

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2017 - 7:00 P.M.**

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

Council Members Absent: Michael Duncan

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

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Jim Hall, Cailie Pollard, Emily DeBord, Diana DeBord, Alison Pollard, Jerry Hurt, Chester Jarosz

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Councilmember 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 January 24, 2017. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Lloyd, Jonas, Yontz, Viars, Vaught; zero (0) against.

CITIZEN’S TIME

Mayor Litz called on Alison Pollard to come forward and address Council. Mrs. Pollard introduced Cailie Pollard and Emily DeBord as Rural Retreat High School Junior class representatives. Miss Pollard requested a donation on behalf of the Junior class for the After-Prom Party which will be held immediately following the prom on April 8, 2017. After-Prom gives students a safe environment for students after prom to gather and stay out of trouble. Mayor Litz stated that the council always gives to this event. Town Manager Childers added that the amount given in the past is \$100. Councilmember Vaught added that it is not cheap to provide this environment for the students. In the past students, would go door to door and request donations from the businesses in town. He added that there are a limited number of small businesses in Rural Retreat therefore, the amount of money donated is limited. The students do other fundraisers such as baked potato sales, etc. Mrs. Pollard stated that the Schoolboard requires the area schools to

stay in the county therefore, they choose to utilize the Wytheville Recreation Center because of the amount of activities they can offer. The fee is \$16 per student which includes the meeting center, pool, gym and rock wall. The total fee to use the facility will be around \$3,200. Councilmember Vaught stated the Schoolboard mandated the facility and it is offered at a reduced rate. A motion was made by Councilmember Lloyd and seconded by Councilmember Yontz to donate \$100 to Rural Retreat High School's after Prom Party. Councilmember Vaught amended the motion to donate \$1,000. Councilmember Lloyd asked what types of fundraisers the group has planned. Mrs. Pollard stated they have held 5 baked potato sales, two school dances, they sold candygrams, scheduled a beauty pageant but cancelled due to participation. They have raised around \$500 to date. The group will provide concessions at the Todd Ridgeway basketball tournament and hope to raise about \$800. Town Manager Childers asked if they have money left over, will it go to the next year's event. Mrs. Pollard stated the money stays in the fund and is passed on to the next Junior class for the After-Prom Party. Jerry Hurt addressed council and stated that he and his wife, Phyllis will support the town and match the town's donation. Mayor Litz called for a vote, motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Lloyd, Yontz, Viars, Vaught, Jonas; zero (0) against.

Jim Hall addressed Council on behalf of the Rural Retreat Community Center. Mr. Hall stated without the generosity from the Town of Rural Retreat the community center would have been forced to close. Mr. Hall stated the Community Center Board has a limited number of volunteers and they are no longer able to continue the maintenance and management of the community center. The center would like to turn over all assets to the town including about \$40,000 in reserve funds. Chester Jarosz, Treasurer of the Rural Retreat Community Center addressed council and reported that the labor is about \$5,760 each year plus they pay approximately \$1,400 to pay a contractor to mow the property. The town would save about \$6,000 in labor by utilizing the town's employees. The center brought in \$14,602 last year which includes the \$7,500 from the town. Mr. Jarosz added that the center will make its own way with the amount of income and the amount of money the town will save in labor. Mr. Hall stated the town can utilize grant money. Mayor Litz asked Town Manager Childers and Treasurer Patton if adding a line item for the revenue and expenses would be possible. Town Manager Childers stated this would not be a problem and scheduling through the town office would not be an issue. The town office takes calls from people looking for the Community Center contacts weekly. Mr. Hall stated the center could operate the remainder of the year until the town can take over. Mayor Litz stated the town is ultimately responsible for the center. Mr. Hall agreed and added the deed states the town shall take the property if the Community Center board decides to disband. Councilmember Vaught asked if the town owns the property. Mr. Hall stated that the Community Center owns the property. Councilmember Lloyd asked if rental of the center is down. Mr. Jarosz stated the rental income is down. Councilmember Vaught asked if the structure is in good shape. Mr. Hall stated the building needs some cosmetic attention, the picnic shelter needs repairs, and the playground equipment is about twenty or thirty years old and needs attention. Mr. Hall stated the property extends to Greever Street located behind the Rescue Squad's property. Councilmember Viars asked if the parking lot had been paved recently. Mr. Hall stated the parking lot was paved about seven years ago, with the help of the town and the parking lot is in good shape. Councilmember Jonas inquired about the heating system. Mr. Hall stated it is in good working condition. The center keeps money in reserve in case the heating/air conditioning system needs repair or replacement. Mr. Jarosz added the checking account has a balance of \$15,000, two savings accounts with a total of \$33,800. Mr. Hall stated the center is currently not insolvent, but in two years it will be if this trend continues. Councilmember Viars thanked the gentlemen for being proactive regarding the center. Councilmember Lloyd requested the town wait until July 1, 2017 to take over management of the

center. Mr. Jarosz stated that the board would continue to manage the center until the town can take over. Mr. Jarosz stated the center usually signs a maintenance agreement with S&S Landscaping. Town Manager Childers requested that they sign a prorated contract and maintain the property until July 1, 2017. A motion was made by Councilmember Lloyd and seconded by Councilmember Viars to take over operations of the Rural Retreat Community Center effective July 1, 2017. There being no further discussion the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Lloyd, Jonas, Yontz, Viars, Vaught; zero (0) against. Town Manager Childers asked if the cleaning of the center is done after each event or monthly. Mr. Hall stated currently Steve and Doris McFarland clean after each event. Treasurer Patton added the town would need someone on weekends and after hours to open the center and answer questions for the renters. Town Manager Childers stated it would not be a problem between himself, Chief Breedlove, and Treasurer Patton someone will be available. Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Hall and Mr. Jarosz for their time.

CORRESPONDENCE

Treasurer Patton read a letter from Rural Retreat Middle School requesting a donation for the 7th Grade Washington DC trip. The letter stated each year RRMS students can travel to Washington, DC for three days. The trip is an educational experience that supports Virginia's Civics, and Economics SOLs, and provides a wonderful opportunity for many students who have never traveled outside the area. Some parents are unable to provide the funds necessary to send their children on the trip. Unfortunately, the school is left with a handful of students who would like to go, but cannot raise the funds. The cost of the trip is \$420 per student which covers travel, hotel, food, events, a t-shirt and spending money. The letter is signed by Shannon Vaught, Principal. Councilmember Lloyd stated the town should contribute but the question is how much. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated he remembers several years ago when the town sponsored a child for a trip and parents were upset because the town sponsored one child and not all of the children. Councilmember Lloyd agreed that the town should give some money but not a specific child. Councilmember Vaught stated the school does not have a lot of students that cannot pay. A motion was made by Councilmember Lloyd and seconded by Vice-Mayor Yontz to contribute \$200 to the RRMS 7th grade trip. Vice-Mayor Yontz added the contribution should be given to the school and not a student. Councilmember Viars added he personally went on the trip and it is well worth the experience for the students. Councilmember Viars stated he does not have a problem contributing the \$420. Jerry Hurt added that he and his wife, Phyllis will match the town's contribution. Councilmember Lloyd amended his prior motion to increase the amount to \$400. Councilmember Viars seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of four (4): Lloyd, Jonas, Yontz, Viars; zero (0) against; one (1) abstain: Vaught.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Breedlove reported that he and Town Manager Childers attended a meeting at the Rural Retreat Community Center and spoke with a group of Senior Citizens about scams. Mayor Litz asked Chief Breedlove about the traffic situation in town. Chief Breedlove stated he sat on Chinquapin Avenue and on Main Street for 45 minutes to 1 hour and did not see anyone speeding. Vice-Mayor Yontz added that several citizens have stated that they never know when they will see the Chief patrolling. Town Manager Childers reported that Chief Breedlove assisted the Rescue Squad at Carrington Place this week lifting a patient. Councilmember Viars stated he appreciates his presence at the school attending basketball games. Councilmember Jonas stated he has heard the same thing from citizens. Councilmember Vaught added the businesses in town are appreciative for his presence as well.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DR. PEPPER LOT PROJECT – Councilmember Lloyd stated the committee is ready to meet. The meeting will take place Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

CROSSWALKS – None

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION – Town Manager Childers reported that he met with a representative from Anderson and Associates, and Brian Reed with Mount Rogers Planning District Commission inspected the property. We will receive a new drawing from Anderson and Associates. Once we receive the new drawing the Downtown Revitalization committee will meet to make plans for the downtown project. Councilmember Viars asked Town Manager Childers if he hired Anderson and Associates as the engineering firm. Town Manager Childers stated that he would not take it upon himself to hire an engineering firm and Anderson and Associates have been the engineering firm from the beginning of the project. Councilmember Jonas asked Town Manager Childers about the plans for the Randy's building. Town Manager Childers stated the initial plans are to salvage the two end buildings and tear out the middle section to make a roadway into the back of the building where the Farmer's Market will be built. There will be ample parking in the back of the building for businesses and the Farmer's Market. The plan is to tear down the Weaver building to access the street. Mayor Litz stated most the funding was for the Farmer's Market and maybe we can shift some of the funds for other purposes in the project. Town Manager Childers stated the only funding that must be used for the Farmer's market are the Wythe-Bland Foundation funds. These funds are exclusively for the Farmer's market.

THE CROOKED ROAD - Councilmember Lloyd asked the Mayor and Council exactly what he needs to discuss the Crooked Road. Town Manager Childers stated we need to know what the town will get for the \$2,500 donation. Councilmember Lloyd stated the Depot has an event scheduled in June. Jerry Hurt explained that the event at the Depot is part of the Crooked Road's Homecoming tour and is taking place at the Farmer's Market on June 14, 2017. This is a regular Farmer's Market day and the Depot has no plans to become a member of The Crooked Road. Councilmember Lloyd added that Wayne Henderson will be attending the event on June 14th. Vice-Mayor Yontz asked if the town would pay for ads. Councilmember Lloyd stated that event advertisements would be an additional fee.

NEW BUSINESS

FIRE TRUCK – Town Manager Childers stated information regarding a new firetruck will be reported at a later date.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Mayor Litz stated Raven Cliff has been invited to play before the main act. They charge \$2,500 for a seventy-minute show. The VW Boys will be playing for \$1,000. Treasurer Patton stated she has the number for a local band Councilmember Jonas provided to call as a fill in act. Town Manager Childers stated he wants to announce the citizen of the year before the premier act in an effort to get more attention to the recipient.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Treasurer Patton reported the interest savings on the Rural Development loans that were paid off early. The loan with an original payoff date of 6-24-2038 had interest savings of \$602.08; the loan with an original payoff date of 9-25-2041 had interest savings of \$28,603.19; the loan (trash truck) with an original payoff date of 9-20-2020 had interest savings of \$3,760.58. Total interest savings of \$32,965.85.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – None

PUBLIC UTILITIES – None

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

MCDONALDS PROPERTY - Town Manager Childers stated the property across the road at McDonalds is owned by VDOT forty feet from the center of the road and Dr. Moore from Abingdon, VA owns the remainder of the property. Councilmember Viars asked if the big clump of asphalt is on Dr. Moore’s portion of the property. Town Manager Childers stated he would try to get in touch with the property owner. Councilmember Viars asked if VDOT offered to take the motor grader out to the property or if they would place gravel on the property. He stated that he would like to reach out to the property owners and VDOT and at least ask if they are willing to clean up the area.

MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT – Town Manager Childers reported he spoke with Sheriff Dunagan regarding the Mutual Aid Agreement between Wythe County Sheriff’s office and Rural Retreat Police Department. Sheriff Dunagan stated he would have an agreement prepared for the town to sign.

WATER/WASTEWATER PLANT - Town Manager Childers stated an appraiser from Virginia Municipal League would be doing an assessment of the property at the water and wastewater plants in the near future.

PRESENTATION OF DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM – Town Manager Childers reported that he, Donnie Buck and Brian Reed with Mount Rogers gave a presentation to a group of retired teachers for continuing education. The presentation was a public service for the group. They contributed \$25 to the Depot Foundation as compensation for our time.

SHERWOOD AVENUE – Town Manager Childers reported that during a Planning Commission meeting it was brought to his attention that the cul-de-sac located where the old portion of Sherwood Avenue meets the new portion is owned by the town. Virginia Department of Taxation did not take this section of the street when it was originally turned over to them. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated that council voted to vacate the property several years ago. Town Manager Childers stated the deed recorded at the court house does not indicate the town owns the property. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated that this should have already taken place. Town Manager Childers stated he would look into the issue further.

Councilmember Vaught asked Town Manager Childers if Mr. Sobey has worked on the property maintenance ordinance. Town Manager Childers replied that he has not spoken with Mr. Sobey regarding the issue. He stated he spoke with Albert Newberry, Town of Wytheville regarding their ordinance. Town Manager Childers added his plans were to adopt some derelict structure zoning

ordinances through Planning Commission. Mr. Newberry explained that the ordinance would not hold up in court and the best route to take would be to have the building inspector involved. Town Manager Childers stated that after speaking with Mr. Newberry on numerous occasions and The Town of Wytheville has had very little success with these types of issues.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The invoices for February 14, 2017 were read and approved.

Treasurer Patton advised council that she now has control of the town’s Facebook page and if council wants anything posted to let her know.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Councilmember Lloyd. The motion was duly seconded and approved.

Mayor

Clerk