

# TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Gate City Town Council  
June 10, 2025  
156 East Jackson Street, Gate City, VA  
6:30 PM

- I. COUNCIL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:30 PM By: Mayor, Jamie Lawson

AMENDED 10-Jun-2025 @ 2:14 PM

- II. ROLL CALL: Deputy Clerk, Lisa Loggans

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:** Jed Spicer, Tucker Barker, Michelle Brown, Matt Quillen, Bob Payne, Dale McConnell, Anna Barnett, Mike Still (Kingsport Times News), Gabe Edmunds (Scott Co. Virginia Star), Roger Carter (Scott Co. Lifesaving Crew), Wendel Burke (Scott Co. Lifesaving Crew), Matthew Hensley, Frances Perry, Ellen Bailey (did not sign attendance form)

- III. INVOCATION: Jed Spicer (1<sup>st</sup> Assembly of God)

- IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: GCPD Sgt. Matt Quillen

- V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made to approve the June 10, 2025, agenda.

Motion by: Dexter Harmon

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

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

*\*Motion Carried*

- VI. PROCLAMATIONS, CONGRATULATORY RESOLUTIONS, AWARDS, APPOINTMENTS, RESIGNATIONS AND CONFIRMATIONS, ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS: None

- VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of May 13, 2025, Town Council Minutes

**Motion made to approve minutes as presented.**

Motion by: Dexter Harmon  
VOTE: Aye: 5  
Nay:  
Absent:  
Abstain:

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Kevin Barnett

***\*Motion Carried***

**2. Approval of May 27, 2025, Public Hearing Town Council Minutes.  
Motion made to approve minutes as presented.**

Motion by: Dexter Harmon  
VOTE: Aye: 5  
Nay:  
Absent:  
Abstain:

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

***\*Motion Carried***

**VIII. 3. APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS**

**Motion made to approve payments as presented.**

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

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

***\*Motion Carried***

***\*At this time, Mayor Lawon went to Item # 3 under "New Business" with the Scott County Lifesaving Crew representatives.***

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENT (Limited to 3 minutes per speaker)**

**Bob Payne:** voiced concern over the road conditions on Elliott Drive (off Manville Road). It is in bad condition with a lot of potholes. The hole is so big that gravel won't fix it. The Town Manager told Mr. Payne we will create a work order and get that fixed.

**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:** Final Plans and Specification have been resubmitted to VDH for technical review. Utility Easements still need to be acquired by the Town.



**Kane St. Sidewalk:** 60% plans are complete. VDOT is currently working on environmental coordination efforts to satisfy NEPA requirements. VDOT has provided approval to move forward with project design utilizing stairs at the intersection of Kane St. and East Jackson St. This will allow the full development of 90% of plans to proceed.

**Manville Road Sidewalk:** 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. VDOT is currently working on environmental coordination efforts to satisfy NEPA requirements. Town and M&C are in the process of setting up a meeting with Jeffery Lane, who is a property owner at 384 Manville Road, to discuss how parking in the area of that residence will be affected.

**Retaining Wall Construction Plans (Walgreen's Parking Lot):** Design is nearly complete with the exception of working out drainage onto the adjacent parking lot. Final bid documents are under development and will be delivered to the Town shortly. The required easement has been approved by the property owner.

**B. Gate City Frontier Report:** Submitted by Leslie Crawford

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

Our chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer will be working on cutting a check for the remaining balance in the events account to return to the town.

#### **Business & Community Outreach**

Working diligently to promote our locally owned Gate City businesses.

Gate City Frontier will be glad to partner with the Town of Gate City in terms of helping with volunteers and coordinating the smooth transfer of all current event contacts. We are hopeful that the town will take the momentum that GCF has created within the past three years and use it to continue to make the Town of Gate City a place where people want to live, work, play, and raise a family.

Gate City Frontier will continue to be a thriving 501c3 non-profit organization working towards our vision and mission. We thank you for having the confidence to work on behalf of your council and Town Hall staff.

**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 has 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)	<u>\$12,000</u>
Total	\$734,968

#### May 2025

- 326 Park St: Rehab Project:** Construction completed; HVAC has been installed. An exception to remove carpet from the bedroom has been approved.
- 347 Park St: Rehab Project:** Roof and HVAC – The initial work using CDBG funds is completed. HVAC using AEP grant funding has been completed.
- 308 Park St: Rehab Project:** Construction in progress. Hot water heater to be installed.
- 309 Park St: Demolition** – Demolition has been completed.

DHCD completed their compliance review on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

#### 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 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.

**April 2025** – Easement has been signed by the property owner. The design is nearly complete.

#### Scott County Historic Society Building: Secure 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

**April 2025** The Historic Society informed me of their desire to create a museum on the second floor of the building the Town leases to them. The flooring appears to be unstable in a few areas. I have received one quote from Clinch Mountain Contractors for \$9,871,98 to install additional support jacks in five different locations. I am in the process of getting additional estimates.

#### 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.

**January 2025** – The required easements needed for this project were turned over to Town Attorney Michele Brooks on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to prepare deeds.

**March 2025** – Project design is complete and submitted to VDH for review. This project is expected to close with the VRA soon.

**April 2025** - 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.

**May 2025** – Utility easements from the Town is needed. To date, we have not received the deeds back from Town Attorney Michele Brooks.

### **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 4<sup>th</sup>, 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 have reached out to Leslie to see if she can contact Matt McClung for his input, but I would 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 was not included in the Phase I budget, I have asked the contractors to draft a separate engagement for this addition.

On the topic of lighting, I will 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.

**April 2025** - On March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025, Vice-Mayor Kevin Barnett and myself went on a field trip to Bristol Sportsplex and the Riverview Courts in Kingsport. We were joined by Ms. Lenore Weiss with Spectrum Designs who is working as a sub-contractor for Quesenberry's Construction. Ms. Anna Walters, USA Pickleball District Ambassador and certified pickleball coach, served as our tour guide.

**May 2025** – The Groundbreaking Ceremony was held on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Construction is expected to start in a few weeks. Council Action: Determine colors of the Pickleball Court.

**June 2025** – Mayor Lawson, Vice-Mayor Barnett, and I met with Lenore Weiss, Spectrum Designs, Inc and Abran Quesenberry, Quesenberry Construction on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The bids for the project have come in over budget. We discussed ways to bring the cost down. **Council Action: Discuss and approve cost savings recommendations.**

### **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 be adopted by December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. The Town Council will need to conduct a Public Hearing and adopt on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Both the 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.**

**June 2025** – This project is almost complete. The mural needs to be sealed. Is there any interest in doing an unveiling within the next two weeks?

### **Gate City Little League: Batting Cage Roof Replacement**

**April 2025** - The batting cage for the Gate City Little League needs to be replaced. We anticipate the cost to be around \$10,000. Mayor Jamie Lawson has identified Walmart's Spark Good as a potential funding source to help offset the cost. Walmart funding can cover as much as \$5,000 towards the project. **Council Action:** approve to apply for the Walmart Spark Good grant program.

**May 2025** – Council has approved to apply for the grant. The grant cycle will run through July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025. I have reached out to the Little League for additional information.

**June 2025** – I have received the requested information from the Little League and the requested information from the IRS. The grant application will be submitted shortly.

### **Hurricane Helene – September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**October 2024** – Hurricane Helene hit Gate City Friday morning, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 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 down trees destroyed eighty transmission lines across Appalachian Power's system. The power restoration began on Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, with most of the residents' power restored by Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. The Water Plant regained power on Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024.

Currently work is taking place to remove fallen trees. FEMA funding for Scott County has been allocated for this storm on Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 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 14<sup>th</sup>, 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.

**June 2025** – Team Rubicon is scheduled to come to Gate City on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and help remove from private property and relocate the debris to a public right of way (ROW) for removal. Special thanks to Vice-Mayor Barnett and the Ministerial Association for providing the accommodation will they are in town.

The RFPs for the storm debris and landfill monitoring predisposition contract are still in draft. It is expected to get the final version of the draft RFP approved by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

The pay request for the generator, cut & toss tree vendor, and miscellaneous expenses have been submitted through FEMA's portal.

FEMA has given Gate City an extension until October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, to clear the remaining land debris.

Gate City has been awarded \$91,667.00 by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to remove 300' water debris from Big Moccasin Creek on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

### **FY 26 Budget**

**June 2025** – The draft FY 2026 Town Budget has been submitted to Council. The council has conducted a public hearing on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025. **Council Action:** Approve FY 2026 Town Budget



**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

**Kevin Barnett** – Went to VML's Small Towns Conference in Farmville. We got to speak with a lot of Council members from other places, and we discussed a lot of the water issues that we are facing – some of the sanitation and water. Heard some good ideas and some favorable stuff. I'm supposed to be in contact with some of those individuals in the future about some of that stuff. And this is something that I was really impressed with, uh the opportunity for grant funding. There was an opportunity there to talk with some folks, and I know we need to discuss some things with VDOT and some other stuff, but there was some discussion about funding which is something that I know we need to seek, and I am waiting to receive some emails from some of those folks regarding that stuff.

**Michele Rusek:** No report

**Wallace W. Ross, Jr.:** – Glad we're making progress towards the future. The small things that we're implementing, but we still don't have any signs. Everywhere I go I see signs welcoming folks to their community. It's a process. I don't know why it takes so long to do that. From my point of view is it seems like a slow process. We need sidewalks – I know we're working on some. People are walking in the street since there aren't sidewalks, and that's dangerous. We still have a lot of properties that have long grass. I know it's been raining a lot lately. Maybe we need to hire another Property Maintenance person again. Why is it that we can't get the green signs that's all over the Commonwealth? And be up with everybody else? I think that'd I don't see why it takes so long to give us directions and identification to the town. Also, when we went to the VML Small Town Conference. They had a lot of programs and grants.

**F. Police Department:** Sgt. Matt Quillen

	May	June	Year to Date
Calls for Service	382	295	1160
Arrest	4	5	22
Summons	55	52	170
Incident Reports	6	7	28
Accident Reports	3	5	21
DIU Arrests	0	1	4
Vehicle Unlock	8	6	35

**Significant Activity & Reporting**



- GCPD will continue to do walkthroughs at local banks and businesses and do extra patrols when needed.
- GCPD continues to work well with SCSO, Weber City, VA State Police, and other local law enforcement agencies, as well as local Fire and Rescue to help our citizens in Gate City and county when needed.

**G. Sanitation Authority:** No Report

**H. Public Works:** Dale McConnell

**I. Water Plant Report:** Submitted by Steve Rutherford

Virginia Dept. of Health – Division of Drinking Water Monthly Report  
 Month/Year: May 2025  
 PWS# 1169405  
 Distribution System Performance

A1	Gallons of water placed into distribution system from GC treatment plant	9,254,000
A2	Gallons of water placed into distribution system from Scott Co. PSA master meter	1,642,500
A3	Total gallons of water placed into distribution system (A1+A2)	10,896,500
B	Gallons of water transferred to Scott Co. PSA	1,612,275
C	Gallons of water placed into distribution system that are not transferred to Scott Co. (A3-B)	9,284,225
D	Average gallons per day placed into distribution system for customers other than Scott Co. PSA (C/days in month)	299,491
E	Gallons of water metered to other customers	4,028,000
F	Total gallons of water accounted for (B+E)	5,640,275
G	Total gallons of water unaccounted for (A3-F)	5,256,225
H	Apparent percent of water lost from distribution system (100*G/A3)	48.24%
I	Number of connections	1,216
J	Average gallons/day placed into distribution system per non-SCPSA waterworks customer (D/I)	246

**Distribution System Performance Goals**

\*Less than 10% loss of water placed into distribution system

\* Less than 150 gpd of water placed into distribution system per non-other waterworks customer.

**Significant Deficiency**

\*Greater than 30% leakage of water placed into distribution system.

**XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**\*\*Town Council went into closed session at this time (7:43 PM).**

### XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Council Pay Increase Amendment – put on September agenda.**  
Motion made to

Motion by:

2<sup>nd</sup> by:

VOTE: Aye:

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

***\*Take No Action***

2. **Approve FY-2026 Town Budget**  
Motion made to approve as presented.

Motion by: Dexter Harmon

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Kevin Barnett

ROLL CALL VOTE:	Kevin Barnett:	Aye
	Wallace W. Ross, Jr.:	Aye
	Pat Elliott:	Aye
	Dexter Harmon:	Aye
	Michele Rusek:	Aye

3. ***Mr. Roger Carter*** (Duffield Fire & Rescue Chief & Scott Co. EMS Association President) **and *Wendell Burke*** (Nickelsville Volunteer Fire Dept. Assistant Chief & Scott Co. EMS Association Vice-President).

Mr. Carter and Mr. Wendel Burke represent the current governing body of the Scott County Lifesaving Crew (SCLC). They related that the SCLC is currently experiencing funding and personnel issues. There have been times when there wasn't any coverage at all. The Scott County EMS Association has taken over day-to-day operations. They are trying to work through the challenges they're facing but feel that the community deserves better.

There are plans in place to receive assistance from other agencies in the area (mutual aid contracts). We want to be a good partner with the Town. We want all three agencies in Scott County to function together. We have an emergency response plan (on road in 12 minutes or less, signed off by the state and county). We have had some outstanding debt, and equipment woes; and it all costs money to fix this stuff. They took over and we have been fully staffed 24/7 since then. We wanted to give the Council an update on getting SCLC to where they need to be.

There is \$31,000 of debt. There are a lot of changes that may have to be made. We have not asked for an audit yet. The governing body has been changed over to the EMS Association; they elected to keep the SCLC license and their assets. They are working on getting a \$5.00 hour increase in wages, and they believe this will help to attract and retain trained/certified EMTs. Mr. Carter and Mr. Burke both wanted to make clear that they are not doing what they're doing to bash Scott Co. Lifesaving Crew – they are trying to save it and the service it provides to the citizens of Scott County.

4. **242 Chestnut Street, House Raze Issue – Ellen Bailey**  
**Motion made to**

Motion by:

2<sup>nd</sup> by:

VOTE: Aye:

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

**\*Take No Action**

*\*\*Mayor Lawson asked Ms. Bailey to try to keep her presentation to 10 minutes, since we have previously heard from her on this topic several times now.*

**\*Ellen Bailey (started speaking at 9:06 pm)** presented the Town Council with her beliefs that the Town made a great mistake when they razed the 242 Chestnut Street property. She reported that she has heard rumors that the Town is going to use this property as part of a walking path. The Town Attorney and Town Manager related that the Town had once considered creating a walking path, but it was 10 or 15 years ago and not on that specific property. Ms. Bailey went on to say that more than 10 years ago the town approached her mother about buying this property, but she refused to sell it. Just so you know the history of the property – before Greg Jones became the Town Manager. Ms. Bailey set up an array of pictures, saying it was a great property and that's why her mother refused to sell. They had a lot of people who wanted to renovate it, but they had plans of tearing it down themselves. We turned down a number of offers from real estate investors. It's a very popular piece of property – that's why it's been handed down through the years.

*\*\*Town Attorney, Michele Brooks advised Ms. Bailey she has 5 minutes remaining.*

Ms. Bailey said some people complained about this property, but that was because they wanted it. There are a lot of reasons why the town would have wanted this property. It was said the property was an imminent danger, a Vacant, Abandoned, and Deteriorated (VAD), and blighted property, but it wasn't. It was rented for numerous years. Ms. Bailey shared, "2020 we dissolved all of the renters cause some of them were paying late or not at all, so we evicted them. In 2020 it was boarded up, and we talked to Mr. Jones". Ms. Bailey asked Greg Jones if he remembered when her mother would come down and talk to him. Attorney Michele Brooks spoke up and told Ellen Bailey that she had instructed Mr. Jones not to answer her questions due to some of the allegations that were made in the letter she handed out (referring to the 14-page letter she handed out after adjournment of the 5/13/25 Town Council meeting). Ms. Bailey then said, "Well if I don't have answers to my questions then you don't know what's true or not. I don't want there to be a misunderstanding and leave here when we need to be clear, so you'll understand what I'm doing."

Ms. Bailey describes the (242 Chestnut St.) as taken care of ... "it was not dilapidated". Ms. Bailey had pictures of other houses that were not taken care of. She was demonstrating that those houses were not torn down, even though some homeowners asked the town to tear them down. Ms. Bailey said there were a lot of homes that were not demolished during Mr. Jone's demo project.

*\*\*Town Attorney Michele Brooks advised Ms. Bailey she is over the 10-minute limit. Wallace W. Ross, Jr. questioned the time limit since this topic is on the agenda and not taking place in the public comment section, which is limited to 3 minutes.*

Ms. Bailey said the house was not dilapidated, it was being taken care of. There was some vandalism that took place before Mr. Jones took the pictures. She went on to say that her house didn't look like that, it was the Town's computers that made it look like that – that is not how the house actually looked.

Mayor Lawson questioned Ms. Bailey whether the house was maintained to code compliance between tenants. She replied yes, and the taxes were all up to date and had all been paid for the last 20 years. She related that she has previous tenants who will come and testify to the condition of the house, and there were no rodents. Some of the tenants did some repairs. The council asked if the property was maintained between April and June (2023) to livable conditions at all. Ms. Bailey replied, "That is a good question." She describes that her mother called Mr. Jones, it was during Covid, and they couldn't find people to work on the house because of that. Council Member Michele Rusek spoke up and said this was 3 years after Covid – and Ms. Bailey said it was still considered a Covid time.

Ms. Bailey said they called Town Manager (Greg Jones) and Chief of Police (Justin Miller) told Ms. Bailey and her mother they were going to be charged with a misdemeanor if they came to town. Ellen said she has proof and if the Council would give her time she can discuss it with them. Mayor Lawson said that the Town Council has given her time, months and months, we have given you ample opportunity to come and speak on behalf of this property. You were given notices about the property, you were given violation notices about the property, so therefore, this town has given you adequate time and notification about this property not being in compliance with what the code says. Ellen said she's trying to show pictures to prove that it was to code. Mayor Lawson stated that the pictures she's showing are actually evidence the property was in violation of the code. Council Member Michele Rusek pointed out the pictures Ms. Bailey showed are outside pictures and are not representative of the living conditions inside the house. Ms. Bailey said that the inside pictures that the town has were after someone had vandalized the house.

Ms. Bailey said, "The first letters that were sent by UPS, we were not in town, and the letters were returned to sender, so we did not receive all of these notices you're talking about. They were returned to sender because we were not there, and we have proof of that." Mayor Lawson said, "So you didn't pick up the notices. Is that correct?" Ms. Bailey replied, "Because we were not in town, but they were certified." Attorney Brooks pointed out a Notice of Non-Compliance poster is in one of the photos that Ms. Bailey was trying to use as evidence of upkeep. However, Ms. Bailey said that Greg Jones talked them into letting him post the violation notice, but it was only to keep the vandals out, not because the house was unlivable – and she said that was the solution that Mr. Jones gave them.

Ms. Bailey said this is the first time that she has had an opportunity to talk to the Council in detail like now. "I thought you were going to give me more time to explain the racism, 'because I have proof of that.'" Mayor Lawson interjected asking Ms. Bailey to stop talking and said, "There is no one on this council that has ever said anything about racism to you at all. No one has ever at one time said anything towards you or your family about racism. You are the one that brought that issue up in your letter that was addressed to the Town Council and me. You brought that issue up. It's right here in black and white. You addressed that, not this Council. No one on this Council has ever addressed anything like that towards you or your family".

Ms. Bailey said, "I want to say that is correct, as far as your knowledge is, but I have not told you and I have kept silent because like I told you, I'm not coming down here to put Mr. Jones or Chief Millier or someone else on the spot about what they've said or what they've done in meetings we had before that you have no knowledge of... they told me I'd get a misdemeanor,



and my mom if we came back down here. That's why my mom called you. And those months you say this property was not taken care of? We called Mr. Jones, and we told him we were having problems finding someone to take care of the property because of Covid. He said the town was having problems finding people too. My mom told him that for the first time in over 30 years she was having a problem trying to keep this property maintained. These other homes they're not maintained like this (Bailey pointing to other house pictures)." Once again, Michele Rusek asked Ms. Bailey if she has pictures of the inside of the house to compare to the town's pictures.

Ms. Bailey: "It was March, April and June the property was not maintained. We had contact with the town. The town told us it was okay to keep looking for someone. Don't worry about it, he told me, Mr. Jones said. We thought it was okay to keep looking, and we finally found someone – and I have receipts – that was July the 8<sup>th</sup>, that's the truth. If you don't want to hear the truth I won't tell it to you."

Attorney Michele Brooks asked Ms. Bailey what she wants from the Council, and Wallace W. Ross, Jr., asked Ms. Bailey what her concern is. Ms. Bailey said her concern is that "we've been charged \$27,000.00. The property is only worth \$6,000.00. There's no way we can save the property. The property, they tore down, we had a verbal agreement with Mr. Jones, a verbal agreement – I have proof of that. I got proof of that. That my mom was supposed to save up \$2,000.00 for asbestos testing and tear it down herself. We had an agreement with the Town Manager up until 2024. We have proof of it that there was an agreement with the Town Manager. Give me more time and I'll show you proof of that. But we have proof that we had an agreement with the Town Manager. The house should have never been on the demolition list. We had an agreement to save up \$2,000.00 for the testing. My mom saved up from her senior income, and it took from 2021 to the end of 2023 to save up \$2000.00 and she was gonna have that asbestos testing. And we came to the house one day, to the property, to find they were tearing it down. I know that you cannot correct Mr. Jones' mistake or honor the verbal agreement we had (and I have proof of that agreement)." Once again Ms. Bailey mentioned she has sought legal counsel over this issue, but the attorneys she talked to are too busy to take her case for 2 to 3 years, and couldn't fit this case in, and they advised her to go back to the Town Council and ask them to revisit the issue.

Vice-Mayor Kevin Barnett: "What is it that you are wanting us to do?" Ms. Bailey replied, "I am asking you all to waive the \$27,000.00 fee that y'all sent the bill to TACS for the demo. And the house should not have been demolished. It shouldn't have been on the list. It was not a VAD house; it was not blighted. We had an agreement with Mr. Jones whether he wants to remember it or not."

Mayor Lawson interjected: "As far as verbal agreements, I don't want to sound mean about what I am getting ready to say on this. As for how verbal agreements go, they are non-valid, non-existent. It doesn't matter when you go to a court of law and you have a verbal agreement about things; it does not exist unless it's in writing, or it's been notarized, or been signed off. This town has done everything legally and in the right way when it comes to this property."

Ms. Bailey: "We're just not discussing it with you because you won't give me time. And if I can come back to the next meeting, I'll surely prove it so you can see for yourself. And I'll bring it and you can see for yourself because I have no reason to lie. I have proof."

Mayor Lawson: "Ma'am, we are not saying that you're lying about anything. We're just saying that there's, you...I'm gonna refer to the Town Attorney when it comes to the fines and things that are going on. She can explain that and how all that works."

Town Attorney, Michele Brooks: "It's a lien against the property. It was taxpayer money that was used to raze the property. And as such, there is a lien against the property. There was really, there was a legal process that was gone through, and we cannot waive that because those were taxpayer funds, not for private benefit."

Ms. Bailey: "Even though there was an agreement between the town and us? Well, I can prove to you that there was an agreement if you would allow it."

Town Attorney: "Are you aware there is a legal process, and there is a legal lien against that property. There were taxpayer resources that went into that and the Town..." *Ms. Bailey interrupts...* Town Attorney, "Listen Ms. Bailey I've listened to you for a long time. Will you please let me answer that question. Because there was taxpayer funds used to tear down that property we cannot benefit you personally because those were taxpayer funds that were used to tear down that property. That would be wrong and it would be illegal for us to do."

Ms. Bailey: "Well I understand that, but the decision that was made was incorrect. And what the decision was based on was incorrect. And if you listen, if you took the time, maybe at the next meeting I'll bring more proof to you. The decision that was made was incorrect. And if the decision was incorrect, I'm about to lose my home, there should be a remedy for when leaders make mistakes. And I can show you where the mistakes were made."

Town Attorney: "The remedy is that if you think we did something wrong, then hire a lawyer and go through a legal process because everything has been done through a legal process. And I think this council has done...and Ms. Bailey, I think you're a very nice lady, and your mom was a very nice lady and I'm very sorry that she passed. But there is nothing we can do about the fact that this house was taken down."

Ms. Bailey: "Laws were violated, and leaders made mistakes."

Town Attorney: "We dispute all of that."

Ms. Bailey: "I can prove it to you. I can prove it."

Town Attorney: "I don't think you can because I reviewed everything. I know you have a perspective, and this is important to you, but there was a legal process that was gone through and if you come here fifteen more times it doesn't change the fact that there was a legal process that was gone through. If you think that there something was done wrong, you have a recourse. And that is to get an attorney and take, handle it in court. Otherwise, there's really nothing else this Town Council can do. And no disrespect to you, but this is really, we have listened, and listened, and listened to all this."

Ms. Bailey: "you haven't heard it...I'm just gonna take my board and go...*(inaudible)*...and I have proof for you, but you don't want to hear all of...I can come another time and...with more facts...so you can see where the law was not upheld. You can see for yourself I'm not making this up, the legal mistakes and I can show you pictures and proof where he made mistakes. I can prove where there was racism, and you can say there was. *Unidentified Council members said, "Uh-oh". Wallace W. Ross: "Stop it!" (Chaos erupts)*

Mayor: "Ms. Bailey, I'm gonna stop you at this point, okay? This is done. Listen, if you want to take any kind of action against this town, then you need to go through the legal process through a lawyer."

Town Attorney: "And you are slandering our Town Manager and that should not be done."

Mayor: "We have not done anything racially against anyone, you, or none of us. Listen, you're being advised that if you want to do it legally, go get an attorney. Your time is up. We're done."

Council member, Michele Rusek: "Done."

Ms. Bailey: "So you don't want to see..." (*Chaos again*)

Council member, Michele Rusek: "Done."

Mayor: "If that's what you want to do, take it to court. If you want to do it ma'am, you need to go to court. I'm sorry but your time is up."

Ms. Bailey: "But it will be sold by the time..."

Mayor: "Your time is up! Okay?"

Ms. Bailey: "Can I say one more thing?"

Town Attorney: "You've talked about 35 minutes, Ms. Bailey."

Ms. Bailey starts speaking again...(inaudible)

Mayor: "If you continue, I'm gonna have, I'm gonna ask the officer to remove you and I do not want to do that."

Ms. Bailey keeps talking while the mayor is talking to her; while he's trying to tell her if she wants to do this legally, she needs to get an attorney and do it that way.

Ms. Bailey: "I'm gonna gather my things and I'm gonna go. The property will be sold by the time the lawyer will be able to take it. That's what they told us. It would be a year to 2 years before (inaudible) and the property will be sold by then."

(Ms. Bailey Finished speaking at 9:40 pm)

Mayor to the Deputy Clerk: "Under item # 4 please show that the Town Council has listened and will take no further action on this issue."

- 5. Mr. Matthew Hensley, permission to use Little League field.**  
**Motion made to grant permission to use Little League field from now (6/10/25) to the end of October.**

Motion by: Michele Rusek

2nd by: Kevin Barnett

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

**\*Motion Carried**

**6. Curb Painting RFP approval**

**Motion made to approve proposal from Affordable Pavement Services for \$7999.00**

Motion by: Kevin Barnett

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

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

***\*Motion Carried***

**7. 167 Wolf Street: Property Maintenance**

**Motion made to turn over to the Town Attorney to proceed with court filing in July.**

Motion by: Pat Elliott

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

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

***\*Motion Carried***

**8. Community Park: Design Changes**

**Motion made to**

Motion by:

2<sup>nd</sup> by:

VOTE: Aye:

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

***\*Take No Action***

**9. Non-Discrimination Policy**

**Motion to accept and do a Non-Discrimination policy.**

Motion by: Dexter Harmon

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Kevin Barnett

VOTE: Aye: 4

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain: 1 (*Wallace W. Ross, Jr.*)

***\*Motion Carried***

**XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT – NEW BUSINESS: None**

**XV. 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: Kevin Barnett

VOTE: Aye: 5

Nay:



Absent:  
Abstain:

Mayor Lawson opened the closed session at 7:43 PM

#### **XVI. RETURN FROM CLOSED SESSION**

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

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

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

Council returned from closed session at 8:56 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:	Aye
	Kevin Barnett:	Aye
	Wallace W. Ross, Jr.:	Aye
	Pat Elliott:	Aye
	Dexter Harmon:	Aye
	Michele Rusek:	Aye

#### **XVII. MOTIONS FROM CLOSED SESSION: None**

***\*At this time, Mayor Lawson resumed with New Business Item# 1***

## XVIII. ADJOURN

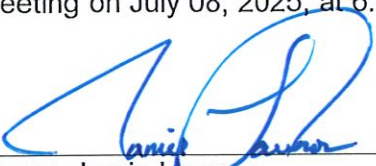
### Motion made to adjourn

Motion by: Dexter Harmon

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

VOTE:     Aye: 5  
              Nay:  
              Absent:  
              Abstain:

\*Mayor Lawson adjourned the meeting at 9:49 PM, until the next scheduled Council Meeting on July 08, 2025, at 6:30 PM.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, Jamie Lawson

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Town Clerk, Lisa Loggans