

Minutes of a Special Called Meeting of the Council of the Town of Blackstone, Virginia, held in the Council Chambers located at 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia on Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting is from the postponement of the February 22, 2021 Council Meeting due to the ice storm.

There Were Present:

Mayor: William D. Coleburn

Council Members: Christine Hasbrouck, 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; Chris Mathias, Sergeant

Town Attorney:

Those Absent: Shelia Jones

Mayor Coleburn called the February Council Meeting to order.

Councilman Nash delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Coleburn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Coleburn asked everyone to go back in their mind to Saturday, February 13th when you heard the transformer blow, or your lights flickered and you knew the storm that was predicted was indeed upon us. He said go back to midday that day when the limbs were falling so bad you were worried about motorists getting hit, whether you should try to go out, and then think about that first night when you knew we were looking at 2-3 days without power at the least. He said think about what you thought when you heard the town truck or saw a piece of heavy equipment plowing a tree out of the street as limbs continued to fall. He said on that day if was so bad our brave Town crews were called back to where it was safe. He said he was on Facebook a lot and people appreciated it, but the real heroes were the men and women that responded to the storm and so tonight he asked to make a few presentations. He said one thing he had learned in life is we go on with our business so quickly, we don't pause and thank those who serve us. He said he had never been prouder in his entire life, to be from Blackstone, to be Mayor of Blackstone and each and every member of the work force starting with the Town Manager and his staff and Public Works, Dan Martin

Mayor Coleburn said he took it upon himself to have some plaques made that read “Town of Blackstone Recognition and Appreciation to the Electric Department, Public Works, Water & Wastewater Treatment and Fire Department. He said he had a retired employee tell him he was giving a lot of praise but hadn’t thought about water/sewer guys. He said that was to their testament because he never thought about it, because we take it for granted. He said water is not sexy, it’s not exciting, until you don’t have it or it’s discolored. He said there was an issue a few months ago with manganese, which is harmless, but Edward Harris and his guys got right on it and it disappeared within a couple of weeks.

Mayor Coleburn said last but not least, the Fire Department, Chief Tomer, those guys were at the Fire Department cooking for the linemen, and the linemen from out of Town. He said our six guys were awesome, and the North Carolina guys were nice reinforcements and only because we are a member of a municipal association and Dan Martin and Philip Vannoorbeeck knew to pull the trigger and make that phone call.

Mayor Coleburn presented plaques to Dan Martin, Chief Tomer and Edward Harris and asked for a round of applause for Manager Vannoorbeeck.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was awesome participation and help from local businesses. He thanked Mitchell’s restaurant for feeding the work crews and said McDonald’s and Food Lion donated food.

Clerk Daniel advised the new chiropractor had a cook out for the Town employees and Benchmark Bank provided pizzas after the storm to show their appreciation.

MINUTES:

Councilman Nash made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Regular Council Meeting on January 25, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

VISITORS:

Mr. Thomas Taylor

Mr. Taylor asked about the status of Phase II for the East End project. Manager Vannoorbeeck said we are still going through the contract negotiation phase. He believed the Town would be under contract with DHCD within the next 30 days, then the qualification process would begin.

Mr. Taylor asked when the infrastructure and paving would start on Harris and Fitzgerald Streets. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, it should be bid out in April or May for the water/sewer portion.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Tomer said we were fortunate enough to receive the Cares Grant, which was done by the Commonwealth Regional Council. He said this would provide for coveralls for the Fire Department members. He said they received roughly \$5,000.00. He said the rationale was members could wear coveralls if they were not wearing turn out gear, take the coveralls off and not have to worry about wearing clothes home from a call to prevent any cross contamination with COVID.

Chief Tomer said this was the first year with the new SCBA.

Chief Tomer said everyone should already be aware of the COVID outbreak at the Fire Department. He believed it had peaked and 11 people tested positive and they had reached their quarantine period. He said during this time they stopped their first responder program because it was too high of a risk. He said once they felt confident everything was back to normal, they reinstated the program.

Chief Tomer said the Burn Law went into effect February 15th. He said we have had plenty of rain so there is not much concern right now, but in the summer and fall from all the debris that has fallen, it could make for a horrid fire season.

NEW BUSINESS:

Fire Department Burns – S. Main Street / Church Street

Chief Tomer said this was discussed with the Training Committee and they did not feel too confident doing this in a controlled setting. He said the house on South Main Street, the location and not having an aerial device would have made it harder, plus it would have been a traffic nightmare. He understood the property on Church Street was very close to power lines. He said they did not think it was a good time right now, plus the Burn Ban was in effect.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the house on Church Street was condemned and had been assured it was coming down, if it does not happen, then the Town will have to get a judge's order to take it down.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in his opinion, the house on South Main Street was violating the Blight Policy. He said Dr. Whiteside owns the house.

Mayor Coleburn said this Council authorized him to write a letter last month to the Department of State, Congresswoman Spanberger and FEMA. He said at the Board of Supervisors Meeting Thursday night, Chief Tomer's letter came up, he said since then he had received a lot of support from the Crewe and Burkeville firefighters and officials, so he was going to draft a Resolution and present to the Board of Supervisors and the three Towns, this may carry more weight than just a letter from the Mayor. He said he would have this for the March Council Meeting.

Chief Tomer said if the grant is awarded, there is a charge from the Commonwealth Regional Council, they get administrative funds from grants if awarded.

BUILDINGS, PROPERTY & CEMETERY:

CARES Act Funds

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Chief Tomer submitted several items recently for CARES Act Funds for the Fire Department. He said one item included an ambulance, and asked Chief Tomer if they had applied for an ambulance to the County previously. Chief Tomer replied yes, but it was denied, because they couldn't be licensed by the December 31st deadline. He said the bunk room would be built inside the existing structure.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said one of the items was a radio tower generator, he said the Town had already purchased this.

Chief Tomer suggested a generator for the fuel pumps.

Mayor Coleburn said with an ambulance, the Fire Department could begin the transport business, and bill insurance. He asked if this would ruffle any feathers with the Squad. Chief Tomer believed there would be some discourse because they are career staffed and provide EMS transport. He believed they were overwhelmed, he said this would help them, but this would not be staffed with volunteers. Mayor Coleburn said the insurance proceeds would pay for the paramedics. Chief Tomer said it would include one paramedic and one EMT.

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Mayor Coleburn stated the bills that have already been paid are in the amount of \$517,815.77.

Councilwoman Thompson made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$517,815.77. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Councilman Miller asked about COVID relief bills. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, the Town received roughly \$22,000.00 from the State of Virginia. He said this was applied to delinquent utility bills if customers could show COVID related circumstances.

Councilman Wilkinson asked if Industrial Chemical in the amount of \$3,800.00 was for the Water Treatment Plant. Finance Director Hardy replied yes.

Councilman Wilkinson asked about \$1,151.00 to Walmart for dog food and a TV. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, that is the Walmart credit card, the dog food is for Kora, and believed the TV was for the break room at the Police Department.

Councilman Wilkinson asked about the tap fee refund in the amount of \$3,200.00. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, Mr. Prue that lives on the south end of Town, approached us about hooking on to the Town's water and sewer, but after reviewing this, it was going to be very expensive for him to have a directional bore done, because the water is on the opposite side of the road. He told the property owner, who is out of Town, he may want to go with well and septic. He said Mr. Prue wrote the Town a check and we held it about six months and Manager Vannoorbeeck decided to refund the money back to him.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Coleburn stated the bills not yet approved, and to be paid, are in the amount of \$142,389.40

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve as presented, the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$142,389.40. The motion was seconded by Councilman Morgan.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

APPROPRIATIONS:

There were no appropriations this month.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. *Buildings, Property & Cemetery – met 2-25-21 – minutes included in February’s Council Packet*

CARES Act Funds

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the departments were asked to put together a list for eligible activities to be submitted to the County for CARES Act Funds.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Police Department would like to enclose the patio on the back side to expand the size of the conference room and the booking room.

Manager Vannoorbeeck talked about expanding the Council Chambers to the sidewalk. Clerk Daniel said this would include extending Council’s area to allow 6’ apart from each other.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said DBi had been working with him on some pricing for virtual museum tours, which would be roughly \$5,000.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the total being requested from all departments is \$609,937.76. He did not expect to do all the items, because the amount they believed the County was providing was \$500,000.00.

Councilman Nash asked how do we dictate to get to the \$500,000.00. Mayor Coleburn said there is some low hanging fruit there. Manager Vannoorbeeck asked to wait to see what the County approves.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve the list as presented and submit to Nottoway County. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Water Tank Estimates – Second Street

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Council asked for estimates in writing and East Coast Demolition provided the enclosed in the amount of \$95,000.00, which includes demo and hauling and Manager Vannoorbeeck may be able to find a less expensive disposal alternative. He said Mr. Dave McCormack was working on an estimate. He believed it was much less and had resubmitted his proposal based on this.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said at the March Council Meeting, he was hoping to be prepared to provide estimates and an agreement from Attorney Bacon.

February 2021 Ice Storm

Mayor Coleburn said as of last week, the cost was over \$527,000.00. He asked what the expenses entailed. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, brush removal, roughly \$200,000.00 for the work crews from North Carolina, purchasing material needed, and fuel.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said not much of this was bid out, and that which was bid out, was not fully compliant with the Town's procurement process. He said for the brush removal, written quotes were received with cubic yard prices. He said three quotes were received, one for \$28.00 a cubic yar, one for \$21.00 and \$8.75 a cubic yard from MTS. He said this company did not do any of the tree work.

Mayor Coleburn said the Town put out an announcement to have debris at the street by March 8th. He asked how long MTS would be here picking up debris. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied probably through March 12th. He asked MTS to focus on big stuff that the Town could not get.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the emergency procurement was put on eVA, Attorney Bacon provided the proper documentation and it was put on the Town's website.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to ratify procurement from the ice storm, for the debris removal and award the low bid to MTS. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Lakeview Cemetery Annual Clean-Up

Chairwoman Hasbrouck said the Committee agreed to move the annual clean up to the week of March 15th – March 19th just for this year, due to the ice storm.

Councilman Nash asked about insurance damage at the Cemetery. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Simmons had already been and provided a written estimate for the roughly 25 damaged headstones. Finance Director Hardy said this falls under the Town's "No Fault" coverage, because the headstones actually belong to the families.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town had already dipped into the "No Fault" coverage, due to a fallen tree, so if the coverage goes over what the Town has, money may have to come from the Cemetery Operating Fund.

Councilman Nash asked if this cost could be submitted to FEMA. Finance Director Hardy said she would try.

Councilwoman Thompson asked about Greenview Cemetery and cleaning it up. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there were a lot of trees down at the entrance on Rocky Bump, and suggested having a clean-up day. He said he and Councilwoman Thompson reached out to a Board of Supervisor member about having the County apply for a grant, but had not heard anything back.

Mayor Coleburn asked this be on the March 15th Agenda.

2. Account & Finance – met 2-25-21 – minutes included in February's Council Packet

The Book End - Rent

Chairman Nash said the Committee asked Manager Vannoorbeeck to reach out to the County to see if they would add \$200.00 a month to their budget for the Library. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would send a letter to the County.

Trash Can Purchases

Chairman Nash said Manager Vannoorbeeck provided two estimates, with the next step being to get some samples here to review.

Mayor Coleburn said Council is considering purchasing 90-gallon trash cans with wheels for everyone. Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would allow all residents to wheel trash to the street, rather than being in your back yard or in an alley. Councilman Nash said this is trying to limit liabilities.

Emergency Procurement – February 2021 Ice Storm

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked Council for approval of the Emergency Procurement list.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Emergency Procure list as presented in the amount of \$226,232.74, due to the ice storm on February 13, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Attorney Bacon provided the notices needed.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Town Credit Card

Chairman Nash said during the ice storm, while trying to purchase supplies, the Town credit card was being declined. He said the Committee asked Finance Director Hardy to follow procurement and get rates from the local banks.

Mayor Coleburn asked what the limit was on the current BB&T credit card. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied \$5,000.00.

Chairman Nash pointed out the Town pays off the credit card 100% each month.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Finance Director Hardy did get pricing and the lowest interest rate from the current rate at BB&T, and the two other local banks was Benchmark at 7.99%. He said we are asking for a \$20,000.00 limit.

Chairman Nash asked who holds the credit cards. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it is kept in the safe and has to be checked out. He said the Town only has one card.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Town of Blackstone applying for a credit card with Benchmark Bank at 7.99% interest, with a \$20,000.00 limit. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no Consent Agenda items.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. MOU – Water/Wastewater Services

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the National Guard had executed the necessary documents to transfer 400,000 gallons of water and 400,000 gallons of sewer to the Town. He said the Town's capacity at the Wastewater Plant goes from 2 million originally, plus 200,000 from the recirculation that the Tobacco Commission paid for, plus this additional 400,000 gallons gives the Town about 600,000 gallons more.

Mayor Coleburn asked what the Town currently uses. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied the Town has capacity up to 500,000, if we are not at it, we may be above it.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said at the Water Plant, there is a 3.2 million a day withdrawal capacity, the permit is for 5 million gallons a day, but our current plant can process 3.2 million gallons. He said with this extra 400,000 gallons the Town is at 2.1 million gallons a day, of which the Town is using about 400,000 gallons.

2. Meter Reading Date Change

Mayor Coleburn said this is a proposal to change the dates of reading meters, which is currently around the 11th of the month, this would change it to being read on the first of each month. Manager Vannoorbeeck added if the first falls on the weekend, it would be read the earliest after the first.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town gets billed from VMEA from the 1st through the 31st of each month. He said currently the Town reads in the middle of the month, so the comparisons are never the same. He said we are proposing the have the month of May, customers get a bill for just 20 days, then that will enable us to start reading meters on the first of every month.

Councilman Nash believed this would make it easier for the consumer as well. Manager Vannoorbeeck added, the due dates would stay the same. He said the shorter month would be the bill you receive June 1st of this year.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town had borrowed money to replace the meter reading system, currently there is a manual read for water. He said we are looking into doing water and sewer like the electric meters.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to approve changing the meter reading dates to the first of each month. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

3. Canine Program

Mayor Coleburn said Officer Shay Farley's dog Kora, has been retired in good standing as of March 1, 2021.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said with the State of Virginia's liberalization legalization of marijuana, you can no longer use a dog that is trained on marijuana, because that cannot be the reason for a search.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to give Kora back to her original owner as requested. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Nash asked for some recognition for Kora. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would provide a Resolution and have Officer Shay Farley at the next meeting.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

4. COVID – Vaccine Policy

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked Council if they had an interest in mandating COVID vaccinations. He said he was not crazy about mandating anything, especially health related. He said he did want to present a Policy that once vaccinations are made available, from that point forward, when vaccinations are offered to the employees, and if it is declined and an employee does get COVID, then those employees have to use their own sick leave. He said currently the Town is paying sick leave when an employee is quarantined for 14 days, without penalizing their personal sick time.

Mayor Coleburn asked if the Town was entitled to know why an employee is sick. He said if they don't want people to know they have COVID, they could just say they are sick and use their own sick leave.

Councilman Morgan suggested waiting until next year once the season starts up again, put the Policy in place then, this will give people more time to know about the vaccine.

Dr. Hawkes asked if employees would be penalized if they had documentation from a doctor saying they could not take the COVID vaccinations. Manager Vannoorbeeck read from the packet, under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, if an employee is unable to get a vaccine due to a disability or religious belief, then the employee would be exempted.

Mayor Coleburn referred this to the Health & Ordinance Committee.

Bon Secours was discussed and how they are not performing any testing. He said he and the Town Manager would be having an intense sit down soon with Bon Secours.

A member from the audience asked if the Town planned to become a vaccination center at some point, since Bon Secours was not providing this service. Mayor Coleburn said the Piedmont Health District is organizing a potential mass vaccination site, maybe the Officer's Club at Pickett. Councilman Nash said the local pharmacies are providing the vaccine as well.

5. Industrial Development Authority

Clerk Daniel said two members had resigned because they did not want to participate in the Statements of Economic Interest. She asked Council to be thinking of two replacements.

6. Juneteenth Jubilee / Arts & Crafts

Ms. Eppes discussed the venue for the event. She said they planned for Main Street from Tavern Street to Church Street be closed. She said currently they have at least 40 vendors and entertainment. She asked to block the streets off at 9:00 p.m. the night before to start setting up. She said they want to leave the sidewalks open for the local businesses.

Mayor Coleburn said if Main Street is closed, then Broad Street needed to be open for Watkins Jewelers and Spencer's Drug.

Mayor Coleburn asked the date. Ms. August replied, Saturday, June 26, 2021. He asked the hours of the ceremony. Ms. August replied, 9:30 a.m. for the opening ceremony, with the event starting at 10:00 a.m. She said family time would be 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. She said the adult atmosphere would be from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Ms. Eppes thought they may have three areas for entertainment, with the Town Square being one location. She said the other two locations would be at the corner of Tavern Street and the third location would be Maple Street.

Mayor Coleburn said the Town would provide the venue, with the Chamber, the Nottoway NAACP, DBi, Spring Hill and other community members being involved as well.

Councilwoman Thompson made a motion to close Main Street, but leave Broad Street open, on Saturday, June 26, 2021 and the night before, with consultation from the Police Chief. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Morgan said the streets need to be closed off so nobody gets through. He said the Street Department would have to assist with detours. Manager Vannoorbeeck said if it is closed on Friday night, someone would have to be there all night. Mayor Coleburn said we would work on the Friday night aspect.

Mayor Coleburn asked if adult beverages were included in this venue. Ms. August said they were still considering this. Mayor Coleburn said if there was going to be adult beverages, Council has to approve for insurance purposes.

Ms. August said they would like to have a shuttle service for satellite parking and recommended Blackstone Primary School. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town has its own bus, so it would be a matter of paying a driver additional hours. Ms. Eppes said they would contact the School Board about using the Primary School parking lot.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck suggested church parking lots as well, with maybe churches having some buses to help.

Councilman Miller said the Committee came to him to ask Council for \$5,000.00 to start this operation. He believed it was a good idea and would help Blackstone.

Councilman Miller made a motion to give the Juneteenth Committee \$5,000.00 from the Council Discretionary Fund to start this operation. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Hasbrouck.

Ms. August said the \$5,000.00 would include booking entertainment, outdoor toiletries and clean-up.

Councilman Wilkinson asked for an itemized list. Ms. August replied yes.

Councilman Nash asked if Meals Tax would be charged from the food vendors. Mayor Coleburn replied, it must be by Town Code. Councilman Nash said he was trying to recoup some of the money and if Meals Tax was charged that would help.

Mayor Coleburn was not sure if the \$5,000.00 would be recouped, but the good will, the potential statewide publicity and a good flavor in peoples mouths about Blackstone would spread, it could be another thing that defines Blackstone.

Councilman Wilkinson asked if there was anything other than alcohol sales, that would be revenue producing. Ms. Ambs said the BBQ event would be for the Chamber.

Councilman Wilkinson said if there was money coming back, the Town could get reimbursed, unless it was going to the Chamber or a particular 501c3 organization.

Ms. August said the Committee discussed having any profits from the event being regenerated back into an account line item for future events.

Mr. William Clarke said they were trying to encourage people to participate and mentioned Mitchell's. He said this is not a black thing, it is for everybody, we want to make it attractive for people to come here.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town would provide the bus, garbage cans and help with traffic control. He asked for a list of what the Town would need to do, such as electric setups.

Mr. Clarke asked Manager Vannoorbeeck to advertise with Virginia Tourism. Mayor Coleburn said he would reach out to Mr. Sandra Tanner.

Mrs. Dianna Mitchell asked if this would just include the downtown area. Mayor Coleburn said this is still a work in progress and the Committee can discuss.

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

Manager Vannoorbeeck said 804 Church Street was discussed earlier and the Fire Department declined burning it. He said he would be working with the property owners to get it dealt with.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he spoke with the property owner of 505 Center Street today and was told the Indemnity Agreements were being mailed back. He told the property owner to have the collapsed garage emptied by April 1st.

Councilman Nash asked if a payment process was discussed. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there would be a lien on the property and he can make a payment at any time. He said we are not mandating to make payments.

Councilman Nash said if we have people willing to sign an agreement, we need them to also sign a payment agreement as well.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a rough estimate of outstanding liens. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, \$250,000.00.

Mayor Coleburn referenced the lien on his property from curb and gutter, he said if there was interest with the lien that would motivate him to pay quicker.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in order to do curb and gutter, it is not the easiest thing to convince people to do, so making the terms as soft as possible, makes it easier to sell.

2. Meals Tax

There were no new outstanding Meals Tax.

3. Street Improvement Projects

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town was not going to proceed at this time. He said the engineer's estimate was \$910,000.00, but the bids came in at \$1.575 Million. He said there was no way to come up with the additional money.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the money that had been saved for this project is now being used to pick up debris from the ice storm. He hoped the Town would get 87 ½% back from the storm damage, with 75% from the FEDS and 12 ½% from the State. He said if everything works out perfectly, there would still be a 12 ½% liability to the Town from the storm damage.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was \$700,000.00 of local money in this project, with the State giving a share, and we were still \$600,000.00 short.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the project could not be delayed until next year, but he could go back to the State and ask for more funding.

Councilman Miller made a motion to reject all bids for the Main Street project from Sixth Street to Tenth Street, due to the bids being over budget. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex / TAP 21

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the one thing that has to happen this year for football to be played, is getting the fence moved. He said he had a cost estimate but it exceeds \$10,000.00, so it must be bid out now.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve seeking bids for the fence relocation at Wrigglesworth for the proposed football field. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck said an announcer's booth with a concession stand would be included in the upcoming budget for the Gators.

5. East End Neighborhood Project

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Housing Rehab Board did approve awards for 505 E. Broad Street, 504 E. Broad Street and 107 Viewbank Street. He said these should be the last residences in the first phase of the East End project because we will be out of money.

Mr. Tom Taylor asked if any of the grant money would go to anything else. Mayor Coleburn said no money from the East End would be going towards the Armory or anywhere else.

Councilman Nash asked if these three houses were coming from extra funds the Town had towards the end of the project. Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is all State funds, but there was still \$30,000.00 left from Weatherization that was included, and this may have to be used as well. He said the Town committed \$50,000.00 for the East End project and has only used about \$20,000.00.

Councilman Miller made a motion to adopt the Business & Employment Plan, the Business & Employment Notice, the Minority-Owned & Female-Owned Business Notice and the Certification of Signatures & Addresses for the second phase of the East End project as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

6. Weatherization

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would be proposed again in the upcoming budget.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. GenerLink Transfer Switch

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mr. Dan Martin brought this to him as a result of the ice storm. He said during the storm a lineman from Danville was badly shocked, due to a generator back feeding into the system and made a line hot.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said included in the packet is an agreement that would allow GenerLink to provide transfer switches that could be installed in customer's meters, this would prevent the back feed. He said there is no cost to the Town, only to the property owner.

Councilman Nash asked if this would have to be bid out because the Town is endorsing this company. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would see if there are other companies, but wanted to proceed with this process.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked that the first option be approved "consumers can purchase direct from Global Power, with the power provider installing".

Councilman Miller made a motion to move forward with the transfer switch and have Manager Vannoorbeeck see if there are any other firms available. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

2. VMEA Reappointments

Councilman Nash made a motion to reappoint Mr. Dan Martin as the VMEA representative for the Town and Manager Vannoorbeeck as the alternate. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Hasbrouck.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

3. Planning Commission Reappointments

Mayor Coleburn said Mrs. Myra Dyke (Quicke) was moving and resigning from the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals, so we need to fill two vacancies.

Clerk Daniel said Mrs. Dyke's resignation would take effect May 1, 2021.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to reappoint to the Planning Commission, Mr. Tom Watkins for 2 years, Mr. Denis McCarthy for 3 years, Mr. Edwin Nash for 4 years and appoint Councilman Miller for the tenure of this term on Council. The motion was seconded by Councilman Morgan.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Coleburn said to bring any nominations for the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals to the March 15th Council Meeting.

4. Fire Department Burns – S. Main Street / Church Street

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

1. Virginia Lee Boulevard

Mayor Coleburn said Virginia Lee Boulevard was not in Town, but there are some folks that want the Town to annex this area.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said these people approached Nottoway County, who in turn approached VDOT about paving the roads. He believed the County was not interested in putting money into the paving and VDOT was not interested in taking this area into the VDOT system because the Towns' sewer line runs down the middle of the road.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is the only way the Town can assist, by having the road brought into our system, thus compensated, and VDOT has confirmed they would allow it in Blackstone's system.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said if this were to happen, he would propose a special tax district, so the people that live in the subdivision, would pay into a fund to satisfy the cost of construction. He said if it costs the Town money and takes away from other paving, it was not a good idea.

Councilman Nash asked if the extra fees in water and sewer for being out of Town had been looked at. He asked Manager Vannoorbeeck to see what the loss would be.

Mayor Coleburn referred this to the Health and Ordinance Committee.

Mayor Coleburn said some in Cole Harbor may not want to pay anything, then they will go to the Board of Supervisors, who may not approve the annexation. He said there could be some political repercussions, the Town will be drawing new districts here soon, and if that becomes an area of Town, there is an election next year, they will be in Town, but will not be on the map.

Councilman Nash did not believe it would be much benefit to the Town.

Councilman Nash said he works for a property owner in Cole Harbor, and there is an agreement that all property owners would pitch in for a road fund, but there is only one property owner pitching in and the others are not.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this process would have to be uncontested from the County. He believed the net would be a loss to the Town. He said we would gain the taxes, but with the 50% loss in utilities, it would be a net cost to the Town.

Mayor Coleburn asked Council if they were in favor of referring this to the Committee. No Council members answered in favor.

Councilman Nash suggested the individual that wrote the letter, petition the neighborhood.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would look into the numbers.

MAYORS MINUTE:

1. Blackstone Strong

Mayor Coleburn said during the ice storm, a native daughter, M.C. Williams was so impressed by the Town's restoration efforts and the updates being given, she made a check out to him for \$500.00 for a Blackstone Strong Fund. He said his recommendation is to accept the check and see it go in the Town's Armory Fund. He said if the Armory gets renovated, he would like to see that become a Town shelter.

Councilwoman Thompson made a motion to have Mayor Coleburn endorse the check to the Town of Blackstone's Armory Fund. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Coleburn said he would send a thank you note on behalf of Council.

2. Blackstone Mayors - Plaque

Mayor Coleburn said Mr. John Inge, who lives in Hawaii, son of a former mayor, is eager to get a plaque with the mayor's names and dates. He said he had identified 13 of the 20 mayors.

POLICE REPORT:

Sgt. Mathias said the Police Department struggled through the ice storm just like everybody else. Mayor Coleburn thanked them for their patrols during the storm.

Councilman Nash asked about a bomb threat call on the Police Report. Sgt. Mathias said he was not familiar with that call. Mayor Coleburn added, it may have been a code for burn or bomb.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Mayor Coleburn thanked Ms. Ambs and Mr. Sarafin, not just for their work on tourism, but also the Juneteenth Jubilee.

Councilman Wilkinson asked about the status of the Armory and grants. Manager Vannoorbeeck said publicly, he was not prepared to announce, but he was working closely with groups that will be here on April 7th. He believed this would garner great interest at the State and local level. He said they would be applying with CDBG, if someone stands up and says yes, we are doing this, but he has to have something in hand when applying. He said it has to be activities that are low to moderate income. He believed there were opportunities to elevate people's education and create a significant amount of traffic here in Town.

Councilman Nash asked if this avenue would be providing any funds to be less burden on the tax payers. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied on the maintenance side.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Coleburn declared the Special Called Meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.


MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

March 15, 2021 APPROVED AND ADOPTED


TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA