

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

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

March 11, 2025

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
 *Arrived at 6:45 pm

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

AGENDA ITEM 2 - INVOCATION by Pastor Bud Kilbourne and Associates Pastor Eddie Kilbourne of Cornerstone House of Prayer.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ITEM 4 - ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Hughes, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of March 11, 2025 be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 5 – J. A. BLAND HIGH SCHOOL HIGHWAY MARKER – JINNY TURMAN

Jinny Turman came and thanked Council for allowing her to make a presentation on the J. A. Bland High School, presently Town Hall, and the placing of the Highway Marker. She said this project was a collaboration of UVA Wise Students, citizens of Big Stone Gap and Alumni. She said the timeline of the project was delayed due to Covid in 2020 until 2021 - 2022. She said the application for the National Registry was received and approved the Summer of 2022 and then they collectively

worked on the expanded National Registry for the next two years and it went to the State in September 2024 and was approved. She said it was listed on the Virginia Landmark Registry and the official National Registry last November as Criteria A and B. She mentioned a few points of interest and history of the building and asked Council to place the marker at the front of the building in the flower bed.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Wendy Warden – 214 East 1st Street South, came to the Council Meeting to reintroduce herself. She said there was some confusion around town about who she was and what her intentions are. She said she was the owner of BSG Girl, a Facebook page. She said she moved back to the area and wants to celebrate this Town and the BSG Girl Facebook does exactly that. She said she is not in competition with Ked Meade who has a tremendous job to do.

AGENDA ITEM 7 - GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Approval of minutes of Council Workshop Meeting of February 4, 2025.
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- b. Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of February 11, 2025.
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- c. Departmental Reports for the month of February 2025.
Recommended Action: Received and filed.**

Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Gilley, that the General Order of Business be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 8 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Broskey said the construction on the waterline continues at Powell Avenue and 5th Street and is going well. He said the Sunrise Village grant application is due at the end of March and Lenowisco is assisting with that. Stephen Lawson asked about locations of fire hydrants being moved and asked if the 2-inch lines that were discussed are good to go. Mr. Broskey said the contractor will take out the hydrants and the 2-inch lines are good to go.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a. Proclamation – Sunny Side Lounge

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a proclamation welcoming Aneisha Chandler, owner of the Sunny Side Lounge located at 311 Shawnee Avenue East in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Aneisha Chandler, owner of the Sunny Side Lounge located at 311 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. Proclamation – Designate April 2025 Child Abuse Prevention Month

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a proclamation to designate April 2025 Child Abuse Prevention Month in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve a proclamation to designate April 2025 Child Abuse Prevention Month in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

c. Proclamation – Recognizing Beth Hagan

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a proclamation recognizing the long history of support and devotion of Beth Hagan to the Big Stone Gap community.

Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a proclamation recognizing the long history of support and devotion of Beth Hagan to the Big Stone Gap community.

Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

d. Ordinance 17-2024 – Tiny Houses Ordinance

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Ordinance 17-2024 being an ordinance governing the design and construction of tiny houses.

Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Hughes, that Council approve Ordinance 17-2024 being an ordinance governing the design and construction of tiny houses.

Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

e. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson said \$1.6 million dollars for Italy Bottom was asked for and \$933,000 was awarded. He said the housing portion of the application would have the biggest impact and we can apply to do water, sewer, and other items for future applications.

Mr. Lawson said the Big Cherry AMLER archeological service will need the area narrowed down and a new contractor is being discussed.

Mr. Lawson said a surveyor’s meeting with Lee Collier regarding the property for a land swap will be tomorrow.

Mr. Lawson said the Middle School softball tournament was a success.

Mr. Lawson said spring soccer starts this week with practice and games to follow.

Mr. Lawson said he had a meeting with Ballard to discuss the demolition of the Armory Building.

Mr. Lawson said the Pickleball lights must have more work done and that we traded for a 65-foot pole to revamp the lights.

Mr. Lawson said next year's budget was underway.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

AGENDA ITEM 11 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Lyke said congratulations to the Union Middle School girls, they got second place in the tournament. She said upcoming events were the Shamrock Walk this Saturday; Pinwheel Ceremony is April 4th at 10 am at MEOC and the Health Wagon free fair is Thursday and Friday.

Councilman Hughes thanked the visitors in attendance. He said he was glad to recognize Beth Hagan. He thanked all the town employees and hoped everyone was well in Italy Bottom.

Councilman Gilley thanked all in attendance and employees and told everyone to stay safe.

Councilman Bloomer thanked everyone for coming. He said the BSG Girl has good traction and that her page focuses on small business. He said he knows the schools promote tournaments, but they need to share more.

Vice-Mayor Bailey apologized for being late and she appreciates the crowd attending and thanked all the town employees.

Mayor Johnson thanked all in attendance and the response from the citizens. He thanked all the town employees.

AGENDA ITEM 12

CLOSED SESSION

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Bailey, that Council enter a Closed Session in accordance with Virginia Code Section 2.3-3711 (A) (1) for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body for the purpose of discussing personnel and potential legal liability.

RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Bailey, that Council reconvene into Open Session.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

Amanda Hawkins, Clerk Treasurer, read the Certification of Closed Session and called for a roll call vote resulting as follows:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

AGENDA ITEM 13 - ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm.

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