

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

**ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE  
VIA GO TO MEETING PLATFORM  
BIG STONE GAP, VA**

**May 11, 2021**

**6:30 PM**

**\*As a result of the State of Emergency declared by Virginia Governor Ralph Northam on March 12, 2020 by Executive Order No. 51, by Wise County Virginia Executive Michael Hatfield on March 19, 2020 and by the Council of the Town of Big Stone Gap Virginia effective March 20, 2020, due to the public health emergency resulting from the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the public meeting scheduled for May 11, 2021 at 6:30 pm, is to be conducted electronically as authorized by Resolution 02-2021 adopted on April 13th, 2021.**

**\*This Electronic Meeting was conducted via the GO TO MEETING platform and was made available to Council Members, Town Staff, and the public by conference call. All votes called for were roll call votes.**

**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 \*Joined at 6:33 pm  
Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman  
Hon. Kent Gilley, Councilman  
Hon. Tyler Hughes, Councilman  
Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman  
Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman \*Joined at 6:35 pm

Staff Present: Mr. Stephen Lawson, Town Manager  
Ms. Amanda L. Hawkins, Town Clerk/Treasurer  
Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney

Those Absent: Mr. Steve Hamm, Chief of Police

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

**INVOCATION by Mayor Gary Johnson.**

**AGENDA ITEM 3**

**ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA**

**Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of May 11, 2021 be adopted as presented. Motion resulted as follows:**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

**AGENDA ITEM 4  
COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS**

No comments.

**AGENDA ITEM 5  
GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. **Approval of minutes of Council Workshop (Electronic) of April 6, 2021.  
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- b. **Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting (In-person) of April 13, 2021.  
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- c. **Approval of minutes of Special Council Meeting (Electronic) of April 20, 2021.  
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- d. **Departmental Reports for the month of April 2021.  
Recommended Action: Received and filed.**
- e. **Treasurer's Reports for the month of March 2021.  
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:**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

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

**AGENDA ITEM 6  
TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT**

Mr. Broskey said he had no updates to last week's report but would answer any questions Council members may have. Mayor Johnson asked if they did smoke testing last week. Mr. Broskey said they did testing and found several locations that need repairs. These areas will be incorporated into their recommendations for the project.

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

- a. **Memorandum of Understanding – 340B Drug Pricing Program**  
Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and Ballad Health to enable the hospital to participate in the 340B Drug Pricing Program.

**Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that Council authorize the Mayor to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Lonesome Pine Hospital, an affiliate of Ballad Health, in order to enable the Hospital to participate in the 340B Drug Pricing Program. Motion resulted as follows:**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

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

**b. Resolution 06-2021 – Change the Accrual of Penalties and Interest**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to change the accrual of penalties and interest practices for delinquent water and sewer utility accounts.

**Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Resolution 06-2021 being a resolution changing the accrual of penalties and interest practices for delinquent water and sewer utility accounts. Motion resulted as follows:**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

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

**c. Utility Budget Billing Option**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve offering all water and sewer customers the ability to participate in a new budget billing program to begin in June. Mrs. Bailey asked to clarify that no changes would be made to anyone's payment process unless they ask for them. Mr. Lawson and Ms. Hawkins confirmed that the plan is totally voluntary and nothing changes unless the customer initiates the change.

**Motion by Hughes, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve offering all water and sewer utility customers of the Town the ability to participate in a 12-month budget billing program to begin annually in June with a final settlement month in July. Motion resulted as follows:**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

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

**d. Payargo Electronic Lockbox Agreement**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve initiating an agreement with Payargo to allow for electronic ACH deposits of online banking payments directly into a Town checking account.

**Motion by Bailey, seconded by Bloomer, that Council authorize the Town Manager to sign an agreement with Payargo to allow for the electronic ACH deposit of online banking payments to be deposited into a Town checking account to be established with New Peoples Bank. Motion resulted as follows:**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

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

**e. PayStar Payment Processing**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve an agreement with Paystar Payment Processing to act as the Town's credit card payment processor and to utilize their Outbound IVR calling system for customer notification.

**Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that Council authorize the Town Manager to sign an agreement with PayStar Payment Processing to act as the Town's credit card payment processor and to utilize their Outbound IVR calling system for customer notifications.**

**Motion resulted as follows:**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

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

**f. COVID-19 & Projects Update**

**Budget**

Mr. Lawson said Town Staff is still working on the budget. He complimented Ms. Hawkins and Renee Mullins for working through several drafts and various roadblocks to arrive at the best budget for the Town, its employees, and our customers.

**ARPA Funds**

Mr. Lawson said the guidelines for the American Rescue Plan funds will be released soon and will clarify what the funds may or may not be used for. He said he will keep Council updated.

**Downtown**

Mr. Lawson said hanging baskets are going up this week.

The Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) sent two representatives to visit the Mutual Building renovations to determine the impact of Curklin's and the Big Stone Gap Redevelopment & Housing Authority's (BSGRHA) apartments on our downtown revitalization. He said they interviewed Mr. Lawson, Susie Cradic (director of BSGRHA) and Wayne Jordan (owner of Curklin's). Those questions and answers will be presented in a VHDA Conference that will review the impact the Authority has had throughout the state. The two representatives were very happy with how things look and plan a personal visit back to Big Stone Gap.

**Travel Ball**

Mr. Lawson said plans and dates have been finalized for June 5<sup>th</sup> for a girls softball tournament and June 6<sup>th</sup> for a boys baseball tournament.

**Wells Fargo Building**

Mr. Lawson said that upgrades to install LED lighting are expected to be completed next week on the Town's new building. We plan to construct two walls and add a glass partition for the safety of our employees. If all goes well, he said we will move in by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Paving**

Boyd's Construction has started patching road cuts we made during the winter for water line repairs. They're also patching potholes on Dogwood Drive that form every winter from scraping snow.

**Easements – Wallens Ridge Prison**

Mr. Lawson said he, Susie Cradic, Charles Bledsoe, and Walt Rivers met via conference call with Lyman Brown from the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) to discuss easements & right-of-ways associated with the transfer of Wallens Ridge State Prison (WRSP) from the Big Stone Gap Redevelopment & Housing Authority (BSGRHA) to VADOC. He said

the call went well and we are waiting on VADOC to provide documents granting the Town existing easements and right-of-ways that we have with the BSGRHA – this is simply a name change for the grantor.

Mrs. Bailey asked if the payment the WRSP makes to Town in lieu of taxes will change. Mr. Lawson replied that we are in the process of trying to get the proper documentation to make sure there is some kind of payment since the services are still being provided.

### **Road Closures for Events**

Mr. Lawson said that the Big Stone Gap General Store & Café has requested a road closure for Wood Ave E from 1<sup>st</sup> Street to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street on May 29<sup>th</sup> for an all-day music event. A different band will take the stage every 30 minutes from noon to 11 pm. We will notify Lee County Emergency Services of the road closure before the event.

The Backroads of Appalachia is planning a Mini Cooper Event on June 4<sup>th</sup>. They are anticipating around 100 – 150 cars and are requesting Wood Ave East be closed so they can park the cars in the street. This will require a road closure from East 5<sup>th</sup> St S to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. They have rented every room in the motel off Rt. 23 and have requested the Town throw a block party. We will have a music DJ with inflatables and Cornhole games.

### **Archery Range Pool**

Mr. Lawson said the Mayor, Bobby Bloomer, and Gary Harris met with the pool guy last week to evaluate our options to repair the pool. Estimates for the main pool membrane came in at \$47,680, the wading pool at \$17,770, and decking for the whole pool at \$79,940. He offered a package deal of \$43,440 for the main pool, \$14,070 for the wading pool, and \$75,000 for pool deck. Mr. Lawson asked for an estimate of just a horseshoe deck around the old diving board area so the pool deck will come down quite a bit. He said if we decide to repair the wading pool using our usual methods we are still looking at around \$60,000 to get the main pool ready to open. Mr. Bloomer asked if we have located the leak yet. Mr. Lawson said we have not but he believes the estimate for the pool membrane included finding and fixing the leak. The earliest the repairs can begin will be the 1<sup>st</sup> week of July.

### **Structure Fire**

Mr. Lawson said there was a structure fire at The Nail Girl/Sisterly Chic building adjacent to the Riggs building at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> Ave E and Shawnee Ave E. The fire was on the roof of the Sisterly Chic section and firemen had to knock a hole in the door between the buildings to put the fire out. There was extensive smoke damage so all of Sisterly Chic's inventory was a total loss. Both The Nail Girl and Sisterly Chic are temporarily moving back to the Minor Building on Wood Ave E until repairs are made.

## **AGENDA ITEM 8**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mr. Gilley reported on behalf of the Fishing Committee that Kids Fishing Day will be held on Saturday, May 29<sup>th</sup> at Big Cherry Lake.

## **AGENDA ITEM 9**

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Ms. Lyke thanked everyone for their hard work on Soapbox Derby day.

Mr. Hughes thanked Town employees, Mr. Lawson, and everyone at Town Hall.

Mr. Gilley thanked the Town employees and sent prayers for the City of Norton Police Chief. He asked when the Jordan Barnett event will be held. Mr. Lawson said it will be June 4<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Bloomer thanked all the Town employees.

Mrs. Bailey thanked all the Town employees, adding the Soapbox Derby was wonderful.

Mayor Johnson said the Tour de Crackers Neck will be held this year on June 12<sup>th</sup> and will be an independent race. He said they will increase the mileage from 26 to 36 miles but will not include any hill climbs. The organizers have asked for a donation of \$300-\$400. The race will begin at Bullitt Park and end at the First Christian Church. Mayor Johnson said the upcoming Kids Fishing Day will be a fun event. He thanked Mr. Lawson for working so hard to get things going in Town. He said he loved the photos posted of the Soapbox Derby event. He challenged every Council member to participate next year.

## **AGENDA ITEM 10**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

#### **ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

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

**Meeting adjourned at 7:22 pm.**

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