

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

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

October 14, 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 6:35

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 Associate Pastor Eddie Kilbourne of Cornerstone House of Prayer.

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 September 09, 2025 be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Kathy Kennedy – 33 East Spring Street South – owns two lots adjacent to Glencoe Cemetery and came to ask Council to do a bike trail or walking trail, they are working excavation and demo of burnt-out building on the property.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – BEARS BACKPACK PROGRAM

Adam Harris 413 East Eiver Street North and Katie Zirkle 252 Colony Court Norton. Mr. Harris said he asked Ms. Hawkins to put the Bears Backpack Program on the agenda because since Phil's passing there was no coordinator but since then Katie has stepped up. Mr. Harris said he wanted it on the agenda because he knew how much this program meant to Phil and every year he would come and request funds for the program. Mr. Harris said the program is in need of funding for the holiday boxes, weekend bags and snacks. Mr. Harris said they have worked with Food City on getting meat vouchers, Ms. Zirkle reviewed what would be in the boxes and bags and the cost. Councilman Hughes asked when they needed the donation, Katie replied by December 1st. There was a discussion by Council on what money was available for donations.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Lyke, that the Council approve a donation of \$2,200 to the Bears Backpack Program.

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

AGENDA ITEM 7 – GRETCHEN COPE

Gretchen Cope, Park Manager of Southwest Virginia Museum, and Jerry Adams, Treasurer of Friends of Museum came to discuss the Peddler's Licenses for the Gathering in the Gap. A page was handed out to Council that had details from a strategic planning session with Crooked Road and included the mission statement for Gathering in the Gap and a brief history of the Park and Festival and how it all came together. She said the Festival was Memorial Day Weekend every year and a big part of the festival is the vendor area and came to ask Council about waving the peddler license for the vendors and food trucks for this event. There was a discussion by Council, Ms. Hawkins, Mr. Lawson, and Attorney Bledsoe regarding amendments that could or could not be made to the ordinance. Ms. Cope said a revision would need to be done by January 2026. Stephen Lawson said the Town and Council would look at the wording of the ordinance and make any revisions possible. Ms. Cope reminded Council of the Festival of Trees at the museum starting November 8th.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Approval of minutes of Council Workshop Meeting of September 02, 2025.**

Recommended Action: Approve as presented.

- b. Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of September 09, 2025.**

Recommended Action: Approve as presented.

- c. Departmental Reports for the month of September 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, Bloomer, Gilley, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke, McKinney

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

AGENDA ITEM 9 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

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

- System Wise Water Improvement Project Phase IA, IB & II – Contractor, Boyd's Construction, has been assigned dates by Railpros for the crossing near Tiger Market. The bore will be completed on October 27 and 28.
- System Wise Water Improvement Project Phase III – We have received VMRC response for the JAP permit. Waiting on Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and U.S. Army Corp. We have submitted the required documents to Virginia Department of Health to request a Categorical Exclusion on the Environmental Report and submitted the Plans and Specs to VDH for technical review/approval.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**Projects Update****a. Resolution 21-2025 – Re-appoint Ronald Prewitt Big Stone Gap Redevelopment & Housing Authority**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Resolution 21-2025 being a resolution to re-appoint Ronald Prewitt to the Big Stone Gap Redevelopment and Housing Authority board for a four-year term to expire on November 30, 2029.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve Resolution 21-2025 being a resolution to re-appoint Ronald Prewitt to the Big Stone Gap Redevelopment and Housing Authority board for a four-year term to expire on November 30, 2029.

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

b. Resolution 22-2025 – Re-appoint Adam Harris Big Stone Gap Planning Commission

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Resolution 22-2025 being a resolution to re-appoint Adam Harris to the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission for a four-year term to expire on October 31, 2029.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve Resolution 22-2025 being a resolution to re-appoint Adam Harris to the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission for a four-year term to expire on October 31, 2029.

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

c. Wise County Department of Social Services – Adult Christmas

Mr. Lawson asked that Council approve a donation of \$250 to the Wise County Department of Social Services Adult Protective Services Christmas.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve a donation of \$250 to the Wise County Department of Social Services Adult Protective Services Christmas.

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

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: None

d. Budget Amendment – DMV Grant FY2025 & FY2026

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve budget amendment to the FY2025-2026 budget increasing General Fund revenues and expenses by \$16,508.44 for the remainder of the FY2025 DMV Grant and the newly awarded FY2026 DMV Grant.

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve budget amendment to the FY2025-2026 budget increasing General Fund revenues and expenses by \$16,508.44 for the remainder of the FY2025 DMV Grant and the newly awarded FY2026 DMV Grant.

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

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: None

e. Parade Permit – Veteran's Day Permit

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a parade permit for the Veteran's Day parade to be held on Saturday, November 8, 2025.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hughes, that Council approve a parade permit for the Veteran's Day parade to be held on Saturday, November 8, 2025.

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

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: None

f. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson gave the following updates:

- A former employee had a heart attack on Sunday. He was med-flighted to Bristol and had a stint put in. The doctor is going to allow that to heal and then he will have by-pass surgery in 5-6 weeks.
- The survey has been completed on 1st Street for the sidewalk extension in that area. Need to remove tree stumps and water meters.
- UHS Homecoming Parade is Thursday at 6PM, will start at Bullitt Park and end at Food City.
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation met at Big Cherry and work will begin this winter. Even though the AMLER funding is on hold the matched funding does not have to wait so work will begin this fall on the pier and ramp. The lake being down this time of year will help with this project.
- New John Deer mower with side arm cutler has been delivered so we can clear the road to Big Cherry. Doing work now in some safe places where there are no vehicles or property to get damaged with debris that comes out of the mower.
- Totally in agreement with Council on supporting the Backpack Program.
- There is progress being made at the Bike Park with the asphalt being laid by hand. Encourage Council to go by and see.
- Black Horse Cycling is a motorcycle shop and want to schedule a ribbon cutting the 1st week of November.
- Pro art tickets has sent tickets to Council, and they have been passed out.

- Early voting at Carnes Gym – Monday – Friday 9AM – 5PM, October 25th and November 1st are the Saturdays open to vote at the same times. Everyone in the County can vote but not the City of Norton. November 4th will go back to normal polling locations.
- Blue Highway Fest 2025 was very stress free due to the new arrangements. Please pat the employees on the back for a job well done. No issues or complaints but Saturday was a little disappointing with the Country band. Wednesday through Friday was a great crowd. Gospel Sunday was a success with more single day tickets sold for that day but only 5% of people came.

AGENDA ITEM 11 - COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Bloomer said there was a Lenowisco PDC meeting last night and asked if the Town received funding for the bridge and engineering and site prep. Mr. Lawson said yes the Town received \$950,000 from AMLER which includes the engineering and work to get the bridge in. The VDOT application has been submitted to connect to the Greenbelt in Italy Bottom.

Councilman Gilley said the Planning Commission met October 6th but had nothing to report.

AGENDA ITEM 12 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilman Bloomer thanked all the employees for Blue Highway Fest, and it ran really smooth. He had one suggestion to start the shuttles earlier. He had complaints about the Saturday music and the high-ticket price for that day. He said the Band Festival is Saturday at Miner's Park.

Councilman Gilley thanked all employees for the Blue Highway Fest. Music was good, weather was great. He said thanks to all the volunteers also.

Councilman Hughes said great job from the employees on Blue Highway Fest. Council is working on a thank you lunch for the employees. He said he agrees with Mr. Bledsoe but wants to look at a way to do waivers. He announced the Home Craft Days at MECC is October 18th and 19th.

Councilman McKinney thanked the employees for all they do.

Councilwoman Lyke read a thank you card from Katlyn Witt. She said the Blue Highway Fest was great and that ticket prices is on par for large festivals. She thanked all the work from security by police, and we had a lot of people stay in town after the football game ended. She agreed we need to do a waiver of some sort in the ordinance for Gathering in the Gap. She said the Home Craft Days breakfast is Saturday morning.

Vice-Mayor Bailey echoed thanks to the employees for the Blue Highway Fest. She hopes Council can work something out for Gathering in the Gap.

Mayor Johnson said he enjoyed VML Conference this year, it had a lot of good information. He said he had good reports and comments about the Town of Big Stone Gap and the growth it had. He said he had a lot of compliments on the BSG shirts he wore. He said the town was full for the festival and after the game, glad to see it. He said will be praying for the employee.

AGENDA ITEM 13 - ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hughes, 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 7:50 pm.

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