

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE RURAL RETREAT TOWN
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026- 7:00 P.M.**

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

Council Members Absent: Dale Yontz, Vice-Mayor

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

Administration Absent: None

Others Present: Amy McBride, Frank Akers, Mike Jones, Becky Harrison

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 Councilmember Dunford seconded by Councilmember Lewis to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2026, meeting. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Jonas, Lloyd, Viars, Lewis, Dunford; zero (0) against.

CITIZEN’S TIME – Frank Akers thanked the town for allowing the Depot Foundation to host Dr. Pepper Day. He reported that he has worked out the details with Dr. Pepper Corporation. He mentioned that it will be an open house for the Depot in addition to the Dr. Pepper festivities. He stated that the Depot Foundation has not decided if they will have the event on Saturday or Sunday. He is going to encourage them to have the event on Saturday since it is 10-24. Councilmember Lloyd stated that the town always had the event on Sunday because of the traffic. Town Manager Childers suggested holding the event on Saturday due to church services.

Fiber- Mr. Akers pointed out that Point Broadband, Shentel, and Brightspeed are very competitive in the Town of Rural Retreat with their services.

Amy McBride stated that she has not had phone or internet service since April 29th. She stated that she has been with Brightspeed for 19 years, and she has nothing good to say about their service. She reported that she will file a complaint with the State Corporation Commission.

Becky Harrison stated that she has had similar issues with Brightspeed. She mentioned that she has had issues with the underground installation. It took six weeks for the underground installation.

CORRESPONDENCE – Treasurer Patton read a thank you letter from Fire Chief David Evans for the painting of the exterior of the fire station.

Treasurer Patton mentioned a message that was received on Facebook Messenger from a parent regarding the playground. The parent complimented the town on the playground facility.

POLICE REPORT - Chief Breedlove stated that he remains on light duty until his June 4, 2026, doctor's appointment. He mentioned that he has been catching up on software training that he missed while out on medical leave and other reporting duties.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Councilmember Dunford asked when the derelict properties will be on the TACS sale. Treasurer Patton announced that the sales should be later in the summer. Treasurer Patton agreed to contact TACS and report on the sale date.

ADDITION TO TOWN SHOP – Mike Jones stated that a quote has been received for the addition to the town shop. A 24 x 40 addition with a concrete floor and a metal ceiling will be added and the quote is within the amount that was budgeted.

LOCUST AVENUE WATER PROJECT – Town Manager Childers reported that he has been in touch with the engineer, Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) about the project. He stated that the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) is in the process and should be completed in a couple of weeks. Councilmember Lewis asked how many residences are involved. Town Manager Childers stated there are six households that will be affected by the project. Councilmember Jonas asked when this project will take place. Town Manager Childers answered in a month or a month and a half.

NEW BUSINESS – None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Treasurer Patton announced that everyone has a copy of the proposed fiscal 2026-27 budget. She stated that the public hearing is scheduled for the June 9, 2026, meeting and then the budget will be adopted at the June 23, 2026, meeting. She stated that the total proposed budget is \$5,367,392 which is an increase of \$49,307 from last fiscal year.

PERSONNEL, ORDINANCES & LEGAL MATTERS – Town Manager Childers stated that prior to July 1 he will be holding employee evaluations. Councilmember Viars asked if the CDL

requirements will be addressed during evaluations. Town Manager Childers stated that is one of the items that will be addressed.

HERITAGE DAYS – None

MURAL PLANNING – Mayor Litz asked if there is an update for the project. He stated that the committee did their job, but the rest of the council did not. He announced that the mural committee made a decision. Councilmember Lewis mentioned that the design was changed after the committee meeting. Councilmember Lloyd stated that the only thing that changed after the meeting was to add himself and other historical people to the mural. Councilmember Viars stated that he understands that the committee decided on the design then after some of the members left it was changed. Councilmember Dunford stated that she attended the committee meeting and the only things committee discussed were moving the water towers back into the background, adding a wagon with a banner that pertained to Dr. Pepper, and the lake would be made bigger to be more like the Rural Retreat Lake. Town Manager Childers mentioned that they also discussed that the tractor and the sunset would be moved over. Councilmember Lloyd stated that all of the surrounding communities have historical people on their murals. Town Manager Childers mentioned that the muralist worked quickly to get the rendering back to him by Friday because the project was to start on the following Monday.

Mayor Litz expressed his dislike for an answer to a social media post regarding the mural by Treasurer Patton. Treasurer Patton explained that the response was plainly stated as to what the town had planned for a mural, and she did not understand his distaste for her comment.

Councilmember Lloyd made a motion to discontinue plans for the mural. The motion failed due to the lack of a second. Councilmember Dunford expressed opposition to discontinuing the mural project, stating that the town should proceed with installing the mural as originally planned. Councilmember Viars stated his disagreement with including specific individuals in the mural design. Town Manager Childers stated that choosing not to paint a mural on the wall would be a disservice to the Town.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dunford and seconded by Councilmember Viars regarding the mural at Heritage Park to remove all of the people and place a Dr. Pepper bottle on the wagon. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Lloyd, Jonas, Viars, Dunford, Lewis; zero (0).

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:** Everything is set in place to open the splash pad and playground May 30th. This opening was postponed from last weekend due to the weather. The base for the flagpole has been received and is here. The flagpole will be here in June. This will be a 40-foot pole with internal cords to eliminate any vandalism. The flagpole is designed for an 8x12 flag. The fences and gates have been installed and

are secure. The Town needs to address security cameras for this area due to possible vandalism.

- **Pepper Stage Decking:** The materials have been ordered by the contractor, and the Town is on the contractor's schedule to replace the decking at the Stage.
- **New Town Sign:** I have been in touch with a sign manufacturer about the new sign the Town is wanting to do with conjunction with the Lion's Club. The size of the existing sign is not big enough to meet the needs of what is desired. The Town has the option of moving the sign to another location or rebuilding the sign on the same site. The sign was a gift from the 1971 graduating class from Rural Retreat.
- **Water Plant:** The Town was scheduled to complete a CIP cleaning last week, but the night before a major water leak occurred which dropped the level of our tanks. In order to complete this process, the plant would have to be shut down for 6 to 8 hours. The Town will wait for better water levels before this is completed.

Councilmember Viars asked if the dinner for the town maintenance workers for their extra work during the winter months has been scheduled. Town Manager Childers stated that he will make sure this gets scheduled.

Decking for Caboose- Councilmember Lewis asked about the decking at the caboose. Town Manager Childers stated that will take place next year.

Councilmember Lewis stated that he is concerned about parking at Heritage Park. He stated that if there is an event center then there needs to be parking. He asked who will be cleaning the bathrooms daily. Town Manager Childers stated that there needs to be a special lock on the building bathroom doors. He mentioned that there needs to be trash cans at the park. Councilmember Lewis stated that someone needs to be in charge of maintenance at the park. Councilmember Viars stated that it is up to Town Manager Childers to make this decision. Town Manager Childers stated that the town should hire a summer employee to clean and maintain the park.

Councilmember Lewis mentioned again that parking will be an issue. Councilmember Dunford asked who owns the old building across from the park. Councilmember Viars stated that the Masonic Lodge owns the building, and it is for sale. Councilmember Lewis stated that there would be a limited amount of parking if the town acquired that building and demolished it, and that it would be costly to tear the building down. Town Manager Childers stated that the Department of Historical Resources (DHR) may look at the building and deem it historical. Councilmember Viars stated that VDOT has already researched it, and it is not historical.

Councilmember Lewis asked if the Council would allow Town Manager Childers to hire a part-time person for maintenance and cleaning at Heritage Park. Town Manager Childers stated that he will advertise for a part-time recreation position.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The invoices for May 26, 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