

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY APRIL 28, 2026- 7:00 P.M.**

Mayor and Council Members Present: Tim Litz, Mayor, Dale Yontz, Vice-Mayor, James Lloyd, Geary Jonas, James P. “Sean” Viars, Alma Dunford, Bob Lewis

Council Members Absent: None

Administration Present: Jason Childers, Town Manager
Monica H. Patton Clerk/Treasurer

Administration Absent: Derek Breedlove, Police Chief

Others Present: Becky Harrison, Mike Jones

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

INVOCATION

Councilmember Jonas gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Litz led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz seconded by Councilmember Jonas to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2026, meeting. The motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Viars, Jonas, Lloyd, Lewis, Dunford, Yontz; zero (0) against.

CITIZEN’S TIME – None

CORRESPONDENCE – Treasurer Patton read a thank you note from Kay Corvin of the American Red Cross Blood Collection Program for the use of the Community Center.

Treasurer Patton read a thank you note from Billy Rice, Executive Director of the Presbyterian Children’s Home of the Highlands for the recent shredding event that the town hosted.

Treasurer Patton read a thank you note from Debbie Moody, Coordinator of the Wythe County Junior Appalachian Musicians for the contribution of \$2,000 from the town.

Councilmember Viars stated that he is appreciative of the town staff and council members that helped with the Shred-it event. Treasurer Patton reported that the town collected about half of a truck load which is around 3,500 pounds of paper.

POLICE REPORT – Town Manager Childers stated that Chief Breedlove spoke with the Wythe County Sheriffs Department and there have been minimal incidents in town while he has been out.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS –Electronic Sign – Councilmember Dunford asked Town Manager Childers for an update on the electronic sign that the Lions Club is interested in assisting with. He stated that he contacted Jerry's Signs in Abingdon, VA to get a quote for a LED sign to be installed between the brick columns on the current sign at the corner of Chinquapin Avenue and North Main Street. He mentioned that he needs to provide the sign company with measurements.

NEW BUSINESS – Councilmember Lewis stated that there is \$31,000 in the budget for capital outlays at the town shop to enclose a bay on the building. He stated that he thinks the town should add onto the existing shed instead of putting doors on the building. He mentioned that the downtown project took vital storage space for equipment that the maintenance department needs. Mike Jones stated that there is only room to add thirty feet to the building on the Miller Street side of the building. He added that the building is only 24 feet deep. To add onto the larger building, the gravel pile can be moved, and the building can be added onto because that building is deeper. A motion was made by Councilmember Lewis and seconded by Councilmember Lloyd to move the \$31,000 from the capital outlay item to enclose a bay of the shop to add onto the shop building for additional storage. Town Manager Childers stated that there are several pieces of equipment that was being stored in the downtown building that needs a place to be stored. The motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Lloyd, Jonas, Yontz, Viars, Dunford, Lewis; zero (0) against.

PAINTING FIRE STATION – Councilmember Lewis stated that the red paint on the fire station is beautiful. He stated that he had reservations about the color, but it turned out very nice. Councilmember Dunford suggested the letters be painted black.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS –Treasurer Patton explained that, per the Code of Virginia, localities may not retain personal property taxes on the books for more than five years. She recommended that the 2020 tax account in the amount of \$3,230.76 be written off. Treasurer Patton noted that some of the accounts involve deceased individuals as well as a business that has closed.

Treasurer Patton further reported delinquent utility billing accounts dating from 2018 to 2020 totaling \$4,754.14. These delinquent accounts include balances for deceased individuals and others that have been deemed uncollectable.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz and seconded by Councilmember Viars to approve the write-off of delinquent taxes in the amount of \$3,230.76 and delinquent utility bills in the amount of \$4,754.14. The motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Yontz, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Dunford, Lewis; zero (0) against.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – None

HERITAGE DAYS – Vice-Mayor Yontz reported that he has a phone call scheduled with the band to finalize everything. The company that provides the sound is satisfied with the stage and plans.

Town Manager Childers stated that he has a quote to replace the porches on stage, community center and caboose with composite decking and aluminum railing from the undesignated line item. The community center porch and the porch around the caboose will need to be in next year's budget.

Councilmember Lewis asked if the benches at the walking track behind the community center can be leveled. Mike Jones stated that there may need to be a concrete pad for each bench. There are three benches to be leveled. Town Manager Childers stated that he will contact the contractor to look into the issue.

Town Manager Childers stated that the playground contractor is working on a cost estimate to replace the playground at the community center.

MURAL PLANNING- Councilmember Lloyd reported that the committee met and the muralist will make a few changes to the initial plan. Town Manager Childers stated that the muralist is very passionate about this project. The mural will be painted before the porch roof is added to the building. Town Manager Childers stated the focus is to get the area above the porch painted then the lower section can be done later.

Mike Jones reported that the gazebo for the park will be delivered in two weeks.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Downtown Project – The concrete porch has been poured. The turf on the playground will be in place this week.

Flagpole – 40 feet with a 8 x 12 flag. M & M Construction will be able to install the flagpole. Councilmember Lewis inquired about lights for the flagpole. Town Manager Childers stated that lights will be installed on the flagpole or flush with the ground.

Pickleball Courts – A company in Princeton has done 350 of these in the past few years. The cheapest is asphalt with concrete being more expensive. Two asphalt courts with fencing would cost roughly \$100,000 and concrete will be roughly \$200,000. He stated that asphalt is more affordable, but it is not as durable as concrete. The asphalt and concrete will have to sit for 30 days before it can be striped. Town Manager Childers stated that he may be able get the local

concrete contractor to pour the concrete then this company will come in and do the striping and fencing.

Mayor Litz stated that he is concerned about the cost of the lights. He stated that it will be expensive to light the courts. Councilmember Lewis stated that the park will need to close by a certain time every day. Town Manager Childers suggested that the lights be placed on a timer. Councilmember Viars stated that the council will need to set times for the park to be open.

Water Plant – Town Manager Childers stated that he has been in touch with VDH, DEQ, and Lane Group regarding the samples that will need to be collected on the raw water from the Spring. The water plant at Phillippi had an issue and it was fixed and the tank levels have come back. The CIP cleaning should be finished by Thursday. The operators used approximately 56 gallons of muriatic acid before the cleaning. The acid lowers the ph levels to a safe level that can be sent into the stream.

Asphalt patching – The rescue squad parking lot needs to be repaved the asphalt is only about 1.5 inches thick. Pine Street will need to be paved next year.

Patching – Councilmember Lewis asked if VDOT has indicated when they will be in town to patch the streets. Town Manager Childers stated that Milk Plant Road will be resurfaced within the next couple of months. Mayor Litz asked what decision was made about W Baumgardner Avenue. Town Manager Childers stated that he gave the concerned citizen VDOT's Bristol office telephone number and requested that he contact them. Town Manager Childers stated that there are streets all over the town that need to be taken care of by VDOT.

Councilmember Viars asked to move the police sign to another location. Town Manager Childers stated that Chief Breedlove asked him to move the sign and he will take care of it.

Business License status – Town Manager Childers stated that he has been by the business several times and no one is ever there. The individual is still renting an office and is in business. He mentioned that the amount delinquent is not much.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The invoices for April 28, 2026, were read and approved.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no additional business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Councilmember Lewis. The motion was duly seconded and approved.

Mayor

Clerk