

# TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Gate City Town Council Minutes  
September 10 & 24, 2024  
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:** Chief Terry Sivert; Kevin Barnett, Scott County Ministerial Association; Frances Perry; Lynn Chapman; Frances Chapman; Joshua Ketron; Dale McConnell, Public Works; Gabe Edmunds, Virginia Star; Mike Still, Kingsport Times-News; Donald Carroll; Tabitha Edwards; Krite Hammonds; Joey Carico; Craig Forrester; Donnie Alley; Sandy O'Dell; Michael Worley; Anna Barnett; Terry and Sue Holt; Mike Taylor; Quentin Miles

III. INVOCATION – Scott County Ministerial Association Chairman Kevin Barnett

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Gate City Chief of Police Terry Sivert

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made to approve the September 10, 2024, agenda.

Motion by: Pat Elliott	2 <sup>nd</sup> by: Dexter Harmon
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 August 13, 2024, Town Council Minutes  
Motion made to approve minutes as presented.

Motion by: Pat Elliott 2<sup>nd</sup> by: Tyler Kilgore



- Company (LLC). I searched the deed. There are people that have lived in the subdivision for many years and new people who just moved in. I would like to keep the subdivision as an R-1 district.
4. **Joshua Ketron, 4426 Dishner Family Road, Bristol, VA:** I am here to speak on behalf of Recovery Resources. My family is from 'Midway' and I went to Midway Methodist Church my whole life. I spent most of my time with my grandfather at the Campus and Hob Knob. I know this community. I will give you a story on why I think this area is so special. I love a town council meeting that starts with a prayer and a pledge of allegiance. I think there is some misconceptions on what Recovery Resources is. Picture it as a safe place for people who have already had treatment to come and stay at a home that has a roof over their head with some guidance to stay clean and sober. I believe that everyone should have the chance for God to work in their life. This is not a business, it's a non-profit. The directors who started this non-profit did so online while working full time jobs, raising a family, and started from a grass roots section. We get to be spectators in the best thing you can image which is God's work at hand. To have someone turn their lives around and see change in their lives to go from something to a person their parents are proud of. I don't believe we are doing justice to the culture of Gate City. Everyone deserves to have a helping hand. If you had any 'spiritualness' in you at all you would feel the same way.
  5. **Unknown Person:** He said a non-profit is not a business. The Salvation Army is a non-profit in which the president earns \$700,000 - \$900,000 per year. Please do not let someone tell you that a non-profit is not a business. I used to sit on a board of a non-profit. It's a business and you're putting a business in the middle of a subdivision.
  6. **Terry Holt, 169 Sue Street, Gate City, VA:** We have lived there for 22 years. I have nothing against them having a place like that. Not in our neighborhood. I feel sorry for the people in this situation. But if its needed real bad, put it in his neighborhood. We don't want it. It's been a safe neighborhood. The apartments were not the best thing in the world. The apartments create a lot of traffic on Sue Street.

Mayor Lawson closed the public comment session at 7:00 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 Status Report**

**VDH Backup Generator Project:** Project design is nearing completion with remaining efforts mostly consisting of the electrical design. The required easements to facilitate the project have been delivered to the Town for acquisition. Final Plans and Specs are expected to be submitted to VDH for approval by October 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Kane St. Sidewalk Transportation Alternatives Funding Application:** We've received 30% comments from VDOT and are working to set up a meeting to discuss.

**Manville Road Highway Safety Improvement Plan Funding Application:** We've received 30% comments from VDOT and are working to set up a meeting to discuss.

**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**

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. As stated in our agreement with the Town of Gate City,

“GCF will provide the Town with a monthly report on monthly activities, accomplishments, and planned projects, said report being due by the first Thursday of the month, for inclusion in the Town Council package.”

The part-time GCF Director will attend monthly council meetings as available to present this report. If any council member would like to gain additional information in regard to any part of this report, please email those to [gcfreterdirector@gmail.com](mailto:gcfreterdirector@gmail.com). The questions will then be presented to the GCF Board and followed up within the next monthly report.

## **I. Foundational Growth and Organization with GCF**

- The GCF Director attended the Mobilizing Main Street interchange which was an informational meeting held on August 27th and briefly outlined the requirements of applying to be a part of the cohort of Exploring Main Street Communities.
- The GCF Director also participated in a meeting with current VMS representative, Amy Guizilitis. This meeting was to discuss many aspects of Gate City Frontier/Gate City’s Virginia Main Street participation with guidelines and suggestions for moving forward.
- In regards to the theater, we are waiting to receive the theater deed (60 days as mentioned at the Town Council Workshop) so we may move forward with the theater committee.
- The FY 25 Community Vitality Grant was awarded in early summer and fulfillment of that streetscape project will begin soon. The money will be utilized per the GCF Board’s specifications along with community feedback in order to revitalize and bring vibrancy to the downtown district. Due to the timeline for repairs at the Historical Society Building, we will have to go a different direction in regards to our original art installation.
- The GCF board will discuss and vote on the grant fulfillment for first remittance on Monday, September 9th at our regularly called monthly meeting.

## **II. Business & Community Outreach**

- Planning alongside local stakeholders for the upcoming fall events including Miles for Diabetes: A Walk for All, Harvest Moon Celebration, King Alleyween, and Veterans Day.
- The Harvest Moon Celebration will offer less than originally planned due to a delay of the FY25 funding allocation. We lost the stage and sound company for this event and one of the entertainment activities, Days Gone By. We are altering plans and making it work at a smaller scale. Despite this, we are excited to be partnering with Scott County Tourism to offer the Scott County Bounty Trail as a new addition to this event.
- We have been in communication with new businesses in town to show support and to welcome them to be a part of GCF. We are hopeful to gain new Friends of Frontier will all of the amazing businesses choosing to call Gate City their home.

## **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 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Funding Awarded:

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

July – 2024 – Due to telephone issues with LENOWISCO Planning Commission, the Management Team and Housing Oversight Rehabilitation Board did not meet.

August – 2024 – 326 Park Street project is now complete. 308 Park Street is currently in progress. Interim Compliance Review (audit) is scheduled for October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

- **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 5<sup>th</sup>, 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.

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 on the property and is currently working on designing the project. Currently awaiting on property owners to decide on easements issues.

April 2024 – The property owner has approved a construction easement but not a permanent easement.

July 2024 – Plans are 90% complete.

August 2024 – Scott County Historic Society has informed me that until exterior work is completed, they can not 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.

- **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**

June 2024 - The COPS grant is due on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The application has been completed and will be turned in on time.

July 2024 – The COPS grant was completed and submitted. We are expecting award notices to be received around October 2024.

- **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 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

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

Gate City Town Council and Gate City Frontier, Inc met on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 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 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The RFP bids are due by Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Council Action: Reconvene Council meeting to September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024, to review bids and award the contract.

- **2024 Comprehensive Plan**

July 2024 – The Comprehensive Plan for Gate City is due by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. The Planning Commission will need to adopt by December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. Town Council will need to conduct a Public Hearing and adopt on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 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 on the anti-virus software to be installed. This project is anticipated to complete by early October 2024.

- **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 target 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 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Letters about this project have been mailed to our residents as well.

- **Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee met on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. The public works team has requested that the Town purchase 2025 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 4x4 Crew Cab and a 2025 Chevrolet Silverado 3500HD Dump Truck for \$55,098.00 and \$66,542.00 respectively. This purchase has been identified on our Capital Improvement Plan. Council Action: Approve the purchase of the two trucks to be purchased with the Town's ARPA funds.

The Finance Committee reviewed the door installation estimate in the amount of \$5,012.83 for the Police Department. Council Action: Approve the installation of a commercial door for the Police Department as quoted by Clinch Mountain Contractors, Inc. to be purchased with the Town's ARPA Funds.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Scott County Historic Society Building Roof Replacement estimate that was provided by Clinch Mountain Contractors, Inc. Council Action: Approve the roof replacement for Scott County Historic Society in the amount of \$6,773.95 to be purchased with the Town's ARPA Funds.

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

The VDOT snow removal contract for this winter season has been completed. VDOT has inspected the snow removal equipment. Our rate will be the same as last year.

- **Kane Street Mural Project**

The Planning Commission met on Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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.

**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:** The sidewalk in front of the School Board Office going toward Shoemaker Street is deteriorating. Does the Town own that? Town Manager Greg Jones stated that he would have to investigate that.
- Tyler Kilgore:** The Personnel Committee interviewed prospective candidates for the Town Clerk position. This issue is under new business.
- Michele Rusek:** No Report
- Wallace W. Ross, Jr.:** The Town has fallen behind in cutting the grass. We used to have property maintenance. We should focus more on that. The Town recently painted the curbing downtown and its already peeling. Town Manager Greg Jones stated he would investigate this issue. Mr. Ross stated that he may need to spend the night on his return trip from the VML Conference scheduled in Virginia Beach next month. Town Manager Greg Jones stated he would give Mr. Ross his credit card to take care of any expenses Mr. Ross needs for his trip. Mr. Ross asked if AEP started changing out their street lights. Town Manager Greg Jones stated that AEP has been changing them out as the older bulbs burn out. Mr. Ross stated that the east end of Town is dark. Town Manager Greg Jones stated that AEP will start on the east end of Jackson Street.

**F. Police Department** - Included with Council Packet

**G. Sanitation Authority** – Have not met. Next meeting is in October 2024

**H. Public Works** – Included with Council Packet

**XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** - No Unfinished Business

**XIII. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Recovery Resources: Proposed Residential Treatment Facility for Individuals Recovering from Drug and Alcohol Addiction.**

**Kristie Hammonds, Frontier Health, 4364 Bellamy Tipton Rd, Gate City, VA:** We do realize that this is an R-1 zone and I understand we are asking an exemption from the current code. We do appreciate the comments from the folks who live in Gate City and who live in that neighborhood. We understand their concerns. We would like to share information that will address some of their concerns. As the President of Frontier Health, we partner with Planning District One Behavior Health Services that services Lee County, Scott County, Wise County, and the City of Norton, Virginia. The one thing we discuss with the county administrators as well as the board is the need of the communities that we serve. One of them being recovery housing. We do not have that currently in this area. We brought Recovery Resources to the table because of Virginia Association of Recovery Residences certification process. In order to get that certification, they really don't like the community services board or an organization like that to be the one actually running the recovery housing. They like them to partner with someone that is their specialty. Knowing this particular organization out of Tennessee, who currently has eleven homes. We brought them to the table to see if this is something they were interested in. The organization works with the landlord who has several homes and can speak to the history and how they manage those homes. He found this home in Gate



City and brought that to their attention. They thought it was the perfect home in the perfect location, so we moved forward thinking that we were ok. We did not realize we had an issue with zoning at that point. There are three partners for this home; Recovery Resources will actually have the home, Frontier Health will be responsible for the staff that will be embedded in the home and provide wrap around services for the individuals there. We understand the guidelines and established rules when individuals are in the home. These are individuals who are still using and have been through detox and residential rehab. Council Member Michele Rusek asked if the home is individuals who have already been through detox and residential rehab? Ms. Hammonds stated that is correct. They are clean and they have to stay clean in order to stay in the home. They are also pursuing the certification through Virginia Association of Recovery Residences which is recognized with the Virginia Department of Behavior Health and Development Services which is our licensing entity for that certification. We are talking about a home that has three different organizations working together with a lot of oversight to ensure we are bringing value to the community. Council Member Michele Rusek asked if there would be someone from Frontier Health at the house 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Ms. Hammonds stated yes.

**Tabitha Edwards, 453 Cedar Grove Road, Johnson City, TN:** I am the executive director of Recovery Resource. I appreciate the opportunity to share a little more about us and what we do with you all in the greater community. Full disclosure, I am a person in long term recovery. I am a person who benefited from a program like this. I lived in a home for ten months just like this one and no one knew it was a recovery home. We are not proposing a treatment center as it says on the agenda. That is not what we do. We are proposing a residential home were people will live together in a community. The goal is that they become part of that community. I fully understand the neighbors' concerns about moving this outside the town. The problem with that is it goes directly against what we are trying to do. Addiction isolates and separates people, and it put them on the outskirts of society. We want to do the opposite. We want to bring them in so that they understand the community and the connection it's going to serve them in the long run. We are embedded in eight subdivisions across Tennessee. The neighbors in those neighborhoods will tell you that we are the best neighbors they have ever had. Our program is structured and intensive and the best way for them to do that is inside a community. We fell in love with your community when we came here. We love the small town feel and everyone was super friendly to us. It seemed as though the town was very welcoming and wanted this type of recovery services in the area. We are not asking to have the whole area rezoned, we are talking about one home inside the neighborhood. If I give you the addresses of our recovery homes in Tennessee, I will challenge you to drive down the street and pick out what house is ours. I would wager the majority of the time you will not pick right. We blend in. We are just a normal house in a normal community. The only difference is our guys are determined to change their lives and make your community better. We have transplanted upward of 25 individuals from southwest Virginia to upper east Tennessee because they do not have the opportunity for this type of service at home. They would rather be here. When they recover here than can help build the community. They work and shop in the community and we support them so they can do that. It will take a short period of time for the people in the community to see the value of our guys being there. Give them 60 days and they will appreciate as well.

**Craig Forrester, 514 Foothills Road, Kingsport, TN:** I am the founder of Recovery Resources. I wish to apologize to everyone. I wish we did not need recovery group housing. I have been clean for 9.5 years and the 20 years before that I put my family through as hard of a time as you could hope for.

I was a plague on society. In 2015, I found the best way for treatment for me was to volunteer my time at treatment centers. In 2018 I started the non-profit with Tabitha Edwards. We are not in it for money. I care about my people. We started doing education fairs. We started doing housing in 2021. Our second biggest referral source came from the Duffield Regional Jail. Because the drugs don't stop over here. What stops is the recovery. Every community has become better because we are there. All we want is a chance to move into a community so we can get better. Mayor Lawson stated that you are not a low life. People make mistakes everyday. Everybody in this room has made a mistake. You took the obligation to get better so you can be a better person instead of being a drug addict or alcoholic. But you are not a low life. You are doing something for yourself, this community, and other communities.

**Donnie Carroll, 407 Parkway Boulevard, Elizabethton, TN:** Southwest Virginia will always be home to me. At a young age, I was introduced to drugs and alcohol. I crossed that line and became dependent on drugs and alcohol. I found myself in an abandoned house with the only way to out was to end my life. I thank God for these programs because they want to help each other. A good friend of mine found her way to a program such as this. She said one simple message to me: I know people who are using more right now and have recovered and are living happy and useful lives. At that point in time, it was hard for me to put those words together. I took a leap of faith and sought treatment. Within a couple days of being with Recovery Resources, I found a job. My kids live six hours away, but I'm more present with my kids today than when I was on the streets. My Mom was proud to have her son back. I will always be for Recovery Resources.

**Kristen Westover, 838 Powell River Road, Dryden VA:** I am the President of Mountain Empire Community College but I'm not here in that capacity. I am here because I am a recovering alcoholic. I was 14 years old when I found myself in a recovery residence treatment facility. I learned how to become a functioning adult in society. We were problems kids, but the community embraced us. I'm thankful that someone did not discriminate in that region. I know that there is fear around addiction. There shouldn't be fear around recovery. I appreciate that Gate City is trying to do something. You have challenges. Folks are addicted whether you want them or not. Anything you can do as a part of civic responsibility to hold the folks up will become members of the community.

**Joey Carrico, Unknown Address:** I am an attorney. I was Delegate Terry Kilgore first legislative aid. I got to know a few people here in town. I am also a recovering alcoholic. I used to be a Judge in this county. I resigned my judgeship due to my alcoholism. Delegate Kilgore and all these people in politics supported me. I had to rebuild my life. I went to treatment for three months back in 2016. I was able to come back home to a supportive family. Some people can't do that. That is why recovery residence is so important. You don't want to put these people in the outskirts of town. There is a need for that in Southwest Virginia. I'm the director of Legal Aid and serve 17 counties. Our closest office is in Castlewood. Our attorneys are trained to deal with people in recovery. This is not a fraternity house. This house allow individuals to be safe while working towards recovery

**Sandy O'Dell, 20152 Wilderness Road, Rose Hill, VA:** I am the director of the Community Services Board for Wise and Scott County and the City of Norton. We work with localities to determine what type of recovery services for individuals who have addictions. Localities put up match monies for this and we also seek grants through the Opioid Abatement Authority. This is the first location that we would put into practice. We had a mental health facility across the street from

the St. Bernards Catholic Church for 12 years. We are familiar with the community. We moved because we outgrew the facility. We never had complaints when we were there before. We were good partners with the community. We want to be good partners in the community where this house is located. It was not our plan to have everything blow up in our face because of where the home is located. There is not one of us in this room that doesn't have a family member who has been addicted or knows somebody who is addicted, and recovered and they can benefit from this service.

Council Member Pat Elliott asked how many residents are we talking about? Mr. Forrester stated the house has seven bedrooms and will accommodate between 7 and 12 residents. Is it all men? Ms. Edwards stated it will be all men. What is the average age? Ms. Edwards stated that is 18 years old and up. Most of our men are in their 30's and 40's. Does someone assist in trying to find the residents' jobs? What about transport? Ms. Edwards stated that they provide assistance to help the residents find jobs and they do help with transportation. Mr. Forrester stated that they do drug test and if they fail they are no longer allowed to live in the recovery house. Mr. Elliott asked if this was a treatment facility. Ms. Edwards stated that it was not. We do not provide treatment. Our homes are not licensed to provide treatment. We are certified by the National Sober Living Association and are pursuing certification with the Virginia Association of Recovery Residencies. Mr. Elliott asked how long Recovery Resources been providing these services? Mr. Forrester stated about six years. Mr. Elliott asked if there are any statistics on short- or long-term relapse. Ms. Edwards stated that those who complete our program and stay sober for one year are 60%. Mr. Forrester stated that we test for more stuff than the probation officer does. If they fail a drug screen for any reason at our house, they will not be allowed to stay at the house.

Council Member Wallace W. Ross, Jr. asked since you are a non-profit, what is your operational budget? How do you maintain service? We charge a program fee to the residents of the home. The program fees pay for their living expenses that includes rent and case management services. That is the majority of where our operating budget comes from. We receive grants from Tennessee Department of Mental Health Services and Frontier Health in Tennessee who funnel funds to us. Ms. Hammonds stated for this particular home they receive funds from the Opioid Abatement Authority and match contributions from the localities. Mr. Ross asked would the funding cover the staffing that you need? Ms. Hammonds stated yes. Mr. Ross asked if these are trained people to monitor? Mr. Forrester stated they are certified recovery resources.

Mayor Jamie Lawson asked that you charge a fee to the residents, what happens to individuals who are unable to come up with that funding? How is that handled in the agency? Ms. Edwards stated that we have never turned anyone away for not being able to pay. Most people who come to our program have nothing in the beginning. So we will start a balance sheet for them and get them into budgeting and financial classes and help them find a job. It important to us that they learn how to be self-supporting. Mayor Lawson stated that a lot of people do not have the opportunity to do this. It's sad there isn't more resources to help people of this nature.

Mr. Wallace W. Ross, Jr. asked if you answer to some kind of board or a financial audit report? Ms. Edwards stated that we just went through a fiscal monitoring two months ago. Grant overseers come in and audit. We also answer to a board of directors. We have eleven members on our board who make sure we are compliant and financially responsible. Mr. Carroll stated that as a person in risk management the properties are gone over with a fine-tooth comb to make sure they are insurable and

up to code. There are standards that have to meet with each property. You cant provide a safe space if its not safe.

Mayor Jamie Lawson asked if the owner was present. Micheal Worley stated he was the owner. Mr. Elliot asked what is your function?

Council Member Michele Rusek stated that you take them from jail. If they have violent felony charges pending does that preclude them from coming into one of your homes? Ms. Edwards stated that our policy will not allow to accept someone who is on the sex offender's registry and arson charges due to our insurance. People with violent offenses are considered quite rigorously and typically will depend if they have served their time or not. If they are in the process of sentencing, we can take them. Mrs Rusek asked if a convicted violent offender can be taken. Mrs. Edwards stated yes, we could. Out of the 607 we have taken; we have taken violent offenders.

Council Member Wallace W. Ross, Jr. asked how many staff member does it take to maintain the property 24 hours, seven days a week. We have five staffed in Tennessee and also contracted out with three other folks. Mrs. Rusek asked if there are others in Virginia. Ms. Edwards stated not run by us.

Mr. Forrester stated that it would make the city more comfortable not to take violent offenders who are pending charges.

**Michael Worley, Property Owner, Johnson City, TN:** My background is in engineering. I am also a recovering addict. I am a small business owner with multiple businesses. I invest in real estate. I buy homes, renovate and resell them. I do rentals as well. Recovery Resources reached out to me to rent them a house. I want to increase the value of the house and keep in good condition. I gave Recovery Resources a shot and that was 3.5 years ago. Now we have multiple homes with her. If you ride down the road you will never know it was a recovery home. The houses are secure. There are cameras everywhere.

## 2. CLOSED SESSION

**Motion made for Council to enter into closed session to discuss 1.) Personnel Matters  
2.) Legal Matters**

Motion by:	Dexter Harmon	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:	Wallace W. Ross, Jr.
VOTE: Aye:	5		
Nay:	0		
Absent:	0		
Abstain:	0		

Mayor Lawson opened the closed session at 8:29 PM

## 3. RETURN FROM CLOSED SESSION

**Motion made for Council to return from closed session.**

Motion by:	Pat Elliott	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:	Tyler Kilgore
VOTE: Aye:	5		
Nay:	0		







15. RFP Bids: Water Street Parking Lot Development Project Council

Motion made to narrow the scope of the project down to include one basketball court, one skate/pump track, two pickleball courts, and one green space. This project will be identified as Phase I, Community Park Development Project. Contractors to resubmit bids for Phase I.

Motion by: Michele Rusek

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Dexter Harmon

Vote: Aye: 5  
Nay: 0  
Absent: 0  
Abstain: 0

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – NEW BUSINESS – No Public Comments

X. ADJOURN

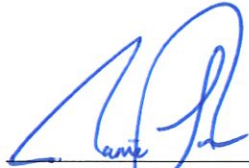
Motion made to adjourn at 6:42 PM.

Motion by: Michele Rusek

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Wallace W. Ross, Jr.

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

\*Mayor Lawson adjourned the meeting at 6:42 PM, until the next scheduled Council Meeting on October 15, 2024, at 6:30 PM (delayed one week due to Hurricane Helene)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jamie Lawson – Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Loggans – Deputy Town Clerk