

**Town of Bluefield  
Town Council  
Minutes  
January 26, 2021**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall located at 112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia.

**PRESENT**

Donnie Linkous, Mayor  
Chuck Presley, Councilmember  
Jarrod Bailey, Councilmember  
Ron Holt, Vice-Mayor  
Cathy Payne, Councilmember  
Rick Holman, Councilmember  
Don Scott, Planning Comm. Member

**ALSO PRESENT**

Trent Crewe, Acting Manager/Town Attorney  
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk  
Kris Williams, Zoning Administrator  
James Hampton, Treasurer/Transit Dir.  
Shane Gunter, Police Chief  
Billie Roberts, Comm. Dev. Coordinator  
Tim Carroll/Martha Shewey, Police Dept.  
11 Members of Public

**ABSENT**

Anglis Trigg, Jr. Councilmember

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Linkous called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 with such closed meeting being confined to the following subject: Town Manager position.

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 Bailey seconded the motion.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 6-0 in favor of going into Executive Session.

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 26, 2021, 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 26, 2021.

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 26, 2021, 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.

Vice-Mayor Holt made a motion to accept the certification. Councilmember Presley seconded the motion.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mayor Linkous: Yes

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 7-0 in favor of the certification.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Jim Drake, Parkview Baptist Church the Invocation. Mayor Linkous led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Vice-Mayor Holt asked to add a special presentation for Darlene Bowers and to remove the possible vote for Town Manager with the understanding that they would be going back into Executive Session.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to approve the Agenda.

Councilmember Presley made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Councilmember Payne seconded the motion.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 to approve the amended agenda.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Vice-Mayor Holt made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilmember Bailey seconded the motion.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

Councilmember Bailey:	Yes
Councilmember Holman:	Yes
Vice-Mayor Holt:	Yes

Councilmember Presley: Yes  
Councilmember Payne: Yes  
Councilmember Trigg: Absent  
Mayor Linkous: No Vote Permitted

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda.

### **CITIZEN REQUESTS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

#### ***Special Presentation: Darlene Bowers, owner of Leslie Ann's***

Mayor Linkous asked Darlene Bowers to come forward. He read the following plaque:

25 years of excellence  
Presented to  
Darlene Bower owner of Leslie Ann's  
In special recognition and appreciation  
For your outstanding Business Excellence  
And dedication in downtown Bluefield, VA

Darlene Bowers stated that it had been a real honor to have a business in Bluefield, VA for 25 years. She stated that she was doing retirement on a happy note and encouraged anyone to open up a business.

Dave Bowers stated that he helped Darlene when he retired from his real job and that he would be moving down the street in the Paper n More building the first of March for his tuxedo business. He stated that name of the store would be The Tux Man from Leslie Ann's.

Mayor Linkous stated that BJ was the Economic Director and took care of letting them know when businesses opened and closed.

Mr. Holman stated that he enjoyed getting to know them and that his wife's closet had increased over the years due to Leslie Ann's. He congratulated and thanked them for all that they had done for the Town.

Mrs. Payne stated that they were neighbors for years and maybe Darlene would start making rolls again. She thanked them for their many years of service.

Mr. Presley stated that he appreciated them being downtown for a long time. He stated that it was awesome Dave was moving down the street and he would be buying some suits.

Mr. Holt stated they had done well being in the same spot in a tough area for all of these years and congratulated them.

Mr. Bailey stated that it was awesome for a business to last as long as they had.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

Mr. Presley asked that since Jarrod would be taking his place on the Sanitary Board did he want him to take his place on the Public Safety Committee.

Mr. Bailey stated that was fine and made a motion that Mr. Presley be appointed to the Public Safety Committee. Mr. Holt seconded the motion.

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

### **ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 in favor.

Mayor Linkous asked if there was anything else.

Mrs. Payne made a motion for the former committee and the ones that were on both the Autumn Jamboree/Christmas Committee to be reinstated. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

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

### **ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 in favor.

Mayor Linkous stated that he was sorry and would take the blame but they were talking about volunteers and should have never messed with them. He stated that we were very fortunate in our Town to have volunteers and asked that anyone who would like to be on a committee to

come forward. He stated that we had people who wanted to complain but asked that they come and help to make things better with new ideas, new people and those willing to work. He asked that they contact Town offices if they would like to help. He stated that BJ Roberts was working on getting together a Beautification Committee and would have something together soon.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND REPORTS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS AND REPORTS**

#### ***Resolution, ROLL CALL VOTE – Mayor Linkous***

Mayor Linkous stated that we presented Mr. Whitt's resolution to him early because it was a surprise and we did not want him to leave before it was presented and would now need a vote. He asked Mrs. Hernandez to read it.

### **TOWN OF BLUEFIELD**

### **RESOLUTION**

### **RECOGNITION OF DON WHITT**

WHEREAS, Don performed with Don Whitt and the Swing Keys on a Bluefield, WV Television station from 1968-1972; and

WHEREAS, Don has owned the building on Spring Street for many years; and

WHEREAS, Don was the owner and operator of Don's TV for over 20 years; and

WHEREAS, Don has been a member and has served as the Secretary of the Planning Commission for over 30 years; and

WHEREAS, Don will be greatly missed by the many citizens he has become such dear friends with throughout his many years of service; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the Town of Bluefield would like to thank him for his service and dedication to the Town of Bluefield Planning Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA, wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to Don for over 30 years of service to the Town of Bluefield, Virginia.

Adopted and presented this 26<sup>th</sup> day of January 2021.

Mr. Holt made a motion to accept the resolution. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 in favor.

***Simple Subdivision-College Ave, ROLL CALL VOTE – Kris Williams***

Mr. Williams stated that in council's packet was a preliminary plat from Rajeev Chopra for property located at 2135 College Ave. He stated that the proposed subdivision would establish new lot lines that would better serve the current property owners parking situation. He stated that it was a simple subdivision and did not require the approval of Planning Commission but just the approval of the Zoning Administrator and Council. He stated that Mr. Chopra was purchasing the two buildings at the end that bordered the Tinder property and was here for any questions.

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve the Simple Subdivision-College Ave. Mr. Bailey seconded the motion.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 in favor.

Mr. Chopra stated that he was going to clean and fix it up.

Mayor Linkous thanked him for developing in our Town and stated that he did a wonderful job.

Mr. Chopra introduced David Kersey who had recently retired and has joined his team as head of development. He stated that he was instrumental in the Goodwill/Gabe's deal.

Mayor Linkous stated that Mr. Kersey would be dealing with an extremely active person and we would like for him to bring those businesses here as well.

**Budget Amendments, ROLL CALL VOTE – Kim Hernandez**

**PURPOSE:** Insurance Payment-Totaled Police Vehicle

**Revenue**

<b>Line Item</b>		<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
0400-0413	Misc Law	<u>\$139,287.25</u>	<u>\$154,974.75</u>	<u>\$15,687.50</u>
	Enforcement	<u>\$139,287.25</u>	<u>\$154,974.75</u>	<u>\$15,687.50</u>

**Expenditure**

<b>Line Item</b>		<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
3110-6009	Vehicle/Other Parts	<u>\$2,000.00</u>	<u>\$17,687.50</u>	<u>\$15,687.50</u>
		<u>\$2,000.00</u>	<u>\$17,687.50</u>	<u>\$15,687.50</u>

**PURPOSE:** Employment Contract Repayment

**Revenue**

<b>Line Item</b>		<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
0400-0413	Misc Law	<u>\$154,974.75</u>	<u>\$161,150.09</u>	<u>\$6,175.34</u>
	Enforcement	<u>\$154,974.75</u>	<u>\$161,150.09</u>	<u>\$6,175.34</u>

**Expenditure**

<b>Line Item</b>		<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
3110-5500	Travel & Training	<u>\$13,859.00</u>	<u>\$20,034.34</u>	<u>\$6,175.34</u>
		<u>\$13,859.00</u>	<u>\$20,034.34</u>	<u>\$6,175.34</u>

**PURPOSE:** Recovered Costs (Trash Truck Hood)

**Revenue**

<b>Line Item</b>		<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
0900-0204	Recovered Costs	<u>\$174,440.00</u>	<u>\$180,695.73</u>	<u>\$6,255.73</u>
		<u>\$174,440.00</u>	<u>\$180,695.73</u>	<u>\$6,255.73</u>

**Expenditure**

<b>Line Item</b>		<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
4230-6007	Repair & Maint.	<u>\$600.00</u>	<u>\$6,855.73</u>	<u>\$6,255.73</u>
		<u>\$600.00</u>	<u>\$6,855.73</u>	<u>\$6,255.73</u>

**PURPOSE:** IDA Repayment to Town for loan

**Revenue**

<b>Line Item</b>		<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
3108-9914	Refunds & Rebates	<u>\$20,000.00</u>	<u>\$50,000.00</u>	<u>\$30,000.00</u>
		<u>\$20,000.00</u>	<u>\$50,000.00</u>	<u>\$30,000.00</u>



**Expenditure**

<b>Line Item</b>	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
8120-5649 IDA Expenses	<u>\$30,000.00</u>	<u>\$60,000.00</u>	<u>\$30,000.00</u>
	<u>\$30,000.00</u>	<u>\$60,000.00</u>	<u>\$30,000.00</u>

Mayor Linkous asked if they needed to be voted on individually or as a whole.

Mr. Crewe stated that they could do either.

Mr. Holt made a motion to approve all of the budget amendments. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 in favor.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Lee Riffe, 215 Hockman Pike stated that his concern was over the Christmas Committee and what council done tonight in their eyes was probably considered right but it was wrong. He stated that they took 5 volunteers and 2 paid employees and cut them off for no reason. He stated that the committee was not even called nor was told by the chair and that they had to watch the video. He stated that there were only 2 of the 5 volunteers there and they deserved a public apology. He stated that out of the blue council went into Executive Session and had their say over volunteers and came out and wiped it clean with new members. He stated that something was wrong somewhere and that Mrs. Hernandez was the chair and James Hampton was also involved on the Christmas Committee. He stated that the same 7 people were on the Autumn Jamboree Committee and council moved all 7 people off of it. He stated that when he thought more about it that it could have been him but why did they take everybody off but then they were in Executive Session so it had to be a paid employee. He stated that they saw his post on Facebook and he steamed for two days but you did not get rid of your volunteers, paid employees yes. He stated that they did not have to tell anyone about it but they got rid of volunteers and did not even tell them. He stated that he found out by watching it and then read the minutes and then he called Gail because he was also on her committee at the Sanders House which now he was off of all committees. He stated that his season was done and he appreciated Mrs. Payne for calling him and also Mayor Linkous but you should not get rid of your volunteers unless you bring them together and tell them. He stated that maybe the committee was stale and that was fine but we had

tried different things for both the Christmas Committee and the Autumn Jamboree. He stated that Kim did all the work of finding people and getting addresses and she helped James and vice versa. He stated that he was still trying to figure out why and it was a small town and sooner or later someone would slip up. He stated that it was none of his business and he did not care but they got rid of 5 volunteers that was on the same committee as James' but was told they could stay on that committee. He stated no that he would not that they did not even come and tell them anything which was spineless. He stated that he was sorry but that was his opinion and they knew how opinions were and if he were sitting up there on council that there was no way that he would have done that. He stated then they came back and voted tonight like it was nothing. He stated that he was sorry and they had their new committee and his post stayed. He stated that he appreciated Kim Hernandez for everything she had done on the Christmas Committee and he was sure they would put her back and apologized to James for not helping him with the Autumn Jamboree and to Gail he stated that she know the situation. He stated that he felt it was his season to come off and however council handled it was up to them but it was very wrong to do that to 5 volunteers and he could care less about himself but was going to speak for the other volunteers who were not there because they were not called nor invited He stated that they should have at least been invited and told what was going on and that probably two of them still did not know what was going on but that was ok because council tried to sweep it under the carpet and vote tonight to put it back together. He said he was sorry but it was wrong and he would not.

Gail Cook, Mobile Estates said she hoped that she did not get emotional over this but when she saw this and Lee called her she was hurt. She stated that she had volunteered in several committees in this Town and to be told she was no longer wanted on a committee hurt. She stated that she had been on the Christmas Committee for many years, on the Autumn Jamboree for many years, volunteered many many hours at the Sanders House and was also on the Cemetery Commission. She stated that she did a lot of volunteer work for this town and to be done the way she was done. She said she was sorry but that hurt and they should have been notified that changes were going to come and she was sorry but from now on she would not be back on the Christmas Committee because she would be doing more things at the Sanders House. She stated that they had more things coming up as soon as the cold was over but she wanted to let them know that they hurt her deeply for someone who was a citizen and was a volunteer and the way council treated them.

Mayor Linkous asked if any of council had anything to say.

A member of council stated it could be done under council comments.

Mayor Linkous asked if there were any more citizen's comments.

There were none.

### **POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT**

Chief Gunter stated that COVID had affected the Police Department last year just as it had everywhere else and they had two who were quarantined for suspected exposure and one who had been exposed and tested positive but isolated and had minimal effects. He stated that they were

lucky it was not worse being a small department. He stated that it would be an obstacle going forward on recruitment and retaining experienced officers and right now a lot were retiring if they could. He stated in 2020 they were able to purchase in car computers and docking stations. He stated that they had recently applied for a grant to replace some old body cameras. He stated that he had handed out a letter of recognition and when the supervisors were randomly reviewing the body cams they noticed one of the officers who had stopped to help a stranded motorists who had run out of gas and could not reach anyone on their cell phone. He stated that the officer went to Wal-Mart and bought a gas can and then when and got gas out of his own money and took it back to the stranded motorists. He stated that the gentleman offered what money he had in his pocket and the officer told him to keep it and finish filling up with gas. He stated that police officers everywhere did this on a daily basis and no one asked for recognition but he wanted to thank them personally. He stated that he could not tell them enough good things about the men and women of the Police Department including the dispatchers and had a team of highly trained and dedicated Police Officers in SWVA. He stated that his goal was to keep the Police Department evolving by advanced training and new technology and to set the expectations high.

Mayor Linkous thanked him for the report and bringing out the good things. He stated that a lot of our citizens did not get to hear the good things. He stated that there were many others besides that one and they were proud of the officers and the department and asked him to express their appreciation

Mr. Holt stated that he shared the same job and that our guys did better than most. He stated that he appreciated his professionalism since becoming Chief and that public recognition was rarely seen but they deserved it. He stated that he was a fantastic Chief and had a tremendous group of people who worked for him and he seen that on a daily basis because of working with them. He thanked him for what he had done and continued to do and had a good working relationship with the board and they would continue to work on offering pay raises.

Mr. Presley stated that they needed to look at the latest Sovereign Immunity Bill which would hold officers liable and would be a huge issue for recruitment. He stated that they needed to send something in opposition. He stated that they had an awesome group of police officers.

## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

### ***Update***

Mr. Crewe stated that he had asked for a little extra protection on short notice and these officers put in extra hours to be here. He stated related to the senate bill that it had cleared the subcommittee and house and looked to roll forward. He suggested that we resurrect the resolution from last time and send it again. He encouraged them all to contact all they could because it was a bad piece of legislation. He stated that the Town itself would be held liable for its actions and would apply to on and off duty officers. He stated that would be an issue when we had officers working security in other places and they could still be sued. He stated that a sinkhole/pothole had caused issues and flattened tires on College. He stated that staff fixed it once they were made aware but it was washed out underneath the pavement. He stated yesterday the owner of the vehicle on Meadows Street called and he was waiting on paperwork and that he was also

negotiating with the owner of the house. He stated that he had sent Chuck an email with a lower figure than what he had given him. He stated that our insurance denied the claim on the car and his insurance had paid him for it. He stated that he would bring back a recommendation on both later. He stated concerning the office relocation that it would take place in the next few days and both parties knew and were in agreeance with it and that things were working much better than they were. He stated that he had signed off on a grant for the Police Department to replace body cams for a matching grant of \$2,250. He stated that he had also signed off on the Fincastle pool being pressure tested in the amount of \$1,850 which would have to be done to see what issues the pool had and to see if it could even open this summer. He stated that the Rec Dept. had an employee who already left and would have another one leaving tomorrow. He stated that the Water Plant was hit with COVID a few weeks ago. He stated that they had 3 licensed operators and 1 part time and were having to work 12 hr. shifts, pass in the parking lot, etc. to keep the plant going but got through it. He stated concerning the soccer field that the gates were not locked and that the Rec Dept. waited until spring to repair everything and that vandalism was not unusual. He stated that he had attended an IDA meeting and there were some things that would need to be addressed and would require action. He suggested that they combine management and synchronize IDA leases and make them all the same.

***Recommendation of BBCOA by Building Official***

Mr. Crewe stated that he had a recommendation from the Building Official for the following members to be appointed to the BBCOA and approved by the Circuit Court:

Mike Ruble to be reappointed, Junior Crockett, Richard Sexton, Jonce Leedy, Jason Webb, Rick Duncan and Matthew Anderson.

He stated that they had staggered terms and that Mrs. Hernandez would keep him straight if he was saying something that was not correct.

Mrs. Hernandez stated that these were not appointed by the Circuit Court just council that the BZA was the only one appointed by the Circuit Court.

Mr. Crewe thanked her for clarifying.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to accept the Building Official's recommendation.

Mr. Presley made a motion to accept. Mrs. Payne seconded the motion.

Mr. Crewe asked if they would like to know the terms of each.

Mayor Linkous stated that it did not matter and asked the Clerk to do roll call and report.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

Councilmember Bailey:	Yes
Councilmember Holman:	Yes
Vice-Mayor Holt:	Yes

Councilmember Presley: Yes  
Councilmember Payne: Yes  
Councilmember Trigg: Absent  
Mayor Linkous: No Vote Permitted

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 in favor.

***Recommendation of new Planning Commission Member***

Mr. Crewe stated that as they were aware Mr. Whitt had retired and that his recommendation would be for Darrin Martin to replace Mr. Whitt on the Planning Commission.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to accept.

Mr. Presley made a motion to accept. Mr. Holt seconded the motion.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 in favor.

Mr. Crewe stated that it had been discussed about Tazewell's COVID numbers getting worse so we had heightened our awareness with social distancing and rearranged the chairs and put up a sign on the door requiring masks. He stated that he had checked into the tablet and had ordered a sample but he was not sure it would work in our equipment.

Mr. Bailey stated that he would email him the presentation.

Mr. Crewe stated that he had went on their website, etc. He stated that he had also received an estimate on putting in plexiglass dividers between council and the cheapest was \$495/unit and it would take 8 to separate them. He stated that he was working on other estimates because that one seemed a little high.

Mr. Holman asked if they were temporary.

Mr. Crewe stated that they were on wheels and it rolled up to where you were sitting and you unfolded it. He stated that there was also one you unbolted and set on your desk and the cost on the mobile was \$675.

Mr. Holman asked if that would come out of the General Fund or would fall under the CARES.

Mr. Crewe stated that it may fall under the new CARES. He stated that the Governor's Executive Order expired on January 31<sup>st</sup> and he would be having a press conference tomorrow which everyone expected that he would issue another order. He stated that Virginia's numbers overall were down including hospital beds but there were also a number of people who were still testing positive. He stated that the average in Virginia was 11.8% but Tazewell County was more than double that number and we needed to take all the precautions we could.

Mr. Holt stated in regards to the partitions that he appreciated the concern but if we had to pay for it out of pocket then he would not be for that. He stated that it made no difference putting them up if when they went back into Executive Session they did not have anything so it would be a waste of money if the Town had to pay for it out of pocket.

Mr. Crewe stated that he thought we could find them cheaper and he was still looking.

Mr. Holman stated that it should be all CARES money but that partitions would be on the bottom of the list and that other priorities needed to come first.

Mr. Crewe stated that they needed to set an example as Town Council and do what they could to be cautious. He stated that he read now where they were saying it was recommended for double masks.

Mr. Holt stated that back in March he knew the Town did not have a stockpile of PPE for our First Responders or anyone else and asked if we working on it now for them as well as Transit.

Mr. Crewe stated that not much had been done with Transit but they had some stuff available to them but to answer his question, no we did not have a stockpile. He stated that the Police Department had some extra things and Transit had used some money to purchase some things but he had been receiving reports that drivers were not wearing their masks and it had been addressed and they had talked to them. He stated that some front line employees as well as Transit was not included in the different funding.

Mr. Holman stated that he believed all employees who were responsible for day to day operations within the Town were in the same group.

Mr. Crewe stated that he took the position that all were considered essential employees although some funding said different. He stated that our receptionist had quit and went elsewhere and we had lost two that were qualified to do that job but the safety of the building depended on a part time person right now. He stated that he had some discussion on closing the building to all unless they had an appointment partly because the numbers were up and partly because the person at the door was not really trained and did not know who should and should not be here. He stated that we had received around 12 applications for the job and the deadline was tomorrow. He stated that we had to hire someone to mandate that door and if given the authority and he needed to do so that he would close the building for the safety of the employees and the general public. He

stated that we could still conduct business with the doors locked and someone who had more training at the door.

Mr. Holt stated that the county had a machine that you put your face and wrist in and it checked your temperature. He stated that the handheld devices did not work and that he would send the information to him.

Mr. Crewe stated that the Supreme Court approved a questionnaire of 14-18 questions and all had to be answered.

Mr. Holman asked 14-18 questions.

Mr. Crewe stated yes that it was in depth. He stated that he had been in four different courts not long ago and a couple asked all of the questions, one did not ask any, etc. He stated that another issue was he would like to try and synchronize all of the buildings to the same server that right now we had multiple systems in each area with different vendors and different firewalls and they did not work well together. He stated that the Police Department did not have a camera that showed someone being at the front door but had one of the front of the building and around.

Mr. Holman stated that part of the problem was having proprietary system issues between departments.

Mr. Crewe stated that was correct.

Mr. Holman asked how soon before he would have some numbers.

Mr. Crewe stated that he thought someone local could have a proposal in a few days but they would probably need to put out a request for proposals and follow procurement. He stated that it needed to be modernized so it would operate more efficiently. He stated that it all needed to be looked at even though we may not do the whole thing. He stated that something else was that all of council needed to have a Town of Bluefield email address because anything done on their email that was Town business had to be archived for 5 years for FOIA reasons. He stated that using their own server, cell phone, etc. would not be archived and the Town could be sued. He stated that it would be expensive to have to find something on multiple sites and by law we had to keep it for 5 years. He stated that it would be easier if they all were under the Town.

Mr. Holman stated that he was using the towns.

Mr. Crewe stated that he was sorry to take up so much time and if council thought it was appropriate then to make a motion to oppose the HB.

Mr. Holt made a motion to oppose the HB. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 in favor.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Bailey had none.

Mr. Holman had none.

Mr. Holt had none.

Mrs. Payne had none.

Mr. Presley gave a shout out to all who came to the meeting. He stated that they were going to have a lot of work to do especially with the new minimum wage that was coming and would affect the entire community.

Mayor Linkous asked that everyone pray for those affected by COVID in our area that they all had close friends, etc. affected and to pray for Mr. Trigg who lost his brother today. He stated that funeral arrangements were incomplete. He stated to Gail, Lee and all the volunteers that he made a mistake by not having more discussion about the volunteers and when he got home he realized that they had done away with volunteers and they never wanted to do away with volunteers in any way, shape or form. He stated that he would like to publicly apologize to Gail and said that he was sorry he let it happen and was sorry for hurting her feelings and asked that she please accept his apology and to Lee he would also like to publicly apologize and that he was sorry to him as well and to the other members of the committee. He stated that he would take the blame and asked that they please let the other committee members know that he apologized if they had hurt people's feelings because that was not their intent. He stated that he believed if you made a mistake then you should fix it and apologize and he had made a mistake and to Gail and Lee he was sorry.

Gail Cook stated that they needed an apology from all of council not just him. She stated that she accepted his apology but it was the rest of council also and they should do individual apologies.

Mr. Linkous stated that they were given an opportunity to speak and chose not to say anything and that was fine but he was the leader and had made a mistake and wanted to personally apologize and to also apologize for the board. He stated that anyone else could come and see them and talk to them. He stated that if they were not careful that it would turn into an argumentative



state but that he had personally wanted to apologize and when he seen the others that he would apologize to them as well. He thanked her for agreeing to work with Cathy at the Sanders House and hopefully once things calmed down that it would be better.

### **ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

None.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Linkous stated that they had gone into Executive Session at the beginning of the meeting with the purpose of talking about a Town Manager and did not allow themselves enough time so they would be returning to Executive Session to continue that discussion. He 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 with such closed meeting being confined to the following subjects: Town Manager position.

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

Vice-Mayor Holt made a motion to enter into Executive Session as described above. Councilmember Presley seconded the motion.

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

### **ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 6-0 in favor of going into Executive Session.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to resume open meeting.

Councilmember Presley: Yes  
Councilmember Payne: Yes  
Councilmember Trigg: Absent  
Mayor Linkous: Yes

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 6-0 in favor of the certification.

***Hiring of Town Manager – ROLL CALL VOTE***

Mayor Linkous asked if there was any more business to be discussed.

Mr. Holman made a motion to accept the contract as presented and hire Trent Crewe as the Town Manager for the Town of Bluefield. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked for a Roll Call Vote and asked Mr. Crewe if he had a vote.

Mr. Crewe stated no.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mayor Linkous stated that the vote carried 5-0 and Mr. Crewe would be employed as the Manager of the Town of Bluefield, VA. He stated that there would be a press release on Thursday afternoon.

**ADJOURN**

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Bailey made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked for a roll call.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

Councilmember Bailey: Yes  
Councilmember Holman: Yes  
Vice-Mayor Holt: Yes  
Councilmember Presley: Yes  
Councilmember Payne: Yes

Councilmember Trigg: Absent  
Mayor Linkous: No Vote Permitted

The motion carried 5-0 to adjourn the meeting.

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D.S. Linkous, Mayor

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Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk