

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Gate City Town Council Minutes

December 12, 2023

156 East Jackson Street., Gate City, VA

6:30 PM

I. COUNCIL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:30 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: Pastor Danny Grizzle, Gabe Edmunds – VA Star, and Mr. Kevin Barnette

III. INVOCATION – Kevin Barnette

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chief Justin Miller

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made to approve the December 12, 2023, agenda.

Motion by: Pat Elliott	2 nd by: Tyler Kilgore
VOTE: Aye: 5	
Nay: 0	
Absent: 0	
Abstain: 0	

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

None.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of November 14, 2023, Town Council Minutes

Motion made to approve minutes as presented.

Motion by: Dexter Harmon	2 nd by: Pat Elliott
VOTE: Aye: 5	
Nay: 0	

Absent: 0
Abstain: 0

VIII. APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

- **Motion made for approval for payment of bills for November 2023 as presented.**

Motion by: Tyler Kilgore 2nd by: Wallace W. Ross, Jr.
VOTE: Aye: 5
 Nay: 0
 Absent: 0
 Abstain: 0

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

Mayor Lawson closed the public comment session at 6:34 PM and opened the consent agenda session.

X. COMMUNICATIONS

No 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's Status Report

VDH Backup Generator Project: Project is considered 35% complete currently. VDH has approved the original Categorical Exclusion request for public comment. The CE has advertised for public comment (ran in Kingsport Times on 7/2 and 7/9). The public comment period has closed and official CE approval was received from VDH on 11/30. VDH has indicated the needed water pump station in the Williams Mill Tank area can be added to the project in place of the one we removed from the project previously. The design can be part of the VDH funding project, but the survey will be the responsibility of the Town since it was not originally included in the budget. The CE will have to be readvertised to include the new location. Next steps after meeting in the field to scope the new site will be to procure easements and final design. The onsite meeting with Greg to scope the new pump station is scheduled for 12/8 at 10:00AM.

Kane St. Sidewalk Transportation Alternatives Funding Application: Project survey has been completed, preliminary design has begun, and project is currently approximately 20% complete. Pre award audit by VDOT has been completed and approved. Once 30% plans are complete we will schedule a public hearing for the project.

Manville Road Highway Safety Improvement Plan Funding Application: Project survey is complete, preliminary design (30% plans) are completed, and project is currently approximately 25% complete. 30% plans have been reviewed with the Town, from that review it was determined that a public hearing should be scheduled to discuss and address any questions or concerns the affected residents may have. Public Hearing will be scheduled prior to the January Council Meeting. 30% plans will be submitted to VDOT for review.

Daniel Boone Water Master Meter Replacement: Meter and telemetry has been installed and is working properly.

Alley Extension (behind Sam's Auto Service): Design has been approved by VDOT and SCSWCD concerning E&SC permitting. The Town can either procure a contractor or proceed to obtain the work permit to allow in-house construction at this point.

Retaining Wall Construction Plans (Walgreen's Parking Lot): Field survey is complete. M&C met onsite to scope the wall design on 11/29 and met with Ms. Judy Fields (Walgreens) to determine how to best locate the wall. Next step is for M&C and Town to schedule a meeting with the property owner (Brack Slate) to discuss the extents of the wall due to property constraints.

B. Gate City Frontier Report

Please accept this brief report on behalf of GCF director, Leslie Crawford. This report will outline the capacity at which GCF has been actively working towards foundational growth and organization, business outreach, community outreach, events, and downtown revitalization through Virginia Main Street.

I. Foundational Growth and Organization with GCF

- Continued our work with VMS/DHCD for grant procedures and fulfillment.
- Working to determine the best scenario for utilizing the \$5,000 match from the Town of Gate City towards the streetscape project. Currently, with that amount, we are unable to get the “bundled” deal that Global offered GCF originally, so we are trying to choose the best “bang for our buck.” I will update as I have information from our rep.
- The GCF board voted to have the theater lease agreement viewed by attorney Terry Kilgore in December before signing.
- All other matters of business were tabled until after the January GCF meeting and the GCF/Town Council workshop on January 8th.

II. Business & Community Outreach

- Worked alongside town businesses to make sure that everyone had advertising for the holiday season. We created a marketing initiative including radio, television, print, and social media to promote downtown Gate City, Virginia, and its businesses for the holiday season.
- Cooperatively planned Tinsel the Town 2023 with local stakeholders

III. Events

- **Veterans Day Program:** This event was held at the Gate City High School/Middle School complex in cooperation with Gate City High School. Many distinguished guests participated to make this an honorable experience for the Veterans in attendance.
- **Christmas Open House:** Held on November 18th, businesses within the designated focus area for Gate City Frontier as well as businesses within the town limits reported increased sales and traffic. In order to bring in tourists, this day featured free carriage rides through town, free face painting, the Kickin Chicken Truck, and street carolers.
- **Small Business Saturday:** This event focused on shopping locally owned small businesses and was a successful day in town. Backwoods Burger Bar Food Truck was in attendance as an additional tourist draw on Jackson Street.

IV. Questions/Concerns for the Town of Gate City

- We are excited to strategically plan and discuss matters in person at the January 8th joint workshop including both GCF and the Town Council.

Upcoming Events:

- February: Community Meet & Greet, Business Showcase, Think Tank
- Spring and summer events will be planned this winter

November Part-Time Hours Total: 140

November 1-4 (24 hours)

November 6-11 (40 hours)

November 13-18 (40 hours)

November 20-25 (12 hours)

November 27-30 (24 hours)

C. Town Manager's Report

- **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

December 2023 – Town Council has adopted the revised Rehab Program Designs and the Admin Agreement. The documents have been submitted to LENOWISCO. This action completes all of our contract and compliance documents.

- **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.

September 2023 – I have received a soft quote in the amount of \$2,400 to remove the dead trees around the parameter of the dog park. This should help mitigate trees falling and damaging the fence. Work is expected to be completed on September 18th, 2023.

October 2023 – The dead trees around the parameter of the dog park have been removed. Factory to You Fence will be completed the fence repair shortly.

November 2023 – We have received a preliminary quote and sign renderings for the dog park. Council action: Approval to develop and advertise a Request for Proposals (RFP)

- **US Department of Transportation: Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program**

July 2023 – We are currently in process of developing a funding proposal to address a better access to the Scott County Recreational Park, development of the Gate City to Weber City trail, and a mobility path between the recreation park and the proposed trail. Our grant deadline is July 10th, 2023.

August 2023 – The grant application was submitted on July 10th, 2023.

- **Department of Criminal Justice System (DCJS)/ARPA Funding Grant**

April 2023 – The Town was allocated \$152,000 through DCJS/ARPA funding. The Town submitted the grant application on March 24th, 2023. Below is our budget:

Item	QTY	Cost/Each	Vendor	Budget
Axon in Car Cameras x5	5	\$ 9,685	Axon	\$ 48,425
Axon Taser 10's x4	4	\$ 4,827	Axon	\$ 19,308
Star Chase GPS x2	2	\$ 9,983	Starchase	\$ 19,966
Less Lethal Wilson Shotguns x3	3	\$ 1,207	Wilson's Combat	\$ 3,621
Handgun's with red dot x4/holster/light	3	\$ 1,155	Craig's Firearm Supply	\$ 3,465
Grogan Park Cameras	10	\$ 3,743	SCTV	\$ 37,430
Police Department Cameras	8	\$ 2,440	SCTV	\$ 19,520
Total				\$ 151,735

December 2023 – SCTV has informed the town that the equipment has been received. SCTV anticipates installation to be completed in January or February 2024.

- **Virginia Tourism Corporation: Marketing Leverage Grant**

March 2023 - The Town applied for the VTC's Marketing Leverage Grant. The proposed funding will be used to create a new website for our tourists: YourGateCity.com. The proposed funding will also include marketing and web page utilization funds for the new website. The total funds requested for the project are \$15,000 with a 50% match from the Town.

May 2023 – A Request for Proposals (RFP) for website development vendors has been developed and should be advertised shortly.

September 2023 – The deadline for the VTC Marketing Leverage Grant is on September 28th, 2023.

October 2023 - The grant application has been submitted. We should receive notice in the next few weeks.

December 2023 – VTC has awarded \$10,000.00 to the Town for this project. **Council Action: Approve bid for Web Page Development.**

- **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. Council has approved Mattern & Craig to develop a drainage plan. A new RFP will be developed once the drainage plan is complete.

September 2023 – Council has accepted Mattern & Craig, Inc proposal to manage the project under the Town's GES contract.

December 2023 – Mattern & Craig has completed the survey the property and is currently working on designing the project.

- **Raze 242 Chestnut Street Project**

September 2023 - Upon the recommendation of the Codification Committee, Council has approved to raze 242 Chestnut Street due to property maintenance violations. The notice to raze the structure has been sent

to the property, posted at the Town Hall and Courthouse. In accordance with VA Code § 15.2-906(2), the notice must also be published in the newspaper for two weeks and observe a 30-day waiting period after the date of the last publication. The notice was published in the VA Star on August 30th and September 6th, 2023. The waiting period will be over on October 6th. In the meantime, I'm developing the Request for Proposal (RFP) for contractors to perform the work. The RFP will be advertised by the end of September.

October 2023 – The RFP to raze the building has been created and advertised. The deadline for the RFP is October 25th, 2023.

November 2023 - DH Griffin Wrecking Company submitted the lowest bid. We did receive one bid that was disqualified. **Council Action: Award contract to DH Griffin Wrecking Company.**

- **DEQ: High School Area Collector Line Replacement Project**

The Town has been awarded \$704,000.00 to replace the wastewater collection line near the Gate City High School. EPA is expected to award up to 50% in grant funding in the spring of 2024. The balance of the funding will be funded through the Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund. The terms will be for 30 years at 0% interest.

- **Water Leaks Repaired**

<u>Location</u>	<u>Repair Date</u>	<u>Materials used for Repair</u>
140 East Jackson Street	11/3/2023	Dug out meter box; water coming from toilet under Dollar General Store; cut off water to toilet until it can be removed

D. Attorney's Report Nothing to Report

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

Wallace W. Ross, Jr: Expressed his concerns about the decorative streetlights, parking in Gate City, Electric Vehicle Charging Stations, location of Gate Way Signs, private property maintenance issues, cyber security issues, and a raise for Council members.

Michele Rusek: No Report

Tyler Kilgore: Codification Committee met. Defer to New Business

Dexter Harmon: No Report

Pat Elliott: No Report

F. Police Department Discussed the Christmas Parade Traffic. We did not receive funding from the COPS grant – we can reapply in the spring. In-car cameras are in. We are waiting to install.

G. Sanitation Authority No Report

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT – NEW BUSINESS

No Public Comments

XV. CLOSED SESSION

Motion made for Council to enter into closed session to discuss Legal and Personnel matters.

Motion by:	Tyler Kilgore	2 nd by:	Michele Rusek
VOTE:	Aye: 5		
	Nay: 0		
	Absent: 0		
	Abstain: 0		

Mayor Lawson opened the closed session at 7:39 PM

XVI. RETURN FROM CLOSED SESSION

Motion made for Council to return from closed session.

Motion by:	Tyler Kilgore	2 nd by:	Pat Elliott
VOTE:	Aye: 5		
	Nay: 0		
	Absent: 0		
	Abstain: 0		

Council returned from closed session at 8:44 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:	Council Members Kilgore, Ross, Rusek, Elliott, Harmon
	Nay:	0
	Absent:	0
	Abstain:	0

XVII. MOTIONS FROM CLOSED SESSION: None

XVIII. ADJOURN

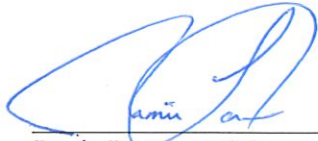
Motion made to adjourn.

Motion by: Pat Elliot

2nd by: Tyler Kilgore

VOTE: Aye: 5
 Nay: 0
 Absent: 0
 Abstain: 0

*Mayor Lawson adjourned the meeting at 8:46 PM, until the next scheduled Council Meeting on January 9th, 2024, at 6:30 PM. A Council Workshop has been scheduled for January 8th, 2024 at 7:00 PM.



Jamie Lawson – Mayor



Lisa Loggans – Deputy Town Clerk