

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

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

June 04, 2024

6:30 PM

AGENDA ITEM 1

Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order.

Council Present: Hon. Gary Johnson, Mayor
 Hon. Nancy Bailey, Vice-Mayor
 Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman
 Hon. Kent Gilley, 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. Tyler Hughes, Councilman

AGENDA ITEM 2

REVIEW OF DRAFT MINUTES

Review of draft of minutes of the Council Workshop Meeting of May 7, 2024, and the Regular Council Meeting of May 14, 2024.

AGENDA ITEM 3

MIKE ALLEN

Mike Allen, 103 West First Street, came representing former Powell Valley High School football players, current citizens of Big Stone Gap and past Powell Valley High School Alumni to ask Council for the opportunity for naming the Bullitt Park football field or the field house after Coach Phil Robbins or have a monument honoring him for the numerous accomplishments he has made for the Town of Big Stone Gap and community.

AGENDA ITEM 4**GAP PARTNERSHIP – Wendy Dillon Murray**

Wendy Murray, President of Gap Partnership, said she and Wendy Warden came to talk about Mainstreet America, the DBA Downtown Big Stone Gap, and provided Council a packet for their review.

Councilman Bloomer asked Wendy Warden about her grant writing. Ms. Warden said she had applied for and received \$11 million last year in her current position. Councilwoman Lyke said grants help businesses in Big Stone Gap but what does the Town get. Ms. Warden replied that the Town will get beautification of the streets and that it's not just for business it's for the whole town. Mayor Johnson asked how many employees they were hiring, and Ms. Warden replied Main Street America required the non-profit arm hire one employee, an executive director, by fall of this year. She said the going rate for Executive Directors of non-profit organizations in Southwest Virginia is \$55 thousand per year but they do not plan to offer that amount. She said they must have one employee and the volunteers can stay on board but the money from the town would be for operations of the DBA Downtown Big Stone Gap. Town Manager Lawson said they assisted a business that moved due to the relocation of the post office. He said that the owner has worked with them and is a recipient of a grant that will help get the building ready for opening. Mr. Lawson said this Partnership will assist the businesses and will take some of the workload off the Town's Tourism department.

AGENDA ITEM 5**TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT**

Mr. Broskey said the contractor on the System Wide Water Loss and Improvements Phase 1A, 1B & 2 would be in the Southern section for another week then move to Cadet or the 4-lane.

Mr. Broskey said the contractor has started on the ramp and footers for the retaining wall at the new Greenbelt pedestrian bridge. After that work the handrails will be installed on the bridge.

Mr. Broskey said the Italy Bottom comprehensive project will include water, sewer, housing rehab, and sidewalks. He said this is a multi-phase project that is in the preliminary stage.

AGENDA ITEM 6**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT****a. Proclamation – Blood Brothers Tattoo**

Mr. Lawson said this was a proclamation to welcome Blood Brothers Tattoo to the Town of Big Stone Gap located on Shawnee Avenue.

b. Proclamation – Susan Vape Store

Mr. Lawson said this was a proclamation to welcome Susan Vape Store to the Town of Big Stone Gap located in the old Pizza Hut Building.

c. Proclamation – Double D Tire

Mr. Lawson said this was a proclamation to welcome the new owner of Double D Tire to the Town of Big Stone Gap, Landon Hamilton. The business is in the same location it has been.

d. Proclamation – Foam Solutions

Mr. Lawson said this was a proclamation to welcome Foam Solutions to the Town of Big Stone Gap located on Shawnee Avenue.

e. Ordinance 11-2024 – Inoperable Vehicles

Mr. Lawson said this was to ask Council to authorize a Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission on Tuesday, July 2, 2024, at 6:30 pm to receive public comment on the inoperable vehicle ordinance.

f. Resolution 12-2024 – Section 125 Premium Only Plant

Mr. Lawson said this was a resolution asking Council to adopt the Section 125 Cafeteria Premium Only Plan for the plan year July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

g. Parade Permit – July 4th

Mr. Lawson said this was a Parade Permit for Council to approve the parade for the 4th of July.

h. Public Hearing – Italy Bottom Planning Grant

Mr. Lawson said there would be a public hearing on Tuesday June 11th, 2024 at 6:30 in the Town Council Chambers to solicit public input on a proposed Community Development Block Grant application to be submitted to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for the Italy Bottom Comprehensive Community Development project.

i. Tour de Crackers Neck Donation

Mr. Lawson said this is to ask Council to approve a donation of \$350 to the Tour de Crackers Neck bike race.

j. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson said now that Council has heard from the Gap Partnership DBA Downtown Big Stone Gap that \$35,000 is included in the FY 24-25 Budget for them and Council can approve, deny, or change the amount given the DBA Downtown Big Stone Gap when the budget is approved.

Mr. Lawson said adding the additional pickle ball courts are backed up till July. He said the contractor had to wait for paving to be completed so they moved on to another project and will be back after 4th of July events.

Mr. Lawson said that the Big Cherry improvements had a lot of moving parts. He said The Lane Group is working on the environmental assessment for every location being developed and that one NEPA document will take care of everything. He said it takes time to get the document through and may take up to 90 days. He said he, Mr. Broskey and Lenowisco plan to meet at the end of this week in-house to review the ARC Power Grant for the water and sewer improvements. Mr. Lawson reminded Council the Town received a \$1.2 million Power Grante for extending utilities to the camp sites. He said they are working with Virginia Outdoors on land dedication for the pier and boat dock.

Mr. Lawson said there were changes to the concrete design at the Greenbelt pedestrian bridge due to drainage and other factors. All the asphalt previously planned for the landing at the bridge had been removed and will be replaced with concrete.

Mr. Lawson said the Double D Tire ribbon cutting will be July 5th at 10 am.

Mr. Lawson said there is interest in the bus station by an outside investor to convert that location to a tourist destination type of business.

Mr. Lawson said tree trimmings on West 2nd Street have been completed.

Mr. Lawson said Ked Meade had been very successful in his Virginia Tourism grants for FY2023-24, receiving \$28,250 with more applications submitted for FY2024-25.

Mr. Lawson reviewed the July 4th event schedule with Council.

Mr. Lawson said the tank maintenance work was going fine and putting the town logo on the downtown tank was not feasible due to sight line, but they plan to put the “Into the Wild” logo developed last year for Big Cherry on the clearwell tank just below the Water Plant.

Mr. Lawson said they were working with the Post Office on their new location because they need more parking spaces that meet federal requirements

Councilman Bloomer asked if there was going to be power to the new bridge Greenbelt pedestrian bridge. Mr. Lawson said that Ray Lane is working on a quote for lights. He said the manufacturer will have to approve the lighting to maintain the warranty on the bridge, but power will not be a problem.

Councilman Bloomer asked about the progress on getting the splash pad open. Mr. Lawson said we have received three quotes for the concrete and building but we are still waiting for equipment and parts to get it up and running.

Councilman Bloomer said the Town's inoperable vehicle rules are stricter than Wise County, and wanted to know who enforces that. Mr. Lawson said Litter Control and Wise County enforces the ordinance and they have had better results than the Town. He said the teeth must come through judicial enforcement.

AGENDA ITEM 7 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Gilley said that Jimmy McElrath has been very helpful to the Planning Commission with the historic district zoning and there was some discussion with Council on whether the Town had adopted a zoning ordinance establishing the historic district boundaries.

AGENDA ITEM 8 COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Lyke said the Gathering in the Gap had over 1,000 people and numbers were low due to weather and moving the main act stage to Mountain Empire Community College. She said they are looking at developing better contingency plans for next year in case of bad weather but had a good turn out and had positive feedback. She said the Garden Club will be at the Visitor's Center Thursday at 5 pm. On Thursday Cripple Creek will be at the Trail of the Lonesome Pine at 7 pm to kick off the first night of the drama this season.

Vice-Mayor Bailey said Gary Baumgardner's wife Marilyn passed away.

Mayor Johnson said the Town is getting busy again and that he appreciates all the volunteers and thanks to all.

AGENDA ITEM 7 ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned 7:40 pm.

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