

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Minutes
May 8, 2018**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 8, 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
Lesley Catron, Town Clerk
Matt Freedman, Town Attorney
Shane Gunter, Police Chief
6 Members of Public

ABSENT

Ron Holt, Councilmember

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Harris added the Police Officer Appreciation under New Business.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Autumn Jamboree Update – James Hampton/Lesley Catron

Mr. Hampton went over the list of events below:

1:00 – 8:00	Bounce House and Inflatables
1:00 – 6:00	Rock Climbing wall, Extreme Air, and Hippo Chow Down
1:00 – 1:15	Opening Ceremonies
1:15 – 3:00	Ruff Kutt (performing on the Visitors Center front porch)
4:00 – 6:00	Beach Nite Band (performing on the Visitors Center front porch)
7:00 – 9:30	Cody Wickline (former contestant on The Voice will perform on the big stage)
9:30	Fireworks

OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS

Art and Essay Prize giveaways

David Nipper Black Powder Shoot-off
Apple Butter
Tractor Hay Ride
Art Contest
Essay Contest
Duck Race (2 pm, 4 pm, 6 pm)
Arts, Crafts and Food Vendors

Winners announced 3:00 at the Gazebo

8:00AM-12:00 Noon Graham Rec Park
Ebenezer United Methodist Church
Town of Bluefield
VFW Post 9696, VFW Women's Auxiliary
BB&T
Kiwanis Club

INFLATABLES PROVIDED BY B&B BOUNCERS. BUS SERVICE PROVIDED FROM TWIN CITY SHOPPING CENTER, GRAHAM MIDDLE, AND GRAHAM HIGH SCHOOL.

Mr. Hampton stated new to the Autumn Jamboree this year would be a Flea Market/Yard Sale Vendors. He stated that by adding this it would attract more people. He stated that the time had been moved to 1 p.m. because of complaints received regarding down time between 11-2. He stated by shortening the day and adding more to the event, it would be a fully packed event and people would want to stay all day.

CITIZEN REQUESTS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS & REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS & REPORTS

Budget Amendments, VOTE – Lesley Catron

PURPOSE: Purchase of Equipment: Roller, Meade Tractor, Affordable Trucks

Revenue

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
0100-0509	Prior Year	<u>\$270,830.39</u>	<u>\$318,135.39</u>	<u>\$47,305.00</u>
	Reserves	<u>\$279,830.39</u>	<u>\$318,135.39</u>	<u>\$47,305.00</u>

Expenditure

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
9100-5850	Contingency	<u>\$78,757.03</u>	<u>\$126,062.03</u>	<u>\$47,305.00</u>
		<u>\$78,757.03</u>	<u>\$126,062.03</u>	<u>\$47,305.00</u>

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve the budget amendments. Mr. Trigg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Police Officer Appreciation Update – Lesley Catron

Mrs. Catron stated that Officer Horn’s wife Tammy who worked at the Treasurer’s Office brought it to their attention that next week was Police Officer Appreciation Week. She stated that Tammy had put together a Police Officer Appreciation Walk at Town Hall open to everyone that would start at 10 a.m. and go to 12 p.m. on Saturday, May 19th. She stated that the first 100 people would receive a free t-shirt and the walk was no charge.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Tom Cole, Former Mayor of Bluefield, WV stated that the cigarette tax was raising concerns. He stated that they were fortunate to be bordering WV and the Town was the beneficiary to those traveling over the state line.

Mr. Watson stated that the proposal would take it to \$1.25.

Mr. Cole stated that the BO Tax/BPOL Tax was taxed at gross sales and had nothing to do with profit. He stated that they had expensive items sold at lower prices and would lose a certain amount of sales by doing this. He asked what the need for this money was and what the projected increase would be on 2 ½ cents.

Mr. Watson stated that it would raise about \$25k/year and they had originally looked at raising it \$0.05. He stated that last year the meals tax was raised to fund a big project.

Mr. Cole asked what the total tax was raised too.

Mr. Watson stated 6.5% but we were still lower than Tazewell. He stated the cigarette tax increase was due to a 12% rise in healthcare. He stated that that deductible was raised from \$250 to \$500 and instead of giving the employees a percentage raise, they decided to give \$500/year to all full time employees.

Mr. Cole stated that his employees paid \$1,300/month for family insurance and \$10k for a family deductible and that was the real world. He stated that they obviously had to do what they needed to do and he thought this was the Public Hearing for cigarette taxes. He stated that he may or may not come back for it. He stated that the property insurance went up this year as well. He stated that Virginia used to be the place to do business but would not be if people were "nickeled and dimed". He stated that it was not a pass through tax because it was not built into his cost and he would have to sale them for 12 ½ cents less to get close to his margin. He thanked them for their time and asked that they take it under consideration.

Mayor Harris thanked him for coming and said they would consider his concerns.

Donnie Linkous stated that he understood it was not the Public Hearing but business was tough now. He stated that his deductible was \$4k each and that every employee was valuable but a \$500 deductible was no deductible. He stated that you should not be raising a tax to give a raise and cover a deductible and if it could not be paid then they could not afford a \$6 million project. He encouraged them to look at taking care of business people.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Field Fest

Mr. Watson stated that Mrs. Roberts and staff went above and beyond for this past Field Fest.

Schedule Public Hearing for 2018 / 2019 Fiscal Budget, VOTE

Mr. Watson asked for a vote to schedule a Public Hearing for the 2018/2019 Fiscal Budget.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve scheduling a Public Hearing for the 2018/2019 Fiscal Budget. Mr. Presley seconded the motion.

Mr. Riffe asked if this was before a cigarette vote.

Mr. Watson stated that he would be scheduling a Public Hearing for both. He stated with this raise, we were still lower than any of the others in our region on cigarettes.

Mr. Riffe stated that the cigarette tax and trash increase would generate around \$45k total.

Mr. Watson stated that the Town picked up the additional cost.

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:	No

The motion passed 4-1 by Roll Call Vote.

Town Offices Closed

Mr. Watson stated that Town Offices would be closed Monday, May 28th for Memorial Day. Monday's trash will be picked up on Friday, May 25th.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Trigg had none.

Mr. Presley stated that Field Fest was awesome and gave a shout out to the Police Chief. He suggested putting bullet proof glass on the outside of the Police Department. He also suggested setting a cap on money for sports teams. He asked when Macados would open.

Mr. Watson stated that he was not sure.

Mr. Presley asked about the \$6 million stadium and if this was what they were doing. He stated that he would like know what was going on with it.

Mr. Watson stated that he had not received a bad comment about it and they were in the process of advertising for engineering firms. He stated that the Town was looking at building a \$6 million facility.

Mr. Presley stated that he would love to have it but everyone was wanting to know how they could afford a \$6 million stadium.

Mr. Watson asked council to clarify and if he said it wrong.

Mr. Presley stated that the news stated it wrong.

Mr. Watson stated that if council would like, he would send in a press release stating we were just advertising not building it.

Mr. Presley stated that they never agreed on building it and people were looking at how the Town would be able to sustain the stadium.

Mr. Watson asked council to vote on if they wanted to move forward with it or not.

Mr. Presley stated that they should move forward with it but it was portrayed as if the Town was building it and the citizens had to deal with it. He asked Mr. Riffe if that was how he portrayed it.

Mr. Riffe stated yes and he also had people coming up to him as well.

Mr. Presley stated that the Town could not absorb \$6 million.

Mr. Watson apologized.

Mr. Presley stated that he was not blaming him but that the news portrayed it differently. He stated that they were cutting services for basic stuff and building a \$6 million project that was not physically responsible. He stated that he just wanted to let them know the frustration from a lot of citizens and did not blame him.

Mr. Watson stated that the intent and his understanding was to do everything they could to move forward with this project.

Mr. Presley stated that the news did not portray it correctly. He stated that the press release was awesome but the news made it something different.

Mr. Watson asked what council would like for him to do.

Mr. Presley stated that they should move forward with it but they needed to know how it would be funded, etc.

Mr. Jones stated that nobody knew that and it was an estimation.

Mr. Presley stated that he knew that but it was how the news portrayed it as if the Town was building it so deal with it.

Mr. Watson stated that he would make another announcement if council would like him to do so. He stated there was no reason to hire an engineering firm, etc. if they were not going to move forward with the project.

Mr. Presley stated no that it just needed to be worded correctly to the public because they had mad citizens.

Mr. Watson advised council to send them to him. He stated that the intent and direction to him from council was to move forward with this project with hopes to break ground in 2019. He stated that they had dedicated the money from meals tax to go towards this project.

Mr. Presley stated that he understood but they did not need to get people excited in the wrong way.

Mr. Watson stated that if council would like him to change the way it was done he would but he thought he was doing what council had instructed him to do.

Mr. Presley stated that it was not a personal attack on him.

Mr. Jones stated that Mr. Watson did what council asked.

Mr. Presley stated that the media portrayed it wrong.

Mr. Watson asked if council wanted him to move forward with the project.

Mr. Presley stated yes for them to do what they talked about in Executive Session but there was no way they could do \$6 million by themselves.

Mr. Watson stated that he was instructed to move forward and to try to fundraise. He stated that you never spend funds on engineering, etc. unless you wanted to move forward with a project.

Mr. Presley stated that he knew that but it was how it was portrayed.

Mayor Harris stated that they could not help how it was portrayed.

Mr. Presley stated that he was just letting them know how people felt and that he was not mad at Mr. Watson. He stated that Mr. Riffe also agreed it was portrayed wrong.

Mayor Harris stated that they were all in agreement including Mr. Presley to do this project.

Mr. Presley stated that the next time Mr. Watson needed to word it and not let them word it.

Mr. Watson stated that you cannot change news, social media posts, etc.

Mayor Harris stated that he had not received any negative comments about it.

Mr. Jones stated that he had not either.

Mayor Harris stated that he actually had a citizen to come in to the store and give him money to go towards this project and stated that it had been needed for a long time. He stated that he would be turning the money over to Mr. Watson. He stated that they could not dictate to the news and the statement they made was two paragraphs long.

Mr. Presley stated that he was not mad at them.

Mr. Jones had none.

Mr. Riffe stated that he did not want to keep it going. He stated that they did not know what would happen or how they would get there that it was to be determined. He stated that Field Fest was awesome but asked that the blue tent be put up for Field Fest. He stated that the porch idea was very good. He asked that everyone be directed to use the Town's restrooms during Field Fest.

Mayor Harris agreed that Field Fest was great.

ATTORNEY REPORT

Condemnation of 2 Appomattox Street, VOTE (attached at end of minutes)

Mr. Freedman stated that there was a resolution concerning 2 Appomattox Street and that this property had several property maintenance violations and he had also gone to court concerning this property which was dismissed because of it being condemned. He stated that it may be subject to a tax sale by the county. He asked for a motion to adopt.

Mr. Presley made a motion to adopt the Resolution to condemn the property of 2 Appomattox Street. Mr. Riffe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilmember Trigg made a motion to enter into Executive Session pursuant to *Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711-A-1.3* and Mrs. Catron read:

Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

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

Council entered into Executive Session at 8:16 p.m.

Councilmember Jones made a motion to enter out of Executive Session. Councilmember Presley 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 8th day of May.

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.

ADJOURN

Mr. Trigg made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Don Harris, Mayor

Lesley Catron, Town Clerk