

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Gate City Town Council Minutes

October 15, 2024

156 East Jackson Street, Gate City, VA

6:30 PM

I. COUNCIL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:35 PM BY: Mayor Jamie Lawson

II. ROLL CALL – Deputy Town Clerk – Lisa Loggans

	PRESENT:	ABSENT:
Mayor, Jamie Lawson	X	
Vice-Mayor, Tyler Kilgore	X	
Council Member, Wallace W. Ross, Jr.		X
Council Member, Pat Elliott	X	
Council Member, Dexter Harmon	X	
Council Member, Michele Rusek	X	
Town Manager, Greg Jones	X	
Town Attorney, Michele Brooks	X	

Others present: Terry Sivert, GCPD Chief; Dale McConnell; Kevin Helms; Gabe Edmunds, VA Star; Kevin Barnett, Scott County Ministerial Association; Reba Hillman, Larry Sturgill, CPA; Mike Still, Kingsport Times News; Chris Henderson

III. INVOCATION – Kevin Barnett, Scott County Ministerial Association

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – GCPD Chief Terry Sivert

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made to approve the October 15, 2024, agenda.

Motion by: Dexter Harmon

2nd by: Tyler Kilgore

VOTE: Aye: 4

Nay:

Absent: 1

Abstain:

*Motion Carried

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

Introduction of the new Town Clerk, Kristie Tipton.

Pat Elliott: “Thank you” to Public Works during & after Hurricane Helene: “Our town crew did an absolutely, fantastic job helping out in every shape, form and way that they could. No task was too big, no task too tough, they handled it. Through all this emergency and everybody just needs to remember that. Dale, your leadership helped with that. Those guys look up to you, buddy. Thank you.”

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of September 10, 2024, Town Council Minutes

Motion made to approve minutes as presented.

Motion by: Tyler Kilgore
VOTE: Aye: 4
Nay:
Absent: 1
Abstain:

2nd by: Michele Rusek

*Motion Carried

**2. Approval of September 30, 2024, Town Council Emergency Called Meeting Minutes.
Motion made to approve minutes as presented.**

Motion by: Dexter Harmon
VOTE: Aye: 4
Nay:
Absent: 1
Abstain:

2nd by: Pat Elliott

*Motion Carried

VIII. APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

Motion made for approval for payment of bills for October 2024 as presented.

Motion by: Michele Rusek
VOTE: Aye: 4
Nay:
Absent: 1
Abstain:

2nd by: Pat Elliott

*Motion Carried

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT (Will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker.)

None

Mayor Lawson closed the public comment session at 6:40 PM and opened the consent agenda session.

X. COMMUNICATIONS

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 Status Report Jason Snapp

VDH Backup Generator Project: Project design is complete, and plans and specs will be submitted to VDH for approval this week. The required easements to facilitate the project have been delivered to the Town for acquisition. The CE approval for the final project has been granted by VDH and the project is cleared for environmental purposes. The Towns FY 23 audit has also been completed, which is a requirement of the VDH funding as well. Project should go to construction in the spring pending VDH approval and easement acquisitions progressing accordingly.

Kane St. Sidewalk Transportation Alternatives Funding Application: 60% plans are in progress. The Town and M&C need to set up a utility conference with all the vested parties to discuss relocations.

Manville Road Highway Safety Improvement Plan Funding Application: 60% of plans are in progress. The Town and M&C will need to set up a utility/ROW conference with all vested parties to discuss relocations and acquisitions. There will be a ROW phase for this particular project to the needed Slope and Construction easements for the project. This will add approximately 12 months to the project timeline. M&C and the Town will need to reach out to each property owner to discuss options.

Retaining Wall Construction Plans (Walgreen's Parking Lot): Design is nearly complete with the exception of working out drainage onto the adjacent parking lot. M&C is working to set up a meeting with Mike Carrico who will represent the owner in discussions regarding the needed construction easement.

B. Gate City Frontier Report – No presenter (Report included in Council Packet)

C. Town Manager's Report – Greg Jones

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

Phase two of the Park Street project includes the rehabilitation of five housing units, the substantial reconstruction of one unit and the clearance and demolition of one blighted unit, serving nineteen low- to moderate-income persons.

December 2022 – DHCD was awarded funding for the Phase II Park Street Housing Rehabilitation Project on November 16th, 2022.

Funding Awarded:

DHCD: CDBG:	\$687,968
AEP	\$35,000
Town (In-Kind)	<u>\$12,000</u>
Total	\$734,968

October -2024 – Interim Compliance Review has been postponed to November 6th a& 7th, 2024 as a result of Hurricane Helene. Prebid conference 308 Park Street and 347 Park Street was held on October 3rd, 2024. The Housing Rehabilitation Board approved rehabilitation efforts for 308 Park Street and 347 Park Street. 309 Park Street is currently scheduled for demolition soon.

- **Dog Park Project**

August 2023 – The Planning Commission noted that the fence is damaged again due to a fallen tree. The Planning Commission also indicated that the latches on the fence were not closing properly. Factory to You Fence will be working to correct these issues. The Planning Commission is currently working on sign development and placement, placement of concrete benches, developing rules that will be posted onsite, and placing three dog waste stations.

February 2024 – Factory to You Fence has completed the repairs to the fence. The sign project can be incorporated into a planning grant from the Tobacco Commission and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

July 2024 – Council has awarded \$5,000 in funding through the FY 2025 budget for this project. The Planning Commission will be moving forward in developing signage and amenities for the dog park in the coming months.

- **Request for Proposals: Scott County Historic Society Building and Wall Repair**

May 2023 - The deadline for the RFP has been extended to April 5th, 2023. We did not receive any proposals. A local contractor is interested in the project but wants engineering plans for the drainage. Town Council has approved Mattern & Craig to develop a drainage plan. A new RFP will be developed once the drainage plan is complete.

July 2024 – Plans are 90% complete.

August 2024 – Scott County Historic Society has informed me that until exterior work is completed, they cannot get insurance for their personal property. Action item: Approve estimate from Clinch Mountain Contractors to replace the roof for 6,773.95. I have approved the soffit trim repair work and leaking windows repair work.

October 2024 – Clinch Mountain Contractors has replaced the roof, fixed windows and broken bricks. The Town is waiting for a return call from Walgreen’s attorney to proceed with the drainage mitigation.

- **Decorative Street Light Removal**

June 2024 – AEP will be installing the new LED lights to their poles on Jackson and Water Street starting in late July. AEP will install a few lights at a time. Our Town Crew will remove the decorative lights as AEP progresses.

August 2024 – AEP has informed that they will start installing the new LED lights in late September. They are behind on their work orders due to the recent storms.

- **United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) COPS Hiring Grant**

October 2024 – The Town has been awarded \$125,000 in grant funding from the USDOJ COPS Hiring Grant. The funding will be used to hire one additional full time Police Officer over the next three years. Help wanted advertising has been posted for this position.

- **Water Street Parking Lot Development Project**

July 2024 – Spectrum Designs, LLC has completed a couple of site plans. They need feedback. I am currently working on scheduling a meeting time for the Economic Development Committee to meet with Spectrum Designs. *Note: ARPA funding must be spent or under contract by December 31st, 2024.

August 2024 – The Economic Redevelopment Committee met with Spectrum Design, Inc and Gate City Frontier, Inc on August 5th, 2024, to discuss the Parking Lot development project on Water Street.

Gate City Town Council and Gate City Frontier, Inc met on August 12th, 2024, to receive their input and ideas concerning the proposed community development project.

The Request for Proposals for a design-build contract has been advertised and solicited. The pre-bid meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 13th, 2024. The RFP bids are due by Friday, September 20th, 2024. Council Action: Reconvene Council meeting to September 24th, 2024, to review bids and award the contract.

October 2024 - Council reviewed bids on September 24, 2024, and determined that the scope of the project to be narrowed to 1x Basketball Court, 1x Skate Track, 2x Pickleball Courts, and 1x Green Space. This project has been named Phase I. A new project map showing the Phase I project area was submitted to Council. The two responding firms were giving instructions to revise their bid to include just the Phase I amenities. The due date for the revised bids was set for October 10th, 2024. **Council Action: Approve bid as recommended by the Economic Redevelopment Committee.**

- **2024 Comprehensive Plan**

July 2024 – The Comprehensive Plan for Gate City is due by December 31st, 2024. The Planning Commission will need to adopt by December 3rd, 2024. The Town Council will need to conduct a Public Hearing and adopt on December 10th, 2024. Both Council and the Planning Commission will receive draft copies by the beginning of November 2024.

- **Byrne/Justice Assistance Grant**

July 2024 – The Town has been awarded the DCJS Byrne/Justice Assistance Grant. The funding will be used to purchase and install mobile data terminals in five of our patrol vehicles. The total value of the grant is \$25,169.00.

August 2024 – The mobile data terminals have been installed. We are currently waiting for the anti-virus software to be installed. This project is anticipated to be completed by early October 2024.

October 2024 – This project has been completed. Grant close-out documents and reporting should be completed by the end of the month.

- **Lead and Copper Compliance Program**

August 2024 – In May 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released final revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR). The rule requires all utility services to create an inventory of public and private water service lines by October 16, 2024.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has required monitoring of lead and copper content in drinking water since 1991. The town's water has been in compliance with safe standards since monitoring began.

The Town of Gate City must compile a Lead Service Line Inventory (LSL Inventory). The inventory must include the Town's portion of the water service line (before and including the water meter) and the customer's portion of the service line (after the water meter into the home or business). Lead service lines were primarily installed during the late 1800s through the 1940s with a federal lead ban effective June 19, 1986.

All municipalities in the United States are required to complete the Lead Service Line inventory. The Town of Gate City will be conducting a customer survey in order to gain information on the type of service lines going into their homes. Please watch for this survey in your next water bill. LENOWISCO has secured \$25,000 in funding for the Town of Gate City to help complete the inventory.

September 2024 – A webpage has been created: <https://mygatecity.com/water-line-survey-material-survey/#survey> This webpage provides the information about the program and online survey for the convenience of our residents. We have targeted eleven areas in Town that have galvanized water lines. Our Public Works Team will be surveying these areas for our initial submission that is due by October 15th, 2024. Letters about this project have been mailed to our residents as well.

October 2024 – The Public Works team completed surveys for Davidson Subdivision, Willow, Walnut, Lynn Drive, Ravine, Anderson, Elm, and McConnell Street areas. We received online responses from 58 residents and have received 151 responses from our direct mailing campaign. The data is currently being uploaded to the Virginia Department of Health's portal. The due date is October 16th, 2024 for the first initial reporting.

- **Kane Street Mural Project**

September 2024 - The Planning Commission met on Tuesday, September 3rd, 2024, and reviewed the Request for Proposals submissions for the Mural project on Kane Street. The Planning Commission was unanimous in recommending MadrPaints to complete the project. Council Action: Approve MadrPaints bid of \$10,150.00.

October 2024 – Council has approved the bid from MadrPaints in the amount of \$10,150.00. The Planning Commission will review the artwork on November 5th, 2024, and make recommendations to Council. Town Council is expected to approve the artwork at the November 12th Council meeting. The approved artwork will then be sent to VDOT for their approval.

- **Hurricane Helene – September 27th, 2024**

October 2024 – Hurricane Helene hit Gate City Friday morning, September 27th, 2024. AEP reported that 282,000 customers lost power. The hurricane caused 2,500 spans of fallen wire and damaged equipment, including 585 poles, 315 cross arms, and 150 transformers. Destructive winds and downed trees destroyed nearly 80 transmission lines across Appalachian Power's system. The power restoration began on Sunday, September 29th, 2024, with most of the residents power restored by Thursday, October 3rd, 2024. The Water Plant regained power on Sunday,

September 29th, 2024, after being off line for 2.5 days. A voluntary boil water was issued for Estil Heights subdivision and area at higher elevation. The boil water advisory was lifted on Thursday, October 3rd, 2024.

Currently work is taking place to remove fallen trees. FEMA funding for Scott County has been allocated for this storm on Thursday, October 10th, 2024. The Town is presently working to bring in Asplundh Tree Removal Service to Gate City. All down trees and storm debris should be placed (if possible) at the edge of the road for pickup. Please contact the Town Hall to be placed on the list.

FEMA announced individual assistance funding on October 14th, 2024. Funding can help pay for essential items, temporary housing, home repairs, and other needs due to the hurricane. Residents can call FEMA at (800) 621-3362 or apply online: DisasterAssistance.gov.

The Scott County Emergency Services Coordinator will be submitting funding requests to FEMA on the Town's behalf.

D. Attorney Report – No Report

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

- Pat Elliott: No Report
- Dexter Harmon: No Report
- Tyler Kilgore: No Report
- Michele Rusek: No Report
- Wallace W. Ross, Jr.: Absent

F. Police Department – Terry Sivert

September - 2024

	August	September	Year to Date
Calls for Service	237	296	1916
Arrest	5	5	56
Summons	43	62	277
Incident Reports	15	12	87
Accident Reports	6	5	30
DUI Arrests	1	2	7
Vehicle Unlock	12	8	49

Significant Activity & Reporting for September 2024:

- GCPD was awarded the FY 24 COPS Hiring Program Grant.
- GCPD put in several hours OT in assisting with the storm damage.
- I would like to thank those who have offered drinks, food and support and encouragement as our officers worked the 4-way red light intersection during the power outage.
- GCPD Officers will continue to do extra patrols throughout the town, we will continue to do walk throughs at schools, businesses and community events.



Department of Justice (DOJ)

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)

Washington, D.C. 20531

Name and Address of Recipient:	TOWN OF GATE CITY 156 E JACKSON ST	
City, State and Zip:	GATE CITY, VA 24251	
Recipient UEI:	QK93YJRHV1H5	
Project Title: FY24 COPS Hiring Program (CHP)	Award Number: 15JCOPS-24-GG-03580-UHPX	
Solicitation Title: FY24 COPS Hiring Program		
Federal Award Amount: \$125,000.00	Federal Award Date: 9/30/24	
Awarding Agency:	Office of Community Oriented Policing Services	
Funding Instrument Type:	Grant	
Opportunity Category: D		
Assistance Listing:		
16.710 - Public Safety Partnership and Community Policing Grants		
Project Period Start Date: 10/1/24	Project Period End Date: 9/30/29	
Budget Period Start Date: 10/1/24	Budget Period End Date: 9/30/29	
Project Description:		
The COPS Hiring Program (CHP) provides funding to law enforcement agencies to hire and/or rehire additional career law enforcement officers in an effort to increase their community policing capacity and crime prevention efforts. Anticipated outcomes of CHP awards include engagement in planned community partnerships, implementation of projects to analyze and assess problems, implementation of changes to personnel and agency management in support of community policing, and increased capacity of agency to engage in community policing activities.		

G. Sanitation Authority – Nothing ready to report.

H. Public Works – Dale McConnell, Included in Council Packet

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Town FY 2023 Audit Presentation** – Reba Hillman presented a brief talk about the audit (pg. 511 highlights)

Motion made to approve the town FY2023 audit presentation.

Motion by: Pat Elliott

2nd by: Tyler Kilgore

VOTE: Aye: 4

Nay:

Absent: 1

Abstain:

*Motion Carried

2. **RFP Bids: Water Street Parking Lot Development Project**

Motion made to accept RFP bid from Quesenberry Construction @ \$600,000

Motion by: Pat Elliott

2nd by: Michele Rusek

VOTE: Aye: 4

Nay:

Absent: 1

Abstain:

*Motion Carried

Discussion about bids to pay for 1st phase. Budget of \$650,000.00 to \$700,000.00. The council has already approved to narrow the scope of the project (basketball court, skate park, pickleball courts, and green space areas). Quesenberry Construction came in at \$600,000.00 / Premier Group came in at \$700,000.00. The Economic Development Committee is recommending we move forward with Quesenberry Construction.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT – NEW BUSINESS

What is the cost and time frame for the Water Street Project?

Greg Jones: we will begin in spring and should be done by summer.

XV. CLOSED SESSION - NO

Motion made for Council to enter into closed session to discuss 1.)

2.)

Motion by:

2nd by:

VOTE: Aye:

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Mayor Lawson opened the closed session at _____ PM

XVI. RETURN FROM CLOSED SESSION

Motion made for Council to return from closed session.

Motion by:

2nd by:

VOTE: Aye:

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

Council returned from closed session at _____ PM

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING – Read by: Town Attorney Michele Brooks

WHEREAS, the Gate City Town Council has convened a Closed Meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-7312 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Town Council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Gate City Town Council hereby certifies that to the best of each member’s knowledge, (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirement by Virginia law were discussed in closed meeting to which this certification applies and (2) only such business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Gate City Town Council.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aye:
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain:

XVII. MOTIONS FROM CLOSED SESSION:

XVIII. ADJOURN

Motion made to adjourn.

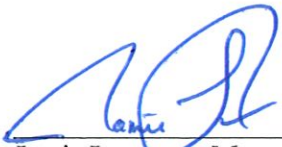
Motion by: Tyler Kilgore

2nd by: Pat Elliott

VOTE: Aye: 4
Nay:
Absent: 1
Abstain:

***Motion Carried**

*Mayor Lawson adjourned the meeting at 7:02 PM, until the next scheduled Council Meeting on November 13, 2024, at 6:30 PM



Jamie Lawson – Mayor



Lisa Loggans – Deputy Town Clerk