

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

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

February 06, 2023

6:30 PM

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

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order.

Council Present: Hon. Nancy Bailey, Vice-Mayor
 Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman
 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

**AGENDA ITEM 2
REVIEW OF DRAFT MINUTES**

Review of draft of minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of January 9, 2024. Mayor Johnson stated that if Council had any changes to inform the Town Treasurer, Amanda Hawkins.

**AGENDA ITEM 3
TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT**

Greenbelt Phase V

Mr. Broskey said that Greenbelt Phase V is looking at change order work and waiting on VDOT for approval. Mr. Broskey said he recommends the River Bend Section not go with VDOT but to go with a private contractor. Boyd's construction is working up pricing for review.

Rural Development System Wide Water Loss Improvements Phase 1A, 1B and II

Mr. Broskey said the bid opening for the Water Loss 1A, 1B and II was held in January. He said the project had two different divisions, 1 – all the line replacement and 2 - Valley View Pump Station. He said there were 5 bidders for each division and that for Division 1, Boyd's Construction Company was the low bidder at \$4.3 million dollars. He said even with that low bid it still puts the project over budget. Bid alternate removals will be discussed with the Town to determine which alternates would be eliminated based on how much funds the Town could commit to the project.

Mr. Broskey said Division 2, Valley View Pump Station, the low bidder was Estes Bros. Construction at \$334,000. This projected estimate is over budget as well and the recommendation may be that the Town not to award the contract and find another alternative for this project. He said the decision must be made within 60 days of bid opening.

**AGENDA ITEM 5
TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT****a. Budget Amendment – HIDTA CY 2024 Grant Award**

Mr. Lawson said the Budget Amendment would be reviewed and voted on at the Regular Council Meeting February 13, 2024.

b. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson said he and Tyler Hughes were in Richmond for legislative week. He said that Councilman Hughes was there with Friends of Southwest Virginia and the Town of Big Stone Gap. Mr. Lawson said that he met with four agencies and three private firms about available buildings downtown. He said that Big Stone Gap has friends on both sides of political atmosphere and when money is available, they believe in us to get things done.

Mr. Lawson said he wants to meet individually with each Council Member and get their opinions on what projects need to be completed with the \$2.6 million unspent ARPA funds.

Mr. Lawson said the Department of Game and Inland Fishery have taken Big Cherry Reservoir, Powell River, and High Knob off their digital map. He said that Ked and High Road Agency are trying to fix the issue.

Mr. Lawson said he has a couple of right of way meetings with owners regarding the Riverbend section of the Greenbelt Project next week. Also, regarding the Richmond meetings, we have three different follow up meetings next week regarding some of the projects we have ongoing.

Mr. Lawson said the Division 2 Valley View Pump Station bid was a lot higher than expected. He said some cost discrepancies was on the equipment, he recommends rejecting the bid. Mr. Lawson said we need the pump station to develop more housing for that area, and we received a notice of violation 18 months ago for that pump station and we do not want to have another one.

Councilman Bloomer asked if there will be any issues with the right of way for the Riverbend Project. Mr. Lawson answered no, most of the property either we own or is owned by Lee Collier and the McCoo family. He said that they have always worked well with the Town. The Town and Mr. Collier may have to get together and do some land swapping.

**AGENDA ITEM 6
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilman Gilley said the Planning Commission will meet Monday, February 12th.

**AGENDA ITEM 7
COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Councilman Hughes said he had a good trip to Richmond, had a lot of great comments about Big Stone Gap. He said he spoke to Virginia Tourism and got analytics of the area and if anyone was interested in looking at them to let him know. He thanked the staff and said he will not be at the regular council meeting next week as he will be in London.

Vice-Mayor Bailey spoke about the detour signage issues, and then asked if we could do anything. Chief Hamm said he met with someone from Estes Brothers Construction and by law these signs must have the current verbiage, this keeps VDOT and Estes Bros. Construction out of litigation. He said the detour is designed to use Exit 2 for west bound traffic, so therefore they should not be coming off Exit 1, the detour signs we see are to get us from here and around to the top where the prison is located. He said that during the meeting he recommended a digital sign on north and south bound with a better explanation, and it is being reviewed by VDOT. Vice-Mayor Bailey said she had complaints about snow removal during the snow storm. Mr. Lawson said this was the coldest and the most snow we have had in years, and we only have 6 employees to push snow, some of those with very little or no experience. There was no salt available all over the region. When an event of this magnitude happens, we just have to wait and do the best we can.

**AGENDA ITEM 7
ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned 7:18 pm.

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