

Minutes of a Special 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, June 21, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: L. Benjamin Green

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; Jackie Brown, Bookkeeper

Town Attorney:

Those Absent:

Special Called Meeting of the Council of the Town of Blackstone, Virginia for 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 21, 2023.

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as Mayor of the Town of Blackstone, I call a Special Meeting of the Council of the Town of Blackstone, Virginia, to be held in the Town Council Chambers, located at 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 21, 2023, for the purpose of considering the following:

1. Public Hearing – FY23/24 Budget

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Public Hearing was advertised last week for a \$22,566,255.00 Budget. He said of that amount, \$11,187,077.00 is in the General Fund, which includes Weatherization, Cemetery, Fire Programs, Airport Fuel, Bus Transit, Taylor Bottom, Medical Center, Electric and Water/Sewer. He said the Electric Fund was advertised at \$5,970,709.00, and the Water/Sewer was advertised at \$3,650,262.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Personal Property remains unchanged at \$.72, with 60% relief. He said Meals Tax remains at 6.5%, and there is no change in Lodging Tax. He added there is no change in Real Estate Taxes at \$.22 per 100.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Water/Sewer rates are increasing by 4% to pay for the East End Project. He said the loan for the East End Project is for 40 years at 1.3% through USDA for \$3.2 Million.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the base electric rate is a 13% increase, plus the Power Cost Adjustment, which includes True-Ups and SEPA, which is electricity purchased from Buggs Island. He said the True-Up is about 8.8%, so the net effect to a customer purchasing 1,000 kilowatt hours is an increase of 3.68%.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Capital items are \$25,000.00 in the Parks and Recreation Department. He said the Ladder Truck is in the amount of \$1,840,000.00, and of that amount, \$1,050,000.00 is grant money, \$520,000.00 will be the debt service, and \$270,000.00 in cash. He said we cannot reduce the loan amount, because it reduces the grant portion first, but the loan can be prepaid at any time.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is \$3,885,000.00 for the Armory, and includes \$2.2 Million from ARPA Funds, \$1 Million from Industrial Revitalization Funds, and \$581,000.00 from the Tobacco Commission.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there are three police vehicles included in the Budget, and the Police Department received \$153,000.00 in ARPA Funds to cover this cost. He said there is \$215,000.00 in the Budget for a Bucket Truck, and it has been ordered. He said the Town has this in cash.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is \$96,000.00 in the Budget for two personal property ditches, one on N. West Avenue for Mr. Somerville, and the other on Dillard Street for Mr. Armes.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said included in the Budget is \$120,000.00 for an aeration system going in one of the water tanks.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Budget reflects a 3% COLA increase to all employees who make over \$35,000.00, and a 4% COLA increase to all employees who make under \$35,000.00. He said part time employees will get the 3% COLA increase. He added, there are two new police positions, plus a \$2.75 increase to the police officer taking on animal control duties.

Mayor Green opened the Public Hearing and asked if there was anyone here to speak for or against the proposed FY24 Budget. There were no comments, so Mayor Green closed the Public Hearing.

Manager Vannoorbeeck described this year as limited new initiatives. He said there may be an appreciable amount of appropriations during this upcoming year, because there are three trucks ordered, that are not in the upcoming Budget, but are included in the current Budget.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked Council to consider a date for a Work Session to go over large projects and daunting figures. Councilman Miller suggested a retreat.

Councilman Gormus said projects partially or fully funded by grants should be identified for the public. He asked if the Budget was the only place projects are tracked, or is there a project management file. Manager Vannoorbeeck said if there is an engineer on projects, they keep this information.

Mayor Green asked to poll Council for some Saturday dates for a Work Session, maybe 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Green declared this Special Called Meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.



MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

September 18, 2023

APPROVED AND ADOPTED



TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA