

The Rural Retreat Town Council held a regular scheduled meeting on October 27, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the Rural Retreat Town Hall Council Chambers.

PRESENT RURAL RETREAT TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Timothy Litz
Ed Schaack
Dale Yontz

Jerrell Hall
Peggy Hash

ABSENT

Vice-Mayor Keith Crigger
Scott Mecimore

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Lori Guynn, Clerk/Treasurer
Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

ABSENT

Raymond Matney, Town Manager

OTHERS PRESENT

Rev. Gary Houseman – Berea Christian Church
Bob Lewis
Roger Shields

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Rev. Gary Houseman.

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 Peggy Hash to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2009 regular meeting as written. The motion passed by a vote of four (4) for: Dale Yontz, Peggy Hash, Ed Schaack, Jerrell Hall and zero (0) against.

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CITIZEN'S TIME

Roger Shields addressed the Council concerning the Pepper 5K Run. He explained he had a friend from Kenya, whom is an Olympic qualifier, participating in the race. Mr. Shields continued by stating his friend encountered problems with traffic because the course was not closed and there was no signage warning drivers and participants of each other. He stated the participant was not directed properly at various intersections by the race personnel. Mr. Shields suggested an apology be issued to his friend and the event sponsors not be allowed to conduct another race. He added his friend enjoyed the race course but he was concerned about the safety of participants.

Councilmember Hash asked how many years this race had been held and if this was the first time there had not been any signage. Mr. Shields responded this was the fifth year. Councilmember Yontz asked former Police Chief Bob Lewis if there had been signage at the crossroads area in the past for the race. Mr. Lewis responded yes. Mayor Litz asked Mr. Lewis if he would like to add any comments. Mr. Lewis stated previously there has always been concern for the participants on Main Street/Route 90 but he felt the sponsors have not been as concerned. Councilmember Yontz asked Mr. Lewis what his opinion was of the safety for the participants in the past. Mr. Lewis responded he has felt it was dangerous especially at the intersections of North Main Street/Gienow Road and North Main Street/Chinquapin Avenue because on occasion the people working the intersections have known what to do and others haven't.

Councilmember Hash asked Mr. Lewis for the route of the run. Mr. Lewis explained the route in the past which was verified by Police Chief Mitchell as being the current route. Mayor Litz asked Chief Mitchell if special instructions were given to him for the race. Chief Mitchell responded he was asked to contact Norfolk Southern to request trains be held for approximately 30 minutes and the Wythe County Sheriff's Office for assistance at the intersection of North Main Street/Gienow Road because he works North Main Street/East Railroad Avenue intersection. Mayor Litz stated all information will be taken into consideration and Ms. Jayne Hall with the Rural Retreat Historical Society will be contacted to ensure all concerns are addressed.

Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Shields for presenting his concerns to the Council.

Bob Lewis stated he had read the minutes of the September 22, 2009 meeting online and had comments, questions and concerns. Mr. Lewis stated at this meeting Councilmember Schaack had expressed concern about getting information to the citizens of Rural Retreat because communications was lost when Porter Sage quit coming to the meetings. Mr. Lewis asked the councilmember's if they had ever asked Mr. Sage why he quit attending the meeting, if not then they should do so on an individual basis. Mayor Litz commented he has asked Mr. Sage to come back but he has not done so. Mr. Lewis added Councilmember Mecimore had commented some localities are using Facebook and Twitter to communicate with citizens. He stated he could probably walk down Buck Avenue or any other street in town and nine of ten people would not

know what Facebook and Twitter are. Mr. Lewis' opinion was this would be a waste of the town personnel's time.

Mr. Lewis continued by stating Councilmember Mecimore had stated people are no longer using cable and satellite services to watch television because with high speed internet services people are watching shows online. Mr. Lewis said this was not true. He had spoken to Mr. Sage earlier in the day and there are currently 375 cable customers in the town and he had personally counted the satellites in town which was 202. People in Rural Retreat are still getting their television service through cable and satellite service, he added. Mr. Lewis stated he had called the towns of Wytheville, Marion, Saltville, Abingdon and Big Stone Gap to inquire if their meetings were placed on television in which none are. Mr. Lewis' opinion was if citizens aren't concerned about what is happening in the town then it was their own fault because they should be attending the meeting to find out. The newspaper used to cover the meetings but they also quit because there wasn't anything happening he added.

Councilmember Yontz asked Mr. Lewis if he was not a former employee and was watching television and one of the town's meetings was on and the discussion was about TEA-21 funding would he know what was being discussed. Mr. Lewis responded he would not have a clue. Councilmember Yontz explained citizens seem to only attend the meetings when they have a concern. Mr. Lewis stated most citizens are only concerned if there is a problem with the water coming into and going out of their home and the being trash picked up unless an issue specifically impacts them.

Mr. Lewis commented no offense to Councilmember Schaack but he felt if the citizens want to know then they should ask. Councilmember Schaack disagreed with Mr. Lewis and explained he felt the meetings weren't watched until there was a controversial issue because it was a quick way for citizens to find out what was going on. He further explained he felt it would be worth the price for the public to know.

Mayor Litz thanked Mr. Lewis for addressing the council about his concerns.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell stated he is currently working on two larceny investigations.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

APPOINTMENT TO PLANNING COMMISSION – Councilmember Schaack suggested discussing the planning commission vacancy at the next meeting in hopes of having a full council present.

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Mayor Litz asked for this item to remain as unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business offered for discussion.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PERSONNEL – Chairman Schaack stated the Personnel Committee will be conducting a work session with the full Council following the conclusion of the meeting to discuss the Town Manager/Assistant Town Manager position.

Mr. Lewis asked Mayor Litz if he could comment on this item in which Mayor Litz agreed. Mr. Lewis stated he had requested a copy of the Assistant Town Manager position description. He explained there was a lot of redundancy in the document. He asked Mayor Litz if the person hired would become the town manager. Mayor Litz responded that had not been decided. Mr. Lewis commented if the person will not be replacing Mr. Matney upon retirement then why is the position needed. Councilmember Schaack responded it is not known if the position is needed or not.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Town Manager's report is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes. No action was taken on the items discussed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The bills for October 27, 2009 were read and approved.

TALK OF THE TOWN

No councilmember was available 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 Hash and was duly seconded and approved.

Mayor

Clerk

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

27 OCT 09

Norfolk Southern

As you are probably aware, the railroad is in the process of major renovations to the tracks and crossings in Rural Retreat. Be advised that traffic patterns will be compromised during this work including detours.

Wythe / Bland Foundation

We have been notified that the Foundation has approved the request for a planning grant (\$30,000) for the wellness / fitness study. As soon as we receive the letter of award we will meet with Wythe County to determine the plan of action.

TEA-21 Sidewalk Project

The Rural Retreat Baptist Church has held their congregational and trustees meetings. We have received a copy of their meeting minutes and we will file the petition with the court and request final certificate of right-of-ways from VDOT. This is the last item we need before receiving authorization to advertise for bids.

TEA-21 Application - Depot Project

We need to continue to discuss possible uses for the depot. Any and all uses that can be tied directly with transportation will score high in the application process. We will be meeting with the Lane Group tomorrow for a progress meeting. Just as a reminder, the public hearing for the TEA-21 application is scheduled for Nov 10th.

VDH Planning Project - Phillippi Spring # 1

As previously reported, this project has been completed with the recommendation to not pursue trying to capture additional water from the collection basin. Due to plans and specifications not being necessary, only \$16,926.19 of the \$25,000 grant was used. Reimbursement has been requested and received for the \$16,926.19. The request to transfer the balance of funds in the amount of \$8,073.81 from the Phillippi Spring #1 project to Phillippi Spring #2 project was approved. With this additional amount of funding we should be able to complete the plans and specifications as well as the additional required monitoring.

VDH Planning Project - Staley Spring

This project has been completed and we will request reimbursement as soon as we receive all outstanding invoices.

VDH Planning Project - Gienow to RRES

This project has been completed and with the approved plans and specifications we will include this water line extension in the Out-of-Town water project. Reimbursement will be requested as soon as we receive all out standing invoices.

Out-of-Town Water Project

We are finally making some progress with DGIF. However, we are still trying to satisfy concerns on part of the Division of Real Estate Services.

Off Site Business Signs

The first sign has been installed at the intersection of North Main Street and East Buck Avenue. Although we have received several compliments about the new sign we have not had many businesses express interest. The second sign will be installed at the intersection of South Main Street and East Baumgardner Avenue. A third sign is planned for the intersection of North Main Street and East Railroad Avenue if any interest is expressed.

Term Contract for Professional Engineering Services

RFP for the Term Contract for Professional Services is being advertised with a deadline to submit by November 10th. Proposals will be ranked and negotiations will be conducted with the two top ranked firms. We have tried to comply with the federal procurement act for this contract in an effort to have the option of using the selected firm(s) on federally funded projects.

Community Wide Warning System

The RFP has been advertised for this system with a November 4th deadline. To date eight firms have requested the complete RFP. We do hope we will receive a proposal that will meet our needs as well as our budget.

Water Accountability

We have had decent improvement the past month due to the repair of several leaks; however, this month the production is beginning to increase again. We believe this will be the norm until we complete the water distribution projects. Keep in mind that maintaining the water distribution system will always be an ongoing project.

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