

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, April 12, 2016 7:00 P.M.**

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

Council Members Absent: None

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

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Jerry Hurt; Brian Vaught; Jack Weaver; David Gilbert; David Evans; Bob Lewis; Tony Wright; Sandra Wright

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

Councilmember Viars requested clarification of the amount the Depot Foundation spent on improvements. He questioned the amount of \$100,000 asking if the amount should be \$200,000. Jerry Hurt stated the amount of \$100,000 is correct for 2015. A motion was made by Councilmember Viars and seconded by Councilmember Hash to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2016 regular meeting. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of four (4) for: Viars, Jonas, Hash; Lloyd; zero (0) against; abstain two (2) Yontz, Hall.

CITIZEN’S TIME

Mr. David Gilbert addressed the Council regarding an issue he has with traffic on Buck Avenue. Mr. Gilbert has six video cameras, three of which are visible and three that are not and they are recording twenty-four hours a day. Mr. Gilbert stated he has recorded video of children in the crosswalks with cars zipping by, cars running stop signs, expired inspection stickers and tags, and children not in child safety seats. Mr. Gilbert wants to invite anyone that is interested to come by his house and watch the videos. He believes the County Sherriff’s deputies and the

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – April 12, 2016 – PAGE 2

State Police are both patrolling the area but the Town is not. He is afraid someone is going to get hit crossing the street. He wants to know if the Town can do something about the traffic by patrolling more and issuing more citations. Mr. Gilbert said he addressed the Town Manager several years ago about the same issue and he was told the Council did not want citations written. Councilmember Viars stated that this was addressed two or three years ago and the Council has never made that statement. He added that the Town Manager at the time may have taken it upon himself and made such a statement. He said the Town Manager works for the Council and he should have never made the statement. Councilmember Hall stated that the Council has asked Chief Mitchell to step up presence and also tenacity. He believes he has made every effort to do so because he has seen him with several vehicles pulled over. Councilmember Viars explained that the Town has invested in a mobile radar sign and it will be used on Buck Avenue. Mayor Litz stated the Town will look into the issue and make an effort increase the presence on Buck Avenue.

Jack Weaver came forward to remind everyone of the “Wake Up America” campaign. On May 5, 2016 a National Day of Prayer ceremony will be held at the Dr. Pepper stage. Jim Lloyd and Frank Emerson will be performing along with Wings of Faith and other speakers. The goal is to have five hundred people in attendance. Mayor Litz expressed his appreciation to Mr. Weaver and Vice-Mayor Yontz for their hard work and planning of this event.

Jerry Hurt addressed the Council on behalf of The Depot Foundation. Mr. Hurt explained the Farmer’s Market is in its fourth year. They are trying to get the customer count up to 300. The Foundation has done research of Farmer’s Markets all over the country to see the most effective way of advertising. They found the best method of advertisement is a banner. They would like to have a banner hung up on Main Street in an effort to bring people to Downtown for the Farmer’s Market. Mayor Litz expressed that a banner would be a great idea, however they should consider researching a different type of banner because the one that was hung up for the Ridgeway Basketball Fundraiser recently was torn apart by the wind. Vice-Mayor Yontz suggested a banner like the one in Abingdon, VA. He said someone should look into using a cable system that pulls the banner tight and it would withstand the wind. Mr. Hurt suggested hanging the banner between the old Randy’s building and Parkway Gas.

David Evans, Rural Retreat Fire Department Chief was present to give an update on the medical bills of the injured Firefighter. He expressed his appreciation to Town Manager Childers and his efforts in resolving the issue. Chief Evans stated C.J. Earles, the injured Firefighter had received an apology from the County. The County is responsible for paying a \$5,000 deductible if medical bills total \$50,000 or more. Mr. Earles’ hospital bill alone was in excess of \$80,000, therefore the County is responsible to pay the \$5,000 deductible. The insurance company VaCorp has contacted the medical offices and advised them of the situation. Mayor Litz stated the Volunteer Firefighters and Rescue Squad members are very important to The Town of Rural Retreat. He thanked all of the Volunteers for their contribution to the Town.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – April 12, 2016 – PAGE 3

CORRESPONDENCE

Town Manager Childers read a letter from the Rural Retreat Volunteer Emergency Service requesting \$12,000 for the 2015-16 budget year. The letter stated funding from the Town will be used for supplies, equipment and the everyday operations of the Rescue Squad.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell reported there has been an increase in traffic enforcement. Chief Mitchell also reported 15 verbal warnings were given in the month of April. He reported that he spends at least two hours every day patrolling on Buck Avenue and Greever Street. Chief Mitchell stated he has purchased a used hand held radar unit for \$99. Chief Mitchell said he would be setting the mobile radar unit on Buck Avenue now that the temperatures are warmer.

Community Warning System – There will be a test of the warning system on April 29, 2016 at 6:00 pm. Chief Mitchell stated he would post flyers around the community to inform citizens of the test date and time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DR. PEPPER LOT PROJECT – Town Manager Childers stated he received a voicemail from VDOT regarding the permit for the billboard. He will report more on this matter at the next meeting.

INDIAN CIRCLE TRAFFIC CONCERN – Town Manager Childers reported he has met with VDOT and the Business Owners at the Hilltop Market. The Hilltop Market owners, VDOT and Town Manager Childers worked out a solution to prevent customers from parking along the street. In the future, vendors will park alongside the dumpster and no parking lines were painted at the street to prevent customers from blocking the line of sight. Mayor Litz thanked the Hilltop Market owners for their cooperation in finding a solution to this matter.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER – Mayor Litz stated Jack Weaver reported on The National Day of Prayer during citizen's time.

NEW BUSINESS

RENTAL OF RANDY’S BUILDING – Town Manager Childers explained that Jack Weaver would like to rent a portion of the Randy’s building to sort out and store some of his property. Mayor Litz stated that the other people have come to the Town and inquired about renting the property have wanted long term leases. Mr. Weaver’s situation is different because he wants a short term lease agreement. Mr. Weaver stated he would like a one year lease. Councilmember Lloyd expressed concern due to other people in the past asking to rent the building and being turned down. He is afraid this could cause a problem. Councilmember Hash remarked that Mr. Weaver does not want a long term lease. Mayor Litz explained he would like Council to consider allowing Town Manager Childers the permission to negotiate an agreement with Mr. Weaver. Town Manager Childers stated he can speak to Brian Reed with Mount Rogers and get a realistic timeframe of when the Town receives the Grant money the renovation process can begin. Jerry Hurt explained another option could be to sign a four month Evergreen agreement which allows either party the option to terminate the agreement by giving a one hundred-twenty day notice. Councilmember Jonas made a motion to offer Mr. Weaver rental of a portion of the Randy’s property using the Evergreen agreement. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Hash. Councilmember Hall stated he has the same concerns as Councilmember Lloyd regarding other citizens that have inquired about leasing the property in the past and now allowing Mr. Weaver to enter an agreement on the property. Councilmember Hash added Mr. Weaver is only interested in storing items and not operating a business open to the public. Councilmember Lloyd stated the Town will be forced to tell the other individuals that inquired prior about the property that the Town has rented to Mr. Weaver. Councilmember Jonas explained the other individual that inquired about leasing the property was going to make improvements. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Jonas, Yontz, Hash, Hall, Viars; one (1) against: Lloyd

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Vice-Mayor Yontz reported he spoke with Shentel regarding their contribution. Councilmember Hash reported the Rescue Squad has lined up several Vendors and there will be new Vendors in attendance this year. Councilmember Hash reported she was approached by a citizen regarding combining Heritage Day and the Rural Retreat- Wythe County Fair. Brian Vaught stated the Fair Association has discussed the idea of moving Heritage Day to the fair grounds.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Town Manager Childers reported a meeting has been set up with Brian Reed with Mount Rogers to discuss the budget.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – Town Manager Childers reported interviews were held earlier today. Bronson Cox was hired for the maintenance position. Mr. Cox was the most qualified individual for the position.

PUBLIC UTILITIES – None

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

SIDEWALK PROJECT – Asplundh has begun cutting trees on East Baumgardner Avenue. AEP has marked for the position of the new utility poles. Town Manager Childers stated he spoke with homeowners and they are satisfied with the progress.

DRAINAGE ISSUE ON MT. VIEW AVENUE – Town Manager Childers reported he spoke with Dennis Umberger with VDOT regarding a drainage issue. VDOT installed a new drainage pipe and this issue is resolved.

UTILITY BILL COLLECTION – Town Manager Childers reported he has inquired in other localities regarding their methods of handling delinquent accounts and water cutoffs. He stated he would like to set up a system to get the delinquent accounts up to date. Town Manager Childers explained we will need to update the ordinance regarding utility billing.

CROSSWALKS – Town Manager Childers reported he will stay in contact with VDOT in order to get the crosswalks updated. He added the Town can paint the lines at Ya-Hill and Shoemaker’s Auto. Town Manager Childers stated he plans on speaking with the business owners at Ya-Hill and see if they will try to work with their customers to park on the right side of the street.

WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT – Town Manager Childers reported Tommy Reedy will be at the Waste Water Treatment Plant next week to begin installation of the new water line. A screen was ordered for the Lift Station in order to alleviate problems with the pump. The screen will not allow objects to flow into the pump.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The invoices for April 12, 2016 were read and approved.

TALK OF THE TOWN

Chief Mitchell will be attending 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.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – April 12, 2016 – PAGE 6

Mayor

Clerk