

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

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

September 09, 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. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman
Hon. Aaron McKinney, Councilman

Those Absent: Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman
Hon. Tyler Hughes, 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

*arrived at 6:32

AGENDA ITEM 2 - INVOCATION by Reverend Sandra Jones of Williams Chapel AME Zion Church.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ITEM 4 - ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Bailey, seconded by Gilley, that the Agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of September 09, 2025 be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Jim Terrell – 476 Ridge Place – came to thank Council for the removal of a certain vehicle. He also thanked Chief Russell. He said to remember this was not the only vehicle in town that needs to be addressed, encouraged Council to keep moving forward on this issue.

Sandra Jones thanked the Town and Council for a successful dedication to the Joseph Garfield Long Sr. Memorial Cemetery and said the family thanked them also. She said Nancy was a great representative for Council.

Matthew Bright – 324 Pearl Avenue East – thanked all that serve on Council and the Town Manager. He came to speak on the Ordinance that is on tonight's Agenda dealing with the placement of political signs. He said he has no issue with the ordinance itself, but there are two ordinances in the Town's Code of Ordinances that regulate signs; 1) streets and sidewalk ordinance and 2) the zoning ordinance. He said the zoning ordinance covers new construction and changing of existing properties and there are several places where these sign ordinances overlap as far as authority. He said his concern is it gives the appearance that it is ok to place signs of a political nature on the town right of ways as long as it is in a given time frame and there is a section where no signs shall be placed on public land unless the Town Manager gives approval. He said early voting changed everything, and there has been a lot of conjecture on the timing of the placing signs. He suggested not to vote on this ordinance and for it to be sent back to the Planning Commission for further revision.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Approval of minutes of Council Workshop Meeting of August 05, 2025.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- b. Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of August 12, 2025.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- c. Departmental Reports for the month of August 2025.**
Recommended Action: Received and filed.

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

Ayes: Bailey, Gilley, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer, Hughes

AGENDA ITEM 7 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Lawson gave the Town Engineer's Report in absence of Jon Broskey:

- No reportable updates by Jon Broskey. Mr. Lawson said Phase of Greenbelt to VDOT will be submitted on Monday. The chimneys and cabin property have been evaluated and will give more updates in the Town Manager's Report.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Projects Update

- a. Ordinance 16-2025 – Revision Article 6 Zoning Ordinance**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Ordinance 16-2025 being an ordinance revision to Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance to be effective immediately.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council table Ordinance 16-2025 revision of Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Ayes: Bailey, Gilley, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer, Hughes

b. Ordinance 17-2025 – Revision Section 21-51 Sign Ordinance

Mr. Lawson said distinguishing between Town property or right of way is creating issues because the Town owns both properties. He said it is very unclear of what the town property is (Park, Municipal building etc.) or town right of way (along the roads). He said this impacts not only political signs but all temporary signs such as festival directional signs. He said the Town Ordinance gives the Town Manager authority to authorize that temporary signs be posted but this needs more clarification. He asked Council to approve Ordinance 17-2025 on the proposed revision of Section 21-51 of the Sign Ordinance.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council table the proposed revision of Section 21-51 of the Sign Ordinance.

Ayes: Bailey, Gilley, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer, Hughes

c. Resolution 20-2025 – Non-Discrimination Police REVISED

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Resolution 20-2025 being a resolution stating the revised non-discrimination policy of the Town of Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve Resolution 20-2025 being a resolution stating the revised non-discrimination policy of the Town of Big Stone Gap.

Ayes: Bailey, Gilley, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer, Hughes

d. Rehab Program Design Version 08/19/2025

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve the Rehab Program Design version dated August 19, 2025 in relation to the Italy Bottom Comprehensive Community Development Project.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve the Rehab Program Design version dated August 19, 2025 in relation to the Italy Bottom Comprehensive Community Development Project.

Ayes: Bailey, Gilley, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer, Hughes

e. Parade Permit – UHS Homecoming

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a parade permit for the Union High School Homecoming parade to be held on Thursday, October 16, 2025 beginning at 6:00 pm.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve a parade permit for the Union High School Homecoming parade to be held on Thursday, October 16, 2025 beginning at 6:00 pm.

Ayes: Bailey, Gilley, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer, Hughes

f. Proclamation – Katelyn Witt

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a proclamation recognizing the athletic accomplishments of Katelyn Witt as part of the Union High School Indoor and Outdoor Track Team.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bailey, that Council approve a proclamation recognizing the athletic accomplishments of Katelyn Witt as part of the Union High School Indoor and Outdoor Track Team.

Ayes: Bailey, Gilley, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer, Hughes

g. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson gave the following updates:

- Cabin – Going to attempt to keep the fireplace on one of the two sides. The foundation is worse than was thought. Rocks will be saved and removed from the site. There will be an attempt to keep them to make a memorial for the cabin.
- Camera Systems - Flock cameras with tag readers have been installed at the top of Country Boy Hill, Union High School and Miner's Park. These will help all Police Departments and Security Personnel with amber alerts or to check if a particular vehicle has went through. This system has already helped with one case. Cameras at Frog Level and Bullitt Park are not readers but cameras that will help monitor the areas.
- Paving - Paving at Bullitt Park from the first gate to the east gate is being completed today. If any funding remains after paving is completed on the list provided by Council and paving for the Economic Development Projects then the remaining paving at Bullitt Park will be completed.
- Miner's Park - Concert at Miner's Park September 14th from 5pm–8pm. This is the last one on the schedule.
- Carv-In – The 14th annual Carv-In Show will be Saturday and Sunday September 20th and 21st from 9am-5pm.
- September 20th events – Leigh Ann Bolinsky 5K run/walk with registration starting at 8am, 15th Annual Recoveryfest at Miner's Park, Thunder in the Gap Car Show for Union Wrestling from 4pm – 8pm at Frog Level Park.
- September 27th – Grillin in the Gap has 19 teams registered. The Cub Run will start at 10am at Bullitt Park with the Grizzly Obstacle Run following at 1pm starting at the Visitor's Center, 1st Annual Blue Highway Fest Pageant is from 2pm – 6pm at Union High School with the winner representing Blue Highway at the Festival.
- Bear Cruiser – The Michael Chandler Community Union Bear Car was a tremendous hit. On Saturday it had over 45,000 views, and the Town has been contacted by media about making a story on it and we have received several calls from the public. Thanks to Chief Russell, Police Department, New Age Graphics and Begley Paint and Body.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Gilley said the Planning Commission had to cancel their meeting schedule for September 8, 2025.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilman Gilley asked what is the meeting schedule for October? Ms. Hawkins said the October 7th Workshop was cancelled the October 14th will be the Regular Meeting as usual.

Councilman McKinney said the car looks good, nice job. Thanks to all involved.

Councilwoman Lyke said the car looks great and thanked all involved. She thanked all employees. She said that on September 18th and 19th at Leeman Field the Health Wagon will be there for free medical services.

Vice-Mayor Bailey thanked all that worked on the car, she said it looks really good and a great tribute to Michael.

Mayor Johnson thanked all the town crews and the work that been going on at the cabin. He thanked all those in attendance and their consistency. He told everyone to come out to all the events and have fun.

AGENDA ITEM 12 - ADJOURNMENT

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

Ayes: Bailey, Gilley, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Bloomer, Hughes

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

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