

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

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

July 09, 2024

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. 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: Ms. Amanda L. Hawkins, Town Clerk/Treasurer
 Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney
 Mr. Steve Hamm, Chief of Police

Staff Absent: Mr. Stephen Lawson, Town Manager

Planning Commission Present: Ms. Wendy Warden, – Chairwoman
 Ms. Amy Hubbard – Vice-Chairwoman
 Mrs. Freda Bishop – Member
 Mr. Kent Gilley – Member
 Mr. Greg Kress, Member
 Mr. John Morrissey – Member

Planning Commission Absent: Mr. Brian Jones, Member
 Mr. Mark Lester, Member
 Mr. Lorenzo Rodriguez – Member
 Mr. Matthew Bright, Administrator

**AGENDA ITEM 2
JOINT PUBLIC HEARING – Inoperable Vehicle Ordinance**

Mayor Johnson Recessed the Regular Council Meeting and opened the Joint Public Hearing for Inoperable Vehicle Ordinance. Mayor asked for public comment. No Comment.

Mayor Johnson closed the Joint Public Hearing and reconvened the Regular Council Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 3

INVOCATION by Pastor Timothy Robinson of Trinity United Methodist Church.

AGENDA ITEM 4

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ITEM 5

ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Hughes, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of July 09, 2024 be adopted as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

AGENDA ITEM 6

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

John Woodward, 108 West 5th Street North, came to request paving of the road at West 5th Street. He said the streets were paved after the 1977 flood and has been patched since then. He said the deterioration is going to cause problems with people walking, riding bikes to get to the greenbelt and eventually with vehicles on that road. He also brought a petition signed by his neighbors to get the roads paved. Mr. Woodward asked Council if they knew there was raw sewage running down the ditch line and if not he would like to know why. He said for the past year he and his father have been going to Public Works and yesterday they went to see Gary Hampton, and this was the first time that he had heard of it. He said they thought the town knew about it, he said David Long had come down and poured lime on it, he said he has begged the Town to do something. He said it is raw sewage right next to the ditch line, he said they can't plant flowers, can't sit outside due to the smell. He said he contacted the Health Department, and they instructed him to get samples of the water, he said he was not going to do that. Mayor Johnson said he would check on it tomorrow and thanked Mr. Woodward for coming to Council and letting them know about the problem.

Daretha Morris, 1975 Artesian Well Hollow said she had sent pictures to Council by email and ever since they built the low-income apartments going up the ridge there has been a lot of drainage that comes down and there was a ditch dug by the house by VDOT. She said that in April with the hard rains the water come off to the left side toward her house and it is going under the house. She said it has done that twice this year but since the slide on that road it has been worse. She said she is running two dehumidifiers and two air purifiers in the back of the house. She said something must be done. Mayor Johnson said they had cleaned the ditch, and he asked Mr. Morris to take pictures of the damage and turn it into her insurance. Amanda Hawkins explained the insurance claims process.

Karen James, 2014 East 3rd Avenue, said she came concerning her mother's grave (Clara Tucker) who passed away April 2023. She said she is buried at Glencoe Cemetery and the grave is covered with river sand with grass seed and straw on it. She said there is no grass, and they keep mowing over the straw. She said that she spoke with Cindy Robinette on Monday, June 24th and had also sent Stephen Lawson an email and he said that dirt and grass would be sown. She said it was just sand and straw again and animals are digging holes in the sand. Mayor Johnson said it would be taken care of.

AGENDA ITEM 7

GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. **Approval of minutes of Council Workshop Meeting of June 4, 2024.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- b. **Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of June 11, 2024.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- c. **Approval of minutes of the Budget/Finance/Audit Committee Meeting of June 11, 2024. Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- d. **Approval of minutes of the Public Utilities Committee Meeting of June 11, 2024.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- e. **Approval of minutes of the Special Council Meeting of June 17, 2024.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented
- f. **Approval of minutes of the Special Council Meeting of June 24, 2024.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented
- g. **Departmental Reports for the month of June 2024.**
Recommended Action: Received and filed.

Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Lyke, 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 8

TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

System-Wide Water Improvement Project Phase 1A, 1B & II

In Mr. Broskey's absence Mayor Johnson gave the Town Engineer's Report. Mayor Johnson said that Boyd's Construction continues to work in the area of Wood Avenue, 1st Avenue, Shawnee Avenue and Railroad Avenue. He said that Pressure and Bac'T tests have passed, and the contractor is going to hook the residences to the new lines. He said they hope to abandon this section of lines next week. He said the contractor has encountered several lines that were leaking and a location where there are multiple lines. Mayor Johnson reported that the contractors hope to see a difference in water loss in just that small area. He said the contractor is planning to move to the Powell Valley areas next to Egan Road for a small replacement to remove the line out of the woods and fields which have been problematic over the years.

Greenbelt Phase V

Mayor Johnson said the concrete entrance was complete along with the metal handrailing on the Greenbelt Phase V. He said the contractor will install the remaining wood railing when the last few pieces arrive.

AGENDA ITEM 9**TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT**

Mr. Stephen Lawson, Town Manager was absent from the meeting, Amanda Hawkins, Town Clerk/Treasurer reported the Town Manager’s Report.

a. Proclamation – Bows and Britches

Ms. Hawkins asked Council to approve a proclamation welcoming Logan Renfro, owner of Bows and Britches located at 319 Shawnee Avenue East in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Logan Renfro, owner of Bows and Britches located at 319 Shawnee Avenue East in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: None

b. Ordinance – 11-2024 – Inoperable Vehicle Ordinance

Ms. Hawkins asked Council to approve Ordinance 11-2024 being an ordinance regulating the storage of inoperable vehicles.

Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve Ordinance 11-2024 being an ordinance regulating the storage of inoperable vehicles. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: None

c. Projects Update

Ms. Hawkins gave the Town Manager’s Report in his absence. She said that Mr. Lawson said he had spoken with Curklin’s and Good Times Pizza and they said that last week was their best week on record with the little league tournament and the July 4th activities. She said that the Little League State Tournament has been ongoing since Friday, July 5th and each day there were 6 games played in Big Stone Gap and 4 games played in Wise. She said the tournament will wrap up tomorrow with the semi and final games.

Ms. Hawkins reported that the replacement parts for the Splashpad had been shipped and should have been delivered today but they had not been received yet. She said the control board was completed today and should be drop shipped tomorrow and received by the end of the week. She said the Town only received one response bid for the control building work and that Stephen Lawson said he was fine to go with that bid.

Ms. Hawkins said the football field naming request from the community for Phil Robbins is awaiting guidance from VML to get the process correct since we do not have a Town policy for naming public buildings or facilities but said this would be done before the first football game.

Ms. Hawkins said that Mr. Lawson had spoken with Gary Lawson of the Wise County School Maintenance regarding the LED lights for the football field again. She said that Mr. Gary Lawson is working on a bid request for this project.

AGENDA ITEM 10 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Gilley said the Planning Commission met last night, July 8th, and voted for the Historical District to be put in place and an Architectural Review Board to be set up. He said these motions would be passed on to Charles Bledsoe.

AGENDA ITEM 11 COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Lyke said that everyone had sang Ked Meade's and Gary Harris's praises for the 4th of July event they put on. She said if you see them out to let them know they did a good job. She said she had talked to some people at the Chamber, and they were singing praises how great the 4th was in Big Stone Gap.

Councilman Hughes echoed Councilwoman Lyke and said it was a great 4th. He said thanks to staff, parks & rec, and the police department for all they had done over the past week. He said that Miners Park looks great with the new local art.

Councilman Gilley said it was great job on the 4th of July with a lot of people from all over coming for the fireworks.

Councilman Bloomer said thanks to all, and they done a great job.

Councilwoman Bailey said everyone did a fantastic job.

Mayor Johnson said a lot of time we don't see what the Town Manager does behind the scenes and that he contributes a lot to the town, and he was just giving credit where credit is due. He said the same with Chief Hamm, Steve Clark, David Long and Amanda Hawkins, he said they all do a wonderful job. He said thanks to all and if anyone has any comments bring it to Council, they will see it gets taken care of.

AGENDA ITEM 12
ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.

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