TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP, VIRGINIA
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING

COUNCIL CHAMBERS
505 E 5TH STREET S
BIG STONE GAP, VA **August 04, 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:	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 Minutes of the Council Workshop Meeting of July 07, 2026, the Budget Finance Audit Committee Meeting of July 09, 2026, and the Regular Council Meeting of July 14, 2026.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT
In absence of Matthew Lane, Stephen Lawson, Town Manager, gave the Town Engineer's Report.

- Proctor Street Sidewalk bids were received on July 30 with $1,292,057.76 being the highest bid and $896,380.69 being the lowest bid submitted by Glass Machinery and Excavation, Inc.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – TOWN MANAGERS REPORT

AGENDA ITEM 4a – Proclamation – The Orangerie
Mr. Lawson stated that this proclamation is to recognize and welcome The Orangerie to Big Stone Gap.

AGENDA ITEM 4b – Proclamation - The Natural Edit Aesthetics
Mr. Lawson stated that this proclamation is to recognize and welcome The Natural Edit Aesthetics to Big Stone Gap.

AGENDA ITEM 4c – Proclamation – Polished by Hannah
Mr. Lawson stated that this proclamation is to recognize and welcome Polished by Hannah to Big Stone Gap.

AGENDA ITEM 4d – Parade Permit – UHS Football Homecoming Parade
Mr. Lawson stated that this permit is for Council's approval of the UHS Football Homecoming Parade scheduled for September 17, 2026 at 6PM.

AGENDA ITEM 4e – Preliminary Plans for Subdivision on Neely Road – Chris White
Mr. Lawson stated this is asking Council to approve the Preliminary Plans for Subdivision on Neely Road – Chris White and send back to the Planning Commission.

AGENDA ITEM 4f – Special Use Permit – Holding Funeral Home Crematorium
Mr. Lawson stated, upon advice of legal counsel, he will be asking Council to send the Special Use Permit – Holding Funeral Home Crematorium back to the Planning Commission. The permit will remain with the Planning Commission until all Wise County site plans comply with applicable requirements, after which it will return to Council for approval.

AGENDA ITEM 4g – VDOT Project – Proctor Street Sidewalk
Mr. Lawson stated this is asking Council to award the Proctor Street Sidewalk VDOT project to the low bidder.

AGENDA ITEM 4h - Projects Update
Mr. Lawson gave the following updates:

- Big Cherry Lake - Treatment for an invasive plant species was done July 28, will be monitoring vegetation die-off, which is expected within approximately one month.
- AMLER – Big Cherry Project - Budget revisions are needed to cover administrative fees. Will be requesting an additional $80,000 to cover Amanda Hawkins, Stephen Lawson, and Natalie Chapman's time. Funds should be expended within one month.
- Powell River Trail Interconnect - Funding will include VDOT and AMLER sources. Total project funding is expected to be nearly $3 million with the project starting in Spring 2029.
- Fraley Property - Property deed has been signed over to the Nature Conservancy. The next step will be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Conservancy and the Town.
- Federal Building - The Federal Building was officially signed over to the Town on July 31 with a cost of $387 for attorney fees. At this time, there are no funds available to rehabilitate the property. Public Works and maintenance staff will continue maintaining the building and grounds until Council determines its future use. A work session will be scheduled to discuss potential options for the building, which could include uses such as a hotel, court services, or other community purposes.
- Bland High School Historical Marker - A dedication for the Bland High School Historical Marker will be held on August 8 at 1:00 p.m. The event will begin with a presentation in Carnes Gym, followed by refreshments. Attendees will then proceed outside for the official unveiling of the historical marker.

AGENDA ITEM 4h - Projects Update (Continued):

- AK Fraley Park Improvements - Fencing improvements at AK Fraley Park are expected to be completed this week. Work will then move to the Skate Park fencing project. Additionally, Gap Partnership has been awarded funding to construct a new picnic shelter and install additional picnic tables at the park.
- Reserve Seating - Replacement of the reserve seating has been completed using a blue and orange checkerboard seating pattern.
- Municipal Building LED Sign - The Town has assumed control of the LED message board located at the Municipal Building. Staff plans to gather announcements from community organizations and local groups for display on the sign to better promote community events and activities.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Harris reported that the Italy Bottom Management Team/Rehabilitation Board met today and will be soliciting bids for HVAC systems.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilman Hollinger said a complaint was received regarding kudzu growth in the Cadet area. Stephen Lawson said he will inspect the location, but it appears the vegetation has been cut back, but it is unclear whether the area has been sprayed for long-term control. Councilman Hollinger asked whether the Town plans to do anything to welcome the new Union High School coach. Stephen Lawson said that the Town works closely with the athletic program but that no specific welcome event or recognition has been planned. Councilman Hollinger thanked all the Town employees.

Councilman Harris inquired about plans for the concession stand windows and doors. Stephen Lawson stated that the windows will be painted and refreshed; however, no additional work is planned for the doors at this time. Councilman Harris also reported that Burke Greear donated his services to assist with repairing the headstones damaged in the vehicle accident at the Joseph Garfield Long Sr. Memorial Cemetery. He stated that the Town Council should consider establishing guidelines or regulations for e-bikes to address safety concerns and promote their safe use throughout the community. He also inquired about the solar-powered speed signs. Mayor Johnson stated that the signs have been installed on Aviation Road.

Councilwoman Lyke said the MEOC CAC Gala will be on November 14th at MECC Phillips Taylor Hall. She thanked all the employees.

Councilman Bloomer stated that he agreed with Councilman Harris regarding concerns surrounding e-motorcycles but was uncertain about what measures should be considered regarding e-bikes. He also commented that the Sling-Shot event was a great success. He attended the parade as well and noted that it was a positive event for the community and provided a significant benefit to local businesses. Mr. Lawson reported that approximately 250 sling-shot participants attended the event.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION (Continued):
Vice Mayor Gilley thanked all Town employees for their hard work and dedication. He stated that he enjoyed the parade on Friday night. He said he had received several positive comments from residents on Wyandotte Avenue regarding the Police Department's increased patrol presence in the area. He noted that residents expressed their appreciation and felt that the additional patrols had made a noticeable difference. Vice Mayor Gilley also stated that he had received inquiries from residents who had seen the solar-powered speed limit signs on Aviation Road and asked whether the signs could be moved to different locations throughout the community as needed.

Mayor Johnson stated that the Town needs to identify suitable storage for the ladder truck to ensure it is properly protected and maintained. He commented that the Sling-Shot event was a great success, although he did receive one complaint regarding the event. He also noted that the speed zone signs on Aviation Road have been a significant benefit and have helped address traffic concerns in the area. Mayor Johnson concluded by thanking all Town employees for their hard work and dedication.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – CLOSED SESSION
Not needed.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned 7:15 pm.

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