

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, April 26, 2016 7:00 P.M.**

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

Council Members Absent: James Lloyd

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

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: David Evans; Raymond Matney; Brain Vaught; Jordan Hall

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 Vice –Mayor Yontz and seconded by Councilmember Jonas to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2016 regular meeting. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of four (5) for: Viars, Jonas, Hash; Yontz; Hall zero (0) against.

CITIZEN’S TIME

Raymond Matney addressed the council and expressed his appreciation to Councilmember Lloyd for the cleanup of his property on Delp Street. Mr. Matney stated the property is one of the first things visitors see when they come into town. Mr. Matney wants to commend Councilmember Lloyd for his efforts.

Jordan Hall with the Rural Retreat Fair Association was present to request a donation from the Town for their annual Fiddler’s Convention. The Fiddler’s Convention is going to held on July 2, 2016. The Fair Association is requesting \$2,000 for this year’s event. Mr. Hall stated that last year the Council donated \$2,000 with a stipulation the money to be spent on advertising. They would like the donation again this year without the stipulation. Councilmember Viars asked if

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the Fair Association received their tax exempt status. Mr. Hall stated that has been taken care of. Councilmember Viars made a motion to donate \$2,000 to the Rural Retreat Fair Association for their Fiddler's Convention. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Jonas. Councilmember Hall asked someone to refresh his memory as to why the Council stipulated the donation last year for advertising. Mr. Hall stated the Council was concerned the Fair Association would use the money to pay other bills instead of the Fiddler's Convention. Mr. Hall assured the Council that the Fair Association is in better financial condition this year and the money would be used exclusively for the Fiddler's Convention. Councilmember Viars asked Mr. Hall if the Fair Association had received any funding from Wythe County. Mr. Hall commented the County told them they would contribute when the 501(c)(3) tax exempt status for non-profit has been finalized. Mr. Hall stated the Fair Association plans on setting up a fund exclusively for the Fiddler's Convention to keep the funds separate. Councilmember Hash asked Mr. Hall if the Fair Association allowed individuals to camp. Mr. Hall stated they do allow camping and they would have camping sites marked off. Motion passed with a vote of five (5) for; zero (0) against. Mr. Hall expressed his appreciation to the Town for their support.

Fire Chief David Evans addressed Council and reported C.J. Earles, the injured firefighter received more past due bills. The bills have been turned into the insurance company for payment. Chief Evans stated he would keep Council updated on the progress of Mr. Earles' situation. Chief Evans reported the paving at the firehouse has been completed. The paving company addressed the problem with the area of the parking lot that was collapsing. They removed ten inches of clay and put a moisture barrier down and packed it with stone. Chief Evans asked if the Fire Department could continue parking their trucks at the Town Shop for a week longer in order for the new asphalt to cure. Town Manager Childers responded the Fire Department could leave the trucks at the shop as long as they needed.

Chief Evans reported the test of the Community Response System would take place on Friday, April 29, 2016 at six o'clock in the evening. The alarm will be set off two times. Councilmember Hash asked Chief Evans if there is a list of shelters for the citizens to go in an emergency. Chief Evans stated that there is a list of shelters. Councilmember Viars asked if the Town could send out an alert through the County's emergency notification system to remind citizens of the test. Chief Mitchell said he would look into getting the test on the notification system. Mayor Litz requested the Fire Chief, Police Chief and Town Manger get together and have more tests of the alert system and educate citizens of what to do in an emergency. Chief Mitchell suggested that the Town could administer the test on National Tornado Awareness day once a year. Town Manager Childers stated he thinks the test should be administered several times a year or possibly quarterly.

Councilmember Hash reported the Rescue Squad wants to give the Fire Department their crash truck. Chief Evans stated the Town owns all of the equipment used by both departments and they would only be parking the crash truck at the Fire Department for use when the Rescue Squad needs a Fire Department member to drive a Rescue Squad vehicle to a call. There is no need to transfer ownership because the Town owns all the Emergency Services vehicles.

CORRESPONDENCE

Councilmember Hash asked if the Town office has received the health insurance quote for next year. Treasurer Patton responded she spoke with the insurance company this week and is supposed to receive the new rates Wednesday, April 27, 2016.

Councilmember Viars reported he was approached by a citizen regarding the lot across from McDonalds. The request is for the Town to have gravel placed on the lot. Councilmember Viars stated he understands VDOT owns the property. Town Manager Childers stated he would speak to VDOT about placing gravel on the property to eliminate the mud and mess and possibly make the area look more attractive.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell reported he received the hand held radar unit and it is working well. Chief Mitchell stated he has used it on Greever Street and also on Parsonage Avenue. Chief Mitchell stated he spoke with Dustin Parker and the Chief Deputy Foster regarding the 5K Run/Walk on May 21, 2016. The route has been approved and the permit has been obtained from VDOT. Chief Mitchell requested with summer coming up that someone should make contact with Mr. Singleton regarding his property.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DR. PEPPER LOT PROJECT – Town Manager Childers stated he spoke to Dave Simms with VDOT and it will not be possible for the Town to place billboards along the I-81 corridor. The billboards already in place are grandfathered in and no new ones can be erected. Mr. Simms suggested placing the information about Dr. Pepper as an attraction on the blue signs along the interstate. Another option is a 150 square foot sign, but they are not effective because they are so small.

INDIAN CIRCLE TRAFFIC CONCERN – Town Manager Childers stated this issue has been taken care of and requests this item be removed from the agenda. The property owners have notified their vendors and they are making an effort to park without blocking the line of sight from Indian Circle. Town Manager Childers stated he has not received any additional complaints since the no parking lines were painted and the vendor's parking has been changed.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER –Vice-Mayor Yontz reported everything is ready for May 5, 2016 at six o'clock in the evening. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated Mr. Weaver has speakers from Smyth, Wythe, Bland and Pulaski Counties scheduled. Mayor Litz asked if advertising has been done for this event. Vice –Mayor Yontz stated they are speaking on Danny Gordon's radio show on Tuesday, May 3, 2016. They have called area churches and requested the event to be placed in the bulletins. Vice- Mayor Yontz added more advertising has been done this year and due to that alone he is expecting more participation.

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RENTAL OF RANDY’S BUILDING – Town Manager Childers stated he spoke with Mike Sobey regarding the Evergreen lease Jerry Hurt suggested. Mr. Sobey stated the Town would not need to do an Evergreen lease. He explained that the Town can do a lease for the property by the month for any period of time they find suitable. Town Manager Childers stated he spoke to Brian Reed and inquired about the timeframe of when the Town could begin renovations if the grant money is approved. Mr. Reed stated if the grant money is received the Town could possibly begin work on the property in November 2016. Town Manager Childers’ suggestion is to set up a six or seven month lease with Mr. Weaver with a thirty day termination notice. Mr. Weaver and Town Manager Childers are scheduled to meet Wednesday, April 27, 2016 at 2:30 to discuss the terms of the lease.

NEW BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Vice-Mayor Yontz reported a problem with the sound system has been addressed and the issue has been taken care of. Councilmember Hash stated the Rescue Squad sent out around one hundred letters to vendors. Treasurer Patton asked when a schedule would be available because people are already calling the town office requesting times. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated as soon as the acts are finalized a schedule would be forwarded to the town office.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Town Manager Childers reported he met with Brian Reed from Mt. Rogers, Treasurer Patton and Tony Wright on Friday, April 22, 2016 regarding the budget. Town Manager Childers stated the budget process is underway and he does not anticipate any issues.

Treasurer Patton reported delinquent real estate and personal property notices would be mailed later this week. The collection rate for real estate taxes is 95% collected and the rate for personal property taxes is 90.62%.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – Town Manager Childers reported Michael Robert was hired for the maintenance position. The individual reported at the last meeting has declined the position. Michael Robert is scheduled to begin on May 3, 2016.

PUBLIC UTILITIES – Mayor Litz reported the committee is talking to Smyth County about a water project.

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

RURAL RETREAT FIRE DEPARTMENT - Town Manager Childers reported the paving at the Rural Retreat Fire Department has been completed.

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TOWN HALL HEAT PUMP - Town Manager Childers requested moving \$6500 from undesignated funds to town hall maintenance to replace the heat pump at the town office. Town Manager Childers reported three quotes were obtained. New River Heating and Air quoted \$7,868, Custom Air, Inc. quoted \$6,700, and Baldwin's Heating and A/C quoted \$6,500. A motion was made by Councilmember Hash to hire Baldwin's Heating and A/C to install a new heat pump in the town hall; seconded by Vice-Mayor Yontz. No further discussion the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for; zero (0) against.

SIDEWALK PROJECT – Town Manager Childers reported all the contracts have been signed for Phase 8 of the Sidewalk project. The project is scheduled to begin on May 9, 2016.

PARKING - Town Manager Childers reported he spoke with Danny Musser and Nelson Dunford, owners of Ya-Hill Auto Parts regarding parking in front of their business. Town Manager Childers stated Mr. Musser and Mr. Dunford were very understanding and agreed to paint lines from the corner of the building about ¼ of the way down alongside the building on Maple Avenue.

FARMER'S MARKET BANNER – Town Manager Childers stated Tony Wright suggested the Town obtain some of the utility poles that AEP will be removing from East Baumgardner Avenue during the sidewalk project. Mr. Wright indicated the poles can be cut down to size and used for the banner the Depot Foundation wants to hang for the Farmer's Market. The banner could possibly be placed on the Town's property at the lift station near McDonalds.

HOPE BACKPACKS – Town Manager Childers thanked everyone from the Town that donated their time to help pack HOPE backpacks. Along with three other organizations approximately 600 backpacks were packed for children to take home for the weekend. The gentlemen with HOPE told Town Manager Childers that Rural Retreat was the first governing body that has assisted in packing. Town Manager Childers stated he would like for the Town to continue donating our time on a regular basis.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The invoices for April 26, 2016 were read and approved.

TALK OF THE TOWN

Mayor Litz announced that there would not be a *Talk of the Town* radio program at the WYVE/WXBX radio station on Wednesday morning.

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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