A Resolution to Educate Bowling Green Residents and the Medical Community on the Risks of Traveling to China for Organ Transplants in Light of Recent Reports of State-Sponsored Organ Harvesting from Prisoners of Conscience

WHEREAS, extensive and credible reports have revealed mass killing of prisoners of conscience in the People's Republic of China, primarily practitioners of the Chinese spiritual practice of Falun Gong, but also other religions and ethnic minority groups, in order to obtain organs for transplants; and

WHEREAS, the China Tribunal, an independent tribunal sitting in London chaired by Sir Geoffrey Nice, who was a prosecutor at the international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, concluded on June 18, 2019 in a unanimous determination at the end of its year-long hearing that the killing of detainees in China for organ transplants is continuing and victims include imprisoned follower of the Falun Gong movement; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 Freedom House report "The Battle for China's Spirit" states that "available evidence suggests that forced extraction of organs from Falun Gong detainees for sale in transplant operations has occurred on a large scale and may be continuing", and

WHEREAS, an investigative report published in June 2016 by human rights attorney David Matas, former Canadian Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific David Kilgour and journalist Ethan Gutmann estimated that China is performing transplants at a rate amounting to "an industrial-scale, state-directed organ transplantation system controlled through national policies and funding and implicating both the military and civilian healthcare systems"; and

WHEREAS, Falun Gong, a spiritual practice involving meditative "qigong" exercises and centered on the values of truthfulness, compassion and forbearance, became increasingly popular in China in the late 1990's with multiple estimates placing the number of practitioners at upwards of seventy million (70,000,000); and

WHEREAS, in July 1999, the Chinese Communist Party launched an intensive, nationwide persecution designed to eradicate the spiritual practice of Falun Gong. Hundreds of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been detained extra-legally in Chinese reeducation-through-labor camps, detention centers and prisons where physical and mental torture is common; and

WHEREAS, in June 2016, the United States House of Representatives unanimously passed House Resolution 343 condemning the systemic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from practitioners of Falun Gong and other prisoners of conscience; and

WHEREAS, Town of Bowling Green residents should be fully informed of the organ source in China before they make the decision to engage in organ transplant tourism in China and the Town Council should assist in raising awareness in this regard.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Bowling Green Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the persecution of Falun Gong and the state-sponsored organ harvesting of all prisoners of conscience currently being carried out by the Chinese Communist regime; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the United States government to thoroughly investigate organ transplant practices in China and take all reasonable steps to end the practice of nonconsensual organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the residents and the medical community servicing the Town of Bowling Green and the immediate region be informed about the risks of travel to China for organ transplants to help prevent local citizens from becoming accomplices in state-sponsored forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be provided to the Governor of Virginia, Virginia's General Assembly, Virginia's Congressional delegation and two U.S. Senators and the Virginia Department of Health.

Adopted this 5th day of August, 2021

Mark A. Gaines
Mayor

Allyson L. Finchum
Town Manager