction because it covers laws and procedures outside of operations.

RURAL RETREAT VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES – Mayor Litz asked Town Manager Childers if he had anything he wanted to add to the meeting they attended earlier. Town Manager Childers replied he didn't. Mayor Litz explained he and Town Manager Childers had been asked to attend the Rural Retreat Volunteer Emergency Services (RRVES) members meeting. He stated he conveyed to the rescue squad they are well thought of and well respected and the town wants them to continue with the same attitude they have now and to not give the county any reason to come in and jerk everything out from under them in a sense. Mayor Litz commented the town has never told them we appreciate what they do. He added the town has oversight on their day to day operations but aren't micromanaging. Town Manager Childers stated they advised them to not do anything to draw attention from the county.

Mr. Weaver asked if this would change with the new county manager. Mayor Litz stated it depends upon what the new county administrator wants to do. He further stated the reason Rural Retreat has such a good fire department and rescue squad is because they have ownership. He added they get certified on their own without being forced and he is afraid they will cease to excel if they are taken over hostilely. He noted the community is why they are here. Mayor Litz stated there are things the county can do that will make them more efficient. He further stated he had spoken to Gary Houseman and Cellell Dalton and told them the town will participate. He also addressed the billing process for the rescue squad. Mayor Litz stated the vehicles are titled to the Town not Wythe County and the County though they can decide to not fund the rescue squad.

Councilmember Hash explained the Board of Supervisors presented the RRVES with by-laws which she presented to the Council. She stated these were reviewed with Michael James; changes were made and returned to the county. The county responded with some stipulations which were agreed to if the by-laws would be accepted. To date no additional word has been received. Mr. Lewis asked Mayor Litz if the vehicles were actually titled to the town or were they titled to the RRVES. Mayor Litz responded that was changed. Mr. Lewis commented funding can be reduced because if he remembered correctly there is no requirement by state law for a governmental agency to have a rescue squad. Mayor Litz stated 80% of the calls are located in the county with a portion in Smyth County. Town Manager Childers stated though he hasn't been here long and based on what he has heard the success of the RRVES is because of Peggy Hash and the hard work she has put in. Councilmember Hash stated she has served for 23 years on the board and but was voted off.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – NOVEMBER 24, 2015 – PAGE 7

PAVING AT THE RURAL RETREAT FIREHOUSE – Councilmember Viars inquired on the status of the paving. Town Manager Childers stated the contractor has gotten held up on another job and it will be a week to a week and a half if the weather holds. Mr. Lewis asked Councilmember Viars in his opinion if it was too late. Councilmember Viars stated it is cutting it close. He added by VDOT standards the surface temperature must be 50° at least. Mayor Litz asked if this should be put off until spring. Town Manager Childers stated we will have to be very careful with the snow removal this winter which may require the use of the skid loader instead of a truck and blade. Discussion ensued on blocking off that section of the parking lot and not using it. Town Manager Childers explained the fire department will continue to operate normally until the paving takes place then trucks will be moved for easier access.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The invoices for November 10, 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.

ADJOURNMENT

Jerry Hurt reported the exterior of the depot is almost complete. He pointed out BB&T has approved donating \$15,000 to the Foundation over the next three years.

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