

**AGENDA ITEM 5
COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS**

No comments.

**AGENDA ITEM 6
GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. **Approval of minutes of Council Workshop of March 7, 2023.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- b. **Approval of minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of March 14, 2023.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- c. **Departmental Reports for the month of March 2023.**
Recommended Action: Received and filed.
- d. **Treasurer's Reports for the month of March 2023.**
Recommended Action: Received and filed.

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

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

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

Mr. Broskey said there was a project that had not been discussed in a year - the application to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) for the Phase 3 Waterline Replacement Project. With no response within the year, we thought the application was inactive, but Mr. Lawson received an offer on April 7th. This Phase 3 project would replace the water line from the Water Treatment Plant through Crackers Neck to Preston Road. This is the main trunk line that feeds all the water system from the plant. The application was for \$7.7 million. The offer received was for \$5.5 million with \$3,683,548 in principal forgiveness, which is 70% in principal forgiveness. Now the question is how to make up for the \$1.8 million shortfall. VDH mentioned phasing the project. We are looking into all possible options. VDH will need a vote and letter of acceptance of the offer by May 12th. The project would be replacing the current two 12-inch lines with one 16-inch line. Gary Hampton, Utilities Director, has stated that there is about a 30% water loss in that area, and by replacing those lines the town would see savings of \$110,000 per year.

AGENDA ITEM 8 TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

a. Resolution 04-2023 – Vacate Public Right of Way

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve the vacation of 2,665 square feet, more or less, of a section of public right of way between East 5th Street North and East 4th Street North.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve the vacation of 2,665 square feet, more or less, of a section of public right of way between E 5th Street North and East 4th Street N. Motion resulted as follows:

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

b. Projects Update

Eagle Scout Project

Mr. Lawson had Council review packets from the latest Eagle Scout Project that was done by Ashlyn Litton. The project involved cleaning veteran headstones in the Joseph Garfield Long Sr Memorial Cemetery, formerly known as Oakview Cemetery. She did an amazing job with the cleaning and restoration. She provided us with the chemical compound she used to clean the headstones so we can continue cleaning efforts. She also brought her excess budget funds and requested that the money go to the lunch box program.

Grand Re-Opening of Gap Golf

Mr. Lawson said the grand re-opening of Big Stone Gap Golf will be on Friday April 14th at 4 p.m.

Wise County Chamber of Commerce Gala

Mr. Lawson said the Gala was a great event with food, games, and silent auction. Award winners were Ron Flanary, Kathy Stewart and Fred Ramey for Citizen of the year.

New Signs for the Town

Mr. Lawson said we have signed contracts to do new signs for the Town. The two entrance signs can be reworked by adding the new BSG logo symbol at the top. New downtown signs will be placed at Italy Bottom Park, the Harry Meador Coal Museum, Miners Park, the Southwest Virginia Museum, Carnes Park, Carnes Gym, Joseph Garfield Long Sr Memorial Cemetery, A. K. Fraley Park, The Ridge (disc golf course), Aviation Park, and Cadet Park. Also new small directional signs marking the Greenbelt Trail will be added to identify entrance areas near parking areas and other access points for the trail.

We will no longer have signs that were part of the Walking Tour for Poplar Hill and Wyandotte Avenue. The iron arches at Bullitt Park and Glencoe Cemetery eliminate the need for a sign at these locations. We have asked the Housing Authority their opinion on the sign for Big Stone Heights before making the final decision to replace it or remove it. Additional small directional signs along the main road to mark the Dog Park and the Ridge Disk Golf Course. A new LED video sign will be placed at the Municipal Building as well as a small sign by the front doors to the building. A smaller sign at Big Cherry Lake. The total cost of the signs will be

\$3,700. These signs will be made of composite materials that will last a long time. Mr. Lawson asked if Council agreed with the ones we are taking out.

Italy Bottom Water Fountain

Mr. Lawson said the water fountain for Italy Bottom Park will be here the first week of May. We will be pouring a pad for handicap access to the fountain and all the water will be near the shelter, which is closer to the playground. The fountain is equipped with the water bottle filling station.

Bullitt Park

Mr. Lawson said we will be redoing the fencing around the basketball courts at Bullitt Park and a new merry-go-round will be set up in the next two weeks.

Blue Highway Fest

Mr. Lawson said Blue Highway Fest tickets will go on sale tomorrow, April 12th with a plan to offer Big Stone Gap citizens two half-price tickets. These tickets may only be purchased at the Visitor Center, with ID to be shown at the gate. Sponsorship tiers for Blue Highway are as follows, Gold \$25,000 with a number of tickets given, tents at the back end of the park and a large banner for the home stands, Silver \$12,500 with tickets and banner lining the railing down the home bleachers, Bronze is \$5,000 with banner and tickets, and Blue \$1,000 and below will include a name on the banner as a supporting business.

AGENDA ITEM 9

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Gilley said the Planning Commission meeting had been moved to April 18th at 6:30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 10

COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilman Bloomer asked if there are plans for the fencing at A.K. Fraley Park. Mr. Lawson stated we have a price for chain link black fencing and wood fencing. The wood fencing would look better and be better for the disc players. Prices for the wood fence was when lumber was extremely high, so we would need to get a new estimate. We are getting prices for new asphalt around the track, and the path may need to be rerouted due to tree roots that we do not want to damage.

Councilman Hughes reported he had talked to Jimmy at Mountain Empire Community College Fabrication Department about the LOVE sign and is going to meet with him and Mr. Lawson on some basic drawings for the project. Terran Young said thank you for the Italy Bottom Water Fountain Project and that this is what cooperative government looks like. Councilman Hughes said he received a paving request for Hamblin Street but has not visited the site himself. He said thanks to the police and all the employees. He stated it was good seeing mulch go down and all the work getting the Town ready for spring. Mr. Lawson asked Councilman Hughes to ask Jimmy about getting benches for downtown with the BSG logo on them like the ones they have on campus at MECC. He said the Town would buy the materials and have the students make them.

Councilman McKinney had a paving request for 25th Street South.

Councilwoman Lyke thanked the guests for coming.

Vice-Mayor Bailey commented on the good attention from the press this week, referring to Jim Fleming’s article related to all the Town. Also, an article shared on Facebook that rated Big Stone Gap as #2 of all the small towns in Virginia. Appreciate all town employees, police department and everyone. She had a paving request for West 3rd Street.

Mayor Johnson stated our flower beds look great with the mulch - the beautification of the town has greatly improved. He requested that paving requests be called in to the Town rather than Council or staff seeking out requests from residents. He stated that the tree removal that was endangering homes is to be commended and they were able to get them down before there was a fatality. He agrees that Country Boy Hill is going to be a problem when they begin construction on widening the road, but the only option would be to detour around it. Mr. Lawson said we would have VDOT put a “congested area” sign on Exit 1 of the four-lane to encourage people to use Exit 2.

AGENDA ITEM 11

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

Meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

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