TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP, VIRGINIA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

COUNCIL CHAMBERS
505 E 5TH STREET S
BIG STONE GAP, VA **September 08, 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 Mr. Matt Russell, Chief of Police

AGENDA ITEM 2 - INVOCATION by Reverend Ben Harding Trinity United Methodist Church.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ITEM 4 - ADOPT OR AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion by Hollinger, seconded by Bloomer, that the agenda for the Regular Council Meeting of September 08, 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
Mike Mason, 692 Second Avenue East, came to ask Council when the striping on new pavement going out of town would take place. He stated that it is dangerous with no lines on the pavement. Councilman Harris asked if Mr. Mason was referring to Country Boy Hill. Mr. Mason confirmed and also said we owe town workers a gratitude that they are doing good job in this weather and he thanked the Police Department for the patrols.

AGENDA ITEM 6 - GENERAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

a. Approval of the minutes of the Council Workshop Meeting of August 04, 2026. Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
b. Approval of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of August 11, 2026. Recommended Action: Approve as presented.
c. Departmental Reports for the month of August 2026.
d. Recommended Action: Received and filed.

Motion by Hollinger, seconded by Hughes, 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
Joey Mullins gave the following Town Engineer's report:

- ESG Water Project – Coordinating with VDH, Virginia Department of Health, regarding the approval process and are requesting to proceed with the project through the prior system wide's PER, preliminary engineering report.
- Sunrise Village Project – PER, preliminary engineering report, has been approved by VDH Virginia Department of Health. The plans have been updated to include a fire hydrant, and the final plan sets are expected to be completed this week.
- Proctor Street Sidewalk Project – Glass Machinery submitted the signed agreement, insurance documentation, and performance bond paperwork on Friday. A preconstruction conference is scheduled for next week.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – TOWN MANAGERS REPORT

AGENDA ITEM 8a – Parade Permit – Veterans Day Parade
Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a parade permit for the Veterans Day Parade Saturday November 07, 2026 at 11AM.

Motion by Harris, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a parade permit for the Veterans Day Parade Saturday November 07, 2026 at 11AM. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 8b – Proclamation – Triple Play Cards
Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a proclamation welcoming Michael Jones owner of Triple Play Cards located at 319 Shawnee Avenue East in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hollinger, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Michael Jones owner of Triple Play Cards located at 319 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 8c – Resolution 17-2026 Re-Appoint John Morrissey BSG Housing Authority

Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Resolution 17-2026 being a resolution reappointing John Morrissey to the Big Stone Gap Redevelopment and Housing Authority board for a four-year term to expire on June 30, 2030.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Harris, that Council approve Resolution 17-2026 being a resolution reappointing John Morrissey to the Big Stone Gap Redevelopment and Housing Authority board for a four-year term to expire on June 30, 2030. Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 8d - Resolution 18-2026 Special Use Permit
Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve Resolution 18-2026 being a resolution authorizing a Special use Permit to Holding Funeral Home for a crematorium located at 17 E 3rd Street N with four additional conditions, as authorized in Article 6, Section 5.2(F) of the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Hollinger, seconded by Hughes, that Council approve Resolution 18-2026 being a resolution authorizing a Special use Permit to Holding Funeral Home for a crematorium located at 17 E 3rd Street N with four additional conditions, as authorized in Article 6, Section 5.2(F) of the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Big Stone Gap.

Council made the following comments regarding Resolution 18-2026, Special Use Permit:

Councilman Bloomer stated that as a Town Council Member he has to protect the Community and cannot support this proposed use. He said he respects Holding Funeral Home and stated that he will be cremated when he passes away but that the location of the crematorium rises concerns and the impact on the nearby homes and businesses. He said Council has worked really hard to build the downtown area where people will want to shop and come together and to approve this special use permit is fallible with this vision.

Councilman Harris stated he cannot support the special use permit based the location and the compatibility and the Comprehensive Plan. He said to represent his constituents this is not the right location, and it does go against the Comprehensive Plan that the Town has.

Councilman Hughes said he received a note from Sharon Fisher and her husband due to the fact that they could not attend the meeting for public comment. The note said that they live a couple of blocks from the location, and they did not support the special use permit.

Councilman Hollinger said he had wrestled with the decision of a business expansion but that he has to listen to residents. He stated he was for it but again he has to listen to the people.

AGENDA ITEM 8d - Resolution 18-2026 Special Use Permit (Continued):
Councilwoman Lyke said downtown local is the issue and safety is a concern.

Councilman Gilley said he was not opposed but too many residents do oppose and he feels his responsibility is to the people of Big Stone Gap.

Mayor Johnson said he is not opposed to the Holding Crematorium but cannot support the location. He stated he has had many phone calls regarding not putting the crematorium in the location suggested.

Motion resulted as follows:

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

AGENDA ITEM 8e - Proclamation – Injections with Alex
Mr. Lawson asked Council to approve a proclamation welcoming Alexandria Ward owner of Injections with Alex located at 502 Wood Avenue East in Big Stone Gap.

Motion by Harris, seconded by Lyke, that Council approve a proclamation welcoming Alexandria Ward owner of Injections with Alex located at 502 Wood 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 8f - Public Safety Committee Meeting – E-Bike Ordinance
Mr. Lawson asked Council to authorize a Public Safety Committee Meeting on Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 6:00PM in the Council Chambers.

Motion by Harris, seconded by Hughes, that Council authorize a Public Safety Committee Meeting on Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 6:00PM in the Council Chambers.

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

AGENDA ITEM 8g – Cancel October Workshop Meeting
Mr. Lawson asked Council to cancel the October 06, 2026 Council Workshop Meeting.

Motion by Lyke, seconded by Hughes, that the October 06, 2026 Council Workshop Meeting be cancelled. 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:

- Big Cherry Reservoir - The budget review for the Big Cherry Reservoir is still ongoing. The Town is continuing to review and make adjustments to the original budget that was submitted.

- Floating Dock Big Cherry – It was reported that there is currently only one company in the area that provides floating docks. The Town is specifically exploring options that would provide handicap accessibility. The Town has been consulting with various state agencies, including the Virginia Outdoor Foundation, for guidance and recommendations. A meeting is scheduled for next week, and additional information is expected following that meeting. It was also noted that composite materials are being considered for the dock because of their durability and long-term use. Similar materials are currently being used in state parks. Additional information and samples have been gathered and are available for Council members to review.

- Powell River Interconnect – The financial vetting process has been approved.

- Packages at the Federal Building - The Amazon and Post Office packages issue seems to be resolved now. The area has been blocked off to prevent packages from being left in the location.

- Speed signs – locations are being reviewed where existing speed signs could be relocated and identifying additional areas where new speed signs may need to be installed.

- Clatterbuck Striping, based out of Roanoke, is the company that currently does the striping work in this area. Rain caused a cancellation of their scheduled time to do the striping.

- Outstanding Police Work Commendations - Mr. Lawson stated that three officers, Mike Jones, Richard Carter, and Chad Ison, were in attendance at the Council Meeting. He presented each officer with an Outstanding Police Work Commendation in recognition of their actions while conducting a welfare check on Gilley Avenue, which resulted in saving an individual's life.

AGENDA ITEM 9 - COMMITTEE REPORTS
Councilman Harris reported that the Italy Bottom Project is progressing well. The Town has received bids for the HVAC units that will be installed as part of the project. He expressed his enthusiasm about seeing improvements to the housing at Italy Bottom.

AGENDA ITEM 10 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilman Bloomer thanked all Town employees for their hard work, particularly while working in the heat. He also stated that the Grizzly will be advertising for next year that participants who complete all three events will receive a challenge coin.

Councilman Harris expressed his appreciation for seeing the Orangerie open and welcomed the addition of new businesses to the community. He also expressed excitement for Officer Jones and his Triple Play Cards. Councilman Harris said he is looking forward to the Blue Highway Fest and believes it will be a great experience. He thanked the Town's police officers for their willingness to risk their lives to protect and assist others and expressed his appreciation to all first responders. He also commented on the Holding decision, stating that it was not an easy decision but that Council must listen to and consider the concerns of the residents.

Councilwoman Lyke reminded everyone that the Steak Cookoff and the Grizzly will be held on September 26. She stated that she would be unable to attend due to other commitments but encouraged everyone to come out and support the events.

She also commended the police officers for their willingness to risk their lives for the safety of others and thanked everyone for all they do for the community.

Councilman Hughes thanked the police officers and expressed his appreciation for the recognition they received. He stated that the public often cannot fully understand what public servants experience in the course of their duties and expressed his gratitude to the Police Department, EMS, and all first responders who work to keep the community safe. He also thanked all Town employees for their service. Councilman Hughes apologized for not having the resolution concerning the Forest Service available for the current meeting and stated that he would obtain the resolution and present it for consideration at next month's meeting. He thanked all guests in attendance for coming to the Council Meeting.

Vice-Mayor Gilley thanked all Town employees for their continued hard work and expressed his pride in the police officers who received commendations. He stated that he was looking forward to the Grizzly and noted that the Blue Highway Fest is only a month away. He thanked everyone for their continued efforts and support of the community.

Mayor Johnson thanked the Police Department and utility workers for their service. He stated that the Town has an outstanding staff who do a great job serving the public in all types of weather, including rain, snow, and extreme heat. Mayor Johnson also reminded residents that trash must be placed in a can in order to be collected. He encouraged Council members to review the information regarding electric bicycles (e-bikes) that was distributed at the previous meeting, noting that it contained useful information about the different types of e-bikes. Mayor Johnson concluded by stating that Council members are elected by the people and have a responsibility to listen to the residents and act in accordance with their wishes.

AGENDA ITEM 11 - ADJOURNMENT
Motion by Lyke, seconded by Harris, 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 7:05 pm.

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