

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2016 - 7:00 P.M.**

Council Members Present: Mayor, Timothy Litz; Vice-Mayor, Dale Yontz; James P. “Sean” Viars; Brian Vaught; Mike Duncan

Council Members Absent: James Lloyd; Geary Jonas

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

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Jerry Hurt, David Evans

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Vice-Mayor, Dale Yontz.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Litz.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilmember Vaught and seconded by Councilmember Viars to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2016 regular meeting. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of three (3) for: Viars, Vaught, Duncan; zero (0) against; one (1) abstain: Yontz.

CITIZEN’S TIME

Fire Chief, David Evans addressed council to request permission to use the old section house along the railroad on Church Street for training purposes. The fire department would fill the house with smoke and practice search and rescue routines. Town Manager Childers stated he would ask the Treasurer of Wythe County about the lien on the property for the delinquent taxes that are owed. Mayor Litz added maybe the county would forgive the taxes so the town can use the house for training purposes. Councilmember Vaught stated the Sheriff’s office contacted the Treasurer and they were told the county does not own the property but there are several years of delinquent taxes owed. The delinquent taxes are owed by Ted Brown. Norfolk and Southern owns the property the house is sitting on. Mayor Litz stated the county is not going to pay anything for the demolition of the structure. The town has been commissioned to destroy the

house at the cost of the town. Mayor Litz stated he is doubtful that Norfolk and Southern will allow the house to be used for training purposes. Councilmember Vaught asked Chief Evans if the fire department could burn the house for training purposes. Chief Evans stated the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) no longer allows the department to burn houses due to pollution hazards. Chief Mitchell stated he contacted Norfolk and Southern regarding the house and they were not even aware they owned the property at that time. Town Manager Childers stated he would contact Norfolk and Southern and inquire about the property.

Chief Evans reported the fire department had an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating overview and part of the overview was to test all the fire hydrants in the town. Chief Evans stated the town started a project approximately three years ago to test all hydrants and paint them according to the rate of output. Red hydrants discharge less than 500 gallons per minute; orange 500 gallons – 999 gallons per minute; green 1,000 to 1,499 gallons per minute; blue 1,5000 gallons and over per minute. Chief Evans stated the project was never completed. He was told by Tony Wright, previous General Service Director the project would be completed sometime in late Summer or early Fall. Chief Evans added that there are several hydrants that are in need of painting. Mayor Litz asked Town Manager Childers to get with Chief Evans and get the hydrants repaired and in working condition. Town Manager Childers explained the maintenance staff is shorthanded and he asked Chief Evans to be patient with him until he gets back to full staff.

Chief Evans asked council to replace the security lights on the front of the fire department because some of the lights are not working. Town Manager Childers stated he has already checked into the matter and he will take care of getting the lights replaced.

CORRESPONDENCE

Treasurer Patton read a letter from the Sheriff's Office inviting council to the Recreation Center in Wytheville to honor military veterans on October 7, 2016.

Treasurer Patton read an email from John Matthews, Associate Director of the Joint Industrial Development Authority inviting council to the Startup Wythe in Business Idea Competition Finale. The event will take place at the Bolling Wilson Hotel on October 4, 2016.

Councilmember Vaught reported he received a complaint regarding the recycling center. He stated the bins at the recycling center are full. Councilmember Vaught added that he spoke to Dr. Houseman and was told the contractor that empties the containers failed to pick up the one in Rural Retreat a few times. Councilmember Viars stated this is an issue for the county.

Councilmember Vaught reported a Rural Retreat resident was appointed as County Administrator. Stephen Bear will take office on Monday, October 3, 2016.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell reported that he monitored the crosswalk located at BB&T for several days and did not see anyone having problems crossing during the time he was present. Town Manager Childers stated he sent Jeff Russell with VDOT a message about getting more signage installed. Councilmember Viars stated he would like to see the signs installed in the middle of the street indicating the crosswalks are present. He also added we have turning lanes that need to be

repainted in addition to the crosswalks repainted. Town Manager Childers stated he would reach out to VDOT again.

Chief Mitchell reported he will continue to do walk throughs at the high school and the middle school. He also reported that he continues to work on inoperative vehicle letters.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DR. PEPPER LOT PROJECT – Councilmember Viars asked if the Dr. Pepper Corporation knew the Town of Rural Retreat was awarded the block grant. Councilmember Vaught stated that Councilmember Lloyd said he was going to talk to Troy Harris with Dr. Pepper Corporation again.

CROSSWALKS – Nothing to add in addition to Chief Mitchell’s report on the crosswalk issue.

NEW BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS -Vice-Mayor Yontz explained the committee will meet on October 25, 2016 to discuss sponsors for the 2017 festival.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Town Manager Childers explained Treasurer Patton spoke with Mount Rogers Planning District regarding the fee charged for Brian Reed’s town manager services. Treasurer Patton stated council need to take action if they wish to discontinue services. Town Manager Childers added that Brian Reed was an asset to the town during the time he served as interim town manager. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz and seconded by Councilmember Viars to relieve Brian Reed, Interim Town Manager of his duties to the town. Mayor Litz stated Brian Reed was an advocate for the town and he did a nice job while serving as the interim Town Manager. Motion passed by a vote of four (4) for: Yontz, Viars, Vaught, Duncan; zero (0) against.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – Town Manager Childers reported he is working with Mr. Sobey regarding the cleanup of the Singleton property. He added he does not have anything new to report on the issue at this time.

PUBLIC UTILITIES – None

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

BLOCK GRANT - Town Manager Childers reported the town was officially notified and will be receiving the block grant for Downtown Revitalization. He added that Brian Reed stated we are waiting on a list from the state that will outline what the town will need to do before the project can begin.

WATER AND SEWER – Town Manager Childers stated that the town has had several water leaks and sewer problems and it has been difficult to stay on schedule since the maintenance department is short a worker. Town Manager Childers stated he will be hiring a maintenance worker very soon but needs to discuss the position with council prior to advertising.

Mayor Litz asked the Council to enter into a Closed Meeting under 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia to discuss personnel matters.

RE: CLOSED MEETING

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz, seconded by Councilmember Vaught to convene to a closed meeting in accordance with §2.2-3711, A, sub-paragraph 1 of the Code of Virginia, discussion, consideration or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment; appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining or resignation of specific public officers, appointees or employees of any public body.

The motion was approved with the following voting in favor: Yontz, Viars, Vaught, Duncan.

Mayor Litz called the regular meeting back into open session.

Motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz, seconded by Councilmember Viars,

WHEREAS, the Rural Retreat Town Council has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and,

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712, paragraph D, of the Code of Virginia requires a certificate by this Council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia Law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Retreat Town Council hereby certifies that to the best of each member’s knowledge, (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certificate resolution applies, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Council.

Vote:	Ayes	Nays
Michael Duncan	X	
Brian Vaught	X	
James P. “Sean” Viars	X	
Dale Yontz	X	

Absent during meeting: Geary Jonas, Jim Lloyd

Absent during vote: Geary Jonas, Jim Lloyd

TREASURER’S REPORT

Treasurer Patton read a memorandum to council regarding the 2016 Personal Property Tax Relief Act (PPRTA). The Commonwealth of Virginia pays each locality a lump sum payment each year for the locality’s share of the tax relief. This year the town’s share is \$17,608. The town must apply the tax relief to qualifying vehicles. The 2016 Personal Property Tax Relief rate has been calculated at 44.5% based on vehicle values provided by Wythe County Commissioner of the Revenue. This is a 2.2% decrease from the 2015 rate. The tax relief is applied to all vehicles based on the following criteria:

Vehicles valued at \$1,000 or less, therefore eliminating tax on those vehicles; a percentage of 44.5% has been determined to be applied to vehicles valued between \$1,000 and \$20,000 and vehicles valued at \$20,001 or more will receive 44.5% tax relief on the first \$20,000 of value.

A motion was made by Councilmember Vaught and seconded by Councilmember Duncan to adopt the rate of 44.5% for the 2016 Personal Property Tax Relief Act. Motion passed by a vote of four (4) for: Yontz, Vaught, Viars, Duncan; zero (0) against.

The invoices for September 27, 2016 were read and approved.

TALK OF THE TOWN

Town Manager Childers will 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 Vice-Mayor Yontz. The motion was duly seconded and approved.

Mayor

Clerk