

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

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

**June 9, 2020**

**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. Kent Gilley, Councilman  
                                  Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman

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

Those Absent:           Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman  
                                  Hon. Tyler Hughes, Councilman  
                                  Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

**INVOCATION by Mayor Gary Johnson.**

**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 June 9, 2020 be adopted as presented. Motion resulted as follows:**

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

**AGENDA ITEM 5**

**COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS**

**Jim Fawbush, Norton, VA**

Mr. Fawbush spoke about getting handicapped accessible access to the South Fork of the Powell River for trout fishing. He said that what has been done near the Jessie Lea RV Park & Campground is appreciated but is not acceptable - the pier is too high off the water, and there's no way he can fish from the road. He reminded Council that they said in the past that

they were going to make some handicapped accessible sites. He offered pictures of some good sites on the South Holston Dam. He said he understands that funds are hard to come by, but if we look back about two years ago, funds were allocated (around \$19,000) to build three handicapped accessible fishing spots. He said that a few years ago he, Steve Stone, and the mayor walked the Greenbelt and identified three areas that would be good spots, but he said that two of those are too high. He said the best spot is behind Town Hall. He asked Council to please consider this as a lot of people like to fish the Powell River.

**Cody Caudill, 804 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave E, Big Stone Gap, VA 24219**

Mr. Caudill said there is a serious speeding issue on his street and asked for a greater police presence to discourage speeding, parking and drinking in the area. He said he and the neighbors who have young children are fearful for them. He said they would also like a sign indicating “Children At Play”.

**AGENDA ITEM 6**

**GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. **Approval of minutes of Council Workshop (Electronic) of May 5, 2020.**  
**Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- b. **Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting (Electronic) of May 12, 2020.**  
**Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- c. **Departmental Reports for the month of May, 2020.**  
**Recommended Action: Received and filed.**
- d. **Treasurer’s Reports for the month of April, 2020.**  
**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, Gilley, Johnson, Lyke**

**Nayes: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Absent: Bloomer, Hughes, McKinney**

**AGENDA ITEM 7**

**TOWN ENGINEER’S REPORT**

In Mr. McElroy’s absence, Mr. Lawson said there were no updates to last week’s report.

**AGENDA ITEM 8**

**TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT**

- a. **Ordinance 09-2020 – FY2021 Budget and Capital Improvements Plan**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to adopt the FY2020-21 Budget and Capital Improvements Plan.

**Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Ordinance 09-2020 being an ordinance adopting the budget for the town of Big Stone Gap, VA for the fiscal year July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, appropriating funds for the fiscal year and placing levies upon all real estate, personal property, bank stock, licenses, fees, consumers of utility**

**services, meals tax, vehicle license tax, cigarette tax, transient occupancy tax, and all other levies as previously imposed or modified herein. Motion resulted as follows:**

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

**Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer, Hughes, McKinney**

**b. Ordinance 10-2020 - Local Hospital Provider Assessment**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this ordinance to implement a Local Hospital Provider Assessment .

**Motion by Bailey, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Ordinance 10-2020 being an ordinance implementing a Local Hospital Provider Assessment. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Ayes: Bailey, Gilley, Johnson**

**Nayes: None Abstain: Lyke Absent: Bloomer, Hughes, McKinney**

Motion failed for lack of a quorum.

Ms. Lyke explained that voting on this ordinance would create a conflict of interest because of her employment.

Mr. Lawson suggested the Mayor call for a special meeting to vote on this ordinance because it needs to be voted on in June. The meeting was set for Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm.

**c. Resolution 11-2020 – Amend PPTRA Rate**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to adjust the PPTRA rate.

**Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Resolution 11-2020 being a resolution amending the Personal Property Tax Relief Act percentage of relief to 55% effective with the tax year beginning January 1, 2020. Motion resulted as follows:**

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

**Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer, Hughes, McKinney**

**d. Budget Amendment – HIDTA Grant (01/01/2020 to 06/30/2020)**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this amendment to recognize the first half of the HIDTA Grant awarded January 1, 2020 which increased revenues and expenses in the amount of \$21,075.50 to the FY2019-20 Budget.

**Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve a budget amendment to increase revenues and expenses by \$21,075.50 in the General Operating Fund from the HIDTA Grant Funds. Motion resulted as follows:**

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

**Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer, Hughes, McKinney**

**e. COVID-19 Update**

Mr. Lawson said Wise County has 27 cases, 11 hospitalizations, and 2 deaths from the COVID-19 virus.

**f. Projects Update**

Mr. Lawson said that Amanda Hawkins is absent tonight because she is in Oklahoma City with her husband who had surgery for an infection in his arm that developed while he was visiting relatives. He asked everyone to keep Danny in their prayers as it is a very serious condition.

Mr. Lawson said he met with a representative from Spearhead Trails to visit horse trail sites on the Scott County side of Big Cherry. There were 21 riders that came to ride on the trails. When asked for feedback they said that instead of horse trails they'd rather ride the roads (Route 619, Century Road, and the Big Cherry Road) because the horses they were riding were gaited horses, such as Tennessee Walkers, rather than quarter horses. They also said if we had camping spots available, they were more likely to use those roads.

Mr. Lawson said that some vandalism occurred at Big Cherry. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' (DGIF) sign for fishing rules was shot up. Our cameras showed no activity, but they only retain recordings for the last 30 days, so the damage may have happened as early as April.

He said that he and the Mayor will meet with John Browning, who lives on Century Road, who has offered to use his equipment to do some work on Big Cherry Road and Century Road if we will supply the stone.

Mr. Lawson said that, as part of our initiative to promote our partnership with Mountain Empire Community College (MECC), we will allow them to hang banners on our poles downtown during the month of August.

He said that jeep rides have been scheduled on both the Lovelady Jeep Trail and the Thunderstruck Jeep Trail, of which one begins - and the other ends - in Big Stone Gap, for June 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, or the 15<sup>th</sup>. He will update everyone when he gets a firm date. He said he will be riding his jeep during the ride to identify any obstacles that need to be addressed.

He said the park fields are open for softball practice in two hour slots from 4-6 pm and 6-8 pm. Playgrounds, events, pools, and splashpads are still closed by order of the governor.

Mr. Lawson said the Town will honor employees of Lonesome Pine Hospital (LPH) on Thursday, June 18 at the Armory parking lot. He would like Council members to attend and to be there by 8:45. A press conference is scheduled for 9 am. Ballad Health will have a speaker, as will the LPH Board of Directors, and the Mayor will speak as well. Mr. Lawson said that LPH was designated as the area COVID-19 treatment center and the employees there have worked with a greater risk than most of us. He recommended people drive by and honk their horns in a show of support for the workers during the ceremony.

**AGENDA ITEM 9  
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No reports.

**AGENDA ITEM 10  
COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Mr. Gilley said he saw a picture of the sign that was shot at Big Cherry. He urged our citizens to be more aware of what is going on around us to try to help with problems like this. He said that when the camera becomes active at the boat dock with live feed it will also help.

On the subject of handicapped fishing areas, Mr. Gilley said he is all for it but with lack of funds we may not be able to do anything immediately. Mr. Lawson commented that Mr. Fawbush was with them from the beginning on constructing the site at the Jessie Lea RV Park. He helped choose the spot and advised them throughout the whole process. Mayor Johnson commented that the picture Mr. Fawbush passed around doesn't do the subject justice. He said he researched the handicapped pier in the photo and it is about four times the length of a football field and almost certainly cost well over a million dollars. He said we have neither the funds nor the space to construct anything close to that. He suggested we have a committee to look at different places and see what can be done.

Mayor Johnson said the protest march was well-organized and everyone was well-behaved. He thanked the organizers and participants for making that happen.

**AGENDA ITEM 11  
ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

**Nays: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Absent: Bloomer, Hughes, McKinney**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.**

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