

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN  
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON  
TUESDAY, April 25, 2017 - 7:00 P.M.**

Mayor and Council Members Present: Mayor Timothy Litz; Vice-Mayor, Dale Yontz, James Lloyd; James P. “Sean” Viars; 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: Amy McBride, Jerry Hurt, Frank Akers, Kevin Williams, Reverend Ritchie Johnson, Dayton Yontz, Anna Laura May, Sheena Atkinson, Kelly Fischer

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

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

**INVOCATION**

The invocation was given by Reverend Ritchie Johnson.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dayton Yontz.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Councilmember Jonas and seconded by Councilmember Viars to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2017. There being no discussion, the motion passed by a vote of four (4) for: Jonas, Duncan, Viars, Vaught; zero (0) against; two (2) abstain: Yontz, Lloyd.

**CITIZEN’S TIME**

Jerry Hurt of the Rural Retreat Depot Foundation addressed council to invite members to the Depot on May 9, 2017 at 6:30 pm to tour the Depot and see the renovations that have been made over the past several months.

Amy McBride, Team Leader for Rural Retreat Farmers Market addressed council. Mrs. McBride announced the Farmers Market will begin on June 14, 2017 through September 27, 2017 every Wednesday from 1:30 pm to 5:30 pm.

Frank Akers addressed council on behalf of the Rural Retreat Depot Foundation. Mr. Akers explained the Crooked Road selected the Farmers Market as a venue for the Homecoming tour on June 14, 2017. Mr. Akers stated the lineup of Appalachian Arts will include Jim Lloyd as emcee, Southwest Virginia Cloggers, Elizabeth Laprelle, Wayne Henderson School's Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM Kids), Wayne Henderson, and a master gardener will give a presentation. The entertainment will begin at 3:00 pm on a stage in front of the Depot with seating in the flat. Citizens are encouraged to bring a lawn chair and enjoy the free entertainment. Mr. Akers added carriage rides will be available and the Hokie Bird will be on site for pictures. The Smithsonian's Journey Stories will be on display in the museum. Mr. Akers reported a food vendor will also be on site for the event. The event is advertised and approximately five hundred people are expected to attend. Mr. Akers explained that this is the first big event for the Depot. In the future, the Depot will offer distance learning, cultural streaming from Virginia Tech, and projection screens for schools to utilize for educational activities. Councilmember Duncan asked Mr. Akers if the Depot Foundation has considered parking and traffic control for the June 14, 2017 event. Mr. Akers stated they would contact the town for assistance with parking and traffic issues closer to the event. Councilmember Vaught asked Mr. Akers if the street would be closed all day on June 14, 2017 for the event. Mr. Akers stated the street would need to be closed throughout the day. Mayor Litz inquired about erecting a banner on K & B Cabinetry's property on Main Street. Town Manager Childers stated banners work better when installed on posts lower to the ground rather than on the utility poles at the school sign on the corner of Main Street and Chinquapin Avenue because the wind destroys the banners when hung that high on the poles. Mayor Litz stated advertisement is important to get the crowd they are expecting. Councilmember Vaught asked Mr. Akers if the Depot Foundation has considered working with the Elementary and Middle school social studies classes to educate students on the history of the railroad in Rural Retreat. Mr. Hurt stated on May 16, 2017 the Rural Retreat Elementary third grade classes will be touring the Depot. Sheena Atkinson of Carrington Place at Rural Retreat stated Carrington Place is willing to bring patients down to the Depot during events. Anna Laura May of Carrington Place stated Carrington Place would be willing to donate to the Depot Foundation.

Kevin Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation for Wythe County addressed council to formally request the \$3,000 budgeted for the Rural Retreat Lake and Campground. Mr. Williams updated council on the progress of improvements and maintenance on the campground. Mr. Williams added that he and County Administrator, Stephen Bear met with Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) regarding the lease on the land at the lake. The changes in the lease are a ten-year lease instead of the twenty-year lease; DGIF will utilize acreage for pollinators. Some of the acreage across from the fairgrounds will be used for pollinators as well. Mr. Williams stated the trails will continue to be maintained by the county. Mr. Williams also requested \$6,000 to be budgeted for FY 2017-2018 by the town. The increase is due to increased costs to maintain the lake property. Councilmember Viars asked Mr. Williams if any of the funds allocated by the town would go toward the pool. Mr. Williams stated most the funds allocated by the town will go toward the campground. Mr. Williams added that the rumors regarding closure of the pool are incorrect. The Parks and Recreation Department plans on operating the pool during the upcoming season. Councilmember Viars stated the pool hours have dwindled down and this is not acceptable because the citizens of Rural Retreat depend on the facility during the summer months for recreation. Mr. Williams stated the recreation department has requested funds from the county to resurface and maintain the pool. Councilmember Duncan stated the trails were not made available to the cross-country teams in the past. Mr. Williams stated the DGIF would not allow any part of the lake to be closed for this type of event.

Sheena Atkinson of Carrington Place addressed council. Ms. Atkinson stated that May 14-20 is National Nursing Home week. She extended an invitation to council members and town office staff to attend a cookout at Carrington Place on May 17, 2017 at 12:00 noon.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

None

## **POLICE REPORT**

Chief Breedlove reported that he attended the Todd Ridgeway basketball tournament, Rural Retreat High School baseball and softball games. In addition, he assisted the Rural Retreat Emergency Service's Easter egg hunt. Chief Breedlove added he has written 6 traffic summons, one of which was from an accident at the Crossroads. Councilmember Viars asked where most speeding tickets were written. Chief Breedlove stated most of the summons were written for speeding on Chinquapin Avenue and Main Street.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**DR. PEPPER LOT PROJECT** – Town Manager Childers reported procurement would be used to hire an engineer for the building project on the Dr. Pepper lot. Once a firm is hired Councilmember Lloyd will meet with the engineers to discuss plans for the building.

**CROSSWALKS** - Town Manager Childers reported the pedestrian signs will be ordered next week for the crosswalks.

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION** – Report included in Town Manager's report

**THE CROOKED ROAD** - Councilmember Lloyd reported the Mountains of Music Homecoming at the Rural Retreat Depot will be filmed. Councilmember Lloyd stated he has two cameras that will be used to film the event in order to get an idea for the concert series that is being planned. Virginia Tech quoted \$25,000 for the equipment to broadcast events from the Depot. Councilmember Lloyd added he thinks we can find the equipment at a more reasonable price.

**MYRTLE LANE WATER CUSTOMERS** – None

**RURAL RETREAT EMERGENCY SERVICE** – Councilmember Jonas stated Peggy Hash, of the Rural Retreat Emergency Service addressed council at a prior meeting and requested \$5,500 to paint the used ambulance they purchased. A motion was made by Councilmember Jonas and seconded by Councilmember Lloyd to provide \$5,500 from undesignated funds to the Rural Retreat Emergency Service to paint the used ambulance they purchased. Town Manager Childers stated the Rescue Squad has received the \$12,000 budgeted funds for FY 2016-17, this \$5,500 is in addition to the budgeted funds. Councilmember Lloyd asked if the Rescue Squad obtained bids for the painting of the vehicle. Councilmember Jonas stated the vehicle had to be painted to certain specifications. Councilmember Vaught asked when the Rescue Squad received their allotment for FY 2016-17. Treasurer Patton stated the funds are in the payables that will be submitted at tonight's meeting. Town Manager Childers stated the funds would come from undesignated. Councilmember Viars added the Rescue Squad has been prudent and received a very good deal on

a used vehicle and he supports their efforts. Sheena Atkinson with Carrington Place asked council if the new ambulance is being added to or replacing an ambulance. Ms. Atkinson added sometimes the nursing home needs to transport patients and there is a lack of resources or people to respond. Ms. Atkinson stated there is a need for a bariatric ambulance to transport larger patients. Carrington Place at Rural Retreat specializes in bariatrics, which is patients weighing over eight hundred (800) pounds. There being no further discussion the motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Yontz, Lloyd, Jonas, Viars, Vaught, Duncan; zero (0) against.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER** – Vice-Mayor Yontz reported the National Day of Prayer will be observed in Rural Retreat with the assistance of Reverend Ritchie Johnson and Reverend Geary Jonas. The Wings of Faith will perform at the event on May 4, 2017 at 6:30pm at the Rural Retreat Community Center, doors will open at 5:00 pm. Reverend Johnson addressed council and introduced himself. Reverend Johnson is the pastor of First Church on Franklin Street in Wytheville, VA. Reverend Johnson assisted with National Day of Prayer last year in Rural Retreat. Reverend Johnson added Ambassador Wilson of the United Nations is a friend of his, and we can most likely have him and his team speak at the National Day of Prayer next year in Rural Retreat.

Anna Laura May with Carrington Place addressed council and stated she is friends with Justin Ward, WDBJ Channel 7 in Roanoke, Virginia. Ms. May stated she can request coverage from WDBJ at the event.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**HERITAGE DAYS** – Vice-Mayor Yontz reported the a conflict with the gospel group Wings of Faith for the Friday night gospel singing. The Whisnants have been booked in their place. The Churchmen will be performing again this year. Treasurer Patton suggested advertising the Friday night gospel singing in area church bulletins. Town Manager Childers requested moving the wall of honor presentations to a different time. In the past, the wall of honorees have been recognized prior to the gospel entertainers on Friday night. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated he is working on a plan to move the presentations to a different time.

**FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS** – Treasurer Patton reported the finance committee will meet to discuss the FY 2017-18 budget on May 9, 2017 at 5:00 pm.

**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:

- Block Grant- We had a Downtown Committee meeting on 4-18-17 at 6pm with Brian Reed from Mt. Rogers and Jessica Littlejohn from Hurt and Proffitt. After going over the plans and options for the project, the committee agreed that there will be more demolition

to the buildings than preservation. The committee felt that this would create green space in our downtown and keep the possibility of new business on the table. By taking this option, this will also help in money savings on our Phase 9 and 10 sidewalk projects as well as give the town a better situation in drainage in the downtown area. Some of this work will begin shortly with the demolition of the building adjacent to Church St. The town plans to use some of our own resources to accomplish this in order to save money on engineering costs.

- Retail Coach-I will be meeting with the JIDA for a final contractual meeting with Retail Coach on May 11<sup>th</sup> to get the contract together. I feel that we should have Retail Coach know our plans for the Downtown Revitalization so they can pursue marketing the property as well as the JIDA.
- Wastewater Environmental Assessment and Compliance- I spoke with Alan Leonard from HD Supply about getting some of our manholes sealed. They will have the chosen manholes sealed by mid-June. We are also going to replace some sewer lines throughout the town that need replaced. The money comes from \$30k of Town Budgeted money and \$50k Mt. Rogers grant money.
- Phase 9 and 10 Sidewalk Projects-Mike Sobey has the plans for both phases and is in the process of getting them drawn up. Once this is completed, I will be getting with the property owners to get them signed and explain what will be done to the properties.
- Mike Sobey also has the documentation needed of the names for the Zoning Board of Appeals members. This will be signed through the circuit court to be activated.
- I would like council to vote Billy Anderson to the Planning Commission. Billy has a lot of experience in these matters and will bring a wealth of knowledge to this commission.

A motion was made by Councilmember Viars and seconded by Vice-Mayor Yontz to appoint Billy Anderson to Planning Commission. Councilmember Viars stated Mr. Anderson is a surveyor with Pillar Engineering and he works in the field and brings a tremendous amount of knowledge to the commission. Councilmember Vaught stated there may be a conflict of interest due to Mr. Anderson being employed with Pillar Engineering, a company the town has a contract with for services. Town Manager Childers stated as zoning administrator he will make sure Mr. Anderson abstains to any vote that may be conflicting. There being no further discussion the vote passed by a vote of five (5) for: Yontz, Lloyd, Jonas, Viars, Duncan; one (1) against: Vaught.

- Representatives from King Contractors were here today to look at the yards on Phase 8 of the sidewalk project. They will be in to reseed the yards in the very near future.

Councilmember Vaught asked Town Manager Childers if he had spoken to Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) regarding the contractor for Phase 9 & 10 of the sidewalk project. Town Manager Childers stated he did speak with Hurt and Proffit regarding their inspector. The inspector needed to be more proactive on the Phase 8 project.

Councilmember Viars stated he noticed the cold patching of potholes by VDOT on Sherwood and around town.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

The invoices for April 25, 2017 were read and approved.

**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