

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 08, 2015, 7:00 P.M.**

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

Council Members Absent: Vice-Mayor Dale Yontz; Peggy Hash

Administration Present: James Childers Town Manager; Brenda Maxey, Clerk/Secretary; Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: 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 Lloyd, seconded by Councilmember Jonas to approve the minutes of the November 24, 2015 regular meeting. There being discussion, the motion passed by a vote for four (5) for: Jonas, Lloyd, Hall, Viars; zero (0) against; two (2) absent: Yontz, Hash.

CITIZEN’S TIME

Jerry Hurt reported that the Rural Retreat Depot Foundation had their first live streaming last Thursday, December 2, 2015 with Virginia Tech in the Town Hall. This was Virginia Tech’s first streaming of a live performance in the state of Virginia outside the metropolitan Blacksburg area. Virginia Tech really wants to work with a rural community such as Rural Retreat stated Mr. Hurt. He was impressed that the Virginia Tech group had already analyzed a grant that the Depot Foundation had submitted in March for \$700,000 and after the first of the year a focus group will be formed to make Rural Retreat a project not just the Depot. Mr. Hurt will be going to Blacksburg on December 9th to meet with them to see what the next step will be to move forward. Virginia Tech then will be selecting four to five projects after approvals by authorities.

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He feels that the community of Rural Retreat will need support of the project such as the leaders of the town, churches, schools, etc. Virginia Tech has found that to make any program successful the community involvement is needed stated Mr. Hurt. This should also tie in with the Downtown Revitalization Program nicely stated Mr. Hurt and this would be a two year program. If you want Virginia Tech resources you have to have active and passionate people. Mayor Litz stated he believed when the campaign is started, if handled correctly people will be passionate and will be active. He feels there would be support of participants outside of the town too.

Mr. Hurt also stated they had looked about moving the caboose next to the depot but after speaking with the gentleman that works for the Department of Interior, that helped to have the caboose marked as a National Land Mark, he feels the caboose placed adjacent to the depot will take away from the historical value. Mr. Hurt remarked Virginia Tech attended the second half of the Christmas Bazaar and they think the Depot will become a destination for tourism, education, art center and museum and they feel that the fifty foot extension would need to be added back to the depot eventually to accommodate activities that will be held there in the future. Councilmember Lloyd questioned about the moving of the caboose. Is the road above the caboose that circles back to Church Street owned by the town and if so, would that not be a good re-location area. Mr. Hurt's understanding from former Town Manager, Michael James, was the town owns one or two feet north of pavement and that would not allow enough room to place the caboose. The caboose location is not a problem at this time stated Mayor Litz.

Mr. Hurt inquired about the property that Norfolk Southern owns west of Jack Weaver's property and is it correct that Norfolk Southern were not interested in selling that to the town. Mayor Litz stated that Norfolk Southern has a standard statement that they will not sell or give away any property. Mr. Hurt inquired would Norfolk Southern consider leasing the property to be used. Norfolk and Southern considers leasing property as a liability because of the tracks being adjacent to the property stated Mayor Litz but if you are interested in pursuing the issue the process will need to start soon because it could take years. The Town of Rural Retreat does have a good relationship with Norfolk and Southern stated Mayor Litz.

CORRESPONDENCE

Councilmember Viars invited the Council Members to the Winter Band Concert on behalf of the Band Boosters which is Sunday, December 13th at 6:00 p.m. at the Rural Retreat High School auditorium.

Councilmember Hall stated that Mrs. Lucille Rich had reported no streets lights on the section of Westfield Avenue where she lives in the newly developed area and she was inquiring about having them installed. Town Manager Childers stated that Mick Musser installed all the lights in the newer developed section of Sherwood Avenue. The lights in that sub-division are a different type stated Councilmember Viars. He also asked if the street where Mrs. Rich lives is a town

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street. Town Manager Childers stated that the town owns the street of Sherwood Avenue past Meredith's Garage then it becomes a state road. Mayor Litz asked Town Manager Childers to investigate to see what the town's decision on street lights has been in the past. Town Manager Childers stated that there is a light at the intersection of Richfield Street and Sherwood Avenue but it does not work properly. Councilmember Hall stated that any previous request for street lights there was to be approximately 400 feet between them. Mayor Litz asked Town Manager Childers to check about the street lights and report at the next council meeting.

POLICE REPORT

None

UNFINISH BUSINESS

DR. PEPPER LOT PROJECT - Councilmember Lloyd reported he had met with Troy Harris of Dr. Pepper Corporation about the Dr. Pepper lot project. Mr. Harris assured Councilmember Lloyd he wants to pursue this but it will depend on corporate decision after speaking to them. Councilmember Lloyd told Mr. Harris that the town would assist in any way they could and if that means scaling down the building that could be done. Councilmember Viars asked if Mr. Harris needed anything else from us. Mayor Litz commented that Councilmember Lloyd did give Mr. Harris the Depot documentary. Councilmember Lloyd did tell Mr. Harris about Virginia Tech involvement with the Depot Foundation and the work being done at the Depot. Councilmember Lloyd stated that the Galax Fiddler's Convention is being sponsored by Dr. Pepper. Councilmember Hall stated he had noticed the stage is now named The Dr. Pepper Stage at the Galax Fiddler's Convention. Councilmember Lloyd stated Mr. Harris again is waiting for the right time to make the presentation to corporate headquarters but is supportive of the Dr. Pepper lot project. Mr. Harris did mentioned to Councilmember Lloyd about Roanoke celebrating October 24th as Dr. Pepper day and asked if Rural Retreat could do a festival or something similar but to remember the important numbers for Dr. Pepper is 10- 2- 4. Councilmember Lloyd told him that the town would do anything within their means and feels it would be beneficial. Mr. Harris will be visiting the town in the future and Councilmember Lloyd will notify Town Manager Childers of the visit so they can meet.

STATUS OF SINGLETON PROPERTY – No update.

NEW BUSINESS

DISPENSING WITH DECEMBER 22, 2015 MEETING AND INVOICE PAYMENTS – Councilmember Viars made a motion to dispense with the December 22 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Lloyd and was approved by a vote of four (4) for: Viars, Hall, Jonas, Lloyd; zero (0) against. The next motion was made by Councilmember Lloyd to authorize Mayor Litz to sign checks and to pay invoices. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hall and was approved by a vote of four (4) for: Viars, Hall, Jonas, Lloyd; zero (0) against.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – No report.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – No report.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – Town Manager Childers reported that there has been four applicants received to date for the Treasurer/Clerk open position.

PUBLIC UTILITIES – No report.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

Town Manager Childers reported that he had attended a Newly Elected Officials Training and has completed the training. He has a reference guide now that he can use as a resource plus contact information of attorneys.

PAVING AT THE RURAL RETREAT FIREHOUSE – This should be completed early next week by Medley's Sugar Grove Asphalt if weather holds out. Councilmember Viars questioned how long they anticipated completing the job. Town Manager Childers stated 2 to 3 days and arrangements have been made to move the fire department vehicles but vehicles that store liquids such as water, etc. will be stored at the town shop.

TOP SOIL PURCHASE – Matthew Heldreth has top soil available to sale from construction of a building at his farm. The town presently purchases top soil at the cost of \$150 per load and Mr. Heldreth has 60 dump truck loads of top soil that he will sell to us at \$75 per load. Town Manager Childers is asking for permission from council to make this purchase in total cost of \$4500. Councilmember Lloyd made motion to approve the purchase of the top soil in the amount of \$4500. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Jonas. Councilmember Jonas questioned where the top soil was going to be stored. Town Manager Childers responded it would be stored at the town dump. There being no further discussion the motion was approved by a vote of four (4) for: Viars, Hall, Jonas, Lloyd; zero (0) against.

SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – PHASES 10 –Town Manager Childers spoke with Larry Roberts from AEP about the possibility of burying the utilities which would be in front of Randy's building going to Lloyd's Barbershop. Mr. Roberts suggested an alternative to take the AEP poles beside the sidewalk from Randy's building to Lloyd's Barbershop and supply power from the poles on the other side of the road. There would be no poles on the sidewalk side of the street and removing the poles would be beneficial stated Town Manager Childers. Town Manager Childers stated that the estimate cost would be \$10,000 and we could use the matching grant money toward this project.

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TREASURER’S REPORT

The invoices for December 08, 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

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