

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, May 17, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: William D. Coleburn

Council Members: Christine Hasbrouck, Shelia Jones, Lonnie Morgan, 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, Nicholas Kuzmiak, Police Chief

Town Attorney:

Those Absent:

Mayor Coleburn called the May Council Meeting to order.

Mayor Coleburn delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Coleburn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Spot Blight Ordinance – 511 Fifth Street

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF BLACKSTONE

The Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on May 17, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blackstone Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia. The Town Council will consider an ordinance declaring 511 Fifth Street, Blackstone, Va. 23824 to be blighted and a public nuisance along with a recommended spot blight abatement plan. The contents of this ordinance is more fully described by the Town of Blackstone's Spot Blight Abatement Policy and Virginia Code Section 36-49.1:1. Town Council shall receive the Town Manager's recommendation and public comment regarding this ordinance during the Public Hearing. The Town Council may approve this ordinance following this public hearing. Any individual desiring to address the Town Council should attend the public hearing at the above stated date and time.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mr. Skidmore did come to his office after receiving a letter and presented his plan to correct the blight at 511 Fifth Street. He said two extensions were given and the work was still not completed, so the next step was to bring before Council.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the options now, per the Ordinance attached, is to advise him to make an offer to purchase the property, use eminent domain, give Mr. Skidmore additional time, or instruct the Town Manger to have the work done, with a lien placed on the property and if not paid within a certain amount of time, being December 31st of the following year, enforce a tax lien and be sold at public auction.

Mayor Coleburn said with eminent domain, the Town would use its legal authority to acquire the property, which would be taking someone's land.

Mayor Coleburn opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Alex Skidmore

Mr. Skidmore said he lives in Richmond and the past four months he had been working approximately 100 hours on the outside of the property to get it painted. He said there were still some facia problems near the roof line. He said he could not give an exact time of completing the work, but he did meet with the neighbors and they have supported him. He said the work had stopped in the past month because of his back problem.

Mayor Coleburn said he was looking at a letter dated May 2021 by Mr. Skidmore, with neighbors supporting the restoration of 511 Fifth Street. He said it was signed by Ben Brett. Mr. Skidmore said, and the neighbor on College Avenue, but Mr. Somerville was not home today. Mr. Skidmore said there was no power at that building.

Mayor Coleburn said he noticed there was a window open upstairs. He said there were complaints months ago about young people going in and out of the house. He asked if the home was secure. Mr. Skidmore replied yes, there should not be anybody in that house.

Mayor Coleburn said this is not something the Town has done lightly, and you are not the only one, he asked when the last time the house was lived in. Mr. Skidmore said almost ten years.

Mayor Coleburn asked Mr. Skidmore when he could get the work done. Mr. Skidmore said he planned on working on the outside within the next 30-60 days. He said as for the inside, he would have to find a buyer for that. Manager Vannoorbeeck added, what the Town is concerned with is the visible outside. Mayor Coleburn said it is not aesthetic, it is strictly about structural components being visible from the exterior.

Mayor Coleburn asked if there was anyone else to speak during this Public Hearing.

Mayor Coleburn closed the Public Hearing.

Councilman Morgan said since he has had two extensions, he believed 60 days would be fair to comply with the Blight Ordinance.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said it was not even painting, the majority of the work is in the back.

Mayor Coleburn asked Manager Vannoorbeeck to provide Mr. Skidmore with a written list of deficiencies. He said if this is not accomplished, he needs to know what the next step would be.

Mayor Coleburn asked Mr. Skidmore if he could live with a 60-day extension from tonight, that would be July 17, 2021. Mr. Skidmore replied yes, with a list and to paint it.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said if Mr. Skidmore has not complied, then he would come back to Council and you can decide from the ala carte choices.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to extend the deadline 60 days for the Blight Ordinance at 511 Fifth Street. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn said the list of repairs would be provided to Mr. Skidmore and this would be on the July Agenda for an update.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

MINUTES:

There were no minutes, the April Minutes were approved at the Continued Meeting on May 12, 2021.

VISITORS:

1. Ms. Delphine Simmons-Fowlkes

Ms. Simmons-Fowlkes thanked the Town of Blackstone for allowing the pop-up vendor event, it was very well received. She said people asked if it could be done again, she was trying to find local people and surrounding communities that offer services.

Ms. Simmons-Fowlkes asked where she could hold such events, because she received an email saying please tell me this would not be collecting funds, funds cannot be collected on Town owned property. She said when she received the email it included her ad from the paper and the event was on Saturday and she received the email on Wednesday, that was too late.

Ms. Simmons-Fowlkes said she filled out all the paperwork and contacted the Director of DBi. She said a part of the proceeds was going to charity. Mayor Coleburn said you did everything correct. She said she got a call and was told if she said all proceeds would go to charity she could have the event, but she said she could not say something that was not true. She asked what the proper protocol was for holding more events.

Mayor Coleburn said DBi was in charge of programming the Town Square. He said a few years ago this Council adopted a Policy that if something is nonprofit you are fine, if an event is for profit, it is normally not allowed on Town owned property.

Ms. Simmons-Fowlkes asked what the difference was with Arts and Crafts. Mayor Coleburn replied, Arts and Crafts is very much held on Town property, but Council approves that event with the understanding it is a 50-year run festival that brings a lot of people to Blackstone. He said people get nervous because the Town has merchants that have business licenses and asked if the businesses that were at Ms. Simmons-Fowlkes event paid any peddler's costs.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the peddler's license is a \$500 one-time fee up front and a surety bond, so that may be cost prohibitive.

Mayor Coleburn said he doubted Ms. Simmons-Fowlkes vendors were competing with Blackstone merchants. Ms. Simmons-Fowlkes said she has two business licenses and asked if they needed to be provided.

Mayor Coleburn referred the vendor pop up events on Town owned property to the Health and Ordinance Committee.

Mayor Coleburn proposed the idea of letting vendors host up to 4-6 events per year and pay a certain permit fee. He reminded everyone that when food is sold, they are required to pay Meals Tax.

Councilman Nash said he was concerned about food being sold, because they have been through so much with food trucks and such, they are not allowed on Town property or in the Historic Business District.

2. Ms. Pamela Hawkes

Ms. Hawkes said she was very disappointed about a home that was going in beside her, she said the front door was not even going to be facing the street. She said this is on Third Street, the house is being put in sideways and did not think anybody here would want that next to them.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said doublewides are not allowed in this particular zoning. He said he met with the couple that purchased this property and the home they wanted would not meet setbacks, so in order to make it fit they are turning the home sideways and there is nothing in the Town's Ordinance saying any different.

Councilman Nash said it does not look nice. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it is not illegal to do it.

Ms. Hawkes said the couple had choices, they could have bought a different piece of land or a different size house.

Councilwoman Jones asked why Ms. Hawkes was not told about this. Manager Vannoorbeeck said we are not obligated to tell people and this couple is using the property legally and as they see fit, they did not need permission from adjacent property owners.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he did speak with Ms. Hawkes previously, and was told a modular home was going to be put next to her.

Councilman Nash suggested doing an Ordinance or at least a Public Hearing on these types of homes being turned sideways.

Mayor Coleburn referred homes sideways to the Health & Ordinance Committee.

Ms. Hawkes said if the couple would reconsider, she would be willing to buy the property. She said now with this house going in, she does not have access to her back yard.

3. Mr. Robert Thomas

Mr. Thomas said he was here again to ask about the funding for the museums, this has been going on for six years. He asked with restrictions being lifted again soon, when would the museums be open and what would be the plan of action for weekends. He suggested to Council that they find some means for funding for a part time employee, when DBi is not open and for weekends. He said since March the Antique Mall has had 95-100 people on weekends, and some have been interested in seeing the museums.

Mr. Thomas said the Town contacted him about a group from the American Legion from Leesburg, Virginia, who is coming on Friday, he said that would be 25 people eating in Town. He said he got an email from Mr. Coleburn about a reporter wanting to do a story on the museum and was having a hard time contacting anyone, that is when Mr. Thomas realized the phone and internet had been disconnected at the Museum.

Mr. Thomas said the last six years DBi had been occupying the building, with very little being done to maintain it or have it open to the public, or even promote it. He said his parents put up their own money to help build the Museum and restore the carriages, not to collect dust. He named several that did not spend countless hours to get funding for the Tavern, for it to sit there and never be seen. He asked if a referendum was needed to see if the public wants the museums.

Mr. Thomas said he was informed DBi was setting up an app for tours, when will this take place and how long before it is operational. He did not think the app would work for Schwartz Tavern.

Mr. Thomas said his mother passed away not knowing the future of the museums, and he will continue the fight until it is resolved, even if it means seeking legal counsel. He suggested starting a dialogue with the full Council, the Thomas family, the Schwartz Tavern Authority and any others for a plan of action. He said contact Ms. Sandra Tanner to find ways to have the museums be self-sustained. He suggested having a Museum Board to meet monthly and create a 501c3 to seek funding.

Mayor Coleburn suggested Town staff contact Ms. Sandra Tanner and meet with the Buildings, Property and Cemetery Committee. He suggested engaging Nottoway Public Schools and Kenston Forest, because the students have community service requirements. He said something needs to be done.

Councilman Nash said funding is this issue, it is not that we don't want the museums open.

Mayor Coleburn asked staff to contact Attorney Bacon to explore a 501c3. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed it was already established for Schwartz Tavern.

Mr. Thomas said he can go to Longwood and talk to a professor there; they have a museum studies program with interns. Mayor Coleburn said you have our blessing on that.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a report on this at the June Meeting.

4. Ms. Beverly Ambs

Ms. Ambs asked for permission for a beer garden at the Fireworks Event. She said this would be in the Town owned section and would be blocked off, and you must have an ID bracelet showing 21 and older.

Councilman Nash said the Town donated \$5,000.00 for a family friendly event.

Ms. Ambs said it would be the Chamber's insurance and she knew they would have to get a TULIP Policy.

Councilman Nash believed it should stay family friendly and have no alcohol. Councilman Morgan said there were a lot of kids there last year. Councilman Nash said Council donated \$5,000.00 and believed this would endorse alcohol.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck and Councilman Miller did not have a problem with it.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to approve having a beer garden at the Fireworks Evens, with a limit of four per patron. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Morgan suggested with alcohol being served, increasing the police presence. He added you cannot wear weapons in the beer garden. Mayor Coleburn said whatever laws apply.

Councilman Nash asked about the blast radius for the fireworks, was there room on Town property for the beer garden. Ms. Ambs said they planned to have the beer garden to the right of the concession stand, which is out of the blast area. She said this would help so the Chamber would not have to keep coming back to Council for funds for the fireworks.

Mayor Coleburn said we need to make sure all State laws are followed.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Tomer said many grants were still pending.

Chief Tomer said with Engine 3, their Truck Committee would be traveling to Wisconsin at the beginning of June to approve the contract to begin the build, this would be about six months. He said once a contract is signed, it would be 16 months for an aerial. He said the new engine may be here between January to February.

Chief Tomer said the aerial device that was out front tonight was just under \$1.5 Million, and just a demo. He said they would still need items added to make it feasible. He said we know this demo truck was not the Town's, but he just wanted to show you what \$1.5 Million will get you.

Chief Tomer said if the Town does get the grant, he believed it would almost qualify as emergency procurement to get an aerial device. He said if we keep waiting, it could go up \$200-\$300 Thousand for a piece of emergency services equipment.

Mayor Coleburn said he and Manager Vannoorbeeck had been talking with Congresswoman Spanberger's office, we were told everything was done right and was a great application. He said even if we get the grant, the best case scenario would be roughly \$900,000.00. He said he would try to find out something more from her Congresswoman Spanberger's staff. Councilman Nash said the County had committed \$200,000.00.

Chief Tomer said they had an informal gathering with membership at the Nottoway River Country Club. He said the Anderson Mayton Award was given to Dylan Baker, Firefighter of the Year was Lonnie Morgan, Officer of the Year was Zac Beares, First Responder of the Year was Timmothy Immekus and Life Membership, which is 20 years of service, was given to Eric Stiles and Robert Paulette.

Chief Tomer said they were finally starting with fundraisers again and he thanked Council for allowing the Car Shows. He said they had a golf tournament scheduled for June.

Chief Tomer said Burkeville had reached out to hold a meeting to see if emergency services could be revamped. Councilman Nash asked why this was being requested, is there animosity because the Town is getting \$200,000.00 from the County. Chief Tomer said the other agencies believed they should get \$200,000.00 also.

Chief Tomer said he hoped an emergency services coordinator that was approved would bring some unity from this. He said we are very blessed to have the Town support us.

Clerk Daniel said Mr. Devin Foster had asked if the Town would consider paying for the porta potties and the hand washing station for the Cruise Ins. She said this would be from May through October of this year.

Councilman Wilkinson made a motion to approve paying for the porta potties and hand washing station for the duration of the Cruise Ins this year. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Mayor Coleburn stated the bills that have already been paid are in the amount of \$502,833.84.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$502,833.84. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash asked Manager Vannoorbeeck if he reviewed the employee reimbursement requests. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he signs off on all of them.

Mayor Coleburn stated the bills not yet approved, and to be paid, are in the amount of \$424,842.22.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve as presented, the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$424,842.22. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

APPROPRIATIONS:

Mayor Coleburn said appropriations have to be made when the Town spends over what was budgeted.

Appropriation #1 – Sanitation = \$11,989.00

Mayor Coleburn said this appropriation is to cover the purchase of new dumpsters.

Appropriation #2 – Cemetery = \$7,077.00

Mayor Coleburn said this appropriation was to purchase a new zero turn lawn mower for the Cemetery.

Appropriation #3 – Water/Sewer = \$7,077.00

Mayor Coleburn said this appropriation was to purchase a new zero turn lawn mower for the Water/Sewer Department.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the appropriations as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Morgan.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash asked about another vinyl fence repair in the garbage department. Clerk Daniel replied, the garbage truck hit the fence enclosure at Cole Harbor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. **Employment & Police – met 4-20-21 – minutes included in May’s Council Packet**

Closed Session – Personnel – Administration / Police Department

There were no recommendations.

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no Consent Agenda items.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Greenview Cemetery

Mayor Coleburn said this Cemetery was not in Town, but does have remains of a lot of citizens from Blackstone. He said there was a big cleanup day Saturday.

Councilman Miller said they had 50 volunteers and numerous pieces of equipment. He said they raised over \$5,000.00 in donations. He said they planned to clean up again in July, there are also t-shirts for sale for \$15.00 that will go towards the restoration project.

Councilman Miller said they still have the Go Fund Me page and he was informed today that the ROTC would be placing flags on Veterans graves.

Ms. Ambs said she had been working on Find A Grave to locate plots.

Mayor Coleburn said they found where someone was buried before 1900, which may make the Cemetery eligible for Federal Funds. He said he was told Saturday, there was someone buried there that would have been a slave. Councilman Miller added yes, from 1865.

2. Industrial Development Authority Nominations

Mayor Coleburn said the IDA may be needed for VUMAC financing. He said if nobody else wants to do it, he would volunteer.

Councilman Wilkinson volunteered.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to appoint Mayor Coleburn and Councilman Wilkinson to the Industrial Development Authority, effective immediately. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

3. Juneteenth Celebration – Ms. Erielle Eppes

Ms. Eppes asked for clarification on what the Town would be providing for services.

Ms. Eppes said they were requesting a reduced fee for the sanitation workers and use of the Armory bathrooms. She believed the Fire Department would be in that area on this day. Mayor Coleburn said by Council's vote, nobody will be using the Armory until the Town's insurance company gives a green light.

Ms. Eppes asked for use of the sectional stage that is used during Arts and Crafts. She said they had a vendor that uses a smoker and requested to set up in Town limits. She requested a complimentary bus driver; they have a shuttle service from the Primary School and the old Levi Strauss Building. She said the shuttles would be from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Eppes asked for use of the Town's walkie talkies. She said they were inviting government officials and delegates to the event and she asked Council if they had any recommendations for a private area for them to take a break. Mayor Coleburn and Councilman Miller recommended the Police Department Conference Room for the VIP. Chief Kuzmiak said that should be fine.

Mayor Coleburn said he had mentioned in the past about leaving Broad Street open, because there are some merchants that do business on Saturdays. Councilman Wilkinson said Council had already agreed to that.

Manager Vannoorbeeck advised, the Town owns a bus, they would just need a driver.

Councilman Nash clarified the Chamber pays two employees for clean-up during Arts and Crafts.

Mayor Coleburn said by Common Consent, that the Town would do what they allow for the Chamber.

Ms. Ambs said the Chamber pays for their clean-up and their porta johns.

Finance Director Hardy asked if the Town was paying this, above the \$5,000.00 already donated.

Ms. Eppes believed they were going to have six porta johns.

Mayor Coleburn clarified the Town would pay for the bus and driver, plus what the Town pays for with the Arts and Crafts Event.

Clerk Daniel asked about the employees that man the street closures. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town paid for these employees for outdoor dining.

Clerk Daniel asked for clarification on what the Town would be paying for. Mayor Coleburn replied, the Town would pay for the bus, bus driver, Town staff for clean-up and street closures

and overtime for the Police Department. He added the Juneteenth Committee would pay for the porta johns.

Clerk Daniel asked for clarification on the vendor with the smoker. Ms. Eppes said she spoke with the owner of Classic Grill and she was given permission to use the parking lot.

Ms. Eppes said for entertainment, there would be three areas, one at Tavern Street, which will be the gospel groups or hip-hop section. She said the main stage would be in the Town Square and the third area of entertainment would be at Irvin Street.

Ms. Eppes said the portion of Tavern Street will have leeway for going to the Car Show.

Mayor Coleburn said the Black History Heroes nominations and winners will be announced that day.

Councilman Wilkinson asked how big they were planning the event to be. Ms. Eppes replied, roughly 300, being a generous number and so far, 40 vendors.

4. Industrial Revitalization Fund Application - VUMAC

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the work at VUMAC did garner a small grant/loan opportunity from the Tobacco Commission in the amount of \$90,000.00. He said this is 50% grant and 50% loan. He said there were three documents included for consideration, a Performance Agreement, Loan Agreement and a Revenue Sharing Agreement. He said this would require the Town and County to pay back 5% of their tax revenues annually, until 105% of the total grant is paid back. He said Nottoway County has agreed, but had not signed anything yet.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town, the County and Mr. Patel have to sign these Agreements. He said the highlights of the agreements are a target investment of about \$11.4 Million, 25 full time equivalent employees, with annual salaries being \$37,000.00.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to approve execution of the Performance Agreement. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this only applies to the Tobacco Commission grant.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve execution of the Loan Agreement pertaining to the Tobacco Commission in the amount of \$44,500.00. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Coleburn said the County had agreed to do the Revenue Sharing.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to approve executing the Revenue Sharing Agreement. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Revenue Anticipation Note:

Manager Vannoorbeeck read the Resolution from VML/VACO. He said the Town intends to provide electrical service upgrades; streetscapes, sidewalk and pathways; sanitary sewer service lines and improvements to the waterlines. He expected to be reimbursed for these activities, not to exceed \$600,000.00, because that is the amount of grant from DHCD the Town is eligible for.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town was putting themselves on the line, he was asking Council to have faith because he believed DHCD would reimburse the \$600,000.00. He said he had spoken to Mr. Patel and asked him, in the event the grant did not come through, if he would be willing to pay back half, Mr. Patel said he would consider it.

Mayor Coleburn said from discussions last week, Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the activities would be closer to \$300,000.00. He believed \$516,000.00 was the limit and thought with the Town doing some of the work, it could reduce the costs. He said the Town was trying to get the lender satisfied with the \$516,000.00.

Councilman Nash asked why there was a gap on an \$11 Million project. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, he was not a banker, but if you are buying a house, you cannot borrow the 20% for the money down. He said Mr. Patel was putting up over \$2 Million of his personal equity.

Mayor Coleburn said if the Town was fortunate to get the \$600,000.00, he would like to see sidewalk, curb and gutter and lighting along a portion of College Avenue, in keeping with enhancing that area.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said approval was needed for the Resolution, which will allow for the application for the Revenue Anticipation Note and make application to the Industrial Revitalization Fund through the State and use VML/VACO as the Town's service, with Mr. Howard Estes as counsel.

Councilman Nash made a motion to adopt the Resolution as long as the Town has a document from Mr. Patel, stating that if the Town does not get the grant from DHCD, he pays back half over a period of time. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Councilman Nash asked when he would see progress on the building. Manager Vannoorbeeck said a building permit had been applied for.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

5. Armory – Insurance Visit

Finance Director Hardy said she had been talking with staff from VRSA, their safety inspector is Fonda, and she is available on June 3, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. She said due to their company regulations, the inspector asked that no visitors be in attendance while she conducts her safety inspections. She said one member from Council can be in attendance. She said the Town had been assigned a point person and underwriter, and they may be willing to attend a Committee Meeting.

Mayor Coleburn asked that Councilman Wilkinson attend the inspection if it suits his schedule.

Finance Director Hardy said she and Manager Vannoorbeeck have a conference call this Friday at 11:00 a.m. with VRSA to go over some concerns.

Councilman Wilkinson questioned the letter, and said can you tell me that only one person is ever in the inspector's presence. Finance Director Hardy replied, no, but since COVID, she believed they had all been working remotely.

Councilman Wilkinson said in the report the Town was provided, there was nowhere in the report that said do not use the Armory. He said it says if you want to use the Armory, they recommend the Town implement certain policies. Manager Vannoorbeeck added, there was information provided about no coverage for certain instances.

6. Request for Public Hearing – FY22 Budget

Mayor Coleburn said Finance Director Hardy is requesting information for the budget advertisement. He believed Council's consensus was for the \$2.25 garbage increase, to pay for a new garbage truck. He said he did not hear in opposition on a 2% increase for water and a 2% increase on sewer, that will be set aside for repairs. He said the consternation was raising real estate and personal property taxes. He suggested advertising the budget without the tax increase. He said this would mean we are delaying borrowing money for the Armory, because right now the Town was not able to do it without putting a significant increase on the people. He said however, he would like to show good faith, advertise the budget without the tax increase, and meanwhile advertise, not just locally, with no obligation, we want contractors to submit to us proposals for a design build renovation of the Armory, as it is, with great wiring, HVAC and acoustics with a deadline by the end of the year. He said by the end of the year, we will be coming up on the end of the police dispatchers at \$90,000.00 a year, we will be closer to a finish line where we can say next July 1st the Town will go hard core on the Armory and do what the voters told us to do.

Councilman Nash believed if you advertise now for contractors, it would be an inflated cost due to materials. Mayor Coleburn said he wanted firms to wow us. He said we need to show the voters we are moving forward and will be seeking grants. He said when the budget is adopted it should include a policy statement with a schedule on what is intended to be done.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said State Code dictates how to handle design build, so it would take some research.

Mayor Coleburn said as an Armory supporter, he could not raise taxes right now to generate \$150,000.00 a year.

Councilman Nash said to advertise the increase in garbage rates and if anyone has complaints, we would deal with it then.

Councilman Nash made a motion to advertise the FY22 Budget without the tax increase for real estate and personal property, but include the garbage rate increase at \$2.25 and the 4% increase in water and sewer.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is a potential electric rate increase, but that will be a pass through. Mayor Coleburn asked if it would be 4%. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, no probably higher than that, but would be included in the Power Adjustment.

The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn asked if there was a general consensus that this Council does agree to move forward on the Armory before July 1st, with a set of instructions for the Town Manager.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

7. Fire Department Cruise Ins – Porty Potty / Hand Washing Station

This was approved earlier in the meeting.

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

Manager Vannoorbeeck said within the next few weeks staff would start working on some existing agreements on Center Street, Third Street and Broad Street.

2. Meals Tax

There were no new outstanding Meals Tax.

3. Street Improvement Projects

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the tar and gravel was completed and he was satisfied with it. Mayor Coleburn said it was a lot of gravel.

Councilman Nash asked to do some street sweeping. Manager Vannoorbeeck said traffic would start clearing it off.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he hoped by the end of summer Colony would be paving Church Street, from the corporate limits to the old Town Shop.

Councilman Nash asked why Tenth Street in front of Councilman Morgan's house was not done. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that would be in the next phase.

Mayor Coleburn said the company doing the tar and gravel blew rocks in people's yards, he hoped next time they would not use the big blower.

4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex / TAP 21

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was waiting for authorization from VDOT to bid this project out.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said once a few of these projects were completed, he would be working on getting the fence moved at Wrigglesworth.

Councilman Nash asked about getting the playground moved. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Eagle Scout project flopped.

Councilman Nash said we have new equipment; it needs to be moved to the new location. Manager Vannoorbeeck said we have some new equipment, but there would not be a swing set, because when it is removed from the current location, it will be mangled.

Councilman Miller said he got a call today; people are worried kids may get hurt hanging on the trees. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the contract had been awarded, he talked to Mr. Ryan Gunn today and Mr. Gunn hoped to get started by next Tuesday on the tree clean-up.

5. East End Neighborhood Project

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there were two homes under construction for Phase I.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the water and sewer portion of the second phase had been advertised and the bids would be opened on May 20, 2021.

6. Weatherization

There was nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Lakeview Cemetery – Headstone Request

Mayor Coleburn said there was a request to place a headstone off center for Mr. Gene Warren. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the north/south direction would be right, but the east/west direction would be moved over two spaces.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the headstone placement request. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Hasbrouck.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

2. VRSA Insurance Renewal (workers comp / liability)

Mayor Coleburn said the renewal rate this year would be \$239,376.00, with last year's rate being \$226,974.00.

Councilman Miller made a motion to renew workers comp and liability insurance with VRSA in the amount of \$239,376.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

3. ElectriCities of North Carolina - Membership

Manager Vannoorbeeck said ElectriCities was the mutual aid provided during the recent ice storm. He said he did not advocate a full membership which is \$9,500.00, but did recommend the annual dues of \$912.00 for mutual aid, with this cost being based on the number of meters the Town has.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve membership with ElectriCities for mutual aid in the amount of \$912.00 annually. The motion was seconded by Councilman Morgan.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

4. Robinson, Farmer, Cox – Engagement Letter

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this was the same basic document with a \$250.00 increase from last year.

Mayor Coleburn said the new County Administrator did recommend to the Board of Supervisors last week to do an RFP, to maybe get a fresh set of eyes on the County's situation.

Councilman Nash asked when would you advertise an RFP for auditing services. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied January/February.

Councilman Nash made a motion to renew the auditing services with Robinson, Farmer, Cox with the \$250.00 increase in the amount of \$22,500.00 and advertise an RFP in January 2022. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

1. Sixth Street Parking – Heritage Hall

Mayor Coleburn referred parking to the Street and Light Committee.

Mayor Coleburn said the parking issue was a mix between employees and visitors at Heritage Hall, and residents on Sixth Street cannot park at their home. He said a request had been made to have resident parking only signs.

MAYORS MINUTE:

Mayor Coleburn said outdoor dining was a big hit last year, granted the pandemic is easing, but does Council want to consider this again with the warm weather coming. He said he had not heard from any restaurants and nobody had talked to him about it.

Councilman Nash thought it may be too hot. Manager Vannoorbeeck added, it was not a bad idea, but it may have been done too many times last year.

Mayor Coleburn suggested the first Friday of the month, make the offer for June, July, August and September.

Mayor Coleburn asked DBi and the Chamber to reach out to the restaurants to see if they were interested. He said there should be at least 3 restaurants participating.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck pointed out the great outdoor dining area at Mitchell's.

POLICE REPORT:

Mayor Coleburn said in January and February there were four traffic stops, 130 in March and in April there were 338, what was the cause of the big spike. Chief Kuzmiak replied, it is the end of COVID are far as law enforcement is concerned, so now that things are changing, enforcement is increasing. He added speeding is one of the most targeted actions they look at.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

There were no comments.

CLOSED SESSION:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711

1/ Personnel – Administration

Councilwoman Thompson 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 Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

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

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Coleburn continued this meeting to Wednesday, June 2, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss personnel with some raise agreements for the budget.

This meeting adjourned at 10:19 p.m.

Will D. Calhoun MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

June 21, 2021

APPROVED AND ADOPTED

Jennifer S. Daniel TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA