

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

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

February 8, 2022

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. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman
 Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman * Arrived at 6:35 pm

Staff Present: Mr. Stephen Lawson, Town Manager
 Ms. Karen Ferguson, Administrative Assistant
 Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney
 Mr. Steve Hamm, Chief of Police

AGENDA ITEM 2

INVOCATION by Rev. Josh Tompkins of West End Baptist Church.

AGENDA ITEM 3

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ITEM 4

ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Lyke, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of February 8, 2022 be adopted as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 5

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Jake Hash, Big Stone Gap, VA

Mr. Hash said he is the grandson of Johnny Cubine and wants to sponsor the 1st Annual Frog Level Flywheeler’s Show at Frog Level Park on July 21st, 22nd, and 23rd in memory of his

grandfather. The Jessie Lee RV Park & Campgrounds will sponsor the show, which will include antiques, antique farm equipment, hit & miss engines, lawn & garden tractors, and large and small engines. He said they hope to have music and food vendors. He asked the Town to allow them to use the park from Wednesday, July 20th, thru Saturday, July 23rd and to provide dumpsters. The show will be from 9 am to 8 pm. Alcohol and firearms will not be allowed. They want the show to be a fun time for family and friends to gather and have a “good ole time”. There will be no charge to the public to attend, but there will be a \$10 fee for vendors to set up. They asked that, if their proposal is approved, the Town advertise the show on our social media sites. Mr. Hash concluded by asking the Town to approve the 1st Annual Frog Level Flywheeler’s Engine Show in honor of Johnny Cubine.

Mr. Lawson said he doesn’t see any obstacles to having a show like this as long as the Greenbelt is kept open.

Mayor Johnson thanked Mr. Hash for coming and said we would get back to him on his request.

AGENDA ITEM 6

GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. **Approval of minutes of Council Workshop of January 4, 2022.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- b. **Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of January 11, 2022.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- c. **Approval of minutes of the Budget/Finance/Audit Committee Meeting of January 11, 2022.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- d. **Departmental Reports for the month of January 2022.**
Recommended Action: Received and filed.

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 7

TOWN ENGINEER’S REPORT

Mr. Lawson said Mr. Broskey informed him there were no updates to last week’s report.

AGENDA ITEM 8

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

- a. **Proclamation – 404 Café & Creamery**
Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this proclamation welcoming 404 Café & Creamery to Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Elise Bloomer, owner of 404 Café & Creamery located at 404 Shawnee Avenue East in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

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

b. Resolution 03-2022 – Re-appoint Ked Meade to Housing Authority Board

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution re-appointing Ked Meade to the Housing Authority Board.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve Resolution 03-2022 being a resolution re-appointing Kedric Meade, II to the Big Stone Gap Redevelopment & Housing Authority Board for a four-year term to expire on February 28, 2026. Motion resulted as follows:

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

c. Resolution 04-2022 – Appoint Allan Morris to Planning Commission

Mr. asked Council to approve this resolution appointing Allan Morris to the Planning Commission.

Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve Resolution 04-2022 being a resolution appointing Allan Morris as a member of the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission for a four-year term to expire on February 28, 2026. Motion resulted as follows:

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

d. Projects Update

Budget

Mr. Lawson said packets have been sent out to all department heads in preparation of the upcoming FY2022-23 Budget discussions. Directors have been instructed to give their “wish list” for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds the Town has received.

Town Property

Mr. Lawson said he and Mayor Johnson rode around Town looking at property that had been brought to our attention. One person who is renting a house built a storage building literally on the road – he has been instructed to move the building.

He said that Mr. Baker came to talk to Mr. Lawson on Friday and they agreed on a plan to alleviate the “junk yard” problem that Mr. Baker’s neighbors have complained about. He

asked about addressing Council about the situation and Mr. Lawson told him he is welcome to come.

Mr. Lawson said there are other violations that will be addressed thru notices to the property owners.

He said the concrete has been poured on the Disney building and water and sewer have been hooked up.

He said the HVAC is in for the brewery building. He said once both projects are farther along there is a drainage problem that will need to be addressed which will affect a future project he has in mind – he would like to remove the Port-A-Pottys in Miners Park and install a restroom at the back corner where the alley joins Mr. Disney's property.

Mr. Lawson said the Mayor went with him to the Big Stone Gap Golf site which has been graded and leveled. The area has not been surveyed officially but he feels good about the corners they have marked to work inside of. He noted our crews are taking down dead trees, removing stumps, and preparing to pour the pad for a nice building. He said we still have lighting and fencing to do and have hired a contractor to do that work. He said the Mayor will head up that project.

Mr. Lawson said the Business Challenge classes ended last night as far as in-class instruction. On February 21st half of the class will make their "pitch" to the judges, with the 2nd half of the class making their pitch on February 22nd. He noted the judges are all independent of any businesses in Town so their decisions will be unbiased. All participants business plans are due by noon on February 14th.

Mr. Lawson said he will meet with representatives of Appalachian Grains at the 404 Café & Creamery on February 15th. The company is trying to enlist local farmers to grow grains for local brewery companies. He said we currently do not have any acres in Wise County growing these grains.

He mentioned the loss of Carl Snodgrass who was Executive Director of the Wise County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) Board for a number of years. Mr. Lawson said Mr. Snodgrass led a lot of good projects in Wise County and brought a lot of jobs to the area. He said an emergency meeting of the IDA board is scheduled for Wednesday at 4 pm.

Mr. Lawson said he will be having lunch tomorrow with Ballad Health's Mitch Kennedy. He said any questions Council may have regarding Ballad will be passed along to Mitch, who has been good to take information back and forth to get answers.

He said after several complaints from customers that they had not received their water bill this month, we called our printing company. They acknowledged that we sent everything in on time but due to a system upgrade on their end the bills didn't go out. They are working to get them out by the 10th.

Mr. Lawson said several new businesses are going into the bus station resulting in the need for a bigger water valve. He noted they are having a problem with the terra cotta sewer pipes in the alleyway behind the bus station. He said we will try to help with the problem, adding they may need an architect to help resolve the issue.

He thanked Jake for doing a really nice thing for a very important member of our Town. He said we miss your grandfather very much and will help in any way we can to make the event happen.

He said the Blue Highway Festival news is out and while it may have ruffled a few feathers, it has the potential to be a great thing for all of Wise County. He said we expect to have more people in Town than ever before so help is needed from Council and everyone who will volunteer. Some of the things that need to be addressed are:

- Parking and Transportation – we are checking on possibly using MECC and all three school parking lots, the area at the old Maloney’s, and maybe Councilman Bloomer’s parking lot. If anyone knows of any spaces that could be used for parking please let him know. He said we are still getting numbers of how many parking spaces all the bands will need but we’re pretty sure there will be no parking within Bullitt Park for the public.
- Marketing – we’ve reached out to The Crooked Road, Friends of Southwest Virginia, and the Heart of Appalachia to help us advertise the event.
- Security – with our Police Department short on officers we may need some private security assistance.
- Hospitality – we will have a Hospitality Tent on 3rd Street for the bands so they will have a place to sign autographs and sell their products.
- Sound & Production – there are professionals doing the sound and production but volunteers will be needed to set up and break things down as the event progresses.
- Risk Management – we will need Mr. Bledsoe’s advice on this item.
- Ticketing and Merchandise Sales – he said ticketing is covered but we will need volunteers to help vendors get set up.
- Vendors – we are having this event the same time as the Wise Fall Fling and while we are definitely not trying to woo their vendors away we won’t turn anyone away. He said we are reaching out to the East Tennessee area as well to ensure we have enough vendors to accommodate the expected crowds. We will also need volunteers for clean-up after the event.

Mr. Lawson said the event is scheduled for October 7th thru the 9th. He noted the McChesney Band Festival has moved their event to another date to accommodate us.

AGENDA ITEM 9 COMMITTEE REPORTS

No reports.

AGENDA ITEM 10 COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilman McKinney said he visited the 404 Café & Creamery and it was very nice.

Councilwoman Lyke thanked Jake for coming, adding she is excited about the event and it will be a great honor for his grandfather.

Councilman Hughes reiterated the thanks to Jake and his family, adding he is excited to see his family staying involved and trying to fill his shoes. He thanked all the Town employees and wished everyone Happy Valentine’s Day.

Councilman Gilley said the 404 Café & Creamery is a good asset to the Town.

Councilman Bloomer thanked everyone for coming to the meeting tonight.

Vice-Mayor Bailey thanked Jake and said we’d do everything we can to help honor his grandfather. She thanked all the employees and the Police Department for hanging in there.

Mayor Johnson said he is very impressed with Jake and is sure his papaw is very proud of him. He mentioned that Ed Carlton’s son passed away from COVID-19 and Ed is not in the best of health himself. He said Councilman Bloomer ‘nailed it’ with the 404 Café & Creamery.

**AGENDA ITEM 11
ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.

Minutes Recorded & Transcribed by
Amanda L. Hawkins–Town Clerk/Treasurer