

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

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
505 E. 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET, SOUTH  
BIG STONE GAP, VA**

**February 12, 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. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman

Council Absent:       Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman

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

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

**INVOCATION by Rev. Kenneth Sturgill of Spirit and Truth Worship Center.**

**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 February 12, 2019 be amended to include Resolution 02-2019 under the Town Manager’s Report. Motion resulted as follows:**

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

**AGENDA ITEM 5**

**COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS**

**Tim Bellamy, 518 East River Street, North, Big Stone Gap, VA 24219**

Mr. Bellamy said he has lived in Italy Bottom all of his life. He said there are a lot of potholes in the street and while some have been patched over time, there are a lot that have not been repaired. He requested the Town pave that area.

**AGENDA ITEM 6****GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. **Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of January 8, 2019.**  
**Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- b. **Departmental Reports for the month of January, 2019.**  
**Recommended Action: Received and filed.**
- c. **Treasurer's Report for the month of December, 2018.**  
**Recommended Action: Received and filed.**

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

**Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke**

**Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: McKinney**

**AGENDA ITEM 7****TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT**

No report.

**AGENDA ITEM 8****TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT****a. Ballard Health**

Mr. Lawson welcomed Mark Leonard, the Chief Executive Officer of Ballard Health in Wise and Dickenson Counties, a position that makes him CEO of Lonesome Pine Hospital (LPH), Mountain View Medical Center, Norton Community Hospital (NCH), and Dickenson Community Hospital (DCH). Mr. Leonard introduced Andy Mallory, the Marketing and Communications Coordinator of Ballard Health in Wise and Dickenson Counties.

Mr. Leonard said that his corporation has a strong heritage in serving the citizens of Wise County. In 2018, Ballard Health invested \$2.2 million in updates in Wise County facilities in spite of loss of revenue in small hospitals. They are currently doing around \$260,000 in renovations at Mountain View Medical Center. They are installing enhanced patient beds at both Mountain View and Lonesome Pine Hospital as well as enhanced telecommunications at Mountain View.

He said they are transforming their facilities from hospital centered systems to health improvement organizations. He noted that duplication of services is not sustainable. He said that in comparing Wise and the surrounding 29 counties in Southwest Virginia and Eastern Tennessee to the State average, they discovered some alarming statistics:

- smoking during pregnancy is 6 times greater in Wise County than the state average,
- neo-natal abstinence syndrome is six times greater here than the State average,
- 30% of babies born at LPH and NCH are addicted,
- prescription opioid overdoses are 4 times greater here than the State average,
- premature deaths are double that of the State average, and
- drug overdoses are also double that of the State average.

Mr. Leonard said that the latest consensus is that 50% of our health is attributed to behavior, 20% is considered to be environmental, 20% is due to genetics, and only 10% is attributed to access to care. Yet the average spent, collectively, is 88% on medical services. The goal is to turn attention to transforming more funding into enhancing, encouraging, and influencing behaviors.

Ballad is establishing Accountable Care Communities because they realize they can't turn the tide on their own. It will require a collaborative effort between them and organizations like Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC), PACE, and church communities.

With the one year anniversary of Ballad Health, they are already seeing a 45% reduction of C-Diff in all their hospitals. They continue to merge all the Mountain States facilities to the new EPIC electronic medical record system.

They are developing a regional trauma and emergency services system, including a new pediatric trauma center associated with Niswonger Children's Hospital, and establishing a new pediatric emergency department in Kingsport and Bristol, and a new call center. They will continue to have three trauma centers: Johnson City Medical Center, Holston Valley, and Bristol.

Mr. Leonard said their focus is not only on providing trauma centers, but on preventing health problems from ever happening. He said that a surprising fact just uncovered is that most trauma events don't involve 'blood and guts' but are the result of falls by the elderly. That changes their perspective on the type of services they need to offer.

He said that all of their 29 emergency rooms combined see approximately 450,000 patients a year. Out of that number, 5,200 will be trauma cases, 488 will be severe trauma, 256 (roughly .06%) will be sent on to the Local 1 Trauma Center in Johnson City. Holston Valley will continue to serve as a tertiary referral center and trauma center with all the advance services available to them: orthopedics, neuro-surgery, cardiovascular, and oncology. Indian Path will continue to be a full-fledged stellar community hospital with the same advance services.

The Family Medicine Program at LPH and Mountain View recently achieved the American Council of Graduate Medical Education's (ACGME) initial accreditation, which is not something easily done.

Lastly, Mr. Leonard thanked Council for allowing him and his wife to be the Grand Marshalls at our Christmas Parade last year, saying it was a great honor.

Mr. Hughes asked what are some things they will be doing to effect the needed changes in behavior. Mr. Leonard said that they are reaching out to the local organizations like MEOC and PACE to choose the best paths to proceed and to let them take the lead.

Mayor Johnson said we are aware of the drug problem in our area and realize that educating the public is an important step in alleviating that problem. Mr. Leonard said that they are working closely with Frontier Health on that particular issue.

Ms. Lyke asked what's next for LPH. Mr. Leonard replied that they are currently focusing on getting them on the EPIC rollout so everyone can talk to each other before anything else. He said that they cannot continue with duplication of services at all three hospitals so there will be changes made, but added that they do recognize what LPH means to this community.

Mr. Lawson asked how many medical residents are in the area. Mr. Leonard said there are 18 residents in Family Medicine and 26 in the Internal Medicine Residency Program at NCH. He said they serve as a great pipeline for positions in the area either on an out-patient

basis or working as hospitalists in the Ballad Health system in the area. He said they have a three-year residency program with a new class of first-year residents every July.

Mr. Lawson asked if there is anything in the COPA that gives a notice of changes planned. Mr. Leonard said that the State can take up to nine months to do its review, but when they hand a decision down, it will be given to Ballad Health.

**b. Resolution 01-2019 Equal Rights Amendment**

Mr. Lawson presented this resolution to Council for their consideration.

**Motion by Bailey, seconded by Hughes, that Council approve Resolution 01-2019 being a resolution in support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Motion resulted as follows:**

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

**c. Parade Permit – Union Little League**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this permit for the annual parade on opening day of Little League on April 6<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. He mentioned that the Union Little League is a joint venture of the Big Stone Gap Little League and Appalachia Little League. He said this is a big step for both organizations.

**Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hughes, that Council approve a Parade Permit for the opening day of the Union Little League on April 6, 2019 at 10:00 am. Motion resulted as follows:**

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

**d. Proclamation – Chris Bartee with State Farm**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this proclamation recognizing Bartee Insurance Agency.

**Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hughes, that Council approve a Proclamation recognizing Bartee Insurance Agency and Chris Bartee located at 401 E. 5<sup>th</sup> St., N. Motion resulted as follows:**

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

**e. Budget Amendment**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this amendment to add a \$50,000 grant from Wellmont to the 2018-19 Budget.

**Motion by Hughes, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a budget amendment increasing General Fund revenues and expenditures by \$50,000.00, a donation from the Wellmont Foundation for recreational improvements. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke**

**Nayes: None                      Abstain: None                      Absent: McKinney**

**f.        Projects Update**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Resolution 02-2019 authorizing the Town Manager to submit a grant application to the National Fitness Campaign for a Fitness Court.

**Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hughes, that Council approve Resolution 02-2019 being a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to submit a grant application to the National Fitness Campaign for a Fitness Court. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Ayes:     Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke**

**Nayes:   None                      Abstain: None                      Absent: McKinney**

Mr. Lawson said that on March 16<sup>th</sup> there will be a Union half marathon that will run from Big Stone Gap to Appalachia and back to Bullitt Park. This year they have added a Kids' 1-mile Leaping Leprechaun Race. There will be music in the park, and the Woodbooger will appear somewhere along the trail. Appalachia will have a troll as a mascot that will appear at some stage. They are designating two pick-up points this year. This race will be part of the Beast Series of five races. The organization dropped Bristol and added Big Stone Gap to its agenda this year.

Mr. Lawson said he and Mayor Johnson rode around to observe soil drainage and ditches that are not holding water. He said that Dawson Avenue is a concern at this time.

The Gap Partnership has submitted a grant application to build a third ball field. He said they are trying to ensure that girls and minorities are represented, as well as expanding the existing little leagues.

Mr. Lawson said there is little we can do about potholes until we get some hot asphalt and better weather. When the asphalt plant opens, he wants suggestions from Council about what roads to prioritize for paving.

He said we have more rain coming and the Police Department will be checking areas throughout the night. Fire Chief Billy Chandler and others are also doing checks on water levels.

**AGENDA ITEM 9**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a.        Planning Commission**

Building Official Matthew Bright said that the Planning Commission met last night. He said that Mark Lester notified the Town that he is unable to continue to serve on the Commission and tendered his resignation. Mr. Bright said that Amy Hubbard expressed interest in serving on the Planning Commission, and the Commission recommended that Council appoint Ms. Hubbard to finish out Mark Lester's term.

Mr. Bright said that the Commission requests the Town Attorney to review a draft ordinance to make sure what they are considering is legal.

He said this ordinance was drafted in response to a complaint by a citizen on Railroad Avenue about a truck being parked on the side of the road and left running all night. The noise was not sufficient to be addressed as a noise nuisance so they are looking at it as a possible parking violation.

The draft ordinance only applies to parking in the Town right-of-way or on street areas. There is no call for a public hearing until they make an official recommendation to Council.

Mayor Johnson asked if this included private property. Mr. Bright said that this only addresses vehicles on public rights-of-way, not on private property.

Council recommended that the Planning Commission decide on what their recommendations will be, and prepare a final draft ordinance for Council's consideration. Mr. Bright said the next Planning Commission will be on March 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm.

**b. Jones Brothers Recognition Committee**

Mrs. Bailey said the committee met today to continue discussions as to signage and signage locations. Further research is being done, and the Committee will schedule another meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM 10**

**COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Mrs. Bailey thanked the Police Department, Stephen Lawson and everyone who has worked thru this rain.

Mr. Hughes thanked all the Public Works and Public Safety employees. He thanked Council for supporting the Equal Rights Amendment. He said the Crooked Road Board of Directors meets later this month. He said he has been approached with the idea of an Overlook on Dogwood Drive.

Mayor Johnson thanked everyone for coming and also thanked all the Town employees.

**AGENDA ITEM 11**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke**

**Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: McKinney**

**Meeting adjourned 7:30 pm.**

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