

The Rural Retreat Town Council held a regular scheduled meeting on September 22, 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
Peggy Hash

ABSENT

There were no members absent.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Rev. Ruthanne Henley – Rural Retreat Methodist Church Circuit
Michelle Richmond

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Rev. Ruthanne Henley.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Litz.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilmember Hall commented the minutes stated he was present at the previous meeting, however he was absent.

Following the correction to the minutes, a motion was made by Councilmember Dale Yontz, seconded by Councilmember Peggy Hash to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2009 regular meeting as written. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Dale Yontz,

Peggy Hash, Keith Crigger, Ed Schaack, Scott Mecimore; zero (0) against and one (1) abstention: Jerrell Hall

CITIZEN'S TIME

Those present did not wish to address the Council at this time.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to be shared.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell explained September had been a busy month. He added he is still investigating the breaking and entering that occurred on South Main Street and a reported larceny. Chief Mitchell stated he is also assisting the Wytheville Police Department on a fraud investigation.

Chief Mitchell addressed the Council concerning issues with residential 911 addresses. He explained he is finding the 911 addresses are not being displayed in a manner that is visible from the streets. This is especially a problem when emergency personnel are responding to calls and they are only given the 911 address and a house does not have the numbers displayed in a visible place. Chief Mitchell gave examples of locations that do not have visible addresses. He commented he felt the solution would be to contact owners that lack proper display of 911 addresses.

Mayor Litz asked Mr. Matney if letters should be sent to the property owners to notify them of this problem. Mr. Matney explained he had suggested to Chief Mitchell as he notices these deficiencies to speak to the owners then and explain to them why the numbers are needed and suggest to them a better location to place them.

Vice-Mayor Crigger asked what the language in the town ordinance stated about 911 addresses. Mr. Matney responded the address must be posted to the left side of the front door but the numbers must be visible from the street. Councilmember Mecimore suggested the Rural Retreat Volunteer Fire Department, as a possible fundraiser, sell the reflective 911 address signs to assist the citizens.

Mayor Litz asked that this item remain under unfinished business for further discussion.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

HIRING OF AN ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER – Personnel Committee Chairman Schaack commented on various items throughout the draft Assistant Town Manager position description. He added on page three there was a typing error that stated “stays abreast of courses of actions of

other localities and planning activities relative to the Town of Wytheville's activities" which Wytheville should be changed to Rural Retreat.

Chairman Schaack made a motion to adopt the draft Assistant Town Manager position description with the noted correction. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mecimore. Chairman Schaack stated the description is for an Assistant Town Manager not a Town Manager trainee. He added he felt when the time comes the Council will need to make a decision whether or not the position will be permanent. Councilmember Mecimore asked if anyone received feedback after the article was published in the *Wytheville Enterprise*. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated the comments he received was people thought it was a good idea especially to begin a training process. He added the main question was if that person would get the Town Manager position upon Mr. Matney's retirement. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated he felt it should not be assumed the person would automatically move up.

Mr. Matney commented the Council should consider whether or not the Assistant Town Manager will be a trainee and take over the Town Manager position or become a permanent position. He added if an assistant is hired as a short term position and does not become Town Manager then the pool of applicants will be small. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked Mr. Matney if the town needs both positions. Mr. Matney responded he is unsure at this point.

Councilmember Mecimore asked when the salary for this position should be discussed. Mr. Matney stated Virginia Municipal League could be contacted and asked to assist with obtaining salaries from localities with a population of 3,500 or less.

There being no additional discussion, the motion passed by a vote of six (6) for and zero (0) against.

GOLF CARTS ON TOWN STREETS – Mr. Matney stated he had not researched this anymore because of his conversations with Chief Mitchell. He added the units sold by the Huff dealerships are regulated through the Department of Motor Vehicles and is not a town issue. These units are authorized on streets with 35 mph speed limits or less.

LEGALIZING TOWN SEAL – Town Attorney Sobey is continuing to work on this. This item is to remain as unfinished business.

RURAL RETREAT TRAIN DEPOT – Councilmember Mecimore asked for an update on the amount of money spent in legal fees toward the Rural Retreat Train Depot because he had been given an expense report by the defense. Mr. Matney responded approximately \$1,500 to date. He asked Councilmember Mecimore if he knew for a fact how much had been spent. Councilmember Mecimore stated he had a written report with Mr. Weaver's signature that reflected \$56,000 had been spent to date.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Schaack stated discussion had been held in the recent Planning Commission meeting about ways to communicate with citizens to let them know what is happening in the town. He commented that communications was lost when Porter Sage quit taping the meetings. Councilmember Mecimore commented that some localities are using Facebook and Twitter. Mayor Litz commented the *Talk of the Town* radio program does some of this but doesn't reach everyone.

Councilmember Schaack added the Wythe County Board Room has a television screen that scrolls with agenda items as they are being discussed. Councilmember Schaack added he felt this was not needed for Rural Retreat but he would like for extra agenda copies be made available for those present so the individuals can follow along with the meeting. Mr. Matney explained when the addition for the Council Chambers was built there were places included to accommodate the installation of cameras.

Councilmember Mecimore explained a small digital camcorder can be purchased for less than \$200.00 and a tripod would be needed. This would allow the meetings to be recorded and then placed on Rural Retreat Cable T.V. and on the town's website for online streaming. He added people are no longer using cable or satellite services to watch television because with high speed internet services people are watching television shows online. Following additional discussion, the consensus was to allow Councilmember Mecimore to look into this more.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAY – Chairman Yontz explained a meeting was held prior to the council meeting. Those present discussed choosing a Citizen of the Year, the entertainment lineup and a theme for the 2010 festival. Chairman Yontz stated the next meeting will be held prior to the first council meeting in January.

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:

PROPOSALS FOR TEA-21 APPLICATIONS – The December 1, 2009 deadline is approaching and a decision must be made on applying for funding through the enhancement program for the restoration of the Rural Retreat Train Depot. Proposals have been received from Anderson and Associates and The Lane Group to prepare an application for the total project. Anderson and Associates proposed \$9,500 for the application preparation fee and will involve Spectrum which has been involved in other depot restoration projects. The Lane Group proposed \$3,500 and includes the work of Jody Gibson whom designed the Town Hall renovations. Mayor Litz added the difference is The Lane Group employees an architect and Anderson and Associates does not.

Councilmember Mecimore asked if the money spent for the funding application would be lost if the depot is not obtained. Mr. Matney responded the issue to be decided is if the procedures were legal or illegal. He added if the judge determines it was illegal then it would be the Council's decision whether or not to re-file the suit. Mr. Matney further commented the enhancement program is going away from depot projects and he felt the Council would have to move forward in good faith in anticipation that ownership will be obtained.

Vice-Mayor Crigger made a motion to acquire services from The Lane Group for the preparation of an enhancement application for the depot restoration. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schaack and passed by a vote of six (6) for and zero (0) against.

Mr. Matney asked the Council members if they would be interested in filing a second application for additional sidewalk projects. This would become phase seven and could include sidewalks on the south side of East Buck Avenue from North Greever Street to the Rural Retreat High School Agricultural Building and on Evergreen Avenue from North Greever Street to the Rural Retreat High School parking lot. He added this would complete the original plan that a previous council had begun.

Councilmember Hall made a motion to apply for additional funding for phase seven of the TEA-21 Sidewalk/Bikeway Project to include sidewalks to the Rural Retreat High School facilities. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mecimore.

Councilmember Mecimore asked where the next sidewalk project would begin upon completion of the proposed phase seven. Mr. Matney responded by stating the Council would need to decide on a location and then pursue funding.

There being no additional discussion the motion passed by a vote of six (6) for and zero (0) against.

TEA-21 SIDEWALK PROJECT – The current TEA-21 Sidewalk Project is being held up while waiting for a petition on behalf of the Rural Retreat Baptist Church to be filed in Circuit Court. Written minutes are needed from a meeting with the Board of Trustees and the church pastor, who is out of town for several weeks, reflecting the church is donating the necessary easements to the town. Upon this being completed, the project will be ready to be put out for bid.

RURAL RETREAT FIRE DEPARTMENT – The Rural Retreat Fire Department Wetland/Brush truck cab and chassis was delivered to Vest's Sales and Service on Friday. The new tank installation has been completed on the 1988 brush truck which will prolong the service life of this vehicle.

Mr. Matney added the fire department had received a \$3,000 donation from the Smyth County Board of Supervisors. He further explained he sent a letter of appreciation on behalf of the Council to the Board of Supervisors for the donation.

AEP RATE INCREASE REQUEST – AEP has requested an additional 17.1% rate increase.

VDH PLANNING GRANT – PHILLIPPI SPRING #1 – Contact has been made with Dale Kitchens with the Virginia Department of Health to inquire about applying the remaining \$7,600 from the Phillippi Spring #1 project to the Phillippi Spring #2 or Staley Spring projects. Mr. Kitchens responded he did not foresee a problem in doing this because the money will be used to complete other on going projects to benefit the citizens of Rural Retreat.

A representative from Virginia Rural Water Association has contacted Mr. Matney and explained they had received Economic Recovery money which is still being channeled through USDA Rural Development. The representative and Mr. Matney discussed the development of Staley Spring to connect with Smyth County in which the representative felt would be fundable with this money.

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT – The necessary easements have been sent to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for approval but have not been received back. Upon receiving the easements, this project will ready to move forward. There are some outstanding easements that have not been signed but the property can be obtained through eminent domain.

The plans for the Gienow to Rural Retreat Elementary School project have been submitted to the Virginia Department of Health to be included in the out-of-town distribution project. This line construction will provide better fire protection services to Rural Retreat Elementary School and will provide an alternate water supply to the Staley Crossroads area customers.

OFF PREMISE BUSINESS SIGNS – A sample of the proposed off premises signs was shown to the council members. The signs will be two sided white signs with colored lettering and a directional arrow for each business. Business signs will have blue lettering, red lettering will represent civic organizations and churches will have green lettering. The sign posts will be 4x4 treated posts with white post sleeves.

Michelle Richmond commented that she had previously placed temporary signs at Parkway Gas and Mr. Matney notified her and explained the sign was illegal so she removed it. Ms. Richmond added she lost business when she had to remove the sign because people thought she had gone out of business.

RURAL RETREAT VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICE – The RRVES annual financial information was distributed for review.

WATER ACCOUNTABILITY – There have been several leaks repaired to aid in water accountability. The amount of water being pumped has decreased 200,000-230,000 gallons daily for the month of September. This is a decrease from 300,000-400,000 daily.

COMMUNITY WARNING SYSTEM – The specifications for an Audible Warning System have been finalized and are now being reviewed by USDA Rural Development in Richmond.

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Upon their approval, this system will be advertised for bid. The two-way control will be bid as an option.

WATER CONNECTION REQUEST – A request was received for a water connection at the Thomas Vernon property on Four Seasons Road. This area is served by a six inch water line. Mr. Matney recommended this connection be approved.

Vice-Mayor Crigger made a motion to approve the water connection request for the Thomas Vernon property on Four Seasons Road. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Yontz and was approved by a vote of six (6) for and zero (0) against.

NEW TOWN BUSINESS – Mr. Matney informed the council members that Blue Ridge Chiropractic has opened their Rural Retreat office at 417 South Main Street. He encouraged the members to visit this facility as their time allows to introduce themselves. Mrs. Hash stated a grand opening will be held in the coming weeks. She added the Council had received a complaint for not attending the opening of Blue Ridge Family Practice. Mr. Matney responded the town was not notified of their open house.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The bills for September 22, 2009 were read and approved.

TALK OF THE TOWN

Chief Mitchell is to attend the *Talk of the Town* radio program at the WYVE/WXBX radio station on Wednesday morning.

ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjourning, Mayor Litz thanked Vice-Mayor Crigger for conducting the last council meeting in his absence.

There being no additional business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Councilmember Mecimore and was duly seconded and approved.

Mayor

Clerk

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