

Minutes of a Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of the Council of the Town of Blackstone, Virginia held in the Council Chambers located at 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, on Monday, June 18, 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 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:

Town Attorney: Kennon C. Walden, Jr.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mayor Coleburn announced that we were notified this past Thursday that we have been designated as a Virginia Main Street Community. Then on Friday we were notified that we received a grant to build a new Medical Center and that we received a grant in the amount of about \$960,000 to demolish and rebuild Castle Trailer Park. This is wonderful news for our community and we are all very excited.

Mayor Coleburn presented a Resolution to Dr. Gwen Edwards, recognizing her for all she has done as Superintendent of the Nottoway County Public School system. Mayor Coleburn added that since the beginning of Dr. Edwards tenure six years ago, teacher pay has increased to either at or near the top of teachers pay in the region, all of our schools are accredited and Nottoway County Schools have met all requirements of the *No Student Left Behind Act*.

Manager Palmore stated that it was a great pleasure working with Dr. Edwards and she will be missed.

Ray Weiland, Health Department, Waterworks Division, presented an *Excellence in Waterworks Performance* award to the Town of Blackstone and recognized the water plant operators present. He added that this is a very difficult award to achieve and the upgrade of the Town's water plant has really helped make this possible. He stated this award is for filtering quality and there are probably only about two dozen waterworks in the State that have achieved this award.

Manager Palmore stated that we have some of the best water plant operators in the State of Virginia. He then addressed Council and thanked them for what they have done to upgrade our water plant. The \$11 million of debt that we are in is in large part due to upgrade of the water plant. It is more than just turning your tap on. He thanked the water plant operators for their hard work.

Ray Weiland added that with the additional work that was put into this plant, the Town is way ahead of the curve; even with EPA's new sampling requirements, we are in good shape for many years to come.

PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Town Officials invite all citizens of the Town to come by the Town Office and have the annual budget, from which this statement is made, explained to them in detail, if they so desire. A public hearing on the budget will be held at 7:00 p.m., June 18, 2007, in the Town Hall. All interested residents of Blackstone are urged to attend and express their opinion.

Manager Palmore stressed that there are no increases in this budget as far as water, sewer, electric or taxes. He hopes that all departments will pay real close attention and turn some money back in and he is going to make sure everyone is aware that we need to try to save money in all areas.

Mayor Coleburn asked for comments from the public. There were none.

Councilman Quicke asked the Finance Director what does PPTRA stand for.

Finance Director Wells answered that is the money we get from the State on Personal Property Tax Relief.

Mayor Coleburn stated that this budget will be considered for adoption next Thursday, June 28th at 5:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Councilman Wilson made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented the Minutes of the May 21st and May 31, 2007, Council Meetings. 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 was absent during this vote)

VISITORS

1. Ron Johnson, Nottoway Youth Football League, requested permission from Council to use the Memorial Center on July 14th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. They are going to have an open forum for the parents of the children in the Youth Football League. He also asked Council to exempt the cost.

Councilman Hill made a motion to grant Mr. Johnson's request. 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

2. Ronnie Jordan, addressed Council regarding his utility bill. He asked about the demand charge. He feels this charge is unfair.

Mayor Coleburn asked the Town Manager to explain the Demand Charge.

Manager Palmore answered that a Demand Charge is a charge placed on us by Dominion Power. The Demand Meters are read every thirty minutes and the charge is set at the highest usage in a 24 hours period. The reason for this is to insure that Dominion Power will have the electrical capacity available. Manager Palmore stated that we cannot do away with this charge. We have tried using contracts to eliminate the Demand Meters but Dominion Power will not allow it.

Mr. Jordon stated that his demand charge went up when he had a problem with this air conditioner.

Manager Palmore stated that as he explained to Mr. Jordon in the past, he can change his service out and replace it with a 240 amp service which will eliminate the Demand Charge. He added that we will be willing to work with him in anyway we can.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he appreciates Mr. Jordon's concerns.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

Assistant Fire Chief Tony Bradford presented the report for the Fire Department for the month of May. He stated that the Fire Chief received approval from the department to pay half of the cost for the RAM's. The total cost for two RAM's is \$7,515.00.

Councilman Hill feels that this whole thing should come out of the Fire Department's budget.

Councilman Green made a motion to take the money out of the Fire Department's Budget and any additional funds to come out of Council's discretionary fund. 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

Assistant Chief Bradford stated that all of the main operators have signed and agree to the Guidelines for Emergency Vehicles form Council asked that be signed at the last Council Meeting. He added that all members of the fire department are not certified to drive the trucks.

Manager Palmore stated this covers all emergency vehicles such as the First Responders and it is very important that everyone sign- not just the main operators. He added that the firemen should use discretion when they use the sirens on the trucks. Manager Palmore stated that we really need to give this some thought because if the locality is not willing to back the members of the Fire Department, we are going to have a hard time finding firemen. Common sense has got to kick in. These men need to know that if an accident happens the Town Council is behind them.

Councilman Wilson wants the Town Manager to discuss this with the Town Attorney. He also wants us to check with the insurance company about the sirens and how this will affect our insurance.

Councilwoman Thompson asked what if someone gets hit and they don't have the siren on, what would our liability be.

Manager Palmore answered that the first thing we would be asked is are we following the policy. If we can take this out of the policy we should.

Councilman Quicke asked is this a new policy.

Manager Palmore answered, no sir. This is something that was recommended by the insurance company.

Assistant Chief Bradford stated that they don't let anyone drive an emergency vehicle unless they are EVOC certified.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Councilman Wilson made a motion to pay the bills in the amount of \$466,909.64. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn. After some discussion the motion was approved unanimously. Vote:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

TOWN-WIDE VOTING PRECINCT

Manager Palmore reported that he has asked several citizens to sit down and talk with him about this issue and find out what are their concerns.

Mayor Coleburn informed Council that he and Councilwoman Wynn attended the monthly meeting of the Nottoway County NAACP. He added that Council did vote to have a meeting on this issue at some point in time but he does not want to push this right now.

Councilwoman Wynn added that she informed the members of the NAACP that she did not feel that she could vote in favor of a single Town-wide voting precinct. She added that it could appear that the Council is pushing this and maybe the citizens need to come forward on this issue.

ON GOING PROJECTS

Bus Shop - We are moving forward on the new bus shop. SVCC has saved us a tremendous amount of money. We propose to go out for Request for Proposal on June 20th

Carriage Museum - We hope by August 15th the keys will be turned over to us and we will be able to start moving the carriages in.

Downtown Revitalization - Manager Palmore informed Council that there is a blight that is affecting the pear trees Downtown. In order to remove the blight we would have to cut off the affected branches and then spray the trees. He wants the Downtown Blackstone Inc, group to meet and make a recommendation to Council on what they would like to see done such as with the trees.

Councilman Green stated that he heard recently that Governor Kaine is planning to visit one of the localities that received the Main Street designation. He feels this group needs to meet and work on improving Downtown.

Mayor Coleburn agreed that the Downtown Blackstone Incorporated group needs to meet and discuss the trees and other issues.

Instant Alert System - Council discussed this system. Manager Palmore informed Council that he has spoken with County Administrator Roark about this and he is going to talk to his Board about Nottoway paying into this which would be good because it will help to improve emergency response all over the County.

Councilman Quicke asked could this system be used to notify Town residents as far as evacuation plans if we had a hazardous waste spill

Manager Palmore answered, yes sir.

Councilman Green asked is the Town going to address the Armory Committee since Tilly Conley gave her presentation.

Mayor Coleburn and Manager Palmore stated they will contact the Armory Committee and see what we can do and answer any questions they may have.

Grants - Manager Palmore spent a good portion of the day calling people such as Todd Christensen and thanking them for all their help on these grants. We will move forward with negotiations with Bon Secours. He spoke with Bo Bo Jones (owner of the Dairy Freeze) and he met with Gene (Gene's Service Station) and told Mr. Davis that all environmental issues need to be taken care of prior to August 31st.

Councilman Green stated that Steve Ferguson worked diligently on getting these grants and he would like to see him publically recognized.

Manager Palmore added that he was going to touch on this a little later but he wants to talk to VDOT and request that they move forward on the Route 40 project.

Castles Trailer Park - This is a very important grant. This will help ten families that are living in pretty bad conditions and will continue to help and improve the lives of the citizens in Blackstone.

Manager Palmore stated that he was told by DHCD that this was one of the best grant applications that they have ever seen and this is due to Steve Ferguson and his staff.

Manager Palmore added that his goal is to have things in place by August 31st to begin construction of the new medical center shortly thereafter. He stated that he is in contact with several dentists who are interested in moving to Blackstone. He also would like to thank Dr. Steve Spence.

Council discussed the Medical Center grant.

RESOLUTION - SYLVIA MEADOWS

Manager Palmore stated that Sylvia Meadows is leaving the Crenshaw United Methodist Church. He added that she has given a tremendous amount of time helping members of the Fire Department and Rescue Squad. He added that Sylvia Meadows was one of the first people he saw at the Mitchell's fire and one of the last to leave.

Councilman Hill made a motion to adopt the attached Resolution of Commendation for Sylvia Meadows. 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

RATIFY POLL TAKEN ON JUNE 11TH - CLOSING GREEN STREET ON JUNE 16TH

Councilman Wilson made a motion to ratify the following Poll taken on June 11th regarding Closing Green Street on June 16th for a family reunion.

Councilman Quicke	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Green	-	Aye
Councilman Wilson	-	Aye
Councilman Hill	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Tucker	-	(Unable to contact)

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

GRANT TO ESTABLISH OLD COUNTRY STORE

Manager Palmore asked for permission from Council to work with Steve Ferguson to establish an Old Country Store in the area of the new Carriage Museum. This will be an ISTEAA grant and we should not have to put up any matching funds.

Councilwoman Wynn made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to work with Steve Ferguson, County Planner, to apply for a grant to establish an old Country Store. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson. After further discussion, Council approved the motion unanimously. 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 stated that he does not want this community to sit here and ignore this. We have a tendency to not complain until the door is shut. He asks the citizens of Nottoway County to write their legislators and let them know they are not happy with this. He added that very soon Council will be afforded the opportunity to visit the Oceana Naval Base at Virginia Beach.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he spoke with Congressman Randy Forbes. Mr. Forbes told him that Governor Tim Kaine does not want the touch and go operations at Pickett but it is a good chance that the Governor may put Fort Pickett on the list. To date we have been told we would only get twelve jobs, if they do the touch and go operations. Senator Warner has been great to us but that does not mean that we have to agree with everything that comes up.

LETTER FROM CONCERNED CITIZEN

Manager Palmore responded to a letter the Mayor had received that was not signed. He stated that he is not used to responding to anonymous letters but he is going to use this to our advantage. He informed everyone that the Town wants all contractors across the State of Virginia to give us proposals on the bus shop and other projects. The more the merrier. He finds it somewhat bothersome about some of the things that are in this letter as far as - This letter states that we received a bid from Payne and Payne Construction on building the new fire station that was lower than GMW contractors. Manager Palmore stated that this could not be further from the truth. He considers both of the companies that are mentioned in this letter as being friends of Blackstone and himself personally. This person who wrote this letter also goes on to say that all bids should be advertised in the paper. Manager Palmore stated that the Town would not be able to afford to pay for the advertising costs. He then showed everyone present the 50+ pages of the bids we received on the fire station. He cannot help that only one company submitted a bid on the Carriage Museum Project. A committee made up of three Council members meets and reviews all bids prior to selection of the contractor. The Town Council also makes motions to award contract on all projects. The number one thing that he can say about GMW is that they don't have a superintendent on the job, they have two owners on the job making sure everything is done correctly. He again stated that he wants as many companies as possible to please submit bids on all Town projects.

Mayor Coleburn reviewed the bidding process.

Manager Palmore asked the Town Clerk to read a copy of a Request for a Proposal so everyone present can see how we advertise. He stated that he hopes we have thirty companies to come knocking on our door to submit a proposal. He is most disappointed that the person who

wrote this letter did not come to him and talk to him about his/her concerns. He added that if the citizens take nothing else away from this, they should know that he will be more than happy to sit down with anyone and talk about their concerns.

Manager Palmore added that 90% of materials we are using on the Carriage Museum came from Bevell's Hardware.

CAROLINA TRANSFORMER

Manager Palmore asked Council to appropriate \$5,000 more for legal expenses in the Carolina Transformer lawsuit. He stated that he is going to have to attend a meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina next week and he is going to let them know how he feels about this issue. He will not be here for the adoption of the budget on June 28th.

Assistant Town Manager Dunn explained this issue further.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to appropriate \$5,000 more for legal expenses on the Carolina Transformer lawsuit. 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 thanked the Town Staff for their hard work on getting the Medical Center and Castle Trailer Park grants as wells as the Virginia Main Street designation.

MISCELLANEOUS

Council discussed overcrowding in several homes in Blackstone.

Manager Palmore stated that we were tipped off that a helicopter was dumped in the reservoir. The people that did this, did not receive permission from anyone at Pickett or from the Town. He explained that this was a training prop done by military personnel. He feels they should have contacted us prior to doing anything like this.

Manager Palmore informed Council that the Blackstone Investment Group has withdrawn their request for rezoning. They asked that we copy Council with two letters we received today. Manager Palmore stated that he will keep Council informed on this issue. He stated that this could be a wonderful thing for Blackstone but he does not agree that it should be in the area this group is suggesting. He added that he was the one who went before the Judge back when we annexed this area into Town and assured him that the property in this area would be kept as it is, with no zoning changes. He hopes that everyone pays close attention to what Mr. Boroughs is saying in this letter because they can build smaller houses than was originally planned, if they choose. He senses that they want to sell the land and get out of this business. Mr. Boroughs told him today that they have entered into a contract with someone to buy the remaining lots and to change the covenants from 1,700 square feet homes to 1,200 square feet homes.

Council discussed this issue further.

POLICE REPORT

No Comments

CITIZENS COMMENTS

None

CLOSED SESSION

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

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711
Sub Section A
- Personnel
- Probable Litigation

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 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

Councilman Green made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to contact our insurance company and tell them to pay the claim on a recent accident involving a fire truck; to alleviate any problems with the driver of this vehicle; and to notify the Town Attorney of the course of action that this Council has authorized. 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

Mayor Coleburn continued the meeting to Thursday, June 28, 2007, at 5:00 p.m.