BOLIVAR TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 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 August 5, 2025 regular meeting of the Bolivar Town Council to order at 6:30pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Treasurers Report
Mayor Higdon asked Laura to give the Treasurers report.
Laura said we do not have a lot of business since we are starting a new year. We do have a net income of $40,730. We have $1.8 million in our bank accounts. I have, at Mayor Higdon's request, made arrangements for Eric Lewis to attend the September Council meeting so he can be introduced to you. He will answer any questions you might have for him. He will give you an overview of his responsibilities and what he does for Bolivar.
Mayor Higdon said Eric Lewis is a great guy, I have known him for a while and the Council has known him for a while. He is very trustworthy.
Laura said he is our CPA source. He is great to have as another Check and Balance system.
Mayor Higdon asked for a motion to approve.
Councilperson Victoria Gale moved to accept the Treasurers report for July, 2025 as presented by Laura Whittington. Councilperson Dan Jimeno seconded the motion. Motion passed 6 – 0.

Town Attorney, Effie Kallas
Not in attendance

Sheriff's Department Report and Public Comment
Corp. Hockman reported 136 total incidents for the month of July. The following is the breakdown of the incidents. There were 68 Road Patrols, 34 Direct Patrols, 4 Follow Up, 4 Welfare Checks, 3 Building Checks, 3 Foot Patrols, 3 Traffic Stops, 2 Alarm ATM, 2 Public Service Calls, 1 911 Hang Up, 1 Alarm, 1 Animal Complaint, 1 Cardiac Arrst-E***, 1 Harassment, 1 MVA Injury. Councilperson Sarah Shafer asked if there was anything he is concerned about. Corp. Hockman said no, nothing stands out. School will be starting up in a few weeks. It has been a pretty good summer so far. Mayor Higdon asked if he was headed out to your National Night Out. Corp. Hockman said

yes, he was going out for a while. Mayor Higdon thanked Corp. Hockman and others for all you do. Enjoy your National Night out.

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park-Superintendent Gossett
Mayor Higdon welcomed Superintendent Gossett.
Superintendent Gossett welcomed new Council members as well.

- She started by mentioning an Order from The Secretary of the Interior.
- Reference Order NO.3434. The orders will start sometime after 10/25 and requires one quarterly coordination report. Mr. Andrew Lee will be HF Park Coordinator. We are committed to working with you. ***See attachment for details after my report.***
- On July 31, we reopened the climbing areas on Maryland Heights after the nesting season ended for the falcons (3).
- I would like to remind everyone in Bolivar that commercial activities on Park Service Property requires a Commercial Use Authorization. Notify Park for complete details because this CUA is required at a cost of $350.
- Friday 8/8/25, Park is co-hosting an event with the Appalachian Chamber Music Festival at 7:00pm, located on Historic Storer College Lawn. Tickets are free. But you need to notify the Park if you are planning to attend.
- Councilperson Dan Jimeno asked Superintendent Gossett bout Mather Training Center closing. Superintendent Gossett said Mather Training Center is not part of the NPS, although it is located within the Park with offices in DC. No decision for future use has been determined at this time.

Approve Regular Meeting Minutes-July 1, 2025
Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to approve July 1, 2025 regular Meeting Minutes with one correction. Councilperson Carolyn Beyer seconded the motion. Motion passed 6 – 0

Attendee Concerns

Mayor's Report
Mayor Higdon said he attended several meetings one of which was the Mayor's Meeting.

- Mayor Higdon said all four Mayors have their priorities/challenges especially Charles Town and Ranson who are experiencing real growth. We shared information and concerns around the table.
- We are 2 to 3 days past a major thunderstorm that went by and did some significant damage in Charles Town. Trees down and the storm blew the top off of Charles Towers Apartment Building. This displaced several people to the Civic Center. We had a big discussion about that. The discussion was about Emergency response. The new Mayor of Charles Town was able to reach out to the different organizations for assistance and take action. It was not smooth sailing, but he made it look smooth. Every Fire Station in the county was there and assisted in every way they could.
- The NIMS Training will be held on Tuesday, September 9 from 5:00 to 8:00pm at the new Government Center. This meeting is after hours but it is always good knowledge to have in an emergency.
- Note: Ethics date might need to be changed. Check with Effie.
- Chamber of Commerce Meeting was held at the Barn. It was well attended and the food was good. Charlma attended this meeting. We talked about marketing

and we talked about our town. Basically my message was we are just getting started and I certainly expect great things from this currently seated council. I mentioned our Bolivar businesses are thriving we want to continue being engaged with them and ask them to contribute a little bit as well. I talked a little bit about priorities but I kind of dodged that by saying low hanging fruit and modernization of a few things.

- Talked a little about sidewalks. Phase II has been submitted. We are starting to gather information for the next phase of the sidewalks. I believe by August 28 we may hear something as to us receiving this grant. It would be an 80/20 financial grant. Mayor Higdon said we would be hearing from and working with the Department of Highways. Councilperson Victoria Gale said if we do not have a say in the sidewalk design and setup then I would be against the new sidewalk. Mayor Higdon said I understand what you are saying, but we should not get too far ahead of ourselves. The Department of Highways will offer a grant and they will provide the engineer for the sidewalks. It will be up to us to accept or reject the grant and design and we will have a say in this. Mayor Higdon said this council needs to take lessons learned from the first phase and apply that to the second phase. Councilperson Sarah Shafer said when she talked to Mr. Burns he said if we wanted the bump outs removed we could talk/consider that if we were going to do phase II. Mayor Higdon said he felt like they have a good line of communication open so far. Mayor Higdon said he will make sure we have a say in what our streets look like. Councilperson Charlma Quarles said if we eliminate the bump outs then the engineer could remove them from the plans. Discussions continued about the bump outs. Phase II will be from Gilbert Street to the Fire Hall. Councilperson Victoria Gale said there are, so far, no mailboxes on the phase III side. Councilperson Sarah Shafer said the bump out at W Washington Street and Gilbert Street requires you to pull out into oncoming traffic to get out of Gilbert Street. Mayor Higdon said there are a couple of bump outs that make it almost impossible (for Emergency equipment) to turn out of, one is at Gilbert Street. Mayor Higdon said he feels we do not need to remove all the bump outs but he knows of a couple that should be. Mayor Higdon is thankful for everyone's input and concerns. Councilperson Sarah Shafer said we just want to have a seat at the table and the discussions. Recorder Reed said this has been a learning experience all the way around. But, sometimes when the State is paying for 80% and we are paying for 20%, we have kind of lost our gambling chips. Councilperson Sarah Shafer said she disagreed because we are stakeholders. Councilperson Victoria Gale said 20% is a lot of money for us. Recorder Reed said she also agreed with them reminding everyone when this all started, it was for replacing sidewalks, then we got into the mailboxes, then the bump outs and then safety issues. One thing led to another, these unforeseen problems occurred maybe because the people doing the work do not live in this little town. So anytime you take away one parking space, you could lose a business. Each business needs to have a certain number of parking spaces your business could go too. Mayor Higdon thanked everyone and said that was a good conversation.

Committee Reports

Street Committee

Mayor Higdon said we are trying to get additional bids for repairs done around here. We already had one company come out we are trying to get a second one. We are also trying to time this out with the Harpers Ferry Water Works plan for how they are going to repair all the construction damage they have to repair. I thought it was going to be done in August. After several emails back and forth we got an answer this afternoon. It will be September. I have asked that HF Water Works prioritize with Terra

Works that this needs to be done in September and we need to know and how soon because we have our own projects to do. I don't want to keep kicking this can down the road so that we won't have the opportunity to do what we need to do. We don't want to do our repairs and tear up something that was just repaired. We want to be as efficient with the money as possible.

Bolivar Planning Commission

Barb Staats reported from their last meeting that updates were given on our action plans and goals / objectives for the town. This will possibly involve changes to some ordinances especially part time zoning administrator and Zoning Administrator. Mayor Higdon as a point of clarity said there is a bit of overlap as Building Administrator. We just need to make sure when and if to do this our Ordinances will need to be changed to comply. Laura said she did not know where the term Zoning Administrator Assistant came into play. There is no Zoning Administrator Assistant. There was about twenty years ago The Planning Commission Clerk who resigned and that job was made part of my position/Job description as Bolivar Town Administrator. Laura said she is compensated by the hour for the work she does by the Planning Commission. Barb Staats will change and make sure this change is made to the Ordinances at the time. Mayor Higdon said we need to get our verbiage correct. We need to make sure we are the same with all things. If we are going to put in front of the Council changes to our Ordinances, I want there to be one big change not ten. So, we need to be talking to one another no harm, no foul. We can figure out how to make it right when the time is right. Mayor Higdon thanked Ms. Barb for the report.

Park & Recreation Committee

Councilperson Victoria Gale said the Park Committee did not hold a meeting this month. I did reach out to Eric. He is out of town.

- Laura has been helping with some things. The Handicap swing is considered a community need and not a want. Laura and I reached out to Mike at Metro. Neither of us heard back from him.
- Councilperson Victoria Gale said they reached out to Mitch at Covington. She reached out to Eric and he said to contact Mitch at Covington. Mitch suggested she contact Jennifer at Jefferson County Parks and Rec. If we install the handicap swing, we will be liable. Installation is up in the air.
- Councilperson Sarah Shafer asked about a stable foundation for the swing.
- Councilperson Gale said Sam Michael's Park has rubberized mulch under their swing.
- Councilperson Gale said she has not had success with Pittsnogle Paving so she has moved on with a quote from All American.

Mayor Higdon asked Councilperson Victoria Gale and the entire Committee to lean on Jennifer Myers for advice in dealing with our park needs. Victoria, I have heard you talk about this for several meetings. You are well vetted in this project. When you come back in September, I don't want to hear your opinion not someone else's suggestions on phone. I would like for you to do installation costs of everything (not a John Garza issue). This Town has the ability to do it right. We need for you to get the cost, bring it back, throw it on the table and we will take a look at it. Mayor Higdon said he wants Councilperson Gale to do (One) The area affected by the swing at one cost and (two) do it all at a second cost. Please give your suggestion the rubberized Mulch as well as a bid for black-topping the basketball court.

Canal Town Partnership

Councilperson Quarles reported no meeting or report until September

Water Commission
Mayor Higdon reported Steve Paradis sent an email to him concerning all the work that the Water Company has done and the repairs that need to be made. Former Mayor Paradis offered to take Mayor Higdon on a drive around. More information will be coming after the drive around.

Jefferson County Development Authority
Nothing to report

History Committee
Jeffrey Staats gave everyone information on the Walking tour Brochure planned for Bolivar. He said we will start off small. All places shown on the list are shown in the comp. plan. or on the town's website. This is subject to change. A lot depends on how much information can be found on each of these properties. We would like the original property owner's name of these properties. I will have more information in September. Our next History Committee will be Tuesday, August 26 at 7:00pm. Mayor Higdon asked more about the Walking Tour or a Brochure. Jeffrey Staats told a story about the Old Jail property. Mayor Higdon asked Jeffrey to put together an estimate of cost for this. Councilperson Charlma Quarles suggested the committee make contact with the Historical Foundation because they already put together an African American Walking tour. Ask for suggestions or information that might be helpful to us. Mayor Higdon said they may have a template and also contact Annette Bates for information. Mayor Higdon asked Jeffrey Staats to put together some numbers and bring to the next meeting and we will work something out. Mayor Higdon thanked Jeffrey for his passion and work on this project.

Board of Zoning Appeals
Mayor Higdon said he asked Laura to invite the Board of Zoning Appeals for the next meeting so we know what they are thinking and they know what we are thinking, just so we are not talking past one another.

Old Business
1. Update regarding opioid statement funds and reporting status
Mayor Higdon said we just got an update from Purdue. We got another settlement and there is more money coming. There may be more phases of the Purdue settlement, I just don't know. Mayor Higdon said when Sarah McMains, former Councilperson left, I promised we would put this money where it would be helping the cause, helping the problem. I have been reading and hearing from people all across the country that the money is not being put back into solving the problem. We need guidelines for spending. Mayor Higdon said if there are guidelines, they are very hard to find. Councilperson Victoria Gale said there are very specific guidelines for spending this money. Even former Councilperson Sarah McMains could not locate the guidelines. **Councilperson Carolyn Beyer volunteered to find these guidelines.** Mayor Higdon said that would be helpful. I just don't want to misuse the money, I want it to be helpful to the problem, and if anyone had any suggestions, please let me know. Councilperson Carolyn Beyer said she had thought about something educational and partnering with the School or the Library. Councilperson Sarah Shafer said at one point, we were told we could turn our money over to Jefferson County Health Department or Jefferson County Community Ministries and they would distribute where needed (mostly for narcan)

Councilperson Carolyn Beyer said she would like to keep the money here and find a way to help right here. Mayor Higdon said it appears we are close to the $10,000 opioid money received as of this date. Mayor Higdon said we will put back on the September meeting.

2. Discuss/Approve snow plow maintenance for town truck

Mayor Higdon said we have the opportunity to utilize our contacts at EPTA to do a diagnostic test and maintenance of the town truck. We will drop it off on the 18th and they will have it about 48 hours. Councilperson Sarah Shafer asked if the cost being over a certain $ amount, would we need the Council's approval to increase the amount? Mayor Higdon said yes we would, we just don't know what is wrong yet.

3. Discuss/Approve the hire of a certified building inspector

Mayor Higdon said he spoke with Gregg Vaughn, Mayor of Harpers Ferry. I talked with Mayor Vaughn as a professional curtsey I talked to Kevin Hamilton and explained what we want to do with hiring a certified building inspector. I asked Kevin if he could help us write a scope for the certified building inspector. Kevin is not a full time employee for Harpers Ferry but does almost the same thing we want to write a scope for. I have not heard back from Kevin yet. Put back on the September agenda.

4. Discuss/Approve the hire of a code enforcement official

Move to the September Meeting agenda.

5. Discuss/Approve zoom availability options for Bolivar Town Council meetings

Mayor Higdon asked the council if we wanted to continue our meetings using zoom. Discussion followed from Councilperson Sarah Shafer.
Mayor Higdon said if you have a meeting on TEAMS and you record it, your work is done. Mayor Higdon said he uses almost exclusively TEAMS at his work.
Mayor Higdon would like for the council to check out different programs that will offer the citizens of Bolivar more access to Bolivar's Council meetings, committee meetings, emails and more attendance via zoom or in person. Mayor Higdon said he has not asked councilperson Dan Jimeno for his expert advice but would like to hear from him. Mayor Higdon would like to hear from everyone around the table. I would like to do what would be the best for all of us, the citizens and others. If we are going to update this then we need to do it right. Mayor Higdon said, I am open to whatever the solution is going to be but it has got to be right. If we are not going to do it right then we should not have it. Councilperson Beyer said she would be interested in TEAMS. She uses it at work for twelve different offices across the State. I think it is a good system. Jeffrey Staats said we sometimes have connection problems in this building with Frontier, we should check this problem out no matter what we decide. Mayor Higdon asked that we come back in September with ideas of what we want to change/update and the cost per item.

6. Discuss/Approve estimate for tree removal-1568 W. Washington Street

Laura explained the two bids for tree removal in Bolivar.
Councilperson Victoria Gale moved to hire Viking Tree Service to flush cut down four (4) trees at 1568 W. Washington Street at a cost of $4,700 after confirmation of all debris being removed from the property. Councilperson Sarah Shafer seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0

7. Follow-up discussion regarding the 9-hole disc golf course plan for the Bolivar Nature Park.

Councilperson Charlma she just needs to know how this will be communicated to the community. Mayor Higdon said Laura contacted Jennifer Myers at Jefferson County Parks and Rec. and Jennifer will get with Chris Craig and they will be responsible for all signage/ communication pertaining to the 9-hole golf course at the Bolivar Nature Park. Mayor Higdon said he drove down there to check it out. He said he had no idea it went back in there so far. It could be cool.

New Business

1. Presentation from Kimberly Michaels (Harpers Ferry Livery LLC) regarding new business venture in Bolivar
Mayor Higdon asked Laura to remove this from the agenda.

2. Discuss/Approve mailbox extensions for W. Washington Street
Mayor Higdon said the Post Office asked about the need for a few more mailboxes due to rate increases. We will do all we can to accommodate as many as possible.

3. Discuss Jefferson County Development Authority Letter of Engagement
Mayor Hidgon said JC Commission dissolved the 15 member JCDA. The five Municipalities no longer have a seat on the JCDA. A resolution was crafted by CT asking all five Municipalities to get on board and sign one document as five. The resolution was very aggressive. I don't think it needs to have that tone. I am not putting my name on something like that. That is not how I negotiate. And most importantly it did not have the chance to pass by any of you. Ranson and Bolivar did not sign. CT crafted their own. We want to be involved and engaged but not demanding.
Mayor Higdon will write his own letter and in September ask for your approval to send.

NOTE: Councilperson asked Mayor Higdon to check out Park Avenue with the water department repair of streets.

Adjournment

Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilperson Dan Jimeno seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 9:17pm

P. Jean Reed
P. Jean Reed, Recorder

Chris Higdon, Mayor