

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Council of the Town of Blackstone, Virginia, held in the Council Chambers located at 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, on Monday, February 26, 2007, at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: William D. Coleburn

Council Members: L. Benjamin Green, John W. Hill, Jr., C. Duncan Quicke, Barbara Thompson, Alfred V. Tucker, J. A. Wilson, Jr., Constance T. Wynn

Town Attorney: Kennon C. Walden, Jr.

Town Staff: Jennifer H. Beck, Administrative Assistant, David Dunn, Assistant Town Manager, Nicholas C. Kuzmiak, Police Chief, J. Larry Palmore, Town Manager, Joan R. Palmore, Town Clerk, Charles C. Wells, Finance Director

Those Absent: None

Mayor Coleburn called the meeting to order and led in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Coleburn led those in the Chambers in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING- CDBG GRANT - Medical Center

Mayor Coleburn asked the Town Clerk to read the public hearing notice as follows:

Public Hearing

The Town of Blackstone will hold a public hearing on Monday, February 26, 2007, at 7:00 p.m., at the Town Hall, 100 W. Elm Street, to solicit public input on local community development and housing needs in relation to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for a project in our community.

Information on the amount of funding available, the requirements on benefits to low and moderate income persons, eligible activities, and plans to minimize displacement and

provide displacement assistance as necessary will be available. Citizens will also be given the opportunity to comment on the Town of Blackstone's past use of CDBG funds. All interested citizens are urged to attend. For additional information, contact Jennifer Beck at 434-292-7251.

Complaints and grievances can be submitted in writing to the Town of Blackstone, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia 23824, or by phone at 434-292-7251 until March 21, 2007.

If you plan to attend and have any special needs requirements, please call 434-292-7251 or the Virginia Relay System at 866-246-9300 (TTY) before February 23, 2007.

Mayor Coleburn asked for public Comment.

No one came forward to speak.

Manager Palmore stated that specifically this project has to do with the Medical Center and the grant application we are making with the help of the Nottoway Planning Council. We have received 350 survey forms back . Our goal is around 400. We hope to have all the information together by March 5th so we can make application by the end of March. He added that the survey form was also printed in the newspaper in case someone did not receive it at home or if they need another copy. We still have to work towards doing a fund raiser so we can show that private funds are being used to support this project. He suggested selling bricks to help raise money. He added that we have received letters of support from dentists and doctors in the area.

Mayor Coleburn thanked the Town Manager and staff for their work on this and also Steve Ferguson with the Nottoway Planning Council for his hard work.

Council discussed selling bricks and the different issues involved.

Councilman Green asked should we get a church or civic organization to help with this.

Manager Palmore answered that would certainly help and the more involvement we can get from the community the better.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he does not like the fact that we have to occupy our Town staff with this but we are united behind this project.

Mayor Coleburn closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING - DISPOSAL OF PUBLIC PROPERTY (305 Jackson Street)

Mayor Coleburn asked the Town Clerk to read the public hearing notice as follows:

Public Hearing

The Town of Blackstone will hold a public hearing on Monday, February 26, 2007, at 7:00 p.m., at 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, to consider the disposal of 305 Jackson Street. This is a piece of property that was left over from the Irvin Street CDBG Project. Anyone who wishes to speak on this issue, please attend.

Mayor Coleburn asked for public Comment.

No one came forward to speak.

Manager Palmore stated that we would like to partner with Habitat for Humanity on this.

Council discussed this further.

Councilman Green asked did we have this property appraised.

Manager Palmore answered no sir.

Mayor Coleburn closed the Public Hearing and continued with the regular meeting.

MINUTES

Councilman Wilson made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented the Minutes of the January 22, 2007 and February 6, 2007, Council Meetings. The motion was seconded by Councilman Quicke and approved unanimously. Vote:

Councilman Quicke	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Green	-	Aye
Councilman Wilson	-	Aye
Councilman Hill	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye

VISITORS

1. Shirley Wilkins addressed Council and stated she is here representing the Texas Festival Committee regarding a banner for the Texas Festival. She stated that this event will draw over 1,000 people or more to the area. She asked the Town to put up two banners

advertising the Texas Festival out on the billboard on Route 460 and also one on Main Street near the Post Office. She asked that the Town put the two up on 460 at least three to four weeks prior to the event which will be on June 9th and she would like to have the Town put up the other banner on Main Street, two weeks prior to the event.

Mayor Coleburn read the Town's policy on Banners as follows: *We hang banners for non-profit organizations that are affiliated with the Town such as –Chamber of Commerce (Arts & Crafts Festival), Blackstone Volunteer Fire Department functions, also for the Virginia National Guard troops leaving and returning home from over seas. Banners must not have any advertisement/sponsor names on them and they can only state what the event is, date, time and location of the event.*

Councilman Green stated that he supports this request because it brings people into Town.

Mrs. Wilkins feels that it is very important to market our assets.

Councilwoman Wynn asked the Town Manager if he has had requests from other organization prior to this.

Manager Palmore answered yes Mam, numerous requests and he has turned them down.

Councilman Wilson stated that we would only be opening up a can of worms if we do this.

Councilman Hill discussed the problems with putting up a permanent sign on 460 which would involve VDOT and would be very costly and time consuming. He then asked who is going to decide if you have four organizations that want their banner up, who will have the time on the sign unless you are going to allow multiply banners up at the same time, etc.

Mayor Coleburn stated that we did put up a banner this past Christmas for the train display at Bevell's. He asked if that complied with this policy.

Manager Palmore answered that he understands the question about the Bevell's banner but if you are advertising a train display for the Chamber, you have to tell everyone where the train display will be located. Bobby Daniel put in many hours with the train display, driving the train at the park and many other things. Manager Palmore stated that putting up and taking down banners is very time consuming and we just don't have the manpower.

Mrs. Wilkins asked if we could charge a fee.

Manager Palmore answered, that doesn't help us find the time to get the job done.

Mayor Coleburn asked for the Council's disposition on this issue.

Councilman Green stated that it looks like to him that we have already opened up a can of worms in the past.

Manager Palmore asked Councilman Green what does he mean about opening up a can of worms?

Councilman Green stated that he supports Bobby Daniel but putting up a banner at Bevell's has set a precedent.

Manager Palmore asked does this mean that we should deny Mr. Daniel's request next Fall when it comes up.

Mayor Coleburn asked about the 100 Anniversary of Blackstone High School that will be here this Summer.

Manager Palmore stated that Council could choose to put up a banner welcoming the Blackstone High School 100 Anniversary alumni.

Mayor Coleburn turned this over to the Health and Ordinance Committee. (Wynn, Thompson, Quicke)

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

Ray Armes presented the Fire Chief's report for January 2007. He asked if Council has any questions.

There were none.

Mayor Coleburn stated that the Fire Department has agreed to let the Town use the administrative portion of the Fire Station as a voting precinct.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Councilman Wilson made a motion to pay the bills in the amount of \$1,037,451.29. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hill.

Council discussed the bills.

Vote:

Councilman Quicke	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Green	-	Aye
Councilman Wilson	-	Aye
Councilman Hill	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Tucker	-	Aye

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were none.

CAROLINA TRANSFORMER

Manager Palmore informed Council that Assistant Town Manager David Dunn has found in the Minutes some transactions we have done with Carolina Transformer totaling up to about \$7,500. He stated that Hunton and Williams has increased the attorney's fees by an additional \$2,500. We have already paid \$7,500 and the additional \$2,500 will make a total of \$10,000. He asked for a motion from Council to approve an additional \$2,500.

Council discussed where this money will come from and agreed to take it from the Electric Department.

Manager Palmore explained that what we anticipate happening is that the localities and others who have joined this group are going to settle with EPA and we are hoping that the settlement will be favorable. After that, this group will then go back and sue the localities and others who did not join the group, to recoup costs. The VMEA group convinced him that it would be better for us to join this group than to be stuck out by ourselves. He stated at first he was not worried about this because we had no control over what was done with these transformers back as early as 1956 through the 1980's, but he realized that if we did not join, we could be liable for much more.

Councilman Green made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to pay another \$2,500 in legal fees as part of the Carolina Transformer group. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson. Vote:

Councilman Quicke	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Green	-	Aye
Councilman Wilson	-	Aye

Councilman Hill - Aye
Councilwoman Thompson - Aye
Councilman Tucker - Aye

SCHOOL BOARD LEASE

Manager Palmore stated that we are going to take pictures of the property that the Nottoway County School Board is leasing to us so we can add it to our insurance policy. He mentioned that Dr. Edwards is retiring and he feels it will be a sad day for the Town of Blackstone and the surrounding County when she leaves. He feels that she did a great job and she will be missed.

Councilman Hill asked if this property will add anything to our insurance policy.

Manager Palmore answered not at this time but, it may go up after the insurance company does their annual review next year. He added that there are some trees that need to be cleaned off the property and we will work on doing that. He stated that we will only take down what needs to be removed and we are counting on the prison labor to help us with this.

Councilman Green asked if we should entertain a resolution thanking and recognizing Dr. Edwards. He then asked the Town Attorney to write this Resolution.

Mayor Coleburn stated that this project is for the whole community not just for a few. He also stressed that this will not be done overnight and everyone needs to be patient on this project.

Council discussed a time frame for completion.

Manager Palmore hopes we can have some of the ballfields completed by April of 2008. He would like to have a committee from the Recreation Association to work on this. He stated that we could not apply for a grant because we did not have a lease on the property, which we have now, so that was the first step. Now we can apply for the grant and hopefully we can proceed in a timely manner but there is a tremendous amount of factors that we cannot control- especially when we are dealing with government grant money. He asked everyone to please be patient with us on this project. He added that we also need a letter of support from Nottoway County.

UTILITY ORDINANCE - Deferral of Penalty

Council discussed a change to the ordinance under paragraph 3.

Councilman Hill asked the Town Manager how many people does he think it will affect.

Manager Palmore does not feel it will affect many because the older generation usually pay their bills on time.

Council discussed this further.

Town Attorney Walden stated that if people do not come in and apply they are not eligible.

Councilman Green asked the Town Manager what is his position on this ordinance.

Manager Palmore stated that he hadn't heard anything about this change (*some retirees' social security checks will not arrive in the mail until after the 15th which is the due date to pay utility bills*) until the last few months. He feels that this is a legitimate problem for some people but he honestly doesn't see this as being big a problem for very many.

Councilwoman Wynn made a motion to adopt the attached Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Councilman Green and approved as follows:

Discussion: Councilman Hill asked how far in advance we would need to approve the requests for an extension under the new ordinance.

Town Attorney Walden feels this should be left up to the Town Manager and staff.

Vote:

Councilman Quicke	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Green	-	Aye
Councilman Wilson	-	Aye
Councilman Hill	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Tucker	-	Aye

Councilwoman Wynn thanked the members of Council, members of the Committee and the Town Attorney for his help on this.

AIRPORT

Manager Palmore stated that during the BRAC Commission in 1995, Council decided to accept the airport by a public benefit conveyance from the Department of Army. Shortly after that we were approached by the National Guard saying that they had a real need for the airfield. Paul Johnson with the Department of Army wrote a letter conveying this property to the Town

provided that there would be a deeded joint-use for the National Guard property. This is something that has frustrated him for a long time. He remembers a meeting with the Dept of Aviation in 2001 and he thought he left that meeting with an agreement allowing us to operate the civilian portion of the airport so we could get grants on the civilian portion of the airfield also. Right now we can only get grants on the 31 acres. With the help of the Dept of Aviation and the FAA this could be a premier civilian airfield. We just want to enhance the airport. As stated in his letter to General Newman, it is very apparent that the National Guard has not been dedicated to repairing and/or taking care of the airfield. A meeting has been set up for 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 7th. He thinks it would be great for the Airport Committee (Wilson, Hill, Thompson) to be involved in this. He stated that this meeting will be held at Fort Pickett.

Councilman Hill asked who will be at the meeting.

Manager Palmore answered someone from the General's Office, Col. Allen and someone from the Department of Aviation.

Councilman Quicke clarified that we are just trying to get a workable joint-use agreement that we have been trying to get since 1999.

Manager Palmore answered, yes sir.

ON-GOING PROJECTS

Manager Palmore reported on the following *On-Going Projects*:

Armory Authority - David Dunn reported that they are taking a trip next Friday to Emporia. We have had several companies to look at the roof and give us an estimate on repair.

Manager Palmore stated that at some point we have got to find the money to put a roof on the Armory.

Bus Shop - Things are going fine, installing silt fence within the next day or so. Getting ready for Southside Community College to come in and move some dirt.

Carriage Museum - Ground Breaking on Saturday, March 10th at 2:00 p.m. We look forward to that. Please let us know how many plan to attend.

Castle Trailer Park - We are having a public hearing on March 15th.

Downtown Revitalization - Jennifer has been moving forward on this.

Irvin Street Project - Still working on this, weather permitting. We need this completed by March 1st.

Manager Palmore reminded the Department Head's to turn in their budget requests to him by April 15th. Manager Palmore went over the dates of the budget meetings for the last three years as follows: 2003 - May 6th and 12th; 2004 - May 3rd, 10th and 24th; 2005 - May 12th and 19th; 2006 - May 16th, 22nd and 30th. He stated that he is sure that our schedule for budget committee meeting will be close to the same time frame this year. He added that this is not a conspiracy where the Town is trying to hide tax increases or anything like that. One thing that causes delay is we may not know what the General Assembly has done for or against us for another two weeks or more so we have to get those figures in place also.

Mayor Coleburn reiterated that the Town routinely begins its budgetary planning after municipal elections.

Manager Palmore stated that it bothers him when you read things that suggest that we have done something that is not correct. When you put those seeds out there, there will always be someone who will believe it but thankfully he thinks people are beginning to figure out what this is all about.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he has been asked by some why does Nottoway County begin their budgetary process in March and April. He added that a lot of times Nottoway adopts their budget before they even know what their State funds are.

Manager Palmore answered, exactly. By law, counties must have the School Budget done by May 1st.

Manager Palmore informed those present that citizens are no longer required to purchase decals for their vehicles but, he added, they still need to pay the \$20.00 fee. This fee is due on or before April 15th. In order to let everyone know about this change, we are going to send out a notice to Town residents. This notice will look similar to a tax bill. We will also run a reminder in the newspaper.

Manager Palmore informed the Town Council that he has checked with surrounding localities and most of them pick up garbage outside of Town, as we do, and we intend to continue to do this but we are not going to go after new customers. He also stated that we pick up the garbage at the National Guard Armory as part of agreement we made with them years ago.

Mayor Coleburn stated that the Town is not doing anything that other localities aren't doing as well.

Manager Palmore informed Council that he has talked to Dollar General and they have agreed to do away with two parking spaces out front. They were supposed to come down last Tuesday but were caught in a snow storm. He hopes to have something in writing soon.

PAVEMENT MARKING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Manager Palmore pointed out that the pavement marking maintenance contract does not include painting the lines on 4th Street in front of the Methodist Assembly Center. We will have to pay an additional amount to have that done.

Councilman Hill made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to write a letter requesting that we be included in the Pavement Marking Maintenance Contract with VDOT. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson and approved unanimously. Vote:

Councilman Quicke	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Green	-	Aye
Councilman Wilson	-	Aye
Councilman Hill	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Tucker	-	Aye

REPEAL AND RE-ENACT 62-10 RECONNECTION POLICY

Town Attorney Walden explained the changes to the Town Code.

Councilman Hill made a motion to adopt the attached Ordinance to Repeal and Re-enact Town Code Section 62-10 Reconnection Policy. The motion was seconded by Councilman Quicke and approved as follows:

Councilman Quicke	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Green	-	Aye
Councilman Wilson	-	Aye
Councilman Hill	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Tucker	-	Aye

RATIFY POLL TAKEN ON JANUARY 30TH TO REAPPOINT TO THE TOWN MANAGER TO THE VMEA BOARD

Councilman Green made a motion to ratify the following poll taken on January 30th to reappoint the Town Manager to the Virginia Municipal Electric Association No. 1 (VMEA) Board.

Councilman Quicke	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Green	-	Aye
Councilman Wilson	-	Aye
Councilman Hill	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Tucker	-	(Did not vote)

The motion was seconded by Councilman Quicke and approved as follows. Vote:

Councilman Quicke	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Green	-	Aye
Councilman Wilson	-	Aye
Councilman Hill	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Tucker	-	Aye

SOUTHSIDE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY- Deed Lot at 305 Jackson Street

Councilman Green asked about the costs associated with this.

Manager Palmore answered none other than preparing the Deed. This can be taken out of program income.

Councilman Green made a motion to surplus the lot at 305 Jackson Street and to Deed it to Southside Habitat for Humanity provided that they adhere to all DHCD requirements.. The motion was seconded by Councilman Tucker and approved unanimously. Vote:

Councilman Quicke	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Green	-	Aye
Councilman Wilson	-	Aye
Councilman Hill	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Tucker	-	Aye

BINDING SYSTEM FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS AND COUNCIL PACKETS

Manager Palmore stated that this new binding system would allow us to have a better Council Packet as well as better grant applications. He added that it would be much more professional looking and that Nottoway County has been using this system for 10 or 12 years.

Councilman Green asked if we have shopped around on this binding system.

Manager Palmore answered no sir, we have not.

Councilman Hill asked about the bills, and how could they be included in this type binding system.

Councilman Green asked about the cost per packet.

Manager Palmore answered that it would cost around \$4.00 per Council Packet.

Councilman Green asked if it will save staff time.

Manager Palmore answered, that it would actually add more time but he wanted to have something that would be easier for the Council to keep up with.

Councilman Green asked the Town Clerk about her thoughts.

Clerk Palmore answered that she feels it will be a great thing for the Council.

Councilman Green asked the Town Clerk and the Finance Director to get together and see how we can get the bills in this packet.

POLICE DEPARTMENT - FUNDS TRANSFER

Manager Palmore stated that the Police Department needs to buy some new office equipment. The Police Chief would like to transfer \$800.00 from Machinery and Equipment to Furniture and Fixtures in order to do this.

Councilman Green asked Chief Kuzmiak what he needs to buy.

Chief Kuzmiak answered that they would like to buy some new office furniture for Sgt. Mathias as well as for the secretary. He would also like to replace two chairs in the dispatch office.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to allow Police Chief Kuzmiak to transfer \$800.00 from Machinery/Equipment to Furniture/Fixtures in order to purchase some new office furniture. The motion was seconded by Councilman Green and approved as follows. Vote:

Councilman Quicke	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Green	-	Aye
Councilman Wilson	-	Aye

Councilman Hill	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Tucker	-	Aye

MAYOR'S MINUTE

Mayor Coleburn read a letter he received from the International Institute of Municipal Clerk's (IIMC) notifying him that the Town Clerk has qualified for the Second Level in the Master Municipal Clerk's Academy. He congratulated the Town Clerk for this achievement.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he went to a Nottoway County Board of Supervisor's meeting recently and they discussed the 911 system. He stated that a lot of the discussion included Blackstone and apparently there was some fear that the County was going to take the dispatching from the Sheriff's Office and move it to Blackstone and the consultant made a comment that there were a lot of people concerned about that. Mayor Coleburn stated that he spoke up and told those present that he feels the problem that we have in Blackstone is that if 911 gets a call from Blackstone, Nottoway then has to call Blackstone Police Department so Blackstone can dispatch it to the First Responders or whoever should get the call. He added that he listened to a call yesterday afternoon from someone in the Blackstone area and from the time the Nottoway Dispatcher got the call, contacted the Blackstone Police Department and the Police Department dispatched the First Responders, a minute and 24 seconds had gone by. He added that he is not complaining about the dispatchers at Nottoway or Blackstone but it the way the system is set up. He added that he made a comment at the meeting the other night that he felt that Sheriff Larry Parrish needs more manpower and Nottoway County did agree to give him more dispatchers.

Councilman Hill stated that he was under the impression that they have a button at the Sheriff's Office on their console that they can push which will route the call to Blackstone.

Chief Kuzmiak answered that they can transfer calls to us but sometimes they don't or they can't get the address of the caller because they are calling from a cell phone.

Council discussed this further.

Chief Kuzmiak stated that the main goal that we targeted when we began meeting on the 911 issue was the delay problem. He added that they handled over 6,000 calls last year at the Police Department.

Councilwoman Wynn stated that she decided long ago that she would call directly to the Blackstone Police Station rather than calling 911 and she asked if that is the right way of doing things.

Police Chief Kuzmiak answered that if you do it that way you will cut out the middle man.

Manager Palmore pointed out that the only flaw is the Police Department would not get a computer read-out of her home address because if you call 911 for a medical emergency and then you become unconscious, the Blackstone Police Department would not know your address or location whereas, 911 would if you had called them. We have got to correct this problem and his understanding is that there is a button at the Sheriff's Office that can be pushed that will correct it. He also added that his understanding from the 911 study is that we could link the two communities through Broadband and this would be the cheapest way for us all to go because we could back up each other. He stated that our dispatchers answer calls for electrical problems, water and sewer issues, etc., in addition to the regular police calls and emergency calls.

Police Chief Kuzmiak stated that no one has met with us to tell us what these options mean in the 911 report. It sounds to him that the County has already made up their mind.

Mayor Coleburn answered that his understanding is that they have already agreed to hire three new dispatchers immediately, and they are also going to give the dispatcher's a pay increase.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were none.

Councilman Wilson asked if we should continue this meeting to March 15th.

Manager Palmore answered that we may need to have a Special Called Meeting between now and then so it would probably be better to close this meeting and then do a Call later on.

Richard Eaton asked about specifics on Broadband.

Councilwoman Wynn asked the Town Manager for a list of people who have made requests for Banners and have been turned down so she will have a basis to make a clear decision.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Coleburn declared the meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

_____ APPROVED AND ADOPTED

TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA