

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

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

September 7, 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. Tyler Hughes, Councilman
 Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman

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

Those Absent: Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman

AGENDA ITEM 2

PUBLIC HEARING – FY2021-22 Budget Amendment-ARPA Funds

Mayor Johnson recessed the Council Workshop and opened the Public Hearing for the FY2021-22 Budget Amendment to appropriate ARPA funds. He called for comments from citizens. Hearing no comments, Mayor Johnson closed the Public Hearing for the Budget Amendment.

AGENDA ITEM 3

PUBLIC HEARING – Ordinance 12-2021 – Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area

Mayor Johnson opened the Public Hearing for Ordinance 12-2021 to designate an outdoor refreshment area and called for comments from citizens. Hearing no comments, Mayor Johnson closed the Public Hearing and reconvened the Council Workshop.

AGENDA ITEM 4

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Review of draft of minutes of the Council Workshop of August 3, 2021, and the Regular Council Meeting of August 10, 2021.

No comments.

AGENDA ITEM 5**TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT**

Mr. Lawson said Jon Broskey is with his kids at a sporting event this evening. In his absence, Mr. Lawson said the only update concerns the Greenbelt Phase V Project. The environmental permit has been reviewed by the Virginia Department of Transportation and we are awaiting federal approval to proceed.

AGENDA ITEM 6**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT****a. Proclamation – Far Fetched Grooming LLC**

Mr. Lawson said this proclamation is to recognize Far Fetched Grooming, LLC as a new business in Town located in Cloverleaf Square.

b. Proclamation – Big Stone Gap Pottery Shop

Mr. Lawson said this proclamation is to recognize the Big Stone Gap Pottery Shop as a new business in Town located inside the Big Stone Gap General Store & Café.

c. Projects Update**Virginia Municipal League Conference**

Mr. Lawson said the Virginia Municipal League's (VML) Conference is scheduled for October 4-6. He noted VML has indicated that the conference will be held in person unless the state issues mandates regarding COVID-19. He said if anyone feels it is unsafe to attend please let him or Amanda know so they can cancel reservations.

Wise County Chamber of Commerce Gala

He said the Wise County Chamber of Commerce Gala scheduled for this weekend has been cancelled due to increased cases of COVID-19, and will not be rescheduled this year.

Grand Openings

Mr. Lawson said Far Fetched Grooming will hold a Grand Opening on Thursday, September 9th, from 3-7 pm, with the ribbon-cutting ceremony at 4:00 pm. The Chamber of Commerce will be in attendance as well.

The Grand Opening for the Big Stone Gap Pottery Shop will be on Monday, September 20th, from 3-9 pm, with the ribbon-cutting ceremony at 2 pm.

Softball Tournament

On October 9th, there will be a 10-and-under softball tournament at Bullitt Park. This will be one of our biggest tournaments this year with 12 teams already signed up.

Mutual Building

Mr. Lawson said the Virginia Tobacco Commission conducted their final audit of the Mutual Building and the Co-Work Space. He noted the Commission representatives were very impressed with the final result of the building's renovations. He said if things go well we will

have the last office rented, which will make our Co-Work Space the first in Virginia to be totally occupied.

Frog Level Property

Mr. Lawson said he has been approached by someone who is interested in leasing the property the Town owns at Frog Level for a Putt-Putt Course. They asked if the Town could assist with lighting the area. Mr. Lawson said that it is close to the area we want to put the bike park so it would be an asset to the Town to help with that. He is having an electrician do a preliminary assessment of the cost. Mayor Johnson asked if the lighting we install there can be used to light the field. Mr. Lawson said he didn't think it would be enough lights to help light the field, but we may be able to extend the Greenbelt lights for the parking area. He added that all of the debris from the cleanup of the area will be taken by the Job Corps to put into their incinerator for disposal.

Multi-Use Building at Bullitt Park

Mr. Lawson said the visitors' locker room will be ready for the home game at Bullitt Park on Friday. The referee's room will not be ready but at least we will be able to separate the teams while they are here to practice social distancing.

New Logo for Big Cherry

Mr. Lawson said the new Big Cherry Trail Project that we received a grant to develop will require signage and will need a Big Cherry logo to put on the signs. He said he will have some proofs at the next meeting to review. One style we are look at is a badge type that we could use on signs and as a shirt patch, with another style more suitable for promotional items like t-shirts, etc.

Water Leak

He said there was a main water leak today on Skeen's Ridge and Hillcrest from about 6 am until around 3 pm. It has been repaired and is in service now.

Pro-Art Association

Mr. Lawson said the Pro-Art Association sent season tickets for all their shows this year. There is enough for two tickets per council member so if anyone is interested please let Amanda know and she will give you the tickets for the event as it occurs.

Utilities

Mr. Lawson said that cut-offs will begin tomorrow on delinquent utility customers. He said we managed to get the number down to 125 customers on the list who have made no effort to set up a payment plan on their past due water/sewer bills. He said all the towns in the county are beginning cutoffs just as we are.

P'nut Football

Mr. Lawson said the P'nut football season will end with the championship games tonight. He said that, because they moved one of their games to Appalachia because of rain and not getting the field ready in time, a rumor somehow got started that we were moving P'nut football to Appalachia next season and not going to allow them to play on our fields next year.

He emphasized that rumor was absolutely not true and we have assured their managers of that fact.

**AGENDA ITEM 7
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No reports.

**AGENDA ITEM 8
COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Ms. Lyke said the Amazing Race was a really good event and people seemed to have a great time.

Mr. Hughes thanked the Town crews. He said the Home Craft Committee met today and will be working with the Virginia Department of Health on how to allow 10,000 people to get together safely. He said there is still some hesitancy about whether they can host the event in the normal manner. He said this Friday the Southwest Virginia Museum will host a special Lunch on the Lawn at noon to honor first responders as part of a 9/11 event.

Mayor Johnson said he is glad to see the Frog Level property cleaned up, and glad to hear complaints from people about not being able to find a parking spot downtown. He said the Town crews did a great job getting water back into service today. He encouraged everyone to continue to work together as a team.

**AGENDA ITEM 9
ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned 6:48 pm.

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