

# TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Gate City Town Council Minutes  
December 10, 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: Frances Perry; Kevin Barnett; Anna Barnett; Hubert McClellan; Libby McClellan; Dale McConnell; Jason Snapp, Mattern & Craig; Gabe Edmunds, Virginia Star; Allison Kimbler; Mike Still, KPT Times News; Carol Dixon; Mauricio Orozco, U.S. Small Business Administration; Ellen Baley, Caroline Bailey, Diane Bailey

III. INVOCATION – Pat Elliott

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Wallace W. Ross, Jr.

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made to approve the November 12, 2024, agenda.

Motion by: Pat Elliott

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

VOTE:Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

*\*Motion Carried*

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

- Tyler Kilgore was presented with a plaque of Recognition/Appreciation on behalf of the town.
- Hubert McClellan was presented with a recognition plaque as the 2024 Christmas Parade Grand Marshal.



- Mauricio Orozco, U.S. Small Business Administration, discussed the main three fundings that are provided to small business owners during disaster recovery: 1) Home Disaster Loans, 2) Business Physical Disaster loans and 3) Economic Injury loans. Recovery centers have been set up to help individuals.
- Mayor Lawson closed the public comment session at 6:48 PM and opened the consent agenda session.

## X. COMMUNICATIONS

- Carolyn and Diane Bailey arrived at 6:52 and Ellen Bailey arrived at 6:54.

## 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 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 Towns 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, still need to submit to VDH Central office for technical review. 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. Comments are being addressed and plans will be submitted to VDH for technical review shortly. Kane St. Sidewalk Transportation Alternatives Funding Application: 60% plans are in progress. The Town and M&C will need to set up a utility conference with all vested parties to discuss relocations which has been scheduled for Wednesday, December 11th at 10:00 AM. Manville Road Highway Safety Improvement Plan Funding Application: 60% 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 (meeting is set up for Wednesday, December 11th at 10:00AM). 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 met with Mike Carrico who will represent the owner in discussions regarding the needed construction easement. Mike has indicated the Town can proceed now and the easement is in place.

### B. Gate City Frontier Report – Included with Council Packet

I. Foundational Growth and Organization with GCF

- Working on gathering data to complete the Virginia Main Street yearly report to maintain our Exploring Main Street designation.
- GCF Director Leslie Crawford was asked to give a presentation for the Virginia Main Street Interchange meeting on January 30th to present the Gate City Proud Streetscape project that has been ongoing since 2023.
- Fulfillment of the Community Vitality Grant for FY25 is currently being fulfilled.
- River rock is being placed in the ground planters by Broadview Landscaping as well as all old plants and debris being removed.
- A Mac McClung recognition sign has been

commissioned and, in the works, to be completed and installed. Donnie Alley is working towards clearance for the sign alongside the town manager, Greg Jones. ○ Market Umbrellas are being ordered for the concrete tables once they come off of backorder. ● Theater Update: no current progress while we wait for an update on the deed. ● We have been working alongside the Scott County Tourism Director, Brittany Robertson, to provide area information for Gate City and surrounding areas to maintain a working relationship with that office. II. Business & Community Outreach ● Planning alongside local stakeholders for the holidays including Christmas Open House and Small Business Saturday. III. Events ● All Christmas events are being advertised on television, radio, and social media. WJHL was utilized to run a town-wide campaign featuring local retail and restaurants. Upcoming Events: January TBA: Semi-Annual Board Meeting February TBA: Community Meet & Greet Meeting.

### **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

#### **December 2024: Project Updates:**

- 326 Park St (Fischer) is now completed.
- 347 Park St (Bradshaw) is under construction.
- 308 Park St (Jeffries) will start after 347 is completed.
- 309 Park St (Fish – demo) still working on finding demo contractor.

#### **• 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.

• **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.

### **• 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.

### **• 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-linesurvey-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.

**November 2024** – The initial deadline of October 16th, 2024 for the first initial reporting has been met. VDH has advised that we have until November 14th, 2024 to report the ‘unknown’ material. Our Town Crew is currently collecting that information.

**December 2024** – The Town Crew completed the survey for the ‘unknown material’. The data has been submitted through VDH’s website portal on November 14th, 2024.

#### • **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.

#### • **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.

**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.:** Asked if Town Council could do a booth at the next VML. Inquired about signage for the town on U.S. 23. He also inquired about the trash can distribution and why it is taking so long.

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

**G. Sanitation Authority** – Dale McConnell, Included with Council Packet

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

*7:29 pm to 7:46pm: Meeting Interrupted for the Bailey Family (Ellen, Carolyn & Diane) wishing to make public comments. Mr. Mayor granted Ellen her request to speak, even though she missed the Public Comment portion of the meeting.*

- This concerns the demolished house at 242 Chestnut Street. The house is owned by Carolyn Bailey (Mother). The Baileys are requesting that the Town Council cancel the entire cost of the demolition and other charges. Ellen (daughter) claimed that there was an agreement with Greg Jones (none on record), that the house would not be demolished if progress was made.*
- The property was inherited and was rental property up until 2020.*
- The Baileys said they asked the Gate City Fire Department to burn it down back in 2021. They spent \$250.00 to have it done but reports that GCFD said they couldn't burn it down because of Covid-19.*
- Carolyn Bailey said she thought the violation sign that Greg Jones put up was about keeping the grass cut. She told him that renters ruined the inside of the house. She said she asked Mr. Jones to leave the sign up, hoping that it would deter the homeless people who had been sneaking in.*



- *The family stated that the house should not have been demolished, as it poses no hazard to the community.*
- *Ellen Bailey said she would type up their concerns and give a brief history of the 242 Chestnut Street property to submit to Town Council at the next meeting in January 2025.*

**XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**XIII. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Donation Request: Hope House**

**Motion made to approve the \$1,000.00 donation request and donate an additional 1,000.00 (total of \$2,000.00).**

Motion by: Michele Rusek

2nd by: Pat Elliott

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

*\*Motion Carried*

**2. Small Business Administration: Storm Damage Loans available to business owners.**

- Representative Mauricio Orozco spoke during the Public Comment Section.

*\*8:44 pm – At this time, Mayor Lawson invited Ellen Bailey to come back to the podium. Her question was regarding the possible auction of the 242 Chestnut Street property. Ellen asked who will put the land up for auction, the Town of Gate City or TACS (Taxing Authority Consulting Services). Michele Brooks, Town Attorney, explained that TACS is our agent, which means they act on the Town’s behalf. She went on to say that in accordance with Virginia statute, the property is “deemed subject to sale” by the Virginia Codes section, that’s what the state statute says, and pointed out that Mr. Jones had also told her that. Ellen asked if the Town would have a closed session and auction the land off. She was told, no. Ellen said she would mail 242 Chestnut Street paperwork to Michele Brooks/Town Council a week before the next Town Council meeting (January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025).*

**3. Kane Street Mural Project: Approve design**

**Motion made to discuss the mural design before finalizing.**

Motion by: Michele Rusek

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Tyler Kilgore

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

*\*Motion Carried*

**Motion made to approve, but with these changes:**

- Remove the music notes above the mountains on the top-left**
- Move “Gate City” to where the music notes were, and add “Founded 1888”**

Motion by: Tyler Kilgore

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Michele Rusek

VOTE:Aye: 5  
Nay:  
Absent:  
Abstain:

*\*Motion Carried*

**4. Public Hearing: Vertical Bridge Communication Tower**

**Motion made to schedule a public hearing during the Town Council Meeting for February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025.**

Motion by: Pat Elliott  
VOTE:Aye: 5  
Nay:  
Absent:  
Abstain:

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

*\*Motion Carried*

**5. Legislative visit: who will be going?**

**Motion made to approve the following Council Members to go:**

- Pat Elliott
- Kevin Barnett
- Dexter Harmon
- Greg Jones
- Jamie Lawson
- Michele Rusek

Motion by: Michele Rusek  
VOTE:Aye: 5  
Nay:  
Absent:  
Abstain:

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Pat Elliott

*\*Motion Carried*

**6. Planning Commission Appointment: Tyler Kilgore**

**Motion made to approve the appointment of Tyler Kilgore to the Planning Commission**

Motion by: Michele Rusek  
VOTE:Aye: 5  
Nay:  
Absent:  
Abstain:

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

*\*Motion Carried*

**6.a) Planning Commission Re-appointment: Mrs. Vickie Roberts (4-year term)**

**Motion made to approve the appointment of Mrs. Vickie Roberts to the Planning Commission for a term of 4 years.**

Motion by: Tyler Kilgore  
VOTE:Aye: 2

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

Nay:  
Absent:  
Abstain: 3

*\*Motion Carried*

**7. Board of Zoning Appeals Appointment: Mrs. Margaret Falin (1-year term)**

**Motion made to approve the appointment of Mrs. Margaret Falin to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a term of 1 year.**

Motion by: Tyler Kilgore

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Wallace Ross

VOTE:Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

*\*Motion Carried*

**8. Planning Commission Appointment: Town Council Representative**

**Mayor Lawson appointed Kevin Barnett – No Vote.**

**9. Donation Request: Scott County Community Garden**

*\*Motion was not made to approve the donation request by Scott County Community Garden in the amount of \$1900.00. No vote. Will add to January 14, 2025's agenda.*

**XIV. CLOSED SESSION**

**Motion made for Council to enter into closed session to discuss**

**1.) Personnel Matters**

**2.) Legal Matters**

Motion by: Tyler Kilgore

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Pat Elliott

VOTE:Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

*\*Motion Carried*

Mayor Lawson opened the closed session at **8:07 PM**

**XV. RETURN FROM CLOSED SESSION**

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

Motion by: Pat Elliott

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

VOTE:Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

*\*Motion Carried*

Council returned from closed session at **8:42 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: Pat Elliott, Dexter Harmon, Wallace Ross, Jr.; Michele Rusek, Tyler Kilgore, Jamie Lawon  
Aye: 5  
Nay:  
Absent:  
Abstain:

**XVI. MOTIONS FROM CLOSED SESSION: None**

**XII. ADJOURN**

**Motion made to adjourn**

Motion by: Tyler Kilgore

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

VOTE:Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

*\*Motion Carried*

\*Mayor Lawson adjourned the meeting at **9:07 PM**, until the next scheduled Council Meeting on January 14, 2025, at 6:30 PM.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Jamie Lawson – Mayor



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