

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, January 22, 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 Councilman Hill led in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

PUBLIC HEARING - CASTLE TRAILER PARK

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, January 22, 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 866-894-4116 or 866-246-9300 (TTY) before January 18, 2007.

Mayor Coleburn asked for public Comment.

No one came forward to speak.

Mayor Coleburn closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING - RURAL TRANSPORTATION

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

Public Hearing

The public is hereby notified that there will be a public hearing held by the Town Council of the Town of Blackstone, Virginia on Monday, January 22, 2007, at 7:00 p.m., at the Town Hall, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia to provide an opportunity for the citizens of the Town of Blackstone to comment on the Town's application of funding under the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program. The FTA funding will assist the Town of Blackstone to recover a portion of the operating and capital costs for the Blackstone Area Bus System for the period of October 1, 2007, to September 30, 2008. A copy of the application may be examined at the Town Office, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia on weekdays between the hours of 8:00 a.m., and 5:00 p.m.

It is the intention of the Town to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Should you need special accommodations, please contact the Town Manager's office prior to 5:00 p.m., on Friday, January 19, 2007. You may also contact the Virginia Relay System at 866-894-4116 or 866-246-9300 (TTY) or www.varclay.org.

Mayor Coleburn asked for public Comment.

No one came forward to speak.

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 December 18, 2006, Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn and approved unanimously. Vote:

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

(Councilman Tucker was absent during this vote.)

VISITORS

1. Drake Bishop, 408 Oak Street and a freshman at Nottoway High School, addressed Council and presented a petition signed by residents on Oak Street and the surrounding neighborhood. He read the attached petition on the proposed new playground. He stated that he visited 26 households in the area and 31 people signed the petition.

Mayor Coleburn commended Drake for what he has done.

Councilman Tucker entered the meeting.

Mayor Coleburn informed everyone that the public hearing on this issue is going to be at 7:00 p.m., this Thursday, January 25th, at the High School mini-auditorium.

2. Joe Allman, addressed Council on behalf of the newly forming Downtown Blackstone Incorporated. He stated there are currently eight municipalities competing for three spots. They have slated a Board of Directors (See attached copy), and they plan to meet next Tuesday morning. He added that everyone that they have contacted, so far, has been very supportive. He then formally requested \$1,500.00 to be used as seed money to open a post office box, join some organizations that are important to this group, etc.

Councilman Green made a motion to provide \$1,500.00 to Downtown Blackstone Incorporated. 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

Councilman Green stated that Field Green is going to serve as an ex-officio member of this group and Manager Palmore or his designee will serve as the Town's ex-officio member.

3. Todd Hulings, asked Council about the Town's policy on Out-of-Town garbage pickup

Manager Palmore explained to Mr. Hulings where we pick up out of Town.

Mr. Hulings asked the Town to stop picking up garbage outside of Town since his business now provides this service.

Mayor Coleburn stated that it is his understanding that Mr. Hulings would have the opportunity, as a private business owner, to compete with the Town.

Councilman Hill commented that the Town of Blackstone was in the garbage collection business before Mr. Hulings went into business.

Councilman Green asked the Town Attorney what are his thoughts on this issue.

Town Attorney Walden answered, that he does not have any comment at this time.

Manager Palmore answered that he feels that this was done a long time ago and on request of the property owners. He stated that he will look into this and see what other localities are doing and report back to Council next month.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

Ray Armes presented the Fire Chief's report for December 2006. He asked Council to allow him to bid out six sets of turn-out gear and added that they hope to have a bid within a month to six weeks.

Council agreed by Common Consent.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Manager Palmore pointed out that the VMEA bill this month is \$436,201.59 and he explained, this is because of the problem with the VEPCO meter. They have fixed the meter and are now billing us for the previous usage.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to pay the bills in the amount of \$722,301.33. The motion was seconded by Councilman Green. Vote:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Health and Ordinance Committee - Councilwoman Wynn reported to Council on the deferral of penalty on utility bills for certain customers. She went over the changes to the current ordinance.

Councilman Green asked why was age 65 used.

Town Attorney Walden answered that the State Statute uses age 65 and that is why he used that in the Ordinance instead of age 62.

Council discussed the proposed Ordinance.

Councilman Wilson asked can we do this next month so the Council can have a chance to look at this.

Councilman Green made a motion to table this issue until next month. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hill 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

Council discussed the collection of delinquent business license taxes.

Manager Palmore stated that the Town Attorney has provided us with a tool to collect these fees from the two businesses that have not gotten their licenses.

CAROLINA TRANSFORMER

Manager Palmore informed Council that we have sent in the necessary paperwork to be included in this group.

PLAYGROUND - PUBLIC HEARING (January 25th, 7:00 p.m.)

Manager Palmore asked that the citizens, members of Council and everyone that can, to please attend this public hearing on the Town's playground request. The hearing will be held in the mini-auditorium behind the High School.

POLICE VEHICLES

Manager Palmore stated that we did not budget quite enough for these vehicles; we are short \$7,495.42.

Chief Kuzmiak explained that the original prices did not include the interest but the revised sheet does.

Council discussed this further.

Councilman Quicke asked about some money that we received from the County on counter terrorism and can this money be used for police vehicles?

Manager Palmore answered that he will check into this but he believes the money we received from the County had to be used for specific things and police cars was not on the list of equipment we could use.

Councilman Green made a motion to authorize Police Chief Kuzmiak to place an order to lease five police vehicles and to make up the shortfall from Council's Discretionary Fund. 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
Councilman Tucker	-	Aye

NOTTOWAY PLANNING COUNCIL - ANNUAL REPORT

Manager Palmore stated this report is given to Council for their information.

ON-GOING PROJECTS

Manager Palmore reported on the following On-Going Projects:

Armory Authority - Committee moving forward.

Bus Shop - Everything is moving along. We are going to have a peer-review next Tuesday. Five or six people from across the state will come here and ask questions.

Carriage Museum - We only received one bid in the last bid process so we are going to have to re-advertise which will take another two weeks.

Castle Trailer Park - Continuing to move forward.

Downtown Revitalization - Meeting tomorrow.

Irvin Street Project - Moving forward

Water Plant - Health Dept inspection Wednesday morning.

Manager Palmore stated that the DMV is going to be closed on Saturday, January 27th, because they have to do a computer upgrade. He asked the Council if they would like to close the Town Office that day since we are not going to be able to do any DMV work.

Councilman Green made a motion to remain open, this Saturday, January 27th, from 9:00 a.m., to 12:00 noon as usual. Councilman Quicke seconded the motion. Vote:

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

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

Manager Palmore stated that while we are talking about this, he would like to address the Town's Holiday's. As far as being closed on the State Holiday Schedule, all Federal agencies are closed, State agencies are closed, the DMV is closed, and the County is closed which causes us problems when we try to get our jobs done because these are the agencies we work with the most.

Councilman Green stated he supports the Town Employees but he is concerned about the Town Office being closed and he wonders if our taxpayers are receiving the services they are paying for.

Councilman Hill stated that we talked about this for several years and two years ago we decided to go ahead and give all the employees the State Holidays. This was a big morale boost for the employees and he would hate to take it away.

Councilman Quicke added that we can't do much as far as picking up garbage since we can't take it to the County because they are also closed on State Holidays.

Manager Palmore answered that the majority of the complaints he heard were about garbage pickup but, he added, as Councilman Quicke has just said, we can't pick up the garbage anyway because the County is closed.

Councilman Green does not have a problem with the Town employees being off, he has a problem with the Town being closed and it is his responsibility to represent the taxpayers.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he feels Councilman Green's concerns were well stated but we are going to leave the Holiday schedule as it is.

RESOLUTIONS - STATE AID FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Administrative Assistant Beck explained the difference between the two resolutions.

Council discussed this further.

Manager Palmore stated several times that if we do not continue to receive grant money to operate the bus system, it cannot continue.

Town Attorney Walden is concerned about the Town’s insurance and our coverage and liability.

Councilman Wilson feels we need to look into our insurance and make sure that the Town has the coverage we need for the bus system.

Councilman Hill asked that we contact VML.

Councilman Hill made a motion to adopt the attached Resolution on the Blackstone Area Bus System. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson 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

Councilman Wilson made a motion to adopt the attached Resolution on the Piedmont Area Transit System. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn 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

OFFER BY NOTTOWAY EMERGENCY SQUAD

Mayor Coleburn stated that at the Nottoway Emergency Squad’s annual banquet, he was honored to be presented an award to the Town from the Emergency Squad to thank the Town for what we did on their new building. The Mayor also informed the Council that the Emergency Squad has offered use of their building as a voting precinct during Town-wide elections.

Council discussed this further.

Town Attorney Walden wants us to ask the County Registrar to look at the Rescue Squad building before we make application to the Justice Department for a change.

Manager Palmore asked the Mayor to have the Registrar look at the Public Works building also.

Mayor Coleburn stated he will talk to the Registrar about these two buildings.

VMEA RFP

Manager Palmore stated that this is some good information for the Council on the Town as compared with other localities. He added that the General Assembly is considering doing away with deregulation. He stated that we have Spiegel and McDiarmid, a large legal firm in Washington DC and a consulting firm working with VMEA (Virginia Municipal Electric Association No. 1) on this.

VIRGINIA WINERIES - RESOLUTION

Manager Palmore feels that it is very important for Council to support this. It is his understanding that the Wineries want to start selling directly to individuals and leave out the wholesalers. This would have a direct impact on Circle Sales, a local wine distributor in Town. He feels the Council should support leaving the laws as they are.

Mayor Coleburn feels that it is a “no brainer” to support one of our local business owners and he added, Circle Sales is a unique business in this area.

Councilman Green made a motion, seconded by Councilman Wilson to approve Manager Palmore’s request for the Mayor to write a letter of support for Virginia Wineries. Vote:

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

Walter Mac thanked the Council for their support on this. He stated that he did get news from Richmond on Friday that Tommy Wright is on his side on this issue. He also thanked the Council for the wonderful dinner and the words of support he received from them last month.

OLD HEALTH DEPT BUILDING (Behind Armory)

Manager Palmore stated that Mr. Richard Lee is requesting use of the old Health Dept Building behind the Armory to store files. Manager Palmore has also learned that there are several other non-profit organizations that would like to use this building. He added that this building could possibly be used as a Chamber of Commerce office or as an office for the new Executive Director for the Main Street Program. He feels that the Town needs to stop giving without receiving money for the use of our buildings.

Council discussed this issue.

On motion by Councilman Quicke, seconded by Councilwoman Wynn Council voted to table this request at least until we determine where the Chamber is going to relocate and the Main Street Program office will be located. The motion was 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

PAVEMENT MARKING ON 4TH STREET

Manager Palmore stated that we have had several complaints that people are turning in front of cars that are coming into Town and the most dangerous spot is in the curve. We will be putting up some directional signs and we have asked that the State include this in their schedule for marking **and we will put up a sign in that second curve telling people to watch for turning vehicles.**

CHANGE FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING TO 26TH

On motion by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilwoman Wynn, the Council unanimously approved changing the February Council Meeting to the 26th due to the Town Holiday on the third Monday. 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 reported that Manager Palmore, Clarence Simpson and himself met with Bon Secours last week regarding moving their office in Blackstone to a new location in Blackstone. He feels this meeting was very positive.

Mayor Coleburn asked if Council sees the need for Work Session in February.

The Council agreed by Common Consent that a Work Session for February is not necessary.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

No comments.

CLOSED SESSION

Councilwoman Wynn left the meeting.

Councilman Green made a motion to go into Closed Session according to the following

- Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711
- Sub Section A
- 3. Acquisition/Disposition of Real Property
- 1. Personnel
- 7. Discussion with Legal Counsel

The motion was seconded by Councilman Hill and approved unanimously. Vote:

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

Mayor Coleburn declared the meeting back in Open Session.

Councilman Green made a motion to certify that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened, were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hill and approved as follows. Vote:

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

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Coleburn declared the meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

_____ APPROVED AND ADOPTED

TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA