

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

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
505 E 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET S  
BIG STONE GAP, VA**

**April 04, 2023**

**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. 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. Steve Hamm, Chief of Police

Those Absent: Hon. Nancy Bailey, Vice-Mayor  
Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman  
Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

**PUBLIC HEARING – Alter or Vacate Public Right of Way**

Mayor Johnson recessed the Council Workshop and opened the public hearing. Hearing no comment from the public, Mayor Johnson closed the public hearing and reconvened the Council Workshop.

**AGENDA ITEM 3**

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Review of draft of minutes of the Council Workshop of March 7, 2023, and the Regular Council Meeting of March 14, 2023.

**AGENDA ITEM 4**

**TOWN ENGINEER’S REPORT**

**Greenbelt Phase V**

Mr. Broskey said the project was going well. The rough grading is complete, and the drainage culverts have been installed. The crews are working on the abutments, concrete and rebar. We have received the first option for lights, but solar power is not an option due to the lack of sunlight. It was noted that there was standing water right in front of the Ironworks Gym and the water stands for several days. The contractor is aware of the standing water, and they are trying to

get the drainage corrected for that area. The update for the bridge construction has a timeline of November for delivery. The crews will be paving as much as they can right now since the asphalt plants will be closed by November. Some connection of the pavement to the bridge after it is installed may need to be done in the Spring.

### **Big Cherry Trails**

Mr. Broskey said the ordering of trash cans, benches, and signage items have been approved for the trail.

Mr. Lawson stated that there are plans to lay a light dusting of gravel in the middle of the trail approximately 3 to 4 ft. wide. The path construction was a little wider than expected but vegetation will grow back on the sides making it feel more like a hiking trail in a few months. Since the equipment is still there, we have asked the contractor to clean up areas from the boat ramp back to the new dam. This will provide more places for fishing and other activities for Kids Fishing day on May 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **East Stone Gap Water/Sewer Project**

Mr. Broskey stated they are still working with LENOWISCO on the proposed project. We are still expecting a couple more income surveys, which will be in our favor and then we will see how many more we need. LENOWISCO will have public hearings for this project later this month.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5**

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

#### **a. Resolution- 4-2023 Vacate Public Right of Way**

Mr. Lawson said the paperwork has been received for this request to vacate the alley between the crematorium and the storage buildings on the Gilliam property, Council will vote to vacate the project at the Regular Council Meeting next week.

#### **b. Projects**

##### **Advertisement for the General Engineering Services**

The advertisement for the General Engineering Services has been sent out and will close at 3 pm on May 4, 2023. We need to decide if the entire council wants to score the applications or designate a select committee to score the applications. It has been done both ways in the past, but a decision will need to be made next week. Mr. Lawson asked the Council to let him know their preference.

##### **Childrens Advocacy Center**

The Childrens Advocacy Center will have their Pinwheel Planting Ceremony April 5th at 9:30 am and the proclamation from the town designating April as Child Abuse Protection Month will be presented by Mayor Johnson.

##### **Staffing**

We have new hires in the Administrative Office and the Water Department. Cindy Robinette will be the new Administrative Assistant to the Town and Barbara Bowman is the new Assistant Data Systems Coordinator for the Water Department. Both fit in well and will be great additions to the team. There are two open positions at the Water Plant, one for Chief Operator and

one for a general Water Operator, that we will be hiring in the coming weeks. Tim Honeycutt started his paperwork for retirement at the end of June. We will be hiring a meter reader as well. and may be able to use Mike Bowen if needed for a while.

### **Utility Bills**

Mr. Lawson stated the new utility bill printers were used for the first time this month. We received many requests from customers who wish to receive their utility bills via email. This is possible with the new printer, but the process will take approximately two billing cycles to complete. The e-bill process will also be used for real estate and personal property taxes this fall.

### **Paving Requests**

Asphalt Plant will be opening with warmer weather, Mr. Lawson asked if there were any requests for paving to let him know. We will be compiling a list of these requests, so we can plan the Spring paving.

### **Country Boy Hill Road Improvement Project**

The Town has received complaints about the traffic congestion resulting from this project.

### **Southwest Virginia Museum Master Plan Study**

Mayor Johnson, Vice-Mayor Nancy Bailey, Councilman Hughes, and Mr. Lawson have been involved with the Ten-Year Museum Master Plan Study. There will be a series of meetings that the museum will have to determine what the next ten years will look like for the campus. The state officials in attendance paid us a compliment in stating that the meeting was one of the biggest public meetings they had been involved with in this planning series with a very diverse set of people, from different groups and ages.

### **Town Events**

The Easter egg event was a huge success with lots of kids.

The Union Marathon had 90 runners, and several were team relay runners. The winner ran the event in one hour and seventeen minutes. Even with the rain and the flooding it was a successful event. Steve Clark, the Public Works Crew did a great job in getting the Greenbelt Trail cleaned up after the rain to allow the event to continue.

Little League opening day was a huge success with the parade and games scheduled for that day. A pallet of turface, two line painter machines, and cases of paint were ordered for little league, which they reimbursed the Town for.

### **Chamber of Commerce Gala**

Mr. Lawson reminded the Council of the Wise County Chamber of Commerce's Gala the theme this year is "Chamber Royale" and will be on April 8<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 - 11:00 pm at the UVA Prior Center. The Town has sponsored a table of eight so anyone wishing to attend needs to let us know.

### **Blue Highway Fest**

Line up for the Blue Highway Festival (BHF) has been released. BHF will be from October 11<sup>th</sup> through October 14<sup>th</sup>. You can go on the website for the lineup, tickets will go on sale April 12<sup>th</sup> via Eventbrite. Emails went out to those who bought a ticket last year. Representatives for BHF, promoters, Ked Meade and Stephen Lawson will have a follow up meeting April 17<sup>th</sup> to allow all the downtown businesses to voice their concerns and how to make the festival more friendly for those businesses this year.

### **Public Works**

Public works had several calls to remove downed trees with the current weather. All the trees were cleaned up except for some brush that will be picked up by the end of the week. There were several dangerous trees which we rented a lift for this week to remove. This task was expensive but needed.

We have two Duffield jail inmates to help with roadside clean up and grass trimming.

### **Council Questions**

Mayor Johnson asked for several questions about the meter reading and radio read transmitters currently being used within the system. Mr. Lawson responded with to the questions and informed Council that we have a meeting with the supplier, Ferguson, on Friday, April 7th about new technology and will be discussing the problems that have arisen.

### **Power Pole Damage**

Mr. Lawson stated that over the weekend someone hit the power pole in the front parking lot of the Town office building. The damage caused some electrical repairs to be performed by Ray Lane. We plan to put concrete bollards around it to ensure that this does not happen again. Also, a vehicle ran through the rock bed at the Visitor Center in the middle of town, and we are in the process repairing that.

### **Harvest Host Campers**

Mr. Lawson stated that we have had two more Harvest Hosts campers since the last update and all three walked the Greenbelt into town and gave us positive feedback.

## **AGENDA ITEM 6**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilman Gilley informed Council that the April 3<sup>rd</sup> Planning Commission meeting was cancelled but the Commission would meet on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

## **AGENDA ITEM 7**

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Councilman Hughes stated it was great to see such a big turnout at the museum meeting. He, Steve and Ked met with Ray Moore, on the arts advisory board. Mr. Moore is creating a glass sculpture to go to Miner's Park. It will be the same as glass sculpture he did for Mountain Empire Community College. Mr. Lawson stated it will be a LOVE sign with a mountain scene at the

bottom and will be stained glass sign encased with steel. It will be backlit and placed in front of the center of the stage with 3 ft letters. The cost is being estimated at \$ 3,000 for fabrication and the Town will provide a concrete slab and electrical for \$1,200.

Mayor Johnson thanked everyone for their work.

**AGENDA ITEM 8  
ADJOURNMENT**

**Meeting was adjourned at 7:03 pm.**

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