

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, January 25, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: William D. Coleburn

Council Members: Christine Hasbrouck, Barbara Thompson, Nathaniel Miller, Eric Nash, Tom Wilkinson

Town Staff: Philip Vannoorbeeck, Town Manager; Jennifer Daniel, Town Clerk; Jennifer Hardy, Finance Director; Dion Tomer, Fire Chief; Chris Mathias, Sergeant

Town Attorney:

Those Absent: Shelia Jones, Lonnie Morgan

Mayor Coleburn called the January Council Meeting to order.

Mayor Coleburn delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Coleburn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

#### *NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF BLACKSTONE*

*The Town of Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on January 25, 2021 at 7:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Va. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider a Rezoning request from **The Town of Blackstone** to rezone approximately 2.0 acres bounded on the south by Second Street, on the east by College Avenue and on the west by S. Amelia Avenue. The property is located at 610 Second and is designated as Nottoway County Tax Map Number 50A25-1-26-21 through 40. The pending request is to rezone this property from the PO, Public Open Space District to the R-3, Residential District. This rezoning, if approved would permit the development of Multi-Family Dwellings. The Town Council may act on this request following this public hearing.*

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this property is located on Second Street, between College Avenue and Amelia Avenue. He said this property currently has the salt shed and abandoned water tank. The Planning Commission had met and recommended approval to R-3, with a 50' setback on the College Avenue side, instead of the 35' required. He believed the parties involved thought that would work out. He said this property consists of (20) 25' wide lots.

Mayor Coleburn opened the Public Hearing and asked if there was anyone here to speak for or against the proposal.

Mayor Coleburn said there is a proposal to build apartments on this property and rezoning is required for the request.

Mayor Coleburn asked how many units there would be. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, the proposal included says 40 units, but could be more. He added, based on the area and bedroom numbers, it could accommodate up to (65) one-bedroom units or (56) two-bedroom units.

Mayor Coleburn closed the Public Hearing.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this was not advertised as a conditional rezoning, so the 50' setback would have to be included in the motion.

***Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to rezone 610 Second Street, Tax Map Number 50A25-1-26-21 through 40 from Public and Open Space to R-3, Heavy Residential. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**RFP – 610 Second Street**

Mayor Coleburn said there was one proposal received from Mr. Dave McCormack. He said Mr. McCormack wants to pay \$40,000, which is what it was appraised for. He said on this property sits a one million gallon concrete water basin that is now offline. He said the Town received two informal estimates to demolish the tank, one for \$150,000.00 and the other for \$200,000.00. He said Mr. McCormack would pay for the property and demolish the tank, but for the demolition expense Mr. McCormack would like to be reimbursed with credits, such as waiving tap fees or electrical connections.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the proposal did have a zoning contingency, such as environmental assurances that Mr. McCormack has asked the Town to provide. He said the Town did get environmental clearance from Cornerstone Environmental for the removal of the old tar tanks.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he had one other individual that approached him as being interested in submitting a proposal, but did not submit anything.

Mayor Coleburn said he did not like to horse trade a lot, but the people in Washington that run FASTC are frustrated by the lack of development in Blackstone to accommodate the trainees. He said Mr. McCormack had already built one complex on Second Street, called Nottoway House. He said the students love when they get assigned here because they don't have to ride a bus in the morning and evening to and from Blackstone, when they could be studying.

Mayor Coleburn asked Mr. McCormack if these buildings were geared towards FASTC. Mr. McCormack replied yes.

Mayor Coleburn asked if there would be a low-income component to these buildings. Mr. McCormack replied no.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck asked if the apartments would be available to anyone, when classes were not in session. He said there is nothing to prevent anybody from renting these units, anyone can stay there.

Mayor Coleburn asked Mr. McCormack if he had a number of apartments in mind. Mr. McCormack said the classes seem to be coming in by 22s, so 44 would be a good number for them and is what financing will allow. Mayor Coleburn asked if they could do 66. Mr. McCormack said theoretically they could, but from a business standpoint, they did not want to get too aggressive.

Mayor Coleburn said Mr. McCormack was smart and took the highest estimate for the tank removal. He said the proposal also wanted to include curb and gutter, and would be in addition to the \$200,000.00 in credits. Mr. McCormack replied yes, they were assuming they did not need it there. He said we did do curb and gutter on the last project, but it was specific to that project. He said if they didn't need it, he didn't want to have to do it.

Mayor Coleburn asked if there were enough credits to achieve the \$160,000.00. Manager Vannoorbeeck said if the Town were to include curb and gutter it would reach \$160,000.00 pretty quick. He said tap fees could be roughly \$15,000.00, plus transformers.

Mayor Coleburn said this would be such a significant project, he would hate to not see curb and gutter there. He said those that live in the area may be insulted that don't have curb and gutter. He said the FASTC trainees that are not sleeping in Blackstone, have zero chance to support the local economy.

Mayor Coleburn said in the proposal it said Mr. McCormack would commence construction within 120 days. Mr. McCormack replied yes, provided we can come to a good number. He said to build to the quality as the other is expensive, which is why you aren't seeing a lot of new construction, and they are taking some risks.

Manager Vannoorbeeck reminded Council that the Town's Ordinance does have the Town paying half of curb and gutter anyhow.

Councilman Nash said he wants to see the project done, but would like to have firm estimates in writing on how much it would cost to remove the tank. Mr. McCormack said he liked that idea. He said if all the other terms look okay, he would like to have a post agreement or negotiation.

Manager Vannoorbeeck suggested the negotiations be discussed with the Buildings, Property and Cemetery Committee.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to proceed with Waukeshaw Development and seek bids for the demolition of the concrete tank.***

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked if Council would prefer to have an agreement rather than the proposal and have Attorney Bacon draw it up.

***The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.***

Mayor Coleburn said this is an unusual deal being made, but Mr. McCormack will not be actively competing with the yearlong renters.

Ms. Gloria Gray said she owns property in this area. She said at the last meeting it was said the only people that would be staying in these units would be people from FASTC and now she is hearing that anybody can rent these units. Councilman Nash believed the rental prices would solve that. Mayor Coleburn guessed the rentals would be \$1,000.00 a month.

Mr. McCormack said these will be custom made for FASTC, he did not want to get into fair housing, it would be illegal to say someone could not live there.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**COMMITTEE REFERRALS:**

*Cemetery Headstone*

Mr. John Nevins said when they viewed the plot, they were under the impression they could get the headstone without a variance. He said there may have been miscommunication but they were told it would be no problem. He said they had already ordered the headstone and Simmons Monument was waiting to install it.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this request was for a four grave section and the headstone is supposed to be in the center. He said their request is the set it off center on graves 1 and 2.

Councilman Nash asked if it would create a maintenance issue. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it would be offset, but half the headstones through the years have been offset. He said he was good with it. He said the request is for Ms. Nannie Procise.

***Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to approve the headstone request for Ms. Nannie Procise to be offset in the four-grave section. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.***

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**MINUTES:**

***Councilman Nash made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Continued Meeting on December 2, 2020 and the Regular Council Meeting on December 21, 2020. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**VISITORS:**

1. Ms. Melody Foster – Commonwealth Regional Council

Ms. Foster was not in attendance.

2. Ms. Beverly Ambs – Blackstone Chamber

Ms. Ambs said she was here representing the Juneteenth Jubilee; she was asking to use the Armory on June 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> to set up and use the historic area. She said Mayor Coleburn had mentioned closing Main Street.

Mayor Coleburn said the pandemic was still going on, he said he reached out to Ms. Arlene Robertson with the Nottoway NAACP about hosting an event in Blackstone. He said Ms. Robertson was open to that. He said everyone is still on guard with the pandemic.

Councilman Nash said he would like to see something in writing, what is the event and hours. Ms. Ambs said she was still in the planning phase. She had talked to Ms. Chastiddy Bryant, who was representing the Town, along with Justin Sarafin and Councilman Miller. She said there was a committee of about 7 people.

Mayor Coleburn said he thought Ms. Ambs was asking about Arts and Crafts. He said there could be a chance that come September, the Armory could be under construction. Ms. Ambs said that is why she was asking now so Council can schedule things around Arts and Crafts.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck asked Ms. Ambs if she would collaborate with the NAACP on the Juneteenth Jubilee.

Councilman Miller was concerned with what could be happening with the Armory and COVID, he asked to wait a few months.

Councilman Nash asked for details for the February Council Meeting.

Ms. Ambs said she was looking at doing some things in the Town Square, as well as things inside the Armory and in the grassy area next to the Armory.

Mayor Coleburn said Arts and Crafts and the Juneteenth Jubilee will be discussed further at the February Council Meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### *The Book End - Friends of the Library Request*

Mayor Coleburn said there was a letter in the packet from Mrs. Sara Gilmore with the Friends of the Library. He said the Book End Building has a new owner and will now be charging \$200.00 a month for rent. He said the Friends are all volunteers and they do not generate enough money with the used books. Mrs. Gilmore said with the rent of \$2,400.00 a year, that is more than they generate a month.

Mayor Coleburn said the Friends are asking that either the Town pay the rent or help them find a new home.

Mayor Coleburn referred this request to the Account and Finance Committee.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town has the unexpected revenue from gaming, he suggested using this money, the Town already has a year's worth of rent collected.

Councilman Nash believed it was already designated for something.

## **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:**

Chief Tomer said they were working with the Commonwealth Regional Council on a grant application for a new aerial device because they did not get the previous grant. He said he had high hopes but felt low probability without any political influence.

Councilman Nash suggested Council reach out to the County for help. Mayor Coleburn believed it would help knowing someone in Washington. Councilwoman Hasbrouck asked about FASTC because the Town was not able to support the buildings out there.

Chief Tomer was told that the Fire and EMS Resolution was passed by the County to have the Virginia Fire Service Board come do a Study. He hoped the Study would provide some guidance on the importance of having this device in our County.

***Councilman Nash made a motion authorizing Mayor Coleburn to write a letter on behalf of Council and address it to Congresswoman Spanberger, FEMA and the US Department of State about being ignored for the Town's ladder truck request, with the most likely place it would be used is FASTC. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.***

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

Councilman Nash said this just does not affect if there was a fire, insurance rates go up by not having a ladder truck, so all citizens are affected right now.

Chief Tomer said with the banquet being cancelled, they were still working on a platform to recognize awards. He said right now they were limited with what they could do, the elections were even held through Zoom.

***Councilman Miller made a motion to approve the annual Fire Department Slate of Officers. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Hasbrouck.***

Fire Chief - Dion Tomer, Deputy Fire Chief- Zachery Beares, Assistant Fire Chief - Phillip Ray Armes, 1<sup>st</sup> Captain - Benjamin Haug, 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain - Cody Lewis, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant - Phillip Armes Sr., 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant - Devin Foster, Treasurer - Tony Bradford, Secretary - Kaity Morgan.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

Mayor Coleburn said the Town was blessed with over 50 volunteers. He said it was announced at the Board of Supervisors Meeting that Burkeville has (6) paid EMS providers, but their fire department has (6) volunteer members, with (3) of them over the age of 65.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to surplus the 1989 aerial device (ladder truck). The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.***



Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

Chief Tomer said Deputy Chief Beares received his 20 years of service this month and is now a life member. He said a third Bradford was brought onto the Senior Fire Department and Austin Hoover just joined, who is the son of Wayne Hoover.

**PAYMENT OF BILLS:**

Mayor Coleburn stated the bills that have already been paid are in the amount of \$1,034,375.08.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town had cash in a money market account and moved \$525,000.00 to Benchmark to draw interest at 2.58%. He said the CD with Benchmark at 2.58% expires this time next year. Councilman Nash said COVID relief was included as well in these bills, in the amount of \$21,000.00.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$1,034,375.08. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

Mayor Coleburn stated the bills not yet approved, and to be paid, are in the amount of \$126,096.70.

***Councilwoman Thompson made a motion to approve as presented, the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$126,096.70. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

Councilman Nash asked what was owed in outstanding utilities. He asked if the customers that received COVID Relief Funds were advised this could be a one-time deal only.

Councilman Miller asked what kind of agreement was signed. Finance Director Hardy replied the Agreement customers signed stated they were affected by COVID. She said there are notices on the back of the utility bills letting customers know about payment agreements, but as of last week, there were zero payment agreements in place.

Councilman Miller asked if this funding is available again, can the same people get it. Finance Director Hardy replied, we were not allowed to let any COVID assistance go towards a customer that had already received COVID assistance in the same period.

Councilman Nash said included in the packet it says delinquent utilities from November was \$103,000.00, December was \$45,000.00 and January was \$76,000.00. Finance Director Hardy said included in January's amount is a \$40,000.00 pledge from Social Services for heating assistance, which has not been received yet.

### **APPROPRIATIONS:**

#### **Appropriation #1 – Electric Fund = \$141,933.00**

Manager Vannoorbeeck said appropriations are unbudgeted expenditures.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the amount included was incorrect, it should be \$144,583.00, there was an Option 1 included with the original bid and Mr. Dan Martin asked that it be included. This is for switch gear upgrades that were previously budgeted.

***Councilman Miller made a motion to approve the appropriation in the corrected amount of \$144,583.00. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**Appropriation #2 – Administration - \$13,535.00**

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Town Hall had a new phone system paid for by the CARES Act.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the appropriation in the amount of \$13,535.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.***

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**1. Health & Ordinance – met 1-6-21 – minutes included in January’s Council Packet**

**Garbage Collection Fee Policy**

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he contacted the County about the \$3.00 landfill charge, that is non-negotiable and applied to every meter.

Councilman Nash asked what the purpose of the \$3.00 was, don’t we pay tipping charges already. He asked if the Town gets charged when the garbage trucks go out there. Manager Vannoorbeeck said we are not charged by the ton, just the \$3.00. He said the Town does get charged for sludge by the ton and we are charged tipping fees for the dump truck loads.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said a Policy on garbage collection fees would be presented to the Committee.

**Tourism Zone**

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we want to make sure everyone has the same opportunities, so the recommendation was to encompass the entire Town limits of Blackstone. He said this is needed for a portion of the Town's Virginia Tourism Council Grant Application for VUMAC. He believed there were some issues on the application with the marketing plan of a certain standard that we do not have, so he was not sure if we would be able to move forward.

***Councilman Miller made a motion to advertise a Public Hearing declaring the Town boundaries as the Tourism Zone. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**Trash Collection Incident**

Manager Vannoorbeeck said a gentleman on McArthur Drive claimed his Christmas decorations were damaged during trash collection and requested \$30.00. He said the Committee recommended \$15.00.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to pay Mr. Eaheart \$15.00 for his damaged Christmas decorations. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.***

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**Trash Collection Changes**

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Committee discussed providing garbage cans for residents. He said the price is about \$55.00 a can, which would be a 90 gallon can on wheels. He said for roughly 3500 customers, that would be \$170,000.00. He said the purpose of these cans would be to get them off private property and brought to the street.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck said in an area in Georgia, the citizens had to pay for their trash cans. She said those that are not able to get it to the street, they get a waiver from the Town.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said these cans would work on our current garbage trucks.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck suggested applying the \$55.00 to utility bills and stagger the payments.

This was referred to Account and Finance for discussions with the Budget.

2. **Account & Finance – met 1/7/21 – minutes included in January’s Council Packet**

**Online Payment Fees**

Chairman Nash said RFPs were sent out and the Committee recommended staying with Citizens Bank & Trust and pay \$225.00 a month for ACH transactions.

Mayor Coleburn asked if the transactions would be done daily. Finance Director Hardy replied, this allows daily transactions.

Chairman Nash said the Committee recommended paying by check online should remain a free service. Manager Vannoorbeeck added Mr. Taylor Quicke with Citizens Bank had the payroll ACH fee waived, so that saves the Town.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to renew the ACH Agreement with Citizens Bank & Trust in the amount of \$225.00 a month and waive the online pay by check fees. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**Bus Budget**

Chairman Nash said Transit Director Worrell’s Budget was presented with everything on the high end and did not commit the Town to anything. He said this needs to be submitted to DRPT for their approval, and by submitting everything high, that will leave room for adjustments, such as salaries, which were discussed during the Committee Meeting.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the total being submitted is \$739,655.08 and does reflect a \$42,223.11 of local match, which may be covered by COVID. Chairman Nash said if the Town were to go with the top end raises, it would cost the Town an additional \$6,000.00.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Bus Budget being submitted to DRPT. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.***

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**FY22 Draft Budget Calendar**

Chairman Nash said this is presented so Finance Director Hardy keeps the Committee on track.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the FY22 Budget Calendar as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

### Utility Meter Readings

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this request came from Mr. Dan Martin. He said it still needs further investigation so no action is needed tonight. He said Mr. Martin would like the meter reading dates moved from the 11<sup>th</sup> of the month and go to the first of each month. He said this would help to compare VMEA bills and actual sales. He said it would only increase the number of days on the first time reading.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said as part of the Town's projects through USDA funding, one is replacing the current water meters with remote meters. He said the Town was looking at two types of meters, one is Census and the other is ITRON. He said the money was already borrowed for this project. He said this project would probably be bid out with the East End Project.

### CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no Consent Agenda items.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

#### 1. RFP – 610 Second Street

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

#### 2. Peak Generator Plant – Switching Gears

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in 2016 this project was bid out and came in at \$285,000.00, which was too expensive. He said the controls from 1989, are so old, there is no longer a service agreement available. He said the money had been put aside in the Depreciation Fund and Carter Machinery was the sole source, because it is a Carter generator. He said the amount of the bid is \$144,583.00, which includes Option 1, breaker maintenance.

Councilman Nash asked if there was any return on this investment. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no, but if it doesn't run the Town is penalized.

***Councilwoman Thompson made a motion to approve the bid from Carter Machinery to replace the switching gears in the amount of \$144,583.00. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Hasbrouck.***

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

### 3. Lakeview Cemetery Policy

Manager Vannoorbeeck clarified easels are not allowed, and Council reaffirmed at last month's Council Meeting.

Mayor Coleburn said the easels were not allowed because it interferes with grass cutting and raking leaves.

Mayor Coleburn thought in the month of December, the Town could be easel friendly when the leaves are up and there is no grass growing, because people were more expressive during Christmas.

Manager Vannoorbeeck suggested posting the rules in the Cemetery.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to allow flower easels in the Cemetery from December 1<sup>st</sup> through January 7<sup>th</sup> each year. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Hasbrouck.***

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye



4. Downtown Light Poles – Painting

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the flags that hang on the light poles were being laundered now. He said the Beautification Committee recommended previously to paint the light poles in the Historic Business District and chose Historic Charleston Green as the color. He said two poles were painted last year as samples. He said there were 87 poles at \$85.00 a pole. He said this project still needed to be bid out.

Councilman Wilkinson asked if the two poles painted last year, weathered okay. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, they seem to be, this painting would get all the poles consistent.

***Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to seek bids for painting the light poles in the Historic Business District. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

5. N. Amelia Avenue – Sewer Relocation Bids

Manager Vannoorbeeck said four bids were received and opened on January 6, 2021. He said the recommended low bid was from Lee’s Excavating in the amount of \$109,837.00. He said the Engineer’s estimate was \$157,000.00, something came in under budget.

Mayor Coleburn asked when this project would begin. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, within the next 30 days.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to award the sewer relocation on North Amelia Avenue to the low bidder, Lee’s Excavating in the amount of \$109,837.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

6. USDA – Loan Resolution – 2021 Sanitation Vehicle

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town received a commitment from USDA for a loan in the amount of \$78,000.00 at 2.125% for 10 years. He said this garbage truck would have an International Chassis and a pack more body. He said the USDA is also providing a \$75,000.00 grant, with a total project of \$153,000.00.

***Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to approve the Loan Resolution for the Sanitation Vehicle and authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the necessary documents. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

Councilman Nash asked if the Town would be retiring any debt this upcoming year that could replace this loan. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town had retired a significant amount of debt already this year. He said the Town paid off the Tanker Truck, cars and a garbage truck.

Councilman Nash asked if the Town would have additional expenditures because of this. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not know if it would be a complete wash, but it was his expectation the previous amounts being paid would be close.

7. USDA – Loan Resolution – 2021 Dump Trucks A & B

Manager Vannoorbeeck said USDA contacted him about purchasing two dump trucks and offered a grant in the amount of \$75,000.00 per truck, with a total grant of \$150,000.00. He said the difference would be paid in a loan at 2.125% for 10 years.

Councilman Nash asked what would be out of pocket for the Town. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, \$104,000.00. He added these would be VDOT standard trucks. Councilman Nash asked if they would be stainless steel bodies. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed so.

Finance Director Hardy reminded Council the dump truck that caught fire was never replaced.

***Councilman Wilkinson made a motion to approve the Loan Resolution for (2) dump trucks and authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute all necessary documents. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Hasbrouck.***

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**ON-GOING PROJECTS:**

1. Dilapidated Buildings

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Tunstall Avenue warehouse had been removed. He said the property owner of 134 Carver Street had the house demolished.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he spoke with the buyer of the funeral home on Church Street and it is expected to be resolved and removed by February 15, 2021.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the last house at the end of Third Street has a trailer in the back yard, the siding has been removed and only the shell of the structure remains. He said he was meeting with the property owners tomorrow to sign an Indemnity Agreement.

2. Meals Tax

There were no new outstanding Meals Tax.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Meals Tax was down 16.6%.

### 3. Street Improvement Projects

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this project would run from Sixth to Tenth Street and would finish the sidewalk from the old Medical Center to Tenth Street. He said four contractors attended the pre-bid meeting.

Mayor Coleburn asked if there would be detours. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no, that was not the expectation.

### 4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex / TAP 21

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he met with some members of the Gators. He said they have an ambitious program, which will ultimately be a good thing, but he could not afford to do all it at this time. He said they want a concession stand with an announcer's booth on the second floor. He said he talked with the Recreation Association and they were in agreement to take the adult size field and reduce it to a T-Ball Field.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked Council to allow him to move the fencing. He said the Town received a \$250,000.00 Grant from VDOT to do curb and gutter and antique lighting. He said he may not be able to wait on that to move the fence. He said that would be the biggest part for this year, plus the infield and purchasing some bleachers. He said the concession stand would have to be next year, but the bathrooms would be shared with the Recreation Association.

Councilman Nash asked to have the field symmetrical.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the sidewalk and curb and gutter would be bid out in May for the VDOT Grant.

### 5. East End Neighborhood Project

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed there were enough funds available from Phase I to do three houses and will be bid out soon.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there would be a Public Meeting in February for Phase II.

### 6. Weatherization

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would be discussed again during the budget process.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### *1. Cares Act*

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was a significant amount of money that had been earmarked for the Town. He believed the County was going to allow the Town to rollover what was left over from the last round, then there is going to be a new round of money, which will be roughly \$500,000.00 in federal money. He said the deadline for this money to be spent is September 2021.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck suggested this money help with broadband improvements and maybe electric vehicle chargers.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said they had been working on something to allow virtual tours for the museums.

Mayor Coleburn referred this to the Buildings, Property and Cemetery Committee.

Finance Director Hardy said the money has to be spent on COVID related issues.

### *2. The Book End – Friends of the Library Request*

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

### *3. Progressive Engineering – Engineering Services Contract*

Mayor Coleburn said this is for engineering services with Progressive Engineering, who helps the Town with electrical issues.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the rate schedule was the same and Progressive Engineering is requesting the contract be authorized for another year.

***Councilman Nash made a motion approving the engineering services contract with Progressive Engineering for one year. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.***

Manager Vannoorbeeck clarified they are only paid when services are needed.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

4. DBi – Virginia Main Street Biennial MOU

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked to make one modification on the second page. He said the boundaries are not what Council has approved. He said it should state the boundaries are as defined by Blackstone Town Council and approved by DHCD.

Mr. Justin Sarafin said he would discuss with Virginia Main Street.

***Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to approve the MOU with the boundary map being corrected to match what Town Council approved. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.***

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

5. Metal Detecting Request

Mayor Coleburn said Mr. Donnie Williamson of Crewe is requesting to metal detect at the Fire Training Grounds, Schwartz Tavern and the field next to the Armory. He said Mr. Williamson assures the Town he would fill in all holes after digging.

Councilman Nash believed the Committee had already discussed no metal detecting at Schwartz Tavern and he felt uncomfortable allowing someone in a locked area at the Fire Training Grounds. He said he would agree to the field beside the Armory. He said the Committee discussed any items at Schwartz Tavern should be left as is, unless it was a certified archeological dig.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to approve Mr. Williamson's request to metal detect at just the field next to the Armory. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.***

Council asked that anyone metal detecting check in and check out at Town Hall.

Mayor Coleburn asked if someone does find an artifact, that is be photographed and reported to Town Hall.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck suggested providing a permit to each person metal detecting.

Ms. Beverly Ambs said the Town could be held liable if someone gets hurt by the holes being dug.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

#### **6. Police Department Sewer**

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the sewer line at the Police Department is a gravity flow line, which goes into a very shallow manhole. He said when we get an appreciable rain, the manhole fills up and the Police Department has been closing a valve so it does not back up, but has backed up twice.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in order to fix this a fiberglass septic tank would need to be installed. He said he received an estimate of \$9,600.00, with the Town providing the power.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for authorization to seek bids.

Mayor Coleburn said by Common Consent, Manager Vannoorbeeck would seek bids.

7. DCJS Grant – Police Department Body Worn Cameras

Sgt. Mathias said this grant would include 10 cameras.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would be a 50/50 Grant, with the Town’s match being \$12,065.00.

Mayor Coleburn said this would replace cameras that are about 5 years old.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to submit the Grant Application. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.***

Sgt. Mathias said the Police Department had \$10,000.00 and roughly \$2,000.00 would come from the Town’s budget. He believed \$7,000.00 would come from Asset Forfeiture.

Sgt. Mathias said the Town has 12 officers, but that excludes the Chief and the Investigator.

Councilman Nash asked if either of them was called out, do they have access to an older camera, because we need to err on the side of caution. Sgt. Mathias replied yes.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

**COMMITTEE REFERRALS:**

1. Cemetery Headstone

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

**MAYORS MINUTE:**

Black History Heroes Program

Mayor Coleburn said last month Council agreed to the first annual Black History Heroes Program. He read the following and said it would be distributed on social media and given to staff along with some churches.



“The Town of Blackstone proudly seeks nominations for its 1st Annual Black History Heroes program. The Town is looking to recognize native sons and daughters and long-time residents -- past and present -- who overcame obstacles and achieved success in industry, business, medicine, law, education, public service, and community involvement. The Town will recognize up to five recipients each year, including up to two posthumously. Nominations will consist of at least one nomination letter, no more than 300 words each, and a photo of the nominee. Supporting letters, also no more than 300 words each, will also be considered. Entries should be addressed to: Black History Heroes Program, Town of Blackstone, 100 West Elm Street, Blackstone, VA 23824 or emailed to: [info@townofblackstoneva.com](mailto:info@townofblackstoneva.com), the Nomination deadline: Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>, with winners announced in March.”

Mayor Coleburn said Manager Vannoorbeeck, Councilwoman Thompson and himself would be the committee that reviews the applications.

### VML – November Elections

Mayor Coleburn said the State Senate passed a Bill, with the Lieutenant Governor breaking the tie, so if it passes the House, and the Governor signs it, all elections in Virginia would be in November. He said Delegate Frank Ruff told him he believed the House would defeat it because Northern Virginia has a lot of towns and cities where one precinct may have three or four House Senate simultaneously with ward/council races.

Councilman Nash believed here in Blackstone; it would save money.

Mayor Coleburn said he likes it because of higher turn-outs, but it was not the Town’s call. He said he did not like VML sending an email urging us to have our lawmakers kill this Bill. He said VML needs to let towns speak for themselves.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was Bill that he believed the Senate Committee met on Friday, to legalize retail sales of marijuana. He said it mandated that it be permitted in localities unless by Referendum, the locality opts out. He believed VML was trying to have an opt in, if you want to have it in your community then vote to do so. He said as it stands right now, no locality is exempt from retail marijuana sales.

Mayor Coleburn asked if it could just be allowed in the Specialized Business District. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it will be allowed unless a locality opts out by Referendum.

Councilman Nash asked if the Town would generate any revenue from this. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, there would be a sales tax. Councilman Nash said personally, he would be against it.

**POLICE REPORT:**

Mayor Coleburn asked if there were less traffic stops because of COVID. Sgt. Mathias replied yes sir.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

Ms. Ambs said she was contacted by Jan's Residential, who is redoing their Disaster Plan. She asked where those residents could go in case of a natural disaster. Mayor Coleburn said hopefully in two years it would be the Armory. Manager Vannoorbeeck said to refer them to Nottoway County's Plan.

Mayor Coleburn said starting July 1, 2021, the County would have a Director of Emergency Operations. He said the shelters in Nottoway County are the gyms.

Councilman Nash said the neighbor to Jan's Residential is putting up a series of doors as a fence. He asked Manager Vannoorbeeck to check on this.

Mr. Michael Bagley believed the Budget Plan needed to be revisited, so it could help the citizens. He said it may help if the Ward leaders would push it.

Mayor Coleburn suggested letting new customers know about the Budget Plan when signing up for service, but you have to have 12 months to get the average cost.

Mayor Coleburn said people have expressed concern about rent rising in Blackstone. He asked if the Town could do rent control. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not know, he would have to look at the State Code.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711

1/ Personnel – Administration

***Councilman Nash made a motion to go into Closed Session for discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.***

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye

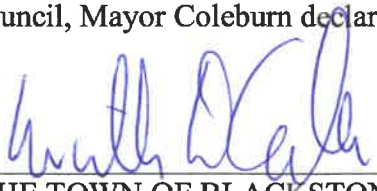
***Councilman Nash made a motion to certify that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened, were heard, discussed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

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Wilkinson	-	Certify
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Certify
Councilwoman Jones	-	Absent
Councilman Morgan	-	Absent
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Certify
Councilman Miller	-	Certify
Councilman Nash	-	Certify

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

March 3, 2021 APPROVED AND ADOPTED

  
TOWN CLERK  
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

