

**Town of Bluefield  
Town Council  
Minutes  
June 1, 2021**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, June 1, 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  
Rick Holman, Councilmember

**ALSO PRESENT**

Trent Crewe, Manager/Town Attorney  
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk  
Shane Gunter, Police Chief  
James Hampton, Treasurer/Transit Dir.  
2 Members of Public

**ABSENT**

Anglis Trigg, Councilmember  
Jarrod Bailey, Councilmember

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

James Hampton, Treasurer/Transit Director led 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.

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

Councilmember Trigg: Absent  
Mayor Linkous: No Vote Permitted

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

**NEW BUSINESS AND REPORTS**

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

Mrs. Hernandez went over the following Budget Amendment:

**PURPOSE:** Recovered Costs (damaged fire truck)

**Revenue**

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
0900-0204	Recovered	<u>\$180,695.73</u>	<u>\$181,588.19</u>	<u>\$892.46</u>
	Costs	<u>\$180,695.73</u>	<u>\$181,588.19</u>	<u>\$892.46</u>

**Expenditure**

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
3220-6007	Repair &	<u>\$2,500.00</u>	<u>\$3,392.46</u>	<u>\$892.46</u>
	Maintenance Supp	<u>\$2,500.00</u>	<u>\$3,392.46</u>	<u>\$892.46</u>

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

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

Mayor Linkous asked to do roll call and report.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

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

**CITIZEN REQUESTS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

None.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND REPORTS**

None.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Gail Cook stated that Thursday at 9 a.m. they would be putting up the new sign on the Railroad Museum at the Sanders House. She stated that summer tours started tomorrow.

Mrs. Payne asked what the times were.

Ms. Cook stated this week it would be 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. on Wednesday & Thursday and the second week would start 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. on Wednesday – Saturdays.

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

Chief Gunter thanked council for the dinner they provided for the officers.

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

Mr. Crewe stated that the pickle ball group had cleaned off the tennis courts, cut weeds, had pressure washed it and were in the process of putting up the nets. He stated that the auditors were here this week and that James & Kim knew them and all was going well. He stated there were a couple of things he would like council's thoughts on with the first one being the mowing ordinance and that citations were written above 10 inches high which was a town wide requirement and the only stipulation.

Mr. Holman asked if it was regardless of the property type.

Mr. Crewe stated yes that he could explore options and give Council some ideas or that Council could give him some ideas that it was their decision.

Mr. Holman stated that they could take his direction.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would give Council some ideas to think about.

Mr. Holt stated that he knew we had something with agricultural which made sense but as far as residential.

Mr. Holman stated that he was talking about a vacant lot next to his property or a residence.

Mr. Presley stated that it was in Sedgewood where the Lamberts lived and there were lots in between.

Mr. Crewe stated that they could have options such as cutting in between dates, heights, etc.

Mr. Holman stated that it would be across the board.

Mr. Crewe stated yes. He stated that in fairness the lots owned by the Town were also not being cut because the company that was hired to do it was behind as well. He stated that he could get a sample of others ordinances.

Mr. Holman stated that it needed to be reasonable.

Mr. Crewe stated that the next thing was related to modular homes and that the normal process would be to ask the Planning Commission to investigate the changes. He stated that after talking to Kris that he thought the Planning Commission would be less than receptive to change since they had already brought a recommendation back to Council. He stated that modular homes were allowed in certain zones but not in the higher priced neighborhoods. He stated that he could look into this or give it to the Planning Commission.

Mayor Linkous stated that he thought when they approved this that it included doublewides and that there was basically no cost difference between a modular being set on a frame vs. being set on a foundation.

Mr. Crewe stated that a doublewide had a different building code.

Mayor Linkous stated as of 2019 that they were in line with the National Building Code although they were inspected a different way. He stated that they could be allowed in a lot of areas within the Town including Chopra's mobile home park and he would like to see them look into this.

Mr. Holt stated that he was exactly right and that he wanted to put in an "on frame" modular home in the area he used to live but could not. He stated that they were built to the current specs and were nice homes. He stated that it would help the lower income bracket and he did not know why the Planning Commission would not like that.

Mr. Crewe asked if they would like for him to refer it to the Planning Commission.

Mrs. Payne asked if Planning Commission did not approve could Council override it.

Mr. Holt stated that they would hate to do that and wanted to all be on the same page.

Mayor Linkous suggested that they all meet together and have an open discussion.

Mr. Holman asked if there was a current zoning map.

Mr. Crewe stated yes.

Mr. Holman stated that he would like to have a copy and to be able to put it up on the screen when they were talking about it.

Mr. Holt suggesting having a Work Session before one of the council meetings.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would coordinate it with Kris.

Mr. Holman stated that affordable housing was needed.

Mr. Crewe stated that the next subject was concerning the billboard ordinance and that any signs were regulated by size, location, etc. He stated that Mr. Chopra was asking to allow an offsite business to be allowed on his sign and that they could also ask Planning Commission about this as well.

Mayor Linkous stated that they needed to come up with a special provision or something to allow this.

Mr. Presley stated there was a conditional use permit.

Mr. Crewe stated they could change the ordinance to where a conditional use permit or special provision was not needed. He asked if they would like for him to add that topic to be discussed with the Planning Commission as well.

Mayor Linkous stated that he was once on the Planning Commission and lost every time but regarding billboards that we did not have anything to show what was in Bluefield especially for the ATV's coming through. He asked that they revisit that topic.

Mr. Holman asked if there were certain restrictions on 460.

Mr. Crewe stated yes that the state had some restrictions but he did not see that they would be restricted in downtown Bluefield if complied with.

Mr. Holt stated that the Town had some ordinances that did not allow them to be so many feet from residential areas, schools and churches.

Mayor Linkous stated that he remember Ed Shaffrey being against them but if the Town wanted people to come to our area that we needed something. He stated that a lot of the businesses has asked for them over the years but he did not think they needed to go up through Double Gates towards Brierwood.

Mr. Crewe stated that one way to do that was to prevent advertising in R1 zoning. He stated that he would ask for a joint meeting. He asked Council regarding the Bluefield College request if they would like for him to bring back some ideas and suggested the sidewalk as one idea

which would be simple but not cheap. He stated that they could do a cash donation over a 4-5 year stretch.

Mr. Holman stated that they seemed willing to finance the total cost.

Mr. Crewe stated in his discussions with them after the meeting that yes they were willing to take pledges over a period of time.

Mr. Holman stated that they seemed comfortable stretching it out with these pledges.

Mr. Crewe stated yes complete to debt service.

Mr. Holman asked where they were at.

Mayor Linkous stated \$125k and the total project cost was \$480k with the largest part being Phases 1 & 2. He suggested that each councilmember come up with an idea of what they would like to give/do.

Mrs. Payne stated that she would like to stay out of it.

Mayor Linkous stated that she worked there.

Mr. Holt asked if she would have to since she would not directly benefit from it.

Mr. Crewe stated arguably no but discretionarily it would be better for her too.

Mayor Linkous stated that they brought in \$20 million.

Mr. Holt stated that locally he thought it was around \$8 million which was a tremendous amount.

Mayor Linkous stated that he would like to see them step out and be a part of it that it was good advertisement for the Town. He stated that if they were to do \$100k that they could give \$20k over five years.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would have to get numbers together on the cost of the sidewalk.

Mayor Linkous estimated it to be around \$30k-\$40k for the sidewalks then they could give another \$100k.

Mr. Holman asked if they would contract out the sidewalks.

Mr. Crewe stated yes.

Mayor Linkous suggested Freddie Miller, Robert Deeb and others who could do the job.

Mr. Crewe stated that we would have to do a request for proposal.

Mr. Holt asked that he give council some suggestions that would not “break the bank”.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would need to know how far they wanted the sidewalk to extend to.

Mayor Linkous suggested from Subway to the entrance of the college and all the way to the fountain later on.

Mr. Holt stated that the crosswalk at the fountain was needed and asked if we would need to work with VDOT on it.

Mr. Crewe stated yes and it could be built into the cost of this.

Mr. Presley stated that he had sent an email to Trent to work on for the budget.

Mrs. Payne agreed that a crosswalk was needed at the foundation that she had seen a couple of people trying to cross it.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would work on it.

Mr. Presley suggested having a Work Session in July.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would ask Planning Commission. He stated that he had received 3-4 requests for money that was not currently in the budget (Sanders House, Library, United Way and the banner at Mitchell Stadium). He stated that there were 40 different funds from the ARPA to where we could apply for money.

Mayor Linkous asked if we were still looking to get \$800k.

Mr. Crewe stated the last update he had received it would be around \$518k.

Mayor Linkous asked why the difference.

Mr. Crewe stated that Tazewell County’s share was not as much as expected and would be \$5.6 million and 10% of that was what we would receive. He stated that Virginia had to ask the federal government for the money and the County had to give it out once received.

Mr. Holman asked if they had given any indication that they would proceed.

Mr. Crewe stated yes that they were working on it. He stated that in addition to getting a new sound system in the Council Chambers and fixing what was broken that Kim and Lee were working on getting quotes to put large speakers in the downtown area as a package deal and had taken pictures to send for quotes.

Mr. Holman asked where they would be.

Mr. Crewe stated on the poles downtown so that we could have an outdoor sound system.

Mr. Holman asked if it was for entertainment.

Mr. Crewe stated no but that it could handle that. He stated that they were talking to the experts to see what they recommended. He stated that the next topic was that the Town did not have a Historical District and there was someone interested in working on this. He stated that it would be downtown where the older structures were and that there was grant money, tax credits, etc. available for a historical area that looked historic. He stated that some would not want to do it and they would not receive the tax credit but that this would be a tourist draw and would benefit the Town.

Mrs. Payne stated that they should do it.

Mr. Holman suggested talking to Bluefield, WV to see what issues they had in doing theirs and talked about it being a great expense to the property owners.

Mr. Holt stated that he would like to have more information on all of it.

Mr. Holman agreed to get both sides.

Mr. Holt stated that it would not be a decision that was made overnight and would need a Public Hearing for all to speak.

Mr. Crewe stated that the next thing on his list was to enforce traffic control inside of Fincastle. He stated that there were two occasions with one being this past weekend that was concerning to him which was the amount of alcohol being consumed from parties, etc. He stated that residents had complained about the speed and at the end of the road people did not stop at the stop sign. He suggested putting up speed limit signs and make the Police Department more visible.

Mrs. Payne agreed and stated that her granddaughter was visiting and liked to walk but she told her not to walk on that road to go to Doe Meadows because people were flying in and out through the day.

Mr. Holt stated that it was a public safety issue and should be enforced.

Mr. Crewe stated that he had talked with Chief concerning it.

Mr. Holman asked if the mirror that was at the end of the road was there because it was hard to see to the right.

Mr. Crewe stated that a mirror was not allowed on private property but whoever put it up that the idea was to improve visibility.



Mrs. Payne stated that she believed that the Town put it up years ago.

Mr. Crewe stated that could have been because you could not see all the way around the corner if you were turning right and that someone coming from the right could not see the other person either. He stated that it needed to be looked at.

Mayor Linkous suggested making it to where you could not turn right.

Mr. Crewe stated that was possible with the increase in traffic now at Fincastle.

Mrs. Payne stated that she would like to see the road widened.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would look into it that it depended on the right of way.

Mr. Holman asked if it was 75ft.

Mr. Crewe stated not on that road because it was a private road when it was built. He stated that another thing was the Historical Society would like to do something with the old Children's Mission possibly restoring and do something with it as something historical. He stated that he would explore with them to see what could be done, the cost and would bring it back.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Bailey stated that he had received several complaints in Double Gates that the sidewalks going up Mountain Lane were uneven and did not line up with the pavement. He asked for a list of all property owned by the Town.

Mr. Crewe stated it was almost complete and that Kris was working on it that it was close to 100 properties.

Mr. Holman asked that it be provided to them when complete.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would.

Mr. Holt stated that the flag at the fountain was brought up to him again by a Veteran and asked that it be replaced as soon as possible.

Mr. Crewe stated that it was on the list to be done but he would push it.

Mr. Holt asked since the restrictions were being rolled back could the partitions be taken down. He stated that since he had changed residences that he had noticed a lot of people running the 4-way stop sign on Franklin and asked Chief to look into it. He stated on the corner of Franklin and Shenley that the lot was overgrown and was hard to see when pulling out.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would get Kris to look at and address it.

Mr. Holt stated that cars were on you quick.

Mrs. Payne stated that she would like to see them set some goals/projects to be completed such as sidewalks, the bridge Mr. Trigg was talking about downtown and things they could get accomplished.

Mr. Holt stated that they had brought up the idea of a retreat a long time ago and it did not happen but thought they could sit down for a weekend and come up with some ideas.

Mr. Presley stated that he had been bugging Trent for a while about having a Work Session. He stated that when he put that on Facebook that he had over 300 comments which was a lot of what was being mentioned so it definitely needed to get done along with their vision/goals. He gave a shout out to the Police and Fire Department along with the Treasurer's Office and thanked Gail and Dave for coming out. He stated that Kim was doing a good job along with Trent.

Mrs. Payne stated that now that things were opening back up that they could start doing some things and instead of going away for a weekend that they could go to Fincastle in the Magnolia Room and shut the door.

Council was in agreement.

Mayor Linkous stated that they could not shut the door that it had to be open to the public. He stated that the house behind the one in Pinehill Park where the person was found dead that belonged to Mike Matthews had some water issues and that an asphalt curb was put in along the edge but that the snowplow had plowed it up. He asked if it he had been fixed yet.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would ask.

Mayor Linkous asked if we had received the other snow plow truck as of yet.

Mr. Crewe stated that it was on backorder.

Mayor Linkous stated that there was around \$150k in our region sitting in Kentucky waiting on ships.

Mrs. Payne stated that the new golf carts were in.

Mayor Linkous asked if there was an update on the pool.

Mr. Crewe stated that there were 4 layers of plaster/concrete on the deep end of the pool that was not anticipated which would be an added expense. He stated that he did not know the cost but should find out later in the week but there were working on the pool. He stated that they would pour plaster on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Holman stated that they had the pool inspected.

Mr. Crewe stated that was correct but the pool had water in it when they inspected it and the only way they could have found this was by digging it out. He stated that it was not anticipated but it had not been taken care of in years either.

Mayor Linkous asked if Harmony Acres would open this weekend.

Mr. Crewe stated no but they were close to opening. He stated that they had some issues with the epoxy not working correctly and had to redo it. He stated to follow up on their comments time wise would be to have a Work Session during a regular meeting or to have a special meeting and on the things that involved the Planning Commission he recommended that they have a meeting ASAP to allow the Planning Commission time as well. He stated that in the meantime they needed to come up with a list to discuss with or without Planning Commission but the two for sure that needed to be discussed with the Planning Commission were the billboards and the zoning on modular homes.

Mayor Linkous stated if they were meeting on Monday then they could attend.

Mr. Crewe stated that they could but we would have to notify the press.

Mr. Holt stated that they did not all need to be there.

Mayor Linkous stated if they were not careful that it would take forever to get done.

Mr. Holt agreed and stated that they have had the sign issue for 8 months.

Mr. Crewe stated that this was why they needed to do something soon.

Mayor Linkous agreed that they need to do it quickly.

Mr. Crewe stated that if they wanted to attend the meeting on Monday then we could advertise it.

Mr. Holt stated that if only two showed up then it would not have to be advertised.

Mayor Linkous stated that it would be better to have everyone there.

Mr. Crewe stated that Kim had reminded him that the only thing with Monday was Planning Commission's Meeting would be held upstairs due to the elections.

Mr. Holt suggested having a Joint Public Meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Mr. Crewe stated that they could start it on Monday.

Mr. Holt suggested that only one go.

Mayor Linkous stated that he would attend. He stated that they gave the Planning Commission the rules to go by.

Mr. Crewe stated the only difference was that they had a couple of certified planners who had to attend classes and be qualified so they had a little more expertise on Planning and Zoning.

Mayor Linkous stated that he did not believe we had anyone certified that the last one he could remember was Ed Shaffrey.

Mr. Crewe stated that he thought they had a couple.

Mr. Holt asked if it was something that council could do and if information could be forwarded to him.

Mr. Crewe stated yes that it was an 8 month program.

### **ADJOURN**

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Holt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

---

D.S. Linkous, Mayor

---

Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk