

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, Virginia, on Monday, November 17, 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, Barbara Thompson, 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; David Ostrander, Director of Public Works; J. Larry Palmore, Town Manager; Joan R. Palmore, Town Clerk; Charles C. Wells, Finance Director

Those Absent:

Council Member: Alfred V. Tucker

Mayor Coleburn called the meeting to order and asked the Town Clerk to report on Councilman Tucker who was recently in a car accident.

Town Clerk Palmore reported that she spoke with Councilman Tucker this afternoon and he is still in the hospital and going through numerous surgeries to repair his leg. He hopes to be able to come home in a week or so.

Councilman Quicke lead in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

MINUTES

Councilman Hill made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented the Minutes of the October 27th and November 6th, 2008, 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. Beverly Ambs spoke to Council regarding the Town trying to get a hospital in Blackstone. She gave the Mayor contact information on hospitals systems in Virginia. She stated that she has spoken with Debbie McCraw with Carilion Health System and Ms. McCraw is going to look into it but they may be too far East for us. She feels that the others on the list should be considered.

Mayor Coleburn asked Council how do they feel about him writing a letter to hospitals in the area asking them to consider coming to Blackstone.

Council agreed by Common Consent.

Mayor Coleburn thanked Ms. Ambs for her interest.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

Fire Chief Tony Bradford made the report for the Fire Department for the month of October.

Council discussed the bids that were received on turn-out gear. The low bid per set is \$2,202.46 with Municipal Emergency Services.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to accept the low bid from Municipal Emergency Services in the amount of \$2,202.46 per set of turn-out gear and to authorize the Fire Chief to purchase three sets at this price. The motion was seconded by Councilman Green. After further 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

Fire Chief Bradford stated that they have put into service a new 12 league defibrillator/cardiac monitor which costs \$25,000. This new piece of equipment will help diagnose a heart attack faster and easier. He stated that members of the Fire Department will be taking a class tomorrow night so everyone will know how to use it. He informed Council that the most it will cost us is \$1,000.00, but it may not be that much because ODEMSA may have found a hospital that will pickup that cost. He stated that the new defibrillator will be on the First Responder Unit.

Manager Palmore asked the Fire Chief to get him the information on who we should thank for this.

Fire Chief Bradford answered that ODEMSA, Old Dominion EMS Alliance is the organization who helped us and he will get the contact information to the Town Manager

Fire Chief Bradford stated that there will be a Memorial Service for Edgar Johnson on Saturday, December 6th at 6:00 p.m., behind the Fire Station. He added that the Fire Department's Annual Christmas Dinner will be on Saturday, December 13th at 6:30 p.m., at the Memorial Center and he invited Council and Town Staff to attend.

Councilman Quicke asked the Fire Chief about the meeting with the Virginia Defense Force on November 4th.

Fire Chief Bradford stated that it was a good meeting and they received a lot of helpful information. They are talking about a big event possibly some time in November of 2009. He explained that this event would be a mock disaster where training would take place. Fire Chief Bradford stated that County Administrator Roark and Assistant Administrator Prosis were at that meeting and pledged to help with this event.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Councilman Wilson made a motion to pay the bills in the amount of \$520,102.47. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hill.

After further 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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no committee reports.

REPORT ON NEW JAMES S. HARRIS MEDICAL CENTER

Manager Palmore reported that things are going well on the new medical center building. The roof is on and the rooms are being sheet rocked. We hope to start laying the curbing off tomorrow and then we will need to do the drainage. He added that we are in negotiations with Brother’s Pizza. He explained that there is a very small sliver of land right in the front of their business that we will need to take. We are talking with Brother’s about exchanging a piece of land on the back. He added that if they want an entrance put in to the back of their business, we will work with them on that. He asked that this be turned over to the Building and Property Committee to continue these negotiations.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he can see a potential for a lot of congestion in this area.

Manager Palmore explained that Jack Hodge, Engineer with Volkert and Associates has been looking very closely at this.

Councilman Hill asked about the alleyway.

Manager Palmore stated that he will need to go back and refresh his memory on this.

Mayor Coleburn turned this over to the Building and Property Committee and asked Councilwoman Wynn to take the place of Councilman Tucker on this Committee, while he is out, since this area is in her Ward.

Manager Palmore stated that he feels, when the road is complete, it is really going to improve the visibility of their business greatly.

Councilman Quicke asked about a cinder block building on the medical center property.

Manager Palmore answered that we are still using it right now.

Councilman Green made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to continue to negotiate with Brother’s Pizza and to allow us to enter into an agreement with them on the land. 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 Hill asked where is this money going to come from.

Manager Palmore answered that we are in negotiations with VDOT on this. They have appropriated \$250,000 from this year's allocation and then we could use \$250,000 for 2009. He stated that we can use Maintenance Funds to replace the signal light and to pay for the work associated. He added that we have already purchased the light.

Councilman Hill asked will this come out of Primary or Secondary Maintenance Funds.

Manager Palmore answered, mainly Primary and roughly \$500,000 will come from VDOT on the six-year plan.

Council discussed this further.

Manager Palmore stated that the ISTE A Street Scape grant that we applied for in the amount of \$1.1 million, will not come in until March of 2009. We are holding off to make sure we get everything coordinated like it should be. He feels like it would be a good idea to hold off so we can make sure all of this is going to tie into the street scaping downtown.

Councilman Wilson is concerned that if, in the future, the current Blackstone Family Practice Center is sold, he want to make sure the folks at the Tobacco Commission know that we are not selling the new James S. Harris Medical Center.

Manager Palmore stated that they understand what is going on and he will make sure there is no confusion.

DEPT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

Mayor Coleburn is concerned with the letter that he received from General Newman and the fact that we have not heard anything back from Governor Kaine's Office yet.

Manager Palmore stated that all the Senators and Congressmen he has talked to do not want to see the headquarter's moved from Fort Pickett to Sandston, except for Senator Webb. Senator Webb has not committed either way.

Mayor Coleburn feels we should have heard something on this by now.

SURPLUS PROPERTY SALE

Manager Palmore reported that we made \$11,200.00 on the recent Surplus Property sale.

Councilman Green asked can we provide the Council with a list of what was sold at the Surplus Property Sale.

Manager Palmore stated that he will provide this at the December Council Meeting.

TOBACCO COMMISSION - LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Manager Palmore reported on the Tobacco Commission Letter of Agreement. He stated that the new James S. Harris Medical Center is not a non-profit business. If it were for-profit, as some have said, we would not be able to receive this grant money from the Tobacco Commission. He then asked Council to authorize him to sign the attached Letter of Agreement.

On motion by Councilwoman Wynn, seconded by Councilman Quicke, Council authorized Manager Palmore to sign the attached Letter of Agreement after the Town Attorney has approved it. Vote:

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

LETTER FROM BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Mayor Coleburn asked for the Council’s input on the letter from County Administrator Ronnie Roark asking the Mayor and Town Council to provide the Board of Supervisor’s with a list of three or four pressing issues that we are facing as a Town. He feels we need to consider including recycling, library funding and the demolition of unsafe structures.

Councilman Green feels strongly that we should include a request for more funding for the Fire Department. He stated that the equipment at the Fire Department is aging rapidly and it going to need to be replaced soon. He asked how much money do we get from the County now to go towards helping to fund the Fire Department.

Finance Director Wells answered, \$25,000.00 for Capital Outlay and we also get 1/4 of the County’s decal money which is around \$35,000 a year.

Manager Palmore stated that he asked the County, a while ago, to set up a rotation schedule and each year to buy a piece of equipment for each department (Blackstone, Crewe and Burkeville) He feels this would be the best way to make sure all departments are taken care of. He stated that the boards on the floor of our brush fire truck are so worn that you can see the street through the floor. He does not want what he is saying be taken that he is fussing at the County, because he is not, he just feels that is a real need here and we are all citizens of Nottoway County.

Councilman Green feels that it is important for us to communicate and cooperate with the County.

Manager Palmore stated that all we asked the County for was to give us the same amount of money that they spent in the Town of Crewe for their library. He added that Nottoway County also spent \$12,000 at the airport in Crewe but they have spent nothing at our airport. He stated that Blackstone is a part of the County. He added that, in the past, the Town of Blackstone has been in a financial position where we haven't had to ask, but that's not the way it is anymore. We need help.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he will write a letter of reply and will bring it back to Council at the December Council Meeting for them to review.

Councilman Green stated that one of his concerns is that Nottoway County is considering going outside of Nottoway to purchase water when Blackstone has a surplus of 4 million gallons of water a day. He feels we need to discuss this with the Board.

Mayor Coleburn is wondering what has brought this on because there has been no formal request to the Board from the town's of Crewe or Burkeville for water and all of a sudden the Board is going to Sandy River to talk about water.

Manager Palmore stated that we are willing to sit down and talk.

Councilman Wilson feels maybe we should leave water out of the letter.

Mayor Coleburn stated that he is going to have breakfast with the Mayor's of Burkeville and Crewe on December 19th and he will talk to them about this issue then.

Councilman Quicke stated that he doesn't blame the County for looking at Sandy River but he certainly hopes they will also consider the Town of Blackstone.

BONUSES

Councilman Green made a motion to pay the Town Employees bonuses in the amount of \$15,750.00. 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

Manager Palmore asked that a detailed list of the bonuses be provided to Council within the next two days.

COMMITTEE TO HONOR FOUNDERS OF BLACKSTONE FAMILY PRACTICE CENTER

Manager Palmore had recommended, at the Council Work Session on November 12th, that Council appoint a committee to honor the three founders of the Blackstone Family Practice Center. (Dr. James S. Harris, Dr. Epes Harris and Dr. Stuart White). Manager Palmore felt that Dr. Rosenbaum, Bob Riffie and Chuck Beale would be some good names to start with.

Mayor Coleburn feels that it is very important that history be accurate. He also suggested Jane Lee Wright.

Councilman Green suggested Arlene Harris.

Mayor Coleburn stated that possibly Joan White would serve on the committee.

Manager Palmore informed Council that Jennifer Beck would be the Town's point of contact on this.

Councilman Quicke suggested Frank Yancey.

Manager Palmore feels we should have a member of Council on this Committee as well.

Councilman Green made a motion to authorize Mayor Coleburn to select and establish this Committee to honor the founders of the Blackstone Family Practice Center on or about December 1st after hearing from Members of Council. 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

ON GOING PROJECTS:

Downtown Revitalization - Manager Palmore reported that he is very happy with the business owners and the meetings have gone well. He added that in many cases the business owners will have to take quite a bit out of their own pockets to see this project through and the majority are ready to move forward. Overall he could not be any more pleased with the project. We hope to be under contract within the week to move forward on the Borum Property. The Borum's are on board and are ready to sign on the line. He stated that he cannot thank DBI enough for their hard work. He added that there is some confusion on the contractual part with one business owner. This person doesn't understand that the contracts are with the Town, the contractor and the business owner, not with DBI and the business owner. Manager Palmore stated that we will come back to those who have chosen to sit back and wait, but we aren't going to let the process get held up, we are moving forward.

Mayor Coleburn asked are the Borum's planning to just do a facade or are they planning massive renovations.

Manager Palmore answered that he feels certain that they are planning to redo the entire building. People don't understand that the grant pays \$10,000 per facade and he explained that we would not have gotten the grant if it hadn't been for the slum and blight areas in Town. The Borum property (old Epes Supply building) is one of the areas identified as slum and blight.

Castles Trailer Park - The houses are being built. He added that the men have done an outstanding job on getting the pads ready.

Manager Palmore stated that things are going well with the Grand Illumination which is scheduled for Friday, November 28th, the day after Thanksgiving.

Manager Palmore recommended that Council appoint David Ostrander as Director of Public Works. He stated that David is doing a great job. He is one of those rare people who will do anything you ask him.

Mayor Coleburn asked David how long has he been working for the Town.

David Ostrander answered, 24 years.

Councilman Green made a motion to promote David Ostrander to Director of Public Works. 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

Mayor Coleburn congratulated Mr. Ostrander and stated that this promotion is well deserved.

MISCELLANEOUS

Councilman Green asked about Dinwiddie Avenue.

Manager Palmore stated that the base is not there and it cannot holdup under the amount of truck traffic that we have on that road. He added that this is going to have to be a VDOT project.

Councilman Green asked about the request from Walter Mac Osborne about naming the street in the area near Circle Sales.

Manager Palmore feels this is immature at this point until we determine if a road will even be there.

Mayor Coleburn referred this to Councilwoman Wynn and the Street and Light Committee, because this is in her Ward.

Manager Palmore stated that he was very impressed with the talent that was shown at the play "The Sound of Music", this past weekend at Nottoway High School. He feels that we need to figure out some way that we can show our support.

Mayor Coleburn stated that over 200 people were involved in the play.

Councilwoman Wynn stated that we have so much talent in Town that no one even knows about.

MAYOR'S MINUTE

Mayor Coleburn stated that he has heard that he may be invited to a DBI Board meeting and if so there will be two other members of Council at that meeting so it will be considered a legal Council Meeting.

Councilman Green welcomed the other Council Members to come to the DBI Board.

Mayor Coleburn stated that if he is invited, he will let the Town Clerk know so she can notify the Council Members.

POLICE REPORT

There were no comments on the Police Report.

CITIZEN’S COMMENTS

Lafayette Dickens thanked Council for allocating \$4,600.00 to DBI to help with rent on their new office space. He also thanked Council for the \$500.00 donation to the Christmas Parade. He stated that he also wanted to publicly thank the Chamber of Commerce for all their hard work on the Christmas Parade. He stated that the parade is really shaping up and he feels it is going to be a great event. He added that the Grand Marshall is going to be Col. Tom Wilkinson, the new Post Commander at Fort Pickett. He informed Council that we are going to have a first Annual Downtown Blackstone Open House after the Grand Illumination on Friday, November 28th. The theme is “An old fashioned Christmas”. He mentioned that it was Grace McDonald’s idea to do this. He handed out information to Council on what will be going on during the Downtown Blackstone Open House. He stated there will be a “Win-The-Window” Contest and explained the way this works is, you enter a drawing and if you win, you get all the merchandise in the window. The idea is to get people going Downtown and hopefully they will see and discover what the businesses have to offer. This is an opportunity to rediscover Blackstone. He added that this contest will go on until about a week before Christmas.

Mayor Coleburn stated that this is outstanding. It is probably the first Downtown promotion in ten or fifteen years.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Coleburn declared the meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

_____ APPROVED AND ADOPTED

TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

