

**Town of Bluefield
Town Council
Minutes
November 28, 2017**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, November 28, 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

ALSO PRESENT

Mike Watson, Town Manager
Shane Gunter, Police Chief
Billie Roberts, Comm. Dev. Coordinator
Lesley Catron, Town Clerk
Kim Hernandez, Executive Assistant
4 Members of Public

ABSENT

Matt Freedman, Town Attorney
Lee Riffe, Vice-Mayor

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Harris removed the VOTE from the Appointment to Sanitary Board under New Business and removed the VOTE from the Wrestling Request under Town Manager's Report. He added the Revenue Sharing Resolution to the Town Manager's Report.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

CITIZEN REQUESTS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS & REPORTS

Water Capital Improvement Project Engineering Firm, VOTE – Kim Hernandez

Mrs. Hernandez stated that it was talked about during the Work Session but that during the September 26th council meeting, council held engineering interviews and graded Hurt & Proffitt and Thompson & Litton. She stated that after tallying up all grading sheets that Thompson & Litton scored the highest with a 298 out of a possible overall score of 300. She asked for a vote to award the engineering contract to Thompson & Litton.

Mr. Presley made a motion to award the engineering contract to Thompson & Litton. Mr. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS & REPORTS

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update – Billie Roberts

Mrs. Roberts stated that it was discussed during the Work Session and asked council if they had any other questions.

Mr. Presley asked if they would vote on it next time.

Mayor Harris stated yes when it was presented.

Resolution for Dominion Power Project, VOTE – Mike Watson

Mr. Watson stated that there was a Resolution for the Dominion Power Project in council's packet in support of it being located in Tazewell County. He asked for a vote to approve the resolution.

VIRGINIA: AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE TOWN HALL IN BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA ON THE _____ DAY OF _____, _____.

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CONSTRUCTION
OF A HYDROELECTRIC PUMPED STORAGE FACILITY
IN VIRGINIA'S COALFIELD REGION**

WHEREAS, we, the Town Council of the Town of Bluefield have worked tirelessly for many years to strengthen the economy of our community and create new job opportunities for our working men and women; and

WHEREAS, in examining prospects for development in our region, we have identified construction of a new hydroelectric pumped storage facility as a potential and promising source of new investments and jobs for our county and other localities in Southwest Virginia; and

WHEREAS, this potential was recognized by the legislative leadership of Virginia's Coalfield Region, including Delegates Terry Kilgore, Todd Pillion, and Will Morefield and Senator Ben Chafin, during the 2017 session of the General Assembly through their sponsorship of House Bill 1760 and Senate Bill 1418; and

WHEREAS, the legislation was passed by both the House of Delegates and Senate and signed into law by Governor McAuliffe; and

WHEREAS, the legislation was designed to promote construction of hydroelectric pumped storage projects in the Coalfield Region; and

WHEREAS, Dominion Virginia Energy has recently announced that it is reviewing several sites in the region for potential development of such projects and has submitted preliminary permit applications to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the sites being evaluated; and

WHEREAS, a recent study commissioned by Dominion Energy Virginia and issued by the respected consulting firm of Chmura Economics & Analytics confirms that development of a hydroelectric pumped storage facility would produce very significant economic benefits, including the creation of thousands of jobs, for our region; and

WHEREAS, the Chmura study specifically found that, depending on the final size of the facility, its construction would produce up to \$320 million in new economic activity and support as many as 2,083 new jobs in our region from 2017 through 2027; and

WHEREAS, the study also found the project, once in operation, would be a significant and urgently needed new source of tax revenue for local governments in Southwest Virginia, adding as much as \$12 million a year to tax collections to support vital services such as law enforcement, education and transportation; and

WHEREAS, the study also forecast that, once the project begins generating electricity, it would produce each year almost \$37 million in economic benefits and support up to 50 permanent positions at the station itself; and

Resolution to School Board, VOTE – Mike Watson

Mr. Watson stated that there was a Resolution to the School Board in council's packet in support of deferring any school closings in Tazewell County until the Economic Development Projects had gone thru. He asked for a vote to approve the resolution.

RESOLUTION INDEX NUMBER

VIRGINIA: AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE TOWN HALL IN BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA ON THE ____ DAY OF _____, _____.

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DEFERRING
A DECISION ON THE CLOSING OF ANY
TAZEWELL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

WHEREAS, the Council of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia recognizes local, state, and federal funding for Tazewell County Public Schools is a serious issue in Tazewell County, Virginia, and is hopeful those funding issues will change in the near future; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia is optimistic that potential economic developments which have recently become increasingly likely, including but not limited to Project Jonah and Dominion Hydroelectric Plant, will locate in Tazewell County, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Dominion Hydroelectric Plant could mean EIGHT MILLION DOLLARS in annual revenues to Tazewell County, Virginia and up to two thousand (2,000) jobs, and Project Jonah could mean up to TWO MILLION DOLLARS in revenues to Tazewell County, Virginia and up to one hundred and thirty (130) jobs; and

WHEREAS, either of those projects would change the aforesaid funding issue by providing an increase in local property tax revenues and an increase in school age populations in Tazewell County, Virginia and thus, enhance funding for Tazewell County Public Schools.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA that the Council of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia hereby respectfully requests the Tazewell County School Board defer any decision on closing any schools until a final decision is made as to whether the Dominion Hydroelectric Plant will be located in Tazewell County, Virginia or until Project Jonah will proceed in Tazewell County, Virginia.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA that this resolution is hereby adopted on this ____ day of _____, _____.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA that this resolution shall become effective on this ____ day of _____, _____.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUEFIELD, VIRGINIA that Donald R. Harris, the Mayor of the Town of Bluefield, Virginia, shall execute this resolution on behalf of the said Council.

Expenditure

Line Item		Original Budget	Amended Budget	Change
9100-5850	Contingency	\$36,875.00	\$52,680.00	\$15,805.00
		<u>\$36,875.00</u>	<u>\$52,680.00</u>	<u>\$15,805.00</u>

Mr. Presley made a motion to approve the tractor purchase and the budget amendment. Mr. Jones seconded the motion.

Mr. Presley asked if it would come out of the LGIP account.

Mr. Watson stated that the Cemetery had 3 different accounts and their own savings account.

Mayor Harris asked for a Roll Call Vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

The motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Wrestling Request

Mr. Watson asked Mr. Woodward to come forward and present his request.

Mr. Woodward stated that in the past he had asked for necessities but after being able to host the tournament last year, they were in better shape. He stated that his request was for singlets for the team. He stated that they needed 16 which would cost a total of \$652.

Mr. Presley stated that he asked for \$1k last year and that he was not opposed to giving the extra money because he knew the work that was put into it.

Mr. Holt thanked him for what he done.

Revenue Sharing Resolution, VOTE

Mr. Watson stated that staff had applied for the Revenue Sharing Grant and received \$40k thru VDOT which was a matching grant to build additional sidewalks. He asked for a vote to approve the resolution.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the Revenue Sharing Resolution. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Route 720 Speed Limit Discussion

Mr. Watson stated that he had contracted an engineering firm to look at the speed limit on Route 720 and would bring it back.

Point of View Breakfast

Mr. Watson stated that the Point of View Breakfast would be held on Friday, December 1st at 8 a.m. at the Clover Club at the Railyard.

Christmas Parade

Mr. Watson stated that the Christmas Parade would be held on Saturday, December 2nd at noon. He stated that the winner of the Elfie Selfie contest was Ashley East who would be receiving a quilt made by the Patchwork Quilters.

Volunteer Christmas Dinner

Mr. Watson stated that the Volunteer Christmas Dinner would be held on Thursday, December 14th at 6:30 p.m. at Bluefield College.

Employee Christmas Dinner

Mr. Watson stated that the Employee Christmas Dinner would be held on Tuesday, December 16th at 6:30 p.m. at Bluefield College. He stated that there would also be a luncheon at 11:30 a.m. at La Fiesta for those employees who could not make it to the dinner.

Town Offices Closed

Mr. Watson stated that Town Offices would be closed on Monday, December 25th and Tuesday, December 26th for the Christmas Holiday and Monday, January 1st and Tuesday, January 2nd for the New Year's Holiday. He stated that Monday's trash on both holidays would be picked up on the Friday before and that Tuesday's recycling days would not be picked up.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Danko had none.

Mr. Jones had none.

Mr. Holt stated that the Chamber Dinner was good and thanked Mr. Watson for getting the VDOT signs up at the flashing yellow lights.

Mr. Presley had none.

Mayor Harris had none.

ATTORNEY REPORT

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Harris asked for a Roll Call Vote to enter into Executive Session.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

The motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

Mrs. Catron read the following Executive Session: *Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711-A-1.6, Section 2.2-3711-A-1.1, Section 2.2-3711-A-1.3 and Section 2.2-3711-A-1.7.*

The investing of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the government unit would be adversely affected.

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; and evaluation of performance of departments.

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 or 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.

Council entered into Executive Session at 7:47 p.m.

Councilmember Holt made a motion to enter out of Executive Session. Councilmember Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Vice-Mayor Riffe 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 28th day of November.

Councilmember Holt seconded the motion.

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. (Vice-Mayor Riffe came back in during the Executive Session).

ADJOURN

Mr. Holt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Mr. Presley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Don Harris, Mayor

Lesley Catron, Town Clerk