

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, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: William D. Coleburn

Council Members: L. Benjamin Green, John W. Hill, Jr., C. Duncan Quicke, 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; J. Larry Palmore, Town Manager; Joan R. Palmore, Town Clerk; Charles C. Wells, Finance Director

Those Absent:

Council Member: Barbara Thompson

Town Staff: Nicholas C. Kuzmiak, Police Chief

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- RURAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

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 Tuesday, January 22, 2008, 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 for 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, 2008, to September 30, 2009. 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 American with Disabilities Act. Should you need special accommodations, please contact the Town Manager's office prior to 5:00 p.m., on Thursday, January 17, 2008. You may also contact the Virginia Relay System at 866-894-4116 or 866-246-9300 (TTY) or www.Varelay.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 Green made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented the Minutes of the December 17, 2007, and January 15, 2008, Council Meetings. 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

(Councilman Tucker was absent during this vote.)

VISITORS

No visitors came forward to speak.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

Fire Chief Tony Bradford presented the Fire Chief's report for December 2007. He pointed out that he has included a copy of Fire Marshall Sam Nunnelly's report for Council.

Councilman Tucker entered the meeting

Councilman Green asked the Fire Chief to get him a report showing how many calls the Fire Department answers in Town versus what they answer out in the County.

Fire Chief Bradford replied that he will get Councilman Green this information.

Councilman Quicke asked about an item on the Fire Marshall's report regarding a home inspection.

Fire Chief Bradford informed Council that the smoke detectors mentioned in the report are provided to the Fire Department by VUMAC.

Manager Palmore stated that he and Chief Bradford have had a lot of conversations over the last few months about Town versus County calls. He believes that 66% of the calls answered by our fire department are in the County. He has asked the Board of Supervisors to sit down and talk to us about the calls we answer in the County and also to talk to us about the library. He feels we need to look into a cost for service with the fire calls like the Rescue Squad did a few years ago. He explained the way this would work is if you use the fire department your insurance would pay for the service.

Councilman Hill asked if a person has a fire and they have a \$20,000 loss, will they also have to pay the fire department on top of the loss already incurred.

Manager Palmore answered, we need to look into this but he feels the homeowners insurance may pay it. He added that he has not checked into this. He stated that Councilman Hill's question is a good one and we certainly don't want to put further financial burden on people who have just experienced a loss.

Council discussed this further.

Fire Chief Bradford stated that in no way will the Blackstone Fire Department ever go after individuals for money.

Mayor Coleburn suggested referring this issue to the Fire and Water Committee.

Fire Chief Bradford added that the fire department has old equipment that will need to be replaced soon. He stated that they have three trucks right now that are not up to NFPA standards.

Manager Palmore stated that is where he was going next. He added that the Council asked the Fire Department to hold off on asking for any more new equipment for five years and now the five years is up. His main concern is since there is no more money coming into the Town, we need to figure out a way to pay for these services.

Manager Palmore stated that he agrees with Mayor Coleburn and feels that the Fire and Water Committee should sit down with the Fire Department and figure out how we can make this work. He also thinks they will eventually need to talk with the Finance Committee.

Councilman Green stated that the safety of these firemen is paramount to him. He would like answers to the following questions: If the Fire Department doesn't go outside of the corporate limits of Town, what is the maximum speed the drivers could go, how much longer would our equipment last and how far is the fire department going on their average call. He feels that we need to make a move and talk to the County now because they are beginning their budget process now.

Fire Chief Bradford agreed whole heartedly. He feels that the County needs to do more for everybody but they don't want to sit down and talk to us. He stated that he cannot talk to the Board of Supervisors like he can to this Council.

Mayor Coleburn referred this to the Fire and Water Committee

Mayor Coleburn thanked Fire Chief Bradford and the Fire Marshall Nunnelly.

Fire Chief Bradford requested four sets of turn-out gear. He stated that they have new people on the department and they need this equipment. They want to buy four sets now and plan to hold the other two sets until they need them. Chief Bradford stated that the cost per set is \$2,200.00.

Councilman Quicke made a motion, seconded by Councilman Green to authorize the Fire Department to purchase four sets of turn-out gear. The motion carried as follows. Vote:

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

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Councilman Hill made a motion to pay the bills in the amount of \$1,575,861.85. The motion was seconded by Councilman Tucker.

Discussion: Councilman Hill, Councilman Green and Council Quicke asked several questions on the bills.

The motion made and seconded was approved as follows.

Vote:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports

RESOLUTION - THANKING JET BROADBAND

Councilman Green made a motion to adopt the attached Resolution thanking Jet Broadband for all they did to help us during the recent funeral of former Mayor James S. Harris. 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
Councilman Tucker	-	Aye

GOALS FOR 2008

Manager Palmore stated that we will work on posting these goals as Council has requested. He looks forward to working on this with the Council and the citizens. He stated that he hopes we can resolve the Armory issue by July of this year. He added that we have an awful lot going on right now and we are only going to get busier. Manager Palmore stated that he looks forward to this coming year.

Mayor Coleburn feels that we should post these goals in the lobby where the public can see them.

Councilman Green made a motion to adopt the attached list of Goals for 2008 as presented. 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
Councilman Tucker	-	Aye

Councilwoman Wynn asked what does the Mayor want the Health and Ordinance Committee to do about the blight problem in Blackstone.

Councilman Hill stated that his understanding is that under the current ordinance we cannot force the business owners to maintain their property.

Manager Palmore stated that we need to have a good meeting with the Health and Ordinance Committee, the Town Attorney and the Town Manager.

Manager Palmore stated that we took action at the last Council meeting to name the new medical center building for former Mayor James Harris. He believes that we should probably rescind motion this and research it further. Manager Palmore feels we need to talk to the family and come back to Council. He added that this needs to be done for other reasons deeper than his own thoughts and feelings and we need a little more time to do this.

Councilman Green rescinded his motion to name the new Medical Center the James S. Harris Medical Center. The motion to rescind was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn and approved unanimously. Vote:

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

ON-GOING PROJECTS

Manager Palmore reported on the following On-Going Projects:

Bus Shop - This is going great. He could not be any more pleased with Kenbridge Construction and the superintendent on the site. He stated that the site is always kept clean and they are doing an outstanding job.

Downtown Revitalization - We are working with B & B and at some point we will need a work session with Town Council and Downtown Blackstone Inc. He wants Council to be fully aware of where we are on this. He talked about making the different businesses Downtown handicapped accessible. It will be better to lay this all out at one time and look at it together. We intend to do intersections one by one replacing with new signals. We may need to put in a four way stop at the post office in order to control the traffic. We will look at all of this but we will be very busy Downtown. We intend to do a lot of the work at night after people have gone to bed and are off the street.

Castle Trailer Park - We have signed the contract with DHCD and are looking forward to getting starting on this real soon. We plan to do this project in phases. Manager Palmore stated that we have not settled with the property owners yet but he intends to start work on that tomorrow.

Manager Palmore stated that we received bids on the Medical Center today and he was disappointed with the low bid because it was about \$400,000 more than he had thought this project was going to come in under. We may need to continue this meeting until sometime next week if the low bidder (IronBridge Construction) does qualify. He stated that IronBridge has been in business for a little under a year and a half. The next closest bid is Kenbridge Construction. The low bidder has a certain time frame where he can withdraw his bid. Manager Palmore stated that as far as he is concerned right now, this is a great company but we need to look into it further. The site is ready to be built on. He stated that he could not be any more proud of the men on this project. They worked through lunch many days and without breaks to get the site ready in time. He informed Council that we found an oil tank on the Gene's Service Center property and we are waiting on direction from DEQ on what we need to do with it. We have notified Gene Davis of this tank. Manager Palmore stated that all the tanks that we knew about had been researched but this tank was a surprise.

Councilman Quicke asked about the target date for opening the bus shop.

Manager Palmore answered, he hopes sometime between April 1st and April 15th.

RESOLUTIONS - STATE AID FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Councilman Hill made a motion to adopt the attached Resolution for State Aid for Public Transportation. 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
Councilman Tucker - Aye

CONSIDER CHANGE TO COUNCIL MEETING DATE AND TIME

Mayor Coleburn stated that we only meet on the third Monday of the month eight out of the twelve months. He asked for Council’s opinion on changing the date of the Council meetings to another night.

Councilman Green asked about the second Tuesday?

Councilwoman Wynn stated that she likes it the way it is.

Councilman Quicke agrees with Councilwoman Wynn. He would like to leave the meetings as they are.

Mayor Coleburn stated that we do have good attendance and Council agreed by Common Consent that the Council meetings stay as they are on the third Monday of each month.

MAYOR’S MINUTE

Mayor Coleburn asked Council to consider a Consent Agenda and asked the Town Attorney to look into exploring a Consent Agenda. This is a tool that a lot of other localities use to speed up the meetings.

Manager Palmore stated that he intends to call VML and get some guidelines on this.

Manager Palmore asked about changing the time of the Council Meeting.

Councilman Tucker stated that he cannot get to the meetings any earlier because he doesn’t get off work until 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Coleburn stated that we will continue to meet the third Monday at 7:00 p.m.

MISCELLANEOUS

Manager Palmore stated that he thought things were moving along on Mattie Neal’s home but he recently found out that this is not the case. He would like permission from the Council to allow us to seek an indoor plumbing grant to build a new home for Mrs. Neal. He stated that it will be better for everyone if we do this as a Town project. We have everything we need in place and Nottoway County does not. He added that Mrs. Neal does not have any running water in her home.

Councilman Hill made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to pursue this grant for Mrs. Neal. 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
Councilman Tucker	-	Aye

Manager Palmore stated that Roy C. Jenkins, Inc., called the Mayor yesterday because they are working very closely with the new plant (Showbest Fixtures) that is going in at the old Blackstone Manufacturing building. They need to have propane put in by February 15th. Mr. Jenkins is proposing to put in a transfer station and lease the property from the new owner. What he needs from us is permission to use Second Street, which has never been opened, it is a right-of-way because we have water and electric lines running through this street. He needs permission for tractor trailers to be able to go in on that road and back up to the transfer station. His understanding is that the fuel will come out of the transfer station and go directly into the factory through a meter and then his trucks can come and go from that area also. He handed out a plat of the property. He stated that a lot of this is not going to be on the Town's right-of-way. Mr. Jenkins is requesting permission to use it and that it be maintained with gravel so that it will be substantial enough to handle a tractor trailer truck. Manager Palmore has been thinking about this and plans to meet Cliff Jenkins on site tomorrow morning. He does not feel that the Town should put any money out as far as materials and we can't do anything on property that doesn't belong to us. He does suggest that we do some grating and put down top soil and Jenkins would put the stone in. He stated that we would be helping the new manufacturer and Jenkins also.

Council discussed this further.

Councilman Quicke asked who is this transfer switch benefitting?

Manager Palmore answered both. Jenkins and the new manufacturing company Showbest Fixtures. It would allow the manufacturer to receive LP gas cheaper and it will allow Jenkins to load here in Blackstone. This would be a \$70,000.00 investment on Jenkins part but as far as the manufacturer is concerned this is very important to their business.

Councilman Quicke asked, from a zoning point of view, can this be done on the manufacturing property.

Manager Palmore answered, yes sir. This is allowed in the M-2, Heavy Manufacturing Zone.

Councilman Green asked would this be specifically for Jenkins?

Manager Palmore answered, yes sir, this would only be for Jenkins.

Mayor Coleburn stated that Showbest is going to let Jenkins build this facility on his property and then Jenkins would lease it for \$1.00 a year.

Councilman Green asked are we creating a new street.

Manager Palmore answered, no sir, the street is already there we would just need to open up the existing right-of-way.

Councilman Hill asked is this going to be a right-of-way owned by the Town that anyone would have access to.

Manager Palmore answered, yes sir.

Councilman Quicke stated he is confused and asked why are we getting involved if the zoning allows for this.

Mayor Coleburn stated that Manager Palmore has made a valid point as well, because we have an industry that wants to relocate here.

Manager Palmore stated that he feels real good about this company. It seems to be growing leaps and bounds. He spoke to one company that he does business with and they had nothing but high praise for Showbest.

Councilman Wilson asked would people be able to drive off of Church Street onto Hardy Street.

Manager Palmore answered, yes sir.

Councilman Quicke asked what if we abandon it like an alleyway.

Manager Palmore stated that he has looked at this and if we abandon it, the property would go to the owners on each side. He added that he is not talking about spending money as far as material, this should be left up to Mr. Jenkins. He only wants to take the motor grader up there. He stated that this is something we would do for any other industry.

Councilman Hill stated that if the traffic volume is large, then Hardy Street is going to take a beating.

Councilman Quicke asked where will the transfer station be located on the property.

Mayor Coleburn answered, if you stand on Church Street and face ShowBest it will be on the left side.

Councilman Green asked how can we say no and also, if they tear up Hardy Street, how can we make them pay for it.

Councilman Quicke does not see the problem here. He feels there is ample space behind the building for the trucks without doing any of this.

Mayor Coleburn asked could this wait until later in the week, since we may have another meeting.

Manager Palmore stated that he will meet with Mr. Jenkins tomorrow and get more details. He understands the request and he also understands Councilman Quicke's point of view.

Councilman Green asked about tabling this issue until later this week.

Councilman Wilson asked does Judge Moncure own property adjacent to this.

Manager Palmore looked at the plat and showed Councilman Wilson where the Moncure property is in relation to the Showbest property. He added that he doesn't have any problem with this request, it fits the zoning, and Jenkins will be putting in #3 rock to maintain the road. He feels certain that this will be done behind a fence but those are questions he can ask Mr. Jenkins tomorrow.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he has heard from Council and we will look into this further and bring information back to Council at a later date.

Manager Palmore showed Council the Amelia Bridge inspection report. He stated that the bridge is the same and it definitely needs to be dealt with and we will be taking this up with VDOT.

POLICE REPORT

No comments.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

No Comments.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Coleburn declared the meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

_____ APPROVED AND ADOPTED

TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA