

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, JULY 14, 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, Bob Lewis, Alma Dunford

Council Members Absent: None

Administration Present: Jason Childers, Town Manager
Monica H. Patton Clerk/Treasurer
Derek Breedlove, Police Chief

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Jeff Butz, Brody Childers, Butch Childers, Brenda Childers, Kyle Ward, Trey Ward, Chad Trivitt, J. B. Wright, Chaz Penwright, Sr., Jake Rollyson, Hunter Rollyson, John Rollyson, Rhonda Rollyson, Erica Collins, Everly Wright, Kennedy Wright

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 Viars to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2026, meeting. The motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Jonas, Yontz, Lloyd, Viars, Dunford, Lewis; zero (0) against.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lewis and seconded by Councilmember Lloyd to approve the minutes of the June 30, 2026, special meeting. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Dunford, Lewis; abstain one (1) Yontz; zero (0) against.

RESOLUTIONS - Mayor Litz read the following resolutions.

TOWN OF RURAL RETREAT



RESOLUTION HONORING BRODY CHILDERS, CHAZ PENWRIGHT JR, JAKE ROLLYSON, AND TREY WARD OF THE RURAL RETREAT HIGH SCHOOL OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD

WHEREAS, Brody Childers, Chaz Penwright Jr, Jake Rollyson, and Trey Ward have distinguished themselves at Rural Retreat High School by excelling in outdoor track & field; and,

WHEREAS, This team advanced to compete in the the Virginia High School League's Group 1A State Championship on June 6th and 7th, 2026, at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia; and,

WHEREAS, These athletes captured the 2026 State Championship in the 4 x 100 Meter with a time of 43.09 seconds; and,

WHEREAS, Their dedication and devotion has brought honor and recognition to the Team, Rural Retreat High School, and to the Rural Retreat Community.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Retreat Town Council on this the 14th day of July 2026, does hereby recognize and congratulate the 4x 100 meter track team in recognition of their 2026 Virginia High School League Group 1A State Championship: and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be presented to these athletes, and a copy to be sent to Rural Retreat High School to be included in their permanent school records.

TOWN OF RURAL RETREAT



RESOLUTION HONORING TREY WARD RURAL RETREAT HIGH SCHOOL OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD

WHEREAS, Trey Ward has distinguished himself at Rural Retreat High School by excelling in outdoor track & field as a senior; and,

WHEREAS, Trey advanced to compete in the the Virginia High School League's Group 1A State Championship on June 6th and 7th, at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia; and,

WHEREAS, Trey captured the 2026 State Championship in the 200 Meter with a time of 22.66 seconds, and,

WHEREAS, Trey's dedication and devotion has brought honor and recognition to himself, Rural Retreat High School, and to the Rural Retreat Community.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Retreat Town Council on this the 14th day of July, 2026, does hereby recognize and congratulate Trey Ward in recognition of his 2026 Virginia High School League Group 1A State Championship: and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be presented to Trey Ward, and a copy to be sent to Rural Retreat High School to be included in his permanent school records.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lloyd and seconded Vice-Mayor Yontz to adopt the previously read resolutions. The motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Yontz, Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Dunford, Lewis; zero (0) against.

CITIZEN'S TIME – Jeffrey Butz thanked the town for cleaning up the debris after the recent storm. He mentioned that the town crew did a phenomenal job.

Kyle Ward addressed the Council regarding the FLOCK license plate reader cameras installed throughout town. Mr. Ward expressed concerns about the cost of the program, and the privacy implications associated with the collection of vehicle data.

Chief Breedlove explained that the cameras are funded through a grant that he applies for annually and do not require funding from the Town's general budget. He stated that the cameras are a valuable investigative tool when crimes occur in the area. Chief Breedlove explained that officers must have an active case number to access and search camera data and that all system use is audited.

Mr. Ward expressed concern that information on vehicles recorded by the cameras could be broadly accessible and stated that he believes there are serious privacy implications.

Chief Breedlove responded that the cameras have assisted the Police Department in recovering two stolen vehicles and locating two missing children. He further stated that the data cannot be shared with federal or out-of-state agencies and that all data is automatically purged after 21 days, with no information retained beyond that period. He added that there is considerable misinformation regarding the FLOCK camera system and assured Mr. Ward that the collection and use of the data are regulated by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Town Manager Childers stated that individuals who are not violating the law have no reason for concern regarding the cameras.

Councilmember Viars commented that, given the Town's small size and limited number of police officers, the FLOCK camera system is a valuable tool for law enforcement.

Councilmember Lewis announced that Raymond Matney passed away today. Councilmember Lewis explained that the room the meeting is taking place in and the building is because of Raymond Matney. He continued that the state-of-the-art water plant is due to Raymond Matney, the sidewalks that we walk on are due to Raymond Matney. The sidewalk projects were started by Raymond Matney. He added that the town owes Raymond a dept of gratitude for his service to the town over the years. Councilmember Lloyd stated that he agrees with Councilmember Lewis, and it should be mentioned that Mr. Matney was the first Town Manager of Rural Retreat. Mayor Litz agreed with Councilmember Lewis and added that Mr. Matney was a guiding light to the town. He stated that he was able to enjoy much of the experience that Mr. Matney brought to the town.

CORRESPONDENCE – Treasurer Patton read a thank you letter from Bloodmobile for the use of the Community Center on June 30, 2026.

Councilmember Viars reported that a citizen had requested extending the Farmers Market's operating hours by one additional hour.

Councilmember Lewis stated that he had discussed the request with the market manager, who indicated that extending the hours is not feasible because several vendors attend church services on Wednesday evenings.

Councilmember Viars suggested surveying the vendors to determine whether there is interest in remaining open later. Councilmember Lewis added that another vendor had commented that customer traffic typically declines after 4:30 or 5:00 p.m.

Councilmember Dunford stated that the Rural Retreat Baptist church requested that their parking lot be roped off during Heritage Day to prevent people from parking on their property. Chief Breedlove mentioned that the town ropes off the property for the Heritage Day event.

POLICE REPORT – Chief Breedlove stated that he applied for the HEAT grant that funds the FLOCK cameras. Chief Breedlove stated that he has completed the application for the 599 law enforcement funds from the state. Chief Breedlove stated that he has requested an additional deputy for Heritage Day because he expects a large crowd.

Chief Breedlove stated that he assisted with the Independence Day celebration on July 3, 2026. He mentioned that there were no incidents and there were a lot of people in attendance.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ADDITION TO TOWN SHOP – Town Manager Childers stated that he does not think this project will be able to take place in the previous budget. He stated that he will meet with Mike Jones.

LOCUST AVENUE WATER PROJECT – Town Manager Childers reported that he has received the plan from the engineering plans and the town will bid the project itself by obtaining three quotes. The plans will need to be approved by VDH (Virginia Department of Health).

WYTHE-BLAND FOUNDATION GRANT – Town Manager Childers reported that he had received a quote for the construction of two pickleball courts. He stated that the courts are designed to be oriented north to south to minimize the impact of the sun on players. The proposed layout also allows space for a future basketball court.

Town Manager Childers advised that the estimated cost of the project is approximately \$200,000. The quote includes all grading and drainage work, concrete, and fencing. Lighting is not included in the current estimate.

Vice-Mayor Yontz requested that Town Manager Childers obtain a separate quote for the future basketball court. Town Manager Childers stated that he plans to submit the grant application well before the application deadline.

Councilmember Lewis recommended that lighting be installed as part of the initial construction rather than added later. Town Manager Childers stated that he would request the contractor to include lighting in the project estimate. Vice-Mayor Yontz agreed that lighting should be addressed during the initial phase of construction.

Drainage – Councilmember Lewis stated that there is a problem with drainage at the corner of Church Street and West Baumgardner. Town Manager Childers stated that this will be addressed when the construction of parking spaces is complete.

NEW BUSINESS

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER – Vice-Mayor Yontz stated that the town was faithfully having a National Day of Prayer in the past. He stated that this item needs to be on the agenda.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Treasurer Patton reported that delinquent business license letters were mailed on Monday, July 13, 2026. There are twenty-four businesses that have not purchased a license as of today.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – Town Manager Childers suggested that action be taken to appoint the new Clerk/Treasurer.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lloyd and seconded by Councilmember Jonas to appoint Lockie Blevins effective August 1, 2026, as Clerk/Treasurer. The motion passed by a vote of six (6) for: Lloyd, Jonas, Yontz, Viars, Dunford, Lewis; zero (0) against.

Councilmember Lewis asked if there needs to be an additional audit when there is a change in Treasurers. Treasurer Patton stated that the town is currently working with auditors on the fiscal 2026-2026 annual audit.

HERITAGE DAYS – Vice-Mayor Yontz reported that he had spoken with the sound crew and confirmed that all arrangements are in place. He stated that the only remaining need is transportation for the band between Rural Retreat and their hotel in Wytheville.

Town Manager Childers advised that the band is expected to arrive in town around noon, travel to the hotel, and then return to Rural Retreat for dinner before the event. He stated that he would check into providing transportation.

Town Manager Childers also reported that event insurance has been purchased. He explained that the policy will cover the cost of the headlining act in the event the performance is canceled due to inclement weather.

Town Manager Childers further reported that advertisements for the event are running on radio stations 95.3, 98.1, and 93.9. He added that station 95.3 will conduct a live remote broadcast during the event.

MURAL PLANNING – This report is included in the Town Manager's report.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Town Manager's report is attached and is hereby made part of these minutes. The following items were reported and discussed.

- **Downtown Revitalization:** The Heritage Park and Market has stayed busy over the past month and half. The public's use of the of the splash pad and playground has been more than I anticipated with many visitors coming from other communities. I have heard nothing but positive comments from all of the people that I have spoken with whether they are using the facilities or are outside onlookers. The bathrooms have stayed clean, with only a couple of instances of small issues. The bathrooms are checked every evening and are only cleaned if there is a need. The Farmer's Market has also been going

very well and our Market Manager, Leslie Vanover, has been doing a really good job of running the Market.

- I am meeting with the General Contractor tomorrow to go over several projects including electricity to the Farmer's Market, the structure in between the splash pad and playground, the relocation of the gazebo, the installation of the flagpole, and the parking at the splash pad and playground. I met with VDOT about the slanted parking spaces to ensure that traffic flows correctly on the one-way street. I also asked them to put up signage around the building to warn drivers not to try to pull out between the downtown building and the Masonic Lodge.
- I met with the pickleball installation company last week about the courts. The measurements were completed and the Town has ample space to install 2 courts on the Town's property across from the Farmer's Market. These courts will need to be faced north to south because of the sun. The quote is for 2 concrete courts with striping, posts and nets, and fencing around the perimeter.
- **Mural:** I spoke to the muralist about the completion of the mural that was approved by council. He is wrapping up the project he has in Pulaski County; he will then begin on the Town's mural. He has had some health issues that has put him behind schedule.
- **Water Plants:** The Phillippee Springs plant has been producing water much more efficiently since the Town was able to complete the CIP cleaning. The tanks have all been over 90 feet for weeks and are doing really well.
- The Town is still waiting on DEQ to see about the permitting of the Staley Pring water plant. It appears that this will take more time than first expected due to changes in the permitting process.

Town Manager Childers reported that the sign company has a mobile sign to bring to show Council what the options are for the digital sign. Town Manager Childers stated that the signs at the Dutch Pantry coming into town and the sign at the town hall need to be addressed too. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated that he can replace the 4 x champion wrestling team sign that is located at the Dutch Pantry.

Councilmember Viars asked if the general contractor will be able to install the cameras at the park. He inquired about when the lighting and landscaping will be addressed. Town Manager Childers stated that the general contractor will be taking care of these items.

Councilmember Lewis asked if the flagpole will be installed before Heritage Day. He asked if the gazebo will be placed on a concrete pad. Town Manager Childers stated that the general contractor has the specifications for the flagpole. Councilmember Lewis asked about the concrete walkways in the park. Councilmember Viars asked if there will be electrical boxes at the Farmers Market. Councilmember Lewis asked about the lighting at the flagpole. Town Manager Childers stated that the flag will be 8 x 12.

Councilmember Lewis asked if the stage upgrades will be completed by Heritage Day. Town Manager Childers stated that all of the materials are here, and the contractor assures him it will be completed by the Heritage Day event.

Councilmember Lewis asked about the drains at the Farmers Market site. Town Manager Childers stated that he will get with the general contractor for a solution.

Councilmember Viars stated that the sign at the mobile home park needs to be addressed. It is illegal to have a billboard sign on the property. Town Manager Childers stated that he will address the issue.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The invoices for July 14, 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