

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

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

April 14, 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 L. Hawkins, Town Clerk/Treasurer
 Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney
 Mr. Matt Russell, Chief of Police

AGENDA ITEM 2 - INVOCATION by Emil Schenck of First Apostolic Church.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Proclamation Honoring Garry Russell, Recipient of the Governor's Fire Service Award – 2026 Firefighter of the Year that was adopted at the March 10, 2026 Regular Council Meeting was presented to Garry Russell by the Mayor with congratulations and applause by all Council members.

AGENDA ITEM 4 - ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Harris, that the agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of April 14, 2026 be amended to add Item 9b – Resolution 12-2026. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

None

AGENDA ITEM 6 - GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**a. Approval of minutes of Regular Council Meeting of March 10, 2026.****Recommended Action: Approve as presented.****b. Departmental Reports for the month of March 2026.****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: Bloomer, Gilley, Harris, Hollinger, Hughes, Johnson, Lyke

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

AGENDA ITEM 7 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

Matthew Lane reported that:

- East Stone Gap Comprehensive Project is well on its way to being completed.
- Proctor Street – 90% complete.
- Sunrise Village – Preliminary plans have been completed but the hydraulics still need completion, after that it will get submitted to VDH for their approval. The project should be completed late summer to early fall. Mr. Lawson asked if there were fire hydrant plans in the design. Mr. Lane replied it will depends on hydraulics.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – TOWN MANAGERS REPORT**AGENDA ITEM 8a - 2025-2026 UNION HIGH SCHOOL AFTER PROM PARTY**

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a donation in the amount of \$250.00 for the 2025-2026 Union High School after Prom Party.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve a donation in the amount of \$250.00 for the 2025-2026 Union High School After Prom Party. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

AGENDA ITEM 8b - RESOLUTION 12-2026 – BLANKET PROJECT FUNDING COMMITMENT AND SIGNATORY AUTHORITY VDOT

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Resolution 12-2026 being a resolution for blanket project funding commitment and for blanket signatory authority to be given to the Town Manager for four (4) years from 2026 through 2030 for all Virginia Department of Transportation projects.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hollinger, that Council approve Resolution 12-2026 being a resolution for blanket project funding commitment and for blanket signatory authority to be given to the Town Manager for four (4) years from 2026 through 2030 for all Virginia Department of Transportation projects. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

AGENDA ITEM 8c – Projects Update

- MEOC's 50th Walk-a-thon is scheduled for May 3rd at 2:00PM at Bullitt Park.
- Kid's Fishing Day is April 25th starting at 9AM. Gary Harris is working on prizes, and roadwork will be done next week.
- 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.
- Prom events – Monday, 4/27 8:45AM drunk goggles with the PD; Wednesday, 4/29 Cody Bishop will do a PD presentation on drugs, Commonwealth Attorney will be there along with Nikki and Todd Zirkle as special guests; Thursday, 4/30 9AM-11:40AM Mock Crash Day.
- The Water Treatment Plant received the 2025 Gold Award.
- Lights at the pickle ball court have been repaired with a time to turn on at 7PM and turn off at midnight.
- Batting cage was installed today at Bullitt Park. Thanks to Allen's Flooring and Paint for donating the turf grass and Union Little League for purchasing the equipment. This is the last phase that needs to be completed so the Town can be eligible to host the 12 and Under 2027 State Tournament..
- Skate Park – asphalt is complete, the pad for the picnic shelter is complete with bids being taken and due by the end of the week for the shelter, we have started forming the middle section concrete that covers the gravel part. We have three grants being submitted to help with the costs of these projects.
- Fire Department done a wonderful job with a response to a fully engulfed house and helped prevent the fire spread to the forest and surrounding structures. Thanks to all.
- Donna Kirk sent a thank you card to the Town for the privacy fence behind the Visitor's Center.
- 4th of July – DJ, Aaron Rowe and If Birds Could Fly are booked.
- Police Department has worked for the last two days on the property on Carter Street which is approximately 4 1/2 acres that will be used for a shooting range and be certified by the academy. The shooting and range testing can be done here in town instead of traveling across the County.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Gilley said the Planning Commission met last night and he handed out a map to Council from the owner of the old Walmart property who wants to make a subdivision. He said this is in preliminary plans only no action to take by Council. Councilman Hollinger asked what will happen to Little Mexico, Mr. Lawson replied it would move to the old Verizon building, the Dollar Tree will stay and the Rent A Center would go into the old Food Lion building then demo the remaining commercial building.

Councilman Gilley said that Holdings Funeral Home wants a Crematorium, and the Planning Commission recommends holding a Joint Public Hearing regarding the Special Use Permit. Mr. Lawson said Council will need an operation plan and any certifications to review first so that they can answer the public's questions at the Public Hearing. Mr. Lawson recommended that the request go back to the Planning Commission for site and operating plans.

Councilman Harris said the Italy Bottom housing projects is moving along and going well.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Lyke thanked and congratulated Garry Russell.

Councilman Hughes said congratulations to Garry Russell and to the Fire Department staff and all the Town employees. He thanked all the guests that came to the meeting.

Councilman Hollinger said congratulations to Garry Russell. He asked about paving Prison Hill. Mr. Lawson said pothole repair is being priced now.

Councilman Harris said thanks to Garry Russell and to his family for their sacrifice and to all the wonderful first responders. He said that April 25th is the Great American Clean Up and Kid's Fishing Day.

Councilman Bloomer said congratulations to Garry Russell, and he thanked the visitors for coming and thanked all the town employees.

Vice-Mayor Gilley said congratulations to Garry Russell and that Kid's Fishing Day is at 9AM on April 25th, he said its all free with hotdogs, ice cream from 404 Café and Creamery, smores and prizes.

Mayor Johnson said congratulations to Garry Russell and that we appreciate all our first responders and he thanked them all. He thanked the police and town staff.

AGENDA ITEM 11 - ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Nayes: None Abstain: None Absent: None

Meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

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