

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, March 15, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor:

Council Members: Christine Hasbrouck, Shelia Jones, Lonnie Morgan,
Nathaniel Miller, Eric Nash, Tom Wilkinson

Town Staff: Philip Vannoorbeeck, Town Manager; Jennifer Daniel,
Town Clerk, Nicholas Kuzmiak, Police Chief

Town Attorney: Tessie B. Bacon

Those Absent: William D. Coleburn, Barbara Thompson, Jennifer Hardy,
Dion Tomer

Clerk Daniel called the March Council Meeting to order.

Councilman Miller delivered the Invocation.

Manager Vannoorbeeck led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Henshaw Group, LLC – Rezoning Request

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF BLACKSTONE

*The Town of Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on March 15, 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 **Henshaw Group, LLC** to rezone a single parcel bounded on the north by East Broad Street. The property is designated as Nottoway County Tax Map Number 50A27-1-R-23 and is also known as 204 East Broad Street. The pending request is to rezone this property from the R-1, Residential District to the B-G, Business District. This rezoning if approved would permit the placement of a Personal Service Establishment, as defined by the Blackstone Zoning Ordinance.*

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this property was known as the old cab stand on East Broad Street. He said there was a request to open a hair salon in the building and realized the property was zoned R-1, so this request is to rezone the property to General Business. He said the Planning Commission recommended approval.

Manager Vannoorbeeck opened the Public Hearing.

Ms. Brenda Tucker said she is the aunt of the lady that is requesting the rezoning. She said her niece has been to school and has her permit for cosmetology and recommended approval.

Manager Vannoorbeeck closed the Public Hearing.

Councilman Nash made a motion to rezone 204 East Broad Street from R-1 to General Business. The motion was seconded by Councilman Morgan.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

2. Mr. Dmitriy Bocheko – Rezoning Request

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

The Town of Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on March 15, 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 Dmitriy Bocheko to rezone approximately 4.41 acres bounded on the north by Pine Road and on the east by Sullivan Street. The undeveloped property is designated as Nottoway County Tax Map Number 50A20-1-3. The pending request is to rezone this property from the M-1, Manufacturing district to the R-3 Residential district. This rezoning if approved would specifically permit the placement of single family, two family and multi-family dwellings.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this property was originally zoned R-2, and then a few years ago rezoned to M-1 for a company, Moonlight Mechanical. He said Mr. Bocheko purchased the residual of the property left after Nottoway Baptist Church purchased the building. He said the church had already been rezoned back to R-2 and Mr. Bocheko's request was for R-3 zoning.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Planning Commission recommended rezoning to R-2, medium residential. He said the only difference is R-3 would permit multi-family apartments and R-2 does not permit that.

Councilman Nash believed Mr. Bocheko planned to build single family homes.

Manager Vannoorbeeck opened the Public Hearing.

Manager Vannoorbeeck closed the Public Hearing.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to approve the rezoning of Nottoway County Tax Map Number 50A20-1-3 to R-2, Medium Residential, as recommended by the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Councilman Nash abstained because he is the deed holder.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

3. Tourism Zone

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF BLACKSTONE

The Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on March 15, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blackstone Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Va. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider a proposed ordinance which would establish the Town of Blackstone as a Tourism Zone and establish incentives for current and future businesses which are associated with the tourism industry.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this got started with VUMAC, there was a grant program through the Virginia Tourism Corporation. He said with this program, the State was not satisfied with the lack of a marketing plan. He said this has fallen by the wayside now, but he would still like to pursue the Tourism Zone. He recommended, if approved, that requests to receive incentives be approved by Council, because Council would be abating their taxes for a period of time.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the incentives include a five-year real estate tax reinvestment credit, but there has been a precedent with the Town, where this was done twice before, but for only three years.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the waiver in tap fees, with a typical tap fee being \$1,600.00, this would take \$1,000.00 off the tap fee.

Manager Vannoorbeeck opened the Public Hearing.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we may need to polish the definition of tourist related, maybe be more specific.

Councilman Nash asked if this would include people building single family homes. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not think so, it would be more for multi-family, or maybe not multi-family but more for hotels or units being built on short stays, under 30-day standards.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the boundaries of the Tourism Zone would be the entire Town limits.

Councilwoman Jones suggested holding the tax credits at three years.

Councilman Nash suggested holding off until there is a definition.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would work with DBi on the definition.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we are holding the Public Hearing tonight and this would be continued to next month's meeting.

Councilman Nash asked how a date would be set, would anything be retroactive. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it would not be retroactive and a date would be set, perhaps July 1st. He said it would apply to certificates of occupancy issued after July 1st.

Manager Vannoorbeeck closed the Public Hearing.

4. Boarding House Term to Guest House

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF BLACKSTONE

The Town of Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on March 15, 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 an ordinance which would amend and reenact Section 6-1.7 and portions of Section 21-3 of the Blackstone Zoning Ordinance. Specifically, the proposed ordinance would remove the term Boarding House and replace it with the term Guest House. No other amendments to the definition or permitted uses would be affected.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said currently the Town has something called a Boarding House in our Zoning Ordinance. He said this Public Hearing was to change the name, not the definition, to Guest House.

Manager Vannoorbeeck opened the Public Hearing.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Planning Commission discussed and approved this change.

Manager Vannoorbeeck closed the Public Hearing.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the name change from Boarding House to Guest House in the Blackstone Zoning Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

MINUTES:

Councilman Nash made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Special Called Meeting on March 3, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

VISITORS:

1. Ms. Beverly Ambs – Blackstone Chamber

Ms. Ambs said the Chamber would like to reserve the grounds beside the Armory for an annual BBQ cookoff on June 19th. She said they would like to serve beer, wine and have music. She asked to waive the Noise Ordinance and said the music would be done by 10:00 p.m. She said the Chamber would acquire the necessary liquor licenses, portable toilets and hand washing stations. She said the competitors would meet the health department requirements.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town would require the TULIP Policy through VRSA for the alcohol portion.

Ms. Ambs said the event would be Saturday, June 19, 2021 from 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Councilman Miller asked Ms. Ambs if she was still going to do this event for Juneteenth. Ms. Ambs replied no, this is not part of Juneteenth, which was discussed at the Committee Meeting.

Councilman Nash asked about lighting for the field. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would have Mr. Dan Martin provide lighting.

Ms. Ambs said this is just a Chamber event that will be ticketed, and limited to ticket members. She said they would like to use the banners that businesses have purchased as a barrier, they are all 4' tall and would block off the area of competition.

Councilwoman Jones asked why this was being done so close to the Juneteenth event. Ms. Ambs said they were trying to get as many things done outdoors as possible due to COVID. She said originally it was planned to go along with Juneteenth, but there was a lot of controversy. She said the Chamber Board decided to separate the event.

Councilwoman Jones said she did not want anything to be taken from Juneteenth. Ms. Ambs said that is why they separated it.

Councilman Miller said he attended the Juneteenth Meetings and a lot of people thought if the BBQ was done on the 26th it would take away from June Jubilee, plus there were tickets being sold, so in order not to cause a conflict, Ms. Ambs changed the date.

Councilwoman Jones said she understood, but that's the problem, we need to come together with functions like this. Councilman Miller said they had been through a lot to get where we are now, and thought it was a great idea and applauded the Chamber for doing this.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve use of the field next to the Armory on Saturday, June 19, 2021 for the BBQ Cookoff, with the event ending at 10:00 p.m., that the Chamber be responsible for any COVID related Orders by the Governor and that the Chamber will provide a TULIP Policy through VRSA.

A member from the audience asked if there was an age limit. Ms. Ambs replied, yes, 21 years and over.

The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Ms. Ambs said the Chamber would like to reserve Wrigglesworth for Saturday, July 3, 2021 for the fireworks event. She said they would be offering games for the children and young at heart, as well as sprinklers to cool people off. She said they would also have food Vendors and a DJ.

Ms. Ambs said after last year's event, Council offered to help, and since Council generously offered \$5,000.00 to Juneteenth Jubilee, she asked if Council was willing to offer the same to the Chamber.

Ms. Ambs said she had already talked to Marcia Martin about the fields and did not see a problem on July 3rd.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve use of the fields for Saturday, July 3, 2021 for the Chamber Fireworks Event. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Ms. Ambs said it would be from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. for the fireworks event.

Councilman Miller made a motion to donate \$5,000.00 towards the Chamber's Fourth of July event. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck asked if this money would be used as seed money for the future. Ms. Ambs said it would help to pay for the pyrotechnics, because they have to hire someone to do it in Town.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck asked if this could be a sustainable donation. Ms. Ambs replied as of now, no, because it is a free event.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck asked if there was a possibility for corporate sponsorships to help offset costs. Ms. Ambs said they did that last year, but because we have had an entire year of COVID, it was no guarantee.

Councilman Nash said when big ticketed items like this come up, he felt it needed to be in the budget process. He said we are now at \$10,000.00 in a two-week span.

Councilwoman Jones asked about the cost for the fireworks event. Ms. Ambs replied, last year was about \$8,000.00 and got everything at half price.

Councilman Miller said this is bringing the neighborhood together.

Councilman Nash said the citizens need to be able to speak when their money is being spent, that's all he is asking.

Ms. Ambs said there would be no alcohol at this event.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash asked where the money would come from. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would figure it out.

Ms. Ambs said last year the DJ's wife noticed several people walking around with sidearms and Ms. Ambs was not comfortable with this at a children's sporting event area. She said she was concerned for the safety of the children. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, gun laws are established by federal and state and not the purview for local government to determine. He said if you are concerned about the children, then those legally carrying guns are the people you would want there.

Councilman Morgan asked Chief Kuzmiak if he could have an officer dedicated to this event. Chief Kuzmiak replied yes.

Ms. Ambs asked for use of the Armory in September for Arts & Crafts.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the State of Virginia Department of Emergency Management people came down to look at the Armory for a mass vaccination location, and chose not to use it.

Councilman Morgan asked if the Town's insurance carrier was still opposing use, he said that was his only concern.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the insurance company recommends having the environmental side completed.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to not use the Armory until the renovations have been made, based on the Town's insurance company's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Wilkinson asked if we were talking about renovations or remediations. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the remediations was the important part, have a clean bill of health.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck said it was a tie vote and would be addressed again next month.

Councilman Miller said the Town is trying to renovate the Armory, and during the renovation stages and with the insurance company saying no, why force the issue. He said he didn't believe it was Council's idea not to use the Armory, it's about what is going on right now.

Councilwoman Jones said the Town's insurance company said it was not safe to have people in there, so that was how she was looking at it.

Ms. Ambs said she was told by the Armory Committee all the concerns had been abated, except the lead on the walls.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said what was done was more for air quality, such as mold, it did not address any other issues. Councilman Wilkinson said there is no air quality test for lead.

2. Mr. Taylor Quicke - DBi

Mr. Quicke said he was here to address the ongoing issues with the Historic Business District mapping. He believed this was addressed at the January Council Meeting with Virginia Main Street's MOU for their relationship with DHCD.

Mr. Quicke said there are two versions of the Historic Business District Map, one by the Town and the other through Virginia Main Street. He said there are 3 main differences and we can all agree they should match. He said the Irvin and Maple block are different and the Town's map goes to Church Street, with the map from Virginia Main Street stopping at Irvin Street. He said the Town's map shows the Armory within the Historic Business District, but Virginia Main Street's does not include the Armory. He said they had talked to the businesses in the Irvin and Maple discrepancy, who some have received services from Virginia Main Street and DBi, and wish to remain in the District.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said as part of the Town's ordinances, to make any changes would require a Public Hearing. He recommended sending a notice to those being added to the District.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked what the difficulty was in modifying the boundaries with Virginia Main Street. Mr. Quicke said Virginia Main Street was looking for an explanation of why they wouldn't want to be in the District, especially because some of the buildings received benefits from being in the District.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this change would take the Wedgwood Hotel out of the existing District.

Clerk Daniel clarified the current Town map includes the Armory, but Virginia Main Street does not.

Councilman Nash clarified the Town's map does not include Bevell's but the Virginia Main Street does include it.

Councilman Nash made a motion to advertise a Public Hearing for April's Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

3. Taylor Bottom Community Needs

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Councilwoman Jones hosted an event at Spring Hill Baptist Church on Saturday at 10:00 a.m. He said this meeting was to discuss pursuing a similar grant as to what is being done in the East End, for the Taylor Bottom area.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said one item discussed was getting a petition together, which was presented to him tonight.

Mr. Eric Paul / Ms. Rachel Maddux

Mr. Paul asked how they could partnership with repairing some of the streets in the Taylor Bottom area. He said something has to be done to increase the community standards for a better way of living. He said he grew up there, has property there and some relatives.

Ms. Maddux said she grew up in the Taylor Bottom area of Blackstone and her mother has lived there since 1959. She said she thought Council had heard about the drainage issues, but this is a group effort coming from the entire Ward. She wants this to be a first step in revitalization for Ward E. She said there is a critical need for drainage improvements, street repairs and curbing. She said she understood the Town did not have a lot of money and thought the Community Block Grant would be the best fit right now.

Ms. Maddux said she hoped Council would support Manager Vannoorbeeck applying for a Planning Grant through DHCD. She said she did not live here, but did own a home and her mother lives here, but she cares about this community.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the first step would be the Planning Grant, and from start to finish is a lengthy process. He said the Town still has to get through the second phase of East End, before getting started with other construction.

Manager Vannoorbeeck requested authorization to write a letter, and would include no funding at this time to get the Planning Grant phase started.

Councilwoman Jones made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to write a letter to DHCD for a Planning Grant in the Taylor Bottom area. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Hasbrouck.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash said there are some constituents from the East End concerned, and wanted to reassure them that this new project would not diminish the East End project. Manager Vannoorbeeck added this will not take monies from the East End project.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there were some concerns from residents about Doswell Street. He said this street runs parallel to the railroad tracks and only partially on Town right of way. He said the portion that is paved is Town owned and the portion that is not is owned by the Railroad. He said there have been requests as to whether the street could be closed to thru traffic.

Councilman Morgan said from a Fire Department standpoint, he was not sure if it was a good idea. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there were no houses that face the railroad portion.

Ms. Penny Tucker said she lives on the portion where people enter from the curve and on December 31st her car was hit and they drove off. She said this has been a problem since 1986, but she was told the road could not be closed because of police, trash and the post office. She said there are speeders and they cannot park in their front yard because of speeding.

The Doswell Street request was referred to the Street & Light Committee and Attorney Bacon will look into the legality of closing the street. He said he would discuss with the Police and Fire Department.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Tomer was not present and there was no Fire Report since Council just met last week.

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Manager Vannoorbeeck stated the bills that have already been paid are in the amount of \$594,319.06.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$594,319.06. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck stated the bills not yet approved, and to be paid, are in the amount of \$164,668.47.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to approve as presented, the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$164,668.47. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

APPROPRIATIONS:

Appropriation #1 – Seay Park Repairs/Maintenance = \$4,500.00

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this request was because the Town went over budget, so additional funds needed to be put back in. He said the money came from additional Personal Property taxes from the first year delinquent that was not budgeted as a revenue. He said this was due to lawn maintenance, because we now have a company spraying fertilizer for the grass.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve Appropriation #1 in the amount of \$4,500.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Appropriation #2 – Garage Repairs/Maintenance = \$507.00

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this request is from the Bus System to cover a particular tool purchase. He said this was all within their budget.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve Appropriation #2 for the Bus Shop in the amount of \$507.00. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Insurance – met 3-9-21 – minutes included in March’s Council Packet

Health Insurance Renewal

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Committee recommended renewing the Anthem health insurance with Local Choice based on the rates presented. He said the rates are going to decrease by 4%.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Councilman Morgan had asked how much it would cost to add an additional contribution percentage for employees and it was not provided. Clerk Daniel added, Finance Director Hardy advised that since it was due April 1st, she asked that it be looked at in the upcoming budget for next year.

Clerk Daniel asked if there was a figure to be voted on. Councilman Nash said the monthly cost was \$58,601.00. He said the Town pays \$47,000.00 and the employee pays \$11,600.00. Manager Vannoorbeeck added the employee portion is for employees with a family plan or an employee that chooses to buy up.

Councilwoman Jones made a motion to approve renewing the Anthem health insurance through Local Choice. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

2. *Employment & Police – met 3-9-21 – minutes included in March’s Council Packet*

FY22 Salaries

Manager Vannoorbeeck said salaries were discussed, but there were no recommendations.

Councilman Miller said Manager Vannoorbeeck advised in the Committee Meeting that right now he did not believe the college stipends could be budgeted for.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said his recommendations to the Committee were to reduce some items presented from Department Heads. He said one was reducing two requests from the Police Department and reduce three requests from the Water/Sewer Department. He said he also recommended not doing the educational stipends at this time.

Councilman Miller said the issue came up because last year only the Police Department got the stipend. He said the legality issue came up as to whether it could only be given to the Police Department and not to everyone else. He said if everyone got the stipend, that would put a dent in the budget.

Councilman Nash said he had not talked to Manager Vannoorbeeck yet about the upcoming budget, and thought it would be a daunting one, but if anything needs to be added it needs to be discussed now, and thought there were going to be several rate increases.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was going to be some real estate and personal property increases. He said there could be some water/sewer increases, with electric potentially being ugly. He said in the past few years we have eaten into \$250,000.00 of the reserves, and cash flow has decreased appreciably over the past twelve months. He said at the end of the month, we are getting our bills paid but there is no surplus and COVID has done this.

Councilwoman Jones said we need to keep in mind, if there are projects that we want to do, we may have to put them off for another year.

Councilman Nash asked how long it had been since property and real estate taxes had been raised. Manager Vannoorbeeck said in his ten years here, it was raised \$.2 once, for real estate.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the projects already in place, such as East End, the finances are established. He said the South Main Street project has been put off, we are using a lot of this money to get up sticks and to pay the electric crews that came to help during the ice storm. He said he did not anticipate many capital projects in the upcoming budget, it would only be paving and repairing curbs.

COVID Voluntary Vaccination Policy

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Committee recommended a Policy and does not make vaccinations mandatory. He said Wednesday, all Town employees are eligible to be vaccinated at Spencer's Drug. He said he reserved 40 slots and only 13 employees signed up. He believed Council would qualify if interested.

Clerk Daniel clarified this did not include the Fire or Police Department, they have already had the chance to be vaccinated.

Councilman Morgan suggested having the second round of shots on a Friday for Town employees, because of possible side effects.

Council clarified the Policy, effective May 1, 2021, everyone uses their sick leave for COVID related issues, regardless of having the vaccination or not.

Councilman Morgan said even after getting the vaccination, masks should still be worn.

Councilman Miller made a motion to adopt the Policy presented, but add everyone having to use sick time after May 1, 2021 and everyone still having to wear masks, even after vaccinations. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no Consent Agenda items.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. GenerLink Transfer Switch

Manager Vannoorbeeck said last month Council agreed to proceed with the GenerLink switch being allowed in Town meters. He said this would allow plugging in generators without back feed. He said through our research, this company is a sole source. He said there is no out of pocket cost to the Town, except Town staff installing the device.

2. Waukeshaw Development – 610 Second Street

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed there had been several modifications to the contract since placed in this packet. He said Mr. Dave McCormack had provided a proposal and the contract encompasses these items. He said the proposed estimate for demolition is \$95,000.00 from East Coast Demolition, but does not include disposal. He said he hoped it could go to the Rocky Bump landfill, but if not, he had contacted Mr. Jason Walker and estimated roughly \$25,000.00.

Attorney Bacon discussed the Land Contract. She said the purchase price agreed upon was \$40,000.00. She said Mr. McCormack was requesting a credit towards the purchase price and would be taken at closing, such as tap fees and electrical hookups. She said these credits are being requested because of Waukeshaw Development agreeing to demolish the one million gallon water tank, with the disposal being done by the Town.

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed Mr. McCormack was proposing about \$120,000.00 in total values, including the \$40,000.00 purchase price. He said in Mr. McCormack's proposal he has \$69,000.00 for the demolition of the water tank, meaning Mr. McCormack would not pay the \$40,000.00 purchase price, but would have a \$69,000.00 credit.

Councilman Nash said for simplicity, let's get rid of the \$40,000.00 purchase price, because that confuses people, he asked what the credit amount would be. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the figure needed to be closer to \$60,000.00, not \$80,000.00.

Mr. McCormack said there are two parts to the cost, one being the demolition and then there is the disposal. He believed he could get creative with the disposal cost to save everybody money. He said Manager Vannoorbeeck's demolition proposal came in at \$95,000.00 and his contractor was a bit higher, but they proposed doing some crushing on site and backfill the hole and maybe wipe the disposal cost out completely. He said if we cannot get rid of everything, then he was asking for the Town's help.

Manager Vannoorbeeck clarified, the estimate from East Coast Demolition included demolition and hauling to somewhere within the Town.

Mr. McCormack asked to have time for the logistical items such as permits. He said he and Attorney Bacon had been working on this with the Contract. He said the clock would start running once the contracts were completed, and then they could start on the demo. He said this should be a simple deal, with the question being where the credits would come from.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked Council how much they would be willing to agree to as a credit, once the \$40,000.00 is taken out. Mr. McCormack said he agreed with the \$60,000.00 in credits from the Town. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town takes the responsibility of getting rid of the demo at potentially \$25,000.00 to Mr. Jason Walker.

Councilman Nash asked Manager Vannoorbeeck if he could get a firm price on the disposal. Manager Vannoorbeeck said if the demo can be put back in the hole or carried to Rocky Bump, it eliminates any cost. He said the plan is to spend as little as possible with disposal.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is a request as part of compliance with the Contract. He said the request is that the Board of Zoning Appeals will make a variance for parking and go from 2 parking spaces to 1 parking space per unit. He said Mr. McCormack was granted 1.5 spaces for Nottoway House and believed it was working. Mr. McCormack said with 1:1 parking, it would all be off street parking.

Mr. McCormack said parking was one of the items he was waiting for before the clock started ticking.

Councilman Nash asked how much would be out of pocket from the \$60,000.00. Manager Vannoorbeeck estimated \$24,000.00, which would include purchasing transformers and equipment for the electric system. He hoped to work with Mr. McCormack on curb and gutter, which is not mandatory. He said there was a salt shed on the property that needed to be demolished and maybe that could be included.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said at this site is a backflow preventer. He said this is the site for anybody buying water in bulk, this will have to be moved as well. He said the bid did not include a retaining wall.

Manager Vannoorbeeck recommended moving forward.

Attorney Bacon clarified the purchase price for the Contract would be changed to \$1.00 and add \$60,000.00 as the credit.

Manager Vannoorbeeck reminded Council that curb and gutter, if a credit, would be half, because the Town pays half the cost already through Ordinance.

Councilman Nash and Mr. McCormack joked about paying a portion of the \$5,000.00 towards the Chamber's Fireworks Event.

Councilman Wilkinson asked if there could be something agreed upon that once this project was completed, then construction would begin on the old Town Shop. Mr. McCormack said that was a totally separate project. He said his vision for the Shop was more on hospitality and the restaurant side and because of COVID, it requires a whole different plan. He just really didn't want to tie the two projects together.

Councilman Wilkinson said the old Town Shop sits on the edge of his Ward and he gets asked daily what is going on with the project. He said he would just like some assurance that it won't sit there for 2-3 years. Mr. McCormack said it is their intention to do something with the building or he would not have agreed to acquire it, and with what has transpired, they were just not ready yet.

Manager Vannoorbeeck reminded Council that the Planning Commission did provide one restriction, the entry would not be on College Avenue, it would be either on Second Street or Amelia Avenue. Clerk Daniel said the Planning Commission also voted to have a 50' setback off College Avenue.

Councilman Nash asked if this would affect the lease with Mr. McCormack with the parking area that was agreed upon with the Town Shop. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the lease would be void if Mr. McCormack purchases the property.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to proceed with the Land Contract as amended, with the amount of credits totaling \$60,000.00 and present the Performance Agreement to Council for approval. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

3. Water/Sewer Financing

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town has entered into agreement with USDA to lend \$1.6 Million for the second phase of East End, which includes water, sewer, street improvements and drainage. He said USDA has also agreed to refinance the first phase of East End, which was originally borrowed from Benchmark Bank. He said this would be a lower rate at 1.3%, rather than the 4.49% and extending the term from 20 years to 40 years. He said USDA was not agreeable that their loan would not have parity with any other lending. He said whoever records first takes priority, and USDA does not want to be second or third in line to be compensated.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Resolution included, was prepared by Howard Estes, which will allow the Town to move forward and satisfy USDA. He said the Virginia Resources Authority holds a 2012 Bond that would do away with the master trust indenture agreement. He said this Resolution will also pay off a 2002 Bond, of which \$103,000.00 is still owed and would come from Reserves held by US Bank. He said it will eliminate the need for a trustee that the Town pays every year, that is about \$10-\$12 Thousand.

Manager Vannoorbeeck pointed out one correction on the Resolution, in section 13, it should be Nottoway County instead of Mecklenburg County.

Councilman Nash made a motion to adopt the Resolution as presented, with the exception to changing Mecklenburg County to Nottoway County. The motion was seconded by Councilman Morgan.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

4. Greenview Cemetery

Councilman Miller said he spoke with Supervisor Vaughan about the cemetery and Supervisor Vaughan was going to see if the property was privately owned. Councilman Miller said he would be attending the next Board of Supervisors Meeting.

Councilman Nash thought there should be a County Ordinance on how cemeteries should be maintained.

5. Downtown Light Poles – Painting Bids

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he hoped to have the poles painted by Memorial Day. He said the Town solicited sealed bids for painting the light poles downtown, and received one bid from Bronson Contractors. He said his original bid was \$115.00 per pole, but negotiated them down to \$95.00 per pole.

Councilman Nash asked if there was any grant money through DBi for this. Mr. Justin Sarafin said he looked, and could not find anything.

Councilman Wilkinson asked Mr. Sarafin if when contacting the paint companies, did he ask if they would donate the paint. Mr. Sarafin said when he was looking into paint companies, there was nothing out there.

Councilman Wilkinson said Sherwin Williams did paint a bunch of towns through donations with Main Street America.

Councilman Morgan made a motion authorizing to proceed with Bronson Contractors to paint the light poles downtown at \$95.00 per pole. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Nash asked Manager Vannoorbeeck, with the upcoming budget, should we hold off on this. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it would not get done in the upcoming budget and was not specifically in the current budget.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would call Sherwin Williams to help with the paint. He said this will only include the poles in the Historic Business District.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

6. Industrial Development Authority Nominations

There were no recommendations.

7. Planning Commission Nominations

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he spoke with Mr. Jacob Allman and he is interested in serving on the Planning Commission.

Councilman Nash made a motion to appoint Mr. Jacob Allman to the Planning Commission, effective May 1, 2021, due to the resignation of Mrs. Myra Dyke (Quicke). The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

8. Board of Zoning Appeals Nominations

There were no recommendations.

9. Juneteenth Jubilee

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he and Chief Kuzmiak still needed to speak to the Committee for more information.

Ms. Ambs said there was a meeting tomorrow at 6:30 p.m. at Spring Hill Baptist Church.

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is a property on Fifth Street, owned by Mr. Alex Skidmore, he has until April 1st to comply. He said the rot on the back side of the house is the issue. He asked for authorization to advertise a Public Hearing if the work is not completed by April 1st.

Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize a Public Hearing at the April Council Meeting, if the property on Fifth Street has not been completed by April 1st. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is another property on Maben Avenue, owned by Ms. Ewa Syska. He said we have not been able to serve her any documents because we could not find her, but have since been in contact with her and has now had a certified letter sent to her.

2. Meals Tax

Clerk Daniel said the one business that is late is not usually late, they believe their check was lost in the mail.

3. Street Improvement Projects

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed Colony Construction would be in Town next week to start patching several areas in Town.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was going to contact End Patch Holes again to see if they can help get us through for now.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this spring, Church Street would be milled and repaved from the Corporate Limits back to College Avenue.

4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex / TAP 21

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would bid out the fencing at Wrigglesworth. He said he has a bid request out for sewer line at the Police Department and once the pricing comes in, he would bid out the fencing.

5. East End Neighborhood Project

There was nothing to report.

6. Weatherization

There was nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Patriot Square – Road Dedication

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this project should get started on or about the first of May. He said there is a survey included that encompasses Tavern Street, with a discrepancy. He said according to the surveyor, the old VFW property owns to the center line of Tavern Street. He said the gentleman who is developing Patriot Square has offered, at no cost, to dedicate this portion to the Town. He said this dedication would make Tavern Street 50' from the Town limit lines back to Epes Street. He said a Deed of Dedication is also included in the packet, between Patriot Square and the Town of Blackstone. He said there is no cost associated with this, other than Attorney Bacon's time.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Deed of Dedication between Patriot Square and the Town of Blackstone as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Hasbrouck.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

2. Airport Engineering Grant Application

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would like to submit a grant application for engineering and included is an estimate from Talbert & Bright.¹ He said the Town would only be obligated if the grant is awarded. He said there is a fee of \$2,400.00, for preliminary costs to Talbert & Bright.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said if the Department of Aviation approves the application, then the total task order would be \$55,000.00.

Councilman Nash asked what this would accomplish. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, this would allow us to mill out and repave the main taxi area. He said the construction application would not be for another two years.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said currently the money is not in the Airport Fund, but would be. He said he has the \$2,400.00, but not the full \$55,000.00.

Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize submitting a grant application for engineering at the Airport with a fee of \$2,400.00 from Talbert & Bright. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

3. *Washbucket Initiative, Inc. – Christmas Tree Festival*

Ms. Sue Yeatts said the Washbucket Initiative is a non-profit organization that tries to do projects to revitalize old towns in Southside Virginia. She asked for use of the Armory on November 6, 2021. She said they would need use of the building five days prior in order to decorate.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was discussion earlier about use of the Armory for Arts & Crafts and it ended in a 3-3 vote. He said it would be brought back up at the April Council Meeting.

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

1. *Power Cost Adjustment*

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked this be referred to the Account and Finance Committee.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked that a ditch next to Mr. Robert Evans, a Town employee, be referred to the Street and Light Committee.

MAYORS MINUTE:

There was nothing to report.

POLICE REPORT:

Councilman Nash said it was his understanding that complaints of noise ordinance are now not a first-class offense, and not enforceable. Chief Kuzmiak said if you are referring to loud exhaust on vehicles, that is true, it is a secondary offense. He said he plans to discuss with Attorney Bacon, the loud music ordinance. He said most secondary offense traffic violations, they cannot stop for now, because of new laws that went into effect March 1st.

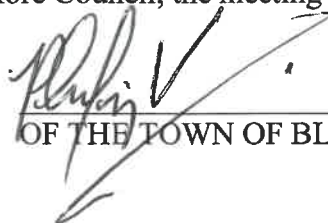
CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he has some storm water improvements that were voted on by the Street Committee and Council about a year ago. He said this would include College Road, Viewbank Street, the 400 block of Sixth Street, Bird Road and 736 N. Main Street. He said he would be bidding this out soon.

Councilman Wilkinson asked what the current plan at the Bus Shop was since the resignation of Mr. Josh Worrell. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mrs. Christie Carmichael and Ms. Mary Murphy were keeping the ball rolling right now, until the position is advertised. He said he would like to sit down with DRPT to see what they are looking for.

Councilman Miller asked about the Community Development Director position. Manager Vannoorbeeck said both jobs are in the budget currently. He said he did not want the two jobs to blend. He thought maybe in 60-90 days he would advertise. He said with grant writing, we are using the Commonwealth Regional Council, which does not cost the Town anything.

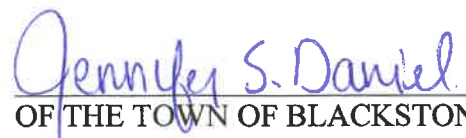
There being no further business to bring before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:32 p.m.



TOWN MANAGER
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

April 19, 2021

APPROVED AND ADOPTED



TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA