TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Gate City Town Council
September 15, 2026
156 East Jackson Street, Gate City, VA
6:30 PM

I. COUNCIL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:35 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, Allen Dougherty	X	
Town Manager - Vacant	N/A	N/A
Town Attorney, Michele Brooks	X	

Others present: Quentin Miles; Gabriel Edmund, Scott Co. Virginia Star; Mike Still, Kingsport Times News

III. INVOCATION: Council Member, Pat Elliott

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: GCPD Chief, Terry Sivert

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made to approve the September 15, 2026 agenda.
Motion made to approve as presented.

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

Motion Carried

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

- **Matt Quillen** – Significant Leader Award by Dean Crisp and the Leaders Helping Leaders Network (LHLN) for Executive Leadership Training.
- **9/11 Proclamation**

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Approval of August 11, 2026 Town Council Meeting Minutes**
   Motion made to approve as presented.

Motion by: Pat Elliott 2nd by: Dexter Harmon

VOTE: Aye: 5
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: *Motion Carried

VIII. APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

Motion made for approval for payment of bills for September 2026 as presented.

Motion by: Dexter Harmon 2nd by: Kevin Barnett
VOTE: Aye: 5
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: *Motion Carried

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

Quentin Miles – said the grass is tall along the sidewalk going from the rescue squad building to Grogan Park (Park Street). There are bunches of grass that need mowing. Some people who mow, pile their cut grass up on the sidewalk. Dale McConnell, Public Works Director, told Council that Patrick had sprayed week killer in that area on 9/14/2026. He also needs a sprayer to help him clean the bathrooms at Grogan Park. The Miles for Diabetes walk is this Saturday (9/19/26) and starts at 8:00 am.

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** – submitted by Jason Snapp, Mattern & Craig

VDH Backup Generator Project
Funding Agency: Virginia Department of Health
Funding Package: $1,558,760 ($1,080,632 local funds/$478,128 grant)
Project Schedule:
- **TBD** Advertisement/Bid/Construction Pending Easement Acquisition

Waiting to submit the pre-bid package to VDH till the required utility easements are acquired. The Town and M&C met with two of the three property owners where easements are needed on 3/4/26 and have answered various follow-up questions from the affected residents since those meetings. Currently, two easements have been signed and there is one additional property owner that still need to sign. Calvin Clifton (M&C) has met with the remaining property owner and she has indicated she feels compensation is due for her to relinquish the easement. The Town will need to pursue the easement either by compensation or the legal process. The project can go to advertisement once the easements are procured and the pre bid package is approved by VDH.

Kane St. Sidewalk
Funding Agency: VDOT (Transportation Alternative Funds
Funding Package: $1,968,395 ($393,679 local match/$1,574,716 grant)
Project Schedule:
- Advertise Project – June 2026 COMPLETED
- Bid Opening – July 2026 COMPLETED
- Contract Award – WILL BE AWARDED FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11th

- Begin Construction – October 2026
- Substantial Completion – April 2027
- Final Completion – May 2027

Project will be awarded this week. It is expected a Pre-construction Conference will be scheduled at Town Hall to kick off the project some time the week of September 21st.

Manville Road Sidewalk
Funding Agency: VDOT (Transportation Alternative Funds
Funding Package: $1,703,241.20 ($170,324.12 federal grant/$1,532,917.08 state grant)
Project Schedule: **TBD** Pending Design Completion and ROW Acquisition (See potential schedule below)

- 60% Completion – July 2026 COMPLETED
- VDOT Review – August 2026 COMPLETED
- Easement/ROW Acquisition – September 2026 – September 2027
- 100% Plan Development – September 2027
- VDOT Review – October 2027
- Advertise Project – November 2027
- Bid Opening – February 2028
- Contract Award – February 2028
- Begin Construction – March 2028
- Substantial Completion – September 2028
- Final Completion – October 2028

VDOT 60% comments have been received and are currently being addressed. Required easements have been defined for acquisition. Once required ROW and easements are established the Town can request VDOT open the ROW phase of the project. This will allow negotiations with the affected property owners to procure the needed ROW/easements. Once ROW is procured 90% and 100% plans can be finalized. Once ROW plans are accepted and the ROW phase is opened, we expect the easement acquisition to take 12-18 months before final construction plans can be fully developed.

DEQ – Southwest Virginia Pilot Program, High School Area Collector Line Replacement Project (C-515856)
Funding Agency: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Funding Package: $704,000 ($176,000 local funds @ 0% loan/$528,000 grant)
Project Schedule:

- **TBD** after engineering agreement executed

Draft engineering agreement will be delivered to the Town this week. M&C has reached out to DEQ to confirm the project is still viable, and funding is in place at a 75% grant/25% loan split.

DEQ – Southwest Virginia Pilot Program, Little Moccasin Interceptor – Phase 1 Project (C-515874)
Funding Agency: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Funding Package: $720,300 ($180,075 local funds @ 0% loan/$540,225 grant)
Project Schedule:

- **TBD** after engineering agreement executed

Draft engineering agreement will be delivered to the Town this week. M&C has reached out to DEQ to confirm the project is still viable, and funding is in place at a 75% grant/25% loan split.

B. **Interim Town Manager/Mayor's Report** – Jamie Lawson

Events:

Saturday September 19, 2026 – Quentin Miles Walk For Diabetes

Saturday October 3, 2026 – Harvest Moon Festival (7am-7PM); Steve Adkins will be the contact for Gate City Frontier

October 24, 2026 – King Alleyween Trunk or Treat at 6PM-8PM; Ernest T Bass will be in attendance

November 7, 2026 – Harvest To Holidays Jeep Show, 9AM-5PM, (Appalachia Krawlers); Megan Kegley is the contact and organizer

December 5, 2026 – Gate City Christmas Parade, 7PM-10PM, Chief Jeff Brickey will be contact and organizer

Community Park Project:

- The Pickleball Court has been a big hit for the town and is being used daily. Pat and Allen met with Quesenberry and discussed the ongoing issues. They advised they would get a GEO Tech Analysis and Grid Summary Baseline to monitor the court. They are still going to fix the swales around the basketball goals.

- LED lights have been ordered and paid for by donations. I am currently working with SCTC and AEP on getting six 35' light poles donated to place the lights on. Matt Hill with SCTC will be meeting with his board and try to get these donated to the town. He gave me a cost for the poles if we were to purchase them, $1981.00. Still awaiting information from AEP.

Grants:

Farmer's Market:

- Cumberland Forest Community Fund: $15,000.00 (Electrical); AFID Infrastructure Grant: $44,000.00 (Structure)

- Local Match: $29,000.00; Total Funding: $88,000.00

- (9/1/2026) need to get RFP's to move forward with this electrical project and contact AFID to finalize the money for the $44,000.00 and start the RFP process for the Structure.

- Continuing to work on finding Grant information and get everything corrected with the awarding agencies.(Active Grants with the Town)

DCJS:

The Gate City Police Department has been awarded two grants

- Grant #1: AED's ($3,000.00)(Two AED's were purchased and all Police Department Personnel have completed the training)

- Grant #2: Miscellaneous($67,880.00)This grant funding was put toward the purchase of the new police vehicle. Vehicle is in service.

- AED's: Still in process of working with Ballad Health to obtain Grant Monies for AED's for use at Town Hall, Public Works, Water Department.

8/19/2026 – Pat Elliott and I met with Delegate Terry Kilgore, Duane Miller, Thomas Lawson, Town Manager Big Stone Gap Steve Lawson to discuss grant possibility for the Town of Gate City.

- We are currently going to receive $25,000.00 Grant from Lenowisco to help with replacement of old water meters. Water Plant Chief Operator Steve Rutherford is working with Duane Miller at Lenowisco for this project moving forward.

9/01/2026 – Public Works department has received a $2000.00 grant to help with the purchase of a trench box or car left. After speaking with Dale, we have decided to put that amount toward a trench box for digging water line and sewer line repairs

C. **Attorney Report** – **No Report**

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

Pat Elliott – recommends we get a Content Creator to do our Facebook posts. Also, it is reported that some businesses have clients that are taking up parking spaces, 4-6 hours at a time. I don't know what to tell these folks? Could we do 2-hour parking? Business owners are grumbling – they seem to think it's hurting their business. Discussion followed, with questions about parking and parking tickets going to GCPD Chief Terry Sivert.

Allen Dougherty – If parking on a street (like a boat), can we get that moved or do we have to receive a citizen complaint? **Chief Sivert** – Property Maintenance used to be done by the Town Manager, but right now it's complaint driven. **Town Attorney** – Boats and stuff like that should be parked in the back yard(s). Past Council voted on this, but it can be changed (voted on).

Wallace Ross, Jr. – Property Maintenance, there's a lot on Chestnut Street. He's had folks tell him that the grass is so high you can hardly see the stop sign. Of all the playground equipment at Grogan Park, there's nothing for small children – just a couple of swings. Nothing for very small children (2-6 years). **Mayor** – the Civitans did that playground. **Dale McConnell** – a lot of it hasn't been updated. **Wallace** – Grass contractor, we still got one? **Mayor** – As of September 1st, no, only on an "as needed" basis.

E. **Police Department** – Terry Sivert

September 2026

	July 2026	August 2026	Year to Date
Calls for Service	206	299	2378
Arrest	10	8	48
Summons	20	44	242
Incident Reports	11	12	59

Accident Reports	3	4	30
DUI Arrests	1	1	4
Vehicle Unlock	8	10	60

Significant Activity & Reporting for September 2026

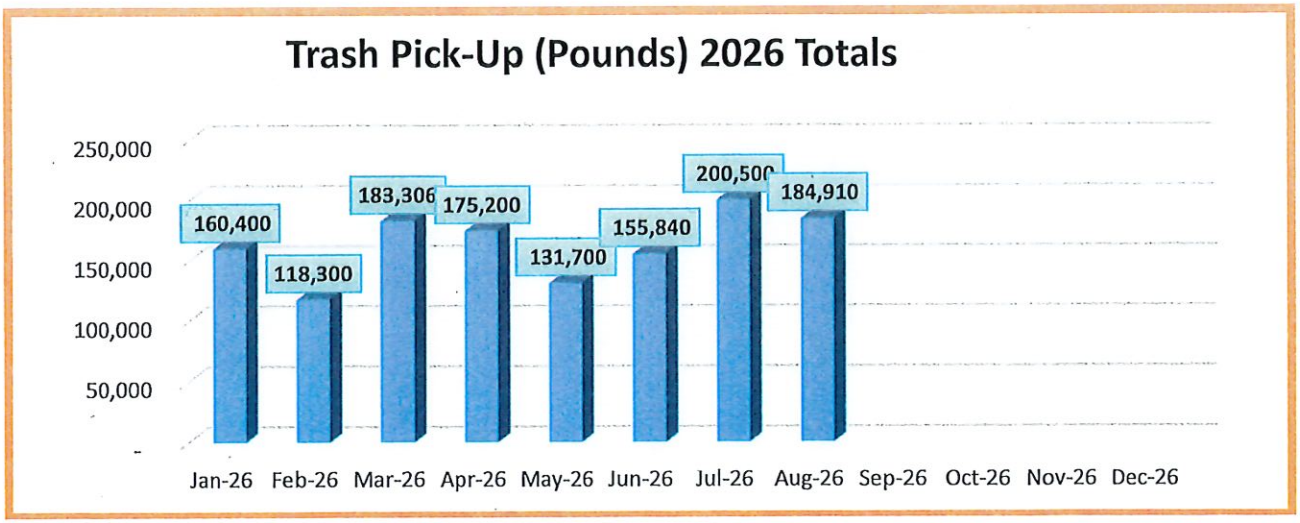
- Our officers are continuing to work plenty of DMV selective enforcement for speed and alcohol. All grants are currently on schedule and have completed all audits.
- GCPD continues to conduct routine patrol and community policing.
- AED's have arrived and are in use. All officers have completed AED/CPR training.
- New 2026 Ford Police Vehicle has arrived and is in service.

F. Sanitation Authority – No Report

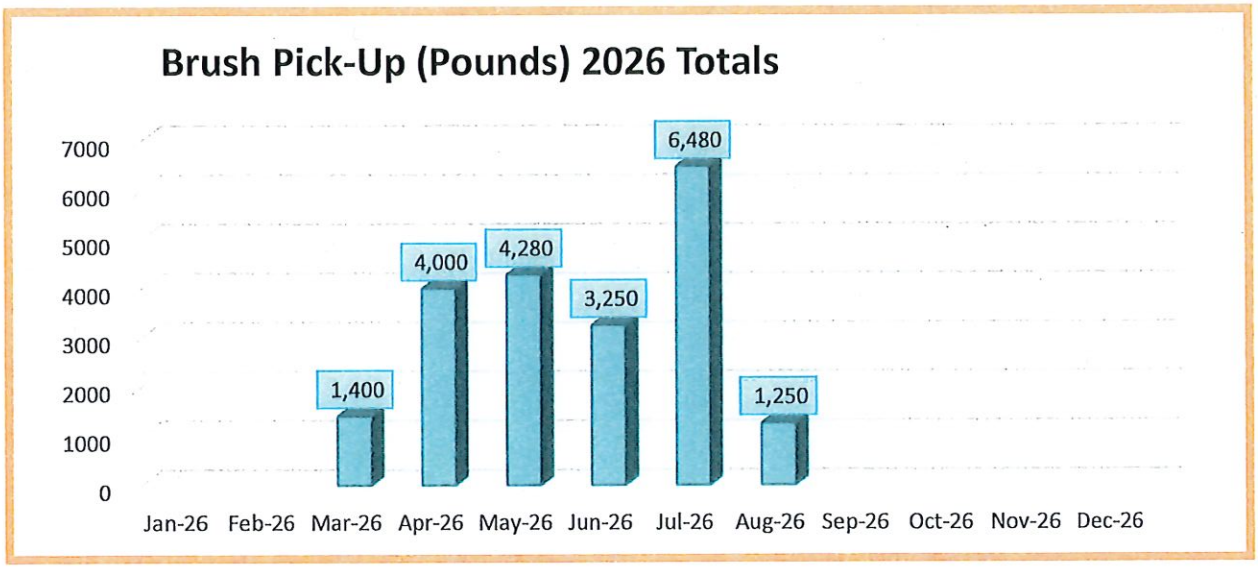
G. Public Works – Dale McConnell

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Measured in Pounds	Brush Pick-Up	Trash Pick-Up	Work Orders (# per month)
Jan-26		160,400	68
Feb-26		118,300	89
Mar-26	1,400	183,306	90
Apr-26	4,000	175,200	61
May-26	4,280	131,700	68
Jun-26	3,250	155,840	68
Jul-26	6,480	200,500	73
Aug-26	1,250	184,910	64







August 2026 – No Water Leaks on the Town's side

- We have patched some potholes with cold patch. We would like to get Peyton Woodward in the spring CDL class. Maybe a grant can help him get that. There are 6 full-time workers and 2 part-time workers on the Public Works crew right now.

H. Water Plant – submitted by Steve Rutherford

Virginia Dept. of Health – Division of Drinking Water Monthly Report
Month / Year: August 2026
PWS# 1169405
Distribution System Performance

A1	Gallons of water placed into distribution system from Gate City treatment Plant	**11,200,000**
A2	Gallons of water placed into distribution system from Scott County PSA master meter	**1,947,700**
A3	Total Gallons of water placed into distribution system	**13,147,700**

B	Gallons of water transferred to Scott County PSA	**3,588,281**
C	Gallons of water placed into distribution system that are not transferred to Scott Co. PSA	**9,559,419**
D	Average gallons per day placed into distribution system for customers other than Scott Co. PSA	**308,368**
E	Gals of water metered to other customers	**4,583,900**
F	Total Gallons of water accounted for	**8,172,181**
G	Total Gallons of water unaccounted for	**4,978,519**
H	Apparent percent of water lost from distribution system	**37.84%**
I	Number of connections	**1,216**
J	Avg gals/day placed into distribution system per non-SCPSA	**254**

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

Steve did a demonstration using a penny and a gallon of water. He said, "An average household of four uses about 7,000 gallons of water (a month). If you purchased water commercially, that would be $9,731.00. Now in Gate City, that same 7,000 gallons costs you $115.00 So, for that one gallon of water, I can make that for a penny. So, what I'm asking for is not for a lot, all I'm asking is one more penny per gallon. That would yield us an additional $14, 324.00 per month. What it comes out for our customer is about $6.25 per month. That rate of $33.75 for 2,000 (gallons) goes up, I know it sounds big but it's not, it would actually go up to $40.00, but in order to sustain we have to go. It didn't go up a lot, just a penny."

There is a 2022 EPA law that went into place on lead and copper. The mandate to replace galivanted lines that have to be replaced by 2037. I have calculated that we have approximately one mile of galvanized pipes in town that has to be replaced. Other localities have instituted a monthly *infrastructure fee* ($10.00 per month) and that would take care of the cost to replace those lines. There are grants available, but not at 100%, we will have to pay a portion to replace these lines.

Discussion followed among council members regarding an inevitable increase in water rates to keep the town's debt covenants in good standing; particularly the debt-to-revenue ratios. We have to get to a point where we are sustainable.

****8:15 PM, Mayor Lawson called a short recess.**
****8:27 PM, Mayor Lawson called the meeting to order**

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Proceed with Purchasing/Installing Heat Pump for Public Works Garage (quote only good until the end of September 2026)**
   Motion made to proceed with the purchase for $9,850.00

Motion by: Pat Elliott — 2nd by: Dexter Harmon
VOTE: Aye: 5
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: — *Motion Carried*

2. **Update on the Emergency Warning System (old fire department whistle)**
Motion made to

Motion by: — 2nd by:
VOTE: Aye:
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: — *Take No Action, put on October agenda*

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Contract Artist/Painter (Martin Church) for Holiday Scene on Town Hall front windows**
Motion made to

Motion by: — 2nd by:
VOTE: Aye:
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: — *Take No Action, put on October agenda*

2. **Veteran's Day Program at Gate City Middle School (11/11/26) at 11:00 am; keynote speaker USMC Retired Colonel, Miles A. Burdine**
Motion made to approve the keynote speaker and nominated Council Member Pat Elliott to be the Welcoming Speaker for the town.

Motion by: Kevin Barnett — 2nd by: Allen Dougherty
VOTE: Aye: 5
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: — *Motion Carried*

3. **Proposal to relocate the Dog Park from Grogan Park to Gateway Park**
Motion made to approve the relocation of the dog park to Gateway Park.

Motion by: Pat Elliott — 2nd by: Kevin Barnett
VOTE: Aye: 4
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: 1 (Wallace W. Ross, Jr.)_ — *Motion Carried*

4. **Propose to have Citco Water visit and present the Diehl AMI system to Council.**
Motion made to have Citco Water visit and present the Diehl AMI system

Motion by: Kevin Barnett — 2nd by: Pat Elliott
VOTE: Aye: 5
Nay:
Absent:
Abstain: — *Motion Carried*

5. **Propose to renew Town of Gate City's loan ending in xx0040 (Clyde Williams Bridge) Motion made to renew the loan ending in xx0040 with New Peoples Bank, and for Mayor, Jamie Lawson; Council Member, Pat Elliott; and Treasurer, Kristie Mullins to be the authorized signers.**

Motion by:	Pat Elliott	2nd by:	Dexter Harmon
VOTE:	Aye: 5		
	Nay:		
	Absent:		
	Abstain:		***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	2nd by:	Pat Elliott
VOTE:	Aye: 5		
	Nay:		
	Absent:		
	Abstain:		***Motion Carried**

Mayor Lawson opened the closed session at **9:27 PM**

XVI. RETURN FROM CLOSED SESSION

Motion made for Council to return from closed session.

Motion by:	Kevin Barnett	2nd by:	Pat Elliott
VOTE:	Aye: 5		
	Nay:		
	Absent:		
	Abstain:		***Motion Carried**

Council returned from closed session at **10:49 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 2.2-3712 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: Jamie Lawson: Aye
Kevin Barnett: Aye
Allen Dougherty: Aye
Wallace W. Ross, Jr.: Aye
Pat Elliott: Aye
Dexter Harmon: Aye

XVII. MOTIONS FROM CLOSED SESSION

1. **Motion made to recognizes that previously voted on donations to Hope House were never given to them for 2025 and 2026, plus the benevolence, for a grand total of $5,00.00 and that we play catch up and make sure they get that.**

Motion by:	Pat Elliott	2nd by:	Wallace W. Ross, Jr.
VOTE:	Aye: 5		
	Nay:		
	Absent:		
	Abstain:		***Motion Carried**

2. **Motion made to begin advertising for a new Town Manager, with methods and cost to be determined in the near future.**

Motion by:	Allen Dougherty	2nd by:	Kevin Barnett
VOTE:	Aye: 5		
	Nay:		
	Absent:		
	Abstain:		***Motion Carried**

XVIII. ADJOURN

Motion made to adjourn

Motion by:	Dexter Harmon	2nd by:	Pat Elliott
VOTE:	Aye: 5		
	Nay:		
	Absent:		
	Abstain:		***Motion Carried**

*Mayor Lawson adjourned the meeting at **10:50 PM**, until the next scheduled Council Meeting on October 20, 2026 at 6:30 PM.

Jamie Lawson
Mayor, Jamie Lawson

Kristie L. Tipton
Town Clerk, Kristie L. Tipton