

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, April 20, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: Lafayette Dickens

Council Members: Wesley Gormus, Lloyette Wynn, Christopher Page,
Nathaniel Miller, Eric Nash, Jake Allman

Town Staff: Philip Vannoorbeeck, Town Manager; Jennifer Daniel,
Town Clerk; Sam Murphy, Police Chief; Zac Beares, Fire
Chief; Chastiddy Bryant, Community Development
Specialist

Town Attorney: Julian Harf - Zoom

Those Absent: Carolyn Williams

Mayor Dickens called the April Council Meeting to order.

Dr. Allen delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Dickens led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES:

Councilman Miller made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Regular (Special) Council Meeting on March 30, 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Abstain
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

VISITORS:

1. Mr. Roland Kooch – Davenport & Co. – Fort Avenue & Forest Drive Pump Station

Mr. Kooch said he had been working with Manager Vannoorbeeck for nearly two decades. He said they pride themselves on unbiased advice.

Mr. Kooch said he was engaged by the Town for pro-forma planning for the Town's water and sewer enterprise fund. He said tonight he would focus on the sewer system with the Fort Avenue Sewer Replacement and the Forest Drive Force Main. He said collectively these two projects total \$4.8 Million. He said the Town had submitted an application to DEQ for these projects for potentially low market financing through VRA and the Clean Water Fund.

Mr. Kooch said in March the VRA advised the Town the State Water Board authorized funding for both projects, and the Commitment Letters are included in the packet. He said the Fort Avenue project is roughly \$600,000.00 and the Forest Drive Force Main is \$4.2 Million. He said the interest rate was 3.75%, with an administration fee being built in.

Mr. Kooch believed the closing date would be FY27, with construction beginning then as well. He said the first interest payment would be due roughly a year later. He said the amortization would start in FY29 with 30 years of payment.

Mr. Kooch said if there are no rate increases in FY27, \$1,650,000.00 is what the sewer revenues would be. He said he would provide the estimated rate increases to support future growth, existing debt service, as well as the repayment of the new debt service. He projected a 4% increase per year for inflation costs just doing business. He said the sewer rates they are working on would meet the minimum of debt service coverage of \$1.2 Million. He said for every dollar of debt service they are estimating a revenue that's available to pay at \$1.25.

Mr. Kooch said they are calculating to maintain a minimum of 200 days cash on hand. He said the Town needs to maintain a self-supporting system.

Mr. Kooch said there would be no rate increase in 2027, but starting in 2028 and 2029 there would be a 6.7% both years. He said 4% of that would keep up with inflation, and the additional 2.7% would cover the capital costs.

Councilman Nash asked why the information showed 5,000 gallons as a minimum, when the Town's minimum is 3,000 gallons. Mr. Kooch said this was based on a 5,000 gallon user.

Councilman Page said it shows in 2027 no rate increase. Mr. Kooch said this is showing the rate increase not until 2027. He said if there is a rate increase in 2027, it would reduce the 6.7% increase in 2028.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there have been 2 sewer increases in the 15 years he has been here. He said the first was for the sewer consent order, which was a 26% increase. He said the second was when the Town had to start paying for the East End project.

Councilman Nash asked if the discussions with the State for funding would effect this. Manager Vannoorbeeck said on the water rates yes, but not the sewer.

Councilman Gormus said over a period of five years, citizens would be looking at \$10-\$12 more total per month.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said pertaining to the water, the Town received a \$1.351 Million Grant through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act. He said \$600,000.00 is for engineering, design and preparation for bidding. He said the \$1.351 Million was associated when the Town was planning to work with Crewe. He said the remaining \$700,000.00 in grant funds was still available so he was going to make an appeal to use towards construction.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he has made application through our Delegate and State Senator for \$3 Million in Principal Forgiveness for the raw water line, and so far, has made it through the budget. He said we have also applied to our Senators for an additional \$3 Million for Congressional Direct Spending.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would not include a rate increase this year, but for FY28.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the force main is failing with the ductal iron that was installed in the 90s. He said the Fort Avenue project is old cast iron with brick manholes, and this project is out for bid now.

Councilman Nash asked about the life expectancy of the force main, is it 30 years, or are we taking a note out for something that won't last that long.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the ductal iron pipe is why it has not lasted longer. He said the ductal iron was not appropriate for the force main due to the corrosive material with sewer, it has worn the cathodic material around the pipe. He said with the new project they would use PVC Pipe.

Councilman Allman made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the two Virginia Resources Authority commitment letters for the Fort Avenue Project and the Forest Drive Force Main Project. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

2. Mr. Dave McCormack – Dillard Crawley Building

Mr. McCormack said he was from Petersburg, and had done several projects in Blackstone. He said he had submitted a proposal for 114 S. Main Street. He said what he was proposing would fit the need from a residential standpoint, and meets the needs for the IRF Grant as part of this project, which is 30% commercial.

Mr. McCormack said the building is in terrible condition, and an awkward shape. He said it was a crazy challenge, but he was looking forward to it. He said this project would be done under the standards of the Department of Historical Resources, and use the Tax Credit Program in addition to the grants and bank financing. He believed this would be a \$4 Million project. He said they would keep the storefronts intact and bring in some residential.

Councilman Page said the proposal says 10+ units; how many are planned. Mr. McCormack said he was keeping that open until they get into the architecture. He said they have to keep with Park Standards and give everyone a window. He said it may be between 10-14 units.

Mayor Dickens said he was impressed hearing Mr. McCormack talk about Park Service and following their guidelines, because they are very exacting. He asked about one of the items Mr. McCormack was requesting from the Town, a soils geo engineering report to determine if suitable to build a slab in the parking lot. Mr. McCormack said they want a radon study done to be sure there are no issues, or former buried tanks. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is no room to build a parking lot. Mr. McCormack said there would not be anything done in the parking lot.

Councilman Page said with the lease fee, it looked like Mr. McCormack was saying the Town would get their money back in water, sewer and power.

Councilman Gormus asked Mr. McCormack to summarize what he was offering. He said they have the same need as developers; they have to meet the debt coverage ratio. He said if they don't hit the 125% debt coverage the bank is going to not fund the project, or curtail the loan. He said they take the gross income coming in, minus the expenses, then left with the debt coverage. He said if we add a lease payment that will skew the ratio and become unfinanceable.

Mr. McCormack said if he does the project, and partners with the Town, it will result in things that are not happening now. He said currently the building is worth negative dollars because of the liability. He said he needs the credits and incentives to get to the positive. He said they will yield real estate taxes, residents will be there using water and power, and they will be going out to restaurants. He believed that would go towards any investment the Town has made.

Mr. McCormack said he was proposing to do the project, invest the \$4 Million, and he just needs the building to do it.

Councilman Page said in the proposal it says the Town would be applying for grants on Mr. McCormack's behalf, he asked Mr. McCormack if he would be matching the funds. Mr. McCormack replied yes, but the only other grant would be through the State Enterprise Zone. He said they have done the same arrangements in other towns.

Mr. McCormack said the IRF is a ten year arc, and once they have stuck with the project that long, they would want the option to purchase the building for whatever the Town has on the hook.

Councilman Allman asked Mr. McCormack if the commercial space needed would be retail. Mr. McCormack said he did not believe in bringing residential to the street fronts. He said they planned to offer at least 1,000 square feet for retail or professional.

Councilman Page said with the Town being the owner, and Mr. McCormack being the lessee, what happens if something breaks down. Councilman Nash believed the maintenance would fall on Mr. McCormack. Mr. McCormack said the Town would be on the hook for nothing.

Mr. McCormack said with the IRF Grant, there needs to be in the agreement that he would be operating this building for the ten years. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would talk to Vacorp about what insurance the Town would need on the building.

Mayor Dickens asked about the size of the units. Mr. McCormack replied, typically 600 square feet. He said the building will determine the size.

Councilman Gormus asked if the closing would not be until the end of the ten years. Councilman Nash said that is because of how the Town purchased the building. Manager Vannoorbeeck said because of DHCD.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for authorization to begin the zoning process, with the Town being the applicant. He said Attorney Harf and Mr. McCormack need to start the process for a lease agreement. He did not think the property needed to be declared surplus because it will be a lease, but did think a public hearing was needed to discuss the terms and conditions.

Councilman Nash asked that the details of the dollar figures be discussed tonight in Closed Session. Attorney Harf believed the potential lease agreement could be discussed in Closed Session. Councilman Nash believed the agreement should include after the ten years the building would go to Mr. McCormack.

Mr. McCormack hoped he could get started over the summer with this project, with a 14 month build time.

3. Ms. Epes – Juneteenth – 6-27-26

Councilman Nash said Juneteenth would not be on Main Street this year, it will be at the Armory. Ms. Epes replied that is correct.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked if a portion of the Bevell's parking lot could be reserved for the customers at Northwest Ace. Ms. Chastiddy Bryant said they wanted to use the Bevell's Parking Lot for the vendors to park.

Ms. Bryant said the food vendors would be parked around the building, with the grassy area being used for the kids.

Ms. Epes agreed to leave some parking spaces for Northwest Ace.

Councilman Nash asked that a parking map be provided.

Mayor Dickens asked about the bands. Ms. Epes said the DJ would be the music inside. Ms. Bryant said their event would only be around the Armory; they would not be using the street behind Northwest Ace.

Councilman Allman suggested using the backside of Northwest Ace for vendors.

Councilman Miller made a motion to authorize the \$5,000.00 donation, waive the banner fee, waive the Noise Ordinance, approving the street closure as presented, and approving use of the Armory. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

4. Ms. Jenny Davis Bunn

Ms. Bunn said it pained her to be here tonight, and read the following:

I come before you tonight with significant concern regarding the public comments and accusations made about me and other members of the tourism committee following the March 30th council meeting.

The facts and intentions behind my actions have been grossly misrepresented by Councilman Page, who has conducted what I consider a smear campaign against me on social media. His posts contain false allegations, threats of legal action, and attempts to damage my reputation. As a business owner in this town, this affects me both personally and professionally.

What is especially troubling is that Councilman Page never once reached out to me for clarification. Instead, he took FOIA-obtained text messages, posted selected portions publicly on Facebook, and attached misleading narratives to them.

Had he contacted me, he would have learned the following:

My concern regarding FOIA was never about avoiding transparency. It stemmed from practical challenges I anticipated after organizing the Christmas event. In the final weeks of that event, coordination required frequent communication—group texts and spontaneous meetings. The requirement to provide three days' notice before such interactions would have made effective planning extremely difficult, and I could see no realistic way around that in the final days of an event. When I raised this concern with the mayor, it was not dismissed, reinforcing my understanding that my concern was valid. Mr. Page also would have learned that my record demonstrates consistent support for transparency. It was I, years ago, who urged the town to provide more advanced notice of committee meetings so the public could attend, and it was I who successfully advocated for video recordings of meetings to improve public access.

Mr. Page might have learned that I have a long history of volunteering for this town. I have served as Chair of the Seay Park Committee, as a member of the Beautification Committee, and on a prior DBI tourism committee before COVID shut it down. So, following Mayor Dickens' appointment, I approached him about developing a tourism committee, which he supported, and our first meeting was held July 9, 2025.

From the outset, meeting times were established and communicated. Minutes from that first meeting reflect that future meeting times were set and emailed to all members, including Mr. Page. Furthermore, a formal report submitted to the town for the October 15, 2025 Council meeting stated that our monthly meetings were moved from the second Wednesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. to the first Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. to increase participation and accommodate schedules.

Given this, the committee did have regular meeting times and we made no attempt to conceal that. Why would we? As a member, Mr. Page was aware of this. If he believed meetings were not being properly posted under FOIA, it raises the question: why did he not ensure they were posted or alert the committee at the time? Why wait until February 2026 to raise the issue?

Mr. Page has stated that he was unaware until then—despite also claiming he has sued governments over FOIA prior to being elected and is “4 and 0” in FOIA matters. Regardless, there was never any intent on our part to operate in secrecy or avoid transparency.

Despite my repeated attempts to clarify these facts with him on Facebook, and my direct requests that he stop spreading misinformation, he continued to do so with complete disregard for the facts or the impact of his behavior. His statements included claims that I wanted to “operate in secret and behind closed doors,” and when I clarified that giving notice of meetings was not the reason, I left the committee, he responded with a threat implying legal action, stating I would have “plenty of time to discuss it”—insinuating in court. These claims are not only false, but unreasonable.

He also alleged that I showed “disrespect for our committees and institutions” and that I influenced others to engage in a hostile takeover of the tourism committee. First, I had no prior knowledge or involvement in DBI forming a tourism committee. I was completely unaware until I was extended an invitation to join it, remain on the mayor's committee, or do neither. Secondly, when I learned that Mr. Clarke had not yet been extended an invitation, I offered to pass the word along to him simply because I had his phone number. That was the extent of it.

To go back to the October 15 council meeting for a moment, further misrepresentation occurred when Councilman Page misstated the tourism committee's position by suggesting that council expand the museum curator's role to include the Armory. That was not a recommendation our committee made, and many of us were upset that he had publicly presented a position as ours that we neither discussed nor supported. Following that October meeting, our focus shifted to organizing the Christmas event, which took place just 58 days later. In that short timeframe, the committee and community accomplished a substantial amount, and never touched the \$5,000.00 donated by the Town.

We raised \$9,450 in 58 days. Local businesses and individuals and tourism members contributed significantly, including funding for attractions, marketing, and event support. A multi-faceted marketing campaign was developed, lodging was secured for participants, and community members volunteered extensively. We organized approximately 20 vendors, hosted live music, created children's activities such as a gingerbread room, and ensured both museums were open and staffed. Attendance exceeded 500 people over two days, and the event generated over \$5,000.

It was a whirlwind. It was exhausting. And it was a success.

At the conclusion of the event, it became clear that the committee structure needed improvement. Specifically:

- *The committee needed defined membership criteria and the ability to vote members on or off.*
- *Communication needed to remain flexible, given the high level of coordination required during event planning.*
- *A dedicated bank account was necessary, as volunteers were paying out-of-pocket and seeking reimbursement, which was not sustainable.*

(These were all issues I discussed with the mayor prior to my resignation, by the way.) In February 2026, we attempted to get members together to address these issues, plan next steps, advocate for a museum curator, and coordinate with the Virginia Tourism Corporation. During that process, Mr. Page stated he would not attend any meetings unless FOIA notice requirements were strictly followed, asserting that any meeting without three days' notice was illegal.

At that time, my perspective was shaped by several factors:

Mr. Page had attended very few meetings since July, had not actively participated in planning or executing the Christmas event, and had previously misrepresented the committee's work. Despite this, he raised concerns without taking steps himself—such as notifying the clerk.

I asked if he wished to withdraw from the committee; he declined. I encouraged him to share his concerns in the group text so they could be addressed collectively, but he stated doing so would violate FOIA and suggested committee members complete FOIA training. After that, the committee did not meet again. Ms. Bunn said in her opinion, people fear Mr. Page and his litigious nature, which has been shown since March 30th.

At that point, I had no interest in navigating those additional obstacles as an unpaid volunteer with significant responsibilities outside of this role. Based on my experience during the Christmas event, the communication limitations alone would have made future efforts unnecessarily difficult.

I communicated these concerns to Mayor Dickens, including the need for structural changes. When it became clear that these issues were not being resolved anytime soon, and with no meaningful progress made in the first quarter of 2026, I made the decision to resign.

My resignation had nothing to do with avoiding FOIA requirements or transparency. It was based on practical limitations, structural concerns, and the inefficiencies I experienced. When I explained this publicly in response to his claim that I “bucked” the committee to avoid FOIA transparency, he dismissed it.

Councilman Page never asked me why I resigned. Instead, he chose to publish selected text messages and attach false claims to them, publicly misrepresenting my actions and intent.

That is why I am here tonight—to correct the record and to address the damage caused by those misrepresentations. Also, I believe Mr. Page should be held accountable for his actions as a Council member and asked the Council to consider censuring him.

Councilman Page said he would like to respond since the comments were directed at him. Councilman Nash said he believed it was Page vs Town of Blackstone in court on Friday, and asked this not be discussed. Attorney Harf said the Town is one of the parties.

Councilman Nash preferred Council not speak on this issue until the court case on Friday.

Councilman Miller said he did not know anything about this, and did not want to be involved in it.

5. Ms. Beverley Ambs

Ms. Ambs was not in attendance.

FIRE CHIEF’S REPORT:

Chief Beares said the radio project was still ongoing. He said the firefighter program at Nottoway High School was going great. He said the Food Truck Rodeo had over 150 people.

Chief Beares said they were still working on getting equipment from the VDFP grant for \$75,000.00. He said they just applied for a Dominion Power grant for \$3,000.00 for new fire hose to go on their second engine.

Chief Beares said training this month was on ladders and search and rescue. He said the blood drive last month was a success, they received 20 units of blood. He said 2 members successfully completed their EMT class. He announced the years of service.

Chief Beares said the Easter Egg Drop was a good event, with roughly 100 people in attendance. He said the Burn Building looks totally different with railings, and the car fire prop was dropped off last week. He thanked Council for their support and backing on this project.

Chief Beares said they did an active shooting drill at Nottoway during spring break.

Mayor Dickens asked about the payment of bills for the Fire Chief's Conference, one was \$4,000.00 and the other was \$5,000.00. Chief Beares said they sent 7 officers to this conference, and this includes classes and their stay, and was held in Virginia Beach.

Councilman Nash said \$5,000 of the funds was a pass through because it comes from Fire Programs.

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

ALREADY PAID:

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$784,386.52. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Nay
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

Councilman Nash said there is a retired employee included in the bills, that says insurance reimbursement. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not know, but would find out.

Councilman Page said his nay vote was because of some expenses included that deal with an expired contract for an employee. He said the DBi contract expired January 31, 2026, and the Town is still paying rent, utilities and salary of the director. He asked to have the contract sent to a committee.

TO BE PAID:

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve as presented; the bills not yet paid in the mount of \$357,693.29. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

APPROPRIATIONS:

There were no appropriations this month.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Employment & Police – met 4-14-26 – minutes included in April’s Council Packet

Closed Session – Treasurer Interviews

Chairman Miller said they have the final person ready to be interviewed by the full Council. He said she knows the new computer system. Manager Vannoorbeeck said more details can be provided during the Closed Session tonight.

Buildings, Property & Cemetery – met 4-16-26 – minutes will be included in May’s Council Packet

Seay Park Policy

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was an issue with people parking on the grass in Seay Park. He said the Church was using the parking lot, so there was not room for everyone to park.

Councilman Nash said the Town has the front portion of Seay Park’s grass treated, so we prefer nobody park on the grass. He suggested the grilling area be behind the gazebo.

Councilman Page suggested adding to the Policy a secondary parking area. Mayor Dickens suggested notifying adjacent property owners when there is an event.

Councilman Nash suggested a map showing additional parking at the rear gate, but not in the front of the park.

RFP – Dillard Crawley Building

Mr. McCormack presented his RFP earlier in the meeting.

Closed Session – Acquisition or Disposition of Real Property - Airport

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Award Bid – Reconductoring Subdivisions

Manager Vannoorbeeck said bids were opened on April 14, 2026 and received one bid from River City Construction in the amount of \$325,420.00. He said the engineer's estimate was \$650,000.00.

Councilman Nash asked when this project would start. Manager Vannoorbeeck said when material was received. He said we want this done before hurricane season.

Councilman Nash made a motion to enter into agreement with River City Construction in the amount of \$325,420.00 for the reductoring project. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

2. Boundary Adjustments

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in the packet were maps, as presented previously. He said 51-6 is owned by the Wilson family and he did meet with them per Council's request. He said the Wilson's were not crazy about coming into Town limits.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the mapping has been modified to include the airport property since the last discussion with Council. He said the Town was purchasing 43-130, 43-130E is owned by the County, Joe Allman owns 43-69A2, 43-130F is owned by the Switch Grass Program. He said the Town owns 43-69A and 51-7.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said 42-88 is owned by Mr. Eric Paul with Transition Solutions. He said 50-(8-10) is DMM Properties, and 51-52C is owned by Mostafa Muhamed.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was still a process for these adjustments, and Attorney Harf was still researching hunting. He asked for authorization to present to Nottoway County.

Councilman Nash suggested using the right of way on Route 40. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Attorney Harf was working on this, but the concern is, if you skip one property then why not skip others. He said we have to go down the Route 40 right of way to get to the airfield.

Council gave Common Consent to Manager Vannoorbeeck to present the preliminary boundary adjustments to the Nottoway County Board of Supervisors.

3. Award Bid – Dillard Crawley – Fire Alarm & Sprinkler

Manager Vannoorbeeck said bids were opened on April 15, 2026, with one bid being received from Curtis Fire Protection in the amount of \$24,283.00. He said this cost was fully grant reimbursable.

Councilman Nash made a motion to enter into contract with Curtis Fire Protection for the repairs to the fire alarm and sprinkler system at the Dillard Crawley Building in the amount of \$24,283.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is a dry system, and intended not to freeze.

4. School Buildings – Asbestos Abatement Bid

Manager Vannoorbeeck said bids were opened on April 15, 2026 for the asbestos abatement at two of the old school buildings. He said one bid was received from Modulus, LLC in the amount of \$202,495.00. He said he was not recommending award at this time, and would try to negotiate with the contractor.

Councilman Nash asked how long the bids were good for. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, the bid bond was good for 30 days.

5. Raw Water Line

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Bookkeeper Mitchell submitted this grant application in the amount of \$8,883,122.00. He said the Town has to hold a Public Meeting, and is scheduled for the May Council Meeting.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we are still waiting on the General Assembly. He said we are also going to apply to the Health Department in August.

It was clarified the \$8,883,122.00 is a loan application through USDA Rural Development.

6. HR Services

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the agreement with OneDigital expires in June 2026, and they have provided options for renewing. He said the current contract will include a 3% escalation if renewed. He said Option 1 is for 4 hours a month at \$1,260 a month and \$180.00 an hour, Option 2 is 8 hours a month at \$1,440.00 a month and \$180.00 an hour. He recommended going with Option 1 at 4 hours a month.

Mayor Dickens asked if the Town was happy with their services. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied yes, they were responsive to him.

Councilman Nash made a motion to renew with OneDigital and go with Option 1, which is 4 hours a month at \$1,260.00, and \$180.00 an hour for anything over that. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

7. Proposed Compensation for Elected Officials

Mayor Dickens said this had been referred to Account & Finance, but they have not met yet. He asked to table this until they can meet.

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he received an email today from Attorney Harf that the State Corporation Commission had filed a certificate of compliance and is serving a statutory agent for Affordable Remodeling, LLC for 819 Falls Street. He said we cannot find this person, either business or resident to serve him. He said after 21 days we can begin default judgement.

2. Meals Tax / Lodging Tax

Councilman Nash asked about a business that did not include a dollar figure. Clerk Daniel said this business has closed, and a new owner has taken over. She added the previous owner had been trying to get his paperwork from the building, and was given until the end of the month to pay.

Councilman Gormus asked if the business that was owing from September is paid. Manager Vannoorbeeck said they were paid up.

Councilman Gormus asked about the business on the top of the page. Clerk Daniel said the legal fees had not been paid, which is why it was still on the list. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is a warrant. He said he would ask Attorney Harf about next steps.

3. Street Improvement Projects

Manager Vannoorbeeck said paving would begin tomorrow on N. Main Street, starting at the Slip In.

4. Wigglesworth Sports Complex

There was nothing to report.

5. Dillard Crawley Building – 114 S. Main Street

There was nothing to report.

6. Armory

There was nothing to report.

7. Weatherization

There was nothing to report.

8. Workforce Housing

Manager Vannoorbeeck said pictures were included. He said it is a square area, and would be divided into four pieces. He said two houses would face Lester Street and two houses would face Harris Street.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was no sewer on Lester Street, so this would have to be added to get back to Patterson Street. Community Development Specialist Bryant said two houses are 2 bedrooms and 2 are three bedrooms.

Mayor Dickens asked if all the lots were equal. Manager Vannoorbeeck said yes, 90x112. Community Development Specialist Bryant said the houses will be built to what people can afford, some may not be able to afford 3 bedrooms.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said if Council is agreeable, he would like to prepare a subdivision, and start the zoning process.

Councilman Nash asked if the property line could be equal to the street. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied they couldn't get the 10,000 square feet.

Clerk Daniel asked if the Workforce Housing funds could be used to install the new sewer line. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied yes. He said the Town currently has \$465,000.00 that will be applied towards these new homes.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked if the Town wanted to be paid back for the lot. Councilman Nash said selling the lots will help pay for the sewer line, and things that may need to be done. He said the optics were better if we do not give the land away.

Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize a Public Hearing to move forward with the Workforce Housing project on Harris and Lester Street, then afterwards prepare a subdivision plat. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Peele Manor – Phase II

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in 2022 the Town approved a rezoning to double the size of Peele Manor. He said it was rezoned to allow 24 additional units that include two conditions, one being 62 years or older, and provide the Town with utility easements at no cost.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was recently contacted and they are now applying for low income tax credits through Virginia Housing, and have asked the Town to send a letter of support. He said there is no financial commitment being requested.

Councilman Miller made a motion authorizing Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the letters of agreement for the Virginia United Methodist Housing Development Corporation. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

2. Blackstone Emergency Squad – Community Event

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Blackstone Emergency Squad would be having a community event on May 23, 2026 and would like permission to have a food truck.

Councilman Nash made a motion approving a food truck for the Blackstone Emergency Squad's community event on May 23, 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

3. Town Square – Street Closure Request

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is for the National Day of Prayer on May 7, 2026 from 6:45 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. He said they are requesting to waive the Noise Ordinance and closing Main Street. Manager Vannoorbeeck recommended not closing Main Street.

Councilman Nash made a motion to waive the Noise Ordinance for the National Day of Prayer on May 7, 2026, but leave Main Street open. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

4. DCJS – Local Law Enforcement Grant – Acceptance

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Police Department was awarded a \$5,166.00 grant for crime control efforts.

Councilman Page made a motion to accept the DCJS Jag Grant in the amount of \$5,166.00 for the Police Department, and execute necessary documents. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

5. The Inn at Blackstone – Upcoming Events

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed Council has waived the Noise Ordinance for these events previously.

Councilman Nash asked if everything had been kosher lately. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied yes.

Councilman Miller made a motion to waive the Noise Ordinance for the events presented for the Inn at Blackstone. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

6. DMV Agreements – Government Application / Extranet Access

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this agreement is from DMV for extranet access.

Councilman Gormus made a motion to approve the DMV Agreement as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Nay
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

7. Virginia Business Ready Sites Program

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is a grant application that is up to \$500,000.00 for the site at the airfield for utility improvements. He said the only firm budget he knew of was the water cost for \$1.6 Million.

Councilman Page made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to submit a grant application to the Virginia Business Ready Site Program for up to \$500,000.00 for the Blackstone Airfield. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

1. Burn Ordinance

Mayor Dickens referred this to the Health & Ordinance Committee.

2. Sewer Project – Jacks Branch Trunk Line

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this project would line existing trunk lines, and would be roughly \$680,000.00.

Mayor Dickens referred this to the Account & Finance Committee.

3. DBi Contract

Mayor Dickens referred this to the Employment & Police Committee.

MAYORS MINUTE:

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in April the Town receives their fuel adjustment figures. He said the estimate was going to be a reduction. He said currently it is \$.01528 per kilowatt hour, and the estimate was .012, but the actual is going to be \$.03956, that is more than double, and will be roughly \$1.2 Million. He said if prices go down, we will still have to wait 6 months.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this rate will be effective with the May 1st billing.

POLICE REPORT:

There was nothing reported.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

There were no comments.

CLOSED SESSION:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711-A

- 1/ Personnel – Treasurer Position
- 3/ Acquisition or Disposition of Real Property – Airport Property & Dillard Crawley

Councilwoman Wynn made a motion to go into Closed Session for (1) 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 and (3) Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Allman	-	Aye
Councilman Gormus	-	Aye
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Aye
Councilman Page	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

Councilwoman Wynn 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 Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Miller	-	Certify
Councilman Nash	-	Certify
Councilman Allman	-	Certify
Councilman Gormus	-	Certify
Councilwoman Wynn	-	Certify
Councilman Page	-	Certify
Councilwoman Williams	-	Absent

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Dickens adjourned this meeting at 10:03 p.m.

Caryetta Dickens MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

May 18, 2026 APPROVED AND ADOPTED

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