

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Minutes
August 9, 2022**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, August 9, 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
Ron Holt, Vice-Mayor
Anglis Trigg, Councilmember
Greg DeGray, Councilmember

ALSO PRESENT

Trent Crewe, Manager/Town Attorney
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk
13 members of public

ABSENT

Rick Holman, Councilmember
James Hampton, Asst. Mgr./Treasurer/Transit Dir.
Shane Gunter, Chief of Police

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-Mayor Holt made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Trigg 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

Sanitary Board Engineering Bids, ROLL CALL VOTE – Trent Crewe

Mr. Crewe stated that the Sanitary Board would like a recommendation from council on engineering for the Bluefield, VA side. He stated that 6 firms had sent in proposals with their qualifications, etc.

- S&S Engineer, Charleston, WV, 42 years' experience, work done in WV.
- Potesta, Charleston, WV, over 2 decades experience, work done in WV.
- EL Robinson, 10 offices in 6 states, vast experience across WV, OH and KY including Mercer County/Bluefield, WV.
- Chapman Technical Group, St. Albans, WV, work done in VA and WV and currently working on College Avenue.
- Thrasher Group, Inc., Beaver, WV, extensive experience throughout the Mid-Atlantic (Wythe County).
- Thompson & Litton, Princeton, WV, 66 years of experience in 6 Mid-Atlantic States, 8 offices with 4 in VA (worked for Sanitary Board and Princeton).

He stated that his recommendation would be Thompson & Litton since they knew more about our water, etc.

Mr. DeGray asked if there were actual amounts.

Mr. Crewe stated no that this was their qualifications.

Mr. Holt stated that he had never been disappointed with Thompson & Litton.

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve recommending Thompson & Litton for the engineering on the Town's side. Mr. Trigg seconded the motion.

Mayor Linkous asked why they were asking us when it was their project.

Mr. Crewe stated that the only answer he could come up with was we were giving them \$200k.

Mayor Linkous stated that it was unheard of to be asked.

Mr. Crewe stated that the Sanitary Board operated on our side as well.

Mr. Holt stated that he liked the fact that we were asked.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Motion carried 5-0 in favor of recommending Thompson & Litton for the engineering on the Town's side.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Anita Littlejohn, 607 Robin Street stated that she had a water issue and was there with her neighbor Janet Gunn. She stated that she had addressed the issues to Chuck, Lee and Trent and thanked them all for getting back to her. She stated that she had lived there for 15 years and had spent \$20k fixing the water issues but with the last storms she had a raging river through her backyard. She stated that she had talked to her neighbors to see if it had ever been an issue and none of the neighbors had ever seen it this bad. She thanked Danny Evans and those who helped him to put down sandbags. She stated that Trent had told her it was not a town issue because it was in the back of her house but stated that she needed help. She stated that she did not have any more money to spend and was not the only person affected.

Mr. Presley asked that they think of ways to help.

Ms. Littlejohn stated that at the top of the street there used to be a grate. She stated that she also needed her curb replaced from the snow plows last winter.

Mayor Linkous stated that he understood where she was coming from that he had 15 inches in his house. He stated that he had driven around town looking and that there was not much curbing in front of her house which he thought was the problem but he did not see her backyard.

Mr. Presley asked what she thought was her main issue.

Ms. Littlejohn stated the backyard.

Mayor Linkous stated that when the Town took in Sedgewood that the developer did not do a good job. He suggested using a camera to see what they could find but agreed that it was not a town issue but our citizens were who they represented. He thanked her for coming and asked that she keep them informed. He asked as a board for them to look at it but that they may not can fix it.

Mr. Holt stated that there were things that they could and could not do and asked to reallocate ARPA money to do studies on those impacted by flooding for future issues.

Mr. Crewe stated that they could. He stated that Ms. Littlejohn had been very nice but he did not know what we as a town could do. He stated that we currently had 2 houses flooding and the water crew was out. He stated that everything had been cleaned out and nothing was stopped up. He stated that he has had this same conversation with at least 50 people and the water was so much we could not find a remedy. He stated that the ground was soaked and had nowhere to go and that her house was actually built on a lot that was not supposed to have anything built on. He stated that it may have been for a retention pond.

Mr. Holt stated that he also had water in his finished basement and he lived on top of a mountain. He stated again that they should spend some money for engineering to come up with a plan.

Mr. Presley asked if it tapped into the drain across the street.

Mr. Crewe stated that it was working how it was designed to do so.

Mayor Linkous stated that having something on the driveway may help and they needed to figure out a way to help. He stated that Etter & Dixon had bad flooding as well and suggested that we look at our storm water management as well.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT

None.

TOWN MANAGER'S/ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mr. Crewe stated that the Police Chief was under the weather and gave his update that the mass casualty drill went well. He stated that he had received a phone call from Sheriff Hieatt complementing our department. He reminded everyone of the First Responders Cookout on the 12th at 5:30 p.m. He stated that they had received over \$5k in donations which allowed them to

hand out school supplies, have a cookout, etc. He stated that several departments would be coming including the VA State Police. He stated that our SRO were fully funded for the upcoming year which was \$215K in savings and that they had also received a total of 3 other grants. He congratulated Officer Tibbs on his recent marriage, stated that Rex Bradshaw along with Chief had the opportunity to meet Lt. Governor Sears in Tazewell and that multiple staff had been out sick with various things.

He stated that staff had resolved all 22 OSHA violations that we were not fined but had to correct. He stated that they were close to putting the motor in the garbage truck, the flooding issues were town wide, that Etter & Dixon had signed the easement, funding for 4 VDOT projects were underway, ads for paving had been sent in and there would be a national softball tournament on Saturday bringing in 500-700 people. He stated that we also had a golf tournament, all the picnic shelters were reserved and this would be the last weekend that Harmony Acres would be open. He stated that Bluefield University was delayed in their construction, that the monthly meeting of the managers and the county administrator would start back up, that Senator Warner would be in Richlands on the 22nd from 4-5:10 p.m., that he had been working on the budget with Chief to come close to other agencies and we would be giving the \$100/year plus an 11% increase. He stated that he would come back with ARPA money allocated for this, he stated that the Frye roofing contract had been executed and a partial payment made, that the downtown historical application had been submitted, the flooring in town hall had been started, we were waiting on the parts to fix the upstairs air conditioning unit, that Public Works had crews out inspecting all of our water drainage, etc. to make sure there were no issues. He stated that we have had some to quit and we could not get caught up. He stated that the water was going through the pipes as it was supposed to be.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. DeGray thanked Trent, Public Works and staff for all of their quick responses to the flooding issues and rerouting water. He asked that they keep the town looking good for the Graham-Beaver game which would bring a lot of people back home.

Mr. Holt stated that the mass casualty drill was a success and that our Police Department was the best. He stated that Perkins was the SRO at the middle school and was fairly new but did a wonderful job. He stated that he knew people were angry regarding the water issues and he understood that and would like to look at reallocating money to help.

Mr. Trigg stated that he had told Trent about some tree issues. He stated that everyone was doing a good job.

Mrs. Payne agreed with all regarding having some engineering done. She stated that there were speeders on Fairway and the residents had agreed to go together and purchase a speed bump in the town would put it down.

Mr. Presley stated that Ridge Road did need some help and suggested having a Work Session in October to start the process of hiring a town manager. He stated that they needed to

have preventive maintenance on the town vehicles. He thanked everyone for coming out and stated that we had a great staff.

Mayor Linkous stated that the last Field Fest was last week and the foam machine was a blast that even the clerk got in it to do a live interview. He asked that we look at having more events. He stated that he had been keeping an eye on Ridge Road as well. He stated that AEP had a policy when it was really hot that every 30 minutes they had to stop and drink Gatorade, etc. He stated that he would like to see the town put some coolers in the vehicles and the town pay for these drinks.

Mr. Crewe stated that all crews had a cooler and came back to the shop more for breaks. He stated that the Autumn Jamboree would be coming up next.

Mayor Linkous stated that the garbage trucks did not have coolers.

Mr. Crewe stated that the citizens had been leaving drinks out for them. He stated that we had suspended the cost for extra pickups from the storm damage.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to read the Executive Session.

MOTION FOR CLOSED MEETING

It is hereby moved that the Council of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia enter into a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia as amended, The specific purpose for this motion is to discuss the following matter(s):

Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body with such closed meeting being confined to the following subject (s): discussion & consideration of performance of employees at Fincastle.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session.

Councilmember Presley made a motion to enter into Executive Session as described above. Councilmember Trigg seconded the motion.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 in favor of going into Executive Session.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to resume open meeting.

Councilmember Payne made a motion to enter back into regular session. Councilmember Presley seconded the motion.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 5-0 in favor of returning to open session.

Mayor Linkous asked the Clerk to read the certification.

CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, the Town Council of Bluefield, Virginia convened a closed meeting on August 9, 2022, pursuant to a duly adopted motion, attached hereto, and such closed meeting was convened in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of Bluefield, Virginia returned to its open meeting held on August 9, 2022.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA HEREBY CERTIFIES that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act were discussed in the closed meeting held on August 9, 2022, to which this certification applies and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening such closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Council of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia in such closed meeting.

Mayor Linkous asked for a motion to approve the certification.

Councilmember Presley made a motion to approve the certification. Councilmember Payne seconded the motion.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was 6-0 for the certification.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

D.S. Linkous, Mayor

Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk