

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

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

July 7, 2020

6:30 PM

***As a result of the State of Emergency declared by Virginia Governor Ralph Northam on March 12, 2020, 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, the public meeting on July 7, 2020, at 6:30 pm, is to be conducted electronically as authorized by Resolution 08-2020 adopted on April 7, 2020.**

***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.**

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

Staff Present: Mr. Stephen Lawson, Town Manager
 Ms. Amanda Hawkins, Town Clerk/Treasurer
 Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney
 Mr. Steve Hamm, Chief of Police

*Hon. Nancy Bailey joined the meeting at 6:45 pm.

AGENDA ITEM 2

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Review of draft of minutes of Council Workshop (Electronic Attendance) on June 2, 2020, the Regular Council Meeting of June 9, 2020, and the Special Council Meeting (Electronic Attendance) of June 15, 2020.

No comments.

AGENDA ITEM 3
TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT
Greenbelt Phase V Project

Mr. McElroy began with launching a computer presentation on the Greenbelt Phase V Project for anyone who is attending the meeting via computer. He said the 90% drawings are nearing completion and should be submitted by next week. The bridge will be located along East 3rd Street near Dr. Botts' house and will cross the Powell River where it will travel along East River Blvd, paralleling the Powell River to the gym and tying into an existing gravel pathway.

Mr. McElroy reviewed slides of the layout of the proposed trail, bridge, and bridge foundations. He also showed the proposed retaining wall that will use ready-rock and structural drawings for the bridge foundation. He said the new portion of the trail will be just under 1,700 feet with the bridge being around 170 feet long and 10 feet wide, which is the width of the Greenbelt Trail. He noted that the height of the bridge is determined by the regulation that the bottom of the beams must be one foot higher than the flood elevation. The pier will be about 12-14 feet below grade so the total pier height will be about 25 feet tall. The bridge itself will be a premanufactured steel-trussed bridge with pressure-treated wood decking and have a small arch.

Mr. Lawson said he will take any of the members to the site this week to review the drawings if they wish to do so.

Rt. 610 and Shelby Avenue Phase II Waterline Replacement Project

Mr. McElroy said the waterline installation is complete, all new lines are in operation and old lines have been abandoned, and the patch paving has been completed. The only outstanding item is the paving overlays near the high school, and the paving contractors should be working on that next week. Mr. McElroy said he is submitting a change order request to accommodate the removal and replacement of a concrete v-ditch that VDOT wanted put back. He said the final budget will not exceed the available funding for the project.

Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study Program.

Mr. McElroy said we have submitted an application to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to participate in the new Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study program. DEQ will announce their offer in September, 2020. He reminded Council that a 25% match is required for this project but should we be able to get funding from Lenowisco for the match— which he thinks is possible - we will have a \$100,000 project that will cost the town nothing.

Mr. McElroy said he has accepted a new job and will be leaving The Lane Group in a few weeks. He introduced Jonathan Broskey, who will be taking over his duties at Lane Engineering. Mr. McElroy said he has been working on the Town's projects and reporting to Council for the last 12 to 13 years, adding that Jon has been working alongside him for much of that time.

AGENDA ITEM 4**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT****a. Resolution 12-2020 – SMART Scale Applications**

Mr. Lawson said this year's SMART Scale applications are for the installation of ADA accessible sidewalk ramps on East 5th Street and Gilley Avenue, and lane widening to accommodate the installation of a left turn lane on Gilley Avenue East in the vicinity of Carter Street and Burger King. We have worked with VDOT for about two years to get approval for a project that will be fundable. Some of the projects we have proposed include improving lane width on Country Boy Hill and improving the intersection of Wood Avenue and Shawnee Ave where Dari Delite is, but those are high-cost projects and are out of our reach right now so the left-turn lanes on Gilley Avenue near Burger King is the logical choice at this time.

Mrs. Bailey asked the status of the proposed widening of the lanes on Country Boy Hill. Mr. Lawson said he would check with VDOT to see where on the project list that proposal is.

b. Resolution 13-2020 – Section 125 Plan

Mr. Lawson said this resolution is to establish the Section 125 Plan for the Town.

c. Budget Amendment – Additional Revenues/Expenses ALL FUNDS

Mr. Lawson said this budget amendment will update the 2019-2020 Budget.

d. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson said the traffic light on East 5th Street went out and needed a total unit replacement at a cost of over \$17,000, not including labor and consultation by Lane Engineering, Elliot Davis, Econolite, and two electricians. He said that Econolite will help us save any parts from the old cabinet that we can use as replacement parts for the other lights.

Mr. Lawson said that Amanda Hawkins has reopened negotiations with ServLine to obtain insurance for our customers' water lines should they have a water leak. He said that we are also talking to a different billing company to offer customers the option of receiving their water bills by email rather than regular mail.

Mr. Lawson said that the total number of utility customers who are past due has reached 80, with the past due amounts totaling \$29,010. Of that 80, about $\frac{3}{4}$ are habitually late in paying their bills and have paid almost nothing toward their current outstanding bill. He said that the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ of customers who are past due and who are not habitually late are all making payments as they can. He noted that the Virginia SCC has extended their deadline for disconnections thru August 31st. Our current deadline to suspend disconnects is August 1st. He said he would check with other localities to see if they were planning to extend their deadline to August 31st. He said we didn't advertise the suspension of late fees but have dealt with them on a case by case basis as they come to us.

Mr. Lawson said that the school Backpack Program that we contributed to in which 652 families were given a \$25 voucher to a local restaurant has been a great success. So far \$16,300 worth of vouchers have been redeemed county-wide by restaurants. He said he has picked up vouchers from Little Mexico, Dari-Delite, Four Seasons, Country Kitchen, and Curklin's, and it seems that most of the people who have redeemed vouchers have been first-time visitors to the restaurant and the owners are delighted to get new customers.

Mr. Lawson said that Phase I on the Co-Work Space in the basement of Curklin's is complete and all the debris has been removed. They have finished cleaning up and extra drains

and sump pumps have been installed. The next phase will be actual construction but we are waiting on our last HVAC and electrical bids and some corrections to the plumbing by Quesenberry's subcontractors. He said we should be able to proceed in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Lawson said that he had budgeted money in last fiscal year's budget that was carried over into this fiscal year for a couple of items we have yet to do. One is for constructing some concrete t-boxes at the A. K. Fraley Park to keep water out. The second is for a sidewalk that will go from the Verizon building next to the to the new cafe to the entrance of Bullitt Park. This would entail moving five water meters, constructing two driveway crossings, and creating three handicapped access areas along the way.

Mr. Lawson said that we are beginning to get the last of the road cuts we've had to do this year patched and paved. Little Henry's is doing that work and has been on vacation this week but will get started back on paving next week. We have 14 small places to pave and \$26,415 left from the asphalt money allocated this year. We've had a request from Mike Dizney to pave West Rose Street North off Second Avenue West. He has four double-wide homes that he is paving the driveways for and would like us to pave the street, which is now gravel. The problem is that we have West Spring Street North and West 11th Street North in that area that are not paved either, and if we pave one the residents on the other streets will want theirs paved too and we don't have the money allocated to do that this year. Dizney said he got a quote for \$9,600 to pave Rose Street. Mr. Lawson said we will look into it, but maybe the best time to do that is when we finish up with the Second Avenue West paving that we received money from the Coal Haul Road fund to do. We may get a lower bid if we already have a contractor and equipment in that location.

e. COVID-19 Update

Mr. Lawson said the COVID-19 virus is ramping up again in our region. We have asked employees to try to restrict non-essential travel during this vacation season and to not travel beyond a 150 mile radius without talking to their supervisor. When they return, we will ask them to do a daily monitoring log for the following 14 days. If any symptoms appear or they test positive, we will ask them to self-quarantine for 14 days.

He said there was a good crowd at the 4th of July fireworks show. He noticed that most people were trying to practice social distancing. He said Gary Harris and his Parks & Recreation crew did a great job with the fireworks. Mrs. Bailey asked how many people were in the park during the fireworks. Mayor Johnson said there were less than 300 people and everyone was maintaining distance from each other.

**AGENDA ITEM 5
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No reports.

**AGENDA ITEM 6
COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Mr. Gilley said we will definitely miss Stephen McElroy and welcomed Jon Broskey. He asked about the camera at the boat dock and when it would be accessible. Mr. McElroy said that Matthew Bright and VA-KY Communications need to coordinate their efforts to get that

up and running. Mr. Lawson explained that Matthew will be in Fire Marshall training for the next three weeks and won't be available until the end of the month.

Mrs. Bailey said that Stephen McElroy has been reporting to Council for several years and will certainly be missed.

Mr. Hughes thanked Parks and Rec for a great 4th of July fireworks show. He thanked Stephen McElroy for his work for the Town.

Mr. Bloomer also thanked Stephen McElroy for his years of service.

Ms. Lyke said Mr. McElroy will be missed. She thanked the Parks and Rec crews for how good the Town looks.

Mr. Johnson said it's been great knowing Stephen McElroy and he will be hard to replace. He said he receives so many compliments on the flowers downtown. He said the 4th of July fireworks were great.

AGENDA ITEM 7

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned 7:20 pm.

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