

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY MARCH 10, 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: Jason Childers, Town Manager
Carolyn Mooney, Clerk
Derek Breedlove, Police Chief, Brenda Maxey, Secretary

Administration Absent: Monica H. Patton Clerk/Treasurer

Others Present: Mike Jones, Peyton Newberry, Houston Bear, Jameson Tibbs, Astan Badzier, Caleb Gibson, Hunter Pennington, Grady Gibson, Justin Walker, Mason P., Sarmat Badziew, William Rose, Ian Bear, Gabe Crewsey, Cade Rouse, Autumn Penwright, Chaz Penwright Jr., Chaz Penwright, Sr., Dominic Lees, Carri Lees

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 Dale Yontz seconded by Councilmember Lewis to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2026, meeting. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Viars, Jonas, Lloyd, Lewis, Yontz; zero (0) against.

RRHS WRESTLING TEAM RESOLUTIONS –

Mayor Litz read the following resolutions:

**A RESOLUTION HONORING
THE RURAL RETREAT HIGH SCHOOL
WRESTLING TEAM**

WHEREAS, the Rural Retreat High School Wrestling Team has distinguished itself as the Virginia High School League 1A State Wrestling Champions for the 2025-2026 wrestling season; and

WHEREAS, the Rural Retreat High School Wrestling Team completed the 2025-2026 State Championship with 216 points, the Rural Retreat wrestling team claimed the VHSL Class 1 State title; and,

WHEREAS, the Rural Retreat High School Wrestling Team had eleven wrestlers place at the state tournament and three were state champions in individuals: Caleb Gibson, Chaz Penwright and Justin Walker; and,

WHEREAS, the Rural Retreat Town Council officially commends the Rural Retreat High School Wrestling Team of which eleven placed in the state finals: Caleb Gibson, Justin Walker, Chaz Penwright, Astan Badziev, Peyton Newberry, Gabe Crewey, Grady Gibson, William Rose, Hunter Pennington, Ian Bear, Jameson Tibbs other team members included are Sarmat Badziev, Dominic Lees, Houston Bear, Mason Pennington and Head Coach Cade Rouse, Assistant Coaches Brian Gibson and Chase Breenan, and the entire staff for their outstanding 2025-2026 season record; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in recognition of the 2025-2026 Rural Retreat High School Wrestling Team's outstanding accomplishments and the pride they have bestowed upon themselves, the Rural Retreat High School, the Rural Retreat Community and Wythe County; the Rural Retreat Town Council in regular session this 10th day of March, 2026 does hereby congratulate the Rural Retreat High School Wrestling Team for a very successful wrestling season; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be presented to the Rural Retreat High School Wrestling Team; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be incorporated into the March 10, 2026, minutes of the Rural Retreat Town Council.

**A RESOLUTION HONORING
CHAZ PENWRIGHT
OF THE RURAL RETREAT HIGH SCHOOL
WRESTLING TEAM**

WHEREAS, senior Chaz Penwright completed a successful 2025-2026 High School Wrestling season with an overall record of 30-0; and,

WHEREAS, Chaz advanced to the Virginia High School League Class 1A State Wrestling Championships which occurred on February 20th and 21st, 2026 in Salem, Virginia; and,

WHEREAS, Chaz captured the 2026 State Championship in the 157-pound weight class making him a two-time state champion; and,

WHEREAS, the Rural Retreat Town Council officially commends Chaz Penwright for his outstanding dedication, athletic ability, and sportsmanship.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rural Retreat Town Council on this the 10th day of March 2026 does hereby recognize and congratulate Chaz Penwright for his dedication and success in being State Champion; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be presented to Chaz Penwright with a copy sent to Rural Retreat High School to be included in his permanent school records.

**A RESOLUTION HONORING
CALEB GIBSON
OF THE RURAL RETREAT HIGH SCHOOL
WRESTLING TEAM**

WHEREAS, senior Caleb Gibson completed a successful 2025-2026 High School Wrestling season with an overall record of 32-0; and,

WHEREAS, Caleb advanced to the Virginia High School League Class 1A State Wrestling Championships which occurred on February 20th and 21st, 2026 in Salem, Virginia; and,

WHEREAS, Caleb captured the 2026 State Championship in the 126-pound weight class making him a four-time state champion; and,

WHEREAS, the Rural Retreat Town Council officially commends Caleb Gibson for his outstanding dedication, athletic ability, and sportsmanship.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rural Retreat Town Council on this the 10th day of March 2026 does hereby recognize and congratulate Caleb Gibson for his dedication and success in being State Champion; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be presented to Caleb Gibson with a copy sent to Rural Retreat High School to be included in his permanent school records.

**A RESOLUTION HONORING
JUSTIN WALKER
OF THE RURAL RETREAT HIGH SCHOOL
WRESTLING TEAM**

WHEREAS, senior Justin Walker completed a successful 2025-2026 High School Wrestling season with an overall record of 30-5; and,

WHEREAS, Justin advanced to the Virginia High School League Class 1A State Wrestling Championships which occurred on February 20th and 21st, 2026 in Salem, Virginia; and,

WHEREAS, Justin captured the 2026 State Championship in the 138-pound weight class, his first state champion; and,

WHEREAS, the Rural Retreat Town Council officially commends Justin Walker for his outstanding dedication, athletic ability, and sportsmanship.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rural Retreat Town Council on this the 10th day of March 2026 does hereby recognize and congratulate Justin Walker for his dedication and success in being State Champion; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be presented to Justin Walker with a copy sent to Rural Retreat High School to be included in his permanent school records.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lloyd and seconded by Vice-Mayor Yontz to adopt the Rural Retreat High School Wrestling Team Resolutions. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Lloyd, Jonas, Yontz, Viars, Lewis; zero (0) against.

CITIZEN'S TIME – None

CORRESPONDENCE – Brenda Maxey read a thank you note from Kay Corvin of the Rural Retreat America Red Cross program. Mrs. Corvin thanked the town for their generosity and support of the program. The recent blood drive had sixty registered donors and collected sixty-two units of blood.

POLICE REPORT - None

NEW BUSINESS – Councilmember Viars stated that he saw the County is doing fireworks at the Rural Retreat Lake for Independence Day in July. They are looking for sponsors for the event. Councilmember Viars stated there are different levels of sponsorship available, and he suggests the Town participate. Vice-Mayor Yontz asked Town Manager Childers to research the levels. Town Manager Childers stated he will report back to Council with information on the event and sponsorship levels.

DISCUSSION ON AQUAHAWK SYSTEM PRICING - Vice-Mayor Yontz inquired whether Town Manager Childers had obtained pricing information for AquaHawk. Town Manager Childers responded that he has not obtained pricing yet. He stated that he will investigate it further. He will contact the company that supplies the meter reading software to see if it would be compatible. He will have an update at the next meeting.

AquaHawk is a web-based water usage monitoring system that the Town of Wytheville has implemented. It allows citizens to connect their accounts and monitor their water consumption in real time (including hourly, daily, and monthly data) via a mobile app or online portal. The service is provided free of charge to citizens but incurs a cost to the municipality. Key benefits include enabling residents to track usage, receive alerts for potential issues (such as leaks or unusually high consumption), estimate bills, and detect leaks more quickly to prevent water loss and property damage.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – None

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – None

HERITAGE DAYS – None

MURAL PLANNING- Town Manager Childers asked Councilmember Lloyd when the committee will be meeting to discuss the mural at Heritage Park. They agreed to have a committee meeting prior to the next Council meeting.

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 contractor has pulled all the old sheetrock out of the downtown building and has framed up all the walls for the bathrooms and laid the block for all the bathrooms to be accessible from the outside. This project is coming together very nicely and timely.
- I have spoken with 2 separate contractors for pickleball courts. I hope to get both companies to come and look at the Downtown Site for measurements and cost estimates for building these courts as part of the Downtown Revitalization project.
- **Water Plant:** Last week the Town had some issues at the water plant. There were communication issues between the plant and the pumps that send water to Town. Luckily, we found this quickly, but the downside was that the Town had to man the plant 24 hours a day to keep sending water to town. I would like to thank everyone who took extra shifts at all hours to ensure our production stayed continuous.
- The Town has ordered the feed pumps that was voted on at the last meeting. They will be installed soon. The Town is finally in better shape with our tank levels. The tanks are currently around 80 feet.
- The Town, RDA engineers, and Davenport and Associates had a teams meeting last week to go over the initial stages and the PER concerning the funding and construction of the Water Plant at Staley Springs. The next step is to get VDH involved and search for the best loan partners to fund this project. We will have a follow-up meeting to go over the findings from each group.
- **Derelict Properties:** I spoke with Town Attorney Cassell about some of the derelict properties in Town. He stated that all these cases are obviously different because of the damage to the properties. There are also many notices that need to be given to the property owner to meet state code requirements. He will be getting pictures of some of these properties tomorrow.
- **Community Center Lighting:** Two new lights have been installed at the east end of the Community Center parking lot to light up the area around the pavilion and the playground area.

Councilmember Lewis asked about a follow up on the calibration for the tanks, Town Manager Childers stated this has not been completed.

Councilmember Lewis asked if we have identified all the derelict properties Town Manager Childers responded, not all of them, but we have the worst ones. He mentioned that some of the properties are scheduled to be sold by TACS later in the year.

Town Manager Childers stated that he has been in contact with the County regarding a large pothole in the parking lot of the Emergency Services building. He mentioned that there are several potholes in town that need attention as well.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The invoices for March 10, 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