

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

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

July 13, 2021

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. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman
 Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman

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

Those Absent: Hon. Tyler Hughes, Councilman

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 Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of July 13, 2021 be adopted as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 5 COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Shannon Vaughn, Whisper Oak Lane, Big Stone Gap, VA 24219

Mr. Vaughn said he has 13 acres of land that he plans to put mobile homes or prefabricated homes on for himself and his family and needs water and sewer service for those homes. His initial plan was to put in a 2” water line up the hill to the houses then install taps to connect all the homes to that one line. He said he is willing to grant an easement to his property for the Town to access the water line.

Mr. Lawson distributed the water/sewer ordinance for the Town to Council members. He explained that the ordinance allows the Town to put in a ¾” water line on our right-of-way that connects a meter to the house. If we place a 2” water line from our main connection up the hill to the homes, then allow taps to extend off that line, then we become responsible for the maintenance of that 2” line, regardless of the reason or cost.

Mr. Broskey said that installing a 2” water line from the main connection to the house on the hill could affect fire flow and that would be a potential problem for people in the Artesian Well Hollow Road area. As to the sewer line, that steep of a grade could cause a separation of liquids and solids.

Mr. Vaughn said his alternative plan is to put a 2” tap from the main line and bore across to his side of the road to install a valve that would connect to two ¾” lines going to both houses they are building now.

Mr. Lawson said we can run two separate ¾” lines (or whatever the hydraulics dictates the size of the line to be to get the water up the hill) to their two houses. The lines would come off of two meter bases at the foot of the hill (on our right-of-way) that connected to the main line. We would do the same with the sewer lines.

Mayor Johnson suggested the matter be put on hold until our Town engineer could visit the site and determine the line size needed for the elevation.

AGENDA ITEM 6 GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. **Approval of minutes of Council Workshop (Electronic) of June 1, 2021.
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- b. **Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting (Electronic) of June 8, 2021
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- c. **Approval of minutes of Special Council Meeting (Electronic) of June 15, 2021.
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- d. **Departmental Reports for the month of June, 2021.
Recommended Action: Received and filed.**
- e. **Treasurer’s Reports for the month of May, 2021.
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, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes**

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

Mr. Broskey said he has no updates to his report given at the Council Workshop but he will answer any questions Council may have.

He said he and Mr. Lawson met last week with Duane Miller and Jimmy Adkins to look at a proposal to install sewer service in the Southern Section of Town between 26th Street and 29th Street. He said we are trying to qualify for a Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) grant application that must be submitted by October. There is approximately one million dollars in grant funds available for towns to apply for. Trey Peace, who is interning with Stephen Lawson this summer, will be visiting each homeowner to explain the project and do a survey of residents interested in connecting to the Town's sewer service.

**AGENDA ITEM 8
TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT****a. Resolution 09-2021 – Rescind Resolution 02-2021**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to rescind Resolution 02-2021 that authorized the Town to hold virtual meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve Resolution 09-2021 being a resolution rescinding Resolution 02-2021 in order to end the temporary changes in certain deadlines and to modify public meeting and public hearing practices and procedures to address continuity of operations associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic disaster and Public Health Emergency. Motion resulted as follows:

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

b. Ordinance 10-2021 – Sale of Armory Property to Ballad Health

Mr. Lawson asked Council to authorize a public hearing to hear comments on the proposed sale of the Big Stone Gap Armory Property to Ballad Health.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council authorize a public hearing on August 3, 2021 at 6:30 pm for the purpose of receiving public comment on the proposed sale of the 7.24 acre Armory Property to Ballad Health. Motion resulted as follows:

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

c. Resolution 11-2021 – Section 125 Premium Only Plan

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to adopt the Section 125 Premium Only Plan to authorize pre-tax deductions for employees' health insurance premiums.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve Resolution 11-2021 being a resolution adopting the Section 125 Premium Only Plan for the plan year ending June 30, 2022. Motion resulted as follows:

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

d. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson said the State's moratorium on the disconnection of delinquent utility customers will end on September 1st. He said at this time we have 265 customers who are 60 days or more past due. We will send a letter to each of those customers along with a COVID-19 Economic Hardship Statement for them to consider. By signing the statement, customers agree to make monthly payments on their past due amounts as well as keep their current bill up-to-date. Delinquent customers who do not agree to a repayment plan will have their service cut off in September.

Sheila Pinkston with the Appalachian Training Central Bland (ATCB) Alumni Association requested a letter from the Town Manager and Mayor, along with a proclamation, to present at their 50th Alumni Association reunion in August. He said a proclamation will be ready for Council's approval at the August Council Workshop. He said Ms. Pinkston requested that the Town Manager and Mayor attend the reunion dinner at Curklin's on August 14th.

Mr. Lawson said Ked Meade and Trey Peace are working on the 2022 Community Business Launch (CBL) Program application from DHCD that is due on July 16th. We are applying for a \$45,000 grant with a Town match of \$15,000. The program runs for eight weeks and is basically a competition for local businesses to develop a Pitch and a Business Plan with the winners in each category awarded money that will go toward their startup. The CBL grant will be awarded in the fall.

Mr. Lawson said the Wise County Chamber of Commerce Gala will be held on August 14th at 5:30 pm. The Town usually sponsors a table for eight so if any Council members wish to attend they need to contact him as soon as possible. The theme for this year's gala is "Murder on the Chamber Express", a 1930's murder mystery.

He reminded Council to make sure they inform Amanda if they are attending the Virginia Municipal League (VML) Conference in Leesburg in October.

Mr. Lawson said the Building Official has been in contact with the property owner in the west end of Town who has been the subject of complaints from neighbors about the numerous cars parked on his property. He said that situation should be resolved by the end of the month.

He said we have had sewer issues at 308 Shawnee Avenue. We have tried to use the camera but cannot see well enough to find the issue so we will probably replace 30-40 feet of line to resolve the problem.

Mr. Lawson said he has personally talked with the man who has been accused of stalking and intimidating females on the Greenbelt. He said he doesn't know if the man will change his behavior. He was told to stay off the Greenbelt and out of the park. He said we can't take any legal action yet but he encouraged anyone who has been stalked by this man to report it immediately and follow thru as a witness. He said the Fire Chief will have a member of the fire department patrol the Greenbelt on an ATV to try to deter any incidents.

**AGENDA ITEM 9
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No reports.

**AGENDA ITEM 10
COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Mr. Gilley thanked Town employees and expressed his hope that Mr. Vaughn will get his water issues resolved.

Mr. Bloomer said the 4th of July celebration was great. He said Ked Meade is going a wonderful job.

Mrs. Bailey thanked the Vaughn family for coming to the meeting tonight and hopes their water issues are resolved quickly. She said there will be a “Music in the Mountains” at the June Tolliver House on Sunday evening.

Mayor Johnson said we are on the right track to resolve Mr. Vaughn’s water line issues. He said he is glad to be back in person for the meetings. He said the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Lonesome Pine School & Heritage Center was a good event last Saturday. He said his nephew played in a travel ball tournament at Bullitt Park and really enjoyed the fields and the Town.

**AGENDA ITEM 11
ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm.

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