

The Rural Retreat Town Council held a regular meeting on March 11, 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

Dale Yontz
Jerrell Hall
Kristie Osborne

ABSENT

NONE

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Rev. Jason McNeese – Rural Retreat Baptist Church
Chief David Evans – Rural Retreat Fire Department

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. Jason McNeese.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Litz.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilmember Scott Mecimore, seconded by Councilmember Dale Yontz to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2008 meeting and the motion passed unanimously.

CITIZEN'S TIME

NONE

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 11, 2008 – PAGE 2

CORRESPONDENCE

NONE

POLICE REPORT

Chief Lewis explained his monthly activity report.

Mayor Litz commended Chief Lewis on the article written about his tenure with town in the *Wytheville Enterprise*.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

LODGING TAX ORDINANCE – This draft ordinance has been distributed for review. Mr. Matney asked the Council to review this ordinance. A public hearing will be scheduled for the April 8, 2008 meeting to adopt the lodging tax ordinance and the flood plain ordinance. This item will be readdressed at the next meeting.

2006/2007 FISCAL YEAR AUDIT – Treasurer Lori Guynn gave an update concerning the fiscal audit. Mrs. Guynn spoke to Tammy Copenhaver with Hicock, Brown, Fern and Garcia earlier in the day and she is completing the draft audit. The draft will be sent to Corbin Stone with Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates for final review prior to issuing the audit to the town. This item will be readdressed at the next meeting.

Mr. Matney further stated that Mr. Stone recommended the town implement a policy concerning the personal use of cell phones and town vehicles issued to employees. These benefits are taxable to the employee if used as personal use.

REQUEST FOR STREET LIGHT – WEST LEE HIGHWAY – Mr. Matney stated he had contacted Jon Fitzwater with AEP who unexpectedly had to go out of town. Contact will again be made upon Mr. Fitzwater's return. This item will be readdressed at the next meeting.

2008 HERITAGE DAYS FESTIVAL –Heritage Days Committee Chairman Dale Yontz reported on the meeting held prior to the council meeting. Chairman Yontz stated the parade will begin at 11:00 a.m. Letters will be sent to area businesses and industries asking for their participation and financial support this year. Mayor Litz reported the entertainment will end at 9:00 p.m.

The next meeting for the 2008 Heritage Days Festival is scheduled for Tuesday, March 25, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

INTERIM FIRE DEPARTMENT ANALYSIS REPORT – Mr. Matney stated he had asked Fire Chief David Evans to attend the meeting to discuss concerns addressed in this report. A conference call will be scheduled to address the concerns.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 11, 2008 – PAGE 3

Councilmember Schaack asked Chief Evans what the department's opinion was on moving the facilities away from the railroad tracks as recommended in the report. Chief Evans stated the department feels that the building is adequate; however repairs are needed due to the age of the building. He also stated his opinion was the main concern in the report was if there was a hazardous material spill on the railroad then it would shut down the fire department and rescue squad building's.

Mr. Matney expressed his concern about the amount of money that is being spent to purchase new apparatus and build new buildings for other departments and the exclusion of Rural Retreat in those capital items. Mayor Litz asked how much of the fire department expenses are absorbed by the town. Chief Evans stated the town has purchased four trucks at a total purchase price in excess of one million dollars. Mr. Matney stated that only \$25,000 is received annually from Wythe County toward the cost of the apparatus. Chief Evans also stated that approximately \$13,000 - \$15,000 per year for various expenses is paid for with money from fundraising efforts.

Councilmember Schaack asked Chief Evans for the number of calls that are responded to within town and for the number of calls that are in the county and on the interstate. Chief Evans responded that approximately 35% of the calls are in-town, 5% in Smyth County and the balance within Wythe County. Chief Evans further stated that Rural Retreat's coverage area extends to the Mountain Empire Airport.

Upon further discussion, it was decided that Mayor Litz, Vice-Mayor Crigger, Chief Evans and Mr. Matney would participate in the conference call.

NEW BUSINESS

SONGS OF THE MOUNTAIN – Mayor Litz informed the Council that Tim White with Songs of the Mountain approached Mr. Matney and himself to ask for Rural Retreat's support of the Songs of the Mountain Festival at the Davis Valley Winery. In order to support this festival, there would be a minimum contribution of \$2,000.

Vice-Mayor Crigger asked what the anticipated attendance is for this festival. Mr. Matney stated he thinks there is a long term benefit to participating because a Rural Retreat Day will be held preceding the event at the winery. The tentative date would be Sunday, June 22, 2008. Councilmember Yontz asked if the date for the Rural Retreat Heritage Days Festival could be changed to coincide with the proposed Rural Retreat Day. Mr. Matney responded that it could be a possibility. He further stated this could possibly be an alternative way to get Dr. Pepper involved in our community.

Councilmember Osborne asked if Rural Retreat would be contributing the same amount as the Town's of Chilhowie and Saltville. Mayor Litz informed the Council that the Town's of Chilhowie, Saltville and Marion also participate in this event. The Town of Marion contributes \$20,000 and the Town's of Chilhowie and Saltville contribute \$2,000 each.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 11, 2008 – PAGE 4

Following additional discussion, a motion was made by Vice-Mayor Crigger to contribute \$2,000 to the Songs of the Mountain to promote tourism in Rural Retreat. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Yontz and passed unanimously.

TOWN MOTER VEHICLE DECALS – Vice-Mayor Crigger recommended that each councilmember receive one free motor vehicle decal. Councilmember Hall made a motion to issue one free motor vehicle decal to each councilmember. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Yontz and passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Personnel Committee Chairman Ed Schaack stated he had comments on the job description for the Police Chief position. Chairman Schaack met with Chief Lewis concerning questions he had. During this meeting, Chief Lewis answered all the questions he had and also informed Chairman Schaack that he provides his own firearm, baton and handcuffs. Wythe County has changed their policy in which they issue a firearm to their officers due to liability issues, Chief Lewis explained. Chief Lewis further explained that it will cost approximately \$4,000 to furnish a new employee including uniforms for summer and winter and equipment.

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:

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CANDIDATE'S FORUM – The Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce will be holding a candidate's forum on Tuesday, April 22, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. All four candidates seeking election to the Town Council will be contacted by the Chamber of Commerce.

PROPOSED REFINANCING OF FIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT BONDS – A proposal was received from Davenport in reference to refinancing Rural Development bonds. They assist in refinancing bonds for a minimum fee. The Finance and Appropriations Committee is currently reviewing this proposal.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – VDH PLANNING GRANT – Proposals were submitted by four firms' for the three water projects. The firms will be narrowed down to two or three for interviews. Interested councilmember's were asked to participate.

WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FUNDING – This project will be broken down into two projects, in-town and out-of-town. The in-town project will possibly qualify for Virginia Health Department funding at 0% interest. The out-of-town project will qualify for Rural Development funding at 2.6%. A funding proposal was also received from BB&T.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – SICK LEAVE – An incentive needs to be created to encourage employees to accumulate sick leave in lieu of using it. A reference was made to the Town of

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 11, 2008 – PAGE 5

Wytheville's sick leave policy in which they allow employees approximately 10 hours per month with no limit on accumulation. After a minimum of five years of service, at termination or retirement they are paid one-quarter of their salary value for the time accumulated.

Currently, sick leave, short-term and long-term disability is available to all town employees which encourage employees to use up their sick leave. There has been consideration of eliminating short-term disability; however some employees do not have enough time to get them from day one to long-term disability.

Mayor Litz asked Mr. Matney to provide the personnel committee with a proposal.

JOINT GOVERNMENTAL MEETING – The Town of Wytheville is hosting the meetings this year. They have requested that each Governing Body submit agenda items.

REQUEST FOR REZONING ON EAST BAUMGARDNER AVENUE – Ms. Dorothy Horne is the sole trustee of the former Gospel Tabernacle Church. She has previously attempted to sell the former church building with no luck. She is interested in using the building as an apartment, office space rental and personal space. Ms. Horne's request was considered by the Planning Commission in which they recommended having the property rezoned from industrial to commercial general or commercial neighborhood. This would not be considered spot zoning because a buffer zone is needed between industrial and residential areas.

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – The individual constructing duplexes on North Greever Street originally indicated he wanted to sell the units and retain ownership of the property. Now, the developer has indicated he would like to have a Homeowner's Association to be responsible for the property. He is also interested in building a total of six units. This type of development is called a Planned Unit Development in which our Zoning Ordinance does not address.

The consensus of the Council was to pursue drafting and adopting an ordinance on Planned Unit Developments. Steve Moore, Assistant Town Manager of Wytheville has stated he would assist us in writing a draft ordinance. Prior to scheduling a Joint Public Hearing, the Planning Commission will need to review the draft ordinance.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The bills were read and approved for March 11, 2008.

TALK OF THE TOWN

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

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 11, 2008 – PAGE 6

ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Councilmember Schaack.

Mayor

Clerk