

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES



Gate City Town Council Minutes
September 14, 2021
156 E. Jackson St., Gate City, VA
6:30 PM

I. COUNCIL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:45 P.M. BY: Mayor – Bob Richards

II. ROLL CALL – Town Clerk – Lydia Morales

	PRESENT:	ABSENT:
Mayor, Bob Richards	X	
Vice Mayor, Robin Richards	X	
Council Member, Allan “Cotton” Roberts	X	
Council Member, Roger Cassell	X	
Council Member, Wallace W. Ross, Jr.	X	
Council Member, Tyler Kilgore	X	
Town Manager, Greg Jones	X	
Town Attorney, Michele Brooks	X	

Others present: Frank Kibler, Senior Planner LENOWISCO Planning District Commission; Justin Miller, Gate City Police Department Chief of Police; Jason Snapp, Mattern & Craig; Gabriel Edmunds, Scott County Virginia Star

III. INVOCATION – Mayor Bob Richards

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Chief of Police Justin Miller

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made to approve the agenda.

Motion by: Allan “Cotton” Roberts

2nd by: Tyler Kilgore

VOTE: Aye, 5
Nay,
Absent,
Abstain

Motion Carried.

VI. PROCLAMATIONS, CONGRATULATORY RESOLUTIONS, AWARDS, APPOINTMENTS, RESIGNATIONS AND CONFIRMATIONS, ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS.

- **Jenkins School of Dance 40th Year** – Town Manager Greg Jones stated that Jenkins School of Dance celebrated their 40th year anniversary this year and we recognized them on September 4th at the concert after their dance routine. Mayor Richards presented Mrs. Jenkins with a plaque.
- **Debbie Williams, Long John Silvers Area Coach** – Council Member Roger Cassell stated that he would like to recognize Long John Silvers and Area Coach Debbie Williams for their recent renovation efforts including repair of their sign, painting the exterior of the building, and adding lights in the parking lot. Council Member Cassell stated that Ms. Williams plans to restripe the parking lot as well. Council Member Cassell stated that Ms. Williams stated that Long John Silvers’ business has increased 30% since the remodel. Council Member Roberts requested that a plaque be made in recognition of their efforts.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of August 10, 2021 Public Hearing: Kane Street Sidewalk Improvements Project Minutes.

Motion made to approve minutes as presented.

Motion by: Allan "Cotton" Roberts

2nd by: Tyler Kilgore

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

2. Approval of August 10, 2021 Public Hearing: Cigarette Tax Minutes.

Motion made to approve minutes as presented.

Motion by: Allan "Cotton" Roberts

2nd by: Wallace W. Ross, Jr.

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

3. Approval of August 10, 2021 Town Council Minutes.

Motion made to approve minutes as presented.

Motion by: Allan "Cotton" Roberts

2nd by: Tyler Kilgore

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

VIII. APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

• Motion made for approval for payment of bills for August 2021 as presented.

Motion by: Roger Cassell

2nd by: Allan "Cotton" Roberts

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT (Will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker.) - NONE

Mayor Richards closed the public comment session at 6:52 P.M. and opened the consent agenda session.

X. COMMUNICATIONS - NONE

XI. REPORTS (All reports given will be included with your packet. Any questions about the reports will need to be discussed with the department head PRIOR to the meeting.)

A. Engineer's Status Report – Mr. Jason Snapp delivered the Engineer's Status Report.

DEQ Sewer I&I Rehab Job: Project is complete and final payment recommendation has been submitted for processing.

Final overall budget is as stated below:

Construction \$ 1,208,498.96

Contingency	\$	0.00
Legal/Bond Counsel	\$	8,000.00
Basic Engineering	\$	128,000.00
Permits	\$	9,324.50
Mussel Survey	\$	8,100.00
Easements/ROW Maps & Deeds	\$	23,451.50
Asset Management Plan	\$	20,000.00
Easement Acquisition	\$	4,404.10
Resident Project Inspection	\$	76,245.04
Additional Engineering for Redesign	\$	14,662.00
Total		\$ 1,500,686.10

The local DEQ Field Office in Abingdon will recommend that Gate City receive the full amount of principal forgiveness at \$700,000. This is expected to be approved by DEQ main office in Richmond. If approval is officially granted the Town's final loan amount for the project will be \$800,686.10.

H/C Ramp HSIP Project: Construction has commenced. The contractor has completed all concrete work at all three ramps and installed temporary safety rails. The contractor is currently working on fabrication of the handrails. Handrails at all ramps will be the last item to be installed due to the long lead time to fabricate. M&C and the Contractor have met onsite to confirm handrails locations at the curb crossovers. Town Manager Greg Jones stated that the public works crew has painted the no parking lines in front of the ramp near the apartments.

DEQ Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study: The smoke testing of the sanitary sewer system has been completed except for a few areas that are inaccessible due to manholes being covered over, these manholes will need to be uncovered by the Town to be able to complete overall system smoke testing. Mapping will be delivered to the Town detailing these areas for uncovering if desired. Several inflow locations (consisting of illegal connections) have been identified so far. Manhole inspections have been completed as well and the project is considered 50% complete overall currently. Flow monitors have been set to begin collecting data and CCTV of critical lines will follow. A final report with recommendations is expected to be delivered to the Town in late 2021. Mr. Snapp stated that one flow monitor is not working properly, and flow monitoring will have to be restarted. Vice-Mayor Richards stated that years ago, the quarry was looked at as a water source. Vice-Mayor Richards asked if there is any documentation as to why the quarry was not chosen? Council Member Cassell stated that he was told that the water in the quarry was so clean that it would have to be treated to make the bacteria work. Vice-Mayor Richards stated that she would like to explore that option again. Council Member Ross, Jr. stated that he was informed that it would use the water up if the quarry was used as a water source. Town Manager Jones stated that the Health Department may have some comments regarding this that they may be able to look up. Mr. Snapp stated that he would reach out to VDH to see if they have any information pertaining to this. Mr. Snapp stated that if the quarry is used, the water would have to be pumped all the way to the treatment plant which entails a new line, or a new treatment plant would have to be built. Mr. Snapp stated that the cost to utilize that water may have been the deterrent before.

Council Member Cassell asked if it is up to the town to open the buried manholes? Town Manager Jones stated yes, our public works is working on that now. Council Member Cassell asked how much I&I is occurring with the manholes that are low? Mr. Snapp stated that there is some I&I but it is not the main factor in most sewer systems. Mr. Snapp stated that watertight lids could be used, but the best repair

would be to raise the manholes where they are supposed to be. Council Member Cassell stated that he would send Town Manager Jones an email concerning the manholes that need to be raised up.

VDH Backup Generator Project: VDH has granted additional funding to complete calibration of the Town’s water system hydraulic model. Calibration of the model is complete. A Preliminary Engineering Report will be compiled with findings, options, and recommendations for review by the Town prior to submittal to VDH for approval. Once the PER is approved by VDH Project design will commence. Project is considered 10% complete currently. Mr. Snapp stated that he believes there are some opportunities to install a small pump station rather than a large one and possibly to get rid of the Trinity Ridge pump station. Mr. Snapp stated that all of this information will be in the PER as well as new cost estimates for everything. Mr. Snapp stated that the plan is to tie the Trinity Ridge pump station into the Moccasin Hills pump station to reduce maintenance and upkeep. Mr. Snapp stated that this project also includes the demolition of the reclaim tank at the water treatment plant and the master meters. Vice-Mayor Richards stated that we need to maintain the urgency of this project. Vice-Mayor Richards stated that Moccasin Hills was out of power this past weekend and there have been a lot of power outages on the West End.

Town Hall Renovations Project: The Town Hall Renovations Project is completed. Mr. Snapp stated that getting keys made is the remaining task for this project, however, key blanks are on back order due to COVID.

VDH Planning & Design Grant Application: The Town has voted to submit a Planning Grant Application to complete a water efficiency study. M&C is in the process of completing the application. Upon completion it will be submitted to the Town for review. Upon approval by the Town it will be submitted to VDH for consideration for funding. Mr. Snapp stated that this project will include a water efficiency study and will address source quantity.

Kane St. Sidewalk Transportation Alternatives Funding Application: The Town has voted to submit the final application for consideration by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. M&C will submit the final application prior to the October 1st, 2021 deadline.

B. Manager’s Report – Town Manager Greg Jones delivered the Manager’s Report.

- **Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD): Park Street Housing Rehabilitation Project.**

DHCD has awarded \$522,200 for the Park Street Housing Rehabilitation Project.

171 Margie Street – Relocation Complete

639 Park Street – Demolition Contract signed. Asbestos to be removed by 9/23/21

559 Park Street – Looking for suitable house for relocation

609 Park Street – Rehabilitation, bid of \$29,375.00

571 Park Street – Rehabilitation, bid of \$18,300.00

Town Council will be conducting two public hearings on September 14th and October 12th, 2021, to seek public input on local community development and housing needs in relation to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for projects in the town. It is our intent to apply for a new round of grant funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to continue our housing rehabilitation program in Gate City in the fall.

- **Estil Cemetery Restoration Project**

Factory to You Fence has started the fence replacement project. The old fence is down. Two more trees and three stumps need to be removed before the new fence can be installed. Town Manager Jones stated that approximately 51 trees were removed from the cemetery. Mayor Richards asked about the trash and brush issues on Estil Street? Town Manager Jones stated that one property with vast amounts of trash in the yard has been given an NOV and will be reinspected on Friday. Town Manager Jones stated that another property owner had cut down a tree and put the branches at the cemetery to get the town crew to pick it up. Town Manager Jones stated that he met with the owner and explained the brush policy and this issue has been resolved.

- **Architecture Service RFQ**

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) for Architecture Services has been posted and advertised. The Interview Team conducted interviews on August 24th, 2021.

Council Action: Approve Spectrum Designs, Inc to provide architectural services to the Town.

- **Banner Project**

Council has approved the banner design for the AEP Street Light Poles on June 8th, 2021. Banners have been ordered and are expected to be received shortly. Town Manager Jones stated that banner brackets are sold out and there is no eta on when they will be restocked.

- **Gateway and Sampson Mini Park**

Signs have been ordered from Bristol Signs. It should take two weeks to produce and will be installed shortly thereafter.

- **Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Snow Contract**

The 2021 Snowplow Contract with VDOT has been completed and submitted. Our equipment has been inspected by VDOT. All action items were completed by the VDOT deadline dates.

- **Clyde Williams Bridge Refinance Issue**

The Town of Gate City replaced the Clyde Williams Bridge back in 2016. The funds to replace the bridge were borrowed from New Peoples Bank in the amount of \$129,220.00. The bond obligation terms are for five years (maturity date September 7, 2021) at an interest rate of 2.6%.

Council Action: Approve to refinance the balance of the bond. The amount is expected to be \$93,611.00.

- **2021 Events**

- Cruiser Palooza Event: September 4th, 2021. We had a wonderful turnout. Borderline, Retroville, HeadGames, and Jenkins School of Dance performed.

- **GATE CITY WATER LEAKS**

August 2021

<u>Location</u>	<u>Repair Date</u>	<u>Materials used for Repair</u>
141 Cross Street	8/12/2021	2” Steel line; 1- 2” Band; 2-ton rock

Elm Street (Smith-Elliott Water Tank)	8/5/2021	4” PVC; BMS; placed 4’ 4” line
319 Depot Street	8/16/2021	1” Steel line; 1” band
251 Lynn Drive	8/16/2021	1 Union; 3’ ¾” line CTX
110 Grace Street	8/20/2021	1” Band
1213 West Jackson Street	8/23/2021	New setter; new meter box; 1-3/4” union

C. Attorney’s Report

- **169 Reed Hollow Road**

Lawsuit – Town Attorney Michele Brooks stated that court was held August 23, 2021 and Judge Kilgore did a 30-day abatement and awarded court costs and filing fees to the Town. Town Attorney Brooks stated that she has not received the signed order from the court yet, but once she does, it will go from the date that had been signed.

- **248 Ravine Street**

Lawsuit- Town Attorney Michele Brooks stated that she was told by the process server that the service of process has been completed for this property and they will have 21 days to file responsive pleadings.

Town Attorney Michele Brooks stated that 195 Ravine Street, 394 Highland Street, and 209 Highland Street have all been filed but have not been served yet.

- **195 Ravine Street**

Lawsuit

- **394 Highland Street**

Lawsuit

- **209 Highland Street**

Lawsuit

D. Council Reports (Any new business from Committees that needs to come before the Council.)

Council Member Wallace W. Ross, Jr. – Council Member Wallace W. Ross, Jr. stated that he will be going to the VML in October. Council Member Ross stated that he spoke with Mike Thomas about having a car show at Gateway Plaza and he felt that it would not be feasible to do that. Council Member Ross stated that Gateway Plaza has been an instrumental source of tax revenue and we need to show our appreciation in some way.

Council Member Allan “Cotton” Roberts – Council Member Roberts stated that Gate City Frontier met last night and decided that the Friday Night Cruise-In event did not go as planned, but on the last night in August, two of the gentlemen that were there wanted to do the event on Saturday night instead. Council Member Roberts stated that flyers were made and handed out at the last event. Council Member Roberts stated that the interested individuals wanted the event to last from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. and to have music. Council Member Roberts stated that Gate City Frontier would set up the street barriers and it would not require any funding. Council Member Roberts stated that the drivers are also interested in having a small swap meet at these events. Council Member Roberts stated that Yum Yum food truck is willing to attend the events. Council Member Roberts stated that he would like to start the last Saturday in April. Mayor Richards and Vice-Mayor Richards stated that they believe it is worth trying to have the Saturday night Cruise-In. Council Member Roberts stated that the Harvest Moon Celebration will be held on the 25th and

there are 24 vendors that will be coming. Council Member Roberts stated that we only have one food truck all day that is coming. Council Member Roberts stated that we need to look at these vendors as possible business people that may want to move into one of the stores downtown.

Council Member Tyler Kilgore – Council Member Kilgore stated that we have some businesses downtown that advertise as a business but don't operate as a business. Council Member Kilgore asked Town Attorney Brooks if there is anything from an ordinance perspective that could be enforced? Town Attorney Brooks stated that we don't grant a business license if someone is not actually doing business. Council Member Kilgore stated that if we are going to conduct events in the Spring and Summer, we need to be able to be proud of our downtown area that we are showing visitors.

Vice-Mayor Robin Richards – Vice-Mayor Richards stated that she has gotten positive comments concerning the picnic tables on the streets.

Council Member Roger Cassell – Council Member Cassell stated that Spectrum Designs was impressed with the fact that the Town almost has a complete walking trail.

E. **Sanitation Authority** – Town Attorney Michele Brooks stated that a letter has been drafted, but not yet sent.

F. **Police Department** – Chief Justin Miller stated that Sargeant Penley attended a front line supervisor school for one week and the instructors were impressed. Chief Miller stated that he attended a conference with all of the chiefs in Southwest Virginia and gained insight on the struggles that everyone is having. Chief Miller stated that March of next year, there has to be a Marcus Alert System put in place with the 911 dispatch. Chief Miller stated that this system allows behavioral health experts to be involved when responding to 911 calls. Chief Miller stated that officers trained in CIT training can respond to these types of calls and he plans to have the whole department certified in CIT training. Chief Miller stated that we have started advertising for our police officer position and plan to have it filled before the academy starts in January.

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. DHCD Housing Rehabilitation Project

Town Manager Jones stated that we have the opportunity to apply for additional funding to continue the Housing Rehabilitation Project. Town Manager Jones stated that we started on Park Street and there has been some discussion on where we need to go from there. Town Manager Jones stated that we originally discussed a Phase Two of Park Street, but there is a spot between Penley Street and Rollins Street that we may be able to pick up on and allow that to be Phase Two. Vice-Mayor Richards stated that she knows of three homes on Park Street that really need help and when we started Phase One, we shared with the residents that we would be moving that way in Phase Two. Mr. Kibler stated that several property owners on Park Street have been doing their own improvements and there are some homes that are too large for the rehab limits to have any impact on. Mr. Kibler stated that Park Street as a whole, may not be as competitive for a project location, but there are a couple of blocks that could be an option. Mr. Kibler stated that the next priority after Park Street is Margie Street. Mr. Kibler stated that income surveys would have to be done because the funding source is driven to low to moderate income households, which may disqualify some of the homes on Park Street. Mr. Kibler stated that this is also a voluntary process and individuals may not want to participate in the rehabilitation project. Council Member Roger Cassell stated that he believes the individuals on Park Street should be given a chance to see if

they qualify because we told them that we would be doing the project there. Mr. Kibler stated that if Council wants to look on Park Street first, we can do that and if it looks like we have a good project, we can proceed accordingly. Council Member Roberts stated that his concern is that we applied for a \$35,000 grant to assist with heating and energy efficiency from AEP and listed Park Street as the housing project. Town Manager Jones stated that he believes that AEP would be flexible with this since the parameters of the grant would not change regardless of location. Mr. Kibler stated that Deanna and Anna Meade did “windshield inspections” on Park Street last week. Council Member Roberts stated that it is his recommendation that we work on Park Street and if it does not meet the criteria, then we can move on. Town Attorney Michele Brooks asked if you could ask for both streets in one project? Mr. Kibler stated no, because it is not a continuous area and even if it was it would be too large. Council Member Roberts stated that we have already informed the Park Street residents that we would be working on that street. Vice-Mayor Richards stated that we can justify moving on if they don’t qualify. Council Member Cassell asked if we can carry over unused funds from another project since we will be underbudget on Phase One? Mr. Kibler stated that it is possible that they would allow that since the project area is right next to the previous one. Mr. Kibler stated that if Council wants, we can start by looking at individual sections of Park Street and see if we can put together a competitive application or if we need to move to a different location. Mr. Kibler stated that the next public hearing will be project specific.

2. Debt Payoff: Rural Development: Police Vehicles

Town Manager Greg Jones stated that we have not yet received the account balances from Rural Development and we will move this item to next month’s meeting when we have the balances that are due.

TAKE NO ACTION

3. Debt Payoff: Hunter’s Crossing Water Line

Town Manager Greg Jones stated that this is to pay for the water system through a private developer and has been on the books for a long time. Town Manager Jones stated that the payoff is roughly \$1,500 dollars.

Motion made to give the Town Manager permission to pay off the balance of the Hunter’s Crossing Water Line.

Motion by: Allan “Cotton” Roberts

2nd by: Robin Richards

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

4. Architectural Services: Approved Spectrum Designs

Town Manager Greg Jones stated that the interview team interviewed Spectrum Designs on August 24th and were very impressed. Town Manager Jones stated that they will also be bringing on a partnership firm called Hill Studio. Town Manager Jones recommended approving Spectrum Designs for architectural services to get started on the Gate City Theatre Project and other amenities planned for the Town.

Motion made to approve Spectrum Designs as the architectural services firm for the Town of Gate City.

Motion by: Allan “Cotton” Roberts

2nd by: Tyler Kilgore

VOTE: Aye: 4

Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: 1 **Motion Carried.**

5. RFP Trash Truck

Town Manager Jones stated that we have received the first half payment of the ARPA grant funding and we wanted to use a portion of this to replace a trash truck which is an allowable expense under the grant under the category of sanitation. Town Manager Jones stated that this will be a procurement of roughly \$160,000 - \$200,000. Town Manager Jones stated that trash trucks are on back order until 2024. Town Manager Jones stated that Kingsport already has one of these trash trucks and we will be sending one of our public works employees there to see how it works and how they like it.

Motion made to advertise RFP for the Trash Truck.
Motion by: Allan “Cotton” Roberts
2nd by: Roger Cassell
VOTE: Aye: 5
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: **Motion Carried.**

6. Approve Article III of Chapter 16 of the Code of the Town of Gate City, VA

Motion made to approve Article III of Chapter 16 of the Code of the Town of Gate City, VA with amendments to Section 16-65 amending “county” to “Town” and to Section 26-70 amending “eighty miles per hour” to “eighty-five miles per hour”

Motion by: Allan “Cotton” Roberts
2nd by: Robin Richards
ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Vice-Mayor Robin Richards, Council Member Allan “Cotton” Roberts, Council Member Tyler Kilgore, Council Member Roger Cassell, Council Member Wallace W. Ross, Jr.
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: **Motion Carried.**

7. Clyde Williams Bridge: Approval to Refinance Balloon Payment

Town Manager Greg Jones stated that New People’s Bank is offering 2.6% for 10 years which will finish out the debt retirement. Town Manager Jones stated that he has checked with other banks in town and this appears to be the best rate that he can get absent that we don’t have to do any type of bond counsel.

Motion made to approve the refinance of the balloon payment with New People’s Bank at a 10 year note at 2.6% interest rate for the Clyde Williams Bridge.
Motion by: Allan “Cotton” Roberts
2nd by: Tyler Kilgore
VOTE: Aye: 4
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: 1 **Motion Carried.**

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT – NEW BUSINESS - NONE

XV. CLOSED SESSION - NONE

XVI. ADJOURN

Motion made to adjourn.

Motion by: Allan "Cotton" Roberts

2nd by: Robin Richards

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Motion Carried.

*Mayor Richards adjourned the meeting at 8:20 P.M., until the next scheduled Council Meeting on October 12, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Bob Richards – Mayor

Lydia Morales - Town Clerk