

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

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

April 12, 2022

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 Pastor Brad Stapleton of East Stone Gap Methodist Church.

AGENDA ITEM 3

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ITEM 4

ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Lyke, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of April 12, 2022 be adopted as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes

AGENDA ITEM 5 COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Chris Allgyer, 10 Wyandotte Ave E, Big Stone Gap, VA 24219

Mr. Allgyer commented we are having great events for youth and tourism, and the greenbelt is great, but we have a serious problem with trash along the greenbelt, the river bank, and across the river. He happened upon a big mess likely caused by a bear that had raided the dumpster at the back of Town Hall. He said this is not the image we wish to present to the public or to tourists. He said he has reported this before and has talked to a Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) representative about extra measures that could be taken. He noted that the town received a grant for dumpster lids but said they are not on the dumpsters. He emphasized that this is not the fault of the bears, but people need to be aware and take more care about not putting food out to attract them.

Mayor Johnson thanked Mr. Allgyer for his concern and said we will take more care to make sure the lids are on our dumpsters.

Bridget McCoo, 315 East Boulevard Street North, Big Stone Gap, VA

Ms. McCoo expressed concern about the road in Italy Bottom that has deteriorated badly on both ends. She cited various conditions that have contributed to the road condition such as heavy equipment from Old Dominion Power (ODP) when they did work in that area. She said ODP knocked her mailbox down and the equipment put divots into her yard. She said they fixed the mailbox and promised to fix the yard but have never come back to do so. She added that some of the dirt banks they created will cause drainage issues as time goes on. She commented that dust issues from construction prep has negatively impacted her health as well as other residents. She said that trash in her area is a problem too because people put their trash out and don't secure it so animals scatter it everywhere.

Paul Boatright, 310 River Street, Big Stone Gap, VA

Mr. Boatright agreed there is a problem with bears and trash in the Italy Bottom area. He said when ODP came to do their work they promised any messes they made would be cleaned up. He said they take no care of the property and their power station is not maintained well, stating they cut the grass 2-3 times a year so a problem developed with snakes and rats. He said he keeps the grass mowed now and in some places he has to weed-eat instead of mow because of the uneven ground and ruts. He said the road is crushed and damaged due to the work done there and the road will eventually collapse into a four foot ditch if nothing is done.

AGENDA ITEM 6 GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Approval of minutes of Council Workshop of March 1, 2022.
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- b. Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of March 8, 2022.
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- c. Departmental Reports for the month of March 2022.
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. Lawson said there were no updates from Mr. Broskey’s report last week.

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

a. Proclamation – BSG Nutrition

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this proclamation welcoming BSG Nutrition as a new business in Town.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Morgan Arrington, owner of BSG Nutrition located at 317 Shawnee Ave E in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

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

b. Proclamation – Moving Forward Physical Therapy, Inc

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this proclamation welcoming Moving Forward Physical Therapy as a new business in Town.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Margaret R. Gibson, owner of Moving Forward Physical Therapy, Inc. located at 767 Wood Ave E in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

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

c. Proclamation – Designating April as Child Abuse Awareness Month

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this proclamation designating April as Child Abuse Awareness Month.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve a proclamation designating April 2022 as Child Abuse Awareness Month. Motion resulted as follows:

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

d. Resolution 05-2022 – Approval of Funding Application

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution authorizing the submission of an application to the Virginia Tobacco Commission for the Regional Outdoor Recreation Project.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve Resolution 05-2022 being a resolution approving the submission of a funding application to the Virginia Tobacco Commission in the amount of \$300,000 for the Regional Outdoor Recreation Project.

Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes

e. Resolution 06-2022 – Blanket VDOT Signatory Authority

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution for blanket project funding commitment and blanket signatory authority for the Town Manager for all VDOT projects from 2022 thru 2026.

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve Resolution 06-2022 being a resolution for blanket project funding commitment and for blanket signatory authority to be given to the Town Manager for four (4) years from 2022 thru 2026 for all Virginia Department of Transportation projects. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes

f. Resolution 07-2022 – Electronic Banking Transactions Signatory Authority

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve this resolution to allow one signature of the three designated Town Officials for electronic banking transactions signatory authority.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve Resolution 07-2022 being a resolution allowing one signature of the three designated Town Officials authorized to conduct corporate business with banking institutions for any electronic banking transaction. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes

g. Proposed Name Change for Oakview Cemetery

Mr. Lawson asked Council to authorize a public hearing to receive public comment on the proposed name change for Oakview Cemetery.

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Lyke, that Council authorize a public hearing on Ordinance 08-2022 on May 3, 2022 at 6:30 pm for the purpose of receiving public comment regarding the proposed name change for Oakview Cemetery. Motion resulted as follows:

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

h. Public Hearing – Real Estate Reassessment

Mr. Lawson asked Council to authorize a public hearing to receive public comment regarding the increased revenues resulting from the increase in real estate assessments.

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Lyke, that Council authorize a public hearing on May 3, 2022 at 6:30 pm for the purpose of receiving public comment regarding the increased revenues resulting from the increase in assessed value of real property and the Town’s intent not to lower the current real estate tax rate of \$0.44/\$100 of assessed value. Motion resulted as follows:

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

i. Boundary Adjustment – 101 Car – SW VA Museum

Mr. Lawson asked Council authorize a public hearing on the proposed boundary adjustment to deed additional property to the SW Virginia Museum for the location of the 101 Car.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council authorize a public hearing on the proposed boundary adjustment to deed additional property to the Southwest Virginia Museum for the location of the 101 Car on May 3, 2022 at 6:30 pm for the purpose of receiving public comment regarding the proposed boundary adjustment. Motion resulted as follows:

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

j. Projects Update

Grand Openings

Mr. Lawson said Moving Forward Physical Therapy has scheduled a ribbon-cutting and grand opening on Friday, July 1, 2022 at 2 pm.

He said Heritage Hall will hold their expansion wing dedication on April 21st from 12 - 3 pm. Chandler Hall will be dedicated in the memory of Michael Chandler.

Traffic Light

Mr. Lawson said the light on 4th Street and Wood Avenue East is not working. Apparently ODP did some work that shorted out some components, and we are using parts from an old control box to try to figure out what component is broken and in need of replacement. We will place temporary stop signs on each side of 4th Street to have drivers stop before entering Wood Avenue.

Blue Highway Fest

Mr. Lawson said he continues to meet with folks each Monday on the Blue Highway Fest. He said we will need a lot of volunteers for this event. He noted we have had crowd training for employees and all the bands are booked.

National Fitness Court

He said the National Fitness Court we have been working on for a couple years has an August 2022 deadline. The original plan was to put the fitness court in the corner of Bullitt Park, but because of the need for all available space for the festival in October, we have requested to move the court to the Girl Scout Cabin site below Town Hall. We are awaiting approval from NFC for that relocation.

Bullitt Park Events

Mr. Lawson said Little League opening day was rescheduled last weekend from Saturday to Sunday, and games were played all day on both fields. He said we have 26 more kids participating this year and noted Travel Ball and Little League are playing together this year.

He said the new concession stand and bathrooms were all open for the games on Sunday and all went very well. He noted that all the tables and equipment are removable to make the building more versatile.

Paymerang

Mr. Lawson said the reason for the resolution on electronic signatures was to accommodate our new accounts payable partner Paymerang. All transactions will be ran thru Powell Valley Bank.

Citizen Complaints

He said he will speak to ODP representative Stewart Spradlin about the issues at Italy Bottom and show him the damages done to the properties and the road. He said he talked to Stephen at the Commonwealth Attorney's office to resume the program to get fine workers from the regional jail back out on the streets to pick up trash. He said we will try to do a better job with the dumpster lids and may have to resort to a lock on them if all else fails.

Putt-Putt Course

He said the new putt-putt golf course is coming along good and is on schedule to open later this month.

AGENDA ITEM 9**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No reports.

**AGENDA ITEM 10
COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Councilwoman Lyke thanked the visitors for coming tonight and for the citizen comments. She identified Courtney Morrissey and Michael Carter, who were here as part of the Forward Wise County program. She said the Jordan Barnette Bash will be on June 17th, with a 5K run on June 18th. She mentioned they will have a gun raffle, and all proceeds will go back into the Town this year for Miners Park.

Councilman Bloomer thanked everyone for expressing their concerns. As to the bear issue with trash, he commented that people know better but bears don't.

Vice-Mayor Bailey thanked everyone for coming, adding she was in one of the first Forward Wise County sessions. She thanked Gary, Crystal, and Stephen for attending the Pinwheel Planting last week as part of the Child Abuse Awareness Month, and Ked Meade for taking photos and posting them on facebook. She commented that Bullitt Park was very crowded last weekend, which is great.

Mayor Johnson noted that the sponsors of the Child Abuse Awareness Month put together a great event. He commented on what the street crews deal with when they get called to pick up brush. He said a lot of times contractors will cut trees and leave them for the Town to clean up and it can sometimes take 3-4 loads to get it hauled off. He noted that residents are allowed one pickup free per month and \$30 for any additional pickups during the same month. He commented on the bear problem and noted that bird feeders are a big draw for them. He thanked all the Town employees for their hard work.

**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 7:17 pm.

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