

**Town of Bluefield  
Town Council  
Work Session Retreat  
March 5, 2019**

The Bluefield, Virginia Town Council held a Work Session Retreat on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall located at 112 Huffard Drive, Bluefield, Virginia.

**TOWN COUNCIL PRESENT**

Don Harris, Mayor  
Anglis Trigg, Jr., Vice-Mayor  
Chuck Presley, Councilmember  
Jimmy Jones, Councilmember  
Jarrod Bailey, Councilmember

**ALSO PRESENT**

Mike Watson, Town Manager  
Billie Roberts, Comm. Dev. Coordinator

**ABSENT**

Ron Holt, Councilmember  
Lesley Catron, Town Clerk  
Matt Freedman, Town Attorney

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Harris opened the Work Session Retreat at 6:00 p.m.

***Projects***

Mr. Watson stated that he would like to look at the Projects from 2015-now. He stated that they included Hockman Pike-\$4.5 million, High Street-working on now, Water Source, Economic Development and the downtown revitalization. He stated that staff had done a good job on these.

Mayor Harris included Mountain Lane.

Mr. Watson stated that the widening of Mountain Lane was before his time. He stated that the purpose was to set long term goals so that staff could look for grants, etc. He stated that the bridge downtown had been brought back up this year, the lighting had been done but there were more areas to upgrade downtown.

### ***Downtown Revitalization***

Mr. Trigg asked if there was any money available for pavers for the parking lot to make it handicap accessible.

Mr. Watson stated that he had gone to VDOT, DEQ, DHCH and we were not going to get the money. He stated that he would love to see pavers but the problem was there were no state/federal funding to give money for it unless you were putting a sidewalk, etc. in.

Mr. Trigg suggested putting a sidewalk right through the middle of it.

Mrs. Roberts stated that she and Mike had talked to agency reps in Richmond about that area and would discuss it further and talk to them about the purpose to see if it fit into one of their programs.

Mr. Watson stated that Billie had worked with a VT student who did drawings of the different ways of improving the downtown area. He stated that she analyzed how to use it all together.

Mrs. Roberts went over the drawings and information and stated that it was dedicated areas to give purpose to the downtown area and included different phases.

Phase 1 – “Links & Coherence”

Phase 2 – “Shops at Graham Square”

Phase 3 – “Bridge Park”

Phase 4 – “Jack Asbury Park & Performance Plaza”

Phase 5 – “Farmer’s Market Extension & Upgrades”

Mr. Trigg asked about the area behind the church.

Mr. Watson stated that you could not build in that area and at one time they thought about putting in a river walk. He stated that the Methodist Church used that area a couple of times per year and we also had the community garden there.

### ***Wireless Network***

Mr. Watson stated that he would like to have wireless network throughout town but it was hard to find someone to do it. He stated that he had a meeting with a company but that the cost would probably be high. He stated that a wireless network was a way to tie in all of the buildings in Town that was running on a network and would not rely on internet speed. He stated that this was something he was going to find money for and not something to add on as a long term issue.

***Old Hockman Pike Rec Area***

Mr. Watson stated that we had put in benches, lighting and a fence.

***Graham Rec Park FIT Trail***

Mr. Watson stated that we working on trying to get money to put in fitness equipment. He stated that they had paved a walking trail.

Mrs. Roberts stated that we were reapplying for the grant.

***Little League Parking***

Mr. Watson stated that he had a conversation with them and they were getting ready to start their season and wanted to do some cleaning on the Little League side and make more room for parking and put some gravel down. He stated that he had not looked at moving the lights anymore since it was a field we did not take.

***Pool/Community Center/Gyms/Multi-Use Facility***

Mr. Watson stated that he had not done anything else since we help build the new gyms.

Mr. Trigg asked how much one would cost now.

Mr. Watson stated to have one similar to Radford would be around \$6.5 million.

They talked about Fincastle Country Club and Mr. Jones stated that they had lowered the price to \$1.3 million.

***Incentives/Economic Development.***

Mr. Watson stated that they had done a good job of filling existing spots and there was no need to do incentives right now.

Mrs. Roberts stated that they had the Enterprise Zone already.

***Pocahontas Water Source***

Mr. Trigg asked about the Pocahontas Water Source.

Mr. Watson stated that it was being done now and we would be able to supply emergency backup water to Falls Mills. He stated that they were working to put a pump station in at Yards to pump up to them. He stated that once we got our capacity up and the

leaks fixed that we would be able to sell water to Pocahontas at a 12% markup. He stated that he was hoping to have this done in the next year.

### ***High Street***

Mr. Watson stated that he hoped to have High Street bid out by June.

### ***VDOT Planning/Leatherwood Lane***

Mr. Watson stated that the Leatherwood Lane intersection had been widened.

Mayor Harris asked what the status was on running the road up by Food City and coming out at Bluefield College.

Mr. Watson stated that it did not qualify for funding.

### ***Sidewalks***

Mr. Watson stated that our internal crews did the sidewalks as we could. He stated that they would finish up PEMCO and would wrap it around to Bullet Bill Drive. He stated that they still needed to put up a fence in Sedgewood and had finished the fencing and sidewalk going up past Garnets. He stated that Spring Street was finished and looked good and they were looking at some spots on South College.

Mr. Watson stated that another project was putting in a new water line for the Fire Station to midtown.

Mayor Harris stated that once the sidewalk was finished at PEMCO that it would be a complete circle from Pinehill Park around and they needed to think about doing lights there because that sidewalk was used a lot.

Mr. Watson stated that he was trying to figure out what kind of lights to put there and if they put decorative lighting it would cost around \$125k for 51 lights. He stated that you could apply through Revenue Sharing to get lighting on that road but it needed to be switched to a different kind of light. He stated that there was no electrical service there so AEP would charge us to put in underground service.

Mayor Harris stated that they were talking about down the road but that he would like to see it done.

### ***Paving***

Mr. Watson stated that they were getting reading to do \$160k worth of paving and was putting a list together.

### ***Enterprise Zone***

Mr. Watson stated that he was on the committee and was going to work with them to get the Enterprise Zone moved around to include Bluefield Iron & Metal which would allow us to get some state and local incentives.

### ***Animal Shelter***

Mr. Watson stated that he had talked to Dave White who did the maintenance programs for Tazewell County and also operated the Animal Shelter. He invited them to come up for a tour. He stated that they talked about some things and that we had a bus that has no air conditioning or seatbelts in that we may be able to donate to them for transportation for the Animal Shelter.

### ***East River Mountain Trail***

Mr. Watson stated that they were still researching doing a trail across the top of East River Mountain and Leatherwood Property 3,000 ft. up.

### ***LOVE Sign***

Mr. Watson stated that we had talked about putting a LOVE Sign downtown. He stated that he would like to tear the pine tree down near the train trestle and make that area nice with benches and putting it there. He stated that Billie would like to move the caboos there and put the LOVE sign on the side of it.

### ***Art Riley's Building***

Mr. Watson stated that they were working on an Industrial Revitalization Fund to help with this building but it would be a year before we received any money.

### ***Bluefield Iron & Metal***

Mr. Presley asked what the purpose of the Bluefield Iron & Metal would be.

Mr. Watson stated jobs. He stated that they were getting ready to do Phase II and then we would know what needed to be done and could find the money to do it. He stated that the only building we were keeping was the one at the end near Kwik Kafe. He stated that they were going to clean it out and put lights in it and use for one department of Public Works. He stated that they met with the VA Economic Development on site and showed them the Ammars and Bluefield Iron & Metal and they asked when it would be ready for them to market. He stated that he would like to use it as an incentive for creating jobs and sale them the property to buy back and in return create long term jobs with a minimum of 10 years.

Mayor Harris asked council if they would like to continue the cleanup that the Town has been doing the past several years and if so that council paid for the meat and the Town picked up the rest of it. The other question he wanted to know was were the 2 Animal Control Officers used.

Mr. Watson stated that he would have to check. He stated that we had regularly paid officers that we paid an extra \$2k year each to be the Animal Control Officer. He stated that a Certified Animal Control Officer could only do what the law allowed them to do such as picking up dogs running at large that they could not go and pickup raccoons. He stated that he could send someone out from Public Works to pick it up and relocate it. He stated that we had two that worked opposite shifts.

Mayor Harris stated that when they were going through the right of way at Leatherwood and unless they broke the right of way within a certain time then they had to go through the whole process again.

Mr. Watson stated that was correct but had talked to them and understood that at this time they could go back in front of the CTB Board and get it approved until there was a significant change and would not have to do all of the engineering. He stated that it had expired.

**ADJOURN**

Mayor Harris adjourned the Work Session Retreat at 8:02 p.m.

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Don Harris, Mayor

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Lesley Catron, Town Clerk