

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, March 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; Michael Duncan

Council Members Absent: None

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

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Roger Hedrick, Dale Mercer, Mike Fisher, Josh Eller, C.J. Earles, Jonathan Turpin, David Evans, Scott Cleveland, Billy Anderson

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 Jonas and seconded by Councilmember Lloyd to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2017. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Lloyd, Jonas, Duncan, Viars, Vaught; zero (0) against; one (1) abstain: Yontz.

CITIZEN’S TIME

Fire Chief David Evans addressed council to present a proposal for a new fire truck. Members of the fire department present with Chief Evans were, Roger, Hedrick, Dale Mercer, Mike Fisher, Josh Eller, C.J. Earles, and Jonathan Turpin. Chief Evans explained all fire equipment must meet National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. The Rural Retreat Volunteer Fire Department has requested budgeting from the town since 2010 for the purchase of a multi-purpose pumper tanker fire apparatus. The department need to replace two apparatuses that are not NFPA compliant. Chief Evans reported that the volume of calls has increased from 54 calls in 2004 to 231 calls in 2015. This increased call volume has placed a strain on the fire apparatuses that are currently in service. The 1985 pumper is 32 years old and is worn out. The 1979 pumper should have been taken out of service 12 years ago, but was not because the department has a need for this truck. The truck is mainly used to haul water when needed. The NFPA states any equipment

over twenty-five-year-old should be taken out of service. Chief Evans stated that the fire department needs a more reliable piece of equipment. Chief Evans stated the Insurance Service Office (ISO) is a program that is used to help establish appropriate fire insurance premiums for residential and commercial properties. Insurance companies need reliable up to date information about a community's fire protection services. The ISO rating scale is class 1 to 10, with 1 being exemplary. There are only two fire departments in Virginia that have a class 1 rating and they are Charlottesville and Fairfax. Rural Retreat Fire Department's rating is a class 4, which is one of the best rating in Southwest Virginia. The purchase of a new apparatus would help the department to obtain a class 3 rating. This means less expensive fire insurance for the citizens of Rural Retreat. Chief Evans stated in 2010 the cost of the new equipment was \$330,000, in November of 2015 the price increased to \$420,000. The price for the same equipment is currently \$439,794 and the manufacturer foresees another price increase by the end of the year. Chief Evans stated the town receives funds from Aid to Localities (ATL) annually in the amount of \$20,000 which can be utilized for this new equipment. Chief Evans stated the delivery time of the fire apparatus is approximately 10 to 12 months out. Therefore, if council purchases a new fire apparatus it will be about one year before the equipment can be placed in service. Chief Evans stated the department is trying to purchase multi-purpose equipment and have less equipment to upkeep. The fire apparatus should last 12 to 15 years before it would need to be replaced. Councilmember Duncan asked Chief Evans what the estimated value of the old equipment is. Chief Evans stated the 1985 pumper's pump does not work and it needs a new carburetor. Chief Evans added the town may consider selling the aluminum and sell the chassis to a farmer for use on a farm. The 1979 GMC tanker is completely out of service, but could be used by the town to flush out sewer lines. Town Manager Childers asked Chief what the ISO area covered. Chief Evans stated the ISO area includes the surrounding area of the town that the fire department may serve. Chief Evans stated the ISO rating is forty percent (40%) from the fire department itself, forty percent (40%) from water availability, and twenty percent (20%) from dispatch and communication. Councilmember Viars asked what happens if the fire department does not meet NFPA standards. Chief Evans answered the town could be liable in case of property loss. Mayor Litz asked Chief Evans how much of a down payment is required. Chief Evans stated the down payment amount is at the discretion of the town. The cost of the apparatus may be reduced depending on the amount of the down payment. Councilmember Vaught asked Chief Evans if the quote included with the proposal was for a commercial or a custom cab. Chief Evans stated the quote was for a custom cab due to the need to transport six to eight firefighters to calls on the interstate. Councilmember Vaught requested the full specifications on the truck that is quoted. Councilmember Vaught asked Chief Evans out of the 231 calls how many are in the town limits. Chief Evans stated 40% to 45 % are in town limits, about 5% are in Smyth County. Mayor Litz added that Smyth County sends funds for the fire department every year without a request from the town. Mayor Litz added that we are all Wythe County citizens. Councilmember Vaught stated that the fire department does not request new equipment every year. He added that it seems like Wythe County would support the fire department by offering funds toward equipment. Councilmember Duncan asked if there were other quotes for this truck. Chief Evans stated he did obtain other quotes and this is the lowest. Councilmember Duncan added the council needs to see the other quotes before a decision is made. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated that as finance committee chairperson he wants to meet at the fire department and visualize the equipment. The meeting will need to be advertised to the public. Councilmember Vaught requested a quote with a crew cab on a commercial chaise in an effort to see the difference in cost. Vice-Mayor Yontz requested documentation of the liability if the fire department continues to utilize the current equipment. Town Manager Childers stated that we should have three quotes to follow procurement. Councilmember Jonas asked Chief Evans if he knows the difference in the commercial cab and the custom cab. Chief Evans stated several truck

manufacturers make a commercial cab. E-One, Pierce and other manufactures make a custom cab for fire apparatuses. The main difference is the custom cab is manufactured as a fire built cab with a heavier aluminum with a roll cage making it safer for firefighters. Chief Evans added the cost could be from \$30,000 to \$100,000 more for the custom cab. The commercial cab would need upgrading to meet NFPA standards and would add to the cost of the apparatus. Councilmember Jonas stated the cost will be more upfront but it will be worth it for the safety of the firefighters. Town Manager Childers reminded Chief Evans to get quotes that are comparable. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated the finance committee will get with the fire department and schedule a meeting. Councilmember Duncan asked Chief Evans if he could find a used truck. Chief Evans stated that used fire equipment is usually not up to standards and most used equipment is traded or sold because it has problems. Town Manager Childers asked Chief Evans if the NFPA standards would change in the next three to five years causing the town to be required to upgrade again. Chief Evans stated the new apparatus would most likely be compliant with NFPA standards for at least the next ten to 15 years. Town Manager Childers asked Chief Evans if the truck would have a warranty. Chief Evans stated the warranty is ten years on major components. Town Manager Childers stated he would contact Rural Development and inquire about grant money and loans.

CORRESPONDENCE

Treasurer Patton read a letter from Wythe County Parks and Recreation Department. The letter requested the town budget \$6,000 for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The letter stated the county plans to re-establish the investment in the campground and pool. Improvements that have been made to the campground and pool in the past are repainting shelters, buildings, and signs. Other repairs and improvements include replacing campsite posts, applying additional gravel to the roads throughout the campground, adding additional mulch/ground cover to playground areas, finding and improving drainage areas to help prevent flooding in campsites, and removing dead trees/limbs/stumps. Councilmember Jonas asked if the state has leased the lake property back to the county. He added it was his understanding that the lease would not be renewed. Town Manager Childers stated he would find out if the lease would be renewed. Councilmember Vaught asked Treasurer Patton when the last time the town contributed to the lake. Treasurer Patton stated the last time the town sent funds to the county for the lake was \$5,000 on May 18, 2006. Treasurer Patton added the current budget includes \$3,000 but the funds have not been requested.

Treasurer Patton read correspondence from Rural Retreat Middle School. The letter from Shannon Vaught, Principal thanked council for the \$400 donation to the school for the 7th grade Washington, DC trip.

Treasurer Patton read correspondence from the Mountain Empire District, Boy Scouts of America requesting a donation of \$170. Treasurer Patton stated the donation from the town was \$150 last year. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz and seconded by Councilmember Lloyd to contribute \$170 to The Boy Scouts of America. There being no further discussion the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Yontz, Lloyd, Jonas, Viars, Vaught, Duncan; zero (0) against.

Treasurer Patton read correspondence from Deedra Crouse with The Todd Ridgaway Memorial Basketball Tournament. The letter requested a donation to help with the basketball tournament which is held annually. All proceeds from the tournament will go to the Memorial Scholarship in Todd Ridgaway's name through Wytheville Community College. An attachment was included with the letter with prices for banners and a copy of the letter from Wytheville Community College which verifies the endowment fund that is set up for Todd Ridgaway Memorial Scholarship

Endowment. Councilmember Vaught stated he would like for the council to purchase a banner. It would be nice to have a banner to represent the town. He added that he understands the scholarship is for a great cause but is available to anyone in Wythe and surrounding counties. Town Manager Childers read the available sizes and prices of banners. The banners are all 2.5 feet and are available in three different widths. The 4-foot banner is \$150, 6-foot banner is \$300 and the 8-foot banner is \$450. A motion was made by Councilmember Vaught and seconded by Councilmember Lloyd to purchase a 6-foot banner to be placed in the gymnasium at the Todd Ridgeway Memorial Basketball Tournament. Town Manager Childers reported there is \$2,870 left in the budget for contributions. Vice-Mayor Yontz added in the future council should request all budget requests for donations be in by a certain date. Councilmember Lloyd stated the proceeds from the banner will go toward the scholarship which will benefit the scholarship recipient and may not be a citizen of Rural Retreat. There being no further discussion the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Yontz, Jonas, Viars, Vaught, Duncan; one (1) against: Lloyd.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Breedlove reported that he attended the funeral service today of the fallen Carroll County Sheriff's deputy.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DR. PEPPER LOT PROJECT – Town Manager Childers reported he spoke with Brian Reed with Mount Rogers Planning District regarding the architectural drawing for the building on the Dr. Pepper lot. He asked council if they would like the cost to include the entire cost of the project. Councilmember Lloyd stated the cost should include everything that is required to build the building to council's specifications.

CROSSWALKS – Town Manager Childers reported he met with Jeff Russell, Andy Fowler, and Mike Frye with Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) regarding the repairs to the crosswalks that VDOT is responsible to maintain. Town Manager Childers added the signs to be installed on the crosswalks are available in two different types. He stated the type that bolts in is a better choice because it can be bolted down but removed in the winter months when the snow is plowed from the streets. The other option is a sign that is on a heavy base. This option is not ideal because it would possibly get knocked over by motorists and pedestrians. VDOT suggests we place the signs at the Main Street/Buck Avenue crossing and the Main Street/Railroad Avenue crossing. Councilmember Viars asked how many VDOT crosswalks are in Rural Retreat. Town Manager Childers stated the town has three crosswalks that are maintained by VDOT. The third crossing is located near Food Country and The Bank of Rural Retreat.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION – Town Manager Childers reported the first meeting for the Downtown Revitalization committee will be held on Wednesday, March 22, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

THE CROOKED ROAD - Councilmember Lloyd reported that FOX News was in town. He spoke with a gentleman regarding the costs involved in an internet broadcast. He added that the cost would be around \$600 which is considerably less than what was quoted by the group from Virginia Tech. Councilmember Lloyd stated he would report back to council when he receives the quote for the cost of equipment to the town.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Vaught reported that at the last Board of Supervisors meeting it was stated that the Board of Supervisors and the count administrator should be notified first of any business that would be interested in locating in the county whether it was in the town of Wytheville or Town of Rural Retreat. Councilmember Vaught added that the council voted to do business with Retail Strategies at the October 2016 council meeting, which at the time was the company the county was going to utilize. Council has not voted on Retail Coach. Town Manager Childers stated that the Joint Industrial Development Authority (JIDA) oversees the project. David Manley with the JIDA stated that they will not allow the contract to state the county shall have the final decision on which business will be allowed in the county or towns. Councilmember Viars stated the town has not made a deal with Retail Coach. He added that he does not think it is a good idea for the town to enter an agreement with the county regarding a retail strategy project. Town Manager Childers added that the town has not signed an agreement with either agency. Councilmember Viars added that he is not interested in the project if it is not through the JIDA.

Town Manager Childers reported that Scott Cleveland requested a variance on his property to extend his lot to include all the landscaping in the back of the property. The Planning Commission met and recommends that council accept the variance. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz and seconded by Councilmember Lloyd to approve the Planning Commission's recommendation to approve the variance for Scott Cleveland. The motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Yontz, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Vaught, Duncan; zero (0) against.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Treasurer Patton reported that The Rockin Cruisers have contacted the town about performing at Heritage Days. The town office contacted the group earlier in the year to obtain their cost to perform. Mayor Litz stated he would check on the entertainment schedule and call the town office next week.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Treasurer Patton explained to council that there are several customers in the county that are billed for water service that did not comply with the mandatory connection when the water lines were installed. The total amount owed on these accounts is more than \$6,000. Treasurer Patton requests a motion from council to allow the accounts to be written off. Mayor Litz added that council should consider adding that the motion require the customers to pay the tap fee and the past due balance. Councilmember Vaught asked how many customers the town has that are paying that did not hook onto the water line. He added that it is not fair to the customers that are not hooked onto the water system and are paying the minimum each month. Councilmember Vaught stated that the town should consider legal action to collect the past due debt. Vice-Mayor Yontz added that when the project was established it was mandatory to send bills to all customers within range of the water lines. Councilmember Lloyd agreed it is not fair to write off debt for some customers and continue billing others. Town Manager Childers stated he would contact Virginia Municipal League regarding mandatory hook-ups.

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 Jeff Russell, Andy Fowler, and Mike Frye with VDOT. They will be in town in the next 2 weeks to make repairs to the crosswalks that VDOT is responsible for. They also said that we could put “yield to pedestrians” signs in the road. All I need to do is email them to get a permit. I will have a quote on the signs tomorrow.
- Did a final walk through with Hurt and Proffitt, VDOT, and King Contractors. There are some items that need to be addressed prior to signing final release for the project.
- Planning Commission met last night about a variance on Scott Cleveland’s property. He is wanting to move some of his property lines at his house. Planning Commission approved the request, but they asked that it be brought before council for final approval.
- Utility Services came on the morning of March 9th and did an internal cleaning and inspection of largest orange water tower. The inspection and cleaning went very well, and I was able get in the tank and visually inspect it. The tank was very clean and in great condition. Utility Services said our tanks are always clean and in good shape because of the quality of our water.
- The Rural Retreat EMS recently purchased a used Rescue Squad from Warrenton EMS and is in good condition and will help meet their needs. They paid \$14k for this vehicle which appears to be a great deal. They will have the vehicle painted and decaled. I will be putting the title in the town’s name and adding it to our VML insurance policy.
- There was a wreck on Saturday at the water treatment plant that damaged the town’s fence. I will reach out to the trooper that worked the incident and file our damages with the proper insurance company.
- Wythe County will issue their annual budget for the Fire Department in the amount of \$34,660. This breaks down to \$10k ATL funds and \$24,660 coming directly from the county. We will also get an additional \$10k from the state. I spoke with Chief Evans and thinks these numbers should be adequate.
- Wythe County is also implementing a new Worker’s Comp policy for our volunteer Fire and EMS members. I haven’t seen the policy yet, but Peggy has said it is a really good benefit for the volunteer’s.
- I observed Officer Breedlove and Captain Barry Harrington do a forensics presentation for a 7th grade class at RRMS. The students were very involved and got to see some really cool things. It is good to see our Chief and the WCPD work together on events like this. I appreciate Derek’s eagerness to get out and do these types of things.

TREASURER’S REPORT

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

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