

**Town of Bluefield  
Town Council  
Minutes  
May 11, 2021**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 11, 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  
Ron Holt, Vice-Mayor  
Chuck Presley, Councilmember  
Cathy Payne, Councilmember  
Anglis Trigg, Councilmember

**ALSO PRESENT**

Trent Crewe, Manager/Town Attorney  
Tara White, Receptionist  
Shane Gunter, Police Chief  
James Hampton, Treasurer/Transit Dir.  
7 Members of Public

**ABSENT**

Jarrold Bailey, Councilmember  
Rick Holman, Councilmember  
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA & CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to approve the agenda and consent agenda.

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

Mayor Linkous asked to do roll call and report.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mr. Holt stated that he was sure this was a first of many accomplishments he would have and congratulations. He stated to the coaches that he knew what it was like to care about kids and knew how hard it would be to watch them grow and go away and certainly could sympathize with that and he really appreciated the time they spent and put into those kids and knew how coaches genuinely cared about the kids.

Mayor Linkous stated that he enjoyed watching Justin on the football field and watching their top notch athletes and that Justin was absolutely amazing with how he pushed the team and encouraged them but that was just the type of kid he was. He stated that he was sorry he did not get to see him wrestle and was sure he was amazing. He stated that he knew Tim Woodward from school and for him to say that Justin was one of the most special athletes to come from Graham High School said something because he had known them all and had been there forever and that was a huge compliment. He congratulated him and wished him the best at whichever school he decided upon and they looked for great things from him. He asked if Coach Fritz or Tim Woodward wanted to recognize any other wrestlers at that time.

### ***Recognition of Wrestling Team***

Mr. Fritz stated that they had two others that played baseball and could not be there. He stated that Zach Blevins (Junior) – finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the State individually & Tristen Hass (freshman) – finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the State individually and that both would be back next year.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND REPORTS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS AND REPORTS**

#### ***Resolution of Matt Dixon, ROLL CALL VOTE – Mayor Linkous***

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to approve a Resolution being prepared for Matt Dixon.

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve a Resolution being prepared for Matt Dixon. Mr. Holt seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous to do roll call and report.

### **ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

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

Mrs. White stated that it was 4-0 in favor.

***Resolution for Mike Goins, ROLL CALL VOTE – Mayor Linkous***

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to approve a Resolution being prepared for Mike Goins.

Mr. Holt made a motion to approve a Resolution being prepared for Mike Goins. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked to do roll call and report.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. White stated that it was 4-0 in favor.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Daniel Harris, Shenley Ave stated that he was having a water issue and that he spoke to Mr. Sleeman about it and they raised the water pressure and sent a letter out to inform citizens that it was their responsibility to put a water pressure reducer on it. He stated he had a pressure reducer in his home to prevent the pipes from busting in the house but he did not think it would get high enough to bust. He stated that he did not know how high it was raised but he knew it was 120 PSI when he checked and was told that was not that high but he knew it was noticeably higher when it came out of spicket when first turned on versus when it had been running for a while. He stated that he had spoken with the town manager about it who had done some research and told him that the pressure had not been changed in years and there was no letter sent out and he did not understand the difference in what the town manager said versus what he discussed with Pete Sleeman. He stated that he felt like the pressure had been raised a significant amount and it was 120 PSI after it went through the pressure reducer in the house. He stated that he did not know how much it was holding back so he turned it down more.

Mayor Linkous asked if the pressure coming from the meter into his house was still 120 pounds inside his house.

Mr. Harris stated it was and he had not checked it until it was inside the house and was told the fix for it was either him putting his own pressure reducer on after the meter or to pay \$450 to have a meter that had one on it.

Mr. Holt stated that he could speak from experience and that he had just moved but lived in Pinehill Park before and that he thought after some of the projects they did that the pressure amped up dramatically and that was what he had to end up doing with his own. He stated that he put a pressure reducer on it and it got to where the pop off valve on the hot water heater would not stay intact.

Mr. Harris stated again that he had a pressure reducer inside the house but the problem was the line that was from the meter to inside the home.

Mayor Linkous stated he thought the new meters they put in had a water pressure reducer on them.

Mr. Crewe stated that he did not have a new meter.

Mayor Linkous asked the town manager to look into this.

Mr. Harris stated that it was becoming quite an expense because he did not get one of the new meters.

Mr. Holt asked his name and address.

Daniel Harris, 106 Shenley Ave.

Mayor Linkous stated they needed to have the town manager get with Mr. Sleeman. He stated that he understood his frustration with getting two stories and it was his understanding the new meters had a built in pressure reducing valve but he may still have an old one.

Mr. Harris stated if that was the case then it would have been nice to know before he spent all the money on repairs.

Mr. Presley stated that he had emailed Mr. Harris about this and the biggest thing was that the old meter did not have a pressure reducer on it which caused the leak in the line between the meter and the house causing an increase and caused some issues which was what he was talking about.

Mr. Crewe stated that he had spoken with Mr. Harris and he had two services that was a house and an office.

Mr. Davis stated he had a house and a garage apartment.

Mr. Crewe stated that he thought both stories were right but there was a difference in the time lapse and that when the water tanks were built 12 years ago that was when the letters were sent out. He stated that he did not think he owned this property for more than 12 years.

Mr. Harris stated that his wife had.

Mr. Crewe stated that 12 years ago when the tank went online and was approved that the project caused an increase in pressure because it was coming down hill and not being pumped up. He stated because it was being pumped up that the elevation caused the water pressure to rise.

Mr. Harris stated he understood that but what he did not understand was if they knew the pressure was up in a particular neighborhood there should have been a matter of urgency in changing those particular meters.

Mr. Crewe stated 12 years ago there was a letter sent that stated because the tank was going online that it could cause an increase in pressure and that some may have had to change meters depending on how old the lines were but he thought that Mr. Harris had a galvanized pipeline going into the apartment.

Mr. Harris stated he believed so.

Mr. Crewe stated that galvanized pipes would not last forever and that was part of the issue. He stated that the pressure had not gone up in the last 4 to 5 years and whether it was followed up on or not that he did not know but the Mayor was right that there was a scheduled replacement of meters and they went neighborhood to neighborhood to replace them.

Mr. Harris stated that made it sound even worse that this had been going on for 12 years and they had still had not gotten to his neighborhood.

Mr. Crewe stated no that there were new meters being put in over the last year that were radio read and were done by neighborhoods that came from grant money. He stated that they could be read by a computer at the Treasurer's Office and that was the purpose they were purchased for. He stated that Mr. Harris' had not been changed because there was no need to until now and that letters were sent out 12 years ago and up until now he did not have a problem.

Mr. Harris stated that he had talked to neighbors about it as well and it was something that happened in the last year or two.

Mr. Crewe stated that there was nothing done on the town's end that would have caused this problem and no changes had been made in at least 5 years. He stated the letters that were sent out was 12 years ago and when the tank went online that the pressure did raise and that 120 pounds was what they shot for. He stated that he may not have needed a reducer but the line that ruptured did not have a pressure reducer on it.

Mr. Harris stated that it was his responsibility to put the pressure reducer on it after the meter and Mr. Crewe was saying that the new ones were the only ones that had the reducer made into them and it was not for necessity but for them to be read electronically.

Mr. Crewe stated that was where the \$450 came from which was to put in a new meter that he did not need because it seemed to be working but there was no explanation found as to why the pressure went up in the last 4 to 5 years. He stated they had made repairs to lines a few times and that sometimes when other lines were repaired that it could have caused the pressure to increase some to his lines.

Mr. Harris stated that could have been the case because there were two large spots where lines had been worked on.

Mr. Crewe stated that there should not have been an increase in pressure enough to bust the lines and while he had not yet gotten council's approval on it that it was on his side of the meter to fix but the town would try to help with the expenses. He stated the meter did not change, the pressure did not change and it was on his side of the meter and thought it was a galvanized pipe. He stated that as far as he could see the town did not cause the problem and that the pipe was old and burst but we would try to help although it was not the town's fault. He stated if it was 120 coming out of the line then it was fine but if it was 160 then that was too much but our records showed it was between 110 and 115 and we could not volunteer for the town to pay for it but would be willing to help as much as we could. He stated that they had been working on this for over a week and though it was not the explanation he wanted to hear that the town did not change or do anything that would have caused this issue.

Mr. Harris stated that was not the way it seemed.

Mayor Linkous asked Mr. Crewe to check on it. He stated that the old meters had built in pressure reducer valves but his meter did not have a reducer at all and asked if they could check it to see and if we had any old reducers laying around to give him one of those. He stated that it was possible that the pressure had increased to 140-160 feeding into him.

Mr. Crewe stated they had checked it and that was where the 110-115 came from. He stated that was why he could not explain it from one side to the other.

Mayor Linkous asked to keep them posted on what was going on.

Mr. Harris stated that he already started the work and had his work permit but wanted to come out because he did not understand.

Mr. Crewe stated that he was not finished on his end and was not slamming the door in his face because that was not how we operated.

Mr. Harris thanked them.

Mayor Linkous asked if there were any other citizen comments.

Dave Wohlford stated he was not very happy about things and wanted to get the crosswalk fixed that there was a couple with four children that had to cross at the fountain area. He stated that they had people in wheel chairs and it needed to be addressed to help with those people crossing the road. He stated that something needed to be done about handicapped parking that there were cars parked at Walmart and Lowes that had no tags and we needed to have an officer patrolling these places. He stated that he had spoken to the chief about it and he said he did not have enough officers to do that. He stated that he wanted to discuss Mr. Harris and his situation because he was a master plumber and 12 years ago they did send out a letter and did put some of the reducers in at that time but that it was not abnormal for them to fail and the pressure should not be as high as 120 pounds. He stated it should not be any higher than 50 or 60 pounds and that

there was some sort of chemical that was put in the water that caused a buildup which started 15 years ago or longer. He stated that there was a lady he worked for that had a large water heater and when the chemicals were added it caused such a buildup that 5 months later he had to take it out and flush it that it was the consistency of drywall mud. He stated that they did not flush the lines as well as they should and the galvanized pipes were probably gone and needed replaced because of the threads. He stated that the plastic lines were much better. He thanked them.

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

None.

### **TOWN MANAGER'S/ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

Mr. Crewe stated that he wanted to keep it short and if anyone had any budget questions to let him know and followed up on the water issues. He stated that someone and they were not sure who at this point without a complete investigation but there was a water line punctured and the water was out for several hours which lit up the phone lines. He stated that on May 18<sup>th</sup> at 2pm there was a scheduled final walkthrough with the engineers on the golf course but that they had a storm this weekend that brought down a couple of trees which they were cleaning up. He stated that there would be refreshments after the walk through and if anyone could attend that would be great. He stated that the Police Chief was modest and did not mention that earlier today there was a Police Walk that took place at the Police Station including 64 people that came out to support which was outstanding. He stated that the last thing he had was concerning federal funds. He stated that the town had not been counted yet but he anticipated that the county would receive around \$8,000,000 and based upon population that the number the town should receive would be around \$800,000 which was 10%. He stated that they thought they could get some money to do some projects, replace meters and pipes, replace a few red lights and would like to have cameras that were more up to date and modern. He stated they needed 20 but would like to have 40 because they would have intersections, exits, and neighborhoods covered and they could see the direction people were going and would be great for police work. He stated the cost for 20 was \$35,000 and 40 would be \$80,000 and they could be seen through a computer over a digital file and on the internet. He stated that infrastructural and broadband grants may cover them. He stated that there were a few other grants that if anyone lost income like Transit who was shut down during COVID that could receive funding. He stated that he and James were going to switch out vehicles because during the last year James was unable to travel and did not put many miles on his vehicle and with how much he traveled it would be better to switch out because we would be able to get more federal funds with higher mileage vehicles. He stated that he did not have anything else unless they had more questions on the budget.

Mr. Presley asked how the pool was going.

Mr. Crewe stated it was not and they were coming May 24<sup>th</sup> but it currently had about 3 foot of water in it that had to be pumped out before they came and it was supposed to rain. He stated that they needed to wait until there was no rain and we were getting there.

Mayor Linkous stated that they should not have taken the contract if they could not do it.

Mr. Crewe stated they were waiting on approval of the funding from the council to make the contract.

Mr. Holt asked if 4 months was pretty standard in his opinion.

Mr. Crewe stated yes for a pool because they were complicated and everyone was trying to get their pool open by Memorial Day.

Mr. Presley asked about the website.

Mr. Crewe stated that it was slow and that Mrs. Roberts was asking who wanted what and to make another presentation.

Mr. Presley asked about the PA system there.

Mr. Crewe stated that staff was researching it and had found a few options to which he approved one for \$890.00. He stated that another part was putting new speaker's downtown and on the poles which would run a lesser chance of them being damaged and to have better sound quality.

Mr. Presley stated that over by his building he saw a major problem with the stop sign not being obeyed that it was the worst intersection he had ever seen in his life and was very concerned with it being so close to a school because people flew through that intersection.

Mr. Crewe stated that they could talk to the chief and may be able to get a police officer to patrol through there. He stated that he had noticed it himself and almost got hit coming through there.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Trigg had none.

Mrs. Payne thanked the town for all the work done at the Sanders House and making it look very pretty and the clean-up from the branch that fell.

Mr. Presley stated that Joe Dales had asked if they would continue to come around the corner to get the brush. He stated they had the best Police Department in the world and all the town workers were the best and was thankful for everyone there.

Mr. Holt stated that he appreciated whoever talked to the person about all the trash around the carwash that it was bad but had since been improved. He asked if Mr. Crewe could let them know when a major utility issue happened via text or a message alerting them.

Mr. Presley stated that he knew after the VA Tech shooting that there was a text alert that could be put into place for the students and asked if there was anything that the citizens could sign up for.



Mr. Crewe stated yes but we did not have that yet and there was a lot that went into it. He stated that if they signed up they had to register and get access to a message button but the local 911 could not allow access to it nor could the county participate in it.

Mayor Linkous stated that out in West Graham where they were working on the bridge that there were markers and there was a huge hole on the side of the road. He stated that it was very narrow though there as it was because of the bridge work but that hole needed to be fixed and all who had a trailer it would cause damage too. He stated that all that would need to be done would be to put some asphalt in it to fill it up. He stated that he wanted to announce that Brittne Hubbard would be leaving from the Zoning Department and was moving the first week of June to Lynchburg. He stated that this was a big step for her and her mother and if anyone seen her to give her some encouragement and wish her well. He stated that with her being a legally blind person and moving to a new town was commendable. He asked who provided the beverages for the police walk and could they be paid for by the town.

Mr. Crewe stated that the town did pay for them and largely in part due to a town employee who organized and planned the entire event and in the past she had not asked for anything but that he approved for around \$60.

Mayor Linkous stated that the employee who organized this event was married to a retired police officer and she did a great job. He stated he would like to see it become even bigger and better next year and in the future and there were a lot of people there that he never imagined would be there. He asked if anyone had anything else.

Mrs. Payne asked if they should do something for Brittne Hubbard.

Mr. Crewe stated that the ladies in the office were planning something for her.

Mayor Linkous asked if they should do a resolution for her.

Mr. Crewe stated that it would not hurt.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to do a resolution for Brittne Hubbard.

Mr. Holt made a motion to approve a resolution for Brittne Hubbard. Mrs. Payne seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked to do roll call and report.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mayor Linkous: No Vote Permitted

Mrs. White stated that it was 4-0 in favor.

**ADJOURN**

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Holt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked to do roll call and report.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. White stated that it was 4-0 in favor.

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D.S. Linkous, Mayor

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Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk