

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, March 28, 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: Peggy Hash, Jerry Hurt, Sally Earles, 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 Vice-Mayor Yontz and seconded by Councilmember Jonas to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2017. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Yontz, Jonas, Duncan, Viars, Vaught; zero (0) against.

Councilmember Lloyd entered the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

CITIZEN’S TIME

Peggy Hash addressed council on behalf of the Rural Retreat Volunteer Emergency Service. Mrs. Hash distributed a financial statement to each council member. Mrs. Hash explained the cost of a new ambulance is approximately \$180,000 to \$190,000. Mrs. Hash added Warrenton, Virginia has used vehicles for sale. The Emergency Service purchased a used vehicle from Warrenton, Virginia. The vehicle had 66,000 miles and cost \$14,000. The vehicle must be painted and lettered per state regulations. The cost to have the vehicle painted will cost between \$5,000 to \$5,500. Mrs. Hash requested funding from council to assist in the cost to have the vehicle painted and lettered to state specifications. Mrs. Hash added the vehicle was equipped with a stretcher. A new stretcher cost between \$10,000 to \$15,000. The Emergency Service currently does not have a stretcher equipped to move larger patients. Carrington Place at Rural Retreat utilizes the

Emergency Service to transport patients regularly. Mrs. Hash stated she would contact the corporate office at Carrington Place and request assistance in purchasing the stretcher that would enable the department to handle larger patients. Councilmember Vaught asked Mrs. Hash about the amount of worker's compensation insurance on the financial statement. He asked if the insurance was for the paid members since the county carries worker's compensation on the volunteer members. Mrs. Hash stated the Emergency Service provides insurance for the paid members.

Sally Earles reported that the Emergency Service is currently working on vendors for Heritage Days 2017. They hope to have 40 to 45 vendors attend this year. Mrs. Earles stated with council's permission they would like to have a dunking booth at the festival. She added they want to make sure insurance will not be an issue. Mayor Litz stated this should not be a problem. Mrs. Earles added the department would like to challenge council members to take a turn sitting in the booth.

CORRESPONDENCE

Vice-Mayor Yontz shared an email from Donnie Buck with Rural Retreat Depot Foundation. The Depot Foundation is requesting the town donate items left in the Randy's building to the foundation. The Depot Foundation would like to auction the items for a fundraiser. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz and seconded by Councilmember Lloyd to donate items in the Randy's building to The Rural Retreat Depot Foundation for an auction. Councilmember Vaught stated he would like to see a list of items to be donated. Town Manager Childers stated the items include an old desk, box safe, safe door, and electrical box. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated The Depot Foundation will move the items off the property. Councilmember Vaught stated he is concerned about other citizens wanting the items, it may not be fair to give the items to one organization. Councilmember Jonas stated that by donating to the Depot Foundation everyone will have an opportunity to purchase the items. There being no further discussion the motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Yontz, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Vaught, Duncan; zero (0) against.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Breedlove provided council with a summary for the month of March. Chief Breedlove reported he attended a New Chiefs training school in Glen Allen, Virginia hosted by the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police & Foundation. The class was Tuesday, March 21, 2017 through Thursday, March 23, 2017. Chief Breedlove added he made several valuable connections while attending the class.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DR. PEPPER LOT PROJECT – Councilmember Lloyd reported Jerry Hurt was contacted by a State Senator from the Blacksburg area that is interested in the Dr. Pepper project. Mr. Hurt reported he spoke with Senator Edwards and he apparently has a family member that worked at the drug store. Councilmember Lloyd stated it would be a good idea for the committee to meet with the Senator. Councilmember Lloyd added we are still waiting on a cost from the architect.

CROSSWALKS - None

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION – None

THE CROOKED ROAD - None

RETAIL COACH - Town Manager Childers reported the meeting that was scheduled was cancelled and he is waiting on the JIDA to reschedule. Mayor Litz stated he spoke with Millie Rothrock from Wytheville Enterprise. Ms. Rothrock stated she met with the county and was told the Town of Rural Retreat was holding up progress on Retail Coach. Town Manager Childers stated he spoke with David Manley with the JIDA and his assistant on several occasions.

NEW BUSINESS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – None

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 Brian Reed and DHCD Representative David Adams to complete the required checklist to enter into contract with DHCD for the town’s BLOCK Grant funding. There are a few very small things that need to be done but, we are right on track to get under contract.
- Spoke with Michele Gowdy who is General Council Representative for VML in reference to the mandatory hook up issue in the county. The first question she asked was “Have the property owner’s been getting bills regularly?” My answer was no because the town stopped sending the bills in September of 2015. She stated that since the billing has stopped, we can no longer pursue the sum of the unpaid bills. In essence, the past due amounts on record cannot be collected. Her advice was to send a letter stating that the property owners had 30 days to hook up or they would start being billed again. She also stated that the town would need to reference an ordinance pertaining to mandatory hookups. The town does not have this ordinance, but the county does. I’m not sure if we can ask the county to use their ordinance since the properties are in the county. I have called Michele back but haven’t gotten a response.

Town Manager Childers stated one customer that did not hook on to the water system is paying the minimum bill. He added this is unfair due to the other property owners that did not hook on,

but failed to pay their minimum bills. The town office stopped sending bills to the customers in September 2015 therefore, legally the town will be unable to pursue payment for the bills. Town Manager Childers stated he was not informed when the decision was made to stop sending the bills. Councilmember Viars asked when the project was complete and customers began being billed. Treasurer Patton stated the billing began in 2011. Councilmember Vaught stated letters were mailed in July 2010 to customers regarding the mandatory hookup. In August of 2010 Mr. Matney spoke about the county ordinance regarding mandatory hookup. It appeared that the town was piggybacking the county's ordinance. Town Manager Childers stated he will report back after he speaks to Michele Gowdy with Virginia Municipal League (VML). Mayor Litz added the town should not fight with the county to provide water that they cannot provide. Councilmember Vaught asked how many citizens use the water on Myrtle Lane. Town Manager Childers stated out of all the homes on Myrtle Lane there are four people that did not hook on, one of which is paying the minimum and three do not pay. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated the county allowed flag lots, and the homeowners share a driveway. The meters were installed at the end of the driveway which required the homeowners to be responsible for the water line from the meter to the house. Town Manager Childers stated the mandatory hookup did not include homes that were more than 350 feet from the water line. Mayor Litz explained the grantor specified the mandatory hookup not a town ordinance.

- I received a call from Matthew Atkins about having a small fair in Rural Retreat from April 27th to April 30. The cost to the town would be zero and only water would be requested. They need a piece of property 200ft x 300ft to accommodate the equipment. It would have rides including a Ferris wheel and other rides. 15% of the proceeds would be given to the RRFD and RREMS. I gave him my email address to get all of the plans and information about the organization, but am yet to get a response.
- Spoke to Kevin Williams, who is the Director of the County's Parks and Rec. He stated that the county is in negotiations with the state about renewing the lease for Rural Retreat Lake. He stated that the plans are to keep the lake as it has been in the past. He explained that he doesn't foresee any changes taking place.

Town Manager Childers added that it appears that the county will sign a five-year lease. Councilmember Jonas suggested that council make no decision until a lease is signed. Councilmember Vaught agreed with the suggestion.

- I submitted our Insurance renewal information to VML. I don't expect there to be any drastic changes in our premiums and don't see any glaring deficiencies in our current policy.
- I spoke with Craig Barbrow from Rural Development about a possible grant/loan for the firetruck. He said they will know their funding for these types of loans after April 28th. There is a possibility of getting \$25k in grant money and then the remainder would be a loan for 15 years with an interest rate of 3.625. He also stated that there is an opportunity for the town to get up to \$75k in grant money for the Farmer's Market. I called Brian Reed and Mt. Rogers will pursue this option.

- VDOT did improvements to the crosswalks last week. I have contacted 2 vendors, and they do not have the type we need. There is a vendor that has what we need, but their local salesperson has been out with health issues.

Councilmember Viars asked how many crosswalks were scheduled to be repaired. Town Manager Childers stated that two crosswalks were to be repaired, one at Dr. Spraker’s office at the railroad and one at BB&T at Buck Avenue. Councilmember Viars inquired as to the crosswalk at the Bank of Rural Retreat. Town Manager Childers stated that VDOT is responsible for that crosswalk but do not plan to repair it now.

Councilmember Viars asked when the next Downtown Revitalization Committee meeting would be held. Town Manager Childers stated he would contact Brian Reed with Mount Rogers and work with him to schedule the next meeting.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Treasurer Patton explained the town is only required to keep five years of personal property taxes on the tax books including the current year. The last time a request was made to write off delinquent taxes was for the 2009 tax year. The auditors suggested that council grant permission each year to write off the delinquent amount. Treasurer Patton requested that council enter a resolution to approve the removal of 2010 and 2011 delinquent taxes. Treasurer Patton reported the amount for 2010 that is delinquent is \$708.66 principle and \$486.72 penalty and interest. The amount for 2011 is \$451.78 principle and \$249.40 penalty and interest. A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz and seconded by Councilmember Vaught to allow the write off of delinquent 2010 and 2011 personal property tax. The motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Yontz, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Vaught, Duncan; zero (0) against.

The invoices for March 28, 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