TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP, VIRGINIA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

COUNCIL CHAMBERS
505 E 5TH STREET S
BIG STONE GAP, VA **August 11, 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. Joseph E. Phillips, Lieutenant Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney
Staff Absent:	Mr. Matt Russell, Chief of Police

AGENDA ITEM 2 - INVOCATION by Pastor Josh Tompkins of West End Baptist Church.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ITEM 4 - ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Bloomer, seconded by Harris, that the agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of August 11, 2026 be approved as presented. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS
None

AGENDA ITEM 6 - GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

a. Approval of the minutes of the Council Workshop Meeting of July 07, 2026.
   Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
b. Approval of the Budget Finance Audit Committee Meeting of July 09, 2026.
   Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
c. Approval of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of July 14, 2026.
   Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
d. Departmental Reports for the month of July 2026.
e. Recommended Action: Received and filed.

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

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

AGENDA ITEM 7 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

Matt Lane gave the following Town Engineer's report:

- PH3 Water Loss Project: The project is ready to proceed to bid upon receipt of Virginia Resources Authority (VRA) approval.
- ESG Project: The final design is being completed, including responses to comments from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). The project will be in position to advertise for bids shortly.
- Sunrise Village: Responses regarding the hydraulic design are being addressed. Plans are to report at the September Council meeting a date to advertise for bids.
- Proctor Street Sidewalk: Glass Machinery submitted the low bid of $896,380.69. Council will consider awarding the project later in the meeting, with the goal of proceeding with full construction by mid-October.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – TOWN MANAGERS REPORT

AGENDA ITEM 8a – Proclamation – The Orangerie

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a proclamation welcoming Natalie Chapman owner of The Orangerie located at 10 East 3rd Street South in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Harris, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Natalie Chapman owner of The Orangerie located at 10 East 3rd Street South in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 8b – Proclamation – The Natural Edit Aesthetics
Mr. Lawson asked Council approve a proclamation welcoming Robert and Samatha Weir owner of The Natural Edit Aesthetics located at 11 East 5th Street North in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Harris, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Robert and Samatha Weir owners of The Natural Edit Aesthetics located at 11 East 5th Street North in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 8c – Proclamation – Polished by Hannah
Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a proclamation welcoming Hannah Dotson owner of Polished by Hannah located at 311 Shawnee Avenue East in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Hannah Dotson owner of Polished by Hannah located at 311 Shawnee Avenue East in Big Stone Gap. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 8d – Parade Permit – UHS Football Homecoming Parade
Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a parade permit for the Union High School Football Homecoming Parade Thursday September 17, 2026 at 6PM.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hollinger, that Council approve a parade permit for the Union High School Football Homecoming Parade Thursday September 17, 2026 at 6PM. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 8e – Preliminary Plans for Subdivision on Neely Road
Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve the preliminary plans for the proposed subdivision on Neely Road.

Motion by Hollinger, seconded by Bloomer, that Council approve the preliminary plans for the proposed subdivision on Neely Road. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 8f – Special Use Permit – Holding Funeral Home Crematorium
Discussion was held regarding the Planning Commission and the appropriate course of action concerning the matter presented. Mr. Bledsoe recommended returning the matter to the Planning Commission for further consideration and discussion. It was noted that the matter had also been discussed with Mr. McAfee, who agreed with the recommendation. Council members were advised that any questions they may have should be submitted to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Motion by Harris, seconded by Gilley, that Council return the Holding Funeral Home Crematorium Special Use Permit Application to the Planning Commission for verification of compliance with all documentation requested by the Wise County Building and Zoning Office and questions from Council. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 8g – VDOT Project – Proctor Street Sidewalk
Mr. Lawson asked Council to award the Proctor Street Sidewalk VDOT project to the low bidder Glass Machinery and Excavation, Inc. for $896,380.69.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Bloomer, that Council award the Proctor Street Sidewalk VDOT project to the low bidder Glass Machinery and Excavation, Inc. for $896,380.69. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 8h – Projects Update
Mr. Lawson gave the following projects update:

- Regarding the Proctor Street project VDOT wants to get started ASAP but there will need to be a discussion with Glass Machinery about when and what they can get started but the project will need to be paused during the Blue Highway Festival and finished before winter.
- Fraley Park fencing has been completed, will proceed to the skate park which will include asphalting the road and parking. Gap Partnership has received funding for the picnic shelter. After this project is completed future consideration will be given to the development of a dirt bike path.
- Patrick and Kendra Ryan reported that their new business, Gap Antique Parlor, is expected to open in late September or early October before The Blue Highway Festival. They are planning a grand opening. The Town will provide assistance with the bucket truck to help with the installation of the sign and windows like they have in the past with other businesses.
- The Bland School marker dedication was a great event and was well attended, with the UVA Wise Chancellor and several students present. It was noted that the event should have been advertised more extensively.

AGENDA ITEM 8h – Projects Update (Continued):

- An update was provided regarding the Federal Building. Two people had lost their jobs after the Post Office moved to its new location, including maintenance and cleaning personnel. The Town has hired a maintenance worker and will consider the cleaning personnel after renovations begin. A contractor had been hired to remove the historic boxes and some wooden structures, the Town wants to get everything back that was taken, the items have been taken to a warehouse and is awaiting resolution of ownership.
- Councilman Harris asked if it had ever been addressed to have cameras installed at the Water Office. Mr. Lawson said that it was currently being reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

AGENDA ITEM 10 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Lyke said the red light at the old Post Office has an extremely long wait time. Mr. Lawson asked Matt Lane for another vendor to work on lights, Mr. Lane agreed. Councilwoman Lyke also asked that something be put on the Agenda for the September meeting regarding e-bikes and the use of them in Town limits for safety purposes. Mr. Bledsoe said he will have something by the next workshop and Mr. Lawson stated he and Chief Russell have been looking at other counties and state law that would support anything that the Town adopts. Councilman Harris suggested that the Police Department put out a statement to encourage safety in relation to any electric bicycle. Councilwoman Lyke thanked all the employees for everything they do for the Town.

Councilman Hughes said he regretted missing the unveiling of the historical marker and dedication and the improvements at AK Fraley Park look good, he thanked all police, EMS, fire department and all the town employees.

Councilman Hollinger was thankful for all that was done for the Bland Reunion. He said he sat near a woman that had great history about the school and he was very appreciative of the sign that was installed. He thanked everyone at the Town, including the police, fire department, EMS and all the employees.

Councilman Harris thanked the Southwest Virginia Museum for the artifacts they brought for display at the reunion. He stated that he was the only one at the Chamber Gala representing Big Stone Gap, he suggested that if Council could not attend that they need to ask employees and that the next Gala event was scheduled for April 10, 2027. He said the back-to-school events were great, and thanked Crystal for the Back-To-School Shuffle and Donna Townsend. He thanked Natalie Chapman for her work on the Big Stone Gap Website, and he also thanked all the employees.

Councilman Bloomer thanked the fire department, police department and all the employees.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION (Continued):
Vice-Mayor Gilley thanked all the employees and said that they are all doing a great job.

Mayor Johnson asked Councilman Bloomer about the difference in the e-bikes, Councilman Bloomer said it is the speed, Class 1 are peddle assist and do not have a throttle and are under 20 mph, Class 2 have a throttle and can go up to 29 mph. Mayor Johnson asked about the no right hand turn at the red light coming from the new Post Office. Mr. Lawson stated that was a VDOT matter due to line of sight but stated with the changes to the building by the new owner that it was not an issue now and he would contact VDOT. Mayor Johnson thanked all the town employees.

AGENDA ITEM 11 - ADJOURNMENT
Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hughes, 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 7:20 pm.

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