

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Council of the Town of Blackstone, Virginia, held in the Council Chambers located at 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia, on Monday, May 18, 2026 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; Zac Beares, Fire Chief; Chastiddy Bryant, Community Development Specialist

Town Attorney: Julian Harf - Zoom

Those Absent:

Mayor Dickens called the May 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 the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting on April 20, 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

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 approve as presented minutes from the Regular Council Meeting on April 20, 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

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

PUBLIC HEARING:

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby issued that Blackstone Town Council will convene a public hearing at the town office on May 18, 2026, at 7 P.M., for the Community Development Block Grant proposal for Taylor's Bottom Improvement- Phase I. This hearing is a requisite step for securing funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development and other funding entities. This public hearing will discuss the proposed housing rehabilitation project and drainage system in the area referenced above. All residents, interested parties, governmental agencies, and organizations are invited to provide their insights and comments. Maps, drawings, and other relevant documents will be available for public viewing upon request from the Town Clerk. Individuals interested in the project's design, location, construction, and housing are encouraged to attend and voice their opinions. Written statements may be submitted either before or during the hearing.

Please be advised: For projects necessitating a Finding of No Significant Impact Statement, the National Environmental Policy Act mandates a 30-day notice for noncontroversial projects and a 45-day notice for controversial projects. For projects that qualify for a categorical exclusion environmental statement, the department may mandate a public hearing, with advertisement timing needing to align with state law. Comments and grievances can be submitted in writing to the Town of Blackstone at 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, VA 23824, or by phone at (434) 292-7251 until May 17, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. If you plan to attend and have any special needs requirements, please call the number listed above.

Community Development Specialist Bryant said the Town was submitting another attempt for the CDBG Block Grant for the Taylor Bottom project. She said per DHCD since the initial grant was submitted less than a year ago, only one public hearing was needed, but to be sure she was going to have two public hearings. She said she would provide updated figures for the June Council meeting because originally, we applied for \$1.25 Million and now with updated figures the Town can apply for \$1.5 Million.

Community Development Specialist Bryant said one of the Spark Plugs for this project passed away, Mr. Eric Paul. She said two are needed and Ms. Teresa Lawson has agreed to help. She said spark plugs are community personnel that relays information to the community and the Town.

Councilman Miller asked if tonight was counted as a Public Hearing. Community Development Specialist Bryant said yes, but this Public Hearing did not allow the 7 days of notification required. She said the June Public Hearing will cover everything.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the contractors were replacing the primary electric line in the Taylor Bottom area. He said this is part of the Taylor Bottom project's contribution.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Taylor Bottom project will consist of housing, drainage, and a Workforce House.

Councilman Nash asked how long does the match last. Manager Vannoorbeeck said typically 2 years. He said the bid was low, so the amount of match from the Town is being decreased.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the additional funding could go towards the drainage. He said the ditch behind Mr. Asher Maddox's house will be addressed in the Taylor Bottom project.

Community Development Specialist Bryant said the two spark plugs are Ms. Rachel Maddox and Mr. Teresa Lawson.

Mayor Dickens closed the Public Hearing.

VISITORS:

1. Virginia Union University Staff

Ms. Felicia Cosby said they were here to talk about culinary arts and hospitality management certificate programs that will be at the Armory. She thanked Council for their patience with them as they have had some internal changes. She added Southern Kitchen will still be a cornerstone for this program. She said with her tonight were individuals that would be running the program, Dr. McSwain with VUU Global and Dr. Jewel, who is the Dean of Business. She said the program would fall under the School of Business.

Dr. Jewel said this program would be a noncredit bearing certificate with 8 week courses, that will run two at a time. She said their first course would start June 29, 2026. She said there would be some online courses, but would also include some labs and hands on work in the Armory.

Dr. Jewel said the first two courses will be Serve Safe and Food Prep. She said after that they will have additional courses on commercial food production, food and beverage cost control and introduction to hospitality management.

Councilman Page asked how enrollment was looking so far. Dr. Jewel said they were just starting the enrollment process. She said being handed out is the QR Code, and a survey, as they want to do some master classes. She said the survey will help find out from the community what classes they are interested in.

Dr. Jewel said entrepreneurship is one of their strongest majors on campus. She said she runs an entrepreneurship week on campus and wanted to mirror it here.

Mayor Dickens said once a student gets their certification, what is next, are they matched up with opportunities. Dr. Jewel said they have Hand Shake on campus, which is an electronic job placement tool. She said they also have workforce development to help find that full time position.

Councilwoman Williams entered meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Ms. Cosby said part of the beauty with the partnership with Southern Kitchen, they will also help in reaching out to local restauranters for placement of the students. She added the restauranters would come and be a part of the program.

Mayor Dickens asked if they had met with the local restaurants. Ms. Cosby replied no, that was something they would have to do. She said they would be here for Juneteenth, and hoped to meet them then.

Mayor Dickens asked about costs and tuition. Dr. Jewel said the cost would be \$150 per instructional hour, and most are 3 credit hours, so the whole program can be completed under \$3,000.00. She said this would include materials and books. Ms. Cosby added it is extremely competitive.

Ms. Cosby said they were asking for support from the Town. She said they have asked from the General Assembly budget for an expansion for the HBCU VTAG. She said individuals that attend Virginia Union and Hampton get more money. She said they are requesting to expand the language to include certificates in certifications. She said this would allow them to subsidize the cost for many of the students. She added the Town's support would help greatly.

Dr. McSwain recognized Superintendent Marcia Martin in the audience.

Dr. McSwain said they have 27 undergraduate and 26 graduate certificates through VUU Global, 100% online. She said financial aid is available and are affordable for high demand certificates. She said this would start in August.

Councilman Page asked how the Town can provide support at the State level, what is needed. Ms. Cosby said a letter of support.

Councilman Page made a motion authorizing the Mayor and Town Manager to provide a letter of support for the HBCU VTAG in the General Assembly. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

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

2. Dr. Marcia Martin – Armory Rental

Dr. Martin said included in your packet is a request from the School Division to use the Armory on August 14, 2026 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for the teacher/staff convocation. She said they planned to have a DJ, and thought that was why approval from Council was needed.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Armory Rental request from Dr. Martin. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

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 Miller told Dr. Martin he was still working on basketball. Dr. Martin clarified using Blackstone Primary this summer.

Dr. Martin said Nottoway had the Virginia Teacher of the Year, Ms. Madeline Duffy. She said they were proud of the work and direction Nottoway was going in.

Councilman Page asked if staff could approve DJ requests for the Armory use. Councilman Gormus believed Council needed to be consistent and stay with the process.

3. Ms. Beverley Ambs

Ms. Ambs said she came before Council two months ago about stewardship with the citizens money. She said she was here again because one of you hadn't gotten the message. She said Mr. Page's childish ego has appeared to have taken over. She said his FOIA request was addressed in court on April 24, 2026 and he lost. She asked how much did that cost the Town of Blackstone. She said as a citizen, wasting money on frivolous FOIA requests, that was dismissed in April, who is paying the legal fees for that. She said the citizens did not ask Mr. Page to file a FOIA request, we should not have to be the ones to pay. She found the childish action from Mr. Page deplorable to file a FOIA against the town he is supposed to serve, is not serving the people.

Ms. Ambs said the issue of tourism is part of DBi, they were recognized by the Virginia Tourism Commission as a DMO when Zack Whitlow was the executive director. She said when the DBi director became a paid employee of the Town, which was Emma Wright in 2023, the understanding was they would be in charge of tourism for the Town. She said we finally have someone taking interest, and Mr. Page starts threatening her and the organization because he can't get his way.

Ms. Ambs said the childish bullying at the citizens expense has to stop. She said as a citizen, she believed censoring Mr. Page may be necessary. She said Mr. Page's social media platform and the comments and responses do not reflect a positive light on Blackstone. She asked what value does Mr. Page bring to a committee if he cannot be a team player.

Ms. Ambs said Mr. Page is the Chairman of the Blackstone Chamber, which is a 501c6 and has different benefits and restrictions. She said it is not a FOIA entity unless public funds are being used. She said grant funds are considered public funds. She said Mr. Page has requested the Town write grants for the Chamber, and is one of the 501c6 restrictions. She asked if this could open the Chamber's finances for inspection by the Town. She read from Virginia Code 2.2-3104.02.

Councilman Gormus said being on Account & Finance, he looks closely at the numbers for the meetings. He said legal fees for the past month were \$12,309.97, with \$9,220.00 being for Page vs. Blackstone. Ms. Ambs said that is money citizens should not be paying.

Councilman Page said for the record, for four years he had abstained on Chamber issues. He said whether his FOIA suit is meritless, that is something for the court system to decide. He said it was not fruitful for him on the lower level, but he has a constitutional right to challenge his government on transparency issues. He said he was going to continue to do that until we have an open and transparent process. Ms. Ambs said that is Mr. Page's right, not the Town's.

4. Dr. Jackie Green August – Executive Director of Total Life Center of Southside Virginia

Dr. August said her office was currently located at 507 Ingleside Street in Burkeville. She said they are a 501c3 non-profit and teach people about being healthy. She said she is a certified community healthcare worker, a state certified doula, and she helps people stay healthy.

Dr. August said they have a healthy home, healthy lives program. She said with this program they are giving out 250 lead, mold and radon kits to residents of Nottoway County. She said there are roughly 6,750 homes in Nottoway and of those, 3,000 were built before 1970. She said she wants people to understand where they live.

Dr. August said they are looking for people to help with mitigation issues. She said she was working with the EPA through a grant she acquired. She said they would be a vendor at Juneteenth.

Dr. August provided kits to the Council. She said you can test 10 surfaces for lead and 10 surfaces for mold.

Councilman Nash suggested this information be provided on the Town's utility bills. He thought some should be kept at Town Hall to help disperse. Councilman Allman suggested having Dr. August's information on the utility bill to contact.

Councilman Gormus asked the cost per kit. Dr. August replied, roughly \$15 a kit, and to test, which includes sending it off would be another \$10.

Mayor Dickens asked how to mitigate. Dr. August said she had a problem with her well, and contacted the Health Department and was able to get a SWAP grant, which helped her get a new well. She said she was also able to get her septic done through the Water Shed Conservation.

Dr. August said their website address is totallife.center. Community Development Specialist Bryant said she had Dr. August's contact information.

5. Mr. Robert Thomas

Mr. Thomas said in January/February he and Mr. Jerome Wilson noticed the Town planted a tree in memory of Mr. Bobby Daniels. He said they were not consulted on this, and where the tree is, it is on an archeological site, which was once the kitchen and serving quarters. He asked that Council consider relocating the tree to another area at Schwartz Tavern.

Councilman Nash asked Mr. Thomas for a map showing potential locations. Mr. Thomas said it was basically from the Gazebo to the old tree that was cut down last year. He suggested near the alley or near the cabins.

Councilman Nash suggested the tree be relocated in September and coordinate with the Thomas family.

Mr. Thomas asked Manager Vannoorbeeck if the contractors had finished at Schwartz Tavern. He said the flooring had not been replaced. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the floor was not in the scope of work.

Mr. Thomas said there was still plastic on windows upstairs. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the contractors were not done yet. Mr. Thomas mentioned the cross beams in the corner. Manager Vannoorbeeck said they removed the plaster board and reframed the inside because there had been termite damage.

Mr. Thomas said some of the boards for the flooring need to be replaced. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that was not included in the project. Councilman Nash asked if that was something Mr. Jason Stokes could replace. Manager Vannoorbeeck said maybe it could be another additional project next year.

Mr. Thomas said he had been looking at flooring from an old home in Georgia, and that might could be used.

6. Ms. Tawandra Foster

Ms. Foster said she was requesting use of the Armory from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on May 23, 2026. Mayor Dickens said the rental fee had already been paid, and they would be having a DJ.

Councilman Page made a motion to approve the request as discussed. 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 alcohol would be served. Ms. Foster replied no, this was for a 16 year old.

7. Mr. Benjamin Eaheart

Mr. Eaheart said he was running for Council, and while out campaigning, people were telling him stuff was not being done. He asked about getting school zone signs for the elementary school and on Ridge Road. He also mentioned children playing signs at the ballpark.

Mr. Eaheart said he had spoken with Chief Murphy about more police presence on Ridge Road and the ballpark. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there are some signs, but we can add more if needed. He said he would discuss school signs with the principal.

A lady from the audience said she lives on Ridge Road and can attest every morning and afternoon, especially the State Police, fly down Ridge Road. She said it was a raceway to their racetrack. She said there were no school signs in the area for Kenston. She said she had contacted the state police about the speeding.

Chief Murphy said he spoke with the Lieutenant previously, and can speak to him again. He said when he has talked with them about the speeding, it is relayed, then the following week another group comes through.

Councilman Gormus said maybe this can be part of their training upfront.

8. Mrs. Debra Damon

Mrs. Damon said she does a lot of walking, and comes from Nottoway Avenue to Brown Street. She said the intersection is quite dangerous. She said when striping parking lots, she would love a crosswalk. She suggested a crosswalk at Maple Street, and one at Elm Street.

Mrs. Damon said she had personally helped two different truck drivers on Nottoway Avenue going under the railroad trestle because there is no signage for the height.

Mrs. Damon said there is a tree at Nottoway and Brown Street, with branches overhanging the sidewalk. She offered to trim it back, if the Town would allow it. Councilman Nash believed Manager Vannoorbeeck could have Town staff cut it back.

Mrs. Damon said downtown there are at least three Walk Signs that do not work. Councilman Allman asked Manager Vannoorbeeck to look into this.

Mrs. Damon said she wished we could get a copy of Dr. Allen's prayer today, and hand it out to everyone in this room. She said we need to get along and work together. She said Council and staff's jobs are hard, especially now when people are moving towards violence, instead of just complaining. She said she appreciated everyone. She said being a volunteer should not cost someone money to do good things. She said what she saw in the paper this week, haranguing the Council and Mayor, saying you are all crooks and not doing anything good, made her very sad. She said the speech given last month having to do with DBi and tourism, what she went through having to come here to speak was equally sad. She believed there should be accountability when you are a volunteer, whether getting paid or not, she was hard-nosed about following rules.

Mrs. Damon said to Councilman Page, as her representative being at-large, she was not happy at the amount of money being spent in court because of his lawsuit. She asked if everything had been done before it got to a lawsuit, and costing her money as a taxpayer. She suggested going back to Dr. Allen's prayer before this happens again.

Councilman Page said he understood they were having to pay to defend themselves, but it was not just his right to a transparent open government, it is every citizen's right. He said he understood citizens don't like this, but he was spending his own money for court. He said this Town has no volunteers, when you are a member of a public body that you are appointed to, you are no longer a volunteer, and comes with rules and transparency. He said he tried for over a month to settle this.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Beares said the radio system was still ongoing, with the turn on date being December. He said a grant had been submitted for a defibrillator on the Rescue Truck. He said last month's training was on extrication. He said the blood drive would be June 24, 2026.

Chief Beares said this month they brought on AJ Lester, and his dad is a life member for Blackstone. He announced the years of service.

Chief Beares said work continues at the Burn Building. He said railings have been installed on the second floor for safety. He said they received six pieces of confined space tunnels installed for free from Chesterfield County.

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

ALREADY PAID:

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$575,974.28. 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	-	Nay
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

Councilman Nash asked about the Department of Criminal Justice, asset forfeiture, it says pass through for \$5,500.00. Chief Murphy said it was from a drug seizure, and the Town gets a portion back.

TO BE PAID:

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve as presented; the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$943,063.34. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Councilman Gormus asked about the generator for water and sewer. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the generator went down at the raw water intake, so a temporary generator was used. He said the cost included is only for repairs, but has been submitted to our insurance company.

Councilman Nash said he spoke to Mr. Edward Harris about submitting to insurance. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the repairs had been completed and the rental generator was returned. He believed the rental was \$21,000.00, but the repair was \$83,000.00.

Councilman Gormus asked if we knew the cause of the breakdown. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he did not know, but would find out.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

APPROPRIATIONS:

Appropriation #1 – Airport = \$82,750.00

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this was for the preliminary engineering and site characterization at the Airport site, and paid for solely from Airport funds.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the appropriation as presented. 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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Account & Finance – met 5-13-26 – minutes will be included in June’s Council Packet

Jacks Branch Trunk Line

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Clerk Daniel researched the overflows, and the last one was in 2025. He said Jack’s Branch Trunk Line runs approximately from the intersection of Freeman and Fourth Street, and there is a sewer line that runs to rear of the former VUMAC property, then crosses Hungarytown Road to what we used to call Jack’s Branch Pump Station. He said now Williams Pond Pump Station has taken its place, and is behind what people refer to as Mac William’s pond.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said that section of sewer line and manholes were not addressed from Hungarytown Road back to VUMAC in 2012. He said the engineers have recommended the Town line that section of sewer line, as well as the manholes.

Councilman Nash said the manholes are in a low spot and in the creek now when water is high, so water is overflowing into the manhole. He said the cost is \$600,000.00. Councilman Gormus said this would raise some of the manholes. Councilman Allman added this is causing the Town to treat water that is not needed.

Councilman Nash said we had discussions recently about adding 4% to the sewer in FY28, but Manager Vannoorbeeck is now recommending adding 4% to the sewer in the upcoming budget, which will equate to \$1.20 on the minimal bill. Manager Vannoorbeeck said this project would be done in bite size pieces. He said since he had been with the Town, he had only raised sewer rates twice, once for the I&I project in 2012, and second was for the East End project.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we have been trying to keep up with things by growing, adding new customers.

Councilman Nash believed piecing the project would cost more money, he suggested using the Reserve Fund and pay ourselves back. Manager Vannoorbeeck planned to include the 4% in the upcoming budget.

Councilman Page said the five year 21% increase will now be 25%. He said if the Town had depreciated what the Town says they depreciate in the audits; the Town would have money to fix these problems without raising rates. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the depreciation on water and sewer is roughly \$900,000.00 annually, and not much is being put aside.

Councilman Nash said depreciation goes towards projects not included in the budget. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town is putting roughly \$125,000.00 into water/sewer depreciation annually. Councilman Page said the projects should be reflected in the audits, instead of being shown as depreciation. Councilman Gormus said the amount is roughly \$1.20 a month.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is no cash component to depreciation, but we try to put \$120,000.00 in depreciation annually. He said the depreciation charge in the audit does not affect the cash flow.

FY27 Budget

Councilman Nash said the Fort Avenue sewer project came in over budget and the numbers need to be corrected by \$60,000.00.

Councilman Gormus asked about the \$200,000.00 for parking along the railroad. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that needed to be changed, taking from the old school buildings. Councilman Gormus said instead of a parking lot, installing a light at Maple and Main.

Compensation for Elected Officials

Chairman Nash said the Committee failed to recommend the compensation package presented by Mayor Dickens. He said this would be discussed further at the Continued Meeting.

Council agreed to meet Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Health & Ordinance – met 5-13-26 – minutes included in May's Council Packet

Food Truck – Farmer's Markets

Chairman Page said the Committee looked at the Ordinance and decided no changes should be made.

Councilman Miller asked to see the Food Truck Ordinance.

Cash Reconciliation

Chairman Page said we have been working with staff in the Treasurer's office on cash reconciliation and daily procedures.

Councilman Nash made a motion to adopt the Cash Reconciliation Policy as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

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

Security Badges/Keys/Digital Security

Chairman Page said this was discussed in Closed Session, and will provide updates when there is something.

Burn Ordinance

Chairman Page said they reviewed the Burn Ordinance for updates and recommended for Public Hearing in June. He said the proposed changes create an exception for fire pits.

Councilman Page made a motion to advertise the Burn Ordinance updates for Public Hearing at the June Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

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. Black History Heroes

Community Development Specialist Bryant said Mayor Dickens appointed a committee to select from candidates submitted. She said those selected were J. Jones from the Fire Department, Robert Jones, Nottoway's Sheriff and Bridgette Miller, who was recognized for her contributions to the railroad. She asked for Council approval so she could order plaques to be presented at the Juneteenth Celebration.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the nominees 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 how many applicants were there. Community Development Specialist Bryant believed it was 7.

2. Award Bid – Fort Avenue Sewer Replacement

Manager Vannoorbeeck said staff opened bids on May 12, 2026, with the lowest bid being from Brock Construction in the amount of \$745,816.30. He said this price was significantly over budget so the Town's engineer has negotiated the price with a deductive Change Order in the amount of \$220,075.00. He said if unsuitable rock is encountered the price will increase by \$4,700.00 per foot.

Mayor Dickens asked Manager Vannoorbeeck if rock is hit, will you come back to Council for approval of the balance. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would just have to make a decision, and possibly take from the Reserve Fund. Councilman Nash said it would come to Council as an appropriation after the fact.

Councilman Nash made a motion to award the Fort Avenue Sewer Replacement to Brock Construction in the amount of \$525,741.30. 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	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

3. Raw Water Line

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this was informational only. He said the Town had been awarded a loan for \$9,334,000.00 at 2.875% interest for 40 years from the Department of Agriculture. He said this will keep payments down, but is the worst case scenario.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town had submitted for Congressional Direct Spending for \$1 Million. He thought we were submitting for \$3 Million, but Community Development Specialist Bryant applied for \$1 Million per their staffers.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said through the Department of Health he was expecting a budget amendment for a \$3 Million grant. He was not certain if the Department of Health would allow acceptance of the grant without using some of their loan. He said the Raw Water Line project had been funded.

Councilman Nash said if everything works out, we will reduce the project amount by almost half, which will help with the increase of rates.

Councilman Page asked when the loan would close. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was waiting on the grants.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would be reapplying to the Health Department by August 8, 2026 through B&B Consultants for the \$3 Million plus any additional grant funds that may be available.

4. TRC – Performance & Escrow Agreement

Manager Vannoorbeeck said included is the final agreement that Attorney Harf has reviewed. He said next month he would include a Task Order from B&B Consultants for the design work. He said once they close on the property, there will be 180 days to get the design done, and 240 days for substantial completion. He said the escrow money has to be deposited within 5 days of closing.

Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the TRC Performance & Escrow Agreement as presented. 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

5. Department of Aviation – Grant Agreement – Fireworks

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is the same grant the Town received last year for \$10,000.00 towards fireworks. He said Community Development Specialist Bryant applied this year and was told they were out of money. He said we received notice a few weeks ago that they were offering \$5,600.00, then rescinded, and is now offering \$10,000.00.

Councilwoman Wynn made a motion to accept the Department of Aviation Grant Agreement in the amount of \$10,000.00, and execute necessary documents. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Councilman Allman asked how the disbursement works. Community Development Specialist Bryant said the Town was a pass through, all invoices collected are sent to the Department of Aviation then reimbursed to the Town, who then provides the money to the Chamber.

Councilman Nash and Gormus suggested the Town pay the event invoices, and get reimbursed instead of the Chamber. Councilman Page said the fireworks person wants his money the day of.

Councilman Gormus made a substitute motion to accept the Department of Aviation Grant Agreement in the amount of \$10,000.00, and execute necessary documents, with the Town maintaining the grant funds and paying the invoices. 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

Councilman Page originally abstained, but changed his vote to Aye. Councilman Nash asked Councilman Page why he abstains just being a board member. Councilman Page said he has always abstained because he is on the Chamber. He said it is a volunteer organization, and does not get any personal gain out of it.

6. DBi – Contract/Services

Attorney Harf asked to move this item until after Closed Session.

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

Manager Vannoorbeeck anticipated a court date in June for 819 Falls Street. He said Attorney Harf and his staff are still working with the property owners for 915 Falls Street.

Attorney Harf said 819 Falls Street is owned by an LLC, and they have tried to serve the owner and LLC, but the address provided is vacant. He said they tried to serve the LLC through the SEC, and will now be filing a motion for default judgment because more than 21 days have passed.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he has three additional homes that will be added to our dilapidated list, which are on Pine Road, Maben Avenue and Irvin Street.

Councilman Nash said it looked like a little progress had been made with Velvet Textile. Manager Vannoorbeeck said they have a crew of two putting a roof on.

2. Meals Tax / Lodging Tax

Councilman Gormus said there is one listed, that was caught up, and now delinquent again. Councilman Page said there was no amount provided. Clerk Daniel believed they had to submit their meals tax before a figure could be provided.

Councilman Nash asked to find out the status of the current outstanding Meals Tax, and update Council.

3. Street Improvement Projects

Manager Vannoorbeeck said paving was complete on N. Main Street. He said Town staff was painting curbs on N. Main Street.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he received a complaint that the Town did not put the two parking spaces back in front of Mike Crafton's old bike shop. Councilman Nash confirmed Council voted to have those two spots. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would put the two parking spaces back.

Mayor Dickens asked if anything had been done on N. High Street along the fence line with litter. Manager Vannoorbeeck said yes, the litter had been picked up.

4. Wigglesworth Sports Complex

There was nothing to report.

5. Dillard Crawley Building – 114 S. Main Street

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Clerk Daniel has set up a Planning Commission Meeting for June 22, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. He said this meeting will consider a Conditional Use Permit for upstairs and downstairs units.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said a draft lease agreement had been submitted to Attorney Harf. Councilman Nash asked if the lease agreement could be discussed in Closed Session before finalizing it.

Councilman Page asked for an email copy of the plans.

Mayor Dickens said someone asked him about a home they have on Carver Street, what would be the cost to fix the house up. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Carver Street will be in the first phase of the Taylor Bottom project. Community Development Specialist Bryant said they will have to qualify per income.

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. Armory Rental Request

This was handled earlier in the meeting.

2. Business Licenses – BNBs / Air BNBs

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he received information from Attorney Harf, and BNBs/Air BNBs are not exempt from getting a business license. He said we will start the process to get business licenses.

3. Street Closure/Waive Noise Ordinance – 802 Second Street

Clerk Daniel said this request is for a birthday party at 802 Second Street, to include a street closure from 802 Second Street to Freeman Street. She said they were asking to waive the Noise Ordinance from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on May 30, 2026.

Councilwoman Williams asked if neighbors are notified when events are taking place. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was not aware of any requirement.

Councilman Nash asked to inform the dispatcher also, so if they receive any calls they will know. Chief Murphy said he would notify Nottoway.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the requests for 802 Second Street. 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

4. Street Closure/Waive Noise Ordinance – Green Street

Councilman Miller made a motion to close Green Street between Falls and Luke Street and waive the Noise Ordinance on May 23, 2026 from 12:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for a family reunion. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

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

5. Lakeview Cemetery – Headstone Request

Manager Vannoorbeeck said a gentleman's wife just passed away, and also has a son buried, and there was already a headstone for the son. He said they are requesting a second headstone for his wife, to be in line with other headstones.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the headstone request as presented in Lakeview Cemetery. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

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. DMV – Annual License Agent’s Agreement

Clerk Daniel said last month’s agreement was for extranet, this agreement is the annual License Agreement with DMV.

Councilman Allman made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the DMV Annual License Agent Agreement as presented. 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. Town Square Request – 6-27-26

Clerk Daniel said DBi Director Glenn sent her this request on Friday. She said 4th Mt. Zion Baptist Church has requested to use the Town Square on June 27, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for “Prayers for Peace & Unity”. They are requesting to waive the Noise Ordinance.

Councilman Gormus said that is Juneteenth.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Town Square request. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Page said parking may be an issue, and asked that DBi talk with them.

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

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

There were no referrals.

MAYORS MINUTE:

There was nothing reported.

POLICE REPORT:

There was nothing reported.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

There were no comments.

CLOSED SESSION:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711-A

1/ Personnel – Treasurer

7/ Legal Matters

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 (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 Councilman Nash.

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 Gormus 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 (only time he was present)
Councilwoman Williams	-	Certify
Councilman Miller	-	Certify

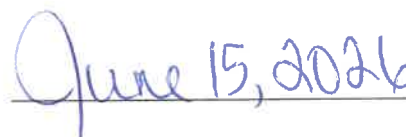
Mayor Dickens continued this meeting to Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Councilman Page asked if the DBi agreement is being discussed to continue to provide the services from the Town for 30 days. Attorney Harf did not believe that was the will of the Council at this time.

Councilman Page made motion to authorize continuing to offer Town staff, facilities and utilities to DBi until an agreement for a new MOU can be made, no longer than 60 days. There was no second.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Dickens adjourned this meeting at 10:21 p.m.

 MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

 APPROVED AND ADOPTED

 TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA