

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Minutes
February 9, 2021**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, February 9, 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
Anglis Trigg, Jr. Councilmember

ALSO PRESENT

Trent Crewe, Manager/Town Attorney
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk
Kris Williams, Zoning Administrator
James Hampton, Treasurer/Transit Dir.
Shane Gunter, Police Chief
7 Members of Police Dept.
27 Members of Public

ABSENT

Rick Holman, 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: Administrative Staff

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: Absent
Vice-Mayor Holt: Yes
Councilmember Presley: Yes
Councilmember Payne: Yes
Councilmember Trigg: Yes
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 February 9, 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 February 9, 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 February 9, 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 return to regular session

Vice-Mayor Holt made a motion to return to regular session. Councilmember Bailey seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to do roll call report.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Mayor Linkous: No Vote Permitted

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 to return to regular session.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to approve the certification.

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

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

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 6-0 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

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 to approve the 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 Presley seconded the motion.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

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

CITIZEN REQUESTS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Special Presentation: Police Department Promotional Swearing In Ceremony - Mayor Linkous

Mayor Linkous asked Rex Bradshaw to come forward and to raise his right hand and repeat after him.

I, **Rex Bradshaw** do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Virginia, and I will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties incumbent upon me as a **Lieutenant** for the Town of Bluefield.

Mayor Linkous asked Channing Mooney to come forward and to raise his right hand and repeat after him.

I, **Channing Mooney** do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Virginia, and I will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties incumbent upon me as a **Sergeant** for the Town of Bluefield.

Mayor Linkous asked Ryan Davis to come forward and to raise his right hand and repeat after him.

I, **Ryan Davis** do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Virginia, and I will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties incumbent upon me as a **Police Officer** for the Town of Bluefield.

Mayor Linkous asked John Phillips to come forward and to raise his right hand and repeat after him.

I, **John Phillips** do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Virginia, and I will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties incumbent upon me as a **Police Officer** for the Town of Bluefield.

Mayor Linkous stated that these men work hard to represent us and made us look good. He stated that it was an honor to have them here before us and congratulated and thanked them for what they did for us.

Mr. Crewe introduced himself and stated we had a great police department of men and women who put their lives on the line every day. He spoke of an incident that happened locally Sunday and stated that it was handled exceptionally well. He stated that these things did not just happen in big cities but here as well and these were the people who stood before us and real trouble.

Special Presentation: Bluefield College Spring Enrollment Update - Josh Cline

Mr. Cline stated he would like to share updates for Bluefield College and what was happening on campus. He stated Bluefield College was thankful for the relationship they had with the town and community and provided updates pertaining to what he stated everyone had seen on the news relating to athletic events. He stated that there had been a conversation on social media as well as personal conversations not only in our community but on a national level as well. He stated that Dr. Olive, President of Bluefield College released a statement today and he would leave a copy with Kim for council. He stated that recently they had student athletes that chose to kneel at a game. He stated that they have had an ongoing conversation with students over the last year or longer covering conversation points on racial inequality and justice. He stated that a large percentage of the campus was minorities and was also a major part of the campus population. He stated that there were a lot of ongoing conversations that were not easy and with no quick easy answers. He stated they were still having the hard conversations which was part of living in a small town and were learning and listening to one another and also would never walk away from one another. He stated that some social media comments were unacceptable and that they would continue with the ongoing conversations and looked forward to moving forward. He stated that they were excited to build pathways to grow healthcare industries in our region and would be great possibilities for this area. He stated they were looking into a doctorate of nursing programs and already had a master's program running along with an RN to BSN program. He stated that they would be receiving their first undergraduate class this fall and that the Dean of Nursing had been in this area for years and had a vision for students to have access to simulated mannequins that covered any situation a nurse may experience. He stated that a centennial was in the works for August, celebrating 100 years of service. He also talked about Jack Marcum, a recently deceased trustee who was not cut out to be in college but succeeded and became a pastor at a local church. He stated that Mr. Marcum wanted people to simply know that he cared and that was what Bluefield College wanted too. He stated that Mrs. Payne had done a lot for the students as well. He stated moving forward that Bluefield College wanted everyone to know they cared and that they wanted to engage in new partnerships for healthcare and have future growth in the health science field. He stated that enrollment was stable with goals to grow and they were working on

ways to improve. He stated that going into the centennial they looked forward to projects with the town with the thought that they were positioning themselves to be a major component to help in the community. He stated that the last economic impact statement was \$19 million and felt for sure that the upcoming one would be around \$25 million.

Mrs. Payne asked him to tell them about the MABS that it was an interesting program.

Mr. Cline stated it was a Masters of Biomedical Science and was the first venture with VCOM. He stated that they were excited to see if they could partner together to extend foot prints across SWVA but that it did not work out for multiple reasons. He stated that it did give opportunity to offer faculty programs and accreditation approval and there were 125 students on the borderline of being accepted into DO school because of grades or coarse load. He stated that they could take this program which use to be a remedial program and not turned into a master's program. He stated that it was taught in Blacksburg and the student received a Bluefield College degree upon completion. He stated that this provided a launch pad to go onto medical school.

Mayor Linkous asked if there were any more questions. He thanked Mr. Cline for his presentation and stated what a wonderful president Bluefield College had. He also stated the town wanted to be involved in the centennial celebration and make it a big celebration with the town involved. He thanked Dr. Olive and stated he was confident in the president and staff moving forward to handle what was in front of them.

Special Presentation: BVLL Projects – Jarried McFarland

Mr. McFarland thanked everyone for allowing him to be there and speak. He stated the 2020 year had been a successful year of overcoming COVID along with some great victories financially and project wise. He stated that he opted not to run for president again because of having a senior and a 13 year old and felt he needed to devote time to his senior. He stated that the 2021 year was upon them and they were in agreement with Bluefield College and excited for the softball team to be home again. He stated that he was speaking on behalf of the new president of the league which was Vice-Mayor Ron Holt and congratulated him. He stated that they were working on projects and that he had talked with the Shott foundation last week about a couple of grants but they had not received yet but should know by the middle of April. He stated that there was a lack of volunteers because everyone was so busy but last October, Jarrod Bailey came out and spread 40 ton of mix for Bluefield College and the 2021 season. He stated in years past the previous Town Manager Mike Watson was directly involved and was always there along with his staff and that they had worked with Greg to coordinate schedules and worked with Graham High School who use the top field for games. He stated that he would get with the new Town Manager Trent Crewe to move forward with the new physical year. He stated that different divisions played on different fields which were t-ball, coach pitch, girls softball and then once a player reached a certain age they moved up to the rec league which was 12 and up. He stated that the equipment was toted from field to field back and forth and there was some vandalism previously with some of the equipment when they left it at the field. He stated that there needed to be storage at the field and asked if the town would consider helping support the purchase of two units measuring 10x16 which were made locally and also asked that the town provide the concrete pad and ramps.

Mr. Presley asked if storage containers would work.

Mr. McFarland stated no that they have had problems with animals getting into them.

Mr. Holt stated they were too narrow to pack and to try and move equipment around. He stated that it was hard to get to what was stored in them.

Mr. McFarland requested the town purchase these two units.

Mr. Holt stated there did not need to be an immediate response on this and after Mr. McFarland spoke with Trent then it could be brought back. Mr. Holt stated there was normally \$10,000 to \$12,000 in fundraising per year, but COVID limited them this year. He stated that they also had these conversations with Charlie Stacy and Maggie Asbury and normally they did not need this amount of help nor never asked for this much but the circumstances surrounding COVID and all of the restrictions caused them to be short on funds.

Mr. McFarland stated that when COVID hit they had to cut the season short and ended up with no sponsorships. He stated they served over 120 kids after extending an invitation to Bluefield, WV and Princeton and was offered to those who did not have a league. He moved on to the next project which was the restrictions on spectators during high school games. He explained that the Governor's order only allowed for a limited amount of spectators and that this was the governor's rule and not VHSL. He stated there were online events now such as high school football games and this project had to do with MUSCO Vision which was who partnered with the Shott foundation to donate lighting for two of the fields. He stated there were other companies that live streamed but they were not the manufacturer of the lighting and MUSCO could not only live stream but if you were a subscriber then you could zoom in and freeze the frame to get a great action shot of a player. He stated that they were working with the Shott foundation on this project as well. He stated there were other fields at Graham Rec Park that needed their lighting updated and he would like to keep it with MUSCO since they were the manufacturer of the other lighting. He stated with MUSCO the fields were at college level illumination and they were willing to come up with a cost analysis for this project. He thanked the town for the past relationships and all they have done to help the league.

Mr. Presley stated they were doing a great job.

Mr. McFarland stated there was a core group of great volunteers and this would be his last year in little league as his daughter would be moving up to JV.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS AND REPORTS

Schedule JPH to change current modular home code, ROLL CALL VOTE – Kris Williams

Mr. Williams stated that in the most recent Planning Commission Meeting that the Planning Commission voted to recommend a Joint Public Hearing to receive input on amending the Town code to remove section five of the modular home ordinance which stated any modular home must be absent of axles and frames. He stated that based upon the Planning Commission’s recommendation that it would be his recommendation to schedule the Joint Public Hearing.

Mr. Presley made a motion to schedule a Joint Public Hearing to change the current modular home code. Mr. Trigg seconded the motion.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

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

Rezoning of Huffard Drive, ROLL CALL VOTE – Kris Williams

Mr. Williams stated that in the most recent Planning Commission Meeting that the Planning Commission voted to rezone a portion of Huffard Drive from R-3 (Medium to High Density Residential) to B-2 (General Business). He stated that maps of the areas to be rezoned were attached in council’s packets and that based upon the Planning Commission’s recommendation that it would be his recommendation to rezone the portion of Huffard Drive.

Mr. Bailey made a motion to approve the rezoning of Huffard Drive. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Mayor Linkous: No Vote Permitted

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

Budget Amendments, ROLL CALL VOTE – Kim Hernandez

Mrs. Hernandez went over the following Budget Amendments:

PURPOSE: Recruiting, Retention & Training

Revenue

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
0400-0413	Misc Law	<u>\$161,150.09</u>	<u>\$174,638.09</u>	<u>\$13,488.00</u>
	Enforcement	<u>\$161,150.09</u>	<u>\$174,638.09</u>	<u>\$13,488.00</u>

Expenditure

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
3110-8108	DCJS Recruiting	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$13,488.00</u>	<u>\$13,488.00</u>
	& Retention Fund	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$13,488.00</u>	<u>\$13,488.00</u>

PURPOSE: SRO Grant Funding

Revenue

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
0400-0413	Misc Law	<u>\$174,638.09</u>	<u>\$195,477.09</u>	<u>\$20,839.00</u>
	Enforcement	<u>\$174,638.09</u>	<u>\$195,477.09</u>	<u>\$20,839.00</u>

Expenditure

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
3110-1100	Salaries-Regular	<u>\$879,696.00</u>	<u>\$900,535.00</u>	<u>\$20,839.00</u>
		<u>\$879,696.00</u>	<u>\$900,535.00</u>	<u>\$20,839.00</u>

PURPOSE: Purchase new police vehicle for COVID response

Revenue

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
3101-0104	COVID 19 Rev	<u>\$160,000.00</u>	<u>\$205,000.00</u>	<u>\$45,000.00</u>
	Reimbursement	<u>\$160,000.00</u>	<u>\$205,000.00</u>	<u>\$45,000.00</u>

Expenditure

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
3110-6009	Vehicle/Other	\$17,687.50	\$62,687.50	\$45,000.00
	Equip Parts, etc.	\$17,687.50	\$62,687.50	\$45,000.00

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

Mr. Holt made the motion to approve 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: Absent
 Vice-Mayor Holt: Yes
 Councilmember Presley: Yes
 Councilmember Payne: Yes
 Councilmember Trigg: Yes
 Mayor Linkous: No Vote Permitted

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Dave Wohlford of Sedgewood stated that he attended the last meeting and observed voting on stuff for Planning Commission. He stated that people could not attend all meetings and he would like the information from those meetings revealed to the citizens on video so that more could be involved. He stated that he would like to discuss Bullet Bill Drive and that this was the last residential area for development. He stated that businesses came in and plans got dumped for residential areas and that he would like to see businesses and houses managed together and not neglect either one. He stated concerning executive sessions and he attended meetings on a regular basis for years but felt that there were too many meetings done in private and that Ron Holt said these issues were personal and not to be aired publicly. He stated if there were that many personnel issues that something was wrong and that council was micromanaging the town workers and not letting them do their job. He stated that the people on the volunteer committee were upset because they had no warning about the committees being changed and that people did not know they were needed for those volunteer positions. He stated that Chuck put a post on Facebook about needing volunteers and that was good and there also needed to be something put in the Newsletter about information like that. He stated that no one knew about appointments that were going on and that people with experience might would like to be involved more and give more input. He congratulated Trent and welcomed him. He stated how upset he was about the recent situation at Bluefield College and that he saw on Facebook where the basketball team kneeled during the National Anthem and he demanded that the flag and National Anthem be honored. He stated

Bluefield College required the towns support and if the college leaders could not get control of this situation then support needed to be eliminated and he would get a petition with 10,000 signatures if he had to. He stated the Town of Bluefield needed to send Bluefield College a letter abolishing them for not taking immediate action that day. He stated that we could not have outside sources to come in and divide us and that was what was happening and there was no excuse for that kind of activity and something needed to be done before the next game or they were off the team.

Mayor Linkous asked if there were any other citizens that would like to make a comment.

Dr. Olive, President of Bluefield College thanked Mr. Wohlford for his thoughts and opinions. He stated they were heard and the college had the utmost respect for the community, country, and flag and wanted to find constructive ways for the young people to handle racial injustice. He stated that was the message they were trying to communicate and the staff was working to help them understand ways to better convey this message. He stated they were a Christ centered learning community and they wanted to treat each other with the love of Christ and that we were all sinners.

Mayor Linkous thanked Dr. Olive for his statement, and stated that he had all the confidence in the world that he and his staff would handle the situation. He asked if there were any more citizen's comments.

There were none.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Gunter thanked Mayor Linkous for swearing in his people. He stated that Rex Bradshaw was promoted to lieutenant in July, 2020, Channing Mooney was promoted to sergeant September, 2020, and that Ryan Davis and John Phillips graduated from the police academy in November 2020. He stated due to COVID restrictions that this was the first opportunity they had to swear them in and he greatly appreciated it.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Crewe stated that he had received an estimate from Bluefield Glass in the amount of \$718.62 for the Plexiglas dividers to go in between council and two to go on the side tables from. He stated that he would assume approval unless he was told otherwise and that this was the best and cheapest solution.

Mr. Holt asked where the money would come from and would it come from the CARES money.

Mr. Crewe stated that he did not know if there was any additional CARES money left but would look into it.

Mr. Holt expressed that he did not want to spend money on that and stated that council had all congregated together in other places and felt it was not a necessary expenditure.

Mayor Linkous requested a motion to discuss the purchase of Plexiglas dividers.

Mr. Trigg made motion to approve the purchase. Mrs. Payne seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous stated that Mr. Crewe gave his opinion along with Mr. Holt and would now like to open the floor with more discussion.

Mr. Bailey stated he was in agreement with Mr. Holt and they were all out living their lives, talked at the grocery stores and congregated on a regular basis and was not in favor of it.

Mr. Trigg stated he thought it was a good idea.

Mayor Linkous stated a lot of times we had to do things to set an example and he believed this would set a good example. He stated that he felt it was a small price to pay if it would protect any of them. He stated that number one it protected them and number two it showed the general public that they were doing everything they could to protect everyone. He stated he did not get a vote but would be in favor of it.

Mr. Presley asked if there would be examples at next meeting.

Mr. Crewe stated he had a diagram from Bluefield Glass that showed it would be 27 inches wide and 24 inches tall.

Mr. Presley stated he was neutral but asked if there would be petitions placed in the back and otherwise felt that it would be pointless.

Mr. Crewe stated there was not a way to arrange or attach them in the back and that the Planning Commission, IDA, and others would utilize them as well. He recognized Dr. Darrin Martin, the newest Planning Commission Member was in attendance.

Mr. Holt stated he understood 100% why others were in favor but felt common sense measures were enough...such as hand washing, wearing masks, and social distancing.

Mrs. Payne asked if the CARES money could be used.

Mr. Crewe stated there had not been any success on finding information or a balance for the CARES money and that he thought it had to be spent by December 31st but would continue to look into it. He stated the money went from federal to state then to county and then to the town. He stated that he was in discussion with the county about it and that was what everyone had been asking.

Mr. Trigg stated he thought it would be a good idea and other places had them up and would keep them up.

Mayor Linkous stated that they had a motion and a second and asked the clerk to do roll call and report.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 3-2 in favor.

Mr. Crewe stated there was an accident with the police department that caused damage to a structure and the property owner agreed to deed the property to the Town and the figure they have agreed on is \$20,000. He stated that it was his recommendation unless otherwise told to arrange the documents and have it deeded to the Town to prevent any further legal action and make it right.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to accept Mr. Crewe's recommendation to settle this claim.

Mr. Holt made the motion. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked if there was any other discussion.

Mr. Holt stated that he was in agreement in making it right with the property owner for the damaged property.

Mr. Bailey asked about all the acquired properties that the town currently had and what was the plan to rid some of them.

Mr. Crewe stated he would look into the surplus and also the church across the street may be interested in it.

Mr. Bailey stated the Town was not in the business of taking donated properties, maintaining them all and did not need to sit on them.

Mr. Crewe stated it was on his list to look at and that the IDA had several vacant properties that they would need to make a choice as to what to do with them.

Mayor Linkous stated there was a motion and a second. He asked the clerk to do roll call and report.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

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

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Trigg stated that he missed the last meeting due to his brother passing away and asked for continued prayers.

Mrs. Payne had none.

Mr. Presley stated that the Princeton Hospital CEO wanted to come and speak to council sometime in March. He stated there was something going on with the internet in the country called #loveBluefield and it was pretty cool for social media and that he would like to touch base with The Hatfield and McCoy trail being a gateway to SWVA. He stated that he would like to have a work session for the next meeting and wanted to assure Mr. Wohlford that these meetings were not about being deceptive but to discuss matters that were in private for a reason. He stated that he voted for the Plexiglas dividers for the benefit of the older councilmembers who were worried about COVID and thanked everyone for coming to the meetings.

Mr. Holt stated to Mr. Wohlford that he would never get mad at him, they might disagree and he might have made him mad for a minute, but he did appreciate that he came there regularly and spoke his mind. He stated he was not going to agree with him a lot of the time, but sometimes he did. He thanked Mr. Crewe with that being his first official meeting and told him he did a dynamite job since he was appointed interim and brought staff together. He stated it had been difficult in the middle of a pandemic and he had been faced with a lot of complex situations and problems and he had done well. He stated that he appreciated all he had done and all his hard work. He stated to Mr. Trigg that they were praying for his family over the past few weeks and knew he had been going through a lot. He stated the council would be there for him and his family. He stated he wanted to address the situation at Bluefield College and he really appreciated them coming out to address it and that it spoke a lot about his character and the character of the institute. He stated that he had been a police officer for 15 years and he did not get emotional much, but asked that they excuse him if he did because it had been a hard time for his profession over the last 4 years. He stated the cops he knew were good people and they cared about the community. He stated he had coached a couple of their grandkids and children and that athletics was something near and dear to his heart. He stated it hurt him as a police officer to think that there was a portion of the population out there in the community that thought we wanted to hurt them as law enforcement officers and it hurt him when he saw that the athletes took a knee. He stated he was a patriot and did not believe that was the appropriate time and he really appreciated his service and

understood why he got angry when he saw those things. He stated he was equally angry when he saw a man plead for his life on camera and he was the literal embodiment of what certain people believed they did as law enforcement officers and it broke his heart. He stated he was talking about George Floyd. He stated it was tough and that every patriotic American should not agree with what happened to that man and he understood why they were angry. He stated that what he was going to submit to them as leaders of their college and the message he wanted them to carry back to their athletes was that it was sometimes easy to take a knee but it was harder to have conversations that addressed the problem. He stated he was willing to set down with each one of those men and talk to them both as a leader of the community and as a law enforcement officer of 15 years. He stated he wanted to know why they felt compelled to do it and he was willing to work with them to form a solution because he thought it was harder to stand up and have those tough conversations than it was to just take a knee in his opinion. He stated he was not trying to dismiss what they were doing and he understood there was some pain there but wanted to have the hard conversation. He stated that he was willing to do that and extended that invitation to them and the athletic program that he was willing to sit down at the table and talk again. He stated that he appreciated everyone being there and thanked them for what they had done for the community and he would not want to do anything to jeopardize the relationship that they had. He stated that they would be remiss if they did not think there was a large part of the community that was hurt by it and he thought they needed to do what they could to bridge that division and have the tough conversation. He thanked everyone.

Mr. Bailey thanked everyone for coming and specifically Mr. Wohlford and Dr. Olive. He stated that he wanted to congratulate all police officers on their promotions and graduation. He thanked Mr. Crewe for a job well done and stated he had hit the ground running. He stated that the Bluefield College issue that Josh talked about and that the college was working on that he felt that the offer Mr. Holt gave would be an excellent resource for these athletes and he hoped and pleaded with them to handle the situation quickly and thanked everyone for coming out.

Mayor Linkous welcomed Dr. Darrin Martin as the newest member of the Planning Commission and stated that he was honored to have him there. He thanked Dr. Olive for being at the meeting and stated that he knew who he was and what he stood for and knew he and his staff would handle the situation and trusted him with it entirely. He thanked Gail and Lee for rejoining the committees and thanked everyone for coming out and assured them that they did have a voice and were being heard.

Betty Kuppusami stated the PA system needed work because she could not hear what anyone was saying during the meeting and that it was hard to hear with masks on but hoped it would improve. She stated that people who wanted to know what was going on at the meetings needed to come.

Mayor Linkous stated that Mr. Crewe would look into that.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

None.

ADJOURN

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Holt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked for a Roll Call Vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 to adjourn.

D.S. Linkous, Mayor

Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk