

**TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP, VIRGINIA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
505 E. 5TH STREET, SOUTH
BIG STONE GAP, VA**

January 8, 2019

6:30 PM

AGENDA ITEM 1

Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order.

Those Present: Hon. Gary Johnson, Mayor
 Hon. Nancy Bailey, Vice-Mayor
 Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman
 Hon. Kent Gilley, Councilman
 Hon. Tyler Hughes, Councilman
 Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman

Staff Present: Mr. Stephen Lawson, Town Manager
 Mrs. Judy C. Hall, Town Clerk/Treasurer
 Mr. Steve Hamm, Chief of Police

Those Absent: Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman

Staff Absent: Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney

AGENDA ITEM 2

INVOCATION by Rev. Ray Moore of the Christ Episcopal Church.

AGENDA ITEM 3

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ITEM 4

ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Gilley, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of January 8, 2019 be adopted as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, McKinney

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Lyke

AGENDA ITEM 5

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

No comments.

AGENDA ITEM 6**GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. **Approval of minutes of Special Council Meeting of November 27, 2018.
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- b. **Approval of minutes of Council Workshop Meeting of December 4, 2018.
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- c. **Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of December 11, 2018.
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- d. **Departmental Reports for the month of December, 2018.
Recommended Action: Received and filed.**
- e. **Treasurer's Report for the month of November, 2018.
Recommended Action: Received and filed.**

Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that the General Order of Business be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Lyke

AGENDA ITEM 7**PROCLAMATION PRESENTATION – UHS LADIES' VOLLEYBALL TEAM**

Mayor Johnson read and presented the proclamation recognizing the UHS Lady Bears Volleyball Team for their outstanding year in 2018 and for competing in the final four in the 2A State Volleyball Tournament.

AGENDA ITEM 8**TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT****Cadet & W 8th Street Waterline Replacement Project**

Mr. McElroy distributed two packets of photos to Council members. The first was of the Pump Station in Cadet that was installed last week. The contractor is working on the wiring this week, and should have it up and running next week. This is the last part of this project so they should be able to close this project soon.

Big Cherry Slide Stabilization and Security Improvement Project

The second set of photos was of the repair work on the slides at Big Cherry. The first slide repair is complete and they have moved on to the second slide. They do have a security gate installed at the water plant. This is the only part of the security measures that has been installed – the rest is on order.

Fisher Road and Shelby Avenue Waterline Replacement Project

Mr. McElroy said that all the documents have been approved and signed, and a Pre-Construction Conference will be held next week for this project.

Route 610 and Shelby Avenue (Phase 2) Waterline Replacement Project

He said that the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) combined these two proposed projects for improvements to the waterlines on Rt. 610 and Shelby Avenue Phase 2 as a single

project. The surveying has been completed and we are working on preliminary drawings. VDH put the stipulation in the loan documents that if we advertise for bids and close the loan within 12 months, we get a discount of two-tenths of a percent on the loan so we are prepared to move quickly on this project.

AGENDA ITEM 9

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Lawson asked Council to allow Dylan Mabe to offer a presentation on a proposed Equal Rights Amendment Resolution that will be presented to the Virginia General Assembly this year.

Mr. Mabe thanked Council for allowing him to speak tonight, and Councilman Tyler Hughes, in particular, for his assistance with the resolution.

Mr. Mabe said the first version of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was drafted in 1923. The full version of the ERA, as it stands now, was passed in 1972 with a seven year ratification deadline (which was later amended to ten years). Thirty-eight states must ratify the amendment to make the ERA a part of the constitution. In 1982 the amendment again lacked the required number of states by a margin of three. The amendment is close to the necessary three-fourths requirement in 2017 with Nevada becoming the 36th state to ratify the amendment, and Illinois the 37th state in 2018. This leaves the ERA one state short of ratification to the US Constitution.

If a 38th state is to ratify the amendment it will happen on one of two ways: thru the judiciary branch, or through the legislative branch. Since a court's ruling can be overturned, the constitutional amendment is the only enduring way to ensure equal protection under the law. The ERA would create a precedent for lawmakers and judges to abide by when interpreting the rights of women in this country. This issue has both a moral and economic factor – the moral responsibility to provide equal protection of the law to all citizens, and the economic responsibility to provide equal pay to all, regardless of gender. Providing equal pay to women would have a dramatic effect on their families and boost the economy by \$5.12 billion.

Mr. Mabe said that, with Nevada and Illinois ratifying the ERA, Virginia is considered the best chance for the amendment to be ratified. He encouraged Council to pass a resolution in support of the ERA this year.

a. Budget Amendment

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this amendment for the purchase of an Excavator and Trailer and additional HIDTA funds for the Drug Task Force.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve a budget amendment increasing General Fund revenues and expenditures by \$78,990.50 for the purchase of an Excavator and Trailer and for additional HIDTA funds for DTF. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Lyke

b. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson said that the amendments requested by Council for the contract with Columbia Plywood have been made by the Town Attorney and a revised contract will be sent to Columbia for their review.

Mr. Lawson said the Greenbelt in Lights ended Saturday with an additional 102 people riding the trail to see the lights. The total rides for this season was over 800 people. We have asked everyone who put up lights to remove everything by January 20th. Anything left on the Greenbelt after that date will be collected by Town staff and kept as donations for next year.

The Polar Bear Plunge had about 40 participants. He said the weather didn't cooperate very well by being close to 60 degrees when they wanted it to be cold, but people did have a lot of fun.

Mr. Lawson said he will meet with Breakthru Construction on Thursday about installing a 40' pole at the new restroom site in Bullitt Park. It will have 100kw transformer and 50 ku disconnect with a lightning arrestor at a cost of around \$5,000. This one pole will take the place of three existing poles and the wires will not hang across the stands as they do now.

He said that the trip to the helicopter landing zones on Thursday on Big Cherry may need to be rescheduled due to weather, but he hopes to walk the trails with citizens to the sites being considered. They will work the schedule so they don't interfere with the slope work taking place now. Anyone interested in going is welcome.

Last Sunday, we started a Cornhole League in Carnes Gym from 7 pm to 10 pm. We had about 20 participants who competed in eight matches each. He said we will seek ACL affiliation later in the year and choose a name for our league. He mentioned that Austin and Kalen did a great job representing our Town in the Cornhole Championships in Myrtle Beach.

Mr. Lawson said that on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, we will have a Youth Basketball League playing in the gym, and Wednesdays will be co-ed volleyball practice with games scheduled for Sundays from 1-6 pm.

He said that we have a lot of areas that are too wet to work in so a lot of clean-up work following leak repairs, etc. will have to wait until it dries up a bit.

Today was the official Grand Opening of David Templeton, DDS at 518 Powell Avenue East. Mr. Lawson said Dr. Templeton will be a great addition to our Town.

He said that 2019 Forward Wise County is coming up soon. Gary Harris and Amanda Hawkins will be representing the Town this year. He invited any Council members who wished to participate to let him know.

He said that we had some strong wind shears come thru Town on Friday night, blowing signs around and breaking some glass. He said it demolished the fence at Miners Park, and we are pricing some aluminum fencing to replace it.

**AGENDA ITEM 10
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No reports.

**AGENDA ITEM 11
COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Mr. Gilley said there was a good crowd at the Polar Bear Plunge, and seeing Steve Lawson and Crystal Lyke jump into the ice was worth the price of admission.

Mr. Hughes thanked the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments. He said he thinks the ERA amendment is worth supporting and passing a resolution in support of it would make a strong statement about our area.

Mrs. Bailey thanked the supporters of the ERA for coming and making their presentation, adding it's time it passed. She thanked everyone who was involved in the Polar Plunge.

Mayor Johnson thanked the Parks and Recreation Department for their work on the Greenbelt in Lights. He said that he drove a lot of people around and heard some great comments about our Town, and especially enjoyed watching the kids' eyes light up when they saw the lights. He thanked all of the Town employees and Steve Lawson for all they do.

AGENDA ITEM 12 ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Hughes, that the meeting be adjourned. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, McKinney

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Lyke

Meeting adjourned 7:07 pm.

Minutes Recorded & Transcribed by
Judy C. Hall, CMC – Town Clerk/Treasurer