

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2016 7:00 P.M.**

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

Council Members Absent: Vice-Mayor Dale Yontz; Jerrell Hall

Administration Present: Jason Childers, Town Manager; Monica H. Patton, Clerk/Treasurer; Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Jerry Hurt; Brian Vaught; Brian Reed; Ray Matney; Bob Lewis; David Evans; Amy McBride.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Councilmember Geary Jonas.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Litz.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilmember Viars and seconded by Councilmember Hash to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2016 regular meeting. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of four (4) for: Viars, Jonas, Hash; Lloyd; zero (0) against.

CITIZEN’S TIME

David Evans, Chief of the Rural Retreat Volunteer Fire Department addressed the Council regarding equipment that is in need of replacement. Chief Evans stated there are funds in the budget allotted for replacement of two trucks, a 1979 GMC tank truck and a 1985 GMC pumper truck. The 1979 GMC is currently out of service. The tank has stress cracks; the truck has electrical issues that mechanics have not been able to diagnose. The truck has to be jumped off if the department needs to use it. In addition to electrical problems the brake lines have ruptured three times. Chief Evans stated the truck is not NFPA compliant. The 1985 GMC pumper failed the ISO pump test last summer. Chief Evans reported that both of these trucks need to be taken out of service. The department would like to purchase one new truck to replace

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both the 1979 and 1985 trucks. Chief Evans stated he quoted a new truck last year and at that time the cost was \$300,000. The cost is currently \$501,000 for the same truck. He indicated that by cutting the truck down to the bare minimum of what is needed the manufacturer was able to reduce the price to \$430,000. Chief Evans indicated that the service life of the new truck would be about 30 years. Chief Evans stated he and Town Manager Childers discussed disposal of the two older trucks. The 1979 GMC tank truck can possibly be sold by sealed bids. The 1985 GMC pumper could possibly be sold to a fire equipment trader company for parts. Mayor Litz stated that it has been a while since the Town had to purchase fire equipment. Mayor Litz asked if the Town could apply for grant money to aid in the purchase. Town Manager Childers stated he had talked to Brian Reed regarding grant money. Mr. Reed indicated that there is not much grant money available for fire equipment purchases. Town Manager Childers said he would look further into the possibility of grant money. Chief Evans agreed that there is not much grant funding available for equipment, and the grants available are mainly for funding of personal protection equipment. Town Manager Childers stated the Town could possibly get a Rural Development loan for the purchase. Councilmember Hash stated that there is a person at Wytheville Community College that does EMS and he might be able to give the Town some information on availability of grants for this purpose. Councilmember Hash said she would get his contact information. Town Manager Childers asked Chief Evans if the department has the necessary equipment in case of a severe situation. Chief Evans stated that the 1985 pumper provided water to other trucks from ponds, streams, creeks, and dry hydrants. There are some streets in the town that do not have hydrants and the department relies on these trucks to supply the primary pumper with the water necessary to fight fires.

Chief Evans informed the Council of a Firefighter that was injured in November 2015 while doing salvage and overhaul on a barn fire. In the process of removing a barn door where the fire was behind the door, the Firefighter fell and injured his knee. C.J. Earles, the injured Firefighter sustained an injury to his knee that required surgery. Chief Evans stated the Fire Department Volunteers are covered under a Workers Compensation insurance policy provided by Wythe County. Firefighter Earles has forwarded his medical bills to the County; however, they have not been paid and Firefighter Earles has received final notices on many of the bills. Chief Evans indicated that he has spoken with Stephen Bear with the Wythe County Administration office and there is an issue with the deductible. Chief Evans stated that Wythe County Administration officials do not think they are required to pay a deductible. Chief Evans stated his main concern is the Firefighter Earles' credit standing. Councilmember Viars indicated that there was a similar concern with another Firefighter. He asked if the County ever took care of the bills in that case. Chief Evans said no, however, the insurance company has changed since then. Town Manager Childers asked Chief Evans if he needs the Town to do anything to help with this matter. Councilmember Viars asked if Tim Reeves and Gary Houseman with the Wythe County Board of Supervisors have been notified of the concern. Chief Evans remarked that he was waiting to hear from Mr. Dalton, Wythe County Administrator before he contacts the Supervisors. Bob Lewis asked Mayor Litz and Council if the Town needs to get involved in the situation with the Firefighter regarding the medical bills. Raymond Matney stated the Firefighter

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needs to be protected and the Town Attorney, Mike Sobey should get involved and be in contact with Wythe County Administration.

Chief Evans reported to Council that the Fire Department received a grant to purchase smoke detectors. Chief Evans received a phone call from an elderly lady that her smoke detector was beeping. He replaced the battery in the smoke detector and realized the smoke detector was malfunctioning and needed to be replaced. Chief Evans received a similar call from another elderly lady a few weeks later. Chief Evans went out to the residence and assisted the lady with her smoke detector. Chief Evans stated he decided to check on the availability of grant money to purchase smoke detectors for citizens. He applied for a grant through the Firefighters Charitable Foundation and the Fire Department received \$300, which allowed the Fire Departments to purchase 38 smoke detectors to distribute to the elderly citizens in the community. Chief Evans also stated that Family Dollar Store in Rural Retreat donated a box of 9-Volt batteries to be distributed to needy citizens for smoke detectors. Chief Evans stated if someone is in need of a smoke detector or replacement battery to contact him and he would make sure they receive one.

Chief Evans asked Council if the Town is interested in conducting a tornado warning test. He stated it has been two or three years since the Town tested the warning system. Chief Mitchell indicated that the Town would need to make citizens aware of the test by placing notices on the radio and in the newspaper.

CORRESPONDENCE

Councilmember Hash reported that she was approached by Mrs. Fogelson and her daughter regarding items they have that were in the Delp house. The Fogelsons would like to donate these items to the Town. She was also approached by a citizen about the Town purchasing the Heritage Hall building. Mayor Litz stated the previous efforts to purchase the property were unsuccessful, but it is a matter that should be considered.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell reported there has been an increase in traffic enforcement. He has had several complaints regarding traffic on Greever Street. Chief Mitchell indicated that the radar sign will be put into use soon. The weather is a factor when using the sign and when temperatures are above 40 degrees he will put the sign out.

Chief Mitchell spoke with Mrs. Irvin regarding the 5K run scheduled for May 21, 2016. They have decided to change the route slightly and have participants cross Main Street at the Bank of Rural Retreat and continue up Main Street to Gienow Road.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DR. PEPPER LOT PROJECT – Town Manager Childers stated that his contact with VDOT has been out of the office due to a recent surgery. Town Manager Childers mentioned that he has another contact, Mr. Simms who issues permits on the I-81 corridor and he will be in contact with Mr. Simms regarding the billboard.

INDIAN CIRCLE TRAFFIC CONCERN – Town Manager Childers reported that VDOT provided the line of sight analysis. VDOT provided a plan to mark twelve feet from the white line on the road into the parking lot for no parking. Town Manager Childers stated he gave the business owner a copy of the analysis along with his contact information. The business owner stated he wants to meet with his attorney. Town Manager Childers stated he will meet with the business owners at 2:30 on Wednesday, March 23, 2016. Bob Lewis stated that if the Town forces the Hilltop business owners to mark their parking lot as no parking at the street then the Town should make other businesses do the same. Mayor Litz stated that the issue should be left to the agency that is in charge of the issue. Raymond Matney stated that in the past the Town put signs up at Ya-Hill and marked no parking on the parking lot at the street of Billy Shoemaker's business because parking was an issue at these establishments as well. Chief Mitchell stated that he and Town Manager Childers have discussed a plan for him to write parking tickets for motorists that were parking in a no parking zone. Chief Mitchell indicated that the Town may need to change the ordinance regarding parking. Mayor Litz indicated that the tickets would be written on a state maintained street therefore would fall under the state statute and not a Town ordinance. Councilmember Viars asked Town Manager Childers about possibly making a right turn only when exiting from Indian Circle. Town Manager Childers responded that he would need to talk to VDOT regarding any changes of that nature. Mr. Lewis explained that the state approved the entrance into Indian Circle and now VDOT is saying the entrance must be changed. He also stated that if no parking is enforced at the Hilltop then it should be enforced at all businesses in Town. Mayor Litz asked Town Manager Childers to meet with all involved and open a line of communication and get the matter resolved.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER – Mayor Litz reported that the National Day of Prayer time has been changed from 12:00 noon to 6:00 pm in an effort to get more participation.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION FOR CDBG FUNDING OF THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT - Town Manager Childers explained the Council will need to adopt a resolution to proceed with a grant application for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The application is the same as the one submitted last year with the exception of the amount. The amount was increased by \$23,000 in order to obtain property in the downtown area. The Town

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Council has met the citizen participation requirements of the program by conducting two public hearings. The Resolution states that \$1,376,510 in VDOT Enhancements and Local Matching funds have or will be spent to improve sidewalks in the downtown business district. The Town has been awarded \$100,000 from the Wythe Bland Foundation for the construction of the Farmers Market. The Depot Foundation, Inc. has spent \$100,000 on improvements to the Historic Depot in 2015. The Town is applying for \$700,000 in CDBG funds for physical improvements to encourage the location and growth of business within the central business district, and the local contribution from the Town will be \$175,000. A motion was made by Councilmember Viars to approve the resolution; seconded by Councilmember Jonas. Raymond Matney asked where the \$175,000 would come from. Mayor Litz explained the \$175,000 was set aside in reserve funds for the project. No further discussion the motion passed by a vote of four (4) for: Lloyd, Jonas, Hash, Viars; zero (0) against.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS - Mayor Litz reported the acts are lined up and the Rescue Squad is working on the Vendors.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Treasurer Patton reported a correction from the last meeting. The Rural Retreat Emergency Service was present at the March 8, 2016 meeting to present their budget and make a request for further funding from the Town. Treasurer Patton stated at the meeting that the \$10,000 that was budgeted for the Rural Retreat Emergency Service had not been submitted. However, on August 25, 2015 a check in the amount of \$10,000 was written to the Rural Retreat Volunteer Emergency Service. Treasurer Patton stated that she has spoken with the Rescue Squad and they are aware that the check was submitted.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – Town Manager Childers reported that the position for Maintenance to replace David Jones has been advertised on the website and in the newspaper. Town Manager Childers also reported that he and Treasurer Patton will be meeting with Brian Reed with Mount Rogers soon to start the budget process.

PUBLIC UTILITIES - None

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

GIS MAPPING SYSTEM - Town Manager Childers explained the GIS Mapping System will be updated and the town employees will be able to access the system with a smart phone. Raymond Matney asked Town Manager Childers if all of the maintenance workers have smart phones. Town Manager Childers stated that all of the maintenance workers with the exception of one have a smart phone. Town Manager Childers explained that with this system the worker will have the capability to go out into the field and say “find me” the GPS enabled system will show the worker where they currently are and which direction and how far to go to find what they are

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looking for. Councilmember Viars explained another option is to use a laptop instead of a smartphone.

MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT - Town Manager Childers reported the Maintenance Department will have the street sweeper in two or three weeks and they will begin cleaning the streets and sidewalks.

CROSSWALK UPGRADES - Town Manager Childers stated he is still trying to get in touch with Jeff Russell with VDOT regarding the crosswalk upgrades. Mr. Russell is supposed to be in the office tomorrow and Town Manager Childers will be in contact with him.

HOPE BACKPACKS- Town Manager Childers reported the Town has agreed to meet at 6:00pm on April 13, 2016 to pack the backpacks. Three employees from the Town have volunteered to help. Town Manager Childers asked if any Council Members would be available to volunteer as well. Councilmember Viars said he will be available to help.

DELIQUENT WATER AND SEWER ACCOUNTS – Town Manager Childers reported the Town currently has eight hundred and fifty water and sewer accounts. Twenty percent of the total water and sewer accounts are delinquent at this time. Town Manager Childers stated some of delinquent amounts are from the customers on Myrtle Lane that did not connect when the water lines were installed in that area.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The invoices for March 22, 2016 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 Jonas. The motion was duly seconded and approved.

Mayor

Clerk