

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Minutes
September 12, 2017**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, September 12, 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, Councilmember
Ron Holt, Councilmember
Chuck Presley, Councilmember
Steve Danko, Councilmember
Lee Riffe, Vice-Mayor

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
Jody Shrewsbury, Cemetery Superintendent
12 Members of Public

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Holt made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

CITIZEN REQUESTS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Citizen Request: Blessings in a Backpack – Kelly Knowles

Ms. Knowles stated that she lived at 117 Oakhurst Ave, Bluefield, WV. She asked council to participate in helping to pack backpacks. She stated that it would be held on September 28th at 6 p.m. at the old K&K building. She stated that Blessings in a Backpack provided food for the weekends and they packed every 3-5 weeks. She stated that they started out with 70 kids and was up to 200 now.

Mayor Harris stated that it was a tremendous undertaking. He thanked her for being there.

Presentation of Resolution to Mr. Ed Spurgeon and Mr. Ben Muncy – Mayor Harris

Mayor Harris asked Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. Muncy to come forward. Mrs. Catron read the following resolutions to each one:



**TOWN OF BLUEFIELD
RESOLUTION**

“Recognition of Cemetery Commission Member Ed Spurgeon”

WHEREAS, Mr. Ed Spurgeon is a native of southwest Virginia; and

WHEREAS, he was born and raised in Bluefield, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, he proudly served our country in the United States Army from 1945 – 1947 in the Quartermaster Corps.; and

WHEREAS, he was hired by former Town Manager Art Mead to serve as the Town’s Superintendent Salesman at Maple Hill Cemetery from 1987 until his retirement in 1993; and

WHEREAS, upon his retirement from the Town, former Mayor Cecille Barrett presented him with an official Key to the Town; and

WHEREAS, he was appointed to the Bluefield, Virginia Cemetery Commission in 2002, where he is still an active member; and

WHEREAS, during his time serving on the Commission, he and his fellow Commission Members, along with the Cemetery Superintendent, have completed numerous projects at Maple Hill Cemetery including the erection of the new cemetery building, remodeling of the gate, the placement of new benches and trash receptacles, the addition of a cremation garden, the addition of a fence around the perimeter, the revitalization of the older area of the cemetery, and the annexation and maintenance of the African American section of the cemetery, located on the west end.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that that Bluefield, Virginia Town Council hereby recognizes the hardwork and dedication of Mr. Ed Spurgeon and his years of service to the Bluefield, Virginia Cemetery Commission for Maple Hill Cemetery.

Adopted the 8th day of August 2017. Presented this 12th day of September 2017.

Donald R. Harris, Mayor of Bluefield, VA

Lesley L. Catron, Town Clerk of Bluefield, VA



**TOWN OF BLUEFIELD
RESOLUTION**

“Recognition of Cemetery Commission Member Ben Muncy”

WHEREAS, Mr. Ben Muncy is a native of southwest Virginia; and

WHEREAS, he was born and raised in Bland, Virginia and has been a resident of Bluefield, Virginia for fifty-three years; and

WHEREAS, he proudly served our country in the United States Navy with four years of active service, as well as four years of inactive service in the Reserves; and

WHEREAS, he worked at McQuail’s Furniture Wholesale store in Bluefield, West Virginia before beginning his career at the Tazewell County Sheriff’s Office; and

WHEREAS, he served as a Police Deputy for the Tazewell County Sheriff's Office for twenty-one years before retiring in 1998; and

WHEREAS, he left retirement to return to the Sheriff's Office in 1999, where he worked until 2010 and officially retired at the age of 77; and

WHEREAS, he joined the Bluefield, Virginia Cemetery Commission in 1998; and

WHEREAS, he is the only living member of the Cemetery Commission that served in 1998; and

WHEREAS, he became Chairman of the Cemetery Commission in 2013; and

WHEREAS, during his time serving on the Commission, he and his fellow Commission Members, along with the Cemetery Superintendent, have completed numerous projects at Maple Hill Cemetery including the erection of the new cemetery building, remodeling of the gate, the placement of new benches and trash receptacles, the addition of a cremation garden, the addition of a fence around the perimeter, the revitalization of the older area of the cemetery, and the annexation and maintenance of the African American section of the cemetery, located on the west end.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that that Bluefield, Virginia Town Council hereby recognizes the hardwork and dedication of Mr. Ben Muncy and his years of service to the Bluefield, Virginia Cemetery Commission for Maple Hill Cemetery.

Adopted the 8th day of August 2017. Presented this 12th day of September 2017.

Donald R. Harris, Mayor of Bluefield, VA

Lesley L. Catron, Town Clerk of Bluefield, VA

Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. Muncy stated that it could not be done without Jody Shrewsbury.

Mr. Spurgeon stated that he was given the key to the Town in 1993 when he retired and thanked everyone.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Sanders House Update – Gail Cook, Terry Kammer and Eva Saunders

Mrs. Kammer stated that the Sanders House Managing Board was made up of volunteers and she served as secretary. She stated that 2,323 people visited the Sanders House this year which was up by 450 from last year. She stated that it served as a historical museum, cultural center, event venue, etc. She stated that the Holiday Bazaar brought in 32 local vendors and 700 people from the community. She stated that they had paint parties and were booked up during the month of August. She stated that it was the backdrop for the Prerogative Magazine and was the site for a fashion show sponsored by Leslie Ann's and Grey & Honey. She stated that they would be having a concert on the lawn for a fundraiser on October 14th with Ruff Kutt performing. She thanked the

Corte Foundation for a grant they received which allowed them to have regular tour hours led by Gail Cook. She stated that the Sanders House served the youth with tours and in November the 3rd Graders from Abbs Valley would be touring. She stated that the GMS Jr. Debs held their monthly meetings there and that the GMS Cheer Team held their Christmas Party their last year. She stated that other events that have taken place at the Sander's House include photos with Santa, Project Graduation Bake Sale, High School interns for the last 2 summers and the inside was also used for Prom and Senior pictures. She thanked the Town and GHS Sub Debs for the free Easter Egg hunt they had on the lawn this past Easter. She stated that 20 high school girls ran the event. She stated that last year the football team helped to move items for their yard sale and last summer Sheila Stilwell opened Grainery Gifts. She stated in the past month they helped with the Eclipse Party and continued to work with the Visitor's Center. She stated that they were doing small repair projects and were working to repair the mural in the library which cost \$7k. She stated that they raised over \$9k to cap the chimneys and had applied for grants with one already being approved. She stated that the concert would go towards this as well and their next project would be to repair and replace the wall paper in the hallway, etc. She thanked the Town for all they had done to help them.

Ms. Cook stated that the summer tours had locals coming in to see the Sanders House. She stated that she had a student interning who helped her go thru boxes of pictures and papers to put on the 3rd floor Town Museum. She stated that she had old councilmembers and mayors pictures, artifacts, etc. and asked if council had anything else to let her know. She encouraged everyone to come see it and that she enjoyed doing the tours.

Mrs. Saunders stated that the Historical Society established a Black History to be recorded and placed at the Sanders House. She stated that they would be putting plaques on older homes and businesses in Town and had several projects in the planning. She stated that the 2nd Tuesday in October would be the Annual Bean Dinner from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. and invited everyone to come. She thanked the Town for all of their hard work and helping them and stated that they always needed more help.

Mr. Riffe stated that his daughter interned this past summer and she was amazed with it all.

Mayor Harris thanked them for all that they did and told Ms. Cook that he had some items he would loan them.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS & REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS & REPORTS

IDA Member Appointment, VOTE – Billie Roberts

Mrs. Roberts stated there was a memo in council's packet recommending Brad Ayers to fill the IDA vacancy.

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve Brad Ayers to fill the IDA vacancy. Mr. Riffe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Dilapidated Property: Baptist Hollow Road Discussion – Mike Watson

Mr. Watson stated in the spring he would have a list of those properties that would be torn down. He stated that right now they were going thru the process and since Baptist Hollow had been annexed they would be cleaning it up as well. He stated that it was an absentee owner who had the property and owed back taxes on it. He stated that she was going to pay the taxes off then we could clean it up and make it to where it was harder for people to throw their trash out there. He stated that once the taxes were paid, he would bring it back to council. He stated that there were 5-6 locations that they were looking at condemning in the spring. He stated that they would first check for back taxes, liens, etc.

Mayor Harris agreed that it needed to be cleaned up.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

David Wohlford, Fairway Street stated that they had a meeting last week concerning the security issues in Town and asked since we were currently negotiating a franchise with Comcast could we not request internet service for our security cameras. He stated that the Police Department was doing a good job patrolling and things had slowed down.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

RFP for Water Project Discussion

Mr. Watson stated that we had received bids for the Capital Improvement Project and would be scheduling interviews at the next council meeting. He stated that we received bids from Hurt & Proffitt (old Anderson & Associates) and Thompson & Litton. He stated that council would be grading them and would be given guidelines to go by which was on a point scale. He stated that staff would be going to Abingdon on the 27th to meet with the VDH.

Fire Department Crash Truck Update

Mr. Watson stated that the cost to purchase the truck was \$42k which was \$3k cheaper and that Tazewell County had agreed to provide \$4,500 to assist with the purchase of equipment needed for this truck. He stated that the total cost including equipment would be \$52,500.

Council Meeting Recordings

Mr. Watson stated that he was having some difficulty with the recordings and that the video was good but the sound was bad. He stated that it was being done in house and had 37 gigs of information and that the normal was 5 gigs or less. He stated in order to put it on the website, it had to be 2 gigs. He stated that he was still working on it and that was why he may put the video up then take it back down. He apologized if that had caused any problems. He stated that when council voted to do the recordings they voted to spend around \$1k. He stated that the cost on contracting it out was \$150 per hour from one company and \$500 each meeting from another company. He stated that he was looking for input and that it would probably take him another month to figure it all out.

Mr. Presley stated that they needed to save money and do it in house and he understood it was a work in progress.

Mr. Watson stated that he was working on it.

Mr. Riffe suggested looking at microphones that they could wear so they did not have to sit over top of the ones they had. He also suggested looking at other videos of Town's that were similar. He stated that they just needed to work on the sound and that the quality would not be 100%.

Mr. Watson stated that the microphones they had now was coming out of the speakers and was echoing when recorded.

Mr. Riffe suggested having a sound tech come in to see how they needed to record it because it should not be picking up an echo.

Mr. Watson stated that when the chamber was built that it was built with theatrical lighting and a sound system made for voice. He stated that if someone was talking over another person that it would cut the other person out. He stated that it was recording directly from the camera sound and that it was just going to take time.

Mr. Presley asked him to keep working on it and if it was posted to keep it up and not take it down. He stated that it would save the Town money by doing it in house.

Mr. Watson stated that what he could do was put it on you tube and give the password to the ones who needed it.

Mr. Holt asked if 3 days was a reasonable time to get it posted.

Mr. Watson stated right now that would be difficult but he would do his best to get it up ASAP.

Mr. Holt asked if anyone had talked to the Town of Tazewell.

Mr. Watson stated that they had a gentleman who did it for \$200 per meeting and staff had called him but he would not return our call.

Mrs. Roberts stated that his name was Reeves and he was out of Princeton but he has not called her back.

Mr. Presley asked if he provided the equipment.

Mrs. Roberts stated that she did not know but had talked to Robin in Tazewell and was told that he did it all and the website.

Mr. Holt asked if it was worth it to get it off of staff.

Mr. Watson stated that he would give it up at any time. He stated that he was using 2 different kinds of recordings to record it and once it was recorded he had to compress it and edit it which took a lot of time.

Mayor Harris asked staff to continue on the same path and he agreed with Mr. Presley about saving money and doing it in house.

Local Govt. Management Grad. Certificate Program Update

Mr. Watson stated that the local government management class was a great program. He stated that it was sent out to the department heads to see if anyone was interested in attending.

Mr. Holt asked if he confirmed that a bachelor's degree was required.

Mr. Watson stated that he did and a 4 year degree was required.

Mr. Presley asked if council could do the program.

Mr. Watson stated that it was up to council.

Mr. Jones asked that they wait and see if Mr. Watson could fix the video before outsourcing it.

Tour du Parc

Mr. Watson stated that Tour du Parc would be held on September 29th at Graham Rec Park starting at 9:30 a.m. He stated that staff was planning a get together the same day.

VML Conference

Mr. Watson stated that VML would be held in Williamsburg on October 1st – 3rd. He stated that if there were any changes that needed to be made to let staff know ASAP.

Red Cross Blood Drive

Mr. Watson stated that the Red Cross would be set up on Wednesday, October 25th in the Council Chambers.

Surplus Properties

Mr. Watson stated that there was a list of equipment in council's packet that the Town could no longer use and would be disposing of. He stated that the Crown Vic had been stripped and the spotlight cutoff. He stated that he did not like to sell them and would donate if anyone else would want it. He recommended disposing of the following:

- 1984 International
- 2001 Jeep Cherokee
- 2002 Ford Taurus
- 2008 Ford Crown Vic
- Snapper Riding Mower

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve disposing of the Surplus Properties listed. Mr. Holt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Danko asked when the paving would start.

Mr. Watson stated the middle to end of September.

Mr. Jones had none.

Mr. Holt stated that he had a complaint about the striping on the roadway between Lowe's and Sam's being faded.

Mr. Watson stated that they would do the striping when they did the paving within the next month.

Mr. Presley thanked Mr. Watson for the meeting with the Sedgewood residents and that he was working with Mr. Watson on some ideas about putting up cameras. He stated that they had a good meeting with the City of Bluefield. He stated that he had been asking to have a Budget Work Session because he wanted to see what the extra money was going for. He stated that they were losing 2 Police Officers soon and would be looking for new ones. He stated that he would like to see them get veteran guys in. He asked when Student Government Day would be.

Mrs. Catron stated that it was usually in October.

Mr. Riffe stated that the Autumn Jamboree went over well and that staff had done a great job as usual. He stated that the Fire Department held a demonstration and that we were down in vendors this year. He stated that last year we had 60 and this year we only had 30.

Mayor Harris had none.

ATTORNEY REPORT

Noise Ordinance, 2nd Reading, VOTE TO READ BY TITLE ONLY VOTE TO ADOPT

Mr. Freedman stated that this would be the 2nd Reading of the Noise Ordinance and would be read by title only. He asked for a vote to read by title only.

Mr. Holt made a motion to approve the 2nd Reading of the Noise Ordinance by title only. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Freedman read:

AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE, BY CREATING ARTICLE IX (NOISE) OF CHAPTER 30 (OFFENSES) OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA

Mr. Freedman asked for a motion to adopt the Noise Ordinance.

Mr. Holt made a motion to adopt the Noise Ordinance. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Cable Franchise, VOTE TO ACCEPT A BID

Mr. Freedman stated that Comcast was the only bid and asked the Mayor to open the bid and ask for any other bids.

Mr. Presley asked if there was a way to make them put up internet service for the cameras.

Mr. Watson stated that the franchise was offering for TV service and for us to use their poles for this service. He stated that if council wanted to wait until the next meeting to vote on it then staff could ask.

Mr. Freedman stated that this was for the TV service and they had gone thru negotiations. He stated that this would be to accept the bid and that he could do a subsequent agreement for internet but that it was not addressed in this agreement.

Mayor Harris opened the bid and stated that it was the same one that they had previously agreed upon. He asked if there were any more bids for the cable franchise.

There were no other bids.

Mayor Harris asked for a motion to accept the bid as submitted.

Mr. Holt made a motion to accept as presented. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mr. Riffe stated that they supplied internet thru the cable and asked if that was in there.

Mr. Freedman asked to read the definition of Cable Services.

Mr. Watson asked if this was a vote to go to Public Hearing.

Mr. Freedman stated that this was to accept the bid in hand. He stated that procedurally, he would then advertised for a Public Hearing to hear the ordinance that adopts the franchise.

Mr. Watson stated that the actual approval of the franchise would be done at a later time.

Mr. Freedman stated yes. He read the following definition:

“Cable Service” or “Service” shall mean the one-way transmission to Subscribers of Video Programming or other Programming service and Subscriber interaction, if any, which is required for the selection or use of such Video Programming or other Programming service.

He stated that he interpreted it to be specific to TV.

Mr. Riffe stated that he thought the internet should be included because it was a service that they provided. He asked if he was looking at it wrong because when they came to hook him up it was thru the cable.

Mr. Watson stated that it had to do with the cable franchise patent. He stated that when BVU came in and put broadband in the Town that they worked thru a state wide right of way. He stated that the only reason we had an agreement with them was because

they were using our right of way so we put clauses in it. He stated that we required Comcast to move it if need be or if we hit a line they did not charge us for it. He stated that there was a franchise tax that the state collected and sent to us off of the cable. He stated that they did not collect a franchise tax off of internet. He stated that the NTelos agreement with us was for them to use our right of way. He stated that the franchise with AEP, the State negotiated to allow their poles to set on our right of way which allowed them to work on them when needed. He stated that staff would check and see if it could be included but that there was no other person in the Commonwealth that was getting internet service provided thru them for free.

Mr. Freedman stated that if they accepted the bid that they were not obligated to adopt an ordinance and they could vote not to accept the bid later on. He stated that he would hate to hold up the process for internet service since they would already be at the end of October.

Mr. Presley agreed that they should go ahead and accept it and could change down the road if need be.

Mayor Harris stated that it could be changed at the Public Hearing.

Mr. Freedman stated that it would need to be brought back if the franchise changed and they were submitting a different bid if it did not include internet service.

Mr. Presley stated that he did not think it could be taken to the public before.

Mayor Harris asked for a Roll Call Vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Vice-Mayor Riffe: | Yes |
| Councilmember Presley: | Yes |
| Councilmember Holt: | Yes |
| Mayor Harris: | Yes |
| Councilmember Jones: | Yes |
| Councilmember Danko: | Yes |

The motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

ADJOURN

Mr. Holt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Don Harris, Mayor

Lesley Catron, Town Clerk