

The Rural Retreat Town Council held a regular meeting on January 8, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in the Rural Retreat Town Hall Council Chambers.

PRESENT RURAL RETREAT TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Timothy Litz
Vice-Mayor Keith Crigger
Scott Mecimore

Ed Schaack
Jerrell Hall
Dale Yontz

ABSENT

NONE

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Raymond Matney, Town Manager
Robert Lewis, Police Chief
Lori Guynn, Clerk/Treasurer

OTHERS PRESENT

Rev. Brian Burch – Rural Retreat United Methodist Church

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Mayor Litz called the meeting to order and determined the presence of a quorum.

INVOCATION

The invocation was delivered by Rev. Brian Burch.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Litz.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilmember Dale Yontz, seconded by Councilmember Jerrell Hall to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2007 meeting and the motion passed unanimously.

CITIZEN'S TIME

NONE

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CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Matney read a Christmas card for the Council from Rodney Hurt, Donnie Widner, Rhea Preston, Mike Jones and Hugh Hopkins wishing them a wonderful holiday season and thanking them for the Christmas dinner and bonus the Council gave the employees.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Lewis explained his monthly report. The 2008 town motor vehicle decals were shown to the Councilmembers. Chief Lewis also stated the new 2008 Ford Crown Victoria police car arrived the previous day. The car is now at the radio shop getting the radios installed.

Councilmember Mecimore asked for an explanation on the gas leak that was in the police report. Chief Lewis stated as Norfolk Southern was removing the abandoned pole at Joey's Country Kitchen the service line to the building was pulled from the ground also. Mr. Matney stated the service line was lying next to the pole underground. Plus the pole had a bell shaped bottom on it. Mayor Litz stated the area was evacuated due to the gas leak. Mr. Matney informed the Council that he had received several great comments concerning how well the emergency responders handled the situation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

APPOINTMENT TO FILL VACATED SEAT – Mayor Litz opened the floor for nominations. Councilmember Mecimore stated he had been contacted by Peggy Hash who was very interested in filling the seat and he thought she would be an excellent choice. Councilmember Yontz stated he wanted to nominate Kristie Osborne. Mayor Litz stated others nominated were Geary Jonas and James A. “Jim” Hall. He gave a brief background of all nominees and stated all are interested in the position. Councilmember Schaack stated both Mr. Hall and Mrs. Hash currently serve on the planning commission and both are good members. He further stated he felt there was a fine group of people that have been nominated. Councilmember Yontz stated he had spoken to Ms. Osborne the previous day and she is enthusiastic about the possibility of serving on the council and to give back to the community. Vice-Mayor Crigger commented that if an individual was appointed from the planning commission then they would have to be replaced. Councilmember Mecimore stated if individuals on the planning commission were interested in being promoted then they should be. He further commented that one of the other nominees may be interested in serving on the planning commission. Vice-Mayor Crigger pointed out this appointment was only for a short term and all nominees should be made aware that elections are in May.

Councilmember Yontz made a motion to appoint Kristie Osborne with Vice-Mayor Crigger seconding the motion. Councilmember Mecimore stated he had not had the opportunity to speak with Ms. Osborne and she had not contacted him concerning the appointment. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hall. He also stated Mrs. Hash had contacted him about her interest in filling the vacancy. Councilmember Yontz then explained he was under the

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impression at the previous meeting that Councilmembers Mecimore and Hall were to contact Ms. Osborne.

Mayor Litz asked for those in favor of Ms. Osborne to signify by stating aye. The motion passed with three (3) voting in favor: Dale Yontz, Keith Crigger and Ed Schaack. Two (2) abstained: Scott Mecimore, Jerrell Hall. Councilmember Schaack asked for a revote on the motion to appoint Kristie Osborne in which the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Litz asked Mr. Matney to notify all nominees following the meeting.

LODGING TAX ORDINANCE – Vice-Mayor Crigger stated he thought a lodging tax ordinance needed to be on the books. Mr. Matney informed the Council he has scheduled an appointment with local attorney Michael Sobey concerning the lodging tax and model cable franchise ordinances. He further stated that VML has written a model cable franchise ordinance that will protect current providers in localities.

ARCET FACILITY – Mr. Matney informed the Council that Arcet, Inc. has been surveying the property at the crossroads area so they should be starting construction on the facility in the near future.

U.S. CELLULAR ANTENNAS – The antennas have been installed on the blue water tank by Utility Services, Inc. for U.S. Cellular. The completion of the wiring is expected within a couple of weeks.

2008/2009 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET – Mayor Litz stated he would like for budget work sessions, if necessary, to be held following the regular meetings.

2006/2007 FISCAL YEAR AUDIT - Councilmember Mecimore asked for the status of the previous fiscal year audit. Ms. Guynn stated she had spoken to Corbin Stone with Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates and Tammy Copenhaver with Hicok, Fern, Brown and Garcia concerning the audit. Ms. Copenhaver stated their firm would not be available until early February at which time they will collect the information needed to compose the adjusting entries and to provide Mr. Stone with an adjusted trial balance so that they can finalize the audit.

Mayor Litz requested this item remain on the agenda until the audit is completed.

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NONE

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TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

The Town Manager’s report is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes. The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

APPOINTMENT TO THE JIDA – Mr. Matney read an email from Dr. Alan Hawthorne, Executive Director of the Joint Industrial Development Authority explaining the ordinance adopted by Wythe County and the towns of Wytheville and Rural Retreat regarding appointments to the Joint IDA Board do not allow elected officials to serve. Dr. Hawthorne stated a petition could be made to Wythe County and the Town of Wytheville to amend the bylaws.

Mr. Matney stated he had spoken to Councilmember Yontz and he was very understanding of the Joint IDA ordinances. Councilmember Yontz explained to the Council that he would like to see a small business owner appointed to the Board because they are not currently represented. Mr. Matney further stated he had two candidates in mind, Barry Guynn and Foy Patton. Upon speaking to both, Mr. Guynn he was not interested and Mr. Patton said he would consider the appointment. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked that each member consider this appointment until the next meeting and bring those nominees back for consideration.

PLANNING GRANTS – The Town applied for two planning grants for the water shed at the Phillippi well and spring through the Virginia Department of Health in which neither was funded. However, we were provided with some insight by those involved in reviewing the grants on how to improve the next applications. Applications were also submitted for three additional planning grants which were approved for \$25,000 each and all are on a reimbursement program. One was for a preliminary engineering report on Staley Springs to find out what would be involved in treating the water and the quality and quantity available to possibly make the spring a potable water source.

Vice-Mayor Crigger asked for a clarification on the applications that were denied. Mr. Matney responded the water shed issues for Phillippi did not include enough information because some information was assumed. Councilmember Mecimore asked who prepared the applications. Mr. Matney stated Anderson and Associates, Inc. completed the applications.

The second grant application was for the collector basin at Phillippi Spring. Currently we are not collecting 50-60% of the water available because it is being lost as it enters the collector basin. The third application made was for the undeveloped Phillippi Spring that will look at water quality and quantity analysis. A plan needs to be developed to determine the amount of water that is available and the quality of the water.

HILLCREST DIVIDE STREET LIGHT PROGRAM – The Homeowners Association has recently formed and they have conveyed concerns about street lights in the subdivision. Previously, Homeowners Associations have paid for the poles and installation. In return the town accepts the lights into their monthly street light rental fee.

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REQUEST FOR STREET LIGHT – GAMMON AVENUE – A request has been received for a street light at the west end of Gammon Avenue. Previously, intersections, cul-de-sacs and dead ends have been lit. Mayor Litz asked that this item be placed under unfinished business to be addressed at the next meeting to allow further review.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN POLES AND WIRES - The abandoned poles and wires have been removed. The view along the railroad tracks is much better. The assistant road master for Norfolk Southern Railroad told Mr. Matney that Rural Retreat was the greatest town to work in because the people were cooperative and appreciative. Mr. Matney stated he appreciated the comment that was made about the Town.

REIMBURSEMENT – FLUORIDE PUMP – The fluoride pump at the Phillippi Water Treatment Plant quit working therefore a new one had to be purchased at a cost of \$453.00. Chief Water Operator Gerald Musser contacted the Virginia Department of Health, Fluoridation Department concerning the cost of the pump. Mr. Musser was able to get the Town reimbursement for the cost of the fluoride pump. Mayor Litz commended Mr. Musser for his efforts.

2008/2009 BUDGET CALENDER – The calendar presented to the Council is an expedited list. Mr. Matney stated he would like to meet with the Personnel, Ordinance and Legal Matters Committee concerning salary issues. He recommended the committee meet following the next regular meeting.

Councilmember Mecimore asked if the salary database of public employees in Southwest Virginia had been reviewed. He further stated that the Town received a compliment on being cooperative in submitting the information to the *Bristol Herald Courier*. Mr. Matney stated the positive thing about the survey is that it shows some employees are average or above average with employees from other localities that perform the same duties.

WATER ACCOUNTABILITY – The water accountability for November is at 34%. Mr. Matney stated there have been no major leaks lately so that is aiding in keeping the loss percentage down.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The bills were read and approved for December 17, 2007 and January 8, 2008.

TALK OF THE TOWN

Mayor Litz is to attend the Talk of the Town radio program at WYVE/WXBX radio station on Wednesday morning.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned by Mayor.

Mayor

Clerk