

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

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

May 13, 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. 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. Robert Bloomer Councilman

AGENDA ITEM 2 - INVOCATION by Reverend Rick Whitten of New Hope Assembly of God.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ITEM 4 - ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Hughes seconded by Lyke, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of May 13, 2025 be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

James Porchie, 111 2nd Avenue West, known as Aviation Road, said he came back regarding the speeding on Aviation Road. He asked Chief Russell if the PD had been there with radar and Chief answered they had and they have written tickets since Mr. Porchie came to the last meeting. Mr. Porchie says he is just concerned about children playing or anyone else that lives there are going to get hit by a speeding car. Council discussed options with Mr. Porchie.

Lauren Allbrick, 3rd Avenue South, and she came to ask about resolution on impacts on Medicaid cuts that was presented by Heather Moses a month ago. She said she works at the homeless shelter and hopes that Big Stone Gap can do something.

Adam Harris, 413 E River Street North, came to invite Council to the 5th Annual Juneteenth Program at 12:00 at Italy Bottom Park.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Approval of minutes of Council Workshop Meeting of April 01, 2025.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- b. Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of April 08, 2025.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- c. Departmental Reports for the month of April 2025.**
Recommended Action: Received and filed.

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 7 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Broskey reported that:

- The contractor is wrapping up doing reconnections and the only line work left is at the railroad crossing at Tiger Market.
- Master meters and tanks are being installed for leak detection.
- Plans are to wrap up the water Phase III, the East Stone Gap Community Project and to work on access to manholes.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a. Proclamation – National Garden Week

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a proclamation designating June 2nd through June 8th, 2025 as National Garden Week in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hughes, that Council approve a proclamation designating June 2nd through June 8th, 2025 as National Garden Week in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

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

b. Resolution 08-2025 – Application to GSA for the Slemo Federal Building

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Resolution 08-2025 being a resolution authorizing the application to the Administrator of General Services State of Virginia for the C. Bascom Slemo Federal Building.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Gilley that Council approve Resolution 08-2025 being a resolution authorizing the application to the Administrator of General Services State of Virginia for the C. Bascom Slemp Federal Building. Motion resulted as follows:

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

c. Resolution 10-2025 – Appropriate \$955,810 CDBG Funds

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Resolution 10-2025 being a resolution appropriating \$955,810 in Community Development Block Grant funds for the Italy Bottom Comprehensive Community Development Project.

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Lyke that Council approve Resolution 10-2025 being a resolution appropriating \$955,810 in Community Development Block Grant funds for the Italy Bottom Comprehensive Community Development Project. Motion resulted as follows:

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

d. Resolution 11-2025 – Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Plan – Italy Bottom CDBG Project

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Resolution 11-2025 being a resolution adopting a Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan related to the Italy Bottom Comprehensive Community Development Project.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hughes, that Council approve Resolution 11-2025 being a resolution adopting a Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan related to the Italy Bottom Comprehensive Community Development Project. Motion resulted as follows:

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

e. Resolution 12-2025 – Business and Employment Plan – Italy Bottom CDBG Project

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Resolution 12-2025 being a resolution adopting the Business and Employment Plan related to the Italy Bottom Comprehensive Community Development Project.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Resolution 12-2025 being a resolution adopting the Business and Employment Plan related to the Italy Bottom Comprehensive Community Development Project. Motion resulted as follows:

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

f. Ordinance 05-2024 – Architectural Review Board

Mr. Lawson asked Council to table Ordinance 05-2024 - Architectural Review Board.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Lyke, that Council table Ordinance 05-2024 - Architectural Review Board. Motion resulted as follows:

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

g. Resolution 09-2025 – Yard Sales

Mr. Lawson asked Council to table Resolution 09-2025 – Yard Sales.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hughes, that Council table Resolution 09-2025 – Yard Sales. Motion resulted as follows:

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

h. Special Use Permit – Ryan and Deborah Adams

Mr. Lawson asked Council to authorize a Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission on Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at 6:30 pm to receive public comment on the proposed special use permit.

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Hughes, that Council authorize a Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission on Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at 6:30 pm to receive public comment on the proposed special use permit. Motion resulted as follows:

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

i. Cumberland Airport Commission Funding Increase Request

Mr. Lawson asked Council to authorize a one-time donation in the amount of \$5,000 for the upcoming capital improvements planned at the Cumberland Airport.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council authorize a one-time donation in the amount of \$5,000 for the upcoming capital improvements planned at the Cumberland Airport. Motion resulted as follows:

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

j. High Knob Music Festival Donation

Mr. Lawson asked Council to authorize a donation in the amount of \$500.00 to the High Knob Music Festival.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Gilley, that Council authorize a donation in the amount of \$500.00 to the High Knob Music Festival. Motion resulted as follows:

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

k. Parade Permit – Union Little League – District 13 All Stars

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a parade permit for Union Little League District 13 All-Stars opening ceremonies to be held on June 7, 2025 at 10:00 am.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve a parade permit for Union Little League District 13 All-Stars opening ceremonies to be held on June 7, 2025 at 10:00 am. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer

l. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson gave the following updates:

- The Architectural Review Board ordinance needs to coincide with the Town Charter and State Law and also to give property owners a 30 days' notice to provide their input and concerns. Council and Town Attorney Bledsoe will need to review and recommend changes to give feedback to the Planning Commission.
- The Yard Sale Policy did not work before years ago and it will not work now but it can be policed better regarding the signs. Town staff would not be available to keep up with the things mentioned in the Policy, it will need to be revised.
- GSA compliance document has been signed and returned. Applause to Matthew Bright and Ked Meade and anyone else who worked on the document. The resolution will be sent after tonight's meeting, and the Town will know soon if we have control of the Federal Building.
- May 24th Kid's Fishing Day and Gathering in the Gap. Stocking of trout will be next Thursday, invited everyone to participate in the stocking of the trout. Big Cherry will be closed to the public after the stocking until Saturday May 24th at 9AM.
- Artisan Well Hollow drainage issue with ditch that was blocked was found last Tuesday with the help of Lane Group. The drain was stopped up and Town crews will get new drainage tiles and clean the ditch.
- Adam Harris, Sandra Jones, LENOWISCO, DHCD and everyone involved in the Italy bottom project will have a kickoff meeting tomorrow in the Council chambers.
- Blue Highway Festival tickets went on sale midnight Monday May 12th. The victims of hurricane Helene that could not attend the 2024 Festival got replacement ticket to the 2025 Festival mailed to them.
- Ked Meade is working on submitting car charger grants that will include a 4-hour charger to be placed at the Municipal Building in one of the drive-thru bays. We have an opportunity to get a fast charger that requires 3 phase power. Councilman Bloomer mentioned at a previous meeting that this was the power is located in the 404 Café and Creamery parking lot. The installation for these fast chargers is \$20,000 – 25,000, a grant would be needed for this project.
- Skate Park meeting was today, and a total equipment groundbreaking will be happening in September 2025. The plans are finalized for the exact layout and location. The DCHD sign will be put up this month with the donors listed. This plant goes along with the VDOT grant

for the sidewalk from the Museum to the Park. The linear feet has been changed to bypass the skate park since the previous grant was passed in 2017.

- The pool is beyond repair, and I am requesting that it be filled in and asphalted over. The Town of Pennington Gap has requested to purchase the pool pumps, and I suggest that we give them the equipment since they have the only working pool in the area. Council agreed.

AGENDA ITEM 9 COMMITTEE REPORT

a. PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Acting Committee Chair Hughes said the Public Utilities Committee met on May 13th to discuss the proposed utility rate increases for the FY 2025-26 budget and made the following recommendation.

The Public Utilities Committee unanimously recommends to Council an increase of 3% for in-town and out-of-town water and a sewer rate increase of \$1.00 to the over 1,000 gallons rate for in-town and out-of-town customers FY2025-26 budget to be included in the public hearing advertisement for Ordinance 14-2025.

The recommendation by the Public Utilities Committee constitutes a motion and a second.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer

b. BUDGET/FINANCE/AUDIT COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Bailey said the Budget/Finance/Audit Committee met on May 13th to review the proposed FY2025-26 Budget and made the following recommendation.

The Budget/Finance/Audit Committee unanimously recommends that Council authorize a Public Hearing on Ordinance 14-2025 on June 3, 2025, at 6:30 pm for the purpose of receiving public comment regarding the proposed FY2025-26 Budget which contains (1) a water rate increase of 3% for in-town and out-of-town customers (2) a sewer rate increase of \$1.00 for the over 1,000 gallons rate only for in-town and out-of-town customers.

The recommendation by the Budget/Finance/Audit Committee constitutes a motion and a second.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer

AGENDA ITEM 10 - COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Gilley

AGENDA ITEM 11 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Lyke reminded Council of Kid's Fishing Day on May 24th. She asked Council if the speed readers like they have in Wise would be an option for 2nd Avenue West.

Councilman Hughes said the Crooked Road Sign will be presented at 5:20PM on May 24th at the Gathering in the Gap. He thanked Matthew Bright and Ked Meade for all their work on the Federal Building Grant and thanks to all the Town employees. He suggested putting yard sale rules and regulations on social media or the back of the water bill.

Councilman Gilley said Kid's Fishing Day started at 9AM Saturday May 24th and they would have hotdogs and s'mores and not to forget about Gathering in the Gap same day.

Vice-Mayor Bailey thanked the Town staff, and she was proud of all the things going on in Town.

Mayor Johnson said that Joie Cantrell was the state's Public Health Nurse of the Year and he wants the Town to recognize her in some way. He thanked everyone for their prayers and for all the hard work they do for the Town.

AGENDA ITEM 12 - ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

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