

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

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
505 E 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET S  
BIG STONE GAP, VA**

**April 07, 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. Tyler Hughes, Councilman  
                                                 Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman

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

**AGENDA ITEM 2 - REVIEW OF DRAFT MINUTES**

Review of draft of minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of March 10, 2026.

**AGENDA ITEM 3 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT**

No Report.

**AGENDA ITEM 4 – TOWN MANAGERS REPORT**

**AGENDA ITEM 4a – 2025-2026 UHS After Prom Party**

Mr. Lawson said there was a request for a donation to the UHS After Prom Party and he suggested \$250.00 to Council.

**AGENDA ITEM 4a - Projects Update**

Mr. Lawson gave the following updates:

- MEOC's 50<sup>th</sup> Walkathon is scheduled for May 3<sup>rd</sup> at Bullitt Park at 2PM to benefit the Emergency Fuel Fund. If Birds Could Fly will be there doing a free concert and the Town will help with the setup for the event.
- Katie Zirkle sent a letter from the Backpack Program sent thanking Council for their support.

**AGENDA ITEM 4a - Projects Update (Continued):**

- The Town received \$25,000 from Friends of Southwest Virginia for a mural at Bullitt Park on the building that Sarah Bott's owns. The procedure for this grant is that you have a committee, and you publish a notice for artist to send in their qualifications and examples of their work, then the committee scores the work received. Three artist submitted drawings and were scored by the committee and Maye scored the highest. We have been in the process of negotiating changes and have received his first edit. Mr. Lawson handed out the renderings of all the murals and the current edit by Maye.
- Skate Park – Asphalt will be added in the bike section next week, pad for the picnic shelter will be poured tomorrow, concrete for the new obstacles will be poured within the next two weeks, the last week of April the parking lot will get asphalt, the first week of May the picnic shelter will be installed and the Grand Opening tentatively Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Lights at pickle ball courts need repaired, the part should be here late this evening with the repair completed and working by tomorrow evening.
- The privacy fence behind the Visitor Center was completed.
- Whitt building has been rented by Natalie Chapman for an event space.
- Three major water leaks – one at MECC and one at Family Dollar with the business and the college closing due to the severity of the leaks. UHS has a leak on a 2-inch line which was dug up today and the leak is under concrete. School maintenance decided to wait till school is out to fix the leak.
- Cadet Park – 1<sup>st</sup> estimate was \$50,000, 2<sup>nd</sup> estimate received today for \$20,177 which includes swings, 2 slides and a rock-climbing wall.
- Speed track signs are in; we need to decide on the locations to put them with Aviation Road being one. A pole will be set at the sites to attach the monitor and solar unit to it, and when not in use with the speed track sign a regular speed sign can go in its place.
- Planning Commission has a big agenda coming up. There will be a housing project for property development. The owners of the Walmart Property are looking at a housing subdivision and will be asking the Planning Commission what they will need to do to get that project started.
- We have a verbal contract for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July with If Birds Could Fly, we are waiting on the signed contract and we are negotiating with Aaron Rowe also.
- Joseph Young that has the free magic show scheduled for April 18<sup>th</sup> called Town offices asking about the \$1,000 sponsorship for the show; the Town knew nothing about this sponsorship and asked if there was anything in writing regarding this, he responded that the minimum that could be accepted is \$750.00. He was told that the Town would provide the venue, staff setup and cleanup and no to the sponsorship money.

**AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Planning Commission meeting will be held on Monday April 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30PM. Holding Funeral Home is asking for a special use permit for a crematorium.

**AGENDA ITEM 6 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

Councilman Hughes thanks to all the employees and crews.

Councilman Harris thanks to the staff and first responders. He said April 25<sup>th</sup> 9AM-2 PM will be the Great American Cleanup and thanked the Gap Partnership and the Town for this event. The

**AGENDA ITEM 6 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION (Continued):**

Pinwheel Celebration was really good. He said congratulations to Councilwoman Lyke for winning Ms. Wise County in the Best of the Best Contest. He said he has had complaints about the road to the prison. He thanked Mr. Lawson for the update at Cadet Park. He asked if Fraley Park could go back to its previous state, Mr. Lawson replied it would have to be put in the budget. He asked if there was an update on the Post Office, Mr. Lawson said no update.

Vice-Mayor Gilley thanked all the employees and said the Easter Egg Hunt was a great event. He reminded Council that April 25<sup>th</sup> was Kids Fishing Day starting at 9AM – 12PM and asked them to get the word out. He said it is a free event with prizes, hotdogs and s'mores.

Mayor Johnson said everyone always has a good time at Kids Fishing Day. He thanked all the crews and said that the Skate Park is a wonderful addition.

**AGENDA ITEM 7  
ADJOURNMENT**

**The meeting adjourned 7:02 pm.**

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