

**Town of Bluefield  
Town Council  
Minutes  
July 26, 2022**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, July 26 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  
Cathy Payne, Councilmember  
Chuck Presley, Councilmember  
Rick Holman, Councilmember  
Anglis Trigg, Councilmember  
Greg DeGray, Councilmember

**ALSO PRESENT**

Trent Crewe, Manager/Town Attorney  
James Hampton, Asst. Mgr./Treasurer/Transit Dir.  
10 members of public

**ABSENT**

Ron Holt, Vice-Mayor  
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk  
Shane Gunter, Chief of Police

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Jay Ferguson led the Invocation. Mayor Linkous led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Councilmember Holman made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Presley 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**

None.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND REPORTS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS AND REPORTS**

***VDOT Blanket Resolution, ROLL CALL VOTE*** – Trent Crewe

Mr. Crewe apologized for not having the resolution prepared for council but stated that this was a blanket resolution that had been done several times in the past and authorized the Town Manager to sign on behalf of the Town to execute documents as well as authorized the mayor to also sign. He stated that this was the next step to get funding. He stated that more state funding may be available and this was an 80/20 match.

Mr. Holman asked what the scope of it was.

Mr. Crewe stated that it included the entrance to Bluefield University towards downtown past the fountain.

Mr. Trigg made a motion to approve the VDOT Blanket Resolution. 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 of approving the VDOT Blanket Resolution.

## CITIZENS COMMENTS

Mr. Etter stated that during the heavy rain on July 1<sup>st</sup> that it blocked the storm drain up flooding his basement. He handed out pictures and stated that he tried calling Town Hall on July 5<sup>th</sup> but did not get anyone to answer so he emailed all of council and that Cathy responded and that his wife had also talked to Chuck. He stated that he was directed to Trent and left a message which was returned on July 6<sup>th</sup> stating that the Town was not liable but would send Public Works out to look at it. He stated that it was checked and the drain was working properly. On July 18<sup>th</sup>, he sent pictures and videos to Trent and the next day when checking his camera, he seen Public Works there checking the drain. He stated that he had emailed Trent to let him know and that on the 19<sup>th</sup> Trent had called to discuss the options with him which were a speed bump, digging a ditch between him and his neighbor or digging up the pipe to see where it went. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, he emailed Trent stating that he would like for him and Public Works to meet with him to look at it and on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Public Works came and discussed what they had found. He stated that no one knew the pipe was there and they may need for him to sign something which he was ok with doing so.

Mayor Linkous stated that he had received a call and went and looked at it and the pipe went over in the yard and stopped. He stated that Public Works had cut a section of the pipe in half and he suggested cutting a ditch to extend that pipe between Etter and Dixon's house leaving the end open to go into the grass. He stated that they would attempt to address the issue immediately. He asked if Mr. Etter gave permission tonight and they voted could anything be done.

Mr. Crewe stated that there needed to be something in writing but we had already been working on a solution and as he told them, it was not a town pipe that we put in nor was it on the Town's right of way. He stated that he was not in the office everyday but had returned all calls and had the same conversation with at least 30 people due to flooding. He stated that Mr. Etter had allowed Public Works to come and look at it and that Danny had stuck his hand down in the pipe during the last rain storm and could feel the end of the pipe. He stated that they were not sure if it were broken, missing a joint, etc. but once it had been dug up the pipe dead ended at a 4ft piece of concrete and had nowhere to go. He stated that it needed to get past his house 50-60ft in the swag but it was on private property and they would need permission for an easement which both Etter and Dixon had both agreed too but the issue was getting machinery there.

Mr. Holman asked if there was any curb and guttering.

Mayor Linkous stated some.

Mr. Holman stated that he had talked to others about a similar issue and asked if there was a storm water board who could address these issues.

Mr. Crewe stated no.

Mayor Linkous stated that it was supposed to rain the next 10-12 days but afterwards the town would work with him.

Mr. Etter asked how no one did not know there was a pipe there.

Mr. Crewe stated that it was not put there by the Town.

Dave Bowers stated that a lot of drainage, etc. was done before becoming a part of the Town.

Mayor Linkous stated that we would try our best to address the issue but could not promise anything.

Josh Cline, Bluefield University stated he was there on behalf of Dr. Olive to thank the town for their help with the bicentennial and the donation. He read a letter and presented a gift to the mayor. He stated that BU was thankful and grateful for all that the town had done. He stated that the dirt was moving on the entryway and would plan a ribbon cutting in the future.

Mrs. Payne stated as chairman of the Bicentennial Committee she would like to thank council for the donation to the entry way and all that the Town had done for BU.

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

None.

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

Mr. Crewe stated that last week our Police Department participated with many other agencies in an active shooter/mass casualty drill at the middle school. He stated that it was a huge success. He stated that the quote to fix the Bank of Graham roof from Frye was \$15,760-bare bones, \$59,564 and \$87,628 which would include the decking, etc. He stated that there was an urgency to get it fixed and the IDA asked the Town for funding.

Dave Bowers stated that they were only a couple of rains away from losing the building.

Mayor Linkous stated that it needed to be fixed correctly in order to market the building and asked if the IDA could meet earlier to get things started because the longer they waited the more damage there would be.

Mr. Bowers stated that there were two things the IDA would have to fix before it could be rented or sold and that was a heat pump downstairs and the roof fixed. He stated that they did not have the funds and had never had resources from the Town and asked that they include into the new budget year some "seed" money for the IDA.

Mrs. Payne asked if the IDA could meet before the next council meeting and come back with a contractor, etc.

Mr. Crewe stated that the roof had been an issue for years and reminded them that the BOG was owned by the Town and was their asset. He asked that they consider authorizing up to a set

dollar amount for the roof with the stipulation that it had to be a certified VA licensed roofing company to get the roof fixed immediately. He stated that ARPA money could be moved around for wages to clear up money to pay for a new roof.

Mr. Presley asked if they IDA owned the Envision Center.

Mr. Bowers stated yes and they were looking to put in \$16k for the build out to expand The Grind and The Lady Project.

Mayor Linkous stated that they had to keep operating in the negative because the Town did not give them any money.

Mayor Linkous suggested they fix it the best they could but asked what the IDA thought was needed.

Mr. Bowers stated that the Town invested \$100k into the building and the tax assessment was \$170k.

Mr. Crewe suggested a motion up to \$87k.

Mr. Holman asked where exactly the money would come from.

Mr. Crewe stated ARPA and there may also be funds available from the state to renovate old buildings.

Mr. Holman stated that he did not want to cut ourselves short but agreed that it was our structure and had to be fixed.

Mr. DeGray stated that he had served on the IDA before council and knew it was a need and had been for a while.

Mr. Trigg agreed.

Mrs. Payne also agreed.

Mr. Holman stated that there was a potential to incur more than the \$87k once it was opened up.

Mr. DeGray asked what Brad recommended.

Mr. Bowers stated that he had not talked to him yet. He stated that they did not have anyone to call on for help since the position was terminated last year and highly encouraged them to bring someone on board for Community Development and to help the IDA.

Mr. Crewe stated that the motion would need to be to give the IDA \$87,628 provided that the IDA approved a certified commercial roofer licensed in VA or a motion to hire Frye Roofing to do it.

Mrs. Payne made a motion to hire Frye Roofing to fix the Bank of Graham roof for the quoted price of \$87,628. 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 giving the IDA \$87,628 to fix the Bank of Graham roof.

Mayor Linkous stated as of today the IDA could not do the renovations on the Envision Center.

Mr. Bowers stated that was correct but asked to come back to them after the issues were worked out with the old tenant.

Mr. Crewe stated that Mr. Pulice, Department of Historic Resources had sent a 6 page application to proceed with the next steps which required him to sign the application and asked that a motion be made to authorize him to sign the letter.

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 Town Manager to sign the Department of Historic Resources letter to proceed.

He stated that unless told otherwise, he would pursue fixing the upstairs air conditioning unit. He stated that The Furnace Man could not do the repairs and recommended Southern Air. He stated that he had passed out the Tazewell County Fair schedule and our ad was on the inside of the brochure, that the motor for the garbage truck was in Beckley and we would probably have to go and get it and that one of our buses had been out of service since March that we were waiting on the parts to fix it. He stated that Sheriff Hieatt had called to brag on Chief Gunter and our Police Department as a whole during the active shooter/mass casualty drill that was held.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. DeGray thanked everyone for being there and the IDA for giving an update and thanked council for approving the funding. He stated that the downtown master plan updates were good.

Mr. Holman also thanked the IDA for coming and thanked the Town for its contribution to the Graham Youth League. He stated that they had the highest participation yet.

Mr. Trigg stated that it was good to see everyone out. He stated that Riley's garage had shut down and suggested getting them a plaque.

Mayor Linkous stated that one was being done.

Mr. Trigg thanked the IDA for coming. He asked who owned Art Riley's old building.

Mayor Linkous stated the bank.

Mr. Trigg stated that it was in bad shape. He thanked Public Works for fixing the drain.

Mrs. Payne stated that Field Fest was coming up and there would be inflatables, a petting zoo, clown, etc. She stated that she had the opportunity to go to Tazewell and visit with the Lieutenant Governor and was very impressed with her.

Mr. Presley thanked everyone for coming out. He asked if the "S" curve in Brierwood could be widened, mentioned the speeders on Sedgewren/Robin Street and stated that we had great employees.

Mayor Linkous thanked the IDA for coming and stated that he was on board to hire a person to promote our Town and move forward. He stated during the flooding that our Public Works had done a lot that was unseen and unheard. He stated that Kimberly's Greenhouse, the one who did our hanging baskets had proposed to work on the fountain next year. He stated that they had been together for 18 months and this was the best council meeting so far, that it was enjoyable and things were accomplished. He stated that the Town was getting a bad rep in the county and he hoped that those watching the video would see differently.

Gail Cook stated that she was still concerned with Ridge Road that it was slanting and there was a crack in the middle of the street.

Mr. Crewe stated that they had looked at it once but would look at it again.

Mayor Linkous stated that VDOT would probably have to get involved.

Mr. Holman stated that he would be on vacation and would miss the next meeting.

Mayor Linkous stated that Kim would be back next week and had been off for a much needed vacation. He stated that she done a fantastic job for them and that Trent could not make it without her.

Mr. Crewe stated that she was definitely missed.

Mayor Linkous stated that he appreciated what Trent did for them and he knew that he caught a lot of grief but it came with the job. He stated that the Town had been picking up extra trash at no charge from the flooding even though we were shorthanded.

### **ADJOURN**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

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D.S. Linkous, Mayor

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Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk