

**Town of Bluefield  
Town Council  
Minutes  
July 10, 2018**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, July 10, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall located at 112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia.

**PRESENT**

Don Harris, Mayor  
Jimmy Jones, Councilmember  
Lee Riffe, Vice-Mayor  
Chuck Presley, Councilmember  
Anglis Trigg Jr., Councilmember

**ALSO PRESENT**

Mike Watson, Town Manager  
Billie Roberts, Comm. Dev. Coordinator  
Shane Gunter, Police Chief  
Kris Williams, Zoning Administrator  
Lesley Clemons, Town Clerk  
10 Members of Public  
1 Member of Media

**ABSENT**

Ron Holt, Councilmember  
Matt Freedman, Town Attorney

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Bill Lykins, Memorial Baptist Church led the Invocation. Mayor Harris led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Harris added a Little League Request and an announcement from Mr. Jones to the agenda.

Councilmember Presley made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Vice-Mayor Riffe 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**

### ***Little League Request***

Jarried McFarland, 301 Montrose Street stated that the softball girls had done something that had never been done and captured the state title. He stated that they would represent VA in the Regionals in Salisbury, NC next week. He stated with the short notice that they did not have time to do a fundraiser and were asking for assistance in the amount of \$1,500.

Mr. Riffe asked if they had reached out to anyone else.

Mr. McFarland stated yes to the Board of Supervisors, Maggie Asbury and Charlie Stacy. He stated that the estimated total cost was \$5k-\$6k and was hoping to cover half of the cost between the Board of Supervisors and the Town.

Mr. Riffe asked how many on the team actually lived in the Town.

Mr. McFarland stated that out of 12 on the team about half of them lived in the Town Limits.

Mayor Harris thanked him and said that they would take it under consideration.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS & REPORTS**

### ***Rezoning of Areas Update – Billie Roberts***

Mrs. Roberts gave a quick update on the rezoning in downtown. She stated that the original application including North End, Spring St, etc. but after a couple of informational meetings that North End and Sexton Hill had been removed. She stated that they would concentrate on Spring Street and both sides of South College.

## **NEW BUSINESS & REPORTS**

### ***Pride of the Bluefields Night at the Ballpark Update – Lesley Clemons***

Mrs. Clemons stated that the Pride of the Bluefields Night would be held on Friday, August 31<sup>st</sup> at Bowen Field.

***Tazewell County Fair Update – Lesley Clemons***

Mrs. Clemons stated that the Town would also have a table set up at the Tazewell County Fair on Tuesday, July 17<sup>th</sup>.

***LED Sign for 1901 VA Ave –Kris Williams***

Mr. Williams stated that during a recent Planning Commission meeting that Planning Commission voted to approve an LED sign for Virginia Ave United Methodist Church. He stated that based upon their approval it would also be his recommendation to approve the LED Sign.

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve the LED Sign at 1901 VA Avenue. Mr. Trigg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

***Resolution to Approve Subdivision of Land, VOTE – Kris Williams***

Mr. Williams stated that Planning Commission approved a subdivision preliminary plat for property located on High Street and Highland Avenue. He stated that the new subdivision would establish new lot lines that would allow the Town to proceed with the High Street project. He stated that based upon Planning Commission's recommendation that it would be his recommendation to approve the preliminary plat.

Mr. Trigg made a motion to approve the Resolution to approve the Subdivision of Land. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

***Day Care Facility: 17 Harmon Street***

Mr. Williams stated that during a recent Planning Commission meeting that Planning Commission voted to approve a day care facility home located at 17 Harmon Street. He stated that based upon Planning Commission's decision and obtaining the appropriate state licensing that it would be his recommendation to approve the Day Care Facility.

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve the Day Care Facility at 17 Harmon Street. Mr. Riffe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Jim Justice, 15 Fairlane Drive stated that he was in shock today after finding out that Graham would be playing in Tazewell. He stated that the School Board offered Mercer County \$10k not \$50k and back in November mentioned meeting to pull a Regional Authority together.

Mr. Watson stated that it was emailed out to the Chamber and listed every single amenity and what was included.

Mr. Justice asked when the next meeting was.

Mr. Watson stated that they did not meet after that one and did not think that the City did anything wrong.

Mr. Justice asked if the decision was made not to do anything after the November meeting.

Mr. Watson stated that they went through the process to deed the stadium to Mercer County and he could not tell the discussions nor if it would or would not happen.

Mr. Justice stated that they quit after one meeting.

Mr. Watson stated that one problem we felt we would lose with was our amenities plus he did not think the ownership in the past would want to do that. He stated that one main consideration was the City Park and the Stadium but he did not knock them for their choices.

Mr. Justice stated that there were 31 people at the first meeting.

Mr. Watson stated that there were a lot of people at the first meeting to determine if the desire was there and to talk about it. He stated that the second meeting was a smaller group.

Mr. Justice stated that one obstacle was the willingness to give up some authority, old resentments, uneven allocation of funds, etc. He stated that they needed to overcome all of them because it was hard to see one of the best stadiums not used. He stated that everyone thought we were getting the short end of the stick and he would get back to them on that but asked that they work with the City of Bluefield. He asked the Mayor if he was on the Board of the park because there were documents stating that he was.

Mayor Harris asked Mr. Jones to make his announcement.

Mr. Jones stated that they swapped the principals between the Vo Tech and GHS but that he was happy to announce that after the meeting, he met with someone who donated \$50k for GHS to play at Mitchell Stadium. He stated that it was directly for the football contract.

## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

### ***129 Depot Street Property Discussion, VOTE (To Accept if Offered)***

Mr. Watson stated that Wells Fargo approached the Town to donate property to the Town. He stated that in return it would be donated to the IDA then turned over to one of the local choices. He asked for a motion to accept the offer.

Mr. Trigg made a motion to accept the 129 Depot Street Property donation from Wells Fargo. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

***126 First Street & 128 First Street Discussion, VOTE (To Accept if Offered)***

Mr. Watson stated that both homes were bought through foreclosure and had been donated to the Town. He stated that they would be used for training for the Fire Department. He asked for a motion to accept the properties.

Mr. Trigg made a motion to accept 126 First Street & 128 First Street. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

***Downtown Bank Property Discussion, VOTE (To Proceed with Acquisition Process)***

Mr. Watson stated over the past several months that the Town had been discussing the purchase/donation of 501 Virginia Avenue formerly known as the Bank of Graham Building. He stated that it would be purchased for about \$35k and would eventually be turned over to the IDA. He asked for a vote to proceed with the acquisition process.

Mr. Trigg made a motion to approve the acquisition process for 501 Virginia Avenue. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Harris asked for a Roll Call Vote.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

Councilmember Trigg:	Yes
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Holt:	Absent
Mayor Harris:	Yes
Councilmember Jones:	Yes
Vice-Mayor Riffe:	Yes

The motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

***Demolition of Condemned Properties Discussion***

Mr. Watson stated that 3 properties Baptist Hollow, Vencil Street, and one near VA Ave had gone through the condemnation process and were ready to be demolished. He stated that they would be demolished by Town Crews and then sold as a tax lien.

Mr. Trigg asked if you could get a fire truck through the one in Baptist Hollow.

Mr. Watson stated that they could get a regular fire truck through the underpass but not the ladder truck.

***Mobile Food Establishment Draft Ordinance Discussion, VOTE (To Go to Public Hearing)***

Mr. Watson stated that the Mobile Food Establishment Draft Ordinance would be added to the code once it was approved and asked for a vote to go to Public Hearing.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the Mobile Food Establishment Draft Ordinance to go to Public Hearing. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

***Sign Ordinance Amendment (Sec. 74-1164), VOTE, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading (Vote to Read by Title Only), VOTE (Vote to Adopt)***

Mr. Watson stated the Sign Ordinance Amendment would be read by title only and asked for a motion to approve it:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND, BY AMENDING SECTION 74-1164 OF ARTICLE IX (SIGNS) OF CHAPTER 74 (ZONING) OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA.

Mr. Trigg made a motion to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the Sign Ordinance Amendment (Sec. 74-1164) by title only. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Watson asked for a motion to adopt it.

Mr. Jones made a motion to adopt the Sign Ordinance Amendment (Sec. 74-1164). Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

***Virginia Avenue Downtown Wall Update***

Mr. Watson stated that a wall had been installed on Virginia Avenue near Jack Asbury Square and they would be adding a sidewalk. He stated that they would like to do something low maintenance and would be talking to Beautification about it. He stated that they were still working on the final design.

***Clean Up Day & Cookout***

Mr. Watson stated that the Clean up Day & Cookout would be held on Saturday, July 14<sup>th</sup>.

***Patchwork Quilters Jamboree***

Mr. Watson stated the Patchwork Quilters Jamboree would be held Friday, July 13<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, July 14<sup>th</sup> at GMS free admission.

***Tazewell County Fair***

Mr. Watson stated that Tazewell County Fair was July 17<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup>.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Trigg stated that the Town and the wall looked great.

Mr. Watson stated that during the winter they would try to manufacture more railing to replace near the wall.

Mr. Trigg asked that someone check the goals at Depot Street Playground because they looked too low.

Mr. Watson stated that new goals were ordered for all of the parks in Town.

Mr. Trigg asked that they be checked.

Mr. Presley gave a shout out to the Police Department and Chief Gunter. He asked if there was any progress on the Town's website.

Mr. Watson stated that he could put together a package with pricing for someone to professionally do it.

Mr. Presley asked with Ammar's closing how that would affect the Town.

Mr. Watson stated that it was personal property and they did not pay a lot but the biggest lost would be from revenue from the lost jobs. He stated that he was hoping to host a meeting with delegates and Tazewell County to host a job fair to help relocate these jobs. He stated that everyone was guaranteed a job for the next 60 days. He stated that once it got closer that Ammar's asked the Town to help them market the property.

Mr. Presley asked for an open meeting with the City of Bluefield about the park and the stadium. He stated that if they wanted to work with us, then council needed to do so.

Mr. Jones had none.

Mr. Riffe asked if the \$50k was a one-time deal with the stadium.

Mr. Jones said yes.

Mr. Riffe asked about the food truck set up downtown.

Mr. Watson stated that they were giving permission to set up during the Saturday night movies. He stated that it was part of the Rec Departments project to get people there. He stated that it was parked there on Friday night to get ready for Saturday.

Mr. Riffe stated that Sexton Hill had been removed for now but would be opened back up later on for discussion with Planning Commission. He stated that Field Fest was Thursday night. He stated that the Little League girls were going to District this week and made a motion to donate \$1,500 to the Little League.

There was no second.

The motion died.

Mayor Harris stated that last week we lost an 11 year employee who was a dispatcher in the Police Department. He stated that they met with Ammar's who informed them that they would be closing. He stated that it was a bad weekend and when one door closed another door opened. He stated 2 weeks ago he received a visit from Jason De la Cruz concerning an article in BDT. He asked him if he and his staff would come back after the article and he said he would be more than happy too. He stated that he also said that Dominion Power had questions they had to answer on the project.

Mr. Jones stated that Lawrence Brothers was looking to hire 15 people and after working there for 60 days they received insurance and an increase in salary. He stated that Joy Manufacturing was also hiring for welders again.

### **ATTORNEY REPORT**

None.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Councilmember Presley made a motion to enter into Executive Session pursuant to *Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711-A-1.6* and Mrs. Catron read:

The investing of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the government unit would be adversely affected.

Councilmember Trigg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Council entered into Executive Session at 8:38 p.m.



Councilmember Presley made a motion to enter out of Executive Session. Councilmember Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Councilmember Presley made a motion to adopt the following resolution certifying the Executive Session and Mrs. Catron read:

WHEREAS, the Town Council of Bluefield, Virginia has convened an executive meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712-D of The Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Town Council of Bluefield, Virginia that such session was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of Bluefield, Virginia hereby certifies that, to the best of each members knowledge, (I) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under this chapter and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting by the Town Council.

Adopted this 10<sup>th</sup> day of July.

Councilmember Trigg seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

Councilmember Trigg:	Yes
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Holt:	Absent
Mayor Harris:	Yes
Councilmember Jones:	Yes
Vice-Mayor Riffe:	Yes

The motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

Mr. Presley made a motion to return to regular session. Mr. Trigg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Jones asked about the Little League donation.

Mr. Presley stated that it would be up to Mr. Watson.

Mr. Watson stated that he did not give monetary donations but by the time they fundraised it would be too late. He stated that the Town had made donations in the past.

Mr. Presley asked what his recommendation would be.

Mr. Watson stated that there was money in contingency.

Mr. Presley stated that everyone should have a set amount of money.

Mr. Riffe stated that they did not blink an eye when the cheerleaders asked for money for their rings. He stated that this was the first time they were going to regionals and were in the Bluefield, VA Little League.

Mayor Harris stated that they had adopted a policy that they would not vote on something the same night. He stated that timing was the only thing.

Mr. Presley suggested giving them \$1k and he would give them \$250 personally and would make a motion for that.

Mr. Riffe suggested giving them \$1,500 and once they came back they could do community service if needed.

Mr. Jones made a motion to donate \$1,500 to the Bluefield, VA Little League Softball girls. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mayor Harris asked for a Roll Call Vote.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

Councilmember Trigg:	Yes
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Holt:	Absent
Mayor Harris:	Yes
Councilmember Jones:	Yes
Vice-Mayor Riffe:	Yes

The motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

**ADJOURN**

Mr. Trigg made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

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Don Harris, Mayor

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Lesley Catron, Town Clerk

## Lesley Compton

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**From:** Lesley Compton <compton@bluefieldva.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 28, 2018 9:28 AM  
**To:** Mike Watson  
**Subject:** Term Limits Survey Feedback

Just wanted to give an update on the feedback we received from the surveys regarding term limits that was posted in the recent newsletter. A few weeks ago, we mailed out approximately 2,000 newsletters, which included mailings to residents, businesses, churches, and other folks that wished to be placed on the mailing list. Each newsletter included a term limit survey. To date, we have received 24 completed surveys. 3 of those returned surveys had 2 votes on them because more than 1 individual from the residence voted on the same slip. After tallying the votes, the current feedback shows a 22 to 5 vote. 22 being in favor of term limits and 5 not in favor of term limits.

*Lesley L. Catron*

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