TOWN OF BOLIVAR
MEETING MINUTES
July 7, 2026, at 6:30pm
Bolivar Community Center

Chris Higdon, Mayor
Carolyn Beyer
Victoria Gale
Dan Jimeno
Sarah Shafer-Absent
Vacancy
P. Jean Reed, Recorder
Laura Whittington, Town Administrator

Pledge of Allegiance
Mayor Higdon asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Call to Order
Mayor Higdon called July 7, 2026, regular meeting of the Bolivar Town Council to order at 6:30pm. Mayor Higdon welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Treasurers Report
Mayor Higdon asked Laura to give the Treasurers report. Laura reported the Property Tax was $9,214 higher than the budget. Sales Tax was higher, Franchise Fees, Table Games and Video Lottery were okay. A few items were below budget, but no problems. All expenses are at or below the budget. We need to do a Budget Revision. Overall, we have spent $45,362 more than we have taken in. (This is mostly a timing issue). Total income was $675,448 and total expenses were $720,810. Laura explained all the remaining pages in detail.
Mayor Higdon asked for a motion to approve the budget report.
Councilperson Jimeno moved to approve the Treasurers Report as presented. Councilperson Victoria Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed 4 – 0. Mayor Higdon thanked Laura for the report.

BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mayor Higdon read the Budget Revision. At a regular session of the Municipal Council, held July 7, 2026, the following order was made and entered:

SUBJECT: The revision of the levy Estimate (Budget) of the Town of Bolivar. The Following resolution was offered:

RESOLVED: That subject go approval of the State Auditor as ex officio chief inspector of public offices the municipal council does hereby direct the budget be revised PRIOR TO THE EXPENDITURE OR OBLIGATION OF FUNDS FOR WHICH NO APPROPRITATION OR INSUFFICIENT APPORITATION CURRENTLY EXISTS, as

shown on Budget revision number 1-General Fund (2026-2027), a copy of which is entered as part of this record.

The adoption of the foregoing resolution having been moved **by Councilperson Dan Jimeno,** and duly seconded **by Councilperson Carolyn Beyer** the vote thereon was as follows:

Carolyn Beyer	**Yes**	
Dan Jimeno	**Yes**	
Sarah Shafer	**Absent**	
Charlma Quarles	**Vacancy**	
Victoria Gale	**Yes**	
P. Jean Reed	**Yes**	**Motion passed 4 – 0**

WHEREUPON, **Mayor Chris Higdon,** declared said resolution duly adopted, and it is, therefore ADJUDGED AND ORDERED that said resolution be, and the name is, hereby adopted as so stated above, and the Mayor, Chris Higdon is authorized to fix his signature on the attached "Request for Revision to Approved Budget" to be sent **to the State Auditor for approval. (See attached Budget Revision for complete details)**

Town Attorney, Effie Kallas

Attorney Kallas pointed out to everyone that the format for the West Virginia Ethics Commission Newsletter has changed. The next training session will be Thursday, July 30, 2026, from noon until 1:00pm. Please email Kimberly.b.weber@.wv.gov for an invite. Since we last met the resignation issue is completed on my end. Later in the agenda we will be discussing the alignment of the elections. We had previously talked about the accessory dwelling unit change in the legislature. I am following this closely.

Sheriff's Department Report and Public Comment

Corp. Hockman gave the report for the month of June 2026 as follows: Corp. Hockman reported we had 92 incidents this month. The breakdown consists of Road Patrols = 36, Directed Patrols = 26, Noise Complaints = 4, Foot Patrols = 3, Traffic Patrols = 3, 911 Hang up calls = 2, Building Checks = 2, Motor Vehicle Accident-No Injury = 2, Welfare Checks = 2, Alarm= 1, Bank Alarm = 1, Attempt to Locate =1, Disabled Vehicle = 1, and 1 Domestic Verblp.

Mayor Higdon thanked Corp. Hockman for his report.

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Report-Superintendent Gossett

Superintendent Gossett said she hoped everyone had a lovely July 4th Holiday. She said she had a few updates. She said the Byron Bridge Staircase project closing will start on or by July 20. Once the staircase is closed, pedestrian access will be closed for three to four weeks. When the new staircase is completed, it will be opened back up to the public. There is geotechnical work at the train station. Amtrak Train will be receiving a permit from the NPS to do work in the parking lot starting Thursday July 23. There will be limited parking due to this work. They will resume work on July 27th through July 30th. The East and West ends of the parking lot will be dropped off to stage equipment and for safety reasons. Parking will be extremely limited, but the train station will remain open. On August 7 at 7:00pm, The Appalachian Chamber Music Festival will be held at Storer College. Mayor Higdon thanked Superintendent Gossett for the updates.

Presentation from Mike Buscher regarding the Rivers & Rails Marathon

Mayor Higdon asked Mike Buscher to inform the Council and Community of an upcoming event.

Mr. Buscher said he is from Horizon Events LLC. They are proposing an Inaugural Marathon Event for November 14, 2026. This event will start in Maryland and end in Brunswick, Maryland. Mr. Buscher said he is expecting about 200 participants. The runners would be using Washington Street to Bolivar Heights and returning to Washington Street and exiting on Washington Street. The first runners are expected in Bolivar just before 8:00am. We don't need to shut down any roads or take away any parking. A little later in this process Mr. Buscher said he would like his people to meet with our Police and come up with a plan. Mr. Buscher requested marketing materials and parking for Bolivar businesses be sent to him as he would like to promote businesses on Washington Street. He added that he wants the town to benefit from this event.

Mayor Higdon said he would like to work with our local law enforcement and develop a plan for the marathon. Mayor Higdon said he wants to work with the community and notify them of the event. Mayor Higdon thanked Mr. Buscher for his report.

Approve Meeting Minutes – June 2, 2026, and Special Meeting Minutes – JUNE 9, 2026

Mayor Higdon asked for corrections or changes to the minutes of June 2, 2026. Recorder Reed will make corrections. Mayor Higdon asked for a motion to approve.

Councilperson Victoria Gale moved to approve June 2, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes with corrections. Councilperson Dan Jimeno seconded the motion. Motion Passed 4 – 0.

Councilperson Dan Jimeno moved to approve June 9, 2026, Special Meeting Minutes as written. Councilperson Victoria Gale seconded the motion.

Motion Passed 4 – 0.

Attendee Concerns:

None

Mayor's Report

Good evening everyone,

As we begin the second year of my first term as Mayor, I want to take a moment to reflect on what we have accomplished together over the past year. None of these achievements happened by chance. They are the result of dedicated employees, committed council members, community partners, and residents who all share a common goal—to make the Town of Bolivar an even better place to live, work, and raise a family. I am proud to report that we have made meaningful progress in each of the following areas;

Strengthening Town Operations

We have worked to modernize the way our town operates by: Hiring a new Building Inspector to better serve our residents and support responsible growth. Implementing a new permit tracking system, creating a more efficient and transparent permitting process. Establishing official Town email accounts for staff, elected officials, and committees to improve communication, accountability, and accessibility. Upgrading the Town's website to provide residents with easier access to information and services. Recreating the Town newsletter to improve communication and keep our community informed about important projects, events, and initiatives. These improvements may not always be visible, but they create a stronger, more responsive local government.

Investing in Infrastructure

Maintaining and improving our infrastructure remains one of our highest priorities. During the past year we have:

Approved a significant contract to repair multiple town streets on phased approach to manage cost and Phase 1 was completed. Completed the new sidewalk connection from Polk Street to Gilbert Street, improving pedestrian safety and accessibility. Most of this effort and credit goes to my predecessor, yet we still brought home the unfinished business of this significant infrastructure improvement. Successfully secured grant funding for the design phase of additional sidewalk repairs and replacements throughout town. These projects represent important investments that will benefit residents for years to come.

Investing in Parks and Recreation

One of our goals has been to continue making Bolivar a community where families want to spend time together. To support that goal we have: Partnered with Jefferson County Parks & Recreation to install a new nine-hole disc golf course at the Bolivar Nature

Park. Repaved the basketball court at the Children's Park. Approved a major renovation and expansion of the Children's Park. These improvements create more recreational opportunities for residents of all ages while enhancing community pride.

Building Community

A strong town is about more than roads and buildings. We established a Special Events Committee that has already helped expand community programming and create new opportunities for residents to come together. Events celebrating Bolivar's history, community gatherings such as stepping up our Music in the Park Events by adding food trucks and treats, and traditions have strengthened neighborhood connections while creating lasting memories for families.

Public Safety and Partnerships

Protecting our community remains a top priority. This year we successfully renewed our Public Safety and Tax Collection Agreement with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, ensuring continued professional law enforcement services for our residents. We have also worked diligently to strengthen relationships with the Jefferson County Commission and neighboring municipalities. These partnerships have already improved communication, increased collaboration, and positioned Bolivar for future opportunities and regional success.

Investing in Our Future

We have also taken important steps to responsibly invest resources that will have a lasting impact on our community. This includes allocating opioid settlement funding toward initiatives that will benefit Jefferson County and support healthier, Responsible financial planning and strategic investment remain central to every decision we make.

Looking Ahead

While I am proud of what we have accomplished during the first year of this administration, there is still much work ahead. As we begin this second year, our focus remains clear: Continue improving roads, sidewalks, and public infrastructure. Complete the Children's Park improvements. Modernize Ordinances to align with current demand and needs pursue additional grant opportunities. Enhance community events and recreational opportunities. Strengthen public safety partnerships. Deliver responsive, transparent, and fiscally responsible local government.

Closing

Progress is never achieved by one person alone. Every accomplishment represents the hard work of our town staff, elected officials, volunteers, our county and state partners, and most importantly, the residents who continue to believe in Bolivar's future. It is an honor to serve as your Mayor. I remain committed to leading with integrity, transparency, and accountability as we continue building upon the momentum of this past year.

Thank you- Mayor Higdon

Committee Reports

Street Committee –Laura reported that we have been working hard to secure Grant money for sidewalk design phase for the portion of Gilbert Street to the Fire Station. We have received $80,000 of Federal Funds from West Virginia Department of Transportation. We will be moving forward with the sidewalk design for the opposite side of our town. We are also in the process of securing funds for the construction portion from Gilbert Street to the Fire Station. This does take some time, but we will get that taken care of. We also approved the paving contract with Slonaker's Custom Paving at the last meeting. We hope to have this work completed by the end of July. Mayor Higdon thanked Laura with the great news. Mayor Higdon said as we start to work with the plans and with DOH, this will require the involvement of all Council Members.

Bolivar Planning Commission-

The next meeting will be July 27, 2026, at 7:00pm

Parks & Recreation Committee

Councilperson Victoria Gale said they do not have any new business to discuss. We are just waiting for the new equipment and the mulch to arrive. We are looking at August for the arrival of everything. We may have to close the park for about 10 days to complete everything.

History Committee Report

Jeff Staats said the History Committee has met four times since the last council meeting. Jeff will discuss later in this meeting.

Water Commission Report

Joe Howsare reported the new water meters are 90% complete. Gilbert Street project will start soon. Starting in September, you should be able to begin using the portal.

Mayor Higdon sked about the people that were over billed on their water bills.

Mr. Howsare said he thought that was approved at Harpers Ferry Council meeting last night. He also said there were as many as 211 customers that were overcharged. These customers should receive credit on their bill.

Special Events Committee

Mayor Higdon said that for the 200th Anniversary of Bolivar we will be holding Celebrate Bolivar Day on July 18, 2026. We will also have Music in the Park on Friday, July 17 with a Food Truck. I am excited. It is time to bring people together. We have another

event meeting on July 8 to finalize celebration details. People are excited for this to happen.

Old Business

1.Presentation from Ryan Nehar regarding Lantern Festival Event for 2026.

Laura said Ryan was unable to be at tonight's meeting, but he did drop off a budget after I left work today. She will send everyone a copy tomorrow morning. Laura said Ryan has been working on trying to get funding for this project. He will be at next month's meeting to explain the Lantern Festival Budget.

Mayor Higdon said just so I understand asked Laura if Ryan was trying to update council on the Lantern Festival and is this a town event. Laura said yes, it is a town event that he is taking care of. He will report to us. Councilperson Dan Jimeno had a few questions that Laura did not have answers for tonight. Ryan will have to answer these questions.

2. Discussion/approve of ordinance change regarding public nuisances within Bolivar

Councilperson Carolyn Beyer said she continues to do research on this issue. Councilperson Beyer said she thinks we need to change the ordinance. Carolyn maintains her position to make a change. She said after speaking to Effie, we should take into consideration that we do not have Home Rule, so our enforcement techniques should be tailored. Carolyn said we need to make sure we are using the latest International Building Codes and International Property Maintenance Codes which we have adopted. We need to check for the latest version. Councilperson Beyer is proposing we form a committee of five to conduct three meetings, one for discussing ideas, two do a rough draft of ordinances and three prepare an ordinance to present to the council. Carolyn would like to have Effie on the committee and three others. Councilperson asked Jeff Staats about the Municipal Court.

Jeff said according to old minutes, records and ordinances Bolivar does have a Municipal Court in our current ordinances. Councilperson Beyer would like to form a committee of five.

Mayor Higdon said he is in agreeance with forming this committee. Mayor said we need to appoint committee members with experience in this field. We would call this the Ordinance Review Committee.

Attorney Kallas said you need a little more structure. She suggested calling this committee The Nuisance Ordinance Review. Committee and the members should be appointed by the Mayor and Council, so it is recorded.

Mayor Higdon asker for a motion

Councilperson Victoria Gale moved to form a committee of five called the NUISANCE ORDINANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE, to review, make changes, and present for approval to Town Council a new Ordinance regarding public nuisances in Bolivar.

Councilperson Dan Jimeno seconded the motion. Motion passed. 4 - 0

3. Discuss/approve changes to Bolivar Municipal Election procedures per SB50

Laura said she does not have anything new to report. Bolivar election will be simple since we only have one precinct. Laura would like to meet with Nikki Painter to get a few questions answered. We need to know who will be collecting the filing fees and who will be taking care of training and paying the workers on election day. We also would like to know if we want to have our town election on General or Primary Election Day. By 2032, the whole State needs to be ready to change. Our next election is 2027.

Laura said she would like to have a meeting with Nikki and Effie to figure out what will be in the MOU. Attorney Kallas also said we will need to change our Town Charter.

New Business

2. Discussion of budget request from Harpers Ferry – Bolivar Historic Foundation

Mayor Higdon apologized for the wording on our agenda and said we can listen to your presentation, but we cannot act tonight on this request. We will have you on the August agenda to discuss.

Lynn Prechekonis spoke on behalf of Harpers Ferry – Bolivar Historic Foundation requesting a monetary Fund of $5000 to continue repairs and restoration of the Historic First Zion Church on West Ridge Street. We are continuing work on the interior focusing on the ground floor first. We are planning to use this facility as a Performing Arts Center. Ms. Pechuekonis is asking for Bolivar to contribute $5,000 toward the Design Drawings and restoration of the Historic First Zion Church on West Ridge Street. We do not have a completion date for the restoration.

Councilperson Dan Jimeno said as previously discussed that there continues to be some questions regarding the usage of First Zion Church on Ridge Street.

Ms. Pechuekonis said she does not see this as a competition and should not affect what we are doing here in Bolivar.

Mayor Higdon again apologized for the mistake and said we will have it back on the August agenda. Mayor Higdon thanked Ms. Pechuekonis for her presentation.

1. Discuss/Approve additional funding for special events in Bolivar

Mayor Higdon said they have been working very hard behind the scenes to get prices for the Celebrate Bolivar Day.

We have pricing on food trucks, Ice Cream Trucks, Movie, and Music. I am requesting $3500 to cover these costs.

Councilperson Carolyn Beyer moved to approve up to $3500 to cover the special events in celebration of Bolivar Days.

Councilperson Victoria Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed 4 – 0.

3-4. Discuss/Approve funding request for Bolivar History brochure

Mayor Higdon asked for this to be tabled.

5. Discuss/Approve new doors for community center building

Discussion followed to determine which doors should be purchased, fiberglass or Polystyrene, for the community center building. After much discussion, Option 2: All Three Openings (3 Each-72" x 84" Pro Via Signet 430 Style Cherry Fiberglass French Door in 16-Gauge Hollow Metal Frame) was chosen at a total cost of $40,298.00 (tax-excluded) from Pro Via quote #15500862 from HPG Windows and Doors.

Victoria Gale moved to approve the purchase of three new doors in the community center building at $40,298.00 from HPG Windows and Doors.

Carolyn Beyer seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Adjournment

Councilperson Dan Jimeno moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilperson Victoria Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:22pm

P. Jean Reed

P. Jean Reed, Recorder

Chris Higdon, Mayor