

The Rural Retreat Town Council held a regular scheduled meeting on August 11, 2009, 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

ABSENT

There were no members absent.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Raymond Matney, Town Manager
Lori Guynn, Clerk/Treasurer
Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

OTHERS PRESENT

Chuck Sullins, Jack Weaver, Wilma Justus, Peggy Hash, Grace Mecimore and June Judd

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Rev. Ed Schaack.

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 July 28, 2009 regular meeting as written. The motion passed by a vote of four (4) for: Dale Yontz, Jerrell Hall, Ed Schaack, Scott Mecimore; zero (0) against and one (1) abstention: Keith Crigger.

CITIZEN'S TIME

Peggy Hash addressed the Council and expressed her interest in the vacant Council seat. Mrs. Hash stated she has resided in Rural Retreat for 49 years and during that time she has been involved in the community through various clubs and organizations. Currently, she serves as the

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Chairperson of the Rural Retreat Volunteer Emergency Services Board of Directors and is a member of the Rural Retreat Planning Commission. Mrs. Hash further stated she wants to see Rural Retreat grow and remain a safe community.

Wilma Justus addressed the Council to also express her interest in the vacant seat. Mrs. Justus explained she is a Wythe County native and has resided in Rural Retreat for seven years. She stated she is the only person of the four nominated to run for a council seat during the past election. She stated she is interested in seeing Rural Retreat grow but wants to see the town focus on the values and principals our founding fathers put forth.

Mayor Litz commented the appointment to the vacant seat will be discussed during unfinished business.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Matney read a thank you card from Gerald Musser thanking the town for giving him a retirement dinner and for purchasing his uniforms.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell explained his July activity report. He added he is investigating the vandalism to the Rural Retreat Community Center Pavilion and Dr. Pepper Stage.

Vice-Mayor Crigger asked if it was possible to place a tarp over the front of the stage to protect the interior from weather damage. He added vandals will cut the tarp but it would aid in protecting the stage. Mr. Matney stated he thought the idea of putting up a night light inside the stage would also help deter vandalism.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

APPOINTMENT TO VACATED COUNCIL SEAT – Councilmember Mecimore made a motion to nominate Peggy Hash to the vacated council seat. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hall. Councilmember Mecimore commented Mrs. Hash would do a great job because she knows the town and the people. He added she would be a benefit to the Council. Councilmember Hall stated he felt that the Council couldn't go wrong with any of the candidates but it is a tough decision. Mayor Litz stated he asked the citizens to support the person they would like to have appointed and by doing so he had received several calls asking for Mrs. Hash to be appointed. Vice-Mayor Crigger commented he thought Mrs. Hash had the background from serving on the Planning Commission. Council members Yontz and Schaack stated they received comments supporting Mrs. Hash. Councilmember Schaack added he received comments in support of Geary Jonas also. There being no more discussion, the motion to appoint Mrs. Hash passed by a vote of five (5) for and zero (0) against.

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Mr. Matney advised Mrs. Hash that she would need to take her oath of office at the Wythe County Circuit Court. He added he would contact Hayden Horney, Clerk of Court and Elizabeth Cook, Wythe County Registrar to notify them of Mrs. Hash's appointment.

Mr. Matney commented the Council will have to address Mrs. Hash's seat on the Planning Commission. The Town Code states only one member of the Town Council can serve on the Planning Commission. Councilmember Mecimore asked if the current appointments should be reviewed. Mr. Matney responded yes, it can be reviewed at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to be discussed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAY – Chairperson Yontz stated the committee met prior to the Council meeting to critique the 2009 festival and begin planning the festival for 2010. Chuck Sullins will now be serving as the co-chairperson. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 29, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Vice-Mayor Crigger stated he thought in order for the car show to be more successful, consideration should be given to giving away prizes. He explained there were three other car shows the same day as Heritage Day and there should be more incentive for potential participants to drive past those shows to attend ours. Councilmember Mecimore asked if money should be offered. Vice-Mayor Crigger responded he wasn't sure but when reviewing the budget for the festival it should be taken into consideration or consider finding corporate sponsors.

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:

SMYTH COUNTY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL – Smyth County Community Hospital is making plans to build a new medical facility beside of the current building on West Lee Highway. SCCH is looking for a temporary facility or property to locate a pre-fabricated building in order to establish the new doctor in the area prior to the new building being constructed. Mr. Matney asked for suggestions from the Council on potential locations that can be provided to SCCH.

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT – Work is continuing on obtaining easements and right-of-ways from property owners; however some owners impacted by this project have requested consideration for the easement or right-of-way. Mr. Matney explained in the past, previous councils have not purchased right-of-ways and easements for utility construction. There has been the general consensus that an improved utility improves property value and fire protection and flows. He asked the Council if they were interested in offering financial consideration to

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acquire easements. Mr. Matney stated if a property owner is not willing to give the easement to the town then the property can be taken by condemnation. He added with utilities such as a water/sewer line, once the petition is filed with the court it becomes a quick claim and the town takes possession of the property and the project can proceed. The town attorney can then complete the final title opinion.

Vice-Mayor Crigger asked if existing water service is on these properties. Mr. Matney responded some have water on the property. As the project proceeds, he stated he may be coming back to the council to ask if they would be interested in waiving connection fees for new customers to encourage individuals to connect to the system. Councilmember Mecimore asked how many properties owners are asking for compensation. Mr. Matney responded there are five, four are on Milk Plant Road and one on Rural Retreat Lake Road. He added one owner asked for \$400 and another asked for \$2,000.

Vice-Mayor Crigger asked who the property owners are since it is public knowledge. Mr. Matney responded Delp, Vance, Simmons and Hall on Milk Plant Road and Lovelace on Rural Retreat Lake Road. Councilmember Mecimore asked how many property owners are affected by this project. Mr. Matney stated approximately 30-35 properties. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked if these properties currently have water service. Two of the four properties on Milk Plant Road have residential service and the other two are undeveloped properties, Mr. Matney explained. Vice-Mayor Crigger then made a motion to authorize the town's administration to proceed with acquiring the utility easements and right-of-ways as deemed necessary to construct a water line. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hall and passed by a vote of five (5) for and zero (0) against.

IN-TOWN WATER PROJECT – Anderson & Associates, Inc. is currently conducting the surveying for this project. Most of the work should take place in the existing VDOT right-of-way so very few easements will be needed.

FIRE DEPARTMENT BRUSH TRUCK (1988 FORD UNIT) – This truck will be replaced on fire calls by the wetlands/brush truck that is being purchased. The department members intend to keep the 1988 unit to use while providing services at Wythe Raceway on Saturday nights however, the tank has rusted. The tank has been ordered with a cost of \$4,000 which includes the skids. The rails and pump are being salvaged. Mr. Matney stated he felt it is beneficial to replace this tank because the town's maintenance crew uses the truck to flush water lines upon completing repairs in addition to the fire department's use for various activities.

FIRE DEPARTMENT WETLAND/BRUSH TRUCK – The new Wetland/Brush truck chassis has been built and is in Kentucky. The title work will be completed on this truck prior to the next council meeting. The truck will be titled to the Rural Retreat Fire Department and the Town of Rural Retreat. There will be a Rural Development lien on the truck until it is paid off.

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Vice-Mayor Crigger asked how the other fire trucks were titled. Mr. Matney responded all trucks are titled the same way because the trucks are insured by the town through Virginia Municipal League.

WATER LINE BREAKAGE – A six inch water line broke in front of the former Rural Retreat Pentecostal Holiness Church building which is now Full Gospel Triumphant Pentecostal Holiness Church on Saturday, August 8. The line broke and filled the church basement with six inches of water. Mr. Matney explained he met with the pastor of the church concerning the damage. The estimated damage was \$1,200. He added the claim can be filed against the town's no fault liability policy with Virginia Municipal League.

JOINT GOVERNMENTAL BODIES MEETING – The next Joint Governmental Bodies meeting will be held on Monday, August 31, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the Wytheville Meeting Center. The meeting will be hosted by the Town of Wytheville.

Mayor Litz asked if the Water Consolidation Study should be added to the agenda for discussion. Mr. Matney said yes because items with the uncompleted preliminary engineering report and the application for funding need to be explained.

AUDIBLE WARNING SYSTEM – Former Police Chief Bob Lewis has been asked by Mr. Matney to review the specifications needed on the audible warning system. The specifications will be written and put out for bid requests in the near future.

TEA-21 SIDEWALK/BIKEWAY PROJECT – We are waiting on the certifications from VDOT before bidding instructions can be requested. There is an issue with the deposition of real estate by a church that needs to be resolved. Town Attorney Sobey is out of town and will be returning soon. When he returns, Mr. Matney stated he hoped to resolve this issue.

STREET PAVING SUGGESTIONS – Mr. Matney asked the Council for suggestions on street paving. He suggested the following locations be overlaid: West Railroad Avenue from Church Street to Miller Street, Miller Street from the railroad tracks to Richmond Avenue and Frye Avenue. Mr. Matney suggested Miller Street be widened at the same time it is paved.

DR. PEPPER STAGE CONSTRUCTION COST – Dr. Pepper Corporation donated \$5,000 toward the construction of the Dr. Pepper Stage. The full cost to construct the stage was \$9,600 therefore the town's expense was \$4,600. Mr. Matney explained Rural Retreat Electrical Service and Topclad donated labor toward the construction that totaled \$7,300. He commended Jerrell Hall, owner of Topclad for donating 291.5 hours of labor. Mr. Matney added there were many individuals that donated their time to the stage construction but it was difficult to place a dollar amount on their time.

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TREASURER’S REPORT

The bills for August 11, 2009 were read and approved.

Mrs. Guynn informed the Council member that the first part of the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year Audit will begin on Monday, August 17.

TALK OF THE TOWN

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mayor

Clerk