

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Minutes
June 14, 2022**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, June 14, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall located at 112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia.

PRESENT

Donnie Linkous, Mayor
Rick Holman, Councilmember
Chuck Presley, Councilmember
Cathy Payne, Councilmember
Greg DeGray, Councilmember
Anglis Trigg, Councilmember

ALSO PRESENT

Trent Crewe, Manager/Town Attorney
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk
Shane Gunter, Chief of Police
Don Scott, Planning Commission Secretary
9 members of public

ABSENT

Ron Holt, Vice-Mayor
James Hampton, Asst. Mgr./Treasurer/Transit Dir.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Don Scott, Retired Minister/Planning Commission Secretary led the Invocation. Mayor Linkous led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Linkous added Charlie Stacy, Tazewell County Board of Supervisors to the agenda under Citizens Request and Special Presentation.

Councilmember Presley made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Councilmember Holman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Trigg made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilmember Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

CITIZEN REQUESTS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Mike Pulice (PowerPoint attached at end)

Mike Pulice presented a power point presentation for the National Register Program. He stated that it did not restrict or put obligations on property owners or local government unless there was a zoning ordinance in place that put restrictions on historical property. He stated that the types of historic district designations were the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register. He showed a mapped out area of the downtown and stated that the churches and houses should probably be eliminated from the designation and limit it to the 30 commercial buildings. He stated that the estimated cost breakdown was \$6,000 for the architectural survey, \$10,000 for the National Register Nomination and \$1,000 for the Public Hearing for a total of \$17k but they would share the cost with the Town as a 50/50 local cash match. He stated that the Public Hearing would be held here in Town Hall or in the downtown district and that the owners would have the opportunity to object to the listing. He stated that they would take care of handling all administrative tasks and anticipated that the Public Hearing would last maybe an hour. He stated that it would be a National and State Registry and he would like to get the addresses of all owners in the vicinity and adjacent to it. He stated that there was also tax credits for anyone listed on the National Register, Income-Producing Properties (State & Federal), Private Residential Properties (State only) if they met the substantial rehab test. He stated that if they followed the rules and submitted an application meeting the requirements such as capital improvement to building then they could receive 45% of eligible expenditures back on their income taxes. He stated that the recovery of taxes on state was 10 years and 20 years for federal.

Mayor Linkous suggested inviting all business owners in the downtown and having him come back and talk to them.

Mr. Pulice stated that he liked that idea and would be happy to do so.

Mayor Linkous stated that it would generate some excitement and asked that council vote to approve a document with Trent's signature being sent to pursue a Historic District.

Mrs. Payne made a motion to approve sending a signed document to pursue becoming a Historic District. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Motion carried 5-0 in favor to pursue becoming a Historic District.

Tazewell County Board of Supervisors, Charlie Stacy

Charlie Stacy stated that the Rotary Club met at Fincastle once a month and it was amazing. He stated that it was a significant investment to our community. He handed out a spreadsheet of Tazewell Counties proposed ARPA funding. He stated that the Town would be receiving \$100k towards fire equipment for each of the 3 years. He stated that the Town of Tazewell had received their first payment for the purchase of a ladder truck and Bluefield was scheduled for next year but the money was available now if needed. He stated that during a previous meeting the issue with the MOU between the town and the county had been brought up. He stated that the Mayor, Danny and Trent had met with the county representatives and all were comfortable with the next two year agreement. He stated that grant money was being applied for to place a Fire Station at the Bluestone. He stated that it would be his desire and the consensus for Bluefield to man it which would allow them to house additional equipment and later on the county may be able to offer additional financial assistance. He gave an account description report to council and stated that it did not generate revenue and that no rescue or fire department did. He stated that they did not attempt to collect balances other than what the insurance paid because it was not made to be a money maker.

Mr. Crewe stated that council discussed and approved the MOU that was signed 10 years ago. He stated that it was in the minutes that it was approved and we were waiting on the current one to be signed and sent back to us.

Mr. Stacy stated that the next EMS class was scheduled for July 13th - August 19th and the county would be picking up the cost of the class. He stated that it would be 8-4 and Brian Hieatt was coordinating it. He stated that college credits were given for this class and the next step was sitting for the national EMT registration. He stated that they were finishing up their budget cycle and there would be no new tax increases in this year's budget. He stated that Dave Anderson had told him that the book value of cars had skyrocketed and that the citizens would feel the effects when they received their personal property taxes. He stated that \$1.2 million would be generated from this and as a board, they were looking at a formula to offset this.

Mr. Presley asked if the surgical center was paying taxes yet.

Mr. Stacy stated that they had always paid the full amount. He stated that they asked them but the county said no.

Mayor Linkous stated that people thought the county was keeping \$50k of our money and they had talked about it several times in prior meetings but that was not the case and this MOU was agreed upon years ago for the county to take the rescue squad and we keep the fire. He stated that the county was not keeping our money. He stated that he had a friend who needed help transporting a family member to doctor's appointment and asked if they helped with that.

Mr. Stacy stated not to doctor's visits only to the emergency room. He stated that transport services was doing that.

Mayor Linkous asked about lift assistance.

Mr. Stacy stated yes that they helped with that all the time.

Mayor Linkous stated that he had talked to Dave Anderson and the personal property taxes would increase 26% and he would be asking to do something revenue neutral.

Mr. Stacy stated that they would not reduce the tax rate just to have to raise it again that Eric Young was trying to find a way of relief such as taking funds and allocating them back in but nothing revenue neutral.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS AND REPORTS

Budget Amendments, ROLL CALL VOTE – Kim Hernandez

Mrs. Hernandez went over the following Budget Amendments:

PURPOSE: Christmas Decorations (donation)

Revenue

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
3108-9903	Gifts &	<u>\$42,517.60</u>	<u>\$47,517.60</u>	<u>\$5,000.00</u>
	Donations	<u>\$42,517.60</u>	<u>\$47,517.60</u>	<u>\$5,000.00</u>

Expenditure

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
8120-5642	Christmas Lights	<u>\$48,200.00</u>	<u>\$53,200.00</u>	<u>\$5,000.00</u>
		<u>\$48,200.00</u>	<u>\$53,200.00</u>	<u>\$5,000.00</u>

PURPOSE: Law Enforcement Block Grant

Revenue

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
0400-0413	Misc. State	<u>\$210,241.28</u>	<u>\$213,078.28</u>	<u>\$2,837.00</u>
	Law Enforcement	<u>\$210,241.28</u>	<u>\$213,078.28</u>	<u>\$2,837.00</u>

Expenditure

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
3110-8106	Grants	<u>\$7,280.16</u>	<u>\$10,117.16</u>	<u>\$2,837.00</u>
		<u>\$7,280.16</u>	<u>\$10,117.16</u>	<u>\$2,837.00</u>

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

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

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Motion carried 5-0 in favor of approving the Budget Amendments.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Dave Wohlford stated with the new homes being built that the town should require the lines to be underground, that the new water lines going across the street/driveways should have conduit in them so they were easily replaceable and he would like to sit down with Trent, Kris and John to voice his ideas such as requiring a certain setback for trees and that the Bradford pear trees should not be allowed.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT

None.

TOWN MANAGER'S/ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mr. Crewe stated that the Quilt Show would be June 24th & 25th, Evening Shade would be Friday 7-9 p.m. with Makenzie Phipps, both pools were now open and the ceremony for Gail Williams would be on Saturday at 4 p.m. He stated that the mermaid event at Harmony Acres was scheduled for June 25th and night swims were starting back up. He stated that National Pools had been at Fincastle to work on the kiddie pool but they did not have the pipe needed to install it and would bring it this week. He stated that we now had 5 EMT and 1 paramedic on the Fire Department, had a lot of employees off for various reasons such as being sick, vacation or attending conferences. He stated that AEP held their second informational meeting on June 6th and had two people to show up. He stated that they would be sending out another round of letters but were continuing on. He stated that the Treasury released more paperwork required for the ARPA

money, we were still working with the City of Bluefield on a monument in the parking lot that would cost around \$30-\$40k with each to pay half of that cost. He stated that we worked together on the carnival and had about as much trouble as in the past. He stated that the arrests were up with a lot of it being juveniles carrying firearms. He stated there was an incident where a juvenile was body slammed and had to be flown out who was in ICU but was doing better. He stated that there was also a lot of adults fighting.

Mr. Holman asked how many firearms were discovered.

Chief stated 4-5.

Mr. Crewe stated that they were immediately taken and incarcerated. He stated that Public Works received much praise and thanks for all that they had done. He stated that the increase in personal property taxes would affect us as well and suggested the town change the rate to a lesser percentage or assess the fair market value percentage. He stated that we were watching what would happen. He stated that he and Kim presented at the Shott Foundation on Friday to receive some funding and that any joint project would receive a higher rating. He stated that we were working with the City on something for the Graham-Beaver game. He stated that staff was very busy and shorthanded but stepping up and getting it done.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. DeGray thanked town staff for all that they were doing and thanked Kim for taking over the duties for Field Fest along with all other events.

Mr. Holman thanked Chief for all the heavy police presence at the carnival. He stated that he appreciated the town offering assistance to things such as this. He stated that his thoughts were with Ron and his mom who was in the ER and pretty ill.

Mr. Trigg thanked everyone for coming out and all the employees. He asked if we had ordered a new trash truck yet.

Mr. Crewe stated that we were working on it.

Mr. Trigg thanked the Police Department for doing a wonderful job. He stated that there was a big drop that cars were hitting and asked that staff look at Tazewell and College Drive.

Mrs. Payne thanked everyone for all of their hard work. She stated that we had a great town and things were starting to happen. She stated that she had gone to a baseball game while the carnival was going on and saw a heavy police presence there and thanked them.

Mr. Presley reminded everyone to come out to the Patchwork Quilters show on the 24th & 25th. He stated that he was glad to see Lecia there, thanked Gail for all that she did, asked for another Work Session in July, and stated that the downtown committee could not get anything together and asked if there was anything we could do.

Mr. Crewe stated that it was talked about during the walkthrough and he would ask the IDA again what they would like to do.

Mr. Presley stated that we had the best Police Chief, Police and Fire Department. He thanked Charlie for coming.

Mayor Linkous asked Chief if he could send a couple of extra officers to Evening Shade due to the fact that Makenzie had a stalker. He also asked that the street be blocked off to only those attending.

Mrs. Hernandez stated that Public Works already knew it needed to be done.

Mayor Linkous asked if the no right turn at New Graham Pharmacy could be bigger.

Mr. Crewe stated that several new signs had been ordered.

Mayor Linkous stated that he was receiving several phone calls regarding weeds in the Town. He stated that we were putting citations in yards when the Town was not doing its own. He asked that all signs be pulled and rescinded until we fixed our own weeds that it was an issue at Fincastle as well. He stated that he was not saying that we were putting signs in yards that should not be but ours was just as bad.

Mr. Crewe stated that we could not rescind because it violated our ordinance. He stated that Fincastle's machine was broken but parts had been ordered and we had a volunteer coming to weed the flower beds. He stated that we have advertised for employees but could not hire anyone. He stated that we had received a quote for \$24k for weeds but were waiting for a breakdown. He stated that it listed spraying the soccer field at the Rec Park which did not need it and we were negotiating with the company. He stated that we were doing the best we good but had to get better at it.

Mayor Linkous stated that there were 17 locations on the bid and he would have him to call that it should have been done two months ago. He stated that it was priced for twice a year and we only did it once per year. He stated that there was no excuse that National Pools did not have the kiddie pool finished when they had 1 1/2 years to fix it. He stated that it was frustrating when things did not happen. He asked if he was looking to hire anyone.

Mr. Crewe stated that we were interviewing and hiring constantly but the struggle was to even get anyone to apply and keeping them. He stated that the pay was competitive.

Mayor Linkous asked about paving the streets that asphalt was as high as gas and last year it was \$112/ton and was now \$197/ton. He stated that equipment charges increased for fuel and it may be better for us to repair and wait and see if it went down.

Mr. Crewe stated that staff had been repairing what they could for three days.

Mayor Linkous stated that Ridge Road was caving in.

Mr. Crewe stated that there was 4 places this week we were looking at.

Mayor Linkous stated that they were not throwing anyone under the bus when they asked questions. He stated that they had a good board and asked for daily emails with updates and what was being worked on.

Mr. Crewe stated that he would try.

Mayor Linkous stated that when Trent was not here and James was not available that Kim was the only one here. He stated that she did a good job and citizens called him all the time about how pleasant she was and that she went above and beyond. He stated that he and Rick had talked before and asked that Town Hall be opened again.

Mr. Crewe stated that the sign was still on the door but the doors had been open for the last month. He stated that he was waiting to take it down to see how the numbers were.

Mayor Linkous stated that we had good employees and thanked everyone for coming out. He stated that Lecia was big on Historical and events and was behind Yakity Yak Park. He stated that she had a heart for Bluefield and welcomed her and Danny back.

Mr. Presley stated that he had been helping the town mow and would continue to help if needed.

ADJOURN

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion and a second to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

D.S. Linkous, Mayor

Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk