

**Town of Bluefield  
Town Council  
Minutes  
April 14, 2020**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 at 7:30pm in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall located at 112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia.

**PRESENT**

Don Harris, Mayor  
Jarrod Bailey, Councilmember  
Chuck Presley, Councilmember  
Ron Holt, Councilmember  
Anglis Trigg Jr., Vice-Mayor

**ALSO PRESENT**

Mike Watson, Town Manager  
Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk  
Matt Freedman, Town Attorney  
Billie Roberts, Comm. Dev. Coordinator  
Rachel Looney, Administrative Asst.  
Shane Gunter, Police Chief  
1 Member of Public

**ABSENT**

Jimmy Jones, Councilmember

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Mayor Harris led the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Harris removed the Planning Commission recording discussion under Council Comments.

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

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

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

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

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

## **CITIZEN REQUESTS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

### ***GHS Wrestling Resolutions, VOTE – Kim Hernandez***

Mrs. Hernandez stated that this was something that was done annually and that Mr. Woodward had come in with information a month ago regarding some statistics on four of his wrestlers who had placed within different competitions that they had competed in. She stated that they would not be coming in to receive these resolutions but she need a vote to approve them. She stated that she would mail them to Mr. Woodward afterwards.

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve the GHS Wrestling Resolutions. Mr. Bailey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

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

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS & REPORTS**

### ***Little League Lights Update – Billie Roberts***

Mrs. Roberts stated that the ad for the BVLL would run tomorrow the 15<sup>th</sup> and also again on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. She stated that this was for competitive negotiations for lighting. She stated that they were due on May 18<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. and then staff would be looking at them the following week.

## **NEW BUSINESS & REPORTS**

### ***Vacating a portion of an alleyway on Walton Street between Farm Bureau and the old Austin Eclipse Building, VOTE – Mike Watson***

Mr. Watson stated that he had received a request to close 30 feet of alleyway to create parking. He stated that it would require a Public Hearing and they would pay us for our 30 feet of it. He stated that we would be abandoning half of the alleyway and it would be his recommendation to proceed with this process.

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve vacating a portion of an alleyway on Walton Street between Farm Bureau and the old Austin Eclipse Building. Mr. Trigg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

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

## **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

David Wohlford stated that it was good to see everyone there. He stated that he did not see Mr. Jones and that the time had come to do something and ask him to resign. He stated that council could remove him and there was an upcoming election with signatures due the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in June. He stated that they were running out of time and with a lot going on, Mr. Jones could not participate. He stated that with the upcoming election that a person would need to be allowed time to get their signatures turned in to be able to run for a council seat. He stated that they had “danced around it long enough”.

## **TOWN MANAGERS REPORT**

### ***Wade Center Donation Request, POSSIBLE VOTE***

Mr. Watson stated that he had the donation request for the Wade Center for some time. He stated that it was a one-time donation for \$500. He stated right now he was concerned with the loss of revenue and asked council if they would like to vote to do it now or to wait.

Mr. Trigg asked if it would be out of the upcoming budget.

Mr. Watson stated that they had requested it for this year. He stated that it was not a make or break but with having the loss that we were experiencing now in revenue that we would be in the red. He stated that we would be in the red with or without this donation.

Mr. Presley stated that he could not give his opinion or vote since he was the Wade Center President.

Mr. Bailey stated that with what Mr. Watson was saying, they would need to look closely at all request. He stated that he was all for helping but if they could not do so right now then they just could not do it.

Mr. Holt stated that he agreed and concerning the Little League Lights that it was not something that could be done right now with the financial situation and suggested that it not be advertised.

Mrs. Roberts stated that she could not stop the ad scheduled to run tomorrow but would stop the one for the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

#### ***Transit Discussion/Letter to Local Businesses Discussion***

Mr. Holt stated that he did not know why these were being put under Council Comments and suggested that they be put under Town Manager or New Business.

Mr. Watson stated that he would go over them. He stated that he had met with Katrina Davidson, Transit Supervisor and James Hampton, Transit Director and Transit would be changing their hours to M-F from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. He stated that there were three routes (Main, Gold and Pocahontas). He stated that the drivers were alternating their weeks. He stated that they had talked about putting up a Plexiglas barrier to protect the drivers which they were in the process of working on doing. He stated that they were actually down in passengers and were asking passengers why they were riding the bus before they were allowed to get on. He stated the other thing was brought up by council to send letters to local businesses.

Mr. Holt stated that he was the one who had brought that up. He stated that he had a lot of citizens who had mentioned to him along with small business owners who had to close their doors. He stated that they had done their part to abide by the laws and the idea was to ask these businesses to respect the County and Government guidelines.

Mr. Trigg stated that he had been around Sam's, Lowes and Wal-Mart and it looked to him like they were doing a good job of separation, using masks, gloves, etc.

Mayor Harris stated that he went in to talk to the Wal-Mart Store Manager but she was out so he talked to an Assistant Manager and gave her his card. He stated that he thanked them for taking precautions for the area. He stated that he was told that all cashiers were required to go and wash their hands every hour and that he saw employees sanitizing and spraying the carts for the customers. He stated that there was someone at the front counting and subtracting as customers went in and out. He stated at Sam's there was someone there directing the customers to the

checkouts and they were also cleaning and sanitizing. He stated that people had to eat and that they were already taking precautions and he did not know what else we could do.

Mr. Presley stated that it would be a hard situation to control. He stated that a letter may help but he did not know if they could enforce it. He stated that people were spread out and doing what they were supposed to do.

Mr. Holt stated that Lowes was the worst.

Mr. Trigg stated that they needed to be careful in sending out letters

Mr. Bailey stated that he had looked at it on all avenues from single parents to one per household. He stated that they could not ask to prove that the parent did not have anyone to watch their kids. He stated that he understood the business owner's side as well and that he had been going to Lowes as well and could not criticize those who also had been going. He stated that he believed the stores were doing what they could. He stated a few months ago there were 5,000 to 6,000 people marching in Richmond for their rights and that one right was just as important as another right and that bothered him if they were going to try and take away a right. He stated that he did not oppose a letter that stated that they were there as a Town to help support them with government resources, etc. He stated that he was not in support of a letter stating what people could purchase and how many were allowed in stores, etc. He stated that he wished everyone would practice social distancing so that we could get back to regular life but everyone was not going to listen. He stated that they could let them know that they were there for resources and ask them to continue to be proactive, to keep sanitizing, etc.

Mr. Holt stated that he had been talking to others on the board and he agreed that it would step on toes. He stated that he did not want to restrict people and that his point was that they were telling churches that they could not have more than 10 people then you drive by a place like Lowes which he did not want to name names and certain parts of the weekend there were a lot of customers there at one time. He stated that he believed that they could do a little more and run people out for a little while until the crowd went down. He stated that he did not want to restrict things that they could buy either. He stated at the same time he understood pastors and business owners and agreed with them. He stated that the letter would be for them to do what they could as a business to control the environment and make it a safe one and to take a proactive stance in our Town for the citizens. He stated that if they did nothing and a bunch of people died that he would not be able to sleep.

Mr. Trigg stated that when Wal-Mart first began building that there were concerns from the citizens who lived near regarding all of the lights being lit up and them not be able to sleep, etc. He stated that he had talked to one of the contractors then and was told that they had done thousands of Wal-Mart's and knew what they were doing. He stated that they needed to be careful in what they said in a letter.

Mayor Harris stated that he had been in court 2-3 times back when Wal-Mart wanted to locate in Bluefield, VA and they had money and would get what they wanted. He stated that he

and Mr. Presley were not receiving a paycheck every week but it was up to them to make their own money. He stated that he would be offended if he were to receive a letter and that in the past 3 ½ weeks he had sold one watch band for \$15.

Mr. Holt stated that they could ask them to do what they could with their own means to follow the guidelines.

Mr. Presley stated that it needed to be more of a guidance letter and not telling them what to do. He suggested that it ask them how we as the Town could help them.

Mr. Holt reiterated that it should ask them to do what they could with their means to follow the guidelines.

Mayor Harris stated that he believed that they knew what their responsibility was.

Mr. Presley asked that a letter be put together first. He stated that he did not want to make Wal-Mart mad.

Mr. Bailey stated that he was sorry for the employees in these stores.

Mr. Holt stated that one employee at one of these locations reached out to him and thanked him for what he was trying to do. He stated that he would share it in private with any of them and had mixed feelings about it.

Mayor Harris stated that he was sure management was being told exactly how to run their stores during this.

Mr. Presley suggested sending a letter asking if they needed help from the Town.

Mr. Bailey suggested that a letter be sent out that was agreeable with council first.

Mayor Harris asked for a Roll Call Vote to send out letters.

Vice-Mayor Trigg:	No
Councilmember Presley:	Yes
Councilmember Bailey:	Yes
Mayor Harris:	No
Councilmember Jones:	Absent
Councilmember Holt:	Yes

The motion passed 3-2 by ROLL CALL VOTE.

**ATTORNEY REPORT**

***A resolution to direct the removal of an unsafe structure located upon 1500 Virginia Avenue in the corporate limits of the Town of Bluefield, MOTION TO ADOPT, ROLL CALL VOTE***

Mr. Freedman stated that this resolution was to direct the removal of an unsafe structure located at 1500 Virginia Avenue. He stated that an image of the structure was attached to the back and if council was good with the resolution entitled: A resolution to direct the removal of an unsafe structure located upon 1500 Virginia Avenue in the corporate limits of the Town of Bluefield then he would need a motion to adopt and a Roll Call Vote.

Mr. Presley made a motion to adopt the resolution to direct the removal of an unsafe structure located upon 1500 Virginia Avenue in the corporate limits of the Town of Bluefield. Mr. Holt seconded the motion.

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

The motion passed unanimously by ROLL CALL VOTE.

***A resolution to direct the removal of an unsafe structure located upon 117 Wharton Street in the corporate limits of the Town of Bluefield, MOTION TO ADOPT, ROLL CALL VOTE***

Mr. Freedman stated that this resolution was to direct the removal of an unsafe structure located at 117 Wharton Street. He stated that an image was attached to the back and if council was good with the resolution as presented then he would need a motion to adopt the resolution entitled: A resolution to direct the removal of an unsafe structure located upon 117 Wharton Street in the corporate limits of the Town of Bluefield and a Roll Call Vote.

Mr. Presley made a motion to adopt the resolution to direct the removal of an unsafe structure located upon 117 Wharton Street in the corporate limits of the Town of Bluefield. Mr. Bailey seconded the motion.

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

The motion passed unanimously by ROLL CALL VOTE.

***A resolution recommending the appointment/reappointment of members to the Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia, MOTION TO ADOPT, ROLL CALL VOTE***

Mr. Freedman stated that this resolution was to recommend the appointment and reappointment of members to the BZA. He stated that it outlined several new members with a term of 1/1/20 to 6/30/20. He stated that they had gotten mixed up with some old members who had not been reappointed. He stated that he would send this to the Circuit Court for their appointment of these members. He stated that if council was good with the resolution entitled: A resolution recommending the appointment/reappointment of members to the Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia then he would need a motion to adopt and a Roll Call Vote.

Mr. Bailey made a motion to adopt the resolution recommending the appointment/reappointment of members to the Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia. Mr. Holt seconded the motion.

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

The motion passed unanimously by ROLL CALL VOTE.

Mr. Freedman stated that he would be making a written motion to the circuit court to be effective July 1<sup>st</sup>.

***MOU-Town of Bluefield and Commonwealth's Attorney handling of Bluefield's criminal cases, MOTION TO ACCEPT, ROLL CALL VOTE***

Mr. Freedman stated that this MOU would be with the Commonwealth Attorney's Office to represent the Town on its criminal and traffic cases. He stated it would be in exchange of \$850/monthly for 6 months. He stated if council was good with the resolution and the sample MOU attached then he would need a motion to accept and a Roll Call Vote.

Mr. Holt made a motion to accept the MOU-Town of Bluefield and Commonwealth's Attorney handling of Bluefield's criminal cases. Mr. Bailey seconded the motion.

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

The motion passed unanimously by ROLL CALL VOTE.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Harris asked Mrs. Hernandez to read the Section.

### **MOTION FOR CLOSED MEETING**

It is hereby moved that the Council of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia enter into a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia as amended, The specific purpose for this motion is to discuss the following matter(s):

Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body with such closed meeting being confined to the following matter (s): discussion regarding a council member and possibly Town Attorney position.

Councilmember Bailey made a motion to enter into Executive Session as described above. Councilmember Holt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

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

Mr. Presley made a motion to enter back into regular session. Mr. Holt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

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

### **CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION**

WHEREAS, the Town Council of Bluefield, Virginia convened a closed meeting on April 14, 2020, pursuant to a duly adopted motion, attached hereto, and such closed meeting was convened in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of Bluefield, Virginia returned to its open meeting held on April 14, 2020.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA HEREBY CERTIFIES that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act were discussed in the closed meeting held on April 14, 2020, to which this certification applies and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening such closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Council of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia in such closed meeting.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

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

The motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

**REGULAR SESSION**

Mr. Holt stated that budget issues were going to get tough and that they needed to work on the 911 Center and asked for an update at the next meeting.

**ADJOURN**

Mr. Presley made a motion to adjourn the meeting 9:18 pm. Mr. Holt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

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

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Don Harris, Mayor

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Kim Hernandez, Town Clerk