

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Minutes
January 10, 2023**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held an Organizational Meeting on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall located at 112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia.

PRESENT

Donnie Linkous, Mayor
Cathy Payne, Councilmember
Chuck Presley, Councilmember
Lee Riffe, Councilmember

ALSO PRESENT

James Hampton, Co Interim Town Mgr/Treasurer
Kim Hernandez, Co Interim Town Mgr/Town Clerk
Nathaniel Mitchem, Zoning/Property Mtn Official
Desera Ganoë, Bldg/Zoning Admin. Assistant
Lori Stacy, Communications Director/Executive Asst.
7 members of public

ABSENT

Anglis Trigg, Councilmember
Ron Holt, Councilmember
Rick Holman, Vice-Mayor
Shane Gunter, Chief of Police

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Linkous called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to read the Executive Session.

MOTION FOR CLOSED MEETING

It is hereby moved that the Council of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia enter into a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia as amended, The specific purpose for this motion is to discuss the following matter(s):

Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body litigating posture of the public body with such closed meeting being confined to the following subject (s): town manager applications.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session.

Councilmember Presley made a motion to enter into Executive Session as described above. Councilmember Payne seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to do roll call and report.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Councilmember Riffe:	Yes
Vice-Mayor Holman:	Absent
Councilmember Holt:	Absent
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Payne:	Yes
Councilmember Trigg:	Absent
Mayor Linkous:	No Vote Permitted

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 3-0 in favor of going into Executive Session.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to resume open meeting.

Councilmember Riffe made a motion to enter back into regular session. Councilmember Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked the clerk to read the certification.

CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, the Town Council of Bluefield, Virginia convened a closed meeting on January 10, 2023, pursuant to a duly adopted motion, attached hereto, and such closed meeting was convened in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of Bluefield, Virginia returned to its open meeting held on January 10, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA HEREBY CERTIFIES that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act were discussed in the closed meeting held on January 10, 2023, to which this certification applies and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening such closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Council of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia in such closed meeting.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to approve the certification.

Councilmember Riffe made a motion to approve the certification. Councilmember Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to do roll call and report.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Councilmember Riffe:	Yes
Vice-Mayor Holman:	Absent
Councilmember Holt:	Absent
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Payne:	Yes
Councilmember Trigg:	Absent
Mayor Linkous:	Yes

Motion carried 4-0 approving the certification.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Steve Branch, Destiny Outreach Ministries led the Invocation. Mayor Linkous led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Riffe made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Presley made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilmember Payne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

CITIZEN REQUESTS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Tazewell County Board of Supervisors Update – Charlie Stacy

Mr. Stacy stated during the last board of supervisors meeting that they adjusted the car tax. He stated that each district had \$100k to utilize for a capital improvement project and he would like to see if be for the downtown bridge if that was what council chose. He stated if the town wanted to do this project then they would need to send him a proposal and cost. He stated that Senator Warner’s new fire station at the Bluestone went through, that pricing would be a little different but the county would produce the rest of the funding if the Town of Bluefield’s Fire Department would run the substation. He stated that this would give a presence in the Springville area by our Fire Department. He stated that Eddie Pauley had resigned on the Eastern District Planning Commission and asked if they had anyone in mind to let him know. He stated that Rick Holman had also resigned from the Wireless Authority because he could not attend the meetings but he understood that Lori was appointed. He stated that he intended to run for the Board of Supervisors seat once again.

Mayor Linkous stated that staff would get the pricing information sent to him.

Mr. Riffe made a motion to move forward with the downtown bridge. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to do roll call and report.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Councilmember Riffe:	Yes
Vice-Mayor Holman:	Absent
Councilmember Holt:	Absent
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Payne:	Yes
Councilmember Trigg:	Absent
Mayor Linkous:	No Vote Permitted

Motion carried 3-0 approving moving forward with the downtown bridge.

BVLL Donation Request, ROLL CALL VOTE – Kim Hernandez

Mrs. Hernandez stated that the BVLL had presented their last year's budget which showed they were in the negative \$5,937. She stated that they had requested money to help purchase a building which had been purchased but were never approved for a donation request for \$8k to help offset the expense.

Mayor Linkous asked that it be tabled until they had a full board.

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve tabling the request. Mrs. Payne seconded the motion.

Mr. Riffe stated that he understood the Little League needed it and would go ahead.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to do roll call and report.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Councilmember Riffe:	No
Vice-Mayor Holman:	Absent
Councilmember Holt:	Absent
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Payne:	Yes
Councilmember Trigg:	Absent
Mayor Linkous:	No Vote Permitted

Motion carried 2-1 tabling the request.

COMMITTEE RERPOTS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS & REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS & REPORTS

Budget Amendments, ROLL CALL VOTE – Kim Hernandez

Mrs. Hernandez asked for a vote to approve the following budget amendments:

PURPOSE: Body Cams and Police Car Cams

Revenue

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
0100-0509	from Prior	<u>\$1,849,233.00</u>	<u>\$1,889,103.00</u>	<u>\$39,870.00</u>
	Year Reserves	<u>\$1,849,233.00</u>	<u>\$1,889,103.00</u>	<u>\$39,870.00</u>

Expenditure

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
3110-8204	Video Cams for Cruisers	<u>\$10,000.00</u>	<u>\$49,870.00</u>	<u>\$39,870.00</u>
		<u>\$10,000.00</u>	<u>\$49,870.00</u>	<u>\$39,870.00</u>

PURPOSE: Veterans Memorial

Revenue

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
0100-0512	Veterans Memorial	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$10,346.20</u>	<u>\$10,346.20</u>
		<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$10,346.20</u>	<u>\$10,346.20</u>

Expenditure

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
8130-5685	Veterans Memorial	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$10,346.20</u>	<u>\$10,346.20</u>
		<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$10,346.20</u>	<u>\$10,346.20</u>

PURPOSE: Fire Department Expense

Revenue

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
0900-0204	Recovered Costs	<u>\$136,718.43</u>	<u>\$137,412.63</u>	<u>\$694.20</u>
		<u>\$136,718.43</u>	<u>\$137,412.63</u>	<u>\$694.20</u>

Expenditure

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
3220-5500	Travel & Training	<u>\$750.00</u>	<u>\$1,444.20</u>	<u>\$694.20</u>
		<u>\$750.00</u>	<u>\$1,444.20</u>	<u>\$694.20</u>

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve the budget amendments. Mrs. Payne seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to do roll call and report.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Councilmember Riffe:	Yes
Vice-Mayor Holman:	Absent
Councilmember Holt:	Absent
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Payne:	Yes
Councilmember Trigg:	Absent
Mayor Linkous:	No Vote Permitted

Motion carried 3-0 approving the budget amendments.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Gail Cook stated that Ridge Road was still in bad shape and was cracking.

Mayor Linkous asked that Public Works look at it.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT

None.

TOWN UPDATES

Mrs. Hernandez introduced Lori Stacy, reminded council that Town Offices would be closed on Monday, January 16th for Martin Luther King Day and Monday's trash would be picked up on Friday, January 13th. She stated that Fincastle reopened on January 18th and the tentative date for the Black Section Monument Unveiling was Saturday, February 18th at 1 p.m.

TOWN ATTORNEY'S UPDATE

Alan McGraw stated that as of January 1st, their new name was Altizer, McGraw and French. He stated that they looked forward to assisting the town.

Mayor Linkous asked about the indemnification to settle some property damage.

Mr. McGraw stated that it would be a release where the parties were settling a matter.

Mayor Linkous asked for a vote to approve.

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve the settlement. Mrs. Payne seconded the motion.

Mr. Riffe stated that he was looking at the citizens and they were probably questioning what exactly they were voting on.

Mayor Linkous stated that an individual suffered great loss at the Town's fault, our insurance company turned them down and they felt like they owed the individual for the amount of \$30,850. He stated that they would not receive the money until the release was signed.

Mr. Riffe stated that they just tabled a request for \$8k because they did not have the full board but were now approving \$30k. He stated that he did not like that.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to do roll call and report.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Councilmember Riffe:	No
Vice-Mayor Holman:	Absent
Councilmember Holt:	Absent
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Payne:	Yes
Councilmember Trigg:	Absent
Mayor Linkous:	No Vote Permitted

Motion carried 2-1 approving the \$30,850 settlement.

NEW BUSINESS & REPORTS

Conditional Use Permits, ROLL CALL VOTE – Nathaniel Mitchem

Mr. Mitchem stated that Planning Commission recommended approving 14 Sexton Hill with the following conditions: maximum of 6 apartments, a minimum lease of 6 months, owner had 90 days to pull a permit, all work must be completed in 1 year and it had to be maintained, Planning Commission approved the consignment shop with the following conditions that the signage met code and only a consignment shop would be allowed and Planning Commission approved 292 Spring Street with no conditions.

Mr. Presley made a motion to accept the Planning Commission's recommendations. Mr. Riffe seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to do roll call and report.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Councilmember Riffe:	Yes
Vice-Mayor Holman:	Absent
Councilmember Holt:	Absent
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Payne:	Yes
Councilmember Trigg:	Absent

Mayor Linkous: No Vote Permitted

Motion carried 3-0 approving Planning Commission's recommendations.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Riffe asked if that would change the taxes on the food distribution place.

Mr. McFarland stated it would only be changed for that one business.

Mr. Riffe asked Mr. McGraw if the change on the meeting for the one person was done correctly.

Mr. McGraw stated that he had looked into it and it was done correctly. He stated that the law governing municipalities was actually in four different places. Town Charter and Ordinance then the State Code and the Virginia Constitution. He stated that there was an interface between the Town's Charter, Ordinance and State law but he had spent some time making sure it was correct. He stated that his concern was well placed.

Mrs. Payne thanked everyone for coming.

Mr. Presley thanked everyone for coming as well, thanked Alan and stated that Kim and James were doing a good job. He asked if Ridge Road was on the paving list. He asked Lee and J-Rod if they had been getting the same amount for years because the same amount right now was not the same as before with the cost of things going up.

Jarried McFarland stated that was a great question and they had to raise their registration this year to cover the increase of things so an increase would help.

Mr. Presley asked when the fire hydrants were last checked, asked if the drains were staying clean and open and asked about the one at Memorial Baptist Church. He suggested that they name the bridge after Trigg.

Mayor Linkous stated that they had been trying to get this bridge for 30 years and thank goodness it was approved tonight. He welcomed Lori and stated that she would be a good addition. He stated that our charter said that to change a meeting, it had to be put in writing, they had to wait 2 weeks and voted on a second time. He stated that the time only was determined at the organizational meeting and that it disrupted everything when a meeting was changed and asked if they chose to vote to change it back then they could do so at any meeting.

Mr. McGraw stated that was correct.

Mayor Linkous stated that they needed to listen to those they represented and that the elected officials knew the meeting dates when taking office and the citizens should have a voice in such change. He stated that the Town was renting property on Furnace Street and the town was not supposed to be doing so. He suggested turning it and the surplus property over to the IDA to

manage. He asked everyone to continue to remember Anglis with all of his health issues, thanked zoning for being there and talked about how great of a job that Desera had done on decorating for Christmas, thanked Lee for his opinion and bringing things up. He stated that they were looking hard for a Town Manager and hoped to have one soon but it may take them a month or two. He thanked the attorney and the administration.

ADJOURN

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion and a second to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

D.S. Linkous, Mayor

Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk

