

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Minutes
September 27, 2016**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, September 27, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall located at 112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia.

PRESENT

Don Harris, Mayor
Anglis Trigg, Councilmember
Lee Riffe, Councilmember
Jimmy Jones, Vice Mayor
Steve Danko, Councilmember
Donnie Linkous, Councilmember

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
1 Member of Media
1 Member of Police Department

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 Recognition of Volunteer Keith Janovec from Citizen Requests & Special Presentations.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Vice-Mayor Jones made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilmember Danko 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

Resolution Supporting Pediatric Cancer Research Funding, VOTE – Lesley Catron

Mrs. Catron stated that the resolution was in council's packet and asked that Mayor Harris discuss the resolution.

Mayor Harris stated that the resolution was the result of a meeting he had attended and that the Vice Mayor of Stone, VA had a 2 ½ year old grandson with cancer. He stated that he had taken it upon himself to seek monetary funding for pediatric research and had contacted several people to secure more money for this. He asked Mrs. Catron to read the resolution:



TOWN OF BLUEFIELD

RESOLUTION

Supporting Federal and State Funding for Pediatric Cancer Research

WHEREAS, cancer is the leading cause of death in children under 15 years of age in the United States; and

WHEREAS, worldwide every year an estimated 263,000 new cases of cancer affect children under the age of 20; and

WHEREAS, 91,250 children lose their life to cancer each year; and

WHEREAS, the incidence of cancer among adolescents and young adults is increasing at a greater rate than for any other age group, except for adults older than 65 years of age; and

WHEREAS, childhood cancer spares no thnice group, socioeconomic class or geographic region; and

WHEREAS, less than five percent of federal funds for cancer research is dedicated to finding a cure for pediatric cancers; and

WHEREAS, in the last 20 years the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved only two drugs for the treatment of childhood cancers and some children are being treated with drugs that were developed more than 25 years ago for adults; and

WHEREAS, the National Cancer Institute’s funding for pediatric clinical trials is only \$26.4 million; and

WHEREAS, the causes of most childhood cancers are unknown and are not strongly linked to environmental or lifestyle risk factors; and

WHEREAS, the treatment of childhood cancers can have devastating financial effects on families.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA supports additional federal funding on the causes and treatments of pediatric cancer.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the Resolution Supporting Pediatric Cancer Research Funding. Mr. Riffe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Harris stated that September was Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month.

Smart Scale Resolution: State Route 746 College Ave. Ext, VOTE – Billie Roberts

Mrs. Roberts stated that she needed council to vote on the Smart Scale Resolution that was in their packet. She stated that it was full funded thru VDOT and would be for \$3,941,488.



TOWN OF BLUEFIELD

RESOLUTION

“Smart Scale Resolution: State Route 746 College Avenue Extension”

WHEREAS, the Town of Bluefield is submitting a smart scale application to VDOT named the State Route 746 extension to College Avenue project ; and

WHEREAS, this project helps address VTRANS needs as it relates to congestion, reliability, and safety; and

WHEREAS, this project addresses the VTRANS needs in the area of support of the Heartland Corridor Segment E1; and

WHEREAS, the needs will be addressed by constructing a new two-lane road that will provide a critically needed alternative means of access to/from College Avenue to US 460; and

WHEREAS, the new roadway will consist of an extension of existing State Route 746 until it intersects with College Avenue, directly adjacent from , the main entrance to the Bluefield College campus; and

WHEREAS, this new connection will allow traffic to be diverted around a congestion area at College Avenue and Leatherwood Lane to reach US 460; and

WHEREAS, this project will allow for more interconnectivity for future and existing economic developments located along Leatherwood Lane; and

WHEREAS, a traffic signal will be installed at the new intersection on College Avenue, which will help improve overall operations as well as safety along the corridor, as this section of roadway was identified as being one of the top 100 locations within the Bristol District for potential safety improvements with a current risk of 4;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council of Bluefield, Virginia hereby supports fulfilling the needs of the VTRANS 2040 Multimodal Transportation.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the Smart Scale Resolution. Mr. Danko seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

119 High Street Deed, VOTE – Matt Freedman

Mr. Freedman stated that in order to move forward with the locally administered highway construction project on High Street that the Town would need to acquire certain properties along that route including 119 High Street. He asked for a motion to (1) authorize the expenditure of the money to purchase the property for \$15,000, (2) approve the acceptance of the deed and the property interest described in the deed and (3) authorize the mayor to sign the deed on behalf of the Town.

Mr. Jones made a motion to (1) authorize the expenditure of the money to purchase the property for \$15,000, (2) approve the acceptance of the deed and the property interest described in the deed and (3) authorize the mayor to sign the deed on behalf of the Town. Mr. Riffe seconded the motion.

Mr. Riffe asked if there was more to look at.

Mr. Freedman stated yes.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Trigg asked where it would come out at.

Mrs. Roberts stated that you would go in like you were going to Westwood but would stay straight up thru the grassy area.

Mr. Riffe asked if it would come out near the circle entrance at the college.

Mrs. Roberts stated yes and there would be a traffic light there.

Mr. Linkous stated that the road going in to Food City was very congested.

Mrs. Roberts stated that it was going to happen and had already been approved last year and that this time next year, they should see dirt moving.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Riffe stated that the wall downtown was looking good.

Mr. Linkous thanked Mrs. Roberts for spearheading it. He stated that the Autumn Jamboree was a big success and that everyone loved being able to watch the game on the big screen and that we should consider doing it for other games. He stated that the vendors needed to be closer to the screen next year. He stated that the Police Department salaries needed to be addressed and that he was not sure where we were compared to those around us. He stated that a few years ago, they gave an across the board raise to bring them up but said they were losing people because of pay. He asked what a new person's salary started at.

Chief Gunter stated that if they had no experience, no college and had not been thru the academy yet that they would start out \$2,000 less. He stated that it was hard to compete with the Sheriff's Office, Town of Tazewell and Town of Richlands but the one thing that kept the officers there was the great work environment.

Mr. Linkous stated that they had been working a lot of overtime lately.

Chief Gunter stated it was because of those in the academy. He stated that they were there for 18 weeks and that those officers did not get on the road for close to one year.

Mr. Linkous stated that he would like to hear what everyone else thought but wanted to wait until Mr. Watson was there.

Mr. Trigg had none.

Mr. Jones thanked everyone for their support during the passing of his wife.

Mr. Danko had none.

Mayor Harris had none.

Mr. Linkous stated that coming out of McD's on the right side close to Wendy's, there were huge bushes that needed to be cut back. He stated that Eddie Pauley and the

local businesses hosted a luncheon for Town Employees at La Fiesta and that La Fiesta paid 100% for the employee's meals. He asked staff to send a thank you letter to Mr. Pauley and La Fiesta. He stated that he was made aware of a situation at Bluefield Regional Medical Center where they would not call the Bluefield, Virginia Rescue Squad to do a transport.

Mayor Harris stated that they were going thru some issues with the county and Rescue 945. He stated that the hospital was not receptive at all to the Bluefield, Virginia Rescue Squad. He stated that they had a meeting on the 3rd and had some decisions to make. He stated that they were also looking for a way to have someone on duty 24/7.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Watson apologized for being late. He stated that he had been at a Wireless Authority Meeting and they had a lot of tough decisions to be made as well.

Soccer Request

Mr. Watson stated that at the last meeting the GMS Fall Soccer League had requested a donation of \$5,300 to help with their operational expenses. He stated that \$3,800 was for uniforms, \$700 to rent the fields and they had to pay the referees. He stated that a donation was not made last year and that it would be an unbudgeted expense.

Mr. Riffe stated that they had already started their season and thought that the Town should at least help with the field rentals of \$700 which would give them a start.

Mr. Trigg agreed with the \$700 field rental.

Mayor Harris agreed with Mr. Riffe and Mr. Trigg on the field rentals but he said they needed to be careful because they would have others coming asking for donations.

Mr. Riffe made a motion to approve giving \$700 for the field rentals to the GMS Fall Soccer League. Mr. Danko seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Board of Zoning Appeals Member Discussion/ Planning Commission Member Discussion

Mr. Watson stated that he would like to bring it up to the Planning Commission Members to see if there is anyone they would like.

Mr. Freedman stated that the process was that it was recommended by council then given to the Circuit Court to approve.

Mr. Linkous asked why they were taking applications if council appointed the person.

Mr. Watson stated that at the last council meeting they asked him to look for someone with experience.

Mayor Harris stated that it was good to let everyone know of the vacancy.

Mr. Watson stated that it had run in the paper twice.

Mr. Jones asked if Planning Commission had recommended anyone.

Mr. Williams suggested that once it was narrowed down, then let Planning Commission decide.

Playground Equipment Grant

Mr. Watson stated that he had met with Mrs. Green and that staff was working with her to get a \$15k grant. He stated that staff had contacted the Shott Foundation and would be applying for a 50/50 match. He stated that this was a non-budgeted item and that right now it was best to buy the equipment because it was on sale.

Recreation 2017

Mr. Watson stated that he removed a full time employee and put in a part time employee for the Recreation Department which was the wrong decision. He stated that they needed someone at the Farmer's Market, Community Garden, and Rec Park while the fields were being used and at the shelters on the weekends. He stated that they were having an issue and needed to have another full time employee to do these things. He stated that right now they had 2 full time employees that did it all.

Mr. Riffe asked if the Rec Leader worked on the weekend or was it the employee.

Mr. Watson stated that as of now the Rec Leader worked on the weekend. He stated that there was a lot more events going on during the weekend and would like to split the full time employee to work Thursday-Monday.

Mr. Linkous suggested partnering with Bluefield College.

Mr. Watson stated that they had talked to them.

Flu Shots

Mr. Watson stated that flu shots for Town Employees/Family would be on Wednesday, September 28th at 2 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Tour du' Parc

Mr. Watson stated that Tour du' Parc would be held on Wednesday, September 28th at 9 a.m. at Graham Rec Park.

Joint Meeting with City of Bluefield

Mr. Watson stated that the Joint Meeting with the City of Bluefield would be on Thursday, September 29th at 5:30 p.m. at the Bluefield Inn.

Annual Chamber Dinner

Mr. Watson stated that the Annual Chamber Dinner would be on Thursday, October 6th at David's at the Club.

VML

Mr. Watson stated that VML would be October 9th – 11th in Virginia Beach. He stated that it would start on Sunday this year and end on Tuesday.

Student Government Day

Mr. Watson stated that Student Government Day would be held on October 18th at 8:30 a.m. at Town Hall.

Graham Middle School Road Discussion

Mr. Watson stated that he had received a quote.

Mr. Linkous asked why they were even discussing it if it was not their issue. He stated that the county needed to do it.

Mr. Watson stated that he was just doing what council asked and that the quote he received was \$110k for 20" depth and \$87k for 16" depth and it would be a 14ft wide road.

Mr. Jones suggested getting a grant thru the Town.

Mr. Riffe suggested going straight on the road and then turning to go down behind the school. He asked if they would have to get permission to access that part of the road.

Mr. Trigg stated that they needed to think about sewer pipes, etc.

Mr. Watson stated that the area would be about 1000ft long.

Mr. Linkous asked what our Police Department's pay rank was compared to others. He stated that they were underpaid, short on officers and were working a lot of overtime hours. He stated that he knew we were the best with equipment and the environment but that we needed to look at the pay. He stated that our department was the best and that the only complaint he had ever heard was that the pay was not where it needed to be. He stated that he would like to see it higher than Tazewell and Cedar Bluff and that this was an issue they needed to talk about.

Mayor Harris asked Mr. Watson to give an in-depth report comparing us with all the other localities with the same budget. He suggested a Work Session be done when the information was together.

Mayor Harris asked if they were going to explain to them about the Sanitary Board Contract during the Joint Meeting.

Mr. Watson stated that they were working on the term of the agreement now. He stated that the meeting was mainly to discuss the next joint project.

Mayor Harris stated that he was not happy with the Town not having an attorney there representing us.

Mr. Freedman stated that he was familiar with some of it and would be attending the meeting. He stated that they had come to an agreement on all of it except the term of bond on the agreement itself. He stated that it needed to be explained and that they were very close to resolving the issues.

Mayor Harris stated that it was never explained to them and that Rick Taylor was not invited to this meeting. He stated that they needed to be careful and make sure we did not get tied down to anything long range. He stated that he did not feel comfortable without them fully being informed first.

Mr. Watson stated that it was his understanding that it would not be discussed at this meeting.

Mr. Linkous suggested they have a Work Session with Steve Arey concerning this agreement.

Mayor Harris stated that he was offended that our 2 representatives on the Sanitary Board were not invited to this meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

ATTORNEY REPORT

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Vice-Mayor Jones made a motion to enter into Executive Session pursuant to *Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711-A-1.3 and 2.2-3711-A-1.7* 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.

Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members of consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body; and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

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

Council entered into Executive Session at 9:03 p.m.

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

Councilmember Danko 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 27th day of September.

Councilmember Linkous seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Councilmember Riffe:	Yes
Councilmember Linkous:	Yes
Councilmember Trigg:	Yes
Mayor Harris:	Yes
Vice Mayor Jones:	Yes
Councilmember Danko:	Yes

The motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

ADJOURN

Mr. Danko made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. Mr. Riffe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Don Harris, Mayor

Lesley Catron, Town Clerk