

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Gate City Town Council Minutes

January 14, 2025

156 East Jackson Street, Gate City, VA

6:30 PM

I. COUNCIL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:31 PM BY: Mayor Jamie Lawson

II. ROLL CALL – Town Clerk: Kristie Tipton

	PRESENT:	ABSENT:
Mayor, Jamie Lawson	X	
Vice-Mayor, Kevin Barnett	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: Dale McConnell; Chief Terry Sivert; Sgt. Cody Johnson (and family); Quentin Miles; Officer John Coalson; Mike Still, Kingsport Times News; Gabe Edmunds, Virginia Star; Frances Perry; Jason Snapp, Mattern & Craig; Zane Scott; Anna Barnett; Maria Barnett

III. INVOCATION – Kevin Barnett, Vice-Mayor

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chief Terry Sivert

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made to approve the January 14, 2025, agenda.

Motion by: Pat Elliott

2nd by: Wallace W. Ross, Jr.

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.

There was a Resolution honoring Police Sgt. Cody Johnson for his heroic actions and saving three (3) lives from a house fire on 12/23/2024.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of December 10, 2024 Town Council Minutes

Motion made to approve minutes as presented.

Motion by: Dexter Harmon

2nd by: Pat Elliott

VOTE: Aye: 4

Nay:

Absent: 1

Abstain:

**Motion Carried*

2. Approval of January 02, 2024, Town Council Special Called Meeting Minutes

Motion made to approve minutes as presented.

Motion by: Pat Elliott

2nd by: Dexter Harmon

VOTE: Aye: 4

Nay:

Absent: 1

Abstain:

**Motion Carried*

VIII. APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

Motion made for approval for payment of bills for January 2025 as presented.

Motion by: Pat Elliott

2nd by: Wallace W. Ross, Jr.

VOTE: Aye: 4

Nay:

Absent: 1

Abstain:

**Motion Carried*

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

Zane Scott spoke to the council concerning his trash pickup, the location of the trash can, and past history of trash pickup at 319 Depot Street. Town Council has decided to hold a Special Meeting Workshop to review the current ordinance and work to find a resolution.

Mayor Lawson closed the public comment session at 7:05 PM 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 Status Report – Jason Snapp, Mattern & Craig

VDH Backup Generator Project: Project design is complete and plans and specs have been submitted to VDH Central Office for review. 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 Town's FY 23 audit has also been completed, which is a requirement of the VDH funding as well. We have received comments from VDH FCAP and VDOT which have been addressed and resubmitted. M&C met onsite with VDH to review on Tuesday, November 12th. 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. M&C is in the process of utility coordination and ROW coordination. Other current tasks include coordination with VDOT concerning the H/C ramp at the intersection of Kane St. and Jackson St.

Manville Road Highway Safety Improvement Plan Funding Application: 60% of plans are in progress. There will be a ROW phase for this particular project to address 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 coordinate the needed construction easement with the owner.

B. Gate City Frontier Report – Included with Council Packet / No Representative Present. Mayor Lawson stated that if this committee wants to keep receiving town funding, that a representative needs to attend the Council meetings and provide financial reports.

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 people.

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)	\$12,000
Total	\$734,968

January 2025: Project Updates:

- 326 Park St (Fischer) is now completed.

- 347 Park St (Bradshaw) is completed; a lead cleaning test will be conducted soon.
- 308 Park St (Jeffries) is in the pre-construction stages.
- 309 Park St (Fish – demo) we are working with the family to get the house cleaned out so that we can begin the demo process.

- **Dog Park Project**

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.

December 2024: Construction Easement is in place and the design is nearly complete.

- **VDH Backup Generator Project – WSL 007-21**

November 2024 – I am currently working with the Virginia Resource Authority (VRA) to close on the backup generator project. VRA has requested data to assist them with their credit analysis. This will be completed in the next couple of weeks.

December 2024 – All of the documents VRA requested have been submitted. We are expecting to close this project very soon.

- **Decorative Street Light Removal**

December 2024: AEP has installed the new LED lights on Jackson Street. The decorative lights have been turned off to see the lighting coverage with the new LED lights. We will start the decorative streetlight removal process shortly.

January 2025: Clinch Mountain Contractors will begin removing the decorative streetlights shortly.

- **Water Street Parking Lot Development Project**

December 2024: Council has approved the construction contract with Quesenberry Construction for the Phase I of the Community Park Development Project on Water Street.

I met with Quesenberry Construction and Spectrum Designs on December 4th, 2024, and discussed the following:

Pickleball Courts

The design team has proposed a modification that would allow us to include four pickleball courts instead of the originally planned two. The courts can be reoriented so that, if the Town decides to repurpose the area in the future, it can be converted into two tennis courts. While this redesign will slightly extend into the green space, the overall cost will remain the same.

Basketball Court and Surface Colors

We also discussed the basketball court and need to decide between a concrete base with a rubber coating or an asphalt base with a rubber coating. I've reached out to Leslie to see if she can contact Matt McClung for his input, but I'd appreciate your feedback as well.

In addition, we have the option to choose the colors for the surfaces of the pickleball court, basketball court, and skatepark. A suggested option is to use a color resembling "Gate City Blue" to create a cohesive and branded look for the park.

Skate Park Layout Options

The team also presented three different layout options for the skate park, designed to align with low-, medium-, and high-range budget levels. I would recommend going with the middle-range option, as it offers a good balance between features and cost. If Council chooses, we can always add additional amenities later as funding allows.

Fencing and Lighting

There was discussion about adding fencing around the pickleball and basketball courts. Since fencing wasn't included in the Phase I budget, I've asked the contractors to draft a separate engagement for this addition.

On the topic of lighting, I'll be meeting with AEP to gather their feedback on options for the park to ensure adequate and cost-effective lighting throughout.

Cost-Saving Opportunity

The team identified a potential cost-saving measure. The asphalt area between the parking lot and green space—currently reserved for a future stage—could be left as is for now and used as a temporary space for food trucks until we move forward with stage construction. This could be a practical, interim solution that enhances usability in the short term. Quesenberry Construction will inspect the existing asphalt to see if this can be done.

Pickleball Court Field Trip – December 19

To help us better visualize some of these plans, we've scheduled a field trip on December 19th to visit area pickleball courts.

January 2025: I am still trying to work out a day for our Field Trip. Currently January 21st, 2025, will work with our contractors.

- **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**

Both the funding match for the Kane Street Sidewalk Project and the Phase I of the Community Park Development Project are under contract. The remaining ARPA funds have been obligated. The two projects must be completed by December 31, 2026. The Treasury portal opens for

reporting on April 1, and the signed contracts that demonstrate the obligation must be submitted by April 30th, 2025.

- **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.

November 2024 – The Comprehensive Plan is expected to be complete in early January 2025.

- **Kane Street Mural Project**

December 2024 – The Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed design with one minor change. The lettering ‘Town Gate City, VA’ has been added for context. **Council Action: Approve the mural design.**

January 2025 – Council has approved the mural with a small change on where to place ‘Gate City, VA’. Our next step is to get the permit approvals from VDOT.

- **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 offline 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 downed 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](https://www.disasterassistance.gov).

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

November 2024 - Asplundh Tree Expert, LLC and Top-Notch Tree Services have been contracted for debris removal. The debris in Big Moccasin Creek alongside Old Nickelsville Highway will be the first area of concern that will be addressed. Once the debris in Big Moccasin Creek is resolved, they will move to the Hillcrest Subdivision and Beverly Circle area. Top Notch Tree Service will also help with the remaining trees that need to be cleared. Residents are encouraged to contact the Town Hall if they have debris from the hurricane that needs to be removed. If possible, the debris should be moved to the curbing for pickup.

December 2024 – Top Notch Tree Service has completed taking down the damaged trees as a result of the hurricane. Asplundh Tree Expert, LLC is expected to be in town for debris removal soon.

January 2025 - Asplundh Tree Expert, LLC has informed me that they will be in Town on Friday, January 17, 2025, to begin the debris removal process.

D. Attorney Report – No Report

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

Kevin Barnett: Discussed the VML Training he completed, which included Housing programs and grants, and cyber security threat awareness for small towns.

Pat Elliott: Asked about painting council chambers. Asked about donating pallets of water to the Scott Co. Ministerial Food Pantry. Inquired about interviews for a new Director of Public Works. Mentioned that the Masonic Lodge (692 Kane Street) has offered the entire side of their building if the town wants to have another mural.

Dexter Harmon: None

Michele Rusek: Absent

Wallace W. Ross, Jr.: Inquired about a welcome sign for the West End of town and green exit sign for Hwy. 23 (VDOT). Asked what the qualifications for part-time jobs with the town are.

F. Police Department – Included with Council Packet

G. Sanitation Authority – Included with Council Packet

H. Public Works – Included with Council Packet

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Scott Co. Community Garden: Approve \$1,900 donation

Motion made to approve a \$1900 donation

Motion by: Dexter Harmon

2nd by: Pat Elliott

VOTE: Aye: 4

Nay:

Absent: 1

Abstain:

**Motion Carried*

2. Trash Cans: Policy Review

Motion made to

Motion by:

2nd by:

VOTE: Aye:

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

**Take No Action*

3. 2025 Legislative trip to Richmond, VA

Motion made to

Motion by:

2nd by:

VOTE: Aye:

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

**Take No Action*

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT - NEW BUSINESS

Frances Perry spoke about the recent retirement of Stoney Falin and offered to help with a venue and organization of a retirement dinner for him.

1. Amend the agenda

Motion made to amend the agenda to add a donation of 13 pallets of water to Scott Co. Ministerial Association

Motion by: Pat Elliott

2nd by: Dexter Harmon

VOTE: Aye: 4

Nay:

Absent: 1

Abstain:

**Motion Carried*

Motion made to donate 13 pallets of water to Scott Co. Ministerial Association

Motion by: Pat Elliott

2nd by: Dexter Harmon

VOTE: Aye: 3

Nay:

Absent: 1

Abstain: 1

**Motion Carried*

XV. CLOSED SESSION

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

Motion by: Pat Elliott
VOTE: Aye: 4
Nay:
Absent: 1
Abstain:

2nd by: Dexter Harmon

*Mayor Lawson opened the closed session at **8:14 PM**

XVI. RETURN FROM CLOSED SESSION

Motion made for Council to return from closed session.

Motion by: Pat Elliott
VOTE: Aye: 4
Nay:
Absent: 1
Abstain:

2nd by: Wallace W. Ross, Jr.

**Motion Carried*

Council returned from closed session at **9:11 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: Jamie Lawson, Kevin Barnett, Wallace W. Ross, Jr., Pat Elliott, Dexter Harmon
Aye: 5

Nay:
Absent: 1
Abstain:

XVII. MOTIONS FROM CLOSED SESSION – No motions

XVIII. ADJOURN

Motion made to adjourn

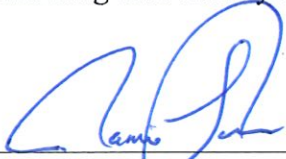
Motion by: Dexter Harmon

2nd by: Pat Elliott

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

**Motion Carried*

*Mayor Lawson adjourned the meeting at 9:13 PM, until the next scheduled Council Meeting on February 11, 2025, at 6:30 PM.



Mayor, Jamie Lawson



Town Clerk, Kristie Tipton