

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

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

May 19, 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. Matt Russell, Chief of Police

Staff Absent: Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney

AGENDA ITEM 2 - ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Harris, that the agenda for the Special Council Meeting of May 19, 2026 be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Mayor Johnson recessed the Special Council Meeting and opened the Public Hearing.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC HEARING – REASSESSMENT AND REAL ESTATE TAX RATE

No one in attendance spoke for Public Comment.

James Terrell, 476 Ridge Place, sent a prepared statement to Council for Mr. Lawson to read as public comment. The letter encouraged Council to use discretion and be good stewards of the people's money and urged Council to consider maintaining the current effective property tax rate, by lowering the tax rate to .33 per hundred in valuation, and either repeal the vehicle domicile tax or apply the tax to every vehicle domiciled with the town limits.

Mayor Johnson closed the Public Hearing and reconvened the Special Council meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – SPECIAL MEETING – SETTING PUBLIC HEARING DATE FOR FY2026-27 BUDGET

Motion by Hughes, seconded by Gilley, that a Special Meeting be held on Friday, May 22, 2026 at 11AM to discuss the FY2026-2027 proposed budget. Motion resulted as follows:

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

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

AGENDA ITEM 5 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Lyke reminded Council of the Gathering in the Gap this Saturday, May 23.

Councilman Hughes said he hopes Council does the right thing for the people and was glad that Mr. Terrell sent his statement and wished more people were involved with the budgetary process and it was discouraging to see so few people at the meeting.

Councilman Hollinger thanked Mr. Terrell for his statement and said it was a beautiful thing to see Saturday at the Skate Park Grand Opening and thanked everyone that was involved with the event.

Councilman Harris said the Grand Opening was a great event and good time for Big Stone Gap. He said we do have to remember though where Mr. Terrell was speaking of the domicile vehicles, vehicles are taxed because they are using the roads and the domicile vehicles are not using or tearing up the roads that's why they are not taxed, but thinks Council is on the right path and looks forward to setting a great budget.

Vice-Mayor Gilley said Saturday was great and again reminded Council of Gathering in the Gap this Saturday.

Mayor Johnson said Saturday was a great event for everybody and the kids loved it. He said everyone appreciates what Council done with the Skate Park. He thanked everyone that was involved with the event. He also reminded everyone of the Gathering in the Gap this Saturday, and that it is a free event except for the main event.

Councilwoman Lyke did say that in case of rain the main act for Gathering in the Gap would be at the Goodloe Center at Mountain Empire Community College.

Ms. Hawkins said there were two committee meetings this week, Public Utilities Committee meeting May 21st at 6PM and Budget/Finance/Audit Committee meeting May 22nd 10AM. She said both meetings are public meeting and open to the public but no public comment, observation only.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

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