

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

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

August 1, 2023

6:30 PM

**AGENDA ITEM 1
Call to Order and Roll Call**

Vice-Mayor Bailey called the meeting to order.

Council Present: Hon. Nancy Bailey, Vice-Mayor
 Hon. Kent Gilley, Councilman
 Hon. Tyler Hughes, Councilman
 Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman
 Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman

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

Council Absent: Hon. Gary Johnson, Mayor
 Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman

**AGENDA ITEM 2
PUBLIC HEARING – Ordinance 02-2023 – Peddler’s License**

Vice-Mayor Bailey opened the Public Hearing for Ordinance 02-2023 – Peddler’s License and called for comments from the public.

No comments from the public were made.

Vice-Mayor Bailey closed the Public Hearing for Ordinance 02-2023 – Peddler’s License and reconvened the Council Workshop.

**AGENDA ITEM 3
REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Review of draft of minutes of the Budget/Finance/Audit Committee of July 11, 2023, and the Regular Council Meeting of July 11, 2023.

AGENDA ITEM 4 TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

In Mr. Broskey's absence, Mr. Lawson, Town Manager, gave the Town Engineer's Report.

Greenbelt Phase V

Mr. Lawson said there is no update at this time on Greenbelt Phase V, we are still waiting on the date for bridge delivery, which is expected to be in November.

Straight Fork Trail

Mr. Lawson said the contractor for the Straight Fork Trail on Big Cherry has completed the installation of the trash cans, benches, trail markers and information signs. He also said the engineer has received the final pay application. Mr. Lawson added that as the project enters the final phases we are going to work on the road. We are waiting for responses from multiple contractors for estimates on the road work.

System Wide Water Loss Phase 1A, 1B and 2

Mr. Lawson said the engineer for System Wide Water Loss Phase 1A, 1B and 2 is working with the Town and attorneys to complete Rural Development's Letter of Condition items and are hoping to advertise the project soon.

Virginia Department of Health – System Wide Water Loss Phase 3

Mr. Lawson said the town completed the initial funding meeting with the Virginia Department of Health to understand the program guidelines.

AGENDA ITEM 5 TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a. Ordinance 02-2023 – Peddler's License

Mr. Lawson said this was the revision to the Peddler's License to be adopted at the Town Council meeting next week.

b. Projects Update

Storm Downed Trees

Mr. Lawson said Saturday's storm left 46 trees down around the area, according to Old Dominion Power reports. The power was out for around 6 hours.

Tourism Awards

Mr. Lawson said the Town of Big Stone Gap won two awards today for tourism as part of the Southwest Virginia Tourism Awards banquet hosted by the Friends of Southwest Virginia in Wytheville. The Town was awarded the Best Festival of the Year Award for an event that lasted two or more days with less than 10,000 attendees for the 2022 Blue Highway Festival. The second award was for the Best New Website for a Locality with a \$50,000 or less marketing budget. He pointed out that the award presenters and organizers acknowledged how we promote

other local events in the region on our website as a very positive and inclusive move. The Town has also been nominated by the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) for the Industry Event of the Year; this IBMA event will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina the weekend of September 29th and 30th.

Park Improvements

Mr. Lawson said we are awaiting parts and pricing for the repairs needed to the LED scoreboard at Bullitt Park. The scoreboard will not need to be replaced.

Mr. Lawson said the poles and netting for the backstop improvements are in at Frog Level Park. We are looking at moving home plate near the parking lot, which would make flooding issues have a less negative impact on the field. The balls would be hit toward the river and as the silt comes into the field during flooding the silt would be in the outfield not the infield. We are still looking at making sure traffic and the parking lot areas are protected from foul balls.

Mr. Lawson said the basketballs goals to be installed at Bullitt Park have hardware missing and the company will be contacted.

AGENDA ITEM 6 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Kent Gilley, Council Representative for the Planning Commission, said they met July 19th. The Commission plans to create an Architectural Board in relation to the historical district in Big Stone Gap. Councilman Hughes suggested contacting Burt Greear at the Southwest Virginia Museum as a good member or at least a resource. The Commission asked for an update regarding the clean-up of the property on Wyandotte where the apartment building had burnt down. Mr. Lawson said the owners stated that their truck broke down and there had been some health problems, but they will be hauling the debris off soon. Mr. Gilley said the Commission continued discussions of the revisions of the fowl ordinances.

AGENDA ITEM 7 COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilman Hughes thanked the Visitor Center and staff, the Mountain Music School had 126 participants come and they used the Visitor Center, a couple of businesses had music and dancing, all had a great time. He said the Town has had Representatives in Town from the Audubon Society and that during one of the bird walks that the museum has been hosting they heard a Bob White Quail along the Greenbelt which is an endangered species. Through birding apps and blogs the Town is becoming a hotspot for birding. The Society will be trying to confirm the presence of the Bob White Quail here. Thanks to employees and staff. Congrats to all on the tourism awards.

Councilman McKinney said that Peanut football opens Saturday evening.

Councilwoman Lyke congratulated the Town on the tourism awards. She said she went downtown during the power outage and that even in the dark jeeps were still out everywhere and lots of people were still roaming the streets.

Councilman Hughes said that Virginia Meador had passed away. Mr. Lawson read the arrangements from the obituary. Mrs. Hawkins asked council if they would want to do a donation or flowers, Vice-Mayor Bailey asked Council for donation to Presbyterian Church, Council agreed.

Vice-Mayor Bailey recognized Meador's accomplishments in our area.

**AGENDA ITEM 8
ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned 6:51 pm.

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