

**Town of Bluefield  
Town Council  
Minutes  
August 24, 2021**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, August 24, 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  
Anglis Trigg, Councilmember  
Chuck Presley, Councilmember  
Cathy Payne, Councilmember  
Ron Holt, Vice-Mayor  
Rick Holman, Councilmember  
Jarrod Bailey, Councilmember

**ALSO PRESENT**

Trent Crewe, Manager/Town Attorney  
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk  
James Hampton, Asst. Mgr./Treasurer/Transit Dir.  
6 members of public

**ABSENT**

Shane Gunter, Police Chief

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Town Manager Trent Crewe led the Invocation. Mayor Linkous led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Linkous removed the Flag Presentation by Woodmen Insurance from the agenda and stated that they had presented them before the meeting. He also removed the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors Update from the agenda.

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

## **CITIZEN REQUESTS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

### ***Bluefield University Update – Josh Cline***

Mr. Cline showed the Bluefield University you tube video. He stated that they had been talking around 5 years about becoming a University and voted in June for the name change. He stated that they wanted to wait until the centennial to release it and were thankful for the Town's help in releasing the name change. He thanked Town Council and Public Works for putting up the banners and stated that the students were excited and it built something within the student body. He stated that they were here because the community wanted them to be here and the Bluefield Chamber members were dedicated and went to the first president and told him that they wanted the college in Bluefield. He stated that the foundations were a strong factor for them being here as well and they looked to grow into the next 100 years and look into the future. He stated that they had an \$18 million dollar campaign for the University and had already raise \$16.3 million thus far. He stated that it would be for scholarships, enhancing the facilities, new programs and investing into academics. He stated that Dr. Olive was in Alabama scouting for their next program which was a nurse anesthetist that should be up and running before too long and they would be expanding into their first doctoral program as well. He stated that they were starting with a blank slate and could write their own in the next 100 years. He stated that they were growing and hoped the Town would grow with them. He thanked the Town for all that had been done.

Mr. Bailey asked for an update on the project being done now.

Mr. Cline stated that it was in a holding pattern that they had started late with the blocking contractor but if the weather held off then they would start in the fall. He stated that he would come back with some dates during fall break. He stated that they had another donor who came on board today and he thought that they could raise Phase II pretty quickly.

Mayor Linkous asked if they had a problem with getting poles as well. He stated that the speaker they had was impressive and out of this world and it was exciting from the beginning to the end. He stated that the students were proud when it was announced.

Mr. Cline stated that they needed to update their Economic Statement that it was around \$20 million/year impact.

Mayor Linkous stated that the students moved in with armfuls of stuff that had been purchased at Wal-Mart. He stated that it was impressive to see the Town's commitment to Bluefield University for them to grow even bigger and that we were working on sidewalks in front of the college to Mitchell Stadium. He asked that they come and give updates regularly.

Mr. Cline stated regarding COVID that they only had one person in isolation and one in quarantine. He stated that they were still collecting vaccine records and encouraged vaccines and hoped with the FDA's approval that it would help with those concerns. He stated that CDC protocols were still in place and those not vaccinated were required to wear masks. He stated that the professors could also require their students to wear them as well. He stated that they were trying to manage in a way that was not confrontational and with respect.

Joyce Johnston stated that they had a wonderful new program for women ages 35-50 who had a GED or high school diploma to come and stay in the dorms. She stated that Millie Lusk was in charge of it and that she was on the committee. She stated that this program showed them how to dress, fill out an application, table manners, etc. and they graduated after the program was completed. She stated that it was a fantastic program and Bluefield University worked with SWVCC for their students to come to Bluefield University their last two years. She stated that it was such a great asset to the region and community.

Mr. Cline stated that it was called the New Opportunity School for Women. He stated that they were a strong college because of this strong Town.

**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:** School Resource Officer Funding

**Revenue**

| <b>Line Item</b> |                 | <b>Original Budget</b> | <b>Amended Budget</b> | <b>Change</b>      |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 0400-0413        | Misc. State     | <u>\$103,674.34</u>    | <u>\$145,352.34</u>   | <u>\$41,678.00</u> |
|                  | Law Enforcement | <u>\$103,674.34</u>    | <u>\$145,352.34</u>   | <u>\$41,678.00</u> |

**Expenditure**

| <b>Line Item</b> |                  | <b>Original Budget</b> | <b>Amended Budget</b> | <b>Change</b>      |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 3110-1100        | Salaries-Regular | <u>\$880,000.00</u>    | <u>\$921,678.00</u>   | <u>\$41,678.00</u> |
|                  |                  | <u>\$880,000.00</u>    | <u>\$921,678.00</u>   | <u>\$41,678.00</u> |

**PURPOSE:** Verizon Credit Refund

**Revenue**

| <b>Line Item</b> |                 | <b>Original Budget</b> | <b>Amended Budget</b> | <b>Change</b>   |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 0400-0413        | Misc. State     | <u>\$145,352.34</u>    | <u>\$145,480.93</u>   | <u>\$128.59</u> |
|                  | Law Enforcement | <u>\$145,352.34</u>    | <u>\$145,480.93</u>   | <u>\$128.59</u> |

**Expenditure**

| <b>Line Item</b> |                    | <b>Original Budget</b> | <b>Amended Budget</b> | <b>Change</b>   |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 3110-5230        | Telecommunications | <u>\$18,000.00</u>     | <u>\$18,128.59</u>    | <u>\$128.59</u> |
|                  |                    | <u>\$18,000.00</u>     | <u>\$18,128.59</u>    | <u>\$128.59</u> |

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to approve.

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

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 6-0 in favor.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Joyce Johnston thanked the Town for helping with the library and removing the dead dogwood tree. She stated that it would have cost \$250 and she asked Pete who was always so nice and he sent his workers and they removed the tree. She thanked Mr. Crewe as well for his help and the Town for watering the plants at GHS and at the entrance of Fincastle. She stated that she saw the Mayor and Mr. Crewe at the Bluefield University luncheon and the Mayor had asked her to join the Beautification Committee. She stated that she would help along with Terri Kammer and Mickey Pellillo to assist Diane Belcher.

Mayor Linkous thanked her.

Betty Watson thanked James for working with them on their Quilt lesson program in the fall. She stated that the Patchwork Quilters had worked with the New Opportunity School for Women.

Dave Wohlford stated that he had watched the last council meeting video and had seen where the fire hydrants were discussed. He stated that it should be the responsibility of the homeowner to cut the brush in front of them if it was located in front of their home. He stated that we had a volunteer Fire Department and this would require a budget to take care of and get done.

He stated that they were not being maintained either and that they need to be looked at and all the same. He suggested that they google about fire hydrants that it was 86 hours maintenance once a year which was 1 hour per fire hydrant. He stated that the isolation valve may be the reason they had not been serviced. He stated that they needed to be serviced and the brush cut around them. He stated the next thing was people doing landscaping and putting a big tree 3ft from the curb. He suggested the Town have a setback to prevent this.

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

None.

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

Mr. Crewe showed council the aerial photos and asked them to pick the ones they liked. He stated that the Town received \$50k CProp funding for Fincastle restaurant renovations. He stated that the reason Chief Gunter was not there was he was attending a conference. He stated that Harmony Acres Pool closed when school started and that Fincastle pool would open on Monday with sporadic hours of free swim due to limited lifeguards. He stated that this would be a dry run practice for next year. He stated that one of our Police Officers was in the hospital due to COVID but was improving. He stated that another employee was off because of his family being positive. He stated that he had received an email from Tazewell County that they were requiring masks to enter their building once again. He stated that he would be looking to require masks again at Town Hall and no one was allowed to come in the front door. He stated that he may put the partitions back up between council in hopes that everyone stayed safe.

Mr. Holt asked what the current policy was to pay employees.

Mr. Crewe stated there was none that it had ended but the county followed the policy if it could be proven that was the reason you were off then they would pay. He stated that federal money was being used for this.

Mr. Bailey asked about parents taking care of children.

Mr. Crewe stated it was something to figure out but yes they would have to have a heart.

Mr. Holt stated he was appreciative for him saying that. He stated that he did not want to see it abused but did not want to see an employee trying to figure out what to do.

Mr. Bailey asked if there was anything mandated right now or if it had expired months ago.

Mr. Crewe stated that it had expired and there were discussions under way but no regulations. He stated that he liked to showcase employees and that Harmony Acres had mermaids swimming with tails and talking to the kids. He stated that there were three and the kids loved it and it was a great event. He stated that another thing was Lee Riffe had donated his time and effort to fix the sound system and thanked him for that. He stated that the Rec Department was planning

an after school program, art club, book club, etc. and were extremely active at the moment. He stated that Public Works worked to put the Bluefield University banners up when the chapel doors closed for the convocation. He stated that the quilters had worked with James who would be volunteering to come and let them in for the fall show. He stated that they had good employees who were always doing something. He stated that Charlie Stacy had to reschedule because of his wife having to go to the hospital with bee stings. He stated that he had received a letter of representation for a former employee. He stated that it was in discussion and nothing needed to be done at this point. He stated that all athletics for middle and high school had been suspended until August 31<sup>st</sup> and told everyone to be careful.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Bailey had none.

Mr. Holman had none.

Mr. Holt had none.

Mr. Trigg had none.

Mrs. Payne thanked the Town for all that they did for the college getting the banners up. She stated that it was a work of love to get it all done. She stated that she had been in NC the past few days and that you could not go anywhere in Raleigh without a mask on. She stated that she hoped and prayed it would not be as severe here.

Mr. Presley gave a shout out to all employees. He stated that he liked but did not like the new phone system and suggested that they look at zoom council meetings.

Mr. Crewe stated that the FOI council was reviewing going back to that.

Mr. Holt stated that the redistricting committee was also looking at that.

Mr. Crewe asked if he had been in attendance at the state meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> because they had one person who was positive and all the others were quarantined.

Mr. Holt stated he was not. He asked to speak to him after the meeting.

Mayor Linkous stated that he was at Fincastle during their last tournament and there were people here from New York, Washington and 29 different states. He stated that our local guys really shined and the attendees kept thanking the Town for hosting the tournament. He stated that Fincastle was hosting a buffet lunch every Sunday and every other Sunday was a breakfast lunch buffet. He asked that everyone tell their friends and family. He thanked Lee and Mark Webb for working on the sound system and asked that a thank you card be sent to them both.

**ADJOURN**

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Holt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Payne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Linkous adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

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D.S. Linkous, Mayor

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Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk