

**Town of Bluefield  
Town Council  
Minutes  
February 23, 2021**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, February 23 2021 at 7:30 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  
Anglis Trigg, Jr. Councilmember  
Rick Holman, Councilmember

**ALSO PRESENT**

Trent Crewe, Manager/Town Attorney  
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk  
Billie Roberts, Comm. Dev. Coordinator  
James Hampton, Treasurer/Transit Dir.  
Shane Gunter, Police Chief  
Tara White, Receptionist  
John O'Neal, Fincastle Manager  
Jessima Frye, Fincastle Asst. Manager  
Anthony Phillips, Fincastle Grounds Keeper  
10 members of public

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Linkous called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Steve Akers, Ebenezer United Methodist Church the Invocation. Mayor Linkous led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to approve the Agenda.

Councilmember Trigg made a motion to approve the agenda. 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: Yes  
Mayor Linkous: No Vote Permitted

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 6-0 to approve the amended agenda.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

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

Councilmember Trigg made a motion to approve the consent agenda. 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: Yes  
Mayor Linkous: No Vote Permitted

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 6-0 to approve the Consent Agenda.

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

#### ***Special Presentation: Chamber of Commerce of the Two Virginias – Jeff Disibbio***

Mr. Disibbio stated he wanted to congratulate Mr. Crewe and honored their services going forward. He stated the chamber was going forward and took a more proactive stance with local government and to let them know that they would be there to partner on anything the town would like to partner on and thanked everyone for their time.

#### ***Special Presentation: Tazewell County Update – Charlie Stacy - Special presentation to Don Harris.***

Mr. Stacy stated it was a pleasure to be there and out in person and sent greetings from his fellow board of supervisors. He stated he knew the town had been going through the same throws as he had with the pandemic with very little answers on how to move forward. He stated he wanted to give an update and he also wanted to congratulate all the new council members along with the Mayor and Mr. Crewe. He stated that he would also like to give a special presentation to a very dear friend and it was nice to hear about all of the great things done during Mr. Harris' time served. He read the resolution:

**RESOLUTION**  
**ACKNOWLEDGING OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICE BY**  
**DON HARRIS**

**WHEREAS**, Don Harris grew up in the town of Bluefield, Virginia and has served the citizens of Bluefield, Virginia since 1963, as a business man and is one of the longest-serving mayors for the Town of Bluefield, Virginia, serving fifteen (15) years; and

**WHEREAS**, Don Harris served in the United States Air Force in Orlando, Florida, where he met his wife, Wendy; and

**WHEREAS**, Don Harris not only has served the citizens of Bluefield, Virginia as mayor, but has owned and operated Graham Jewelry on Virginia Avenue for the last forty (40) plus years; and

**WHEREAS**, Don Harris carries a list of accomplishments the town has achieved during his helm of office that include, a new town hall and fire department, the purchase of a \$1.2 million fire truck, land annexations (the St. Clair farm) for future development, the Little League Baseball Park, Pine Hill Park, with the Bullet Bill Bridge (named in honor of the late football star William “Bullet Bill” Dudley, a graduate of Graham High School to the NFL), acquiring the Harmony Acres swimming pool, and the purchase of the Fincastle Country Club; and

**WHEREAS**, Don Harris has served on many local boards and statewide, serving on the Virginia Corporation Commission and as vice chair of the legislative committee of the Virginia Municipal League that gave him a chance to promote the town and the region making sure the people representing more populous areas knew the state “does not stop at Roanoke”; and

**WHEREAS**, Don Harris has been instrumental in holding festivals and offering activities for the community and one of his dreams as to make the Town of Bluefield a better community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors recognizes Don Harris for his expertise, his longevity, and for his dedicated service to the citizens of Bluefield, Virginia and the entire county of Tazewell, Virginia expresses their appreciation for his extraordinary work, leadership, commitment and distinguished career.

Congratulations! God Bless and God Speed.

Presented this the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of February, 2021 by the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors.

Tom Lester, Vice Chair  
D. Michael Hymes, Member  
Travis Hackworth, Member  
Margaret A. “Maggie” Asbury, Member  
C. Eric Young, County Administrator

He stated that Jack Asbury hired him at a very young age when he was an excited and energetic police officer and from time to time had the back of his shirt lifted just enough to know exactly what it meant to take care of this town. He stated that 9 years ago when elected to the Board of Supervisors someone else reached and grabbed his shirt collar and that made him learn a lot about government. He thanked Mr. Harris for his years of service and the time he dedicated to

him with the position on the Board of Supervisors on how to be a better help to the citizens of Bluefield, Virginia.

Mr. Harris stated time has flown by and it was hard to believe he had been there as long as he had. He stated that he and Charlie would be on the road at night traveling on 460 and worked together on several projects like the telephone system and had many late nights that they worked together. He stated that he certainly appreciated it and his fellow councilmembers that he served many years with and that he made the decision to retire after 57 ½ years in Bluefield Virginia. He stated that it was a difficult decision but he and his wife were able to travel to Florida while there was snow on the ground here and thanked Chief Gunter for watching over his property. He stated that it had been a pleasure to serve all the people and now there was a new council and Mayor but there was a person he gave the hardest time to and that was Mr. Wohlford and even though there was not a lot they agreed on he was always there. He stated he came across some old Bluefield Virginia folders and presented everyone on council with one. He thanked everyone.

Mr. Stacy stated that the spouses of those that served sacrificed as much as the individuals that served and he would not let that go unnoticed. He stated they had been monitoring COVID cases and vaccines and hopefully the town employees received their first round of vaccines and the second to be received soon. He stated that there were only 13 cases in the last 14 days and the numbers continued to decrease but cases were still spreading and they recommended to continue all precautions they had operated under and continued to do over the next little bit. He stated that the vaccines would continue and if there were any questions to let them know but the county did not run the vaccine program that it was ran through the VDH. He stated he wanted to offer as much support as he could and the state was still trying to find footing on it and had done a wonderful job with getting vaccines to certain age groups. He stated that if they wanted more local support then they were willing and prepared to do that. He stated everyone wondered about the next stimulus package and whether or not the government or state would continue to receive benefits on the county level. He stated they advocated that states locally would receive additional funding and would push those funds down so that they could be used locally for small business and that was what they worked on with the CARES funding. He stated the schools were continuing to follow state recommended guidelines and they did a phenomenal job educating our children, the amount of food they gave out and just what all the school system did could never have a price tag put on it and when it was all over a lot of recognition should be given. He stated they never thought they would be able to talk about economic development 12 to 15 months after the pandemic but they sat down and looked at it and they opened up new businesses, had ribbon cutting ceremonies and moved forward on project Jonah. He stated they would talk about the time frame to construct and decisions would have to be made about the hydro pump station which would lead back to back into 4-5 year construction projects that would employ over 1000 people. He stated that if they brought all of those into the community and worked them for 5-10 years they would become permanent residents and a large percentage would bring their families which would be a great opportunity. He stated that they broke ground on a project at the Bluestone with a local entrepreneur that has expanded and if there were any other local businesses interested in working through the Bluestone they would do it. He stated the Bluestone had been working on internal trail development to create the aesthetics that would help promote it and the Town considered doing some trail work that ran over East River Mountain and headed West and the Bluestone trail would run east and they could join. He stated he had several meetings at Fincastle as part of

COVID relief and they did a wonderful job and appreciated council for going out on a limb and taking on such a venture. He stated there was a lot going on and he had meetings with the rotary and talked about golf tournaments and projects going on there and what a great opportunity it was there. He stated that he would like to see lodging put in there which would help continue the financial well-being and support of Fincastle and commended how well they kept it going through the pandemic. He asked if there was any questions.

Mr. Holman stated Mr. Stacy mentioned the primary roll out of the vaccines and asked if he had an estimate of what the county's numbers were.

Mr. Stacy stated he only had a percentage and about 45% of group 1A got the vaccination and he was disappointed when he heard that percentage but when he reached out to other facilities, such as hospitals and clinics the percentage was about the same. He stated they gave a little leeway because it was a vaccine that was only out for 12 months and a lot of younger, healthier people chose not to take it at that time.

Mr. Holman asked if they based the future amount on participation.

Mr. Stacy stated the first wave was not based on who wanted it but how many qualified for it and for example we received two doses for every member but if only 45% chose to get it then there was a surplus and was used for our school system and everyone that qualified for 1A and 1B.

Mr. Holt stated when they were going through the transition of town managers there were a couple of lapses where they were going to miss opportunities for CARES ACT funding and for other things that were in the Town of Bluefield. He stated that Mr. Stacy stepped in and communicated with them and made sure they did not miss out on that funding and he wanted to thank him for that because it was a big deal. He stated that was a huge help with our town and without him looking out for them and those opportunities they would have missed out on those and he really appreciated it.

Mr. Stacy stated it was his pleasure and he knew they were dealing with it too and the regulations changed every week. He stated if they did not use all of their allotted money they would have a surplus and to reach out to them if they were in need of something that they were still using the balances that were not used for other things.

Mr. Crewe stated that he had met with the Tourism Group and there were some opportunities for the town in tourism efforts and in the next few months the county had some plans for the tourism office. He asked Mr. Stacy to talk more about it.

Mr. Stacy stated the Tourism Office closely aligned with the Virginia Tourism Corporation and they followed their guidance. He stated that a lot of the facilities were closed down during COVID but have started opening back up and they planned to fully staff that office. He stated tourism was the area that they waited to reopen and felt there would be a flood of people once restrictions were lifted. He thanked everyone once again.

Mr. Crewe stated that Fincastle was going to give an update on all that had been going on.

***Special Presentation: Fincastle progress update – John O’Neal, Jessima Frye, & Anthony Phillips***

Mr. O’Neal stated he wanted to thank everyone for allowing them to be there and thanked Mr. Stacy for that appreciation of Fincastle. He stated he brought Jessima Frye, Assistant Manager/Events Coordinator and Anthony Phillips, Golf Course Superintendent. He stated that they were who kept him going and he would be lost without them. He stated he wanted to start with updates on all they had been doing with facility upgrades and that back in October they started looking at software upgrades and found one called foreUP that was very user friendly and they were very happy with it. He stated with the COVID crisis they went through and replaced all soap dispensers, paper towel racks, painted ceilings, banquet rooms, replaced blinds and curtains and the lower deck was refurbished. He thanked Mrs. Roberts for her work on the C-PROP grant that helped replaced the roof along with landscaping and several other projects. He stated they replaced many pieces of kitchen equipment and that there was no choice on some of the improvements so they could bring people in and keep them in. He stated that they had many events planned between 2019 and 2020 and he liked to tell the story that they had 27 Christmas parties in 21 days. He stated that was where they were and want to be there again. He stated that on the golf course they did a \$1.2 million dollar upgrade with Aspen Group and turned it over to Mr. Phillips to explain more.

Mr. Phillips stated that they received a grant from the Shott foundation that allowed them to do a \$1 million dollar renovation by Aspen Golf Course Construction and Golf Course Architect and the concept was to make the golf course better and player friendly for average golfers and golf course maintenance and efficiency. He stated they wanted fewer bunkers and bunkers that drained, wider approaching areas around the putting greens and a complete renovation of the bunker that used The Better Billy Bunker System which was considered the number one bunker system in the world and that Fincastle was the only golf course in Southwest Virginia, East Tennessee, and Southern West Virginia to have that system other than the golf course in Southwest Virginia located in Bristol, Virginia. He stated that putting green 10, 14, 17, and 18 had been replaced and brought back to their original size and all putting green heads had been replaced with brand new irrigation heads. He stated that the project started in mid-August and was completed in mid-November and they worked 7 days a week and at one time had up to 40 people there. He stated that it went from 78 bunkers to 48 and all bunkers had the drains that used The Better Billy Bunker System. He stated he chose zoysia grass that would stay brown till mid-April to mid-May and chose that because it did not have to be mowed as much and was a warm seeded grass but studies show that it would turn green for spring and summer months and back to brown. He stated the sand used for the system was specific to that system and there were three steps for the sand: 1. Percolation regimen 2. Particle size 3. Color. He stated that was the only sand that could be used for that system. He stated the four putting greens they reapplied for were completely redone and when they hired for it they had a master plan and Fincastle received a \$200,000.00 grant from the Shott Foundation and it went towards water irrigation and a fountain for increased water filtration that had to have circulation. He stated that they also purchased a TDRX rough mower. He stated the four main steps in running a golf course were staffing, ergonomics, equipment, irrigation and water. He asked if anyone had any questions.

Mr. Holt stated he did not have any questions but was very impressed with what they had done.

Mr. Phillips stated that he knew everyone did not play golf but encouraged everyone to take a look at the golf course.

Mr. O'Neal stated that he was very proud of them and they were very excited about what the future held and wanted to share more about what they had been doing to move forward and that the golf course had received a lot of recognition and had 27 events planned between May and October. He stated he received an e-mail from VSGA that was very supportive and wanted to come visit to see the virtual game that was designed and wanted to do a promo for the golf course. He stated that the virtual game was a spot light for VSGA and explained it. He stated thanks to the town they had over 50 new golf carts on the way and in May they would have to be ready for the golfers and have everything in order to open and serve. He stated with money in mind there was a rebate check for some golf supplies that they would be receiving. He stated that they tried to keep some workers at the restaurant and did not want anyone to lose their job.

Mrs. Frye stated they had 74 events scheduled and lost due to COVID from February to now. She stated since restrictions were lifted they have 76 scheduled throughout December.

Mr. O'Neal stated that they lost about \$124,000 and that was just for the room rental and food. He stated the restaurant itself could not sustain itself but with events it could thrive because some events were \$5,000 to \$6,000 events for 5hrs of work.

Mrs. Frye stated they had meetings scheduled with several different organizations such as the Red Hats, Kiwanis, two Bridge Clubs, Garden Club, American Legion and the Railroad club. She stated they also had Bluefield State College and Bluefield College scheduled to meet.

Mr. O'Neal stated the big question a lot of people asked was about the swimming pool and it was being worked on and they were still doing a lot of work on it.

Mr. Phillips stated that the scuba guys were coming back to check the pressure and set up to get a pressure test and if that test came back ok then we could go forward once that was checked.

Mr. Holman asked how old the lines were.

Mr. Phillips stated he really did not know but a lot of people have looked at them over the course of many years and the concrete was put in about 12 years ago. He stated that when they got the pressure test results back he would let the town know.

Mr. O'Neal stated that he did not know what he was getting into when he took the position a year and a half ago but was very excited and felt it was going to work and be an asset to the community. He stated that he wanted to thank everyone for their support and thanked Chief Gunter for always being so supportive along with the sanitation department who was always dependable. He thanked Mr. Sleeman as well as Mr. Stacy and Mrs. Hernandez for the work they did with the vaccines. He stated he did not want to leave anyone out and thanked everyone.

Mrs. Payne stated she was probably there the most and wanted to thank them for all they have put into Fincastle and they have done a tremendous job.

Mr. Holman stated they had done a tremendous job and put it back on the map.

Mr. O'Neal stated he had been a part of Bluefield Virginia all of his life and he wanted Fincastle to be as it was once before and a place they could be proud of.

Mr. Holman stated that Mr. O'Neal was tailored for the manager position and hired a great staff that was doing a remarkable job. He stated he knew of several events that happened and representatives that made comments of what a fantastic job they were doing and he had no doubt the place would continue to grow.

Mr. O'Neal stated that Mr. Crewe took time to sit down and listen and communicated to head down the right path.

Mr. Bailey stated when they purchased Fincastle they did not purchase a business but failed assets with a golf course that was in disrepair and 6 foot ditches that were so dry that were not getting water. He stated that he felt it would never work but fast forward to now and the \$1.2 million renovation made a big difference. He stated if it were not for COVID they would have done so much better and surpassed what they would have done and he wanted to acknowledge Hunter O'Neal for all the work he put into the virtual side of it and all he did with no acknowledgement.

Mr. O'Neal stated he knew Hunter appreciated it and was very thankful for him and his knowledge with computers. He stated the detail of the virtual game and software was top quality. He stated how thankful he was for the community support and support from The Shott Foundation and that \$75,000 was used for the pool and various things.

Mr. Presley stated everyone said all he wanted to say and answered a question from earlier that yes they were all nervous about the purchase and what they had done was great.

Mr. O'Neal stated that the Aspen Group commented on how cordial our town and employees had been.

Mayor Linkous stated he was not a golfer but he did go to eat at the restaurant on weekends and the food was always fantastic with great prices and it was only getting better. He stated how proud he was of the job they were doing and with the \$1.2 million in renovations only made things better and we needed to focus on keeping it maintained from here on out and commended Mr. O'Neal on how he stepped in and worked hard and even had a paint brush in his hand.

Mr. O'Neal thanked everyone.



***Citizen Request: Dave Wohlford***

Mr. Wohlford stated that he wanted to address an issue that had happened in the past with a councilmembers absent. He stated that they went a year and a half without a councilmember and that was entirely too long to not have a full council and felt they needed to establish guidelines and boundaries. He stated that it needed to take place out in the open and not in the back so that everyone would know what was going on. He thanked everyone.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND REPORTS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS AND REPORTS**

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

**BUDGET AMENDMENTS**

**2020/2021 (12)**

**PURPOSE:** School Resource Officer Funding (GHS & GMS)

**Revenue**

<b>Line Item</b>		<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
0400-0413	Misc Law	<u>\$195,477.09</u>	<u>\$216,316.09</u>	<u>\$20,839.00</u>
	Enforcement	<u>\$195,477.09</u>	<u>\$216,316.09</u>	<u>\$20,839.00</u>

**Expenditure**

<b>Line Item</b>		<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
3110-1100	Salaries-Regular	<u>\$900,535.00</u>	<u>\$921,374.00</u>	<u>\$20,839.00</u>
		<u>\$900,535.00</u>	<u>\$921,374.00</u>	<u>\$20,839.00</u>

**PURPOSE:** Grant Funding for the purchase of PPE & Related Equipment for COVID

**Revenue**

<b>Line Item</b>		<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
0400-0413	Misc Law	<u>\$216,316.09</u>	<u>\$263,884.60</u>	<u>\$47,568.51</u>
	Enforcement	<u>\$216,316.09</u>	<u>\$263,884.60</u>	<u>\$47,568.51</u>

**Expenditure**

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
3110-8106	Grants	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$47,568.51</u>	<u>\$47,568.51</u>
		<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$47,568.51</u>	<u>\$47,568.51</u>

**PURPOSE:** Hazardous Duty Stipend for Police Officer (COVID Pandemic)

**Revenue**

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
0400-0413	Misc Law	<u>\$263,884.60</u>	<u>\$282,884.60</u>	<u>\$19,000.00</u>
	Enforcement	<u>\$263,884.60</u>	<u>\$282,884.60</u>	<u>\$19,000.00</u>

**Expenditure**

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
3110-8108	DCJS Recruiting	<u>\$13,488.00</u>	<u>\$32,488.00</u>	<u>\$19,000.00</u>
	and Retention	<u>\$13,488.00</u>	<u>\$32,488.00</u>	<u>\$19,000.00</u>

Mayor Linkous asked for a vote to approve the Budget Amendments.

Mr. Holt made a motion to approve the Budget Amendments. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to do roll call and report

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated it was 6-0 in favor.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Don Harris stated they were promised a certain amount of money for Fincastle and it was never received. He stated that he asked council at the time if the expenditure did not come through were they willing to borrow the money to buy it and it was a unanimous vote. He stated they had done a great job.

Joyce Johnston stated she wanted to thank each of the members of council for giving their time and to thank Mr. Stacy for everything. She stated that the Board of Supervisors had a fund that he had been very generous with and thanked Pete Sleeman and all of the workers that went above and beyond and even helped on their lunch hour to clean, cut shrubs and just anything they needed at the library. She stated that Mr. Stacy also gave financial support to the library as well as Cathy Payne. She stated that she had been a member of Fincastle since 1972 and was so happy that the town chose to buy it and with what Mr. O'Neal had done with the entire place and thanked him.

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

None

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Crewe stated he had been here for 3 ½ weeks and had stirred up a few things and broken a few things but the town had the finest group of employees and wanted to introduce Tara White who asked to attend tonight and wanted to see how meetings were conducted and was another added to that list of fine employees and did a great job along with James Hampton that was there. He stated that the trucks that were purchased were there and he wanted to add that there potentially could be 4 to 5 more snow storms and he was glad to add these trucks to snow plowing services. He stated that the Plexiglas plates were in place that they approved for purchase. He stated that he had a request from Graham High School teacher Debra Brewster for permission to have a homecoming parade. He stated the governors orders were that no more than 250 participants were allowed and no more than 10 per car and Pulaski tried to push that with participants and were shut down and the governor tweaked his orders but the mandate was extended to February 28 of a maximum of 175 kids.

Mr. Bailey stated the parade would not be a VHSL event.

Mr. Crewe stated that was correct.

Mr. Bailey asked what the current regulations of the state were with it not being a VHSL event.

Mr. Crewe stated that the VHSL met today and under the governor's order that this was a social event.

Mr. Holman stated his interpretation was that if they were holding the event in a designated area it would be different but the parade went through the whole town and he would challenge it on that point alone.

Mr. Crewe stated yes, if there were less than 250 participants who were riding in parade and no more than 10 per vehicle. He stated Mrs. Brewster told him no more than 10 people per vehicle and no more than 250 people and the school board approved it late today. He stated he felt he could speak for everyone there that they wanted to give these kids some kind of normalcy and

her letter stated that this likely would be the resemblance of something normal for outside school activities and she was very concerned about the welfare of the students. He stated the parade would line up at 5:30 in the usual spot and would begin at 6:15 and be done by dark. He stated people would be 6 feet apart, stayed in their own yard and on side of street and there would be no bonfire or gathering at the end. He stated it was a gray area but it was not a town sponsored event and he would go out on a limb to recommend it for the kids.

Mr. Holt stated he had an 11 year old well rounded son that was struggling and if we could do something for these kids we needed to. He stated these kids were in class rooms together and they were getting out and we needed to take steps to do things for them. He stated that when COVID first started he was one of the first that said stay home, do not congregate at Walmart, and follow mandates but we have been shut down for a year now and have not lived normal lives so if there were people out there that wanted to say no then they needed to stay home and do not come to the parade and protect themselves.

Mr. Crewe stated that the governor's order said all public and private in person gatherings of 10 or more that did not live in the same home and that was broad and if there were 10 per car then we could do that.

Mr. Holman suggested that everyone use common sense and there was nothing that prohibited anyone from going onto the street at any time.

Mrs. Payne asked if there was any way to do a reverse parade.

Mr. Crewe stated that it could be done but that was not what they asked to do and the other way out would be that it was not a town sponsored event but they had to follow the stipulations of social distancing, wear a mask, only 10 in a car, and less than 250 participants.

Mr. Holman stated he felt that if they were ok with following the guidelines then he would be ok with it.

Mr. Holt stated the only concern he had was if they wanted to congregate at Jack Asbury Square and if you have attended any previous parades that was what went on. He stated they could have liability because of it being town property.

Mr. Crewe stated that he was told that they would not be doing that.

Mr. Holt stated that was his only concern.

Mr. Crewe stated that he spoke with Chief Gunter and it could be done if the town approved it.

Chief Gunter stated yes as long as they had town crew and enough officers to cover it.

Mr. Crewe suggested that as long as they followed guidelines it would be a go.

Mr. Holman stated that participants of the parade usually dispersed at Jack Asbury Square.

Mr. Crewe stated that it could be a problem but that we could not control that.

Mr. Bailey asked if there would be any liability with the cheerleaders sitting on top of the fire trucks.

Mr. Crewe stated no as long as there were no more than 10 per truck but we would probably have a new truck to put them on as well.

Mr. Holman stated the motion would be to have the parade as long as they complied and asked for a copy of the letter for reference.

Mayor Linkous asked for motion to allow GHS to have a homecoming parade.

Mr. Holt made a motion to allow GHS to have a homecoming parade. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to do roll call and report

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated it was 6-0 in favor.

Mr. Crewe stated there was a gentleman on High St whose wife had inherited 3 parcels of property and was interested in selling. He stated that it was not needed for the project and he would get more details but it was the highest tax accessed parcels there. He stated that he would explore further if they would like.

Mr. Presley stated that they did not need it.

Mr. Crewe stated that an agreement had been made on the parcel purchase and the deed was in the wives name. He stated that it should be back soon and that the gentleman's car that was damaged had been taken care of. He stated that there had not been a lot done with tourism and there was a possibility of tying trails together. He stated that there was grant money that we needed to look into so that we could beef it up. He stated that did not know how they could lose anything on tourism. He stated that Restaurant week was coming the second week of March and that most of our restaurants had participated. He stated that the project and activity sheets justified his existence for the past 3 weeks and that all the employees were nice. He stated that what he discovered by talking to Todd at the Water Plant was we needed a vulnerability study done by

June 1<sup>st</sup>. He stated that Thompson and Litton were under contract doing it and that it was supposed to be done as a county project but the state would not accept them as one. He stated concerning the budget process that he had talked to James quite a bit and Rick some and he would make recommendation by April per the Town Code. He stated that a few of them had attended the Bluefield Baseball Club unveiling and there were some marketing opportunities for the town. He stated that the perception for Fincastle was there were only open to members and thought about putting up a billboard that would be great advertisement. He stated that this Appalachian League would be very different than the League in the past and the idea our Mayor had mentioned was giving ticket stubs with a free drink, etc. to the league. He stated that they could have a couple girls work with the league and get information about specific players and make it about the player and let them sign baseballs. He stated that they now had some real equipment to push snow. He stated that next Thursday the IDA would meet at noon and one of the things being discussed was a proposed business that had a high degree of success. He stated that it would be a closed meeting and he could not discuss much about it but invited council to attend.

Mr. Holt asked with it being a closed meeting could they attend.

Mr. Crewe stated that they could be invited in.

Mr. Holman asked what time it would be

Mr. Crewe stated at 12:00 in the upstairs conference room.

Mr. Holman stated that the Sanitary Board could have worked it out to where they could have held it in the chambers.

Mr. Crewe stated that Kim juggled it around to hold each group. He stated that they had room to spread out there and would not have that many people in attendance. He stated a mess up he had was that he took an existing contract with Dominion Systems and asked for an estimate and the letter that was sent out to ANS said that it would be for the whole town. He stated that he had worded it wrong and that others were also working on this as well to evaluate the Town's needs.

Mr. Holman stated he received a call from Advanced Network Systems and they were asked to turn in all password information and they would not be doing any more work with the town.

Mr. Crewe stated that was not exactly correct and that he spoke with Heath Havens and they had been emailing back and forth.

Mr. Holman stated that he would like us to do a complete audit and take a look at the network and soft work as a whole. He asked Mr. Hampton what they used.

Mr. Hampton stated remote desktop.

Mr. Crewe stated that there was a hodge podge of different parts and that was what he discussed with Dominion Systems and the first step was to get with the different departments and

work with them individually. He stated everyone had a different system and it was not cost effective.

Mr. Holman recommended that they not jump into one individual contract and the comment that came back to him was that they were being pushed out and had worked with them for many years and were local.

Mr. Crewe stated that was not his intent and if he needed to make some calls to reach out to them he would but that was not the impression he got from Mr. Havens and their exchanged emails.

Mr. Holman stated these were important parts of their industry.

Mr. Crewe stated that if they changed something they needed to look at every angle of all the services.

Mr. Holman stated that they needed to look at the quality of service and asked if voice was included with that too.

Mr. Crewe stated yes and the first step was we had to know what we had and needed to know passwords, etc. so they could give us a recommendation.

Mr. Holman asked if they had made a concrete decision.

Mr. Crewe stated no they were still looking at all of the information and doing all of the ground work.

Mr. Holman stated they ANS did there work on a case to case basis.

Mr. Crewe stated that we were still checking on that but in the meantime had increase our contract hours with Dominion Systems.

Mr. Holman stated that he would like to see what we could get and be able to move Bluefield forward.

Mr. Crewe stated that we relied on him and other IT providers and he would bring back more information.

Mr. Holman thanked him for the information.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would talk to whomever if need be. He stated that there was a very strong possibility there was new COVID funds going that would be available but was stuck in Congress right now and a new minted mechanism that if they did not spend all the CARES money by December 31<sup>st</sup> that they had extended it to April 15. He stated that he did not have all the details on it and hoped to find out more about it soon but that we had spent all of our money. He stated that there were two pots of money that would be available, the old pot that we could tip

into again and the new pot. He stated that this all had been a learning experience and he was there to take the heat and make council look good. He stated that he had seen some concerns on Mr. Presley's Facebook and asked that they let him know of any concerns. He stated that we were not much different here than other localities and asked that they give him time. He stated that they had an excellent work staff.

Mr. Holman stated he appreciated his efforts and him digging in with both heels.

Mr. Crewe stated that was what they hired him for. He stated that he was still trying to find answers for Ron concerning the Norfolk Southern issue.

Mr. Holt stated he knew he was busy and he knew a guy that worked for Norfolk Southern and he asked him what the issue was and said that was not his department but he would look into it for them.

Mr. Crewe stated he forgot to mention about the street located in front of the new Dollar general would be closed Saturday to lay pipe.

Mrs. Payne asked when the New Website would be up and running.

Mr. Crewe stated it was up but not going and that they would receive training on it. He stated that he, BJ and Kim would work on it.

Mr. Holman asked who our vender was.

Mr. Crewe stated that he was not sure.

Mrs. Payne stated that would save Mr. Presley from having it all on his Facebook because they could go directly to the site.

Mr. Crewe stated that they should be able to interact. He stated that Mr. Presley needed to be careful what he told people when it was on private property. He invited them all to go to Fincastle and tour it and that they would be making money if COVID had not shut them down but asked that they bear with them.

Mr. Holt stated he saw that recycling was taking off again and wanted to know about the cost and asked him to shed some light on that.

Mr. Crewe stated they were making a little money on cardboard but he would have to get numbers on that since they just started back. He stated that he had a few suggestions such as doing cardboard, paper and plastic on different days. He stated that some federal grants would not give grant money if the town did not recycle.

Mr. Holt stated he was not against it but just wanted some information.



Mr. Crewe stated that it was not a money maker and that China had pulled the plug because more plastic was being recycled than made but in the long run it would be better to continue in case we ever qualified for money later on.

Mr. Holt asked if it put the town in a difficult situation by doing this.

Mr. Crewe stated no, that they had it down to a science. He stated that they wanted to cut all corners that they could and he did not expect them to digest all the numbers on the budget all at once. He stated they had Fincastle's presentation and all of the information they gave them. He stated that they really cared about Fincastle and that Mr. O'Neal could tell them story after story. He stated that he thought it would end up being great and they would move forward and make money.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Trigg thanked everyone for the flowers, and card from his brother's funeral. He stated the sidewalks on college to Walmart were covered with snow and people were having to walk on the road and a few about got hit. He stated there was a big bush by BB&T and when people tried to pull out it was a big safety hazard.

Mrs. Payne stated that she really did not have anything but did want to add that the bush Mr. Trigg referred to was a problem as well as the one at McDonald's and that both needed to be addressed. She thanked everyone for coming out.

Mr. Presley stated that bush was one of the issues out of 194 things on his list. He stated that he would talk about them at the next meeting. He stated that another issue was they were losing a significant amount of water and they needed to work on it and that Mr. Crewe and Todd would get together and talk about that.

Mr. Crewe stated he had an update concerning that and Thompson & Litton had already been called and would be meeting one day next week with Todd to replace parts and fix leaks.

Mr. Presley stated that it was significant money loss. He stated that he would like to be informed on the boards they were appointed too as to when they meet that he did not know what was going on. He thanked everyone.

Mr. Bailey thanked everyone for coming out and thanked Mr. Disibbio, Mr. Stacy and the representatives from Fincastle that came out and to Mr. Crewe for allowing them the time to do that.

Mr. Holman thanked everyone for coming and being a part of that meeting and also thanked Mr. Disibbio and Mr. Stacy along with Mr. O'Neal from Fincastle. He stated he was appreciative they came and took the time to give information and updated everyone and thanked Mr. Crewe for allowing them the time and information. He stated that it spoke volume about the work they did. He discussed a donation to the Little League for \$500 to help provide all participants face coverings and to adhere to all the guidelines and to keep everyone safe.

Mayor Linkous asked if there was any more discussion.

Mr. Presley stated he thought it was a good thing.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to donate \$500 to BVLL.

Mr. Holman made a motion to approve donating \$500 to the BVLL. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mr. Trigg stated that we needed to be cautious about giving that there would be other organizations who would want the same thing. He stated that he was not against it but knew in the past when that was done others wanted donations too.

Mrs. Payne asked how many children there were.

Mr. Holman stated last year they had well over 225 kids.

Mr. Holt stated they ran around 300 kids but did not know what this year would look like with COVID and he had more to discuss about the baseball league.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to do roll call and report

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated it was 6-0 in favor.

Mr. Holt stated he wanted to give the board an update on the Little League and that he and Mr. Crewe spent some time there. He stated that anytime he spent a significant amount of time with Mr. Crewe that he wanted to update what they did and talked about. He stated he knew Mr. Crewe received a lot of phone calls from some of their board members but to clarify the most pressing issue was they needed protective wear for their athletes. He thanked Mr. Stacy and Maggie for their donations and stated that they were good enough to give \$500 from each of their district funds and with the town's donation that would cover the \$1600 cost of the protective wear. He stated that was for several hundred athletes and volunteers safety and would keep them safe throughout the season and that was the most pressing issue. He stated he and Mr. Crewe talked and went over some of the requests and why they had the needs they had and there was a priority list. He stated the main priority was to make sure they would continue to get a level of funding from the town and Mr. Watson had been really good about helping the little league but he would do it in a different way that was not wrong but the board did not know about it. He stated it was not a part of their budget discussion and he told Mr. Crewe that he wanted to stay as transparent

as possible about the money they were spending and have those discussions with board members later on after BVLL made requests about the money they needed. He stated they did not traditionally get a significant amount but received several thousand a year and they were lucky to have had that relationship with the town. He stated they were relying heavily on donations and sponsors and due to COVID they were unable to fundraise last year and would not be able to this year either and he was sure they would have other sport organizations that would need help and quite frankly felt as though it was their responsibility to help them out. He stated these kids were the future of our town and we were always saying we needed to offer alternatives to our children other than drugs and this was the alternative. He stated putting these kids around good people and good volunteers gave them something to channel that energy too other than getting into trouble. He stated that he had spoken to Mr. Crewe, Mayor Linkous and Mrs. Payne and he knew they restored the committee members from the Christmas committee previously, however the volunteers that expressed interest in being a part of that committee still wanted to be on the committee and would like to help out and do their part to help the town. He stated that he gave Mrs. Payne a list of those ladies that still wanted to participate. He stated after talking to them that he thought they would be welcomed as far as participation to that committee and that was his understanding.

Mr. Crewe stated that anyone that wanted to volunteer for the town was more than welcome.

Mrs. Payne stated absolutely.

Mr. Holt stated that he thought they would work well with Mrs. Payne and they were a great group of ladies that were motivated to jump in and do whatever they could to make the town better and to make Christmas even better.

Mrs. Payne stated wait a minute that she did not want to be the chairperson and wanted to know if that was where he was going with that.

Mr. Holt stated no, he did not know if they had a chairperson for that committee but he did know she was the council appointed member.

Mrs. Payne stated yes that would be ok but she was over extended with committee things.

Mrs. Cook stated that she did not understand what Mr. Holt was saying because Kim Hernandez was the chairperson of the Christmas committee.

Mr. Holt stated that he did not say there was not a chair and he had council comments right then and would appreciate if he could finish. He stated that if there were any other questions she could direct them to the mayor or town manager later on and no one said anything about a chair and those were ladies that wanted to be part of the Christmas committee and volunteer. He stated as far as he was concerned the last time they had that discussion they wanted people to be on the committee and they wanted them for the right reasons so that was affirmed and those ladies names were given over. He stated they just wanted to be part of the group that helped and there was no one as chair and as far as he was concerned there was not a chair and never had been one and he

knew there were town personnel that worked on it along with a council appointed person. He stated they had previously talked about the rec park lights and there was an opportunity there that he did not want to lose and it was not a little league issue but a town issue and we needed to move forward with conversation to allocate money for that.

Mr. Bailey asked where that was at.

Mr. Holt stated that was the upper fields not the little league but the ones used for baseball and softball. He stated there was a foundation willing to partner with them not for 100% but to match what they could give and that would be a good opportunity for the town to save money. He stated that was all he had.

Mayor Linkous stated he had a pretty good list but it was getting really late. He did say they had a wrestler from Graham High School that was a state champion and that we would usually have a recognition there at the town for these athletes. He asked the clerk and town manager if they could call the athletic director and set that up. He stated that it was the Fritz boy and he was a four time state champion and did not know if that had ever happened in the history of GHS and would like to have him as well as any other award winning athletes and coaches recognized at the next meeting. He thanked everyone.

Mrs. Cook stated she did not understand what Mr. Holt was talking about but their Christmas committee welcomed all volunteers but the chairperson was Kim Hernandez and although she was a town employee she was the chairperson. She stated she did not know why Mrs. Payne was addressed when he mentioned the volunteers and asked if Mr. Holt could answer that.

Mr. Holt stated that was a comment to his fellow councilmember that served on the committee and he did not feel as though he needed to explain a whole heck of a lot more. He stated he knew there were some and he did not want to make it argumentative and for her to listen and that he tried to help her through the years at the Sanders House and he was one of the few councilmembers that called her to say he had some ideas and how they could function. He stated he knew she was hurt with the Christmas committee before but we had council members that came to her and said they were sorry and they did not mean to hurt her or to make her feel like she was not wanted and she told them she would not accept their apologies. He stated that she wanted a public apology and quite frankly if she wanted an apology then she would take it from the person if she sincerely wanted it and was hurt by them. He stated he was the type of person that would just address the person and the concerns and that no one wanted to see her or anyone else off the committee if she truly wanted to serve. He stated they had a large group of ladies that wanted to help for the right reasons and told her not to be so stand offish when they said look Gail we were going to put a few members on the committee to help out and they just wanted to help out with no other motives. He stated that as far as the chair he had no idea that there was ever a chairperson and he had never heard that and was not a knock on staff or whoever else and that he did not care who chaired it. He stated he thought it was good they had volunteers that wanted to help.

Mrs. Cook stated she appreciated volunteers that wanted to help and as far as not accepting the apology she still felt like they owed the entire committee a public apology and all of the

committee needed to be there for it to be recorded. She stated that she told the person that apologized that she appreciated the apology but just could not accept it at that time.

Mayor Linkous stated that they appreciated all of the work Mrs. Cook had done with a lot of different things and it may have been a misrepresentation. He stated that Mrs. Payne did not want to be the chairperson and he was sure she would be glad he said that and we welcomed and encouraged everyone that wanted to volunteer especially the younger generation.

Mr. Disibbio stated that the Fritz boy was the most decorated athlete in the history of GHS and he was a 5 time state champion, 4 for wrestling, and 1 for football.

Mayor Linkous asked Mrs. Hernandez to check into it.

### **ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

None.

### **ADJOURN**

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Holman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:01 p.m. 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:	Yes
Mayor Linkous:	No Vote Permitted

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 6-0 to adjourn.

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D.S. Linkous, Mayor

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Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk

