

The Rural Retreat Town Council held a regular scheduled meeting on May 25, 2010, 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**

No members were absent.

### **ADMINISTRATION PRESENT**

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

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

Wilma Justus and daughter, Jack Weaver, Bob Lewis, Grace Mecimore  
Roger Crigger – Rural Retreat Pentecostal Holiness Church

### **DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

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

### **INVOCATION**

The invocation was given by Rev. Roger Crigger.

### **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 Peggy Hash to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2010 regular meeting as written. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for, zero (0) against and one (1) abstention: Dale Yontz due to his absence from the meeting.

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### **CITIZEN'S TIME**

Mr. Jack Weaver addressed the Council concerning the town's discussion of designating a historical district several years ago that would have included the depot area, Railroad Avenue, Baumgardner Avenue and possibly Parsonage Avenue. Mr. Weaver asked if it was possible to pursue this and stated he realized it was tied to redevelopment but it would help owners of historical buildings to be eligible for historical credits. Vice-Mayor Crigger commented he felt the residents in the proposed district thought their rights as a property owner would be infringed upon. He added most historical districts dictate the maintenance of property but it may be an issue of educating the owners. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated from the comments he heard at the time this was being discussed most owners felt this way. Mr. Weaver explained if houses or buildings are designated as historical sites then this would apply but if a historical district is formed the town would be saying the area is historical. Vice-Mayor Crigger added this may be something to look at but the most important thing is educating the people. Councilmember Mecimore explained the town would have to adopt ordinances to regulate a historical district if they choose and he referred to the town of Abingdon's ordinances. He added he thought the town spent \$8,000 to develop this plan and it was voted down. Mr. Matney explained the town has previously conducted and paid for a historical district study which is available for review. He added he was unsure if there were different levels of a historical district because the town of Wytheville has an Architectural Review Board that must be consulted prior to working on property. Councilmember Schaack suggested the Planning Commission to review this proposal. Mr. Matney stated the Planning Commission could review the plan at their next meeting and report back to the Council. Mayor Litz asked that this item be added to unfinished business.

Ms. Wilma Justus addressed the Council concerning the depot and she distributed a handout which contained her suggestions for consideration on what to do with the building. She explained the town and Mr. Weaver has spent a lot of money but the railroad still owns the land. Ms. Justus suggested the town work with the railroad to help Mr. Weaver get the land so the depot can be restored. She also addressed the town proceeding with closing a railroad crossing in order to help Mr. Weaver. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked Ms. Justus if she was aware which crossing was being discussed for closure. Ms. Justus replied it was her understanding it was the crossing beside the depot. Vice-Mayor Crigger informed Ms. Justus that particular crossing can not be closed due to emergency personnel accessing that area of town. Mr. Weaver added the discussion was to close the Miller Street crossing. Ms. Justus stated she had misunderstood which crossing was agreed upon. Mayor Litz commented the issue with the depot is not a closed subject because everyone wants input. He continued by stating if the town had the property there are some things that would have never been done. Mayor Litz stated the railroad is almost impossible to work with and because of this the town asked a Congressman to write a letter to them on the town's behalf. He added the answer is always no. Mr. Matney commented the town has previously contacted the railroad on Mr. Weaver's behalf. Ms. Justus stated citizens want to see something done and a petition may need to be started to send to the railroad or ask the citizens to call them. Mr. Weaver responded to the discussion by stating he is looking at three to four options on the depot and he had spoken to an assistant in Congressman Boucher's office and was told Congressman Boucher was writing a letter to Mr. Norman asking the railroad to help.

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Ms. Justus added she would be willing to knock on doors to get signatures on a petition. She stated the main lesson learned was don't buy anything you don't own the land too. Mr. Bob Lewis commented and stated it might be nice if the depot is fixed up and it might be nice if the town was involved but he felt the opinions of people in the Rural Retreat community should not be a factor because this was a town issue only.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence to be shared.

### **POLICE REPORT**

Chief Mitchell explained the activity for May has increased. He added he is working a larceny investigation in which the same business has been hit twice in the same week. Chief Mitchell is working with the Smyth County Sheriff's Office on this investigation. He continued by stating he is running radar on each shift and is issuing warnings. Dog complaints are being investigated and issues with Wythe County Animal Control are being resolved.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business to be discussed.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business offered for discussion at this time.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**FINANCE** – Chairman Crigger stated the council members received a copy of the proposed budget at the previous meeting. He asked for questions and/or comments. There being none he stated he was confident in proceeding with advertising for a public hearing. Mayor Litz commented the town is operating in a fiscally responsible manner. Mr. Matney added the town was doing so without tapping into reserve funds. Councilmember Mecimore asked Mr. Matney if there would be any tax increases. Mr. Matney responded there would be no tax increases, but there would be a slight increase in the water and sewer rates as has been done over previous years. The public hearing will be scheduled for June 22, 2010.

**PERSONNEL** – Chairman Schaack stated the committee will meet after the regular meeting to discuss the town manager profile that was distributed at a previous meeting.

**HERITAGE DAY** – Chairman Yontz reported Councilmember Hash will be visiting local businesses seeking sponsorships for entertainment. In order to increase traffic at the Community Center, the Hefty show car will be placed there and vendors will be allowed to set up inside the building if they prefer. The next committee meeting will be June 8, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

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### **TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT**

The Town Manager’s report is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes. The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

**TEA-21 SIDEWALK/BIKEWAY PROJECT** – We received four bids for TEA-21 Sidewalk/Bikeway Project. The bids ranged from \$1,333,045.50 down to \$787,037 which was submitted by Elk Knob, Inc. A resolution recognizing Elk Knob, Inc. as the lowest bidder and recommending awarding them the contract must be adopted. Vice-Mayor Crigger made a motion to adopt the resolution awarding the contract to Elk Knob, Inc for the TEA-21 Sidewalk/Bikeway Project. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Yontz. Councilmember Mecimore asked Mr. Matney if he was comfortable working with this contractor and if they had done work for the town previously. Mr. Matney responded yes he was comfortable with them because they have done work for us before under a different name. There being no additional discussion the motion passed by a vote of six (6) for and zero (0) against.

Mr. Matney added since the last meeting, VDOT has awarded the town an additional \$200,000 for the TEA-21 Project. Mayor Litz asked how much grant money had been received. Mr. Matney responded \$1.6 million has been awarded over the past ten years.

Mr. Matney addressed the tree trimming taking place in town. He explained some trimming has been in conjunction to the sidewalk/bikeway project but AEP is also trimming trees back from the power lines.

**1920 TRAIN WRECK PICTURE** – Last week Rudolph Viers from Radford visited the town hall and gave the town a picture of the 1920 train wreck. Mr. Viers had explained a family member was the conductor on one of the trains and had survived the wreck. Mr. Viers’ wife encouraged him to give the picture to the town after he had a dream about the wreck the night before. Mr. Matney stated he would be writing a letter on the Council’s behalf to be sent to Mr. Viers thanking him for giving the picture to the town. He added he would like to have a plaque made to put with the picture and hang both in the Council Chambers.

**IN-TOWN WATER PROJECT** – A Resolution of Governing Body must to be adopted authorizing the Mayor or Town Manager to execute documents on behalf of the town for the in-town water project. Councilmember Mecimore made a motion to adopt the Resolution of Governing Body authorizing Mayor Litz or Town Manager Matney to execute documents on the town’s behalf. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Yontz and passed by a vote of six (6) for and zero (0) against.

A Loan Resolution must be adopted for USDA Rural Development for a loan amount of \$734,000. A motion was made by Councilmember Schaack and seconded by Councilmember Hash to adopt the USDA Rural Development Loan Resolution for \$734,000. The motion passed by a vote of six (6) for and zero (0) against.

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**OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT** – A preconstruction conference should be held within the next two weeks on division I and the additional bids A & B of this project. Rural Development has requested a PER on the division II project, Gienow Road to Rural Retreat Elementary School, be submitted for approval. DCI/Shires and Cross Pointe are to submit bonds to Rural Development for approval.

**COMMUNITY WARNING SYSTEM** – This system was tested on May 18<sup>th</sup> and the coverage was less than desired. Councilmember Mecimore asked how far away the tones were heard. Chief Mitchell responded he had gone to Southwestern Equipment and it couldn't be heard unless a person was listening for it. Mr. Lewis commented toward the end of testing the tones were on full volume. Chief Mitchell added the system was easier to be heard after doing so. Mr. Matney suggested possibly adding additional speakers or adding remote locations to the system. Mr. Weaver asked Mr. Matney what the cost was for remote locations. Mr. Matney responded he was unsure. Mr. Lewis added the system will test each Friday at noon and he commended the council for moving forward with the purchase of this system.

**VIRGINIA BICYCLING FEDERATION** – Approximately 10-12 bicyclists were at the town hall last Monday for refreshments and to learn more about Rural Retreat. The bicyclist took pictures and made a short video for future promotion of our community. Mr. Matney referred to information that was given to him on the Route 76 Bikeway. He added there is 570 miles of Route 76 in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Mr. Matney explained the current and former Pulaski County Administrators joined the group in Rural Retreat and were riding a two person bicycle back to Pulaski.

**MONTHLY STATUS REPORT** – The monthly status report from Anderson & Associates, Inc. is available for review. Councilmember Mecimore asked if progress had been made in getting the water and sewer information added to the GIS site. Mr. Matney responded he had not received a response. He explained the site contains the water and sewer lines and the manholes are available but seemed difficult to access. The water valves, meters and hydrants are not on the site. Mr. Matney stated the progress being made on this is addressed in the status report.

**VRS CHANGES** – Mr. Matney stated Mrs. Guynn and himself had attended a VRS workshop in Abingdon the previous week. Effective July 1, 2010, the Virginia Retirement System will be offering two plans to participants. Plan I will include employees hired prior to June 30, 2010 and Plan II will include those hired after July 1, 2010. Plan II states employees must pay their 5% employee contribution instead of the employer unless a resolution is adopted by the locality stating the employer will contribute between 0-5% on the employees behalf. Retirement eligibility requirements will also change July 1.

**DRAFT DROUGHT ORDINANCE AND CONTINGENCY PLAN** – A draft Drought Ordinance and Contingency Plan was distributed several weeks ago for review and needs to be adopted. This plan is part of the Regional Water Source Plan that is required by the Commonwealth of Virginia and dictates the measures the town would take in a drought situation. Vice-Mayor Crigger made a motion to adopt the Drought Ordinance and Contingency Plan as

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distributed. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mecimore. Following additional discussion the motion passed by a vote of six (6) for and zero (0) against.

**MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE** – The American Post 229 will be conducting a Memorial Day Service on Sunday, May 30, 2010 at 3:00 p.m. at the Veterans Monument. Mayor Litz will be participating in the service.

**WATER ACCOUNTABILITY** – Mr. Matney explained the accountability for April was low but he felt the prior month was incorrect. At this time accountability is stable but when the water projects get underway the numbers should improve.

Prior to continuing, Mr. Weaver stated Mr. Matney, Councilmember Mecimore and he would be attending a meeting with the Southwest Virginia Downtown Interchange in Abingdon the next day. Mr. Matney stated this program promotes tourism and he felt this would be an educational opportunity. He added, unfortunately, he would not be able to attend the meeting. Discussion continued on an upcoming meeting in June with representatives with The Crooked Road.

Mayor Litz asked Mr. Matney for an update on the water project with Smyth County. Mr. Matney explained he has been trying to get in touch with Travis Jackson with USDA Rural Development because he needs to be involved with this project. A notice with the intent to apply for funding will be published soon. Mr. Matney then explained Rural Development has changed their grant eligibility requirements which make it more difficult to obtain grant funding. The Wythe County Board of Supervisors will be sending a letter to the town on the out-of-town project referencing Myrtle Lane, Ridge Avenue and Rural Retreat Lake Road and mandatory water use. This letter should be available at the next meeting.

Mr. Lewis questioned Mr. Matney on fire department funding from Wythe County. Mr. Matney responded he attended a meeting earlier in the day and the Wythe County Fire Association understood there was funding in the budget for the Rural Retreat Volunteer Fire Department but the department was not included. He added there was confusion on what individuals received the budget. Mr. Matney said he commended Wythe County for providing quality apparatus to the fire and rescue departments excluding Rural Retreat. He asked if Rural Retreat would ever be included in the rotation for capital needs since Wytheville will receive a ladder truck. Wythe County's response was Rural Retreat is deserving if they have capital needs. Mr. Matney added he sent the debt service information for the brush/wetlands fire truck to Wythe County for review.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The bills for May 25, 2010 were read and approved.

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**TALK OF THE TOWN**

Councilmember Yontz was 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 Vice-Mayor Crigger and was duly seconded and approved.

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Mayor

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Clerk