

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

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

July 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. 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

*Gary Johnson, Mayor arrived at 6:42 pm

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

Staff Absent: Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney

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 Hughes, seconded by Bloomer, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of July 08, 2025 be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Paul Mullins, 2808 Cousins Lane, came on behalf of Oak Grove Baptist Church. He said the public alley near the church at has a sink hole and is causing issues at the entrance. He said he thinks it is owned by Town and would like to find out so it can be fixed. He said he appreciates what the Town has done so far in helping with this matter.

Samantha Slempp, 3013 Arise Valley, said she came as a representative for the pickleball group. She thanked the Town for all they have done for this sport and wanted to ask Council about installing more outside courts as well as an indoor facility.

Dane Moore, 388 Deep Springs Drive, said he echoed Samantha on the pickleball. He said it is getting crowded at the courts and more availability would help with tourism and Airbnb rentals.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Approval of minutes of Council Workshop Meeting of June 03, 2025.
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- b. Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of June 10, 2025.
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.**
- c. Departmental Reports for the month of June 2025.
Recommended Action: Received and filed.**

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 7 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Broskey reported that:

- Water Project - Contractors finished 3rd Avenue and is waiting for testing, still working with the railroad on that project.
- Phase III - The plan and design went to VDH for approval and are hopeful to to advertise in January 2026.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson gave the following updates:

- 4th of July – thanks to all – 85% of the work is done by Parks and Rec and the Visitor's Center. All events seem to grow each year. Some concerns were raised by the Lonesome Pine Drama, but we will work on those issues next year. 3,600 tickets were sold, and the total attendance was more than the Big Stone Gap population.
- Paving - \$190,000 in the next few weeks, if any new requests get them in ASAP.
- Complaints at Big Cherry about swimming and kayaking at the damn instead of at the boat ramp. These things will happen because usage of this area has increased. We are going to start an Ambassador Program by issuing 5 permits to monitor and scout areas. There will be more signage purchased and placed regarding the use of the Big Cherry area.
- We are getting bids from contractors for cleanup on the mountain from the Helene storm damage.
- Blue Highway Festival single day Gospel tickets and group sale prices will begin soon.
- Pickleball courts – proud of our hometown teams. We are looking at other spaces to do more courts. The space at Bullitt Park was promised to Union Little League for hitting cages. We can always use help in finding funding or donors for an indoor facility.

- Harry Meador asked to meet with Gretchen Cope to take over the cabin by Friends of the Museum. The current plans for the skate park does not include the cabin. If the museum agrees to take over the plan to move the cabin it must be voted on by the current Council. There was discussion by Council regarding the cabin. Councilwoman Bailey suggested having a memorial or plaque listing the use and history of the cabin. Mr. Lawson said the town would take it down and be as careful as possible. The construction crews would need a clean area by the end of July.
- Oak Grove pipe issue – the pipe is a private pipe and is outside the alleyway. The pipe is rusting and collapsing in on itself. He said he could meet Thursday to look at possible solutions.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Gilley said the Planning Commission met last night. He said they worked on advertising for RFP to work on a Compilation Plan. Mr. Lawson said he had a request from Planning Commission members and a citizen regarding opening up the gym for bad weather days, he said this is determined by Wise County, funds from Virginia State goes to Wise County. Councilman Bloomer asked where we are on the Architectural Review Board. Mr. Lawson said not received anything from Council or the Town attorney and suggested that he and Matthew Bright can create a draft to present to the Planning Commission and have the Town Attorney review. Councilman Bloomer said building beside Warren's building has a door missing that has big drop off and is dangerous. Mr. Lawson said the owner would be responsible and they have been contacted by the Town.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilman Bloomer thanked all the town staff and said we have a great team.

Councilman Gilley thanked all the employees for the 4th week.

Councilman Bloomer said the pickleball court proceeds bought furniture at the courts.

Councilman Hughes thanked all employees for the 4th of July events. Said he was thankful for the visitors and crowd attending the meeting. He said that Mr. Terrell was in the audience and there were still issues with the inoperable vehicle ordinance and asked if there was anything we could do for that. He said he wanted to make sure that it had been voted on by Council that the Architectural Review Board members had to be approved by Council. Mr. Lawson answered yes and asked Councilman Hughes to talk about the Crooked Road and Blue Highway Festival partnership. Councilman Hughes said there will be a big partnership this year between Crooked Road and Blue Highway Festival. He said will be hosting a JAM on Thursday night and working with the school system to get some acts to go out to the schools to build some educational links.

Councilman McKinney thanked the visitors for coming and all the town employees for the 4th of July.

Councilwoman Lyke thanked the visitors for coming. She said she was at the 4th of July events all day, the run was a good success, and the Karaoke event drew people from NC, OH, and Kingsport. The employees did a great job. The Health Wagon does children's meals daily. She said there will

be a backpack event for children that are in need of supplies, clothing and shoes on July 31 at the Wise fairgrounds. She said there will be a free dental at UVA-Wise on July 18th.

Vice-Mayor Bailey thanked the visitors for coming to the meeting and the Town employees for a wonderful 4th of July. She said the drone footage from Belcher Images were spectacular. She said she was sad about the cabin but would like a memorial.

Mayor Johnson thanked everyone for the 4th of July and said they would look at the problems at Oak Grove.

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

Meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm.

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