

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Minutes
July 12, 2016**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, July 12, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall located at 112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia.

PRESENT

Don Harris, Mayor
Anglis Trigg, Councilmember
Donnie Linkous, Councilmember
Jimmy Jones, Vice Mayor
Lee Riffe, Councilmember

ALSO PRESENT

Mike Watson, Town Manager
Matt Freedman, Town Attorney
Shane Gunter, Police Chief
Lesley Catron, Town Clerk
Kim Hernandez, Executive Assistant
Billie Roberts, Comm. Dev. Coordinator
Kris Williams, Zoning Administrator
3 Members of Public

ABSENT

Steve Danko, Councilmember

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-Mayor Jones made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Trigg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Vice-Mayor Jones made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilmember Riffe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Harris stated at the last council meeting they had much disagreement and agreement and thanked everyone for their professionalism and thanked staff for how well the minutes were prepared.

CITIZEN REQUESTS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Field Fest Update – Billie Roberts

Mrs. Roberts stated that the next Field Fest would be held on July 14th with Kristi Hughes from The Voice performing. She stated that there would be a local girl Lilly Comer from Graham performing during intermission. She stated that they had over 25 vendors including Backyard Heroes BBQ, Country Girl Catering, funnel cakes and the beer/wine garden. She stated that this time they would be free to roam instead of having to stay in the garden which would help the food vendors. She stated that the IDA would be donating all of the proceeds from this time to Doug Thompson who had just had his 2nd cancer surgery.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS & REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS & REPORTS

Graham Manor Apartments Waiver Request, VOTE – Mike Watson

Mr. Watson stated that there was a request to waive the taxes for Graham Manor in council's packet. He stated that it had been waived for the last several years and the amount was \$773. He asked for a vote on the waiver.

Mr. Trigg made a motion to approve waiving \$773 in taxes for the Graham Manor Apartments. Mr. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Tazewell County Wireless Service Authority Reappointment, VOTE – Mike Watson

Mr. Watson stated that there was a letter in council's packet from the Tazewell County Wireless Service Authority reappointing himself to the board. He stated that they appointed one person from each district and that he had served the last several years. He asked that council vote on his reappointment as well.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve Mr. Watson's reappointment to the Tazewell County Wireless Service Authority. Mr. Trigg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

FY 2015/2016 Budget

Mr. Watson stated that there was a \$32,382 shortage in the general fund for the 2015/2016 year but was prior year and did not count as revenue. He stated that the prior year projects included a new police car and paving which they did not end up doing it all. He stated that they ended up in the good a few thousand dollars but that it was not a sizeable amount and that he did not transfer into the Fire Department Fund this year. He stated that they broke even on the General Fund. He stated in the water fund there was a \$32k shortage due to a decrease in revenue and buying extra pumps. He stated that they had a pump to go out this year and had to rewind one of the main pump motors. He stated that the cemetery fund had a \$9k profit and that overall all funds were to the good \$30k.

Mayor Harris stated that was due to good management.

VML Conference 2016

Mr. Watson stated that the VML dates had been changed to October 9th – 11th and would start on Sunday at 9 a.m. and they would come home on Tuesday. He stated that staff would have to change the reservations and if there was any activity that they would like to attend to let staff know.

Committee/Department Updates

Mr. Watson stated that a copy of the committee and department updates was in council's packet. He stated that they were scheduled to come in twice a year to give an update and that it gave council an opportunity to see the faces and ask questions.

Upcoming Events

Mr. Watson stated that there was a list of upcoming events in council's packet for the next 3 months. He stated that there was a lot going on.

Employee Appreciation Night at the Ballpark

Mr. Watson stated that Employee Appreciation Night at the Ballpark was scheduled for July 29th and that employees and their families would get in for free. He stated that there had been a \$100k donation made from an individual in Bluefield, WV to the Blue Jays to help with renovations.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

George Leedy, 1002 Mountain Lane stated that this was the best ran County in the State of Virginia and that he had lived in Bluefield, VA for 38 years. He stated that he had heard good things about the Community Garden and he had something there as well. He stated that it was good that the Town had this and hoped it would expand. He asked about the logging being done and that he had heard there was going to be housing there. He asked where the road was going to go.

Mayor Harris stated that they were only timbering now and there were no plans for housing.

Mr. Leedy stated that when it rained that the dirt may wash down. He asked about the liability the Town would have concerning Field Fest and the beer/wine garden if someone was drinking more than they should. He stated that he liked the idea and would be attending the upcoming one and that it showcased the Town. He stated that they may need to look at the advertisement for Donnie running for mayor and that it should read paid for by Donnie Linkous.

Mrs. Roberts stated that there was a disclaimer at the bottom of the page.

Mr. Leedy stated that his only concern was that it should be a level playing field. He stated that he appreciated living in the Town and that they were all doing a good job.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Riffe stated that he was looking forward to the next Field Fest.

Mr. Linkous stated on the upcoming events, that it showed the coal show and asked if they were having another one this year.

Mayor Harris stated that he thought the coal show was done every other year.

Mr. Watson stated that staff would find out.

Mr. Linkous asked for an update on the Rescue Squad.

Mr. Watson stated that they had a meeting yesterday with the Board. He stated that the previous administrator had left and they appointed Kyle Powers as the new administrator. He stated that the rescue squad was not making money and that Rescue 945 was having the same issues. He stated that we were an emergency service rescue squad and the other surrounding rescue squads did transport services as well. He stated that we could not make it on emergency services only and they were looking at different ways to increase the ability to accept calls for transports plus have emergency calls. He stated that they may look at merging or see who could do transports but that it had not come to the point yet where he would need to come to council.

Mr. Linkous asked about merging with Bluefield, WV.

Mr. Watson stated that they were not licensed in Virginia. He stated that Bluefield, WV did a lot of transport calls and did the transport calls for Westwood.

Mr. Linkous asked why our rescue squad was not doing them.

Mr. Watson stated that Westwood had a contract with Bluefield, WV Rescue Squad.

Mr. Linkous stated that we needed to get that contract.

Mr. Watson stated that they were going to meet more and may look at operational changes.

Mayor Harris stated that the prior administrator got a tremendous offer in Roanoke that would pay off his student loans and pay for him to become an RN. He stated that the County was working well with the Rescue Squad as well and that we needed to keep it here and that they were all working towards that goal.

Mr. Linkous asked about the Welcome Center and when the part would be ready that Cathy Payne had paid for.

Mr. Watson stated that he had received 2 bids but that the lowest one they questioned because it was not done professionally and that they would be looking to award the contract out in the next week.

Mr. Trigg recommended using the new gyms and having something scheduled at them next year instead of having events at the individual parks and also suggested having water to give out as well.

Mr. Jones had none.

Mayor Harris stated that he had a local merchant that was in opposition to Field Fest serving alcohol in the downtown. He stated that he tried to explain that it was well controlled. He stated that his concern was also the liability of it and that he had talked to Mr. Watson about it. He asked Mr. Freedman to look into it and make sure the Town was covered.

Mr. Freedman asked if there was a specific area and that the way he understood it, the IDA had insurance for this type of thing. He stated that it could be a liability on the Town.

Mr. Watson stated that the main thing was if there was a proven liability, was the Town covered.

Mr. Freedman stated that his understanding was that there was a banquet license with ABC and that the Town was taking appropriate actions with the Fire Department, Police and Town Crews involved.

Mr. Trigg stated that he had been to several different places this summer and they were all doing a similar thing.

Mr. Freedman stated that there was a concern of liability and that you had to look out for those who may have had too much to drink. He stated that the purpose was not for celebration.

Mayor Harris stated that a West Graham resident told him it was nice but that there was nothing for the children to do. He explained that it was geared as an adult recreation and an attempt to get people downtown. He stated that he was asked if it was a Town event and he told him no, that it was held by the IDA. He stated that he did not think that council would ever be able to answer all of the questions they were asked.

Mr. Trigg stated that he was at Sam's the other day and they were doing a wine sampling their but that you had to sign a slip stating that you would not hold them responsible.

Mr. Riffe defended Field Fest and stated that they had events for the kids such as the movies, etc. He stated that this was a good event and would bring in more young and older folks and that they could not supply everything or they would end up having another Jamboree.

Mayor Harris stated that he was for anything that would help with the downtown area.

ATTORNEY REPORT

None.

ADJOURN

Mr. Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. Mr. Trigg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Don Harris, Mayor

Lesley Catron, Town Clerk