

The Rural Retreat Town Council held a regular meeting on June 24, 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

Dale Yontz
Jerrell Hall
Kristie Osborne

ABSENT

Ed Schaack

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Raymond Matney, Town Manager
Lori Guynn, Clerk/Treasurer

ADMINISTRATION ABSENT

Robert Lewis, Police Chief
Scott Mitchell, Police Officer

OTHERS PRESENT

Rev. Jonathan Hamman - Grace/St. Paul Lutheran Church
Elizabeth Lowder

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

A motion was made by Councilmember Scott Mecimore, seconded by Councilmember Kristie Osborne to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2008 meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Vice-Mayor Crigger and Councilmember Yontz abstaining from the vote.

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CITIZEN'S TIME

Ms. Elizabeth Lowder addressed the Councilmember's concerning the increase in water and sewer rates that was stated in the letter included with the Consumer Confidence Report. She also stated she had been approached by other town citizens who also expressed to her their concerns on the increases. Ms. Lowder explained she had compared the town's rates to other water and sewer systems in the area. Rural Retreat's rates are equal to or slightly higher than other utility systems. Concerns were expressed by Ms. Lowder on the timing of this increase especially with the other increases that are affecting our small community. She quoted Vice-Mayor Crigger, who had stated in a previous meeting, he would like to see slight increases on a gradual basis instead of a large increase at one time. Ms. Lowder stated most of the citizens in Rural Retreat on average have a salary of \$30,000 or less and the rate increase will also affect those people.

Vice-Mayor Crigger explained to Ms. Lowder that he viewed the increase to be the lesser of two evils because the tax rates could have been increased instead of the utility rates. In addition to the rate increase being passed on to the customers, Vice-Mayor Crigger explained that the cost of materials has also increased. Mayor Litz informed Ms. Lowder that the Town is not eligible for grant money because currently the water bills are lower than required to receive federal funding for water system improvements. Mr. Matney stated the Virginia General Assembly has placed mandate's on localities that include additional testing requirements in which the cost has been passed on to localities therefore resulting in the need to increase rates. Mr. Matney provided Ms. Lowder with a handout that reflected the monthly increase for customers at various consumption levels. In-town customer will see an average increase between \$.50 and \$3.50 with out-of-town customers seeing an average increase between \$.87 and \$4.71.

Following additional discussion, Ms. Lowder stated the Mayor's letter that was included with the water report stated a modest increase. She suggested that in future mailings the increase be further explained. Ms. Lowder thanked the Councilmember's for listening to her concerns. Mayor Litz asked Ms. Lowder to encourage the citizens that have expressed concerns to her to attend the meetings because the Council feels that no one cares about the things happening in town. Mayor Litz also thanked Ms. Lowder for attending the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to bring before the Council.

POLICE REPORT

No report was given due to the absences of Chief Lewis and Officer Mitchell.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2008/2009 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET ADOPTION – There being no questions or comments on the budget, Councilmember Hall made a motion to adopt the 2008/2009 Fiscal Year Budget to

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include the revised water and sewer rates as presented. Vice-Mayor Crigger seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

2008 HERITAGE DAYS FESTIVAL – Chairman Yontz explained that everything has been finalized with the exception of placement of all participants. The Parade Marshals will be the Roger Rich family. An award for Citizen of the Year will be presented at the opening ceremonies. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 8, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. Chairman Yontz further stated there will be no charge to attend this event and there will be things for all ages.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Mecimore informed the Council that Jayne Hall had approached him concerning a hole near the caboose that is in the path of traffic. Mr. Matney stated this was a storm water drain at the entrance to the alleyway that is behind the Rural Retreat Historical Society. Currently there are delineators around it but more can be put there to keep vehicles from driving into the drain.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no committee reports to be given.

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:

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER IMPROVEMENTS – Work is continuing with Rural Development on the out-of-town application for the water improvement project. A meeting with the Virginia Department of Health will be on Thursday to discuss funding options they may have available for the in-town improvement project.

RURAL RETREAT FAIR ASSOCIATION REQUEST – The Fair Association has requested the Town place a trash dumpster at the fair grounds for the duration of the fair. In the past the town has agreed to place the dumpster and to empty it periodically at no charge.

RURAL RETREAT EMERGENCY SERVICES REQUEST FOR FUNDING – The additional information that was requested by the Finance Committee has been received. Financial information for the previous four years was submitted. Two members of the Board of Directors have been asked to attend a meeting and explain the financial status of the emergency services and answer questions that Councilmember's may have.

MONTHLY STATUS REPORT – ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES – The monthly summary report has been received and is self explanatory.

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SONG OF THE MOUNTAINS FESTIVAL – The Song of the Mountains Festival is at Davis Valley Winery this upcoming weekend. The Town received eight complimentary tickets for the three day festival if any councilmember is interested in attending.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The bills were read and approved for June 24, 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.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Vice-Mayor Crigger.

Mayor

Clerk