

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

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

January 06, 2026

6:30 PM

AGENDA ITEM 1

Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Johnson called the January 06, 2026 meeting to order.

Council Present: Hon. Gary Johnson, Mayor
Hon. Kent Gilley, Vice-Mayor
Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman
Hon. Tyler Hughes, Councilman
Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman

Council Absent: Hon. Adam Harris, Councilman
Hon. W. Turk Hollinger, Councilman

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

AGENDA ITEM 2 - REVIEW OF DRAFT MINUTES

Review of draft of minutes of the Council Workshop of December 2, 2025 and the Regular Council Meeting of December 9, 2025.

AGENDA ITEM 3

TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Broskey gave the Town Engineer's Report as follows:

- Phase 3 Water - Categorical exclusion environmental approval was received today, project will be moving forward but the easements are still needed.
- The Lane Group merged with Rinker Design & Associates (RDA). It is in the transition phase; Jon Broskey is stepping out of the Lane Group and Patrick McKinney will be taking over as client representative.
- Stephen Lawson said he is signing a document sent to him today stating all The Lane Groups existing contracts are being transferred to Rinker Design & Associates (RDA).

AGENDA ITEM 4

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a. Resolution 03-2026 – Reappoint Tyler McFarland – Planning Commission

Resolution to reappoint Tyler McFarland to a four-year term on the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission to expire on January 31, 2030.

b. 2nd Amendment Sanctuary Resolution

Council adopted Resolution 20-2019 that was a Resolution regarding the Town of Big Stone Gap's Commitment to Respect, Preserve and Enforce the Second Amendment (US Constitution) and Article 1 Section 13 (VA Constitution) December 10, 2019. Will be asking Council to renew the Resolution.

c. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson gave the following updates to Council:

- Annual finance disclosures will be emailed to Council later this week, the disclosures need to be signed by January 31, 2026. The Conflict-of-Interest Training link will be emailed to Council, and it also must be completed by January 31, 2026.
- LOVE sign design edits are completed. Photos were passed out to Council of the completed design.
- Planning Commission's map of a site plan for a garage to be built on property located on Shawnee Avenue was presented to Council.
- Ballard meeting with Cindy Elkins will be January 7, 2026, a monthly meeting, will take this opportunity to talk about the Isaiah 117 House being located at the Armory property. Another location for the Isaiah 117 House would be the Williams Property in Frog Level.
- A Council member gave the name of Bryan Adams for the Planning Commission vacancy, Mr. Adams was contacted and agreed he was interested in the position. Also, Shawn Eldridge attended the Regular Council Meeting November 12, 2025 to state his interest and asked for Council to consider him as a candidate for the Planning Commission vacancy.
- Mr. Lawson was approached by Winston Whitt to see if the Town would be interested in the purchase of his garage. There has been no price given and no negotiations. Mr. Whitt's concern is the Town use and shut down of 3rd Street for events.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Gilley said the Planning Commission met on January 5, 2026 and the Commission wants Council to review the Camping Ordinance, the garage site plan for Shawnee Avenue, and parking at the old Pet Dairy property.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Lyke said she liked seeing the 2nd Amendment Act back on the agenda even though it had been done before.

Councilman Hughes asked why the 2nd Amendment Act was being redone, he voiced a word of caution on hyper partisan resolutions, that they often deter investment. He said he was a supporter of 2nd Amendment Act but does not like supporting any hyper partisan actions. He said before purchasing the garage the Town needs to weigh the potential revenue on rent and the revenue from the taxable property. He said he was looking forward to 2026 opportunities for the Town, lots of change exiting 2025 but change is a good. He thanked all the employees, fire and rescue.

Mayor Johnson had a question on the Camping Ordinance Section 1-C's terminology "sleeping intent", he asked how that would be determined, there was a discussion regarding how that would work. He thanked everyone for a good 2025 and said the Town would continue to go in the right direction. He thanked John for his service.

AGENDA ITEM 7 - ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 pm.

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