

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

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

May 3, 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. Tyler Hughes, Councilman
 Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman
 Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman

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

Those Absent: Hon. Kent Gilley, Councilman
 Mr. Stephen Lawson, Town Manager

AGENDA ITEM 2

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE 08-2022 – NAME CHANGE OAKVIEW CEMETERY

Mayor Johnson recessed the Council Workshop meeting and opened the Public Hearing for the proposed name change of the Oakview Cemetery. Hearing no comments, Mayor Johnson closed the Public Hearing.

AGENDA ITEM 3

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE 09-2022 – TRANSFER OF PROPERTY – SW VA MUSEUM

Mayor Johnson opened the Public Hearing for the proposed transfer of property to the Southwest Virginia Museum. Hearing no comments, Mayor Johnson closed the Public Hearing.

AGENDA ITEM 4

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE 10-2022 – REASSESSMENT REVENUE INCREASE

Mayor Johnson opened the Public Hearing for the expected increase in revenue due to Wise County's real estate property value assessments. Hearing no comments, Mayor Johnson closed the Public Hearing and reconvened the Council Workshop.

AGENDA ITEM 5**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Review of draft of minutes of the Council Workshop of April 5, 2022, and the Regular Council Meeting of April 12, 2022.

AGENDA ITEM 6**TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT****Greenbelt Phase V**

Mr. Broskey said he is still waiting to hear from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) on the updated cost estimate and possible additional funding for the Greenbelt Phase V Project.

Water & Sewer Projects

Mr. Broskey said we are submitting two applications to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). One is for a main transmission line in Crackers Neck which is a \$7.6 million project. He said that VDH has a lot of grant money right now to distribute so we want to take advantage of that. The second application is for improvements to the Water Treatment Plant, such as installing Pall plants, intake improvements and SCADA improvements so the plant can be run remotely should anything like COVID-19 happen again.

AGENDA ITEM 7**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT****a. Audit Services RFP**

Ms. Hawkins explained that our contract with Rodefer Moss ended with the conclusion of FY2021-22 audit report. In April we advertised for a RFP (Request For Proposal) for audit services. She said we solicited proposals from about nine firms and have received one proposal so far and that is from Rodefer Moss. Ms. Hawkins said the deadline is this Friday after which the Budget/Finance/Audit Committee will meet to review the proposals and make a recommendation to Council for the Town's audit firm. She noted we must have an auditor under contract by June 30, 2022.

b. FY2022-23 Proposed Budget Update

Ms. Hawkins read Mr. Lawson's notes to Council – "this budget year we have decided to go all in for our employees. We will take one last look but our budget will most likely be level-funded across the board with the exception of the proposed increase of minimum wage and increases within various departments. There is no guarantee that all employees will receive a raise in the proposed budget but you can be assured that all directors will have the opportunity to let us know which employees have earned the opportunity to have an increased wage due to their performance this year." Ms. Hawkins reiterated that we are not looking at a flat across-the-board raise but will be evaluating each employee according to his/her performance.

Ms. Hawkins said we will probably have to have at least one special meeting to get the advertisements done in time for the budget to be approved ahead of the June deadline. We will also need to have a Budget/Finance/Audit Committee meeting and maybe a Public Utilities Committee meeting to discuss a possible utility rate increase, if needed.

c. Projects Update

Police Department

Ms. Hawkins said we had one candidate attending the Police Academy this spring. Unfortunately, the employee hurt his shoulder during training that has prevented him from continuing to attend the Academy. He is working at Town Hall on restricted duty while his condition is being evaluated. He will not be able to return to the Academy for this session, so we will have to wait for the fall session to send any candidate.

Traffic Light – Wood Avenue/4th Street

Ms. Hawkins said we are aware of the cycling issue with the traffic light on Wood Avenue and 4th Street at the courthouse intersection. Public Works Director Steve Clark said the repairs are beyond what his people are qualified to do so he reached out to Econolite to have them fix the problem. The earliest date they can come is June 6th so it will be a few more weeks before it is back to normal.

Bullitt Park

Ms. Hawkins said the old concession stand has been taken down and we anticipate both the concrete and asphalt work being finished by the middle of June. Work on the old home team field house has begun and should be finished by July so we won't hinder football practice for next season.

Blue Highway Fest

Ms. Hawkins said in anticipation of the Blue Highway Festival we are getting quotes for goal posts that are removable so we can move them to allow more room for people. The idea is to set up the stage in the high jump area and not be on the field anymore.

Asphalt and Paving

Ms. Hawkins said we are evaluating requests and locations for possible paving projects this year. She said if Council has any requests now is the time to submit them to her or Stephen.

Wise County GIS – Renaming Street

Ms. Hawkins said the Wise County GIS department has contacted us twice regarding the requested name change of the alley that runs behind Freedom Chevrolet to the Jordan Barnette Boulevard. Matthew Bright had told us previously that we did not need to take any action to have the alley way named, but Wise County GIS says they need a formal request with a Council vote to make the change. This item will be on the Council Agenda at next week's meeting.

Art Projects

Ms. Hawkins said Union High School's Art Director Lisa Davis had submitted a few proposals for murals around Town. Amanda pointed out the one with the coal miner theme is planned for the building next to Miners Park. Another sample with the BSG Logo is planned for the wall inside the new Municipal Building. Ms. Hawkins suggested Council consider forming an Art Committee comprised of selected Council members and citizens so we have input from the public.

**AGENDA ITEM 8
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No reports.

**AGENDA ITEM 9
COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Vice-Mayor Bailey said she attended the graduation block party at the Visitor Center and while she was there it was not well attended but she did hear more people came later. She commented she and David went to Huddle House and encountered a room full of people driving three-wheelers who had attended a tour in Winchester, KY. She invited them back to the Blue Highway Fest this fall and they seemed excited about it

Mayor Johnson thanked Steve Hamm for the good job his police officers are doing while being short-handed. He thanked all the other departments as well.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM 10
ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned 7:05 pm.

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