

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

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

January 09, 2025

6:30 PM

AGENDA ITEM 1

Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Johnson called the January 09, 2025 meeting to order that was rescheduled from January 07, 2025.

Council Present: Hon. Gary Johnson, Mayor
 Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman
 Hon. Kent Gilley, Councilman
 Hon. Tyler Hughes, Councilman
 Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman

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

Council Absent: Hon. Nancy Bailey, Vice-Mayor
 Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman

AGENDA ITEM 2

JOINT PUBLIC HEARING

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

Planning Commission Absent: Mr. Brian Jones, Member
 Mr. Greg Kress, Member
 Mr. Matthew Bright, Administrator

Mayor Johnson Recessed the Council Meeting.

a. Ordinance 18-2024 Establish Downtown Big Stone Gap Historic District

Mayor Johnson opened the Joint Public Hearings for Ordinance 18-2024 to Establish Downtown Big Stone Gap Historic District and called for comments from the public.

No comments from the public were made.

Mayor Johnson closed the Joint Public Hearing Ordinance 18-2024 to Establish Downtown Big Stone Gap Historic District.

b. Ordinance 19-2024 Recreational Substance: Retail

Mayor Johnson opened the Joint Public Hearing for Ordinance 19-2024 Recreational Substance: Retail and called for comments from the public.

No comments from the public were made.

Mayor Johnson closed the Joint Public Hearing Ordinance 19-2024 for Recreational Substance: Retail.

c. Ordinance 27-2024 Skill Games Operation: Retail

Mayor Johnson opened the Joint Public Hearing for Ordinance 27-2024 Skill Games Operation: Retail and called for comments from the public.

No comments from the public were made.

Mayor Johnson closed the Joint Public Hearing Ordinance 27-2024 for Skill Games Operation: Retail.

AGENDA ITEM 3**PUBLIC HEARING – Ordinance 24-2024 – Amend Section 13.6 – Alcohol Sales Hours**

Mayor Johnson opened the Public Hearing for the Ordinance 24-2024 Amend Section 13.6 – Alcohol Sales Hours and called for comments from the public.

No comments from the public were made.

Mayor Johnson closed the Public Hearing for the Ordinance 24-2024 – Amend Section 13.6 – Alcohol Sales Hours and reconvened the Council Workshop.

AGENDA ITEM 4 - REVIEW OF DRAFT MINUTES

Review of draft of minutes of the Council Workshop of December 3, 2024 and the Regular Council Meeting of December 10, 2024.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – JR APPALCHIAN MUSIC PROGRAM – Joey O’Quinn

Joey O’Quinn was not in attendance.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – VACATE ALLEY E 2ND STREET SOUTH – Robert Botts

Robert Botts was not in attendance.

AGENDA ITEM 7 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Lawson gave the Town Engineer's Report in the absence of Mr. Broskey. Mr. Lawson said on the System Wide Water Improvement Project Phase IA, 2A and 2B the Contractor was planning on starting back this week but due to the weather is waiting until next week. Mr. Lawson said on the System-Wide Water Improvement Project Phase III the paperwork had been signed and turned into the DEQ to work on the plans for this phase.

Mr. Lawson said we continue to work on the Big Cherry Outdoor Recreation Environmental Archaeological Study and are receiving quotes for that study.

**AGENDA ITEM 8
TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT****a. Resolution 01-2025 – Appropriate \$1,221,100 ARC Funds**

Mr. Lawson said this was a resolution for Council to approve appropriating \$1,221,100 in ARC Funds for the Big Cherry Regional Recreation Enhanced Infrastructure Project.

b. Resolution 02-2025 – Reappoint Freda Bishop – Planning Commission

Mr. Lawson said this was a resolution reappointing Freda Bishop to a four-year term on the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission to expire on October 31, 2028.

c. Resolution 03-2025 – Reappoint Amy Hubbard – Planning Commission

Mr. Lawson said this was a resolution reappointing Amy Hubbard to a four-year term on the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission to expire on September 30, 2028.

d. Resolution 04-2025 – Reappoint Greg Kress – Planning Commission

Mr. Lawson said this was a resolution reappointing Greg Kress to a four-year term on the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission to expire on July 31, 2028.

e. Resolution 05-2025 – Reappoint Lorenzo Rodriguez – Planning Commission

Mr. Lawson said this was a resolution reappointing Lorenzo Rodriguez to a four-year term on the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission to expire on July 31, 2028.

f. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson passed around a poster for the Skate Park and said that the American Ramp Company will be here on January 23, 2025 to look at the bike pump track site for the skate and bike park. He said the schedule for their visit would be as follows: 9 am – Design, 10 am – Visit the Site, 11 am – Lunch at Curklin's to meet with the family, 1 pm – Financials and remittance, 3 pm – Focus on Business, 4 pm – Focus on User, 5 pm - Dinner, 6 pm – Open Community Meeting.

Mr. Lawson said for website management Ked Meade and Amanda Hawkins had been talking with Ripl Creative for the town's websites bigstonegap.com, bigstonegap.org and Blue Highway Festival.

Mr. Lawson said the Town offices were closing at 12:00 pm tomorrow due to the weather forecast. He said the road crews would work the Prison Road and Azalea Lane first, Hospital second, then the main roads from town limits to town limits then the secondary streets.

Mr. Lawson said the Town does not clean sidewalks, that it is the businesses responsibility for the area in front of their business. He said with trash pickup that the garbage trucks can't always reach residences during bad weather so employees that are not scraping the roads are out in pickup trucks gathering trash.

Mr. Lawson said there would be changes within the Police Department due to the retirement of Chief Hamm.

Mr. Lawson said the date for Blue Highway Festival has been set and the official announcement will be after Monday.

Mr. Lawson said local businesses will be getting visits for past due accounts for Business Licenses, Water Bills, Meals Tax and other fees.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Gilley said the Planning Commission met Monday and the Tiny Houses Ordinance was completed and will be sent to Council for review.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilman Gilley said for everyone to be safe tomorrow.

Councilman Hughes said he had someone contact him on the Ordinance to remove vehicles from public right of way and they wanted to know how the enforcement worked. Wendy Warden asked for the address to pass along to Jimmy McElrath. Councilman Hughes said for everyone to stay safe and warm. He said it's wintertime and Legislative session will be soon; there are many folks without a home in Wise, Lee and Scott Counties and these Counties lack the resources to address the homeless population. He said everyone needs to contact the Legislation and the Commonwealth will have to tackle this problem eventually and provide these Counties with resources to help. He thanked all the employees for what they do for the Town.

Mayor Johnson said thanks to the Planning Commission for a doing a good job. He welcomed Adam Harris to the Planning Commission and said he was thankful to our employees and for everyone to stay safe and warm.

AGENDA ITEM 11 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned 6:58 pm.

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