

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, August 23, 2016 - 7:00 P.M.**

Council Members Present: Mayor Timothy Litz; Geary Jonas; James Lloyd; James P. “Sean” Viars; Brian Vaught; Mike Duncan

Council Members Absent: Vice-Mayor Dale Yontz

Administration Present: Jason Childers, Town Manager; Monica Patton, Clerk/Treasurer

Administration Absent: Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

Others Present: Gary Houseman, 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 Dr. Gary Houseman.

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 Jonas to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2016 regular meeting. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Vaught, Duncan; zero (0) against.

CITIZEN’S TIME

None

CORRESPONDENCE

Town Manager Childers read a thank you card from Carolyn Ellison, Cliff Chewning, and Rosie Chewning. The card expressed their appreciation to the town regarding the issue with their neighbor’s dogs and kennel.

Town Manager Childers read an email from Carolyn Ellison’s son, Jack Ellison expressing his appreciation with the issue his mother had with the neighbor’s dogs.

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POLICE REPORT

No report

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DR. PEPPER LOT PROJECT – Councilmember Lloyd reported he met with Troy Harris from Dr Pepper Corporation. Mr. Harris toured the downtown area and requested that the drawings and other information the town has be sent to him. Mr. Harris will meet with other corporate decision makers and report back to the town council their intentions. Mayor Litz thanked Councilmember Lloyd for his efforts on this project.

NEW BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – None

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Clerk/Treasurer Patton reported auditors from Robinson, Farmer, Cox and Associates will be in the town office on August 29th and 30th for the fiscal year 2015-2016 audit. Mayor Litz stated that one thing the auditors commend the town on each year is the cooperation from the town office.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS

Mayor Litz commended Town Attorney, Michael Sobey for the letter he wrote to Jack Trivitt regarding his behavior during town council meetings.

PUBLIC UTILITIES –NONE

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

METER READING SOFTWARE – Town Manager Childers reported the new meter reading software system was installed today. The new system will be used September 1, 2016 to read water meters. The new software will allow maintenance workers to read all water meters in approximately one hour versus the day and a half it currently takes.

GRANT – Town Manager Childers stated the bar screen “muffin monster” was delivered on August 22, 2016 and will be installed within the next two weeks. The new equipment will ensure the pumps continue to pump and stay primed. The wastewater employees will be called out less to the pump station during nighttime and weekend hours. The town received grant money to fund this purchase and the equipment was in the budget for fiscal year 2016-2017.

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AMERICAN'S WITH DISABILITIES ACT – Tim Spraker with the Wythe County Building Inspectors office contacted Town Manager Childers regarding the ADA standards at the firehouse. The firehouse is used as the polling place for elections in Rural Retreat. Mr. Spraker has inspected the building and found that it is not compliant. Town Manager Childers stated he met with Mr. Spraker and decided that the overhead door in the first bay can be opened on Election Day and disabled voters can enter the building and have access to the voting area.

MANHOLE REHABILITATION – Town Manager Childers reported the grant and supporting documents have been submitted. The grant in the amount of \$100,000 and a \$30,000 match from the town will be used to rehabilitate every manhole in the town. This project will ensure the wastewater treatment plant functions properly and efficiently.

BLOCK GRANT – Town Manager Childers reported he spoke to Brian Reed with Mount Rogers Planning District. Mr. Reed stated the decision will be made on recipients for the grant sometime in late August or early September. In order to keep everyone up to date on the amounts Mayor Litz asked Town Manager Childers to give the amount of the grant. Town Manager Childers stated the block grant was applied for in the amount of \$890,000 and the Wythe-Bland Foundation grant is \$100,000 and is contingent upon receiving the block grant.

DOG COMPLAINT ISSUE – The issue has been resolved because the citizen with the dogs moved out of the town limits.

JOINT GOVERNING BODIES MEETING – Town Manager Childers stated he will be discussing the lack of law enforcement at the schools in Rural Retreat. He has been approached by several Rural Retreat citizens and asked why the officers are not present at the school. This is an issue especially during drop off and pick up times at the schools. Town Manager Childers would like to know why some of the schools in the county have Resource Officers and others do not. Councilmember Vaught stated that the Sheriff's office does not have resource officers assigned to any of the county schools. Councilmember Vaught also stated that the officers are present at some schools during the morning hours when children are being dropped off and in the evening pickup times because they are in the area patrolling. Councilmember Duncan agreed that the issue needs to be addressed. Dr. Gary Houseman commented that the Sheriff makes the decisions regarding resource officers. The county has provided the Sheriff's office with an additional \$600,000, however the Sheriff has not signed the Memorandum of Understanding from the county. Dr. Houseman stated he is unsure what else the Board of Supervisors can do regarding this issue. Mayor Litz stated the issue has been placed on the agenda for the upcoming Joint Governing Bodies Meeting and will be addressed at that time.

Councilmember Viars asked Town Manager Childers if the brush and trees across the street from the Bank of Rural Retreat was going to be picked up. Town Manager Childers stated the homeowner should call the town office and have a work order prepared in order to send the maintenance crew out to chip and pickup brush. Clerk/Treasurer Patton added she would check to see if a work order was requested.

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JACK SINGLETON PROPERTY - Councilmember Vaught inquired about the Jack Singleton property. He was approached by Bill Bralley regarding the status of cleaning up the property. Mr. Bralley stated the issue was brought before council in May of 2015 and it is approaching 14 months that the property has been in need of maintenance. Councilmember Lloyd stated Mr. Singleton was ill for many months during the 14 month period. Town Manager Childers stated the town maintenance crew mowed the property but Mr. Singleton accused the town of cutting down decorative trees. Town Manager Childers stated Mr. Singleton attempted to clean up the property with a weed eater but it will take much more than that for the property to be acceptable. Councilmember Viars stated as far as the town's ordinance is concerned that cutting the grass is the only thing the property owner is required to do. Town Manager Childers added that the ordinance states that the grass is required to be cut and that the condition of the property does not affect the wellbeing and safety of the surrounding properties. Councilmember Lloyd added that the property cannot be a health hazard such as rat infestation. Councilmember Viars stated the town should have the property mowed and send Mr. Singleton the bill. Mayor Litz added the problem with the town mowing the property is that Mr. Singleton accused the town of cutting down trees that were valuable. Councilmember Vaught stated that the town should take the issue to court for violation of the town ordinance. Councilmember Lloyd stated that Mr. Singleton will most likely tell the court that he mowed part of his property and made an effort to maintain it. Town Manager Childers stated that most of the growth on the property is briars and brush. Councilmembers Vaught stated the neighbors keep their property nice and all they want is Mr. Singleton to do the same. Councilmember Lloyd suggested the town have the property mowed with Mr. Singleton present. He also added that taking the issue to court would be a waste of time. Councilmember Vaught asked if the Town of Wytheville had any success with Mr. Singleton regarding his property within the town limits of Wytheville. Town Manager Childers stated he does not believe the Town of Wytheville was successful in their efforts. Mayor Litz suggested the Town Manager utilize the Virginia Municipal League regarding the issue. Councilmember Lloyd suggested that the town write Mr. Singleton a letter and inform him of the town's ordinance on property maintenance. Councilmember Viars made a motion to send Mr. Singleton a letter that would require him to mow his property or be present when the town has it mowed. The letter would stipulate that this be accomplished by September 13, 2016. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Lloyd. Councilmember Duncan added that the town should give Mr. Singleton an estimate of the amount it will cost him for the town mow or have the property mowed. No further discussion the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Lloyd, Jonas, Viars, Duncan, Vaught; zero (0) against.

Councilmember Vaught asked Town Manager Childers if he had anything to report on the property located on North Greever that was in need of attention and if Chief Mitchell made contact with the property owner. Town Manager Childers responded he did not know if contact was made.

Councilmember Duncan commented that there is an issue with speeding on Buck Avenue. He stated there should be a speed limit sign on East Buck Avenue from the school to Main Street to remind motorists of the 25 MPH speed limit in the school zone. Town Manager Childers stated he would contact VDOT regarding the sign. Councilmember Vaught asked Town Manager Childers if he would ask VDOT about a 35 MPH sign from exit 60 to the Crossroads.

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Motorists do not see a speed limit sign from the interstate to the traffic light. Town Manager Childers stated he would check on this as well.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The invoices for August 23, 2016 were read and approved.

Councilmember Vaught questioned the US Cellular invoice and why the town manager does not have a cell phone. He stated Chief Mitchell and the General Services Director both have cell phones but the town manager does not. Town Manager Childers stated he can be contacted during the day through the town office and after hours dispatch has his personal cell phone number if he needs to be contacted in an emergency. Town Manager Childers added that he does not think the town needs to provide a cell phone for him.

TALK OF THE TOWN

No one is available to attend the *Talk of the Town* radio program at the WYVE/WXBX radio station.

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