BOLIVAR TOWN COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, JULY 1, 2025 AT 6:30 PM

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 July 1, 2025 regular meeting of the Bolivar Town Council meeting to order at 6:30 pm

Treasurers Report

Mayor Higdon requested that Laura present the treasurers report. Laura stated that the report is dated from July 2024-June 2025. This is just a preliminary report, this report will be finalized after the bank statements are reconciled. The town ended the year with a $53,650 surplus. The Town of Bolivar currently has $1.7 million dollars in various bank accounts as of June 30, 2025. Eric Lewis will also be invited to our August meeting in order to meet the newly elected officials and to answer any questions that you may have regarding our accounting procedures. **Councilperson Dan Jimeno made a motion to approve the**

treasurer's report as presented. Councilperson Vickie Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Town Attorney, Effie Kallas

Attorney Kallas began her report by congratulating the elected officials to their first meeting. Attorney Kallas reported that the 2nd quarter of the Wine/Liquor Tax has not been released as of this meeting and she will send as soon as she receives. July 30th from 12- 1pm a virtual ethics training will be given by the WV Ethics Commission that is given by Kimberly Weber. The month of June Effie stated that she assisted the town on questions regarding variance requests, public meetings acts directed to the history committee. Effie requested that the new council calendar a date for an Ethics training for the newly elected officials. This meeting was scheduled for September 9, 2025 @ 7:00 pm. Effie has been reporting to the council the status of bills in legislation that may have an effect on the Town of Bolivar. A list of bills was provided to the Mayor and Council and Effie requested the authority to research these bills in order to advise the need to revise the town ordinances.

Sheriff's Department Report and Public Comment

Corp. Hockman reported 129 incidents for the month of June. Of those incidents there were 69 road patrols, 37 directed patrols, 4 traffic stops, 3 foot patrols, 3 susp. Vehicles, 2 building checks, 2 MVA no injury, 1 Fraud, 2 Welfare Check, 1 911 Hang up, 1 ATM alarm, 1 CAPIAS service, 1 Civil process, 1 Follow-up, 1 MVA unknown. Mayor Higdon thanked Corp Hockman and Sheriff Hansen for their service to the Town of Bolivar. We appreciate you not only making yourself available to our community but putting your life on the line as well.

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park-Superintendent Gossett

Not in attendance for the July meeting

Minutes

Approve Regular Meeting Minutes-June 9, 2025

Councilperson Sarah Shafer made a motion to approve the minutes of June 9, 2025 with corrections. Carolyn Beyer seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Approve Meeting Minutes of June 9, 2025- Canvass of Election

Councilperson Vickie Gale made a motion to approve. Seconded by councilperson Sarah Shafer. Motion passed.

Approve Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2025-Certification of Election

Councilperson Sarah Shafer made a motion to approve with correction. Vickie Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Attendee Concerns

NONE

Mayor's Report

- Congratulations to all of you on your elected positions as town council members. I am very excited to get started and looking forward to working with each of you. Don't hesitate to ask questions as we go along. I am encouraged and grateful for the opportunity to work with you on serving the residents of Bolivar.
- Department of Highways had a regional meeting located in Leetown, WV to discuss DOH projects, operations, and state of affairs in our Jefferson County region. I was in attendance for that meeting with former Mayor Paradis, Senator Rucker, Secretary of Transportation from Charleston, WV, Most of the WV delegates were in attendance, County Commission President, Sheriff, most Mayors from all the municipalities, County Administrator, as well as other County and State Officials. This meeting was based mainly on projects that were in the queue for execution; particularly some road work to certain intersections and road improvements in specific areas of the mountain such as Shannondale. The biggest take away for me was the need for improved communication and collaboration; more engagement with the municipalities to understand project details, schedules, etc. There seemed to be a consensus agreement across the attendees in the room, that communication and improved working relationships is necessary. I am encouraged by the recollection of the need

and am optimistic we can improve in these areas; but this will be a work in progress.

- I reached out to Mayor Vaughn and HFWW for an update regarding the recent project by Harpers Ferry Water Works & Terra Works. All of the waterline work for this phase has been completed. There is one "plumbing" item remaining-replacement of a pressure reducing valve at the head of High Street going down to Lower Town. So, for all practical purposes, work in Bolivar is done. What remains for all areas that were affected this spring is "restoration" work. That's mostly paving with perhaps some landscaping work if the seed they've spread didn't take, or if residents take issue with how things have been left. Paving in Bolivar will amount to patching the cuts that were made to install the new mains. Additionally, and separately, the Water Works has a list of spots that need some patching due to water line repairs made over the past couple three years. We will try to coordinate these two paving efforts. A notable improvement has been seen in the leak rate as a result of this work and a repair to a leak that surfaced over by the KOA last month.
- I attended my first Board of Directors meeting @ the Jefferson County CVB on June 18th. This was a very productive meeting and I am pleased that I know several of the members of the board through prior working relationships. A few details from the meeting: Jefferson County hit the 1 billion mark for the number of visitors, strong social media presence / 25-44 year old had the highest hits, New River Rivers Waterpark opened, and Snow Riders excelled this year with better weather, improved snow making equipment and marketing exposure.
- I have had the opportunity to interact with Mayor Vaughn since the Harpers Ferry Election. He & I share the same commitment to work together for the betterment of the two towns.
- The Town of Bolivar recently received an opportunity to apply for grant funding for additional sidewalk replacement. I would like to inform the council that in order to meet the window of 4:00 pm on July 2, I approved Laura to move forward with the completion of the application to cover funds from Gilbert Street to the Fire Station. This was a short window and we did not want to miss this opportunity. This is not a commitment of funding for the project but simply a submission of the application. I intend

to seek Council approval prior to moving forward. The deadline to apply for funding for construction if July 23, Laura has been working diligently to meet the application deadline. The timing of the application deadline was not favorable with our Council meeting, however this a non-binding commitment of funds. Keep your fingers crossed that we receive the award.

Committee Reports

- **Street Committee:** Laura reported that she has reached out to Superior Paving and this company is coordinating with HF Water Works to repave/patch streets in the town. Bolivar wants to be sure that HFWW has their repairs completed before our repairs begin in order to avoid repeating the task.
- **Bolivar Planning Commission:** Next meeting is July 28th
- **Park & Recreation Committee: Committee has not had any recent meetings but are still waiting for the park inspection and the paving of the basketball court. Vickie requested that Laura reach out to another contractor for another paving proposal in the event that Pittsnogle rescinds their contractual agreement. Also waiting for additional information from Metro Recreation in order to move forward with the installation of the handicap swing.**
- **Canal Town Partnership:** No Report. Councilmember Charlma Quarles stated that the next meeting would be held in September.
- **Water Commission:** No Report
- **Jefferson County Development Authority:** No Report
- **History Committee:** Mayor Higdon requested that the history committee report be tabled until the August meeting.
- **Board of Zoning Appeals:** Mayor Higdon suggested that Laura reach out to the members and request that a quarterly report be made to the council. Would like to start in September.

Old Business

1. **Update regarding opioid settlement funds and reporting status**: Mayor Higdon gave an update about a few changes that have taken place since our last meeting. Keith Lowrey from the Jefferson County Community

Ministries has resigned from his position and former Councilmember Sarah McMains has relocated from the Town of Bolivar and recent contact has not been made with her to receive updates regarding this subject matter. Mayor Higdon would like to table for future discussions and requested that the council members introduce their ideas in order to find the right spot that would be suitable for these funds. Item was tabled.

2. **Discuss/Approve snow plow maintenance for town truck**: Laura requested that this item be tabled until Mayor Higdon could discuss the mechanical issues with maintenance worker, John Garza. Item was tabled.

New Business

1. **Presentation from Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority (EPTA) given by Elaine Bartoldson:** Elaine Bartoldson congratulated everyone on their newly elected positions and stated that she loves working with Bolivar and it is her favorite municipality. Elaine explained to council that EPTA has an intergovernmental agreement with Berkeley County for maintenance of vehicles and can share with the Town of Bolivar if they are interested. Elaine will forward the MOU to Laura for additional information. EPTA has some big projects happening, groundbreaking took place a year ago for a new facility. EPTA has acquired ten new solar bus shelters and one of these shelters has been reserved for the Town of Bolivar. EPTA will provide the new shelter and hardware to install in place of the current shelter that is located on W. Washington Street. The only item that Bolivar would be required to provide is the concrete pad to put the shelter in place. There may be a grant opportunity by EPTA through a capital improvements funds. Councilmembers asked questions regarding the size of the new shelter and the placement. Elaine explained that this was at least an eighteen month process but she wanted to provide the information to Bolivar in order to be sure that their shelter was reserved. EPTA board will have an upcoming seat available for anyone that would be interested. Mayor Higdon thanked Elaine for her presentation.
2. **Presentation from Jefferson County Park & Rec (Jennifer Myers) regarding Bolivar Nature Park usage (9-hole disc golf course):** Jennifer Myers was in attendance for the meeting and introduced Activities

Director, Tommy VanVliet to assist in explaining the disc golf course. Jennifer thanked the Town of Bolivar for their monetary donation that supported the fireworks in Jefferson County. Jennifer explained that the Bolivar Nature Park is a seven acre park in Bolivar that is owned by Jefferson County Park & Recreation. Jefferson Park & Recreation is in the process of having a survey of the property completed to be sure that there are not adjacent properties encroaching on park owned property. Jefferson County Park & Rec will be beginning repairs/replacement of the current gazebo that is located in the Nature Park. The JC Park & Rec board has been discussing the idea of placing a 9-hole disc golf on the property of the Bolivar Nature Park. Tommy VanVliet, activities director for JC Park & Rec. gave a brief description of the sport of disc golf and how popular it has become. Tommy stated the Bolivar Nature Park is a real gem located in the Town of Bolivar and that the Jefferson Park & Rec. has no intention of coming into the Nature Park and removing trees or clearing trails in order to install this course. Jennifer Myers stated that she wanted to make the council aware of the plans that JC Park & Rec. has for the Bolivar Nature Park. JC Park & Rec. would like to implement this plan in late summer/early Fall. The installation of the course is semi-permanent, and there would not be an environmental impact. Tommy also explained that there would not be an impact to the neighbors or surrounding properties. Councilmember Charlma Quarles questioned if the disc golf course was added, would the trails surrounding the area still be accessible? Tommy stated that all trails surrounding the property would still be 100% accessible. Jennifer will send a map of the proposed disc gold course location in order for the council to have a better idea of the layout of the land. The disc golf course will not interfere with any individuals that would like to visit the Nature Park to utilize the trails and JC Park & Rec. plans to place signage in the area. JC Park & Rec. has also opened discussions with WVU Medical Center for assistance with parking. Jennifer explained that the installation and maintenance would be the expense of Jefferson County Park & Rec. due to ownership of the land. Mayor Higdon asked Jennifer what requirements if any were needed from the council. Jennifer stated that there was nothing at this point, but she just wanted to make the council aware of the plans that

were being proposed. Jennifer stated that she would be happy to speak to Trail & Town Alliance to also make them aware of the changes that were being planned for the Bolivar Nature Park. Councilperson Dan Jimeno stated that he was unfamiliar with disc golf until he saw this item on the agenda. Since, he has researched the website and found it to be very popular, interesting, and competitive. Disc-golf is free to play when the parks are open. Mayor Higdon thanked both for their information and presentation and would also like to say well done on the Fireworks display. JC Park & Rec also thanked the Town of Bolivar for their allowing them the use of the Bolivar Community Center to host summer camps. It has been well received and the generosity of the Town is much appreciated.

3. **Presentation from Kimberly Michels (Harpers Ferry Livery LLC) regarding new business venture in Bolivar:** Kimberly Michels was not in attendance for the meeting. Item was tabled.
4. **Discuss/Approve the hire of a certified building inspector:** Mayor Higdon explained that this was born from activities through the Bolivar Planning Commission. This is not a revisit that was presented in the past. This is not about an intent to hire a full time employee or to drop big government overreach on the residents of Bolivar. This is a discussion about how we can allow projects to happen in town and be performed correctly. We have run into a number of issues, without having a building inspector. There are individuals that visit the office to apply for a permit and are surprised at the fact that a permit is not needed for certain projects but there are several projects that do require a permit and these projects require inspections. Mayor Higdon explained that the town does not have the capability at this time to turn to a building inspector for assistance. Mayor Higdon stated that this is not about someone managing your hot water heater, this is about being sure that the projects that are completed in the Town of Bolivar are inspected properly. Mayor Higdon would like permission/motion/approval to explore different options in order to bring in an as needed basis building inspector. Mayor Higdon also explained that it will be up to the council to prepare the scope of work for this individual. There are more people that are moving into the area and Mayor Higdon would like to prioritize

this need. Councilperson Sarah Shafer shared questions regarding issues from the past building inspector situation. Mayor Higdon explained that the elected officials have the ability to define what the towns needs are related to the individual projects. Councilperson Sarah Shafer stated that she did not want Laura to be a position that she cannot point residents/individuals to resources or has to tell the individual that she does not know how to answer their questions but at the same time, we do not want to be bombarded with being in a similar position. Councilperson Carolyn Beyer stated that she would be completely supportive of this and would like to suggest that the Mayor investigate the idea of searching for this individual. Councilperson Carolyn Beyer made a motion to allow Mayor Higdon & Laura to seek information for financial aspects on an as needed basis for the position of a building inspector. Councilperson Vickie Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed. Motion passed.

5. **Discuss/Approve the hire of a code enforcement official:** This agenda item was grouped together with item #4. The individual that will be selected as the code enforcement officer, will be hired on an as needed basis and hired to enforce town ordinances. This position will be defined by the needs of the town council. Mayor Higdon & Laura will seek information for financial aspects on an as needed basis for this position and bring back to the town council for further discussion.
6. **Discuss/Approve appointment to the Hagerstown-Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization (HEPMPO) board:** Mayor Higdon explained the mission of HEPMPO. This organization reached out to the Town of Bolivar for their interest to hold a position on their board. The Mayor did not want to make the determination as to whether each of you were interested in holding this position. If you are interested, this item can be placed on the August agenda for further discussion. Mayor Higdon wanted to be sure that all the elected officials had the opportunity to make the decision to hold this position. Dan Jimeno suggested to remove this item from the agenda due to the lack of interest of elected officials and the lack of knowledge of the position.

7. **Discuss/Approve tree trim/removal request from resident of 1568 W. Washington Street:** Laura explained that the office received a request from Matt Humberstone who currently resides at 1568 W. Washington Street. During the last few storms, there have been several tree limbs to fall on his property. No damage to report at this time, however the trees that are hanging over his property (fence) are very large in size. Mr. Humberstone would like to request that the Town remove the trees in order to prevent future/possible damage to his property. Councilperson Vickie Gale made a motion to spend up to the amount of $3,000 for tree removal. Councilperson Sarah Shafer seconded. Motion passed.
8. **Discuss/Approve appointment to the Bolivar Planning Commission:** Mayor Higdon stated that he was leaving his seat at the Bolivar Planning Commission in order to apply additional focus on his newly elected position. Mayor Higdon would like to appoint Councilmember Dan Jimeno unless there is another council member that has an interest in this position. Councilperson Vickie Gale made a motion to appoint Dan Jimeno to the Bolivar Planning Commission as the town council liaison. Sarah Shafer seconded the motion. Motion passed.
9. **Discuss/Approve date for meet & greet of elected officials:** Mayor Higdon would like to propose to the council that a special meeting is held in the upcoming weeks. This would be an informal setting to discuss/disclose your priorities. Legal counsel, Effie Kallas asked Mayor Higdon asked how the agenda would look for this particular meeting. Mayor Higdon explained what he was trying to achieve by requesting this particular type of meeting/orientation. After further discussion with Effie Kallas, (legal counsel) the Mayor decided to withdraw his decision to have a meet/greet and further research some other ideas.
10. **Discuss/Approve zoom availability options for Bolivar Town council meetings:** Mayor Higdon explained that the town is not required to provide the zoom capability to the public. This process came about during COVID in order to reach the public in a safe manner. If we are going to keep this option, I feel that we need to make some improvements. Councilperson Sarah Shafer asked what the Town paid for the zoom capabilities. Laura stated that it was $400/year. There was discussion among the councilmembers including teleconference options.

Mayor Higdon asked for suggestions from the elected officials. Item will be tabled in order to research solutions that will make the zoom capability more productive.

11. **Discuss/Approve Mayor's authority to authorize expenditures (spending limit):** Mayor Higdon explained that the mayor currently has a spending limit of $400 for items that come up in the Town and need attention prior to the council meetings. Mayor Higdon would like to see that amount increased in order to assist in covering large emergencies that occur or may occur in the Town. Councilperson Vickie Gale said that she felt comfortable increasing this amount. Mayor Higdon does not anticipate that this is going to take place on a regular basis but would like to have this safeguard in place. Laura explained that this decision would be made for this elected body (administration). This would not pertain to the next group of elected officials. Councilperson Sarah Shafer made a motion to authorize the Mayor's authority to spend up to $3,000 for emergency expenditures. Charlma Quarles seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mayor Higdon thanked everyone for helping him get through his first meeting. Mayor Higdon received a round of applause from those in attendance.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Councilmember Sarah Shafer to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Charlma Quarles seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Chris Higdon, Mayor

Laura Whittington, Town Admin.