

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN  
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2017 - 7:00 P.M.**

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

Council Members Absent: Vice-Mayor, Dale Yontz

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

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Melissa Swain, Mary Williams, Jennifer Mullins, Candida Smith, Anna Laura May, Kelly Fischer, Billy Anderson, Jack Weaver, Jerry Hurt, David Manley

**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 Councilmember Viars and seconded by Councilmember Jonas to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2017. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Lloyd, Jonas, Duncan, Viars, Vaught; zero (0) against.

**CITIZEN’S TIME**

Mary Williams distributed a handout and addressed council to request a donation for the Todd Ridgaway Memorial Basketball Tournament. The tournament will take place April 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Rural Retreat High & Middle school gymnasiums. Proceeds from the tournament will go to the Matthew Todd Ridgaway Memorial Scholarship Endowment which is managed by the Wytheville Community College Educational Foundation, Inc. Mrs. Williams explained that Todd Ridgaway was a 1999 Rural Retreat High School graduate. Todd was in an accident in 2009 while working construction and lost his life. This is the fifth year the organization will hold the tournament to raise money for the scholarship endowment fund. Mrs. Williams stated anyone can purchase a banner with an advertisement or special message or simply make a monetary donation. The banners are available in three different sizes and range from \$150 to \$450 each. Mrs. Williams

stated she would like to see the Town of Rural Retreat purchase a banner to welcome folks to the town. Mrs. Williams added that hundreds of people will be attending the tournament and spending money in Rural Retreat during the two days of the tournament. Mrs. Williams requested that council approve the purchase of a banner and a donation to the tournament. Mayor Litz asked for a motion from council. Jack Weaver asked Mrs. Williams if they would like more than one banner. Mrs. Williams answered they can hang more than one banner. Councilmember Duncan asked if a donation has been made in the past. Councilmember Jonas stated that this is the first-time Mrs. Williams has asked for the donation. Treasurer Patton stated she would check the funds in the budget and report back at the next meeting. Mayor Litz agreed that checking the budget first would be a good idea.

Melissa Swain with Friends of the Rural Retreat Library addressed council to invite everyone to Grace Church on March 24, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. Rural Retreat native Doris Anne Crouse-Mays will be speaking. The Library of Virginia celebrates National Women's month every March. This year one of the eight nominees is Doris Anne Crouse-Mays. Doris is a graduate of Rural Retreat High School and Wytheville Community College. She is the daughter of Fred and Gladys Crouse. Town Manager Childers stated the town can post the event on the town's Facebook page.

Candida Smith addressed council on behalf of Carrington Place at Rural Retreat. Mrs. Smith explained that it was brought to her attention that Carrington Place did not have a presence in the Rural Retreat community. Mrs. Smith stated Carrington is here to support the community. She introduced the following administrative staff: Anna-Laura May, Administrator; Jennifer Mullins, Director of Nursing; Kelly Fischer, Human Resources Director.

Jack Weaver addressed council regarding the water issue from Rural Retreat to the Smyth County line. Mr. Weaver stated it has been seventeen years since he first came before council regarding this issue. Mr. Weaver stated he hopes the town will continue to pursue this venture in the future. Mayor Litz stated he has spoken with Wythe County Administrator and Blacklick District Supervisor to explain that Rural Retreat would entertain the idea of selling bulk water to the county that could be distributed to citizens in the West end of Wythe County. Mayor Litz added that the Town of Rural Retreat has tried to offer water to Smyth County, but has not been successful.

Mr. Weaver commented that the property across the street from the hotel he owns on Baumgardner is zoned commercial and other property on the same street is zoned residential. Mr. Weaver is requesting the properties be re-zoned either residential or commercial.

Mr. Weaver commented on a newspaper article he read regarding the \$45,000 spent for Retail Strategies. Mr. Weaver stated Wythe County has a JIDA (Joint Industrial Development Authority) to address retail strategies. Mr. Weaver added he is glad to see David Manley with the JIDA present at tonight's meeting because they are the best group to address issues such as retail strategies. Mayor Litz explained that David Manley will address the issue later.

Mr. Weaver stated he has concerns with the county budget. His concern is with budget increase of approximately 1,000,000 for 2% to 3% salary raises. Mr. Weaver stated when county employees receive 2% to 3% it actually costs the county around 10% per individual after taxes are added to the equation. He stated he understands this is not an item for discussion by the town. However, he added that we are all Wythe County citizens as well as Town of Rural Retreat citizens.

David Manley with Wythe County Joint Industrial Development Authority addressed council and thanked everyone for having him at the meeting.

- Mr. Manley explained that recently the manufacturer's council was revitalized. Thirty (30) people met on February 16, 2017 at a lunch meeting. The council is developing a program for K-12 level of manufacturing with apprenticeship programs. This will bring more career opportunities to the area.
- The JIDA has been contacted by alternative energy companies seeking acreage in the 75 up to 100 to 150-acre range. Mr. Manley stated if anyone knows of a landowner that would be interested in leasing their property to contact him. The JIDA will not be involved in the contracts or dealing. They are only gathering the information the companies have requested.
- Mr. Manley stated the JIDA is working with Crisp Manufacturing to market its facility.
- The annual tenure awards were held and nine companies were honored for being in business for ten to forty years. JZ Utility Buildings and Musser Lumber were of the Rural Retreat companies honored.
- The JIDA will be holding board meetings at different sites in the county and will be scheduling a meeting in Rural Retreat in the coming months.
- March 8, 2017 from 9:00 am to 12 noon the JIDA will hold a Manufacturing Career Fair at the Wytheville Meeting Center. Several area companies will be attending with current openings for prospective employees. Positions are available for all skill levels: entry level to advanced skills.
- Mr. Manley reported that an agreement with Retail Coach was made by the Wythe County Board of Supervisors Economic Development Committee. The JIDA was brought into the equation to represent the three local governments and act as the one point of contact for the consulting firm. The money going toward this project is not money from the JIDA. Councilmember Viars asked Mr. Manley to give a general overview as to what the town and counties goals are. Mr. Manley stated the organization comes to a community and does several days of research then tries to identify, with citizen input, targeted properties that the town or county would like to see developed. They try to attract commercial development. The organization goes to trade shows and they have several real estate contacts. Councilmember Vaught reiterated that this company is different from Retail Solutions which was the first company the county and towns received a quote. Mr. Manley stated that he exercised due diligence for procurement purposes and got another quote from Retail Coach. Town Manager Childers stated he was at the meeting with Mr. Cofer of Retail Coach and he spoke about specific properties at Food Country, the interstate, in the downtown area. Mr. Childers added that it was obvious Mr. Cofer had done his homework. The presentation was very specific to properties in the Town of Rural Retreat. Town Manager Childers stated Mr. Cofer had six or seven specific properties that he would target for development in Rural Retreat. Councilmember Vaught asked what period would the contract cover. Town Manager Childers stated the town could get out of the contract at any time. Mr. Manley added that Retail Coach develops a plan within 3 to 4 months that they will work for the first year. If the county and town likes the plan, then we can go forward the next year. Mr. Manley stated that this plan is very flexible and our goals will be better achieved with this plan versus the first quote that was received. Councilmember Vaught asked if the town's cost was about the same as the first quote. Mr. Manley stated it was about 40% less. Mr. Weaver stated that Rural Retreat does not have a place for retail concept. Mr. Manley stated Mr. Cofer has identified several properties that were marketable. He added that

even if one or two would work out it would be a plus. Mr. Weaver stated that the old Rural Retreat Garment Company building is a 62,000-square foot facility with water and sewer. Mr. Weaver stated the building would be remodeled to the specifications of anyone that would be interested in the property. Mr. Manley answered that the building is on the JIDA's list and is marketed when it meets the specifications of potential businesses.

Town Manager Childers asked Mr. Manley if all the companies in the county were solicited to participate in the Manufacturing Career Fair. Mr. Manley stated all manufactures in the county that the JIDA is responsible were invited to participate.

Councilmember Viars thanked Mr. Manley for offering to meet in Rural Retreat. Mr. Manley stated that with the consent from the town the meeting could be in the council chambers or at the community center. The meeting held in Rural Retreat will be the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday at 3:00 p.m. in April or May.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Mayor Litz reported a former mayor of Rural Retreat passed away recently. The obituary mentioned Mr. Charles Worley was a former mayor of Rural Retreat. Mr. Worley was not elected but appointed as mayor from 1954 to 1956. Mr. Worley was an employee of the Pet Milk Company and moved to Greenville, TN upon leaving Rural Retreat. Mayor Litz added Mr. Worley brought a picture to the town office several years ago, to be hung in the council chambers. Treasurer Patton stated she had the picture and a frame and is in the process of getting the name plate ordered. The picture will be added to the wall soon. Councilmember Lloyd added Frank Akers has a picture of Mayor Price who was the first mayor of Rural Retreat. Mayor Litz stated we will contact Mr. Akers and add a picture of Mayor Price to the wall as well

### **POLICE REPORT**

Chief Breedlove provided a report for the month of February. Chief Breedlove reported February was a busy month. The main incident to report was vandalism at the old Randy's building. The vandals were kids and will be taking part in community service by working some Saturdays to clean up in and around the Randy's building. Chief Breedlove stated the speeding in town has went down drastically. Town Manager Childers added that Chief Breedlove is doing a very good job.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**DR. PEPPER LOT PROJECT** – Councilmember Lloyd stated the committee met. The next step is to hire an engineer to draw the plan. Mayor Litz asked if the town would solicit bids for the engineering firm. Town Manager Childers stated that he would look into this further and report back to council.

**CROSSWALKS** – Town Manager Childers reported that he spoke with Jeff Russell with VDOT. Mr. Russell stated Rural Retreat is on the schedule this year to have crosswalks repainted. Once the weather breaks VDOT will be in town and repaint the crosswalks that they are their responsibility. Town Manager Childers added at that time the signs for the center of the road will be installed at the same time. Councilmember Vaught asked Town Manager Childers if he looked

at the signs on the streets in Wytheville. He added that they sit on a weighted base and look to be portable. Town Manager Childers said he would consider all the options available. He stated the portable option does not sound like a very good idea.

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION** – Mayor Litz asked Town Manager Childers if we have a date as to when the project can begin. Town Manager Childers stated the date is April 18, 2017. Mayor Litz then asked if a date has been scheduled for a committee meeting. Town Manager Childers reported Brian Reed with Mount Rogers stated the meeting would take place the first or second week in March. Town Managers stated he would contact Mr. Reed and advertise a committee meeting.

**THE CROOKED ROAD** - Councilmember Lloyd met with Jack Kincerwood with the Crooked Road. Councilmember Lloyd stated the Crooked Road is basically an advertising agency. He added that at this time Rural Retreat does not have anything to add to the Crooked Road. Councilmember Lloyd added that if the Town of Rural Retreat would like to participate an option would be an internet concert series. Councilmember Lloyd stated the cost to the town would be \$800 to \$1,000 per month and would draw people from outside the town. Councilmember Lloyd stated that if the town decides against an internet concert series then it would not be beneficial to join the Crooked Road.

Jack Weaver addressed council and stated that he has approached the mayor of Abingdon about a series that would be called, “The Great Road”. Mr. Weaver added the coverage would be along highway 11 from Abingdon, VA to Roanoke, VA. Mayor Litz added this would make more sense for Rural Retreat instead of joining the Crooked Road.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Councilmember Duncan asked if the town should do a resolution for the Rural Retreat High School wrestling team due to their state championship. A motion was made by Councilmember Vaught and seconded by Councilmember Jonas to present a resolution to the Rural Retreat wrestling team. There being no further discussion the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Duncan, Vaught, Viars, Jonas, Lloyd; zero (0) against.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**HERITAGE DAYS** – Mayor Litz asked if the Rescue Squad is working on vendors. Councilmember Viars stated the letters have been sent.

**FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS** – None

**PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS** – None

**PUBLIC UTILITIES** – None

## **TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT**

The Town Manager’s report is attached and is hereby made part of these minutes. The following items were reported and discussed:

- Met with Dennis Amos from Hurt and Proffitt. We have reviewed Phase 9 and 10 of the Map-21 sidewalk projects and will be getting easements from the property owners as soon as possible.
- Met with the JIDA and Mr. Kelly Cofer from The Retail Coach about retail strategies within the county.
- Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) did a random spot inspection of the Waste Water Treatment Plant.
- Placement of solar panels on some of the agricultural zoned property within the town.
- The contract with Spillman Technologies has been signed and we are waiting on a time frame when the new CAD system will be up and running.
- Possibility to gain ownership of the property with the Station house along the railroad.
- Repainting Crosswalks.
- Norfolk Southern and VDOT are working on the RR crossing on Greever Street.
- VDOT will come and lay some transition stone at the lot across from McDonalds.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The invoices for February 28, 2017 were read and approved.

Councilmember Viars asked if the check written to Rural Retreat High School was written specifically to After Prom. Treasurer Patton answered the check was written to the high school and noted specifically to After Prom. The middle school check was written to the middle school noted specifically to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Washington, DC trip.

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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Mayor

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Clerk