

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING / PUBLIC HEARING OF THE RURAL
RETREAT TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 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

Council Members Absent: Alma Dunford

Administration Present: Monica H. Patton Clerk/Treasurer
Derek Breedlove, Police Chief

Administration Absent: Jason Childers, Town Manager

Others Present: None

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 May 26, 2026, meeting. The motion passed by a vote of four (4) for: Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Yontz; one (1) against: Lewis

PUBLIC HEARING -Proposed Fiscal 2026-27 Budget -Mayor Litz opened the public hearing for citizens comments. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Councilmember Lewis asked where the Town Manager is this evening. Mayor Litz answered that Town Manager Childers is on vacation.

CITIZEN’S TIME – None

CORRESPONDENCE – Vice-Mayor Yontz stated that he has had several citizens asking about emergency phones at Heritage Park and at the Community Center. He explained that the phones

dial directly to a 911 dispatcher in case of an emergency. Vice-Mayor Yontz reported that the phones are not very expensive. Chief Breedlove stated that he is concerned about dispatch receiving multiple calls. Councilmember Lewis agreed and stated that he is not sure it would be necessary. Councilmember Lewis agreed, stating most people have cell phones.

Chief Breedlove stated that there are new regulations regarding sporting events that require a defibrillator at sporting complexes and events. He stated that he will investigate this more to see if the town will be required to have the device at Heritage Park & Market once the Pickleball courts are installed.

POLICE REPORT - Chief Breedlove reported that he has been notifying citizens that need to mow their properties.

Chief Breedlove reported that next week he plans to work with the County on July 3rd for the Independence Day festival at the lake. He mentioned that there will be a lot of people traveling through town that weekend. The fireworks will take place on Friday the 3rd.

Chief Breedlove explained that the town can adopt an additional 1 to 3.5 percent tax on cannabis retail sales. He provided the Council with a handout for more information. Vice-Mayor Yontz asked how the additional tax would be approved. Treasurer Patton explained that a public hearing would need to take place to approve any additional tax.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

HERITAGE PARK & MARKET – Councilmember Viars stated that he has had several comments from citizens that the splash pad is nice. One citizen even expressed that it reminds them of a Hallmark movie.

Councilmember Lewis stated that there needs to be a sign put up at the splashpad with the hours, directions for use, and rules. Treasurer Patton commented that she gave Town Manager Childers a picture of the sign that the Town of Chilhowie has at their splash pad, so the town can order a similar one. Councilmember Lewis asked how much water is being used daily for the splash pad. Treasurer Patton explained that the water department has a reading on the water use.

Councilmember Lewis asked if the gazebo at Heritage Park will be moved to a different location in the park. He asked when the structure between the playground and the splash pad will be built.

Councilmember Lewis asked if someone is cleaning the restrooms at Heritage Park. Treasurer Patton announced that Baylee Childers is cleaning the restrooms daily.

Councilmember Viars asked if the Chief has placed the cameras at the park. Chief Breedlove stated that he plans to get the general contractor to install the cameras. He added that the town needs to have wi-fi installed to be able to login remotely.

ADDITION TO TOWN SHOP - None

LOCUST AVENUE WATER PROJECT – None

NEW BUSINESS – Councilmember Lewis asked if the Clerk/Treasurer's position has been advertised. Mayor Litz reported that the position has been advertised. Treasurer Patton added that it was advertised on SWVA Media online. Councilmember Viars asked if there is a plan if a replacement is not found soon. Treasurer Patton reported that the office has received a few applications.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Yontz and seconded by Councilmember Viars to accept Treasurer Patton's resignation that is effective July 31, 2026. Councilmember Viars stated that he hates the town is losing Treasurer Patton. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Lloyd, Jonas, Yontz, Viars, Lewis; zero (0) against.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Treasurer Patton reported that she contacted TACS regarding the auction of properties with delinquent taxes. They do not have a time set for the auction yet.

SPECIAL MEETING – Treasurer Patton announced that the code of Virginia requires that a public hearing be held 7 days prior to the adoption of the annual budget. Treasurer Patton explained that a special meeting would need to be scheduled for June 30th to adopt the fiscal 2026-27 budget. This is necessary in order to process the weekly payrolls in July. A motion was made by Councilmember Lewis and seconded by Vice-Mayor Yontz to have the special meeting at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, June 30, 2026. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Lewis, Viars, Yontz, Jonas, Lloyd; zero (0) against.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – None

HERITAGE DAYS – Vice-Mayor Yontz reported that the deposit has been made and the contract is signed. He mentioned that the band is well known. He added that the schedule is set and is tight.

MURAL PLANNING – The muralist is scheduled to begin in a couple of weeks.

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 splashpad and playground has officially opened, and I think everyone can agree that it has been a great success. The Town has been flooded with compliments on the project. So far, we have experienced no vandalism, and the bathrooms have stayed clean without any issues. There has been an issue with people driving the wrong way on the one-way street, but the Town has put up the Chiefs sign temporarily to help prevent this.

- Water Plant- The Town was able to complete the CIP cleaning at the water plant and have seen significant improvements in production. The high service pumps are also scheduled to be installed.
- I met with DEQ and RDA engineering about getting the Town's permitting for Staley Springs Water Plant. The permit is being prepared, and DEQ stated it may take as much as 270 days to review the permit. This is far longer than any permitting that has taken place in the past. The Town and the engineer are trying to get this more fast tracked. The Town also met with Davenport and Associates about funding for this project and this time it appears February will be the application date.
- Mural: I spoke to the muralist, and he is a week or so from getting started on the Heritage Park mural. I told him the specifications communicated in the last meeting.
- Heritage Day: I have sent in the application to VRSA about event insurance for Heritage Day. The Town is waiting to hear from the underwriter about what the premium and parameters are concerning the policy.
- New Rural Retreat sign: The Town has reached out to a sign installation company about replacing the event sign near Chinquapin Ave. They will be bringing a truck with test signs to verify exactly what the Town will need.

Councilmember Lewis asked what the plans are for the pickleball courts. Vice-Mayor Yontz stated that he understood that we are ready to proceed as soon as a contractor is available to do the pavement. Councilmember Viars stated that he would like to see if the Wythe-Bland Foundation could assist with the funding. Councilmember Lewis stated that the grant applications are due by August 3, 2026.

Treasurer Patton announced that on Friday there will be a reception for Brenda Maxey's retirement.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The invoices for June 23, 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