

The Rural Retreat Town Council held a regular meeting on February 12, 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
Ed Schaack

Scott Mecimore
Jerrell Hall
Kristie Osborne

ABSENT

Dale Yontz

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Rev. Jonathan Hamman – Grace Lutheran Church, Holly Clemons, Cheryl Turner, Kim Turner

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Rev. Jonathan Hamman.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Litz.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilmember Scott Mecimore stated he was not present at the previous meeting as indicated in the January 22, 2008 minutes.

Following the correction, a motion was made by Councilmember Jerrell Hall, seconded by Vice-Mayor Keith Crigger to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2008 meeting and the motion passed unanimously with Councilmember Scott Mecimore abstaining from the vote.

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CITIZEN'S TIME

Holly Clemons addressed the Council concerning the installation of street signs on the newly named Richfield Street. Ms. Clemons stated she was notified approximately six months ago that her address would be changing from Westfield Avenue to Richfield Street and that new street signs would be installed. Previously she has been informed that the signs had been ordered and they would be installed when they were received. Mayor Litz asked Mr. Matney to address Ms. Clemons' concern.

Mr. Matney stated the first set of signs ordered were incorrect and had to be reordered. He further explained that the correct signs have been received and he was told that they had been installed. Mr. Matney informed Ms. Clemons the street signs would be installed by the end of the week.

Cheryl Turner addressed the Council next concerning the installation of street lights on West Lee Highway. Ms. Turner explained that she is owner of Holston Trucking and when their area was incorporated into the Town in 1999 she was told that street lights would be installed and to date they haven't been. She further stated that she is concerned with the entrance to the Old West Diner Restaurant, in which she also owns, because cars are driving over the bank as they are attempting to enter the facility. Ms. Turner stated she understands she can not install lights at the entrance. Mr. Matney stated only flashing lights are not allowed. Theft has also been an issue on the property that is occupied by a truck lot, Ms. Turner stated and she felt lighting at these properties would deter the theft and aid in allowing patrons to see the entrance to the restaurant.

Mr. Matney informed the Council he had spoken to Ms. Turner concerning the lighting at her property on West Lee Highway and had also looked at the existing poles in the area. Mr. Matney stated the poles that are on the utility easement are telephone poles because all power poles are on private property. Upon contacting AEP, he was told the approximate cost to set new street light poles was \$750-\$1,000 each. Mr. Matney further stated he had explained to Ms. Turner that in the past the Council's policy has been to light intersections, cul-de-sacs and dead ends.

Ms. Turner stated she would mainly like to get lighting at the restaurant entrance and at the truck lot. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated the biggest concern was for residential properties when the Town annexed the property however he did see a need for lighting on West Lee Highway both east and west. Ms. Turner stated if the Town didn't install lighting then she would pursue it on her own.

Mayor Litz stated he would be Ms. Turner's contact person concerning her request.

CORRESPONDENCE

NONE

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POLICE REPORT

Chief Lewis explained his written monthly report.

Mayor Litz expressed concern of the recent incident of an individual contaminating another individual's well water with gasoline. He had spoken to Mr. Puckett, with the Virginia Department of Health about funding to protect our water supply because previously we didn't pursue the available funding. Mr. Puckett informed him that there was a possibility the funding will be available again in the future.

Chief Lewis also stated that there has been a significant increase in drug activity on this end of the County. Councilmember Schaack asked if the increased activity involved the schools. Chief Lewis stated that the activity has always been there but it is now more easily detected.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

LODGING TAX ORDINANCE – Mr. Matney stated Michael Sobey had brought an amendment to the Code of the Town of Rural Retreat to him. Prior to this item being placed in the Code, an ordinance must be adopted, therefore an ordinance is being drafted. This item will be readdressed at the next meeting.

2006/2007 FISCAL YEAR AUDIT – Mr. Matney stated preliminary work for the adjusting entries by Tammy Copenhaver with Hicoock, Brown, Fern and Garcia will begin Wednesday, February 13. Corbin Stone with Robinson Farmer and Cox Associates is tentatively scheduled to be here the week of February 25. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

REQUEST FOR STREET LIGHT – GAMMON AVENUE – Operations and Maintenance Committee Chairperson Jerrell Hall stated he had looked at the area on Gammon Avenue and he thinks there is a need for a street light and the Town's policy includes lighting dead ends. Chairperson Hall made a motion on behalf of the Operations and Maintenance Committee to install a street light at the end of Gammon Avenue. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schaack and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

2008 HERITAGE DAYS FESTIVAL – Councilmember Yontz is now the Chairperson of the Heritage Days Festival. In his absence, Lori Guynn informed the Council of some of the ideas that Mr. Yontz has for the festival. Those ideas include moving the festival from July to the fall, having a chili cook-off, car show or cruise in and possibly changing the festival name. Councilmember Osborne will be assisting Mr. Yontz with the festival.

Mr. Matney stated he had some reservations with moving the festival especially this year because Bill Hall has spoken to Norfolk Southern about the expedition car coming. Mr. Matney

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further stated a chairperson is needed to organize the entertainment lineup in which he asked Mayor Litz to chair. Mayor Litz stated he would help with the entertainment.

Vice-Mayor Crigger said he thought the ideas presented were good. He stated he felt the entertainment needed more variety and if a car show or cruise in is planned he suggested asking an organization to organize it.

A meeting for the 2008 Heritage Days Festival is scheduled for Tuesday, February 26, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NONE

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:

2008/2009 FISCAL BUDGET – The first draft of the 2008/2009 budget has been distributed. Councilmember Mecimore, prior to the meeting, had asked about the figures in the actual column because the figures looked high. The numbers also include the amounts from the 2007/2008 year because the audit hasn't been completed for adjusting entries to be posted in order to close the books. The draft doesn't include capital items which recommendations will be made at the next meeting. The fire department is concerned with repairing the floor and the roof is in need of repairs. Operations and Maintenance Committee Chairperson Jerrell Hall was asked to assess the fire departments needs and to report back.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL – Eddie Stamper who used to be with Dewberry & Davis and is now with VDOT has some influence with the Safe Routes to School Program which is 100% funding. This grant program is for elementary and middle schools. Currently this money is not being tapped by localities. Councilmember Mecimore asked if a study would need to be done prior to making the application. Mr. Matney stated the Wythe County School Board would need to be notified and we would have to obtain their support.

Mayor Litz asked Mr. Matney if he had specific ideas on where to implement this program. Mr. Matney stated he thought we should extend from our TEA-21 project and build sidewalks down East Buck Avenue to the middle school. The consensus of the Council was to allow Mr. Matney to pursue this funding contingent on the Wythe County School Board's decision.

WATER STUDY PLANNING GRANT – WYTHE COUNTY – A letter received from Wytheville Town Manager Wayne Sutherland was read stating the committee appointed by Mayor Litz to address the need for public water in areas that it isn't currently available recently met. This committee decided that each governing body should take action to support an application to the Virginia Department of Health to seek funding for the study. Vice-Mayor

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Crigger made the motion to support the application for the grant funds to perform a study to support the extension of public water systems. Councilmember Hall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

RFP'S FOR WATER PER GRANTS – The requests for proposals (RFP's) for the water engineering grants will be published in the Roanoke Times this weekend to comply with the procurement requirement to encourage the Women Business Enterprises and Minority Business Enterprises to submit a proposal.

WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – The Preliminary Engineering Report for the distribution project has been approved by the Virginia Department of Health. We are now at the point of needing to put together funding packages. Upon speaking with Travis Jackson with Rural Development earlier today, he indicated they are anticipating a large allocation this year. Currently financing is at 4.25% and with the allocation the interest rate may go to 2.9%. BB&T has also expressed interest in funding future projects.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM – This ordinance will have to be amended. The recommended changes have received and will be implemented into a draft ordinance. A draft copy will be included in the next meeting packet for review. Upon review a public hearing will be scheduled.

OVERLAY OF GREEVER STREET – VDOT has funding available to overlay roads. They are going to overlay Greever Street from Ridge Avenue to Gienow Road.

HILLCREST DIVIDE SUBDIVISION STREET LIGHTING PROGRAM – The program has been designed and a meeting is scheduled with AEP. The plan will then be presented to the Homeowner's Association along with the lighting cost. The same information will also be presented to the Council.

STREET LIGHT REQUEST, WEST LEE HIGHWAY – EAST – This item was addressed previously in the meeting.

FIRE DEPARTMENT & RESCUE SQUAD INTERIM ANALYSIS – This report was initiated by Wythe County to address the needs for the fire departments and rescue squads in the County. In this report, it was stated that all agencies would be interviewed and in addition, interviews have been conducted with the Town of Wytheville's Council, Manager and Director of Public Safety and Wythe County's Board of Supervisors, Administrator and Assistant Administrator. The Town Council nor individuals with the Town of Rural Retreat were interviewed for this report.

Additional items of concern includes the program that Wythe County has implemented to address the apparatus needs of the fire departments including the construction of four fire stations and a fire truck replacement program that has replaced eight pieces of equipment to date. However, none of this activity has been within either of the towns. The report further stated the

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Rural Retreat Emergency Services facility is located next to the fire department and is located directly across from a major railroad corridor that exposes the facility to the risk of a hazardous materials incident that would remove the station from service. Mr. Matney stated the only recommendations made for Rural Retreat was to build new fire and rescue facilities.

Vice-Mayor Crigger stated the report revolves around the fire protection at Progress Park and the need for an additional ladder truck in the county that would be adequate to serve the facilities, if needed, in Progress Park.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REQUEST FOR WILD-LAND/BRUSH APPARATUS – The fire department has addressed Mr. Matney concerning the need for a wild-land/brush apparatus truck for an approximate cost of \$130,000. Rural Development has a maximum \$50,000 grant available to assist in funding the truck leaving a balance of \$80,000 that would need to be financed. This balance could be financed in-house or through a Rural Development loan.

DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY FORMS – The deadline to file candidacy forms for the Town Council is March 4, 2008. Packets containing the necessary information are available at the office if anyone is interested.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – SICK LEAVE – Employees are eligible for one sick day leave per month with a maximum accumulation of 90 days. Two years ago the Town purchased short term and long term disability insurance for the employees. Originally it was considered to eliminate the short term disability insurance and maintain a sick leave program. However, several employees have not accumulated enough time to maintain the gap between day one and the thirteenth week to be eligible for long term disability. An incentive to accumulate sick leave instead of using the time needs to be created and possibly offer pay for unused time upon retirement. The Council was asked to consider this change so that it can be discussed later.

POLICE CHIEF (CASH IN LIEU OF BENEFIT) – Prior to this item being addressed Chief Lewis stated he would retire as of June 30, 2008. He stated a written notification will be given to the Council at the next meeting.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The bills were read and approved for February 12, 2008.

TALK OF THE TOWN

Mayor Litz stated he would 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 upon a motion by Councilmember Schaack.

Mayor

Clerk