BOLIVAR TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, September 2, 2025 at 6:30pm

CHRIS HIGDON, MAYOR
P. JEAN REED, RECORDER
CAROLYN BEYER
VICTORIA GALE
DAN JIMENO
CHARLMA QUARLES
SARAH SHAFER
LAURA WHITTINGTON, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Pledge of Allegiance

Call to Order
Mayor Higdon called the September 2, 2025 regular meeting of the Bolivar Town Council to order at 6:41pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting. We were late starting due to Dan Jimeno going home to get a new hook-up (wires) for a video presentation later this evening.

Mayor Higdon presented a Recognition Plaque to Councilperson Sarah Shafer. Councilperson Shafer was recognized for having perfect attendance at the Bolivar Town Council Meetings for the last two years. She did not miss one Town Council Meeting.

Treasurers Report
Mayor Higdon introduced Mr. Eric Lewis to everyone.

- Mr. Lewis explained the layout of the financial report and how to read each page of the report starting with Income.
- He also reported that Laura and the State Auditor are responsible for setting up all the different funds.
- Mr. Lewis said the first column is always for the same month's information for last year (24/25. The second column is for this year's information.
- He said since we just started a new year on July 1, our targeted % for this month should be 17%. We are at 14%.
- The expenses for this month amounted to $61,995. We are at 9% of our actual budget and we should be at 17%. Our net income for this month is $40,169.
- The remaining pages of the report was explained my Mr. Lewis.
- Mr. Lewis said if anyone would like to have something new added to the report just let him know.

Mayor Higdon thanked Mr. Lewis for the report and the great success he has been for Bolivar. Mayor Higdon mentioned to Mr. Lewis about the audit.

Mr. Lewis said he and Laura have been in touch. Mr. Lewis said he will be in touch with the Auditor. Mr. Lewis will keep us informed.

Mayor Higdon asked for a motion to approve the financial report.

Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to accept the Treasurers report for August, 2025 as presented by Eric Lewis. Councilperson Charlma Quarles seconded the motion. Motion passed 5 – 0.

Town Attorney, Effie Kallas
Not in attendance

Sheriff's Department Report and Public Comment
Corp. Hockman was not present for this meeting. Mayor Higdon asked everyone to look over the report and if they had any questions to please let Laura know. She will get answers for you.

- Councilperson Sarah Shafer said the numbers seem to be about the same. She said nothing looks like a concern.

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park-Superintendent Gossett
Mayor Higdon welcomed Superintendent Gossett.

- Superintendent Gossett spoke a little about Order No. 3434 from Secretary of the Interior strengthening the Parks relationship with Gateway Communities. Later this week the Park will forward an invitation to Mayor Higdon to join a Webinar hosted by the Department on September 17, at 1:30pm.
- The Gateway coordinator for Harpers Ferry Park will be Mr. Andrew Lee. More information will be presented later on partnerships.
- If Mayor Higdon would like other members of the Council to serve, just let Superintendent Gossett know.
- Superintendent Gossett said Bryon Bridge construction work will start next month.
- Because of this construction we may not be able to get to the C & O Canal. This construction could last six to eight months. The shuttle bus will be running. Just keep an eye on the Park Service Web page for updates.
- Here in Bolivar we are planning to demolish the gas station, garage and house located at the foot of Bolivar Heights behind the Jefferson County Visitor's Center. This is part of the American Battlefield Trust. This property will be put back into a natural state with no buildings or homes.
- Alstalts House which is directly tied to John Brown Raid is almost finished.
- September 13 at one, two and three o'clock cannons will be fired on Bolivar Heights.
  Mayor Higdon asked Superintendent if the yellow gate will be removed when the demolition is happening.
  Superintendent Gossett said she was not sure.
  Mayor Higdon thanked Superintendent Gossett.

Approve Regular Meeting Minutes August 5, 2025
Councilperson Victoria Gale moved to approve the August 5, 2025 regular Meeting Minutes. Councilperson Sarah Shafer seconded the motion. Motion passed 5 – 0

Attendee Concerns
1. Steve Paradis said he had a complaint about someone cutting his crab apple trees and lilac bushes that were cut down with no notification to him. Whoever did this did not pick up any of the bushes and limbs. Mr. Paradis said he did not know if anyone else

had concerns. Mr. Paradis said he might know who did this but he would address this himself.
Mayor Higdon thanked Mr. Paradis for bring this to our attention.
Councilperson Charlma Quarles asked Mayor Higdon what we are to do about a concern like this. Do we get involved?
Mayor Higdon said we can only discuss and take action if it is listed on the agenda in that way. We are only sure our town employee did not do this.

Committee Reports

Street Committee

Mayor Higdon asked Mr. Paradis to give a report on Water Department paving. The Water Department is only responsible for paving and repair that was caused by the Water Department. The areas have been identified by Mayor Higdon and Mr. Paradis.
Mayor Higdon said we just want to get ahead of the snow.
Mayor Hidgon asked Mr. Paradis to send us a list of the vendors that might be doing the paving for Tara Works.
Mr. Paradis said they would be meeting the next day so he will send the list.
Councilperson Victoria Gale asked if the area on Jefferson and Park. This is an area that was not repaved after a bad leak from two years ago.
Mayor Higdon and Mr. Paradis will look at this.
Mayor Higdon thanked Mr. Paradis for the report.

Park and Recreation Committee

Discuss/Approve event with Corporation of Harpers Ferry
Councilperson Victoria Gale reported she and Eric Eastman had a meeting and talked about the following. They talked about a number of items. Mayor Higdon asked who Eric was and Vickie introduced him. She said Eric gave her a punch list.

- She started with a letter she received from a lady concerning things that needed to be done in the park.
- Vickie said our priorities are getting the basketball court repaved and striped, getting the handicap swing and getting it installed.

Mayor Higdon asked where are we on the inspection and where we are with the asphalting of the basketball court.

- Vickie said the basketball court is on the agenda. We do not have an inspection on the park yet. We have not gotten anyone yet to do the inspection.

Mayor Higdon offered to help Vickie and Eric out on the inspection.

- Vickie said anything Mayor Higdon could do would be greatly appreciated.

Discuss/Approve event with The Corporation of Harpers Ferry

Councilperson Carolyn Beyer asked if we need a motion to approve since we discussed this last meeting.
Councilperson Carolyn Beyer moved to participate in the Scarecrow event with the Corporation of Harpers Ferry. Councilperson Charlma Quarles seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.
Mayor Higdon said we will need a representative for Bolivar to serve on this project.

Canal Town Partnership

Councilperson Charlma Quarles reported the Canal Town Partnership and the Canal Town Trust will be holding their second Art Trail Event at the Camp Hill Wesley Church

on October 4, from10:00am to 6:00pm. This event will consist of many paintings of Harpers Ferry and Bolivar. One of the Artist paintings will be Garrnet Jett.

Water Commission Report
Report given by Mr. Paradis earlier in the meeting.

History Committee
No one in attendance.

Board of Zoning Appeals
Phil Hale introduced himself and gave a brief explanation of himself and other members of the Board of Zoning Appeals.

- Mr. Hale said the Board started under Mayor Bob Hardy
- Of the present members of the Council, Laura and Jean are the only two remaining, everyone else is new
- We have five members and we work independently.
- We take the appeals very seriously.
- Our criteria consists of
    1. We are required to hear, review, and determine appeals from decisions and determinations of Administrative Officials basically zoning conclusions.
       We will grant variances,
        - Will not adversely affect public health, safety or welfare or rights of the adjacent property owners
        - The appeal rights or special conditions or special attributes which pertain to the property for which the variance is sought
        - Eliminate unnecessary hardship and permits a reasonable use of the land
        - Will allow the intent of the zoning ordinance to be observed.
        - All meeting agendas are posted and advertised. Minutes are taken for each meeting. Meetings are open to the public.

       Mayor Higdon thanked Mr. Hale for his report.

Change of order

New Business

1. Presentation by Gil Hocker regarding Lantern Parade Festival with budget request
A presentation was given to Mayor and Council members. This was statistics of the last two years of information about the Lantern Festival and their plans for the coming year. Please see attached forms for information.
Council members had concerns and questions about ownership.
Councilperson Victoria Gale asked why we don't use artists from the area instead of Baltimore.
We were told the first year the $2000 instructor's fee was fee a one- time fee for teaching others to teach. We paid $2000 for the second year too.
We agreed we need to determine ownership or sponsorship
Mayor Higdon said he felt this was a unique opportunity. Last year was very impressive. Looking forward to what it can be Mayor Higdon would like for us to look at some things.

Mayor Higdon said if he owns it, he is calling the shots. Mayor Higdon said I want you guys to defer some of that cost by getting more businesses to participate in Frosty Fest. Make sure we are reaching out to the Harpers Ferry Merchants Association make sure they are open during Frosty Fest. This is not just an opportunity for the town to participate in it, it is an opportunity to boost the presence in town when it is otherwise cold. Everybody could benefit from this.
Councilperson Victoria Gale said we back in June put $3000 in the budget for this.
Councilperson Charlma Quarles said even if we own it, we need to rely on expertise.
Mayor Higdon said he and Laura talked with Annette and there are opportunities for all. We would have to go to the JCVB and ask. We need to meet again for further discussion.
Mayor Higdon thanked them for being the first to use the new forms. He also thanked them for the wonderful presentation.

2. Discuss/Approve proposal to repave basketball court in Bolivar Children's Park (new proposals presented)
Councilperson Victoria Gale said she has two proposals/estimates for repaving the basketball court in Bolivar Children's Park. A short discussion followed.
Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to accept the estimate of $8,338.00 from All American Paving LLC for repairing, repaving and striking the basketball court in Bolivar Children's Park. Councilperson Victoria Gale and Recorder Reed seconded the motion. Motion passed 6 – 0.
Councilperson Charlma Quarles suggested we make sure they do what we want.
Laura said they will go out and inspect before they leave and before they are paid.

3. Discuss/Approve proposal to purchase/Install handicap swing in Bolivar Children's Park
Mayor Higdon asked for this item to be held over to the next month.

4. Discuss/Approve proposals to repair/repave town owned street(s) in Bolivar

5. Discuss/Approve proposals to replace mulch in the Bolivar Children's Park
Mayor Higdon would like to table this for tonight until we find an inspector.
Mayor Higdon thanked Victoria Gale and Eric Eastman for all their work on the park.

6. Discuss/Approve library board position for Bolivar Rep.
Councilperson Victoria Gale left the room due to a conflict since she is the Secretary for the Library Board.
Mayor Higdon read a request from Councilperson Victoria Gale and asked for a motion.
Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to appoint Councilperson Victoria Gale to fill the position for a Bolivar Rep. to the Bolivar Harpers Ferry Library Board. Councilperson Dan Jimeno seconded the motion. Motion passed 5 - 0
Councilperson Victoria Gale returned to the meeting.

7. Discuss/Approve forming a special events committee *Mayor Higdon asked for a volunteer. Councilperson Sarah Shafer asked what other activities we might have.*

Councilperson Sarah Shafer volunteered to serve as chairman. Mayor Higdon said we will move on for tonight so think about it.

Old Business

1. Update regarding Opioid settlement funds and reporting status
Councilperson Carolyn Beyer would like to talk to Effie to make sure we are on the right WV criteria for spending the approximately $10,000. As of now Councilperson Carolyn Beyer feels supporting educational programs is the best way to go. Councilperson Charlma Quarles has volunteered to work with Councilperson Carolyn Beyer to research this project. We would like to keep it local. We are working on a report for the October Meeting.

2. Discuss/Approve the hire of a certified building inspector
Mayor Higdon said we have been struggling with the situation on Mercer Street. Mayor Higdon will be meeting with Jefferson County Building Inspector and hopefully getting some guidance/help for the situation on Mercer Street. I will bring back results of this meeting. I may call a short special meeting or 15 minutes prior to the next meeting.

3. Discuss/Approve zoom availability options for Bolivar Town Council
Mayor Higdon asked to table this item to give Dan Jimeno time to work on this.

Note:
New Business
4. Discussion/Approve proposals to repave town owned street(s) in Bolivar
Discussion on three bids received for repair/repaving Bolivar Streets.
We already awarded All American Paving LLC an $8,000 contract to repair/repave the basketball court, Mayor Higdon asked Laura to contact Billy Hoak once we get a date for the basketball court repaving, are there any efficiencies to his pricing if we are able to help him coordinate his equipment in town. A lot of time there are efficiencies built in just because you do not have to be moving equipment from place to place. We could help coordinate this. Mayor Higdon said Laura has been out surveying the streets times three.

Adjournment

Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilperson Victoria Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed 6 -0.
Meeting adjourned 9:45pm

P. Jean Reed
P. Jean Reed, Recorder

Chris Higdon, Mayor