

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

**ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE  
Via GO TO MEETING Platform  
BIG STONE GAP, VA**

**October 13, 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 October 13, 2020, at 6:30 pm, is to be conducted electronically as authorized by Resolution 16-2020 adopted on September 8, 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. 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  
Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman  
Hon. Kent Gilley, Councilman  
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 \*Joined the meeting 6:40 pm

Those Absent: Hon. Tyler Hughes, Councilman  
Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

**INVOCATION by Mayor Gary Johnson.**

**AGENDA ITEM 3**

**ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA**

**Motion by Bailey, seconded by Gilley, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of October 13, 2020 be adopted as presented. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes, Lyke**

**AGENDA ITEM 4  
COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS**

No comments.

**AGENDA ITEM 5  
GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. **Approval of minutes of Council Workshop (Electronic) of September 1, 2020.  
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- b. **Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting (Electronic) of September 8, 2020.  
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- c. **Departmental Reports for the month of September, 2020.  
Recommended Action: Received and filed.**

**Motion by Bailey, seconded by Bloomer, that the General Order of Business be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes, Lyke**

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

Mr. Broskey said he did not have any additional information to submit but said he’d be happy to answer any questions Council may have.

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

- a. **Resolution 17-2020 – Shawnee Ave Bridge Closure for Construction**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to close the Shawnee Avenue Bridge while construction is ongoing.

**Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Resolution 17-2020 being a resolution approving the closure of the existing Shawnee Avenue Bridge during the construction. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes, Lyke**

- b. **Resolution 18-2020 – Re-appointing Freda Bishop to the Planning Commission**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to reappoint Freda Bishop to the Planning Commission for a four-year term ending October 31, 2024.

**Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Resolution 18-2020 being a resolution to reappoint Freda Bishop to the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission for a four year term which will expire on October 31, 2024. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Roll Call Vote:****Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Johnson, McKinney****Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes, Lyke****c. Resolution 19-2020 – Re-appointing Amy Hubbard to the Planning Commission**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to reappoint Amy Hubbard to the Planning Commission for a four-year term ending September 30, 2024.

**Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Resolution 19-2020 being a resolution to reappoint Amy Hubbard to the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission for a four year term which will expire on September 30, 2024. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Roll Call Vote:****Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Johnson, McKinney****Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes, Lyke****d. Resolution 20-2020 – Re-appointing Miranda Deboard to the Housing Authority**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to reappoint Miranda Deboard to the Big Stone Gap Redevelopment and Housing Authority for a four-year term ending November 12, 2024.

**Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Resolution 20-2020 being a resolution to reappoint Miranda Deboard to the Big Stone Gap Redevelopment & Housing Authority Board for a four year term which will expire on November 12, 2024. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Roll Call Vote:****Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Johnson, McKinney****Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes, Lyke****e. Resolution 21-2020 – Authorizing a Special Use Permit to Savida Health**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution authorizing a Special Use Permit to Savida Health to open an outpatient drug and alcohol treatment facility in Cloverleaf Square.

**Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve Resolution 21-2020 being a resolution authorizing the issuance of a Special Use Permit to Savida Health, with an additional condition, to operate an outpatient drug and alcohol treatment facility at 310 Cloverleaf Square, Building B, Suite 2. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Roll Call Vote:****Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Johnson, McKinney****Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes, Lyke****f. Budget Amendment – FY2020-2021 Prior Year Encumbrances**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this amendment to add revenue and expenses to the FY2020-21 Budget to allocate the prior year budget encumbrances.

**Motion by Bloomer seconded by Bailey, that Council approve a budget amendment to the FY2020-2021 budget to increase General Fund revenues and expenses by \$23,660.55 and to increase Water Fund revenues and expenses by \$6,465.62, for an overall increase in revenue and expenses of \$30,126.17 to allocate the prior year budget encumbrances. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

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

**g. Budget Amendment – DMV Grant 154AL-2021-51400-21400**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this amendment to add revenue and expenses to the FY2020-21 Budget for a DMV Grant.

**Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve a budget amendment to the FY2020-2021 budget to increase General Fund revenues and expenses by \$12,245. Motion resulted as follows:**

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

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

**h. Projects & COVID-19 Updates**

**Paving**

Mr. Lawson said our annual paving project has been awarded to Boyd's Construction at a bid of \$175,054. Little Henry's Excavating & Construction was very close but came in over the winning bid by about \$4,500. Mr. Lawson said we have smaller jobs such as road cuts that Little Henry's will be doing. He summarized the paving schedule:

**Completed**

- Washita Ave W from West 11<sup>th</sup> Street S to West 13<sup>th</sup> Street S
- West 12<sup>th</sup> Street S from Washita Ave W to Cumberland Ave W
- West 13<sup>th</sup> Street S from Washita Ave W to Cumberland Ave W

**Upcoming**

- Wallens Ridge Blvd (in progress)
- from Shawnee Ave W along Wood Ave W to Cumberland Ave W (begins next week)
- a 150' strip at the back of Bullitt Park
- Algonquin Street
- West 6<sup>th</sup> Street N (Cherokee Ave W to the end of the street at the Dog Park)
- Powell Avenue East
- Railroad Avenue East (East 1<sup>st</sup> Street N to East 4<sup>th</sup> Street N)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue East
- Fox Street
- Oakview Cemetery (entrance to around the flag pole).

Mr. Lawson said this would leave us with about \$85,000 left for road cuts and other necessary road repairs between now and Spring.

### **Fishing Piers**

Mr. Lawson said that Parks & Recreation finished constructing two handicapped accessible fishing piers on the riverbank near Town Hall. He said the locations were picked out by Mr. Fawbush. Mayor Johnson and Kent Gilley helped spearhead this project. He said that we may get the areas between the cross-ties paved by Little Henry's while they are doing some of the smaller paving jobs.

### **Bullitt Park**

Mr. Lawson said that a few weeks ago Job Corps had reworked some of the blocks that had been laid incorrectly on the multi-purpose building. He met with them at the park this morning while they picked up their equipment they had left. While there, Mr. Lawson said they discovered damage to the corner of the foundation near the old concession stand. He said it looked like some type of vehicle hit the blocks, leaving some streaks of blue behind. He said we will have to have a contractor fix the damage, and noted that Matthew Bright is working hard with Scott County Telephone Coop (SCTC) to get cameras installed in the vicinity to monitor activity there.

### **Downtown Businesses**

Mr. Lawson said that at the Wise County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) meeting this evening he learned that the 53 loans the IDA had given to businesses in Wise County to help them get thru the economic impact of the pandemic will be forgiven, so the businesses will not have to repay them.

He said that Jasmine's Cottage, after trying a couple of places in or close to Town, has secured a spot in the Shawnee Shopping Center in the same location that the Italian Carryout used to be in. They had also approached the IDA about securing a loan to help purchase equipment, and the IDA agreed tonight to give them an \$8,000 loan at 3% interest. He said the IDA will be announcing some Rural Development loans shortly at a similar rate to help small businesses.

### **Mutual Building**

Mr. Lawson said he and Ms. Hawkins toured the shared workspace in the basement of the Mutual Building last week. Work is moving along and looking good. He said a representative of Thompson & Litton visited the site and was impressed with how much the air quality and dampness issues have improved. He said we still have a very small amount of water seeping up from a drain line that we will address by taking some concrete up, putting gravel down, and installing perforated pipe to divert the water.

He noted that the windows for the apartments upstairs are being framed in and the electrical work is almost finished.

### **Ballad Health**

Mr. Lawson mentioned the recent personnel changes at Ballad Health that affect our area. Mark Leonard has left Ballad to pursue other opportunities and Dale Clark will take over as Interim Director of both Norton Community Hospital and Lonesome Pine Hospital (LPH). Mitch Kennedy will move from Norton to LPH as Interim Director for LPH to handle day-to-day operations as well as overseeing the Lee County facility. Mr. Lawson said he wanted to give a "shout-out" to the LPH Board for their hard work toward developing a feasible plan for Ballad going forward that will be good for the future of our area.

### **WanderLove Grant**

Mr. Lawson said we are working with Spearhead Trails on the WanderLove Grant. We will have videographers making short videos about our local towns and jeep trails beginning this weekend, the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, and again on the 21<sup>st</sup>. He said they'll be getting videos of eating and lodging establishments, riding the Thunderstruck Trail coming off of Big Cherry, getting lunch in Big Stone Gap, and doing the Tomahawk and Moccasin routes as they relate to Big Stone. He said that Lee County, Wise County, and the Town of Big Stone Gap each received a \$10,000 grant and decided to combine the grants to get "more bang for our bucks". Along with the videos, we'll have brochures and pocket maps to direct visitors along the trails.

### **Upcoming Holidays**

Mr. Lawson reiterated his comments about Halloween from the Council Workshop. The Visitor Center will be handing out pre-packaged candy to kids coming by on Saturday. We ask trick-or-treaters to social distance and respect the 'lights on – lights off' rule. He said that, after talking with Chief Hamm, we will set hours for trick-or-treating just to encourage people to be in before it gets late. Chief Hamm suggested the hours of 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm for door-to-door visitation.

Mr. Lawson said the Town will not have a Veterans' Day parade but will try to fly the big flag if it isn't already promised elsewhere. We will also have banners at the Visitor Center recognizing the day and saluting our veterans.

### **Town Improvements**

Mr. Lawson said we finished replacing the sidewalk in front of the John Fox, Jr. House today from East 1<sup>st</sup> Street N to East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street N. He said it was in really bad shape and looks a lot better now. Mr. Bloomer asked if we trimmed the trees along that sidewalk. Mr. Lawson said there are some dogwoods along the street and one huge tree whose roots had heaved the sidewalk up. He said there are a large number of hemlocks in that area that are dying out, and he is trying to get the John Fox, Jr. House to apply to the Slemp Foundation for a grant to help with trimming or taking the trees down.

Mrs. Bailey mentioned that the sidewalk from Cherokee Avenue to the entrance of Bullitt Park has several places where tree roots are causing problems. Mr. Lawson said we looked at that area but it didn't get on the first list of sidewalk repairs that we are planning. The next project on the schedule will be extending the sidewalk from the General Store to East 1<sup>st</sup> Street and adding handicapped accessibility, curbing, and guttering. But Mr. Lawson said he would go look at the sidewalk in front of Bullitt Park.

Mr. Lawson said we are getting prices from the lumber yard in Appalachia for lumber similar to the wood fencing at Bullitt Park to erect similar fencing around Fraley's Park. He noted the fencing there is in bad shape and this type of fencing will allow people to get in and out of the park easier. He also noted that the track around the park is in bad shape. He asked for ideas in trying to secure funding to revamp the track and perhaps to improve the layout.

### **Questions**

Mr. Bloomer asked when the Shawnee Avenue Bridge would be closed for construction. Mr. Lawson said it would be sometime in the Spring but didn't have an exact date yet. Mayor Johnson mentioned that he spoke with John Cubine, owner of Jessie Lea RV Park & Campgrounds, who was very receptive to the public using his property to cross the river until the bridge is finished.

Mr. Bloomer said that there are a couple of trees along the road that crosses the RV Park's property that look like they are going to fall. He suggested Mr. Lawson check them out. Mr.

Lawson said we've had a lot of tree problems this year. He said we had a recent request from the Episcopal Church to help with a couple of trees that are interfering with utility lines. We've talked to Old Dominion Power about moving some lines and to possibly take a couple of trees down.

## **AGENDA ITEM 8 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No reports.

## **AGENDA ITEM 9 COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Mrs. Bailey thanked Town employees for adding Oakview Cemetery to the paving list. She also thanked Mayor Johnson and Kent Gilley for overseeing the building of the fishing piers. She said she is thrilled about Jasmine's Cottage going into the Shawnee Shopping Center. She mentioned that the virtual MECC Home Crafts Days is this weekend. She noted that Councilman Tyler Hughes is recording music for the event tonight. She said that the early voting in Carnes Gym is very helpful to citizens. She said she received a complaint from a woman who reported that a man with no shirt on had followed her for some distance along the Greenbelt Trail until she stopped to talk to someone. Mrs. Bailey asked if there were increased safety efforts that could be made.

Mr. Gilley thanked Parks & Recreation for their help with the piers. He said they did a wonderful job and thinks Mr. Fawbush will be pleased with the results.

Mr. Bloomer asked if we are moving forward with the Greenbelt in Lights. He suggested we have a community committee to oversee that event. Mr. Lawson said we will be doing the decorations but we are not sure if we are doing the rides this year. He noted that Greg and Tracy Kress have been in charge of that for the last couple of years. He said Gary Harris is working on our lights.

Mr. Lawson said he talked with Chief Hamm and Sergeant Phillips about Mrs. Bailey's complaint a few weeks ago that drivers are running the stop sign at Wyandotte Avenue along West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street S toward Clinton Avenue and on to Wood Avenue in an effort to beat the traffic. He said they would try to have a greater police presence there in the future.

Mayor Johnson thanked Kent Gilley for the great job he did on the fishing piers as well as the Parks & Recreation crew and everyone who worked together to make it happen. He also thanked Stephen Lawson and Amanda Hawkins for their hard work.

## **AGENDA ITEM 10 ADJOURNMENT**

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

### **Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Nays: None                      Abstain: None                      Absent: Hughes, Lyke**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm.**

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