

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, November 17, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: Lafayette Dickens

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

Town Staff: Philip Vannoorbeeck, Town Manager; Jennifer Daniel, Town Clerk; Sam Murphy, Police Chief; Lee Williams, Assistant Fire Chief; Karen Morris, Treasurer; Jackie Mitchell, Bookkeeper; Chastiddy Bryant, Community Development Specialist

Town Attorney: Attorney Harf - Zoom

Those Absent:

Mayor Dickens called the November Council Meeting to order.

Reverand Snodgrass delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Dickens led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES:

Councilman Nash made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Regular Council Meeting on October 20, 2025 and the Continued Meeting on October 29, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman .

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

VISITORS:

Mr. Francis Gilmore – Rotary Club of Blackstone

Mr. Gilmore said he was here representing 20 members from the Blackstone Rotary Club, and recognized some Rotarians in the audience. He thanked Mr. Eric Nash for allowing them to use his facility for meetings. He said the Blackstone Rotary was part of Rotary International, one of the largest service organizations in the world. He said we all work under the motto, service above self.

Mr. Gilmore said in 2026 the Blackstone Rotary Club would be celebrating its Centennial Anniversary. He said to celebrate this achievement, the Club would like to purchase a grand street clock, and donate it to the Town of Blackstone. He said this would highlight the Town's local, national, and global service projects, over the past 100 years. He said the clock was planned as a permanent addition to the Town to remind us of our values and legacy. He said the clock was intended to be placed in a prominent location ensuring it is visible to everyone to celebrate the partnership between the Town, Blackstone Rotary Club, and the community over the last 100 years.

Mr. Gilmore said we have a Clock Committee, and had discussed with Manager Vannoorbeeck. He said they narrowed the location to the Blackstone Medical Center. He asked permission to allow the Rotary Club to purchase and place the Clock Tower on the Town owned property at the Medical Center.

Councilman Allman made a motion to authorize the purchase and placement of the Large Washington Clock Tower on Town owned property at the Blackstone Medical Center, planned for March 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Page thanked the Rotary and said it was a beautiful clock.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the placement of the clock will jeopardize a maple tree, but the tree can be relocated. Mr. Gilmore believed the clock would be roughly 30' from the bus shelter. He said they elected to go with the Large Washington Clock, which stands 15'7" high.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked if the Rotary wanted donations to come to the Town of Blackstone. Mr. Gilmore replied no, donations would come to the Rotary Club, and they are a 501c3 organization. He said they selected a clock maker in the United States.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked if a nuclear clock required power. Mr. Gilmore replied yes, a very small amount of power, less than a street light. He said they would need the Town to run the power, but they would pour the foundation, and run the conduit.

Councilman Nash believed the Town would help in any way they could.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Mrs. Lisa Johnson – Tourism Committee – Hometown Holiday Express & Bazaar

Mrs. Johnson said she was here for approval of vendors in the Armory for their Christmas Bazaar on December 13th and 14th.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve vendors being allowed in the Armory for the Christmas Bazaar on December 13th and 14th. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Page believed their budget needed to be approved. Mayor Dickens said according to what was provided in the packet, the Committee's sponsorship was expected to be \$11,600.00, with \$5,300.00 in expenses. He believed the expenses were coming from their sponsorships.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Town Square Request – Farmer's Market – Ms. Kelly Parker & Mr. Bryce Miller

Mrs. Parker said they submitted an application to start a farmer's market in May 2026. She said she and her husband have a farm on Hungartown Road, and have set up at the Farmer's Market on Church Street for the past two years. She believed the Town Square would be a prime location for a farmer's market. She anticipated the market to run through the third week of November, and if successful, they would like to host this annually.

Councilman Allman said this request comes with a positive recommendation from DBi.

Councilman Miller asked if this would be every Saturday. Mrs. Parker replied yes sir. Councilman Gormus asked if there would still be a market on Wednesdays. Mrs. Parker believed so.

Councilman Nash asked if the markets would be at both locations, the Town Square and Church Street. Mrs. Parker replied, that remains to be seen. Councilman Allman asked if there was anything the Town could do to alleviate concerns. Mrs. Parker said one concern were the fees charged by the Town, and the other concern was not having restrooms for the vendors.

Mayor Dickens asked if the vendors would be selling their own produce. Mrs. Parker replied yes, most farmer's markets have a percentage rule, you have to grow/raise 80-90% of what is sold. She said they planned to keep those percentages for those that want to participate.

Councilman Allman said with the farmer's market and being raw materials, there would not be any fees from the Town. Manager Vannoorbeeck said farmer's markets growing their own produce is exempt from a business license, but he was not sure about sales tax. He said items not grown on people's farms, would be subject to a business license. Mr. Bryce Miller said there are cottage food laws such as prepared foods sold at a farmer's market up to a certain amount.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Council needs to decide how they want to handle selling wares, etc. on Town Property.

Councilwoman Williams asked about their application saying the events would have open flames, grilling, and barbequing. Mrs. Parker said they have considered having food trucks or a coffee truck to set up at the market. Councilman Nash said food trucks would be subject to the licenses, as they already are. Councilman Allman suggested if food vendors are decided on, it should be brought to Council.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said if flags or banners are planned for the events, provide something to Council ahead of time for approval. Mrs. Parker said they would want to have a farmer's market flag for the Town Square the day of the events. She said they may want to hang a banner across Main Street prior to kickoff, if this gets approved.

Councilwoman Williams did not believe there were food trucks currently at the farmer's market. Mrs. Parker said in other locations, people have to submit an application to be a part of the farmer's market, and if she and her husband are managing it, it allows them to know people would not be bringing arts and crafts.

Councilman Page asked if they would be charging vendors to sell at the market. Mrs. Parker said they discussed \$10.00 a week for marketing costs. She said eventually if there is growth, they would pay someone to manage the market. Councilman Page asked if they were non-profit. Mrs. Parker replied no.

Councilman Gormus suggested they contact the lady from South Hill, she could help with the planning.

Councilman Gormus made a motion to approve the Farmer's Market request for the Town Square, operating from 7:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays, beginning May 2026 – November 2026, and waive the Town Square fees. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Accounting Software – RDA Systems

Manager Vannoorbeeck said RDA Systems was selected by the Town's committee, after four interviews. He said it would be \$102,350.00 for the initial set up, plus \$15,000.00 for potential customization.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he talked with Mr. Lawson Headly, who was referred by RDA Systems. He said Mr. Headley helped Amelia County transition to Bright. He said Mr. Headley would be additional cost, but saves the Town from having to upgrade the software with Bright because ALL data will become cloud based.

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the annual fee with RDA would be \$21,000.00. He said there was currently \$60,000.00 in the money market account, and \$60,000.00 budgeted this year. Councilman Gormus did not believe it all had to be paid at one time.

Councilman Page said according to RDA, the merchant fees would be 3.5% to pay online, so they worked with the company the Town is with now and negotiated to 2% hopefully. He said this company would work with RDA to incorporate with the new software.

Councilman Allman asked about automatic debit. Councilman Page said that would be done with the new merchant.

Councilman Allman believed Mr. Headley would be converting the Town's data to a cloud based system that mimics what the Town has now, to get it off the server. He said for the employees, it should be seamless.

Councilwoman Williams asked if the training for employees was included in the pricing. Councilman Page said it was definitely included, and the Town did not have pay until it was done. Councilwoman Williams said someone needs to be in all the trainings.

Councilman Page said the Software Committee, himself, Councilman Allman and Treasurer Morris, plus other staff will still continue to work with RDA.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the one-time set up fee for \$102,350.00, plus the \$15,000.00 customization fee, and authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute necessary documents. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Allman thanked Councilman Page for all his time and efforts on this project.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Assistant Chief Lee Williams thanked Council for their continued support. He reported on the monthly calls.

Councilman Nash asked if the Town was no longer receiving mutual aid from Ft. Pickett. Assistant Chief Williams said we are no longer receiving automatic mutual aid at this time, it was removed by the Post Commander. He said the fire chiefs had been discussing, but it was not back in place yet. Councilman Nash asked if there was anything Council could do to help. Assistant Chief Williams said this happened with the change of Guard at Ft. Pickett.

Assistant Chief Williams said the radio system was moving forward and everything should start arriving in December. He said they were working with the Water Department on marking fire hydrants. He said the Diesel Exhaust System was completed, and they had applied for a grant for upgrades.

Assistant Chief Williams they were working on several grants, one with the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Fire Programs. He said dry hydrants throughout the County were tested last month. He said they participated in the Battle of the Badges in softball with the Fire and Police Departments.

Assistant Chief Williams said more CPR instructors were needed for them and the community, so they reached out and now have 3 additional, they are American Heart. He said their Tanker was out of service for an extended amount of time, but Crewe has lent their back up.

Assistant Chief Williams said they had Fire Prevention Week in October. He said they had their Food Truck Rodeo last Friday.

NEW BUSINESS:

7. Fire Department Injury Policy Renewal – The Hartford

Councilman Nash made a motion to renew the Fire Department's Injury Policy in the amount of \$9,482.00 with The Hartford. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

10. Award Bid – Rooftop Safety Railings – Fire Training Grounds

Councilman Nash asked if this was grant funds. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it was a small match, but Nottoway County provided \$10,000.00 for the maintenance of the Burn Building.

Councilman Nash made a motion to award the low bid to T3 Industrial Services for the rooftop safety railings at the Fire Training Grounds in the amount of \$10,700.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

11. Award Bid – Egress Platforms – Fire Training Grounds

Councilman Page made a motion to award the low bid to T3 Industrial Services for the three egress platforms at the Fire Training Grounds in the amount of \$38,051.87. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

15. Ordinance – Christmas Bonuses / Fire Call Reimbursements

Councilman Allman made a motion to adopt the Christmas Bonus Ordinance in the amount of \$19,650.00 for Town staff and Fire Department, along with the annual Fire Department Call Reimbursements in the amount of \$28,834.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

ALREADY PAID:

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$1,051,148.88. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

TO BE PAID:

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve as presented; the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$191,833.51. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Street & Light – met 11-5-25 – minutes included in November's Council Packet

Speed Limit – S. Main Street

Chairman Miller said the Committee agreed to leave the speed limit as is.

Ditches – Fourth Street, Tavern Street, and between High & Harris Street

Chairman Miller said the Committee suggested asking Council if they want to create a list of ditches that were created by the Town, and prioritize them.

Councilman Gormus said he was not against anybody that has damage on their property as a result of Town work, getting it taken care of. He said he was not in favor of saying we will do something, and then not doing it. He said as a Town, if we caused an issue, we should be responsible for addressing it. He said the Armes ditch has been agreed upon at least twice, but has been caught up in “red tape” and did not happen. He added doing nothing is never going to be the right thing to do.

Councilman Gormus said we need to approach these issues with a strategy, whether chronological or damage, the Armes ditch would be at the top of the list. He said if a list is created and prioritized then it can be looked at financially.

Chairman Miller said Mr. Ray Armes mentioned during the Committee Meeting the video sections from what the Town’s Attorney said in previous discussions.

Councilman Page said he had been looking at grants available for the Armes ditch. He said he found some information through the Soil and Water Conservation, DEQ and USDA, that could be done with matching funds so the Town is not spending cash every month.

Councilman Page said there is something in Virginia that allows the Town to take \$100,000.00 to create a fund for citizens to apply for because they can get it done cheaper than the Town. He said someone from Soil and Water would be here Thursday to look at the Armes ditch at 1:30 p.m. to see if it qualifies for one of their programs. He said there is something from DEQ, but cannot be applied for until 2027, but could be useful for other ditches.

Mayor Dickens commended Councilman Page for seeking a solution that could save money.

Councilwoman Williams asked if Council would write a new policy. She said Council has been saying we would not go on private property. She suggested if a list is created, then write a new policy.

Councilman Nash said if a list is created and the Armes ditch is at the top, but then others come before him again, that will pit neighbor against neighbor.

Councilman Page suggested a list of ditches that are causing flooding and erosion issues, and vote on them case by case. Manager Vannoorbeeck added cases that have been brought to the Town's attention. Councilman Allman said that is what we were doing before and a ditch came up that was voted against. He said we were handling them case by case.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would present a list of ditches at the next Street and Light Committee meeting. Councilman Gormus suggested going chronologically with the ditches. Councilman Nash said money will be the factor in all of this.

Councilman Page said there is plenty of money for flood mitigation, even on private property. He said we need to look into reducing the cost on private property.

Councilman Gormus said as for liability, could we have a disclaimer for the property owner.

Councilman Nash asked, was there an agreement when the Armes ditch was installed. He said 25 years from now, we are going to be in the same predicament. Councilman Allman said the Armes ditch was installed in the 80s with good intentions, there is no easement, and now we are here voting to pay for this work out of citizens taxpayer money, for what he believed was the natural erosion of a ditch that has been there for 35 years. He did not believe installation was perpetual maintenance.

Councilman Gormus said maintaining a Town is perpetual maintenance, like installing curb and gutter, that impacts people's property.

Attorney Harf said a lot of what Council is saying is correct, he said these are fact specific considerations. He said if we want to talk about specific properties, it should be done in Closed Session so he could offer legal advice. He said in general; we should make sure the onus is on the Town, let the Town make the determination.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Stormwater Pool application that Councilman Page forwarded to him was due in October, so would have to be submitted next year. Councilman Page said he was still researching.

Dead Trees – S. Main Street – 600 S. Main Street

Chairman Miller said there were two dead trees on S. Main Street in front of Councilman Gormus's house, and Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for authorization to have Town staff cut them down. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Councilman Gormus did not approach him about the trees.

Councilman Allman made a motion authorizing Town staff to cut down two trees in front of Councilman Gormus's house on S. Main Street. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Nash asked if it was in the Town's right of way. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no, it is behind the stone wall. Councilman Nash asked if it was effecting Town utilities. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no, it is effecting the road.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Employment & Police – met 11-5-25 – minutes included in November's Council Packet

Personnel Policy / Merit Raises

Chairman Miller said performance reviews and merit raises were discussed, so everyone needs to be up to par.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town employees had been through the training course through the Town's Human Resources company.

Councilman Nash made a motion to edit the Personnel Policy allowing the Town Manager to handle the evaluations for the Clerk, Treasurer and Police Chief. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Part-Time Curator (Carriage Museum & Schwartz Tavern)

Chairman Miller said they discussed the curator position, and this should be discussed during budget season. Manager Vannoorbeeck said several positions have been discussed for the Armory and Tourism. Chairman Miller said there may need to be some volunteers for basketball. He said we have Town employees that were volunteering to help with scheduling. Councilman Allman added but still getting paid.

Buildings, Property & Cemetery – met 11-5-25 – minutes included in November's Council Packet

Armory Reservation Guide

Chairwoman Williams said Councilman Gormus provided an application from Colonial Heights for their community center. She said we are still waiting on the schedule for the colleges.

Councilman Gormus said instead of a profitable venue, it should be used as a community center. He said he researched and there are 15 municipalities in Virginia, and 4 of the 15, with Blackstone being one, pay themselves for utility bills, which are already paid.

Councilman Gormus did not believe taxpayers voted to renovate the Armory for a profitable venue. He believed it was more for the community to have events. He said Colonial Heights has a community center and an application that is two pages. He believed the Town's cost would be the internet and maintenance.

Councilman Allman did not believe the Armory was to make money, but to pay for itself.

Mayor Dickens said based on the reactions from the public, this is a minefield. He asked if there was a motion to constrain the use of the Armory to a community center, and not a for-profit venue. He also asked if Council was interested in simplifying the rental form as presented, and if alcohol is involved, it still require a TULIP Policy.

Councilman Nash said he did not want to vote on a Policy until seeing it.

Councilman Allman asked if the colleges would have an issue since the Town would not be providing events for them to prepare for. Community Development Specialist Bryant said the colleges were planning to use events for internships and hands on experience. Chairwoman Williams said we need to get the dates from the colleges.

Chairwoman Williams asked this be referred back to Buildings, Property & Cemetery for review. She asked that Council review the application and decide if they want to use it.

Councilman Nash said at what point do we say to the colleges, it is their building, let them handle it.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Accounting Software – RDA Systems

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

2. B&B Consultants – Task Order #5 – Forest Drive Force Main

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed B&B Consultants wanted to be engaged when closing the loan. He said we don't have to begin now; Council can still choose to go to another funding agency. He said the amount he was proposing is \$309,200.00 with B&B Consultants, which excludes the inspection costs.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he included in the packet that this Task Order would be contingent on the loan being closed and fully funded by DEQ.

Councilman Nash believed this project would be funded through rates. He said before he votes on anything, he wanted to see rates. He asked if there had been any progress on grants. Manager Vannoorbeeck said a request was made, but the Town was turned down.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was working with Davenport on a rate study, and may have a presentation next month.

Councilman Page said if the Town proceeds with this project, what year will the rate increases go into effect. Manager Vannoorbeeck said usually not until VRA bills the Town.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he and Mr. Roland Kootch made a plea to DEQ, which fell on deaf ears, they indicated the Town is relatively too wealthy.

Councilman Nash asked if there were any debts being paid off anytime soon. Manager Vannoorbeeck said not until 2034, that will be the next debt pay off. He said we can do a 30 year amortization. He said this project is strictly sewer.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this project is \$4 Million, and the Raw Water Line is \$9 Million.

Council agreed to discuss this again next month, no motion was made tonight.

3. Asphalt Paving Bids – N. Main Street

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked to hold off on this bid. He said Town staff had been talking with VDOT about State of Good Repair funds, and under certain conditions the Town is eligible to apply. He said he would have an answer in December, and bring back to Council. He said if we can apply, we would have to add 18 months before beginning.

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

There was nothing to report.

2. Meals Tax / Lodging Tax

Councilman Page said there is a particular restaurant that has a large balance. Treasurer Morris said that restaurant is 1.5 months behind, and she had called and emailed with no response. She said she would be sending a bank lien tomorrow. She said TACS will not get involved until they are 90 days delinquent.

Councilman Page said he was in the restaurant last week and their business license said 2024, and asked if they have a current business license. Treasurer Morris said she would look into that.

3. Street Improvement Projects

Manager Vannoorbeeck said VDOT is considering the two applications submitted for TAP 21 for Amelia Avenue and College Avenue. He said College Avenue includes from Sixth Street to Eighth Street, and along Eighth Street to Brunswick Avenue.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he approached Mr. Raj Patel, who has agreed to pay his prorated share of curb and gutter based on the current year's bid amounts. He said this is roughly \$22,500.00, from Fourth to Sixth Street.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the second project is on Amelia Avenue from Nottoway Avenue to the railroad bridge.

Councilman Nash said on the previous TAP 21 project at the ballfield, the project was way higher once work could begin. Councilman Nash said the simple solution to College Avenue would be widening the asphalt. Manager Vannoorbeeck said a cost estimate of \$40,000.00 was provided, but Council had not acted on this. He said this included from Sixth to Eighth Street.

Councilwoman Williams asked when we would hear about the TAP 21 grant. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not know at this time.

Councilman Allman said he would like to see both prices, and if TAP 21 is announced in a reasonable time frame, we can make a decision then. He said there are three options, do nothing, do sidewalks through TAP 21, or do a paved shoulder.

4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex

There was nothing to report.

5. Taylor Bottom Block Grant

There was nothing to report.

6. Armory

There was nothing to report.

7. Weatherization

There was nothing to report.

8. Workforce Housing

There was nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Town Square Request – Farmer's Market

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

2. Talbert & Bright – Airport Engineering Contract

Mayor Dickens said this request is to renew the annual Agreement through December 2026.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is no dollar figure associated with the Agreement, task orders would be assigned.

Councilman Nash said this is their third of three extensions to their Agreement.

Councilman Allman made a motion to renew the annual Airport Engineering Agreement with Talbert & Bright. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Councilman Gormus asked if this would come from airport funds. Manager Vannoorbeeck said everything done at the Airport comes from Airport Funds.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

3. Workforce Housing Investment Program – Round 2

Mayor Dickens said this request is to ratify the submission of a grant application for Workforce Housing for an additional \$250,000.00 to build 5 new homes.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we have contracts on all three homes on Tavern Street. He said when these houses sell, the Town gets the money back, so once closed the Town will have roughly \$460,000.00 for houses. He said the Town can use this additional \$250,000.00 with the \$460,000.00 and build 5 new homes. He said if property has to be purchased, Mr. Earl Howerton would have to do this.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the application was due November 7th, so it had already been submitted.

Councilman Nash asked where these houses would go. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is some property on Patterson Street to build 4 homes, and one has to be done in Taylor Bottom.

Councilman Miller asked if 4 homes would fit in that area. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied yes.

Mayor Dickens asked Manager Vannoorbeeck if he anticipated any push back. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied in government and these days; there is push back on everything. He said if necessary, there are lots behind the Armory.

Councilwoman Williams said we need to get away from push back, we want to get people off the street and let them be homeowners. Mayor Dickens said in that particular area, the people that live there have been adamant about it, and we need to consider them as well. Councilwoman Wynn said that was against apartments.

Councilman Page made a motion to ratify the submission of the grant application for Workforce Housing for an additional \$250,000.00 to build 5 new homes. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Councilman Allman asked if the housing location was included in the grant application. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it does include Patterson Street on the application.

Councilman Nash asked what happens if the community says no. Manager Vannoorbeeck said we would send the money back, there are many options.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

4. *Resolution – Workforce Housing Authorization*

Manager Vannoorbeeck said 401 Tavern Street is not going through Virginia Housing, and their lender is requesting this Resolution. He said he had already signed four deeds previously for the Town.

Community Development Specialist Bryant asked this Resolution include the entire Workforce Housing Program.

Councilman Allman made a motion to adopt the Workforce Housing Authorization Resolution as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

5. *VDOT Roundabout – Utilities – Water Agreement*

Councilman Allman made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the VDOT Utilities Water Agreement for the roundabout at the main entrance to Ft. Pickett as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the cost share to the Town is \$0.

Councilman Nash asked what if Council votes no on this, and we don't have a roundabout.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

6. Progressive Engineering – 2026 Engineering Agreement

Manager Vannoorbeeck said at your desk are comments from Attorney Harf that he is requesting be added to this Agreement.

Councilman Nash made a motion to renew the 2026 Engineering Agreement with Progressive Engineering as presented, and include the addendum per Attorney Harf. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

7. Fire Department Injury Policy Renewal – The Hartford

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

8. 2024 Utility Write-Offs

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town has been writing off utility accounts for deceased and anything under \$5.00. He said Mayor Dickens asked about three specific write offs over \$1,000.00. Treasurer Morris said it could be they didn't pay for up to three months before passing away. She said she would check into this.

Mayor Dickens asked how we can avoid utilities being that high in these situations. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it takes three months to cut someone off.

Councilman Page said anything over \$500.00, are we checking for any estates.

Councilman Miller asked how is it determined that someone is deceased. Manager Vannoorbeeck said we will find out and report back to Council.

Councilman Nash said there are some write offs for under \$5.00 for businesses, such as an apartment that still functions. He said if they owe it, there lights should be cut off.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we will bring this back next month.

9. *RailPros Agreement – Fort Avenue Sewer*

Mayor Dickens asked for a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the RailPros Agreement for the Fort Avenue sewer project, and include the payment of \$14,675.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Attorney Harf is recommending language be added that the Town be indemnified. He did not know if the railroad would agree to this.

Councilman Nash asked if this was needed just to bore under the railroad. Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is just for permission and includes the \$14,675.00. He said this may include sending an inspector during the boring.

Attorney Harf said this is per Virginia Law, the Town cannot contract away their Sovereign Immunity.

Councilman Allman made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the RailPros Agreement for the Fort Avenue sewer project, pay the fee of \$14,675.00, and include the State Law provided by Attorney Harf. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

10. Award Bid – Rooftop Safety Railings – Fire Training Grounds

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

11. Award Bid – Egress Platforms – Fire Training Grounds

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

12. B&B Consultants – Task Order #4 – Airport

Mayor Dickens asked for a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck so execute this Task Order, using Airport Funds in the amount of \$82,750.00 for the development of the Airport Industrial Park.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would be preliminary engineering, and all paid for with Airport funds. He said there is currently \$121,000.00 cash in the fund. He said this preliminary plan can be submitted to the Tobacco Commission, Economic Development Administration, and the Department of Aviation.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the County had not adopted the airport zoning designation yet. He said this may happen this Thursday and their Board of Supervisors meeting.

Councilman Page made a motion to approve Task Order #4 for the Airport in the amount of \$82,750.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

13. 2026 Council Meeting Dates – Approval

Councilman Miller said he could not be here for the August Meeting.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the 2026 Council Meeting dates as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

14. 2026 Holiday Schedule – Approval

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the 2026 Holiday Schedule as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash asked if trash was picked up on a holiday, such as Thanksgiving, when it is 2.5 days off. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no, he said some may come in on that Saturday for dumpsters. He said it was not overtime, just regular time.

Councilman Miller asked about the grant we received last year for holiday dumpsters. Community Development Specialist Bryant said the Town did not get the competitive grant, but she was waiting to hear about the non-competitive grant.

15. Ordinance – Christmas Bonuses / Fire Call Reimbursements

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

16. Utility Bill Adjustments – 356 Courthouse Road and 408 N. Main Street

356 Courthouse Road:

Clerk Daniel said she spoke to Mr. Randall Fristoe, and he has some appliances still in use in the old house. She said he wants to keep the meter, but have the trash pick-up cost removed. She said he was paying for trash pick-up with the new meter. She told him he could remove the meter, but he did not want to do that at this time.

There was no action needed for a denial per Council.

408 N. Main Street:

Mayor Dickens said 408 N. Main Street, Naugle Motor Co., was requesting to remove the trash fee because the building was only used for storage.

There was no action needed for a denial per Council.

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

Councilman Gormus reminded Mayor Dickens about the committees to meet for Buildings, Property & Cemetery to follow up on the Armory, and Street & Light to follow up on ditches.

MAYORS MINUTE:

Mayor Dickens said confirmation is proof that something is true. He said a few months ago the 7 of you appointed him as interim Mayor, a historic decision at the time. He said two weeks ago, the voting public validated Council's choice, resoundingly, with a 939 vote total, the most ever cast for mayor. Mayor Dickens said as members of Council, you should be proud to know the citizens agree with your choice for their leader. He said he was humbled by the results, and it felt like a natural transition from his previous job.

Mayor Dickens said some say he has his hands full, but that's not how he feels. He said he was honored to serve with Council as well as staff, and motivates him to beat his pom-poms for Blackstone, where the inconceivable happens and the remarkable is common place.

POLICE REPORT:

There was nothing reported.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Councilman Allman asked about the nightly run for BABS, is there room for expansion. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied yes, he believed they were currently running Sunday through Thursday nights. He said The Inn at Blackstone are the main users.

Councilman Allman said he got a request to start the route an hour earlier at 5:00 p.m. He said he was also asked if Fridays and Saturdays could be added. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would check with Transit Director Wilkinson on this.

Councilman Nash asked what would happen if a business was created to provide this service, would the Town continue. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town does it for free. Councilman Allman said the free is so the Town can get meals tax from the riders. He suggested Manager Vannoorbeeck contact Dianna at The Inn about the bus route.

CLOSED SESSION:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711-A

- 3/ Acquisition or Disposition of Real Property – School Buildings
- 7/ Legal Matters

Councilwoman Wynn made a motion to go into Closed Session for (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, and (7) Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Page 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 Councilwoman Wynn.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Dickens adjourned this meeting at 9:45 p.m.


MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

December 15, 2025 APPROVED AND ADOPTED


TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA