

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, July 16, 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 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 Quicke led in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

MINUTES

Councilman Wilson made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented the Minutes of the June 18th and June 28, 2007, Council Meetings. The motion was seconded by Councilman Green 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

Mayor Coleburn read aloud and presented a Resolution of Commendation to Rev. Sylvia Meadows as adopted at the June 18th Council Meeting. All those in the chambers applauded Reverend Meadows.

Assistant Fire Chief Tony Bradford also presented Reverend Meadows with a blanket from the Volunteer Fire Department.

Rev. Meadows thanked everyone and introduced her successor at the Methodist Church in Blackstone, Rev. Scott Hopkins.

Police Chief Kuzmiak introduced three new police officers- Danny Joyner, Brock Tomlin and Jeff Radcliff. He then pinned a badge on each officer's uniform and welcomed them to the police force.

VISITORS

1. Tom Daniel, Blackstone High School Alumni Association, addressed Council and thanked them for all the Town did to support the recent Blackstone High School reunion held at the United Methodist Assembly Center. He also thanked the Town Manager specifically and his staff. He then read a letter of thanks from one of the alumni in attendance at the reunion.

2. Pastor Carlos Gonzalez - Mr. Gonzalez was not present at this time.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he would like to make a brief statement. He added that for the last year the Town Council has born with him in his desire to pursue a single voting precinct in Blackstone. **Mayor Coleburn said he believes a single, consolidated precinct for all registered voters in town, during Town elections every four years, would be in the best interest of all citizens. However, he said he did not want to push an issue that would create any division in this community. He stated that he appreciates Council's patience but he would like to ask that this issue be tabled.**

Councilman Wilson made a motion to table this issue indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Councilman Green 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

FIRE CHIEF’S REPORT

Assistant Fire Chief Bradford addressed the Council and stated that the fire report is in the Council’s packet and asked if there are any questions.

There were none.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Councilman Hill made a motion to pay the bills in the amount of \$746,214.62. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson. After some discussion 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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Green, Chairman of the Building and Property Committee, reported that the Armory Committee met and had a work day. He thanked Mr. Fred Sanger, Mr. David Ostrander and Mr. David Dunn for their assistance.

Manager Palmore feels that we need to meet with the Building and Property Committee in the near future. He added that we recently found that the Armory has termites and we have scheduled an exterminator. He added that the prison labor is a big help to us all over Town.

Councilman Green stated that three of the young men (prison labor) volunteered to work an extra two hours and they were great to work with.

Pastor Carlos Gonzalez, stated that he is a new pastor in the community and his church would like to hold a gospel block party in the 500 block of Broad Street. This would be from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m., on Saturday, July 28th. He is the pastor of the Redeemer Christian Church and they are currently meeting at the Lion of Judah Church on North Main Street. He stated that the noise level will not be louder than 10 decibals.

Councilwoman Wynn asked Pastor Gonzalez to make sure the neighbors have been notified and are in agreement.

Pastor Gonzalez stated that this has been done.

Manager Palmore asked that Pastor Gonzalez notify not only Broad street residents but also the other streets around the area.

Pastor Gonzalez agreed that he would.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to allow this request contingent upon approval of the Police Chief. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson. Motion carried. Vote:

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

OCEANA NAVAL BASE - FORT PICKETT AIRFIELD

Manager Palmore reported that we, in conjunction with Nottoway County, have set up a meeting this Wednesday, July 18th at 12:00 noon at Mitchell's Restaurant to discuss the Oceana Naval Base and the proposed OLF at Fort Pickett. He asked that Council and anyone present, try to make it to Mitchell's as this is a very important meeting. He added that he hopes that Nottoway County will take the lead on this. He does not relish the fact that Southside Virginia could be disturbed this way when there are other areas that are less populated and would not have the detrimental affect that it would have on us. His understanding is that Dinwiddie County is considering adoption of a Resolution similar to the one we adopted in May and their representatives will be at the meeting on July 18th.

Councilman Green asked have we hired attorney Barry Steinberg and where will these funds come from.

Manager Palmore answered, that is up to Council but his suggestion would be from Council's discretionary fund.

Councilman Green made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to hire retired Col. Barry Steinberg, Attorney, and to retain him at the Town Manager's discretion. The motion was seconded by Councilman Tucker. Vote:

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

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

Mayor Coleburn asked Mrs. Mattie Neal to come forward and speak.

Mrs. Neal asked that Division Street be closed off for the Night-Out-Against Crime on August 7th at 6:00 p.m. She added that this will be the 20th year that she has been hosting this event.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he and this Council appreciates all that Mrs. Neal has done.

Councilwoman Wynn made a motion to close Division Street on Tuesday, August 7th from 6:00 p.m. until the conclusion of the program. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson 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

TRAFFIC STUDY - OAK STREET

Manager Palmore stated that this study was done by the Police Department and they put a tremendous amount of time and energy into it. He added that there are some violations but this study shows that the stop signs really don't seem to help in this area.

Mayor Coleburn asked how can we say that a stop sign will not help if we don't have a stop sign on the street.

Councilman Quicke thanked Chief Kuzmiak for doing this because he did it at Councilman Quicke's request. He feels we should defer to the Police Chief to do what he thinks is appropriate.

Police Chief Kuzmiak apologized to the Council that this was not given to Council sooner. He then stated that this study shows that the placement of stop signs will not slow down traffic on Oak Street. He does not think a stop sign will do any good.

Mayor Coleburn asked again why wouldn't a stop sign slow traffic down.

Councilman Hill asked are the school buses still using Oak Street.

Manager Palmore answered yes sir.

Councilman Hill is concerned that this could cause a problem with backing up the school buses.

Councilman Green agreed that this could cause problems with the school buses. He also does not know how are we going to handle asking the residents not to park on the street.

Council discussed this issue further.

Police Chief Kuzmiak stated that once the police department gets to full staff, it will be easier for them to address problems like this. Where ever there are concerns they will be happy to help.

Assistant Fire Chief Bradford asked what can be done about Barco Road and North West Avenue. He stated that sooner or later there is going to be a really bad accident there. He suggested stop lights or something.

Manager Palmore answered that we looked at this idea some years ago and VDOT did a safety study of that intersection and a stoplight was not recommended at that time but we can certainly go back and do this again. He has thought for some time that we could put up a caution light there or we can ask for a full blown study from VDOT.

Mayor Coleburn asked the Town Manager to get Jack Hodge to look into this.

BROADBAND

Manager Palmore stated that he went to a meeting in Danville last Wednesday before the Tobacco Commission. We had a lot of help from Delegate Wright, Senator Ruff and Delegate Hogan and we left with 100% allocation for the Broadband project. The amount we will receive is \$366,000.00. Manager Palmore explained that we are not going to be in the Broadband business. We want it here for the citizens of Blackstone to be able to utilize it. He recommended that when people build new homes they should consider putting this capability in their homes.

Mayor Coleburn discussed the areas in Town that will be covered by Broadband.

Manager Palmore answered that he envisions that every business in Blackstone will one day have Broadband capabilities.

Councilman Hill asked, will we get the money from the grant first and then spend it.

Manager Palmore answered yes sir, that is correct.

OVERCROWDED HOUSING

Manager Palmore reported that we have been watching this issue.

Town Attorney Walden stated that we need to tighten up our definition of family. He provided Council a copy of a Ordinance and explained that this Ordinance would more clearly define a family. He stated that we cannot pass this law and enforce it on people if they are already here, living in a home in Town because they would be “grandfathered.” Mark Flynn, Attorney with VML suggested that we handle this with the Building Code because it does not have a grandfather clause. Hopefully the building inspector will get on board with us on this. If there are some that we need to address right away we could do it right now.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he likes the idea of using the building code.

Town Attorney Walden asked that Council look this ordinance over and come up with their suggestions.

Mayor Coleburn stated that the Town needs to be real careful as to how we act on this.

Manager Palmore feels that this problem needs to be addressed. We are not going to give up on this, we are going to continue to work with VML.

Councilman Green stated that we talked about having a part-time building inspector. This makes him even more convinced that we need to do this.

Mayor Coleburn stated that we are not unlike other localities who also have undocumented immigrants coming into their communities.

Councilman Wilson feels we need to look into this further because he feels it will be almost impossible to determine who is related to whom.

Council discussed this further.

SOUTH MAIN STREET RECONSTRUCTION

Manager Palmore stated that he is happy to report that we did receive a good low bid from Colony Construction in the amount of \$642,608.00 with a total project cost of **approximately \$740,000.00**. He added that he wishes he could tell the residents on South Main Street that this street will get better soon but we have more to go through as we are reconstructing South Main Street. He recommended that Council authorize us to sign with the low bidder and to begin the work immediately.

Mayor Coleburn stated that we will be rebuilding South Main Street from Church to 10th Street. He asked about the projected completion date.

Manager Palmore answered hopefully within three to four months. He added that the quickest way to do this is to block off the entire street so we can get in there and get it done. He explained that we are using the money we had left over from the first phase. After we finish this phase, the next project will be from 10th Street to the Corporate Limits at Route 46.

Mayor Coleburn clarified that the Town will only have to pay 2% of the total project cost.

Manager Palmore explained the funding and how the money will be distributed.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to accept the low bid of \$642,608.00 from Colony Construction Company on the South Main Street Reconstruction Project and to authorize the Town Manager to sign a contract with Colony Construction Company. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hill 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

Danny Sheffield, Resident of South Main Street, asked when will we begin construction and will there be a schedule of when water will be sprayed to keep the dust down. He also asked can the Town put something in the paper to notify the residents of when we can expect the project to begin.

Manager Palmore answered that the start date is contingent on VDOT and the contractor.

ON GOING PROJECTS

Bus Shop - We had seven contractors to attend the pre-bid meeting but only two picked up packages.

Carriage Museum - We intend to have everything ready before the Arts and Crafts festival in September.

Castles Trailer Park - A meeting will be scheduled soon.

Medical Center - We will be meeting on the Medical Center tomorrow with Bon Secours, Town Staff and DHCD.

BLACKSTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL - Support Letter (21st Century Grant)

Councilman Hill made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to write a letter of support for Blackstone Primary School to apply for the 21st Century Grant. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson 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

CUT THRU TRAFFIC ON BRUNSWICK AND LUNENBURG AVENUES

Manager Palmore stated that he has asked the Police Chief to increase patrols in this area. It is probably going to get worse before it gets better but we will pay closer attention to this.

RESOLUTION - TRACK HOE

Councilman Green made a motion to adopt the attached Resolution to purchase the track hoe. 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

MAYOR'S MINUTE

Mayor Coleburn commended the Police Chief and the Blackstone Police Department on the recent numerous drug busts.

Police Chief Kuzmiak stated this was a great day in Blackstone and in the County.

MISCELLANEOUS

Councilman Green asked about the blue house on Main Street.

Manager Palmore stated there is not much we can do about this until the Nottoway County Building Inspector condemns the property.

Councilman Green stated this house is an eyesore.

Manager Palmore added that the old Armbruster's Restaurant falls in the exact same category. We are in limbo on this because the owner will not respond to our letters.

Councilman Green stated that he has had some residents ask about the Yancey property on South Main Street.

Manager Palmore answered that he has not heard of anything happening on this property.

Councilman Hill asked what is going on with the cable television franchise.

Manager Palmore answered the ball is in their court.

Councilman Hill feels we should send them a registered letter and give them a date to return it to us.

Councilman Hill asked the Town Attorney to look into this.

Attorney Walden stated that he will be glad to call their attorney and see where they are on this.

Council agreed by Common Consent to have the Town Attorney contact Jet Broadband

Councilwoman Thompson asked does anyone know anything about the dog fighting in Blackstone.

Mayor Coleburn asked the Police Chief to check into this.

Councilman Quicke stated that he is concerned about Blackstone Manufacturing and the grass.

Manager Palmore stated that the property is now owned by a holding company. We can contact them and ask them to cut the grass.

POLICE REPORT

No Comments

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Assistant Fire Chief Bradford asked is there any way we could have the Fire Marshall condemn the houses discussed earlier.

Mayor Coleburn feels this is a good idea and asked who is the Fire Marshall.

Manager Palmore answered that Council appointed Walter Mac Osborne.

CLOSED SESSION

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

- Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711
- Sub Section A
- Personnel
- Acquisition/Disposition of Public Property

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

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 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

Mayor Coleburn stated that Council continues to follow closely the tragic death of K-9 Officer Oakley.

Councilman Quicke made a motion to change the August Council Meeting to August 27th which is the 4th Monday. 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

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Coleburn declared the meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

_____ APPROVED AND ADOPTED

TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA