

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

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

April 08, 2025

6:30 PM

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

Vice-Mayor Bailey called the meeting to order.

Those 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 L. Hawkins, Town Clerk/Treasurer
 Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney
 Mr. Matt Russell, Chief of Police

Council Absent: Hon. Gary Johnson, Mayor

AGENDA ITEM 2 - INVOCATION by Pastor Josh Tompkins of West End Baptist Church.

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 April 8, 2025 be amended to add GAP PARTNERSHIP to the agenda as Item 5.
Motion resulted as follows:**

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

AGENDA ITEM 5 – GAP PARTNERSHIP

Elise Bloomer, President, Gap Partnership thanked Council for allowing her to come and speak. She said she is also the owner of 404 Café and Creamery in Big Stone Gap. She introduced Gretchen Cope who said she was the Treasurer of the Gap Partnership and Park Manager of the Southwest Virginia Museum. Ms. Bloomer said she came to ask Council to partner with the Gap Partnership for a permanent covered Farmer's Market. She said the vision is to create a covered open-air structure in Big Stone Gap that would act as a hub for local artisans and small businesses. She said

this would allow vendors to operate rain or shine and it would extend market dates. She said this space could be multi-use by all events held by the Town of Big Stone Gap. She said at this time they are requesting the Council's support to start the planning process, identifying a potential location, and researching funding sources. She passed out a picture to Council of what they were looking at doing for the project. Council had some questions and there was discussion on those questions.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Heather Moses, 418 East 5th Street South, came representing concerned citizens and brought a proposal for Council to consider, she handed out the proposal. She said this proposal is requesting a comprehensive study by the Weldon Cooper Center and Virginia Tech's Center for Economic and Community Engagement to assess the impact of Medicaid cuts in the Town of Big Stone Gap. She read the proposal. Councilman Hughes asked if this has been presented to other boards. Ms. Moses answered yes, other Counties and Towns have the proposal but the only vote on it was Dickenson County.

AGENDA ITEM 7 - GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 8 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Broskey said the abandonment on the 5th street line was completed Friday and the new line is active. He said they have seen small decreases in water and the contractor has moved to the Cadet bridge.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a. Proclamation – Emily Arrington Photography

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a proclamation welcoming Emily Arrington, owner of the Emily Arrington Photography located at 321 Shawnee Avenue East in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Emily Arrington, owner of Emily Arrington Photography located at 321 Shawnee Avenue East in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

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

b. Proclamation – B12 Results Medical

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a proclamation welcoming Renee Davenport, owner of B12 Results Medical located at 18 East 5th Street North in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Rachel Davenport, owner of B12 Results Medical located at 18 East 5th Street North in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Johnson

c. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson said they received access to the Federal Building to take photos. He said we still need additional photos of the attic, crawl space and postal area to complete the application and meet the May 6th submission deadline.

Mr. Lawson said he had meetings with a podcaster from Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority that was sent to Big Stone Gap for our outdoor recreation activities including the Greenbelt, Powell River Trail, Big Cherry and the AMLER grant. He said they would get back with us in May and would go live with the podcast. He said he would keep Council informed because several will need to be involved. He said the state parks was one of the sponsors and this was a regional plan put together to get tourists to stay longer than a weekend.

Mr. Lawson said Blue Highway dates have been finalized for October 8th through October 12th. He said all time slots have been contracted but there were still six contacts that need to be finalized. He said ticket pricing had been set, and marketing and advertising had been completed. He said he feels really good about this year's show. He hopes to announce everything by April 21st but no later than May 1st.

Mr. Lawson said the Easter egg hunt is this weekend and is always a big event.

Mr. Lawson said the Town was cleaning up the concrete where the Post Office is relocating and that was part of the agreement and that they plan on being in that building by October 2025.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Gilley said the Planning Commission met last night but did not have anything for this meeting but will have something for the next Workshop meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 11 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Lyke announced the following events to Council: Spring Yard Sale at the Southwest Virginia Museum April 26th from 9 am – 2 pm, Garden Club luncheon at the Fox House April 26th, Great American Clean- Up April 26th. She said Gathering in the Gap is looking for volunteers for May 24th. She said the Pinwheel Ceremony was very successful. She said she has seen a lot of cuts and that she hands out food boxes and a lot of things have lost funding. She said she volunteers with a lot of different organizations and would like to see the proposal Heather brought on the agenda.

Councilman Hughes said it was good to be with all the people at MEOC at the Pinwheel Ceremony. He thanked the visitors for coming and bringing their presentations. He said he shares in the concern right now with the changes in government and the effect it will have on rural America and Southwest Virginia, and it will eventually affect us on the local level. He thanked all the police, fire and rescue and all the town employees.

Councilman Gilley said thanks to all employees, and he hopes Gary is ok.

Councilman Bloomer said he was sorry he missed the Pinwheel Ceremony, and he apologized. He said he; Elise and Amanda attended the Gala and had fun. He said the Minnick School wants to have a grand opening and ribbon cutting the 1st or 2nd of May and he will let everyone know when they decide. He asked what the update was on the skate park, Mr. Lawson said they would have the next graph for us by the of end of this week. Councilman Bloomer also asked about the splash pad, Mr. Lawson said it would be ready by the 2nd week of May.

Vice-Mayor Bailey thanked everyone for coming and the presentation for the Farmer's Market and Heather for bringing the Resolution. She thanked the police fire and all our town employees.

AGENDA ITEM 12 - ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm.

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