

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

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

November 9, 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 *Arrived at 6:35 pm
	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

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 Gilley, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of November 9, 2021 be amended to add item 8g to the Town Manager’s Report. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 5

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

No comments.

AGENDA ITEM 6**GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. **Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of October 12, 2021.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- b. **Departmental Reports for the month of October 2021.**
Recommended Action: Received and filed.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by McKinney, that the General Order of Business be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Lyke

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

Mr. Lawson gave an update in Jon Broskey's absence.

Greenbelt Phase V Project

Mr. Lawson said we have been notified by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) that the Greenbelt Phase V Project has been sent to VDOT's Central Office for a final review. He said we are only a few steps away from being able to advertise this project for bid.

System Wide Water Loss Project

Mr. Lawson said that easement plats for the System Wide Water Loss Project have been forwarded to Charles Bledsoe for his review to prepare documents. He said we have negotiated the required railroad fees from \$15,000 for two permits to \$1,900 for one permit – the 2nd fee has been waived.

Big Cherry Trails

Mr. Lawson said the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) agreement has been executed for the DCR Trails Grant. We have received some response on the environmental review but are waiting on a couple of reports before we can get final approval.

East 9th St N & 1st Ave E Sewer Project Phase I

Mr. Lawson said that the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has made their first funding offer for a new sewer project – East 9th Street North & 1st Avenue East Sewer Project Phase I. The total project cost is \$2,956,566. DEQ has offered a 50/50 grant/loan at 0% interest for 30 years. He said we will review the offer and make sure we have the funds in the Sewer Fund to cover our share of the cost.

AGENDA ITEM 8**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

- a. **Parade Permit – Christmas Parade**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this permit for our annual Christmas Parade on Thursday, December 2, 2021 at 6:00 pm.

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a parade permit for the Christmas Parade on Thursday, December 2, 2021 beginning at 6:00 pm. Motion resulted as follows:

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

b. Resolution – Re-appoint Robert Bloomer to LENOWISCO Board

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to re-appoint Robert Bloomer to the LENOWISCO Board for a two-year term.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Resolution 15-2021 being a resolution re-appointing Robert Bloomer to the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission Board of Directors for a two year term to expire on December 31, 2023. Motion resulted as follows:

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

c. Resolution – Opposing the Proposed ODP Rate Increase

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to oppose ODP’s proposed rate increase.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve Resolution 16-2021 being a resolution opposing the proposed Old Dominion Power rate increase before the Virginia State Corporation Commission identified as Case# PUR-2021-00171. Motion resulted as follows:

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

d. Resolution – Naming of the Shawnee Ave W Bridge as “John H. Cubine Memorial Bridge”

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to request VDOT rename the Shawnee Ave W Bridge for Johnny Cubine.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve Resolution 17-2021 being a resolution requesting the Commonwealth Transportation Board name the bridge on Shawnee Avenue West that spans the South Fork of the Powell River off Wood Avenue West in the Town of Big Stone Gap as the John H. Cubine Memorial Bridge. Motion resulted as follows:

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

e. Organizational Meeting Date & Time

Mr. Lawson asked Council to set a Council Organization Meeting for December 16th at 6:30 pm.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by McKinney, that Council set the Organizational Meeting for Thursday, December 16, 2021 at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers. Motion resulted as follows:

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

f. ODP Special Use Permit Request

Mr. Lawson asked Council to authorize the return of ODP's request for a Special Use Permit to the Planning Commission with additional questions for ODP.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council return Old Dominion Power's request for a Special Use Permit to the Planning Commission with additional questions to be answered. Motion resulted as follows:

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

g. Resolution – Approval of the Creation by BSGRHA of Certain Legal Entities

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to approve the formation of the Union Development Corporation by the Housing Authority to enable them to purchase all the limited partnership interests in certain properties.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Resolution 18-2021 being a resolution approving the formation of the Union Development Corporation by the Big Stone Gap Redevelopment and Housing Authority as a legal entity to enable the Authority to purchase all the limited partnership interests in each of RH One LP, WV One LP, and WV Two LP. Motion resulted as follows:

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

h. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson extended his thanks and congratulations to all the incumbent Council members on being re-elected. He said they have been a great team and thanked them for the support they give him and Ms. Hawkins. He said the Organizational Meeting will get the new Council set up for the next two years.

Mr. Lawson said the Wise County Social Services (WCSS) has requested a donation for the Foster Care Christmas Fund. They currently have 87 children in foster care. WCSS said there is no money available on the state and federal levels so they rely on the community for assistance.

Because of the pandemic, they will not hold a Christmas party this year but they want to give each child a gift card for \$150 to buy Christmas gifts and each family a gift card for a turkey or ham. They emphasized they want to keep with the spirit of Christmas for these foster families with these gifts. Mr. Lawson noted that in 2019 the Town gave \$200 and last year \$250. He asked them to consider what they wish to donate this year.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bailey, that the Town increase this year's donation to the Foster Care Christmas Fund sponsored by the Wise County Social Services to \$1,050. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bailey, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

Mr. Lawson said the theme for the Christmas Parade this year is "Christmas Memories". He said Ked Meade is coordinating efforts with downtown businesses regarding a window dressing competition.

Mr. Lawson said the Greenbelt in Lights will host rides on December 4th, 11th, 18th, 23rd, and the 30th. On the 4th, 11th, and 18th there will be live music, pictures with Santa, and the Farmer's Market will have a sale at the Visitor Center. All proceeds from the Farmer's Market will go toward the Kids Bucks program they sponsor.

He said that paving is finished for this year. He said he is receiving more requests and urged Council to make a list and they will re-evaluate it again in the spring.

Mr. Lawson said the Veteran's Parade is this Saturday at 11 am. He noted that Town Hall will be closed Thursday in observance of Veteran's Day.

He said the employees Christmas Lunch is on December 14th at 11:30 am and all Council members are welcome.

Mr. Lawson said the house on Wyandotte Avenue that burned a few months ago is being torn down today.

He said the Town has four VIP tickets to Southwest Virginia Museum's Annual Festival of Trees should any Council member need them.

Mr. Lawson addressed the issue of Fentanyl exposure for police officers as well as the public. He said we have Narcan on site and are working to have every police vehicle equipped with it. He said that even though training is not required we will go thru training set up by the County. Councilwoman Lyke said she agrees with having Narcan in all of our police vehicles and asked when that would happen. Chief Hamm said they have begun the process.

Mr. Lawson said we have received a request from Sandra Jones to rename Oakview Cemetery to Joseph Garfield Long Cemetery in honor of the caretaker's long service to the Town. He said it is a legitimate request but asked Mr. Bledsoe to check on any legal ramifications in making a name change. He said he would also contact the Cemeteries Committee to get their input on the request. Vice-Mayor Bailey said Ms. Jones said if the request is granted they would be glad to do some fund-raising to change the signs or any other necessity. Councilman McKinney said we also have to consider the wishes of all the families who are buried at Oakview.

AGENDA ITEM 9 COMMITTEE REPORTS

No reports.

AGENDA ITEM 10 COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilman Bloomer congratulated everyone who was re-elected to Council. He said Halloween was great in Town with a lot of people out and about. He said they gave out 5,000–6,000 pieces of candy at the bike shop. Mr. Lawson said there was estimated to be about 3,000–3,500 people downtown Halloween night.

Councilman Gilley thanked all the Town employees. He said he is glad the election went well and they are all still together.

Councilman Hughes congratulated everyone on being re-elected and thanked all the Town crews. He said the Festival of Trees will begin with a VIP reception on November 13th. There will be night viewings on Friday and Saturday nights beginning November 26th and continuing thru December.

Councilman McKinney also congratulated everyone on being re-elected to Council and said he is looking forward to working with everyone.

Councilwoman Lyke also congratulated everyone and apologized for missing Council meeting last Tuesday due to an illness. She said the Town is moving forward and that this Council works great together. She wished everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving and added she is looking forward to the Christmas Parade.

Vice-Mayor Bailey congratulated everyone and thanked all the people who voted for them. She said during a visit to Norton a group of people was very complimentary to the Town and all that is going on here. Mr. Bloomer commented that during a trip to Kingsport he was asked about all that is happening in Big Stone Gap. Mr. Lawson said it is great to see the change in downtown, adding that this Council has done a great job.

Mayor Johnson said the park looks great with the new paving – a tremendous improvement. He thanked all the Town crews saying everyone is doing a great job. He said he enjoyed Thanksgiving lunch today with all the employees. He added he is glad everyone got re-elected.

AGENDA ITEM 11 ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:17 pm.

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