

**Town of Bluefield  
Town Council  
Minutes  
January 10, 2017**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, January 10, 2017 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, Vice Mayor  
Lee Riffe, Councilmember  
Chuck Presley, Councilmember  
Ron Holt, Councilmember  
Steve Danko, Councilmember

**ALSO PRESENT**

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

**ABSENT**

Shane Gunter, Police Chief

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Councilmember Riffe led the Invocation. Mayor Harris led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Harris removed the Cheerleading Donation from the agenda.

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

**CITIZEN REQUESTS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

None.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS & REPORTS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS & REPORTS**

***Vice-Mayor Discussion, POSSIBLE VOTE – Mike Watson***

Mr. Watson stated that Vice-Mayor was voted on every 2 years and was done thru a recommendation by council. He asked the mayor to request a vote for appointment of Vice-Mayor.

Mayor Harris stated that the floor was open and asked if there was a motion for Vice-Mayor.

Mr. Holt made a motion to appoint Lee Riffe as Vice-Mayor. Mr. Danko seconded the motion.

Mr. Holt explained his motion. He stated that he had the upmost respect for Mr. Jones and that he had always done a great job. He stated that his motion for Mr. Riffe was that he was very involved in the Town, energetic and was the face he had seen associated with different events. He stated that a lot of people care about him and liked him and that the two of them had a lot of differences over the past several years but he thought that he would be someone that he could definitely work with and would do a good job for the Town. He stated that just the fact that he was an energetic person, cared about the Town and you seen him out.

Mr. Jones stated that he would not accept a nomination. He asked that whoever was voted as Vice-Mayor to be allowed to continue to sign checks in case one of the other authorized signers were to be out of Town.

Mayor Harris stated that his intent was to nominate Mr. Jones but that he stated that he would decline it.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Harris congratulated Mr. Riffe.

***Appointments / Reappointments, VOTE – Mike Watson***

Mr. Watson stated that he needed a motion to approve each reappointment individually.

- Barry Perdue to Planning Commission (4 year term). Mr. Jones made a motion to approve reappointing Barry Perdue to the Planning Commission for a 4 year term. Mr. Riffe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- Mike Ruble and Eddie Pauley to Board of Building Code Appeals (4 year term). Mr. Jones made a motion to approve reappointing Mike Ruble and Eddie Pauley to the Board of Building Code Appeals for a 4 year term. Mr. Danko seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- Gail Cook to the Cemetery Commission (3 year term). Mr. Riffe made a motion to approve reappointing Gail Cook for a 3 year term. Mr. Holt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- Mr. Watson and Mayor Harris to the Bluefield, VA Rescue Squad (1 year term). Mr. Jones made a motion to approve reappointing Mr. Watson and Mayor Harris to the Bluefield, VA Rescue Squad for a 1 year term. Mr. Riffe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- Mr. Danko to the Bluefield Sanitary Board (3 year term). Mr. Holt made a motion to approve reappointing Mr. Danko to the Bluefield Sanitary Board for a 3 year term. Mr. Riffe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- Mayor Harris to the Cumberland Plateau Planning District (1 year term). Mr. Holt made a motion to approve reappointing Mayor Harris to the Cumberland Plateau Planning District for a 1 year term. Mr. Danko seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
- Mr. Watson to the Bluefield Baseball Club (1 year term). Mr. Jones made a motion to approve reappointing Mr. Watson to the Bluefield Baseball Club for a 1 year term. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

***Audit Report***

Mr. Watson stated that the auditors would be at the next meeting to discuss the Town's latest audit report. He asked that council keep their copy until the next meeting.

***Wrestling Donations Request, VOTE***

Mr. Watson stated that wrestling donation request was \$1k and asked if council would like to vote to approve the request.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the \$1k Wrestling Donation. Mr. Holt seconded the motion.

Mr. Holt stated that he knew it was tough and some had issues with a donation to these types of organizations but that Mrs. Raley gave a compelling speech when she talked about college recruiters who showed up at these events. He stated that he and his wife were \$100k in debt with student loans and that it was a crippling debt that our young people are left with. He stated that these are state class athletes who are going up there and doing really great things with this program. He stated that he looked at that \$1k as an investment in these kids, their future and the future of our Town. He stated that if these kids were able to receive a college scholarship from this that he was all for it. He stated that he knew there were a lot of people coming and asking for money but did not really do anything to fundraise the money but he knew that this particular organization did and that was the reason that he 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

#### ***Playground Equipment Grant Update***

Mr. Watson stated that we did receive a \$40k matching grant from the Shott Foundation. He stated that they talked about it earlier in the fall and talked about budgeting. He stated that the best time to buy playground equipment was in the winter time. He stated that he would bring it back for a vote but he was looking at taking \$40k out of one of the savings accounts and placing it with the \$40k to buy \$80k worth of equipment to revamp some of our parks. He stated that Depot Street, Pinehill Park and Graham Rec were the major ones that needed new equipment. He stated they were looking at the West Graham area and adding some equipment to it as well. He stated that they were trying to make the parks available for ages 2-12. He stated that staff had applied for another grant but had not heard back on it yet. He stated that a local resident had been working with staff to try and find more money to spend on Depot Street. He stated that staff would be writing a letter of appreciation.

#### ***Resolution for Juanita Sheppard, VOTE***

Mr. Watson stated that Juanita Sheppard was one of the first on the Autumn Jamboree Committee and also worked with the VFW. He stated that she could not do as much and be as involved as she used to and asked that council approve doing a resolution to honor her.

Mr. Riffe made a motion to approve a Resolution for Juanita Sheppard. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

#### ***Budget Work Session***

Mr. Watson asked council to think about an evening to do a Budget Work Session that was not on a council meeting night.

***Conflict of Interest Forms***

Mr. Watson stated that Conflict of Interest Forms were due by Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>.

***Tazewell County Career & Technical Center Tour***

Mr. Watson stated that they would be touring the Tazewell County Career & Technical Center on Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. He asked those wanting to attend to meet him at Town Hall at noon.

***Legislative Visit to Richmond***

Mr. Watson stated that the Legislative Visit to Richmond would be January 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>. He stated there was still time to cancel if anyone could not go to let staff know as soon as possible.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

George Leedy stated that the Town did a great job on the recent snow storm. He stated that there was enthusiasm for the new councilmember's and that the Town of Bluefield was one of the best governed Towns in the state.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Watson stated that they need to clarify the Wrestling Donation and asked the mayor to do a roll call vote.

Mayor Harris asked for a roll call vote on the \$1k Wrestling Donation.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

Councilmember Riffe:	No
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Holt:	Yes
Mayor Harris:	Yes
Vice-Mayor Jones:	Yes
Councilmember Danko:	Yes

The motion passed 5-1 by roll call vote.

Mr. Danko stated that he took his truck to the Vocational School to have it fixed and that it only cost him \$300 vs. Cole who was going to charge him \$1,100. He stated that they done a really good job but kept it longer because they could only work on it for about 20 minutes per day.

Mr. Jones had none.

Mr. Riffe stated that the Town did a great job on snow removal during the last snow storm. He thanked council for their vote to appoint him as Vice-Mayor and stated that he appreciated Mr. Jones and would look to him for guidance.

Mr. Presley had none.

Mr. Holt stated that he wished that Chief Gunter would have been there but that there was a tragedy in the Town last week and it was difficult for the Police Department to investigate. He stated that he would like to thank the Police Department for their hard work.

Mr. Watson stated the young man's funeral would be on Wednesday with visitation at 1 p.m. and the service at 2 p.m. at Mercer Funeral Home.

Mayor Harris stated that he had a gentleman take out his frustration on him because of the snow removal. He stated that he had been frustrated for the past 30 years and lived in a cul de sac. He stated that the snow had to go somewhere. He stated that the gentleman was nice about it but was just frustrated. He stated that he had talked with one of the drivers during the storm and he told him that he had been out all night. He stated that all of our employees were important and that council needed to keep that in mind when they started the upcoming Budget Work Session.

Mr. Jones stated that he was at the high school today and had heard students asking to be allowed to attend the young man's funeral. He stated that the principal told them that they could as long as they brought back something from the funeral home.

Mayor Harris welcomed the new councilmember's and stated that they were all a team and reminded them to leave their differences there and not take them home with them.

### **ATTORNEY REPORT**

None.

### **ADJOURN**

Mr. Holt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Mr. Danko 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