

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

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

March 10, 2026

6:30 PM

**AGENDA ITEM 1
Call to Order and Roll Call**

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order.

Council Present: Hon. Gary Johnson, Mayor
 Hon. Kent Gilley, Vice-Mayor
 Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman
 Hon. Adam Harris, Councilman
 Hon. W. Turk Hollinger, Councilman
 Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman

Council Absent: Hon. Tyler Hughes, Councilman

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

Staff Absent: Mr. Stephen Lawson, Town Manager

AGENDA ITEM 2 - INVOCATION by Pastor Kenneth Sturgill of Spirit and Truth Worship Center.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ITEM 4 - ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Harris, that the agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of March 10, 2026 be amended to add Item 9e – Resolution 11-2026. Motion resulted as follows:

**Ayes: Bloomer, Gilley, Harris, Hollinger, Johnson, Lyke
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes**

AGENDA ITEM 5 – HIGH KNOB MUSIC FESTIVAL – Buddy Delph

Buddy Delph said this would be the 12th year for the High Knob Music Festival and that Big Stone Gap, City of Norton, Wise County, and Scott County were their biggest supporters. He said this year the Festival will have Rolling Thunder, Wise Jams, Mac Music, and the MECC String Band. He said the Festival compensates them with a small amount of money for supporting the Festival.

He said the construction of the ADA observation platform is very close to beginning with a 12 X 16 foot platform being constructed near the parking lot. He said they had a meeting with the Forestry Commission and they approved the plans for the platform. He said the contractor for the project is a member of the High Knob Music Festival to keep costs down.

He asked Council for a contribution. He said Scott County donated \$1,000, City of Norton \$2,000, and the Wise County meeting is upcoming where he will be asking for their support also. He said last year the Town of Big Stone Gap donated \$500.

Motion by Harris, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a donation of \$500 to High Knob Music Festival, \$250 to the Festival and \$250 for the ADA observation platform. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bloomer, Gilley, Harris, Hollinger, Johnson, Lyke
Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes

AGENDA ITEM 6 – COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Adam Boring – 920 Canonchet Avenue East – came to Council joined by the boy scouts. He said he was trained in mental health and has a degree in social work and psychology. He said that getting out in nature is a big deal and very therapeutic. He said eco-tourism that our community supports is super important and wanted to thank Council for developing the Trail at Big Cherry Reservoir and looks forward to seeing what else can be accomplished.

AGENDA ITEM 7 - GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Approval of minutes of Council Workshop Meeting of February 03, 2026.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- b. Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of February 10, 2026.**
Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
- c. Departmental Reports for the month of February 2026.**
Recommended Action: Received and filed.

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

Ayes: Bloomer, Gilley, Harris, Hollinger, Johnson, Lyke
Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes

AGENDA ITEM 8 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

Matthew Lane reported that:

- System Wide Water Loss Improvement Project 1A, 1B, II was completed.
- System Wide Water Loss Improvement Project Phase III and the Hospital sewer shed are on hold until audits are completed.
- East Stone Gap Comprehensive Improvement Projects design will be completed at the end of March and then be submitted for approval.
- Proctor Street sidewalk – 30% of the design drawings have been submitted to VDOT. The projected plan is to have the design complete, and bids go out in June for the project.
- Sunrise Water Extension Project – project has been secured and an engineering agreement has been developed for the Town's consideration in the next two weeks.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Amanda Hawkins, Town Clerk Treasurer gave the Town Manager's Report in absence of Stephen Lawson, Town Manager.

AGENDA ITEM 9a - PARADE PERMIT – Union Little League Opening Day Parade

Ms. Hawkins asked Council to approve a parade permit for the Union Little League to be held on Saturday, March 21, 2026 at 11 am.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hollinger, that Council approve a parade permit for the Union Little League to be held on Saturday, March 21, 2026 at 11 am.

Ayes: Bloomer, Gilley, Harris, Hollinger, Johnson, Lyke

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes

AGENDA ITEM 9b - PROCLAMATION – Garry Russell

Ms. Hawkins asked Council to approve a proclamation Honoring Garry Russell, Recipient of the Governor's Fire Service Award – 2026 Firefighter of the Year.

Motion by Hollinger, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a proclamation Honoring Garry Russell, Recipient of the Governor's Fire Service Award – 2026 Firefighter of the Year. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bloomer, Gilley, Harris, Hollinger, Johnson, Lyke

Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes

AGENDA ITEM 9c - PROCLAMATION – Designate April 2026 Child Abuse Prevention Month

Ms. Hawkins asked Council to approve a proclamation to designate April 2026 Child Abuse Prevention Month in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Harris, seconded by Hollinger, that Council approve a proclamation to designate April 2026 Child Abuse Prevention Month in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bloomer, Gilley, Harris, Hollinger, Johnson, Lyke
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes

AGENDA ITEM 9d - RESOLUTION 10-2026 – Appointment to Planning Commission

Ms. Hawkins asked Council to approve Resolution 10-2026 being a resolution appointing Shawn Eldridge to fill the unexpired term vacated by Adam Harris on the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission, to expire on October 31, 2029.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Gilley, that Council approve Resolution 10-2026 being a resolution appointing Shawn Eldridge to fill the unexpired term vacated by Adam Harris on the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission, to expire on October 31, 2029. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bloomer, Gilley, Harris, Hollinger, Johnson, Lyke
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes

AGENDA ITEM 9d - RESOLUTION 11-2026

Ms. Hawkins asked Council to approve Resolution 11-2026 being a resolution approving the site plan for the proposed construction of an attached garage located at 1710 Shawnee Avenue East with the listed conditions and construction details as recommended by the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission.

Motion by Harris, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve Resolution 11-2026 being a resolution approving the site plan for the proposed construction of an attached garage located at 1710 Shawnee Avenue East with the listed conditions and construction details as recommended by the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bloomer, Gilley, Harris, Hollinger, Johnson, Lyke
Nays: None Abstain: None Absent: Hughes

AGENDA ITEM 9e – Projects Update

- MEOC Pinwheel Ceremony will be March 31, at 10AM at Mountain Empire Older Citizens.
- In-person early voting for the April 21st Election Day will be available at the General Registrar's Office, 5607 Patriot Drive, Wise, Monday - Friday, 8:30AM - 5:00PM, Saturdays' April 11th and 18th from 9:00AM - 5:00PM.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

AGENDA ITEM 11 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Lyke thanked Council for all the calls, texts and everything they done for her during her grandmother's passing. She thanked all the employees.

Councilman Hollinger thanked the Boys Scouts for their attendance.

Councilman Harris said this had been a busy February with a meeting at the Fire Department for citizens to learn how to volunteer for the Red Cross; they had seven BSG citizens sign up. He said he was looking at getting improvements for Cadet Park. He said he met with Scouts of America in which they got a badge for learning the process of running for an election. He asked Council for two AEDs for officers to carry while on duty. He also thanked Ked Meade, Gary Harris and Councilwoman Lyke for helping him get in contact with the leader of the Garden Club in regard to ECO day and he is working with Food City to have their donated plastics go to the Garden Club. Thanks to all the employees and looking forward to this week as the Girls Union Bears go to Richmond to play their state game.

Councilman Bloomer said he appreciated the Scouts attendance, said it was hard work but to keep working at it. He said the Skate Park has about 30 to 40 kids there every day and it's amazing to see.

Vice-Mayor Gilley thanked all the visitors for attending the meeting and thanked all the employees.

Mayor Johnson thanked Vice-Mayor Gilley for filling in for him while in Hawaii. He said there was great attendance for tonight's meeting and thanked all the employees for everything they do.

AGENDA ITEM 12 - ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Harris, seconded by Bloomer, that the meeting be adjourned. Motion resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bloomer, Gilley, Harris, Hollinger, Johnson, Lyke

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Hughes

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

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