

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, September 18, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: L. Benjamin Green

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

Town Staff: Philip Vannoorbeeck, Town Manager; Jennifer Daniel,
Town Clerk; Brittany Harris, Treasurer; Jackie Brown,
Bookkeeper; Nicholas Kuzmiak, Police Chief; Sam
Murphy, Detective; Dion Tomer, Fire Chief; Chastiddy
Bryant, Community Development Specialist

Town Attorney: Tessie Bacon

Those Absent: Christopher Page

Mayor Green called the September Council Meeting to order.

Reverend Allen of the Blackstone Ministerial Association delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Green led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Green said Manager Vannoorbeeck asked to add the BB&T Bank property to the Agenda tonight. He said there would be a Closed Session tonight for Personnel, and he would be adding possible litigation as well, with a briefing from staff.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. HELP – Real Estate Exemption

*NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TOWN OF BLACKSTONE*

The Town of Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on September 18, 2023 at 7:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Va. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider an Ordinance that would designate property owned by Helping Every Life Prosper exempt from real property taxation by the Town of Blackstone. Specifically, the subject property is designated as Nottoway County Tax Identification Number 50A27-1-U-3A and is also described as 314 South Main Street. The subject property including improvements is assessed in the amount of \$18,048. The annual Town of Blackstone real property tax levy is \$39.71. The Town Council may act on this ordinance following this Public Hearing. Any person desiring to speak for or against the request should attend the Public Hearing at the above stated date and time.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he received a request from the HELP Organization to declare them exempt of the real property they hold at 314 S. Main Street. He said this request would include a waiver of \$39.71 annually, and the County has waived the Real Estate taxes on their end. He said he advertised this Public Hearing previously, but did not include some statutory limitations, so tonight’s Public Hearing has been advertised properly.

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

Councilman Nash asked if this would be indefinitely, or until the building changes hands. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, it would be until the building changes hands.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Ordinance as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

2. 107 Taylor Street – Blight

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TOWN OF BLACKSTONE

The Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on September 18, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blackstone Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia. The Town Council will consider an ordinance declaring 107 Taylor Street, Blackstone, Va. To be blighted and a public nuisance along with a recommended spot blight abatement plan. The content of this ordinance is more fully described by the Town of Blackstone's Spot Blight Abatement Policy and Virginia Code Section 36-49.1:1. Town Council shall receive the Town Manager's recommendation and public comment regarding this ordinance during the Public Hearing. The Town Council may approve this ordinance following this public hearing. Any individual desiring to address the Town Council should attend the public hearing at the above stated date and time.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he and Clerk Daniel have been working with the property owner of 107 Taylor Street, but not much has been addressed. He said a series of vagrants are residing on the property, and has been reported to the police department. He said the property owner had been very cooperative working with the police department, and sent him an email saying they feared for their safety going on the property. He said he received an email today from the property owner and they were not feeling well, and could not make the meeting tonight.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked Council to hold the Public Hearing, and allow the Town to move forward with Option #4, which allows as much as eminent domain.

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

Councilman Nash asked if the property owner mentioned rectifying the issue, or tearing the house down. Manager Vannoorbeeck said in the email today, they did mention fixing the house, but he was not sure what the inside looked like. He said this does not commit the Town or the property owner to anything immediately.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Ordinance as presented to start the process to declare 107 Taylor Street as blighted. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

3. 902 Second Street – Blight

*NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TOWN OF BLACKSTONE*

The Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on September 18, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blackstone Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia. The Town Council will consider an ordinance declaring 902 Second Street, Blackstone, Va. to be blighted and a public nuisance along with a recommended spot blight abatement plan. The content of this ordinance is more fully described by the Town of Blackstone’s Spot Blight Abatement Policy and Virginia Code Section 36-49.1:1. Town Council shall receive the Town Manager’s recommendation and public comment regarding this ordinance during the Public Hearing. The Town Council may approve this ordinance following this public hearing. Any individual desiring to address the Town Council should attend the public hearing at the above stated date and time.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this house has taken a turn for the worse, and is at the corner of Green and Second Street. He said the back porch has fallen off and someone has recently broken windows. He said two notices have been sent and we have not received any response.

Councilman Miller asked who owned the property. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, Lettie Eppes. He said this person may be deceased, but if we proceed on with eminent domain, Attorney Bacon will help us with service.

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

Councilman Allman made a motion to approve the Ordinance as presented to declare 902 Second Street blighted. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

4. 114 S. Main Street – Eminent Domain

Town of Blackstone
Public Notice

The Town Council of the Town of Blackstone will hold a public hearing on September 18, 2023 at 7:00 P.M., or as soon thereafter it may be held, at the Blackstone Town Council Chambers, 100 West Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia 23824. This Public Hearing has been called as required by Virginia Code Section 15.2-1903. The purpose of the public hearing is to adopt a resolution authorizing the use of the eminent domain power to condemn property located at 114 S. Main Street, Blackstone, Virginia, for use by the Town of Blackstone in the project to remediate the blight existing at the property pursuant to the Town of Blackstone's spot blight abatement code and policy. Additional information regarding this Public Hearing may be requested from the Town of Blackstone Town Manager. Interested persons may appear at the aforementioned time and place to present their views.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said staff received a call today from the owner, who said he had an illness in the family and was unable to attend tonight. He said the property owner indicated he had paid off the mortgage, and has every intention of working on the property. He said by holding this Public Hearing, it will still allow the property owner to do the work and save the Town the trouble. He said this building is a concern, if there were a fire, it could be problematic for the whole downtown.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked Council to hold the Public Hearing tonight, authorize the eminent domain, and allow Attorney Bacon to start the process of communicating with the property owner. He said the Town did make two bonified offers of \$42,500.00, but was not accepted. He said Attorney Bacon had done a title search.

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Resolution included would allow Attorney Bacon to begin the process for eminent domain.

Councilman Nash said he was in agreement starting the process, but now the property owner needs to get started quickly.

Councilman Gormus believed this would involve hundreds of thousands of dollars. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed stabilization of the building was quoted about \$465,000.00. Councilman Gormus said this amount of work won't happen in 90 days.

Manager Vannoorbeeck suggested getting the property owner's plan of work in the next 45 days, and have significant work commence in 90 days.

Councilman Miller made a motion to adopt the Resolution presented and proceed with obtaining a plan of work within the next 45 days. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

5. Nottoway Reservoir Aeration Project

*Town of Blackstone
Notice of Public Hearing*

The Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on Monday, September 18th, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blackstone Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia. The Town Council will consider the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) report for the Nottoway River Reservoir Aeration System Project. The EA is a required element of the Environmental Review process required to seek project funding from the Virginia Department of Health (Drinking Water Funding Procedural Guidelines-PG#7). The proposed project is the complete replacement of the existing aeration system within the Nottoway River Reservoir. The Town of Blackstone will hold a public hearing for the purpose of discussing the project, alternatives considered, environmental impact, project costs, and any potential user charge impact and to receive public comment. Any individual desiring to address the Town Council should attend the public hearing at the above stated date and time. The draft Environmental Assessment (EA) report will be available for the public to review and requests for information should be directed to the Blackstone Town Manager at philipv@townofblackstoneva.com or (434) 292-7251.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in 2021 the Town's aeration system ceased working. He said this work was completed in 2022. He said in 2021, the Town applied for Infrastructure Grant/Loan money through the Department of Health. He said while waiting to hear back, the Town proceeded with the repairs and used ARPA Funds. Manager Vannoorbeeck said in April 2023 the Town was notified we received 100% in Grant Funds.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Health Department has now said the Town has to do an environmental assessment for the replacement of this project. He said this includes a public comment period that opened September 6, 2023 until October 6, 2023. He said this will also include the Public Hearing tonight for anyone that may have comments.

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

Councilman Gormus asked if the environmental review was being performed now. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the review had been completed, so now this is the public comment period for people to come review the documents.

MINUTES:

Councilman Miller made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Special Called Meetings on June 7, 2023 and June 21, 2023 and the Regular Council Meeting on August 21, 2023. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

VISITORS:

Chief Kuzmiak's Retirement Recognition

Mayor Green thanked Chief Kuzmiak for his service here and in Upstate New York. He said Chief Kuzmiak has a 40 year law enforcement career. He said it was with regret Council accepted Chief's resignation, but after Chief's long career, it brings him joy to know Chief will take some time off to do what is right for him and his family.

Mayor Green read the Resolution and presented that and a key to the Town to Chief Kuzmiak.

R e s o l u t i o n
A RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION TO
NICHOLAS C. KUZMIAK, CHIEF OF POLICE, ON HIS
RETIREMENT FROM THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE
POLICE DEPARTMENT

WHEREAS, The Town of Blackstone is proud to recognize the legacy, and accolades of Nicholas Charles Kuzmiak, Chief of the Town of Blackstone Police Department, on the occasion of his retirement; and

WHEREAS, Chief Kuzmiak became Chief of the Town of Blackstone Police Department on February 7th 2003 after previously serving 20 years in law enforcement within the state of New York; and

WHEREAS, during his 20 years of service to the Town of Blackstone, Chief Kuzmiak's tireless efforts modernized, and shaped the Town of Blackstone Police Department into a transparent, community-oriented department that is recognized and appreciated by those within, and those outside of the Blackstone community; and

WHEREAS, Chief Kuzmiak performed many vital functions required to run the Police Department, manage its personnel, and ensure the departments employees operate with the professionalism the community deserves, coupled with the community programs he implemented such as the building of a skate park, Open Gym at the primary school, Shop with a cop, and the Partners in Policing cookouts have been instrumental to the community relations the department enjoys today; and

WHEREAS, Chief Kuzmiak will be missed for his steadfast leadership, tireless efforts to improve the Town of Blackstone Police Department, unwavering dedication to the Blackstone community, and overwhelming professionalism;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of Blackstone wishes to express its sincere appreciation and thanks for his 20 years of hard work and loyalty to the police department and the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council, the police department staff and Blackstone citizens wish to express their best wishes to Chief Kuzmiak for a long and happy retirement.

Chief Kuzmiak thanked everyone, and said he has had a marvelous career, and proud to say Blackstone was the longest department he had worked for, 20 years straight. He said he has had great staff and great support from the Town and community. He said he truly loves the Town of Blackstone and thanked Council for allowing him to finish out his career here.

Ms. Emma Wright – DBi

Ms. Wright said DBi's Color Run would be on October 14, 2023, starting at 12:00 p.m. and ending at 4:00 p.m., with the race starting at 2:00 p.m. She asked for assistance from the Police Department at Eighth and Main Street. She asked for a street closure on High Street from Dinwiddie Avenue to Tavern Street. She said the start and finish line would be on High Street.

Ms. Wright said she contacted Mr. Dan Martin for use of the flatbed truck for their DJ. She requested to waive the Noise Ordinance from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Ms. Wright said last year alcohol was served, and was her plan this year, but was not set in stone yet.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the DBi Color Run, with using the Police Department as needed, closing High Street in front of the Carriage Museum, waive the banner fee, and waive the Noise Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash said if alcohol is served a license will be obtained. Mrs. Field Green said all proper stuff would be done, and they were already working on the liability policy.

Councilman Allman made a motion to allow alcohol for the DBi Color Run. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Tomer said there had not been much progress on the radio system, but a meeting would be held in October with the consulting firm and the Committee. He said they had been waiting on responses from the three vendors with modifications.

Chief Tomer said the Boot Drive was a great success, they got just over \$10,000.00 from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. He said they enjoyed the speed restrictive devices.

Chief Tomer said last month he advised Council about donating expired Turn-Out Gear to Honduras. He said it was mentioned that this gear should be surplus.

Councilman Miller made a motion to surplus the expired Turn-Out Gear, and have it donated to Honduras. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Chief Tomer said Firefighter Johnathan Repollet passed his National Registry test to become an Emergency Medical Technician. He said Sgt. Dylan Jones began employment with Ft. Barfoot as a firefighter last week.

Chief Tomer said October 8th-14th is Fire Prevention Week, and their Open House would be October 9th at 1:00 p.m. at the Fire Station.

Chief Tomer said the Blood Drive would be tomorrow, starting at 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., and walk ins are welcome.

Chief Tomer said Image Trend would be canceled at the end of the month. He said this was roughly \$406.00 a month recurring fee.

Chief Tomer said their newest addition to their flag pole is the Freedom Flag, and being flown this month. He said this Flag was made after 9-11 by a restaurant owner in Richmond, and denounced as the official flag of 9-11. He said this Flag has been approved by the Governor for display and they will keep it flying throughout September.

Chief Tomer said the Christmas Banquet would be on December 9th at the Officer's Club, with formal invitations coming out shortly.

Mayor Grenn pointed out four anniversaries of Life Members with at least 25 years, and asked for a round of applause.

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Mayor Green stated the bills that have already been paid are in the amount of \$385,715.76.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$385,715.76. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Nash asked about Archives Social, LLC in the amount of \$4,200.00. Chief Kuzmiak said that is the backup service for the Police Department’s Facebook and Social Media account.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Green stated the bills not yet approved, and to be paid, are in the amount of \$258,093.35.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve as presented, the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$258,093.35. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

APPROPRIATIONS:

There were no appropriations.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

EMPLOYMENT & POLICE – MET 8-31-23 – MIINUTES INCLUDED IN SEPTEMBER'S COUNCIL PACKET

Chief Kuzmiak's Retiring/Replacement

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Chief of Police position had been advertised.

Noise Ordinance

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Noise Ordinance was discussed, and we want everyone that comes through Town to turn down radios, fix exhaust, because they are writing tickets now.

HR Job Description

Manager Vannoorbeeck said at the next Committee Meeting he would present a job description.

Councilman Miller asked if it was in the budget. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it would likely be included in next year's budget. He believed it was the intention of the Committee to have this person as an employee of the Town.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Award Renovation Bid - Armory

Manager Vannoorbeeck said on September 14, 2023 bids were opened for the renovation of the Armory. He said the low bid was from Tazewell Contractors of Norfolk, with their base bid being \$3,295,000.00. He said there were additives such as the second floor renovation, and completing the elevator and dumb waiter. He said the total bid was \$3,822,000.00. He said he was not prepared to make a recommendation to Council yet.

Councilman Nash asked about Additive #2, does this include the elevator being on the interior of the building. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied it would be exterior.

Mayor Green believed Manager Vannoorbeeck would be hearing from the Architect with a recommendation, so he would be continuing this meeting to October 4, 2023 at 7:00 p.m., to award the bid.

2. Award Roof Bid – Schwartz Tavern

Manager Vannoorbeeck said on September 1, 2023, staff opened sealed bids for the replacement of the roof at Schwartz Tavern. He said the apparent low bid was from Vertex Roofing in the amount of \$106,500.00, but the type of shingle bid did not meet specifications. He said Vertex advised the specified shingles would add \$39,596.00 to the bid, which makes them the second lowest bid.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the lowest responsive bid is from NW Martin, and did submit the specified shingle, which matches the existing. He said their price was \$142,160.00. He said the architect has recommended award to NW Martin. He said the budgeted amount for the work is only \$120,000.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the difference in the shingles is square and scalloped, and scalloped was specified. He said we need to replace the roof; it has reached its life expectancy.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is cash available for the difference.

Councilman Nash asked when the project would be completed. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not know, but may be a 6 month project.

Councilman Nash said if it is a six month project, he would like it rebid, for a square shingle, if it is that much cheaper.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said if this is rebid, the intention is to go with the less expensive shingle, the square shingle.

Councilman Nash made a motion to reject the roof bids received for Schwartz Tavern. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash made a motion authorizing the Town Manager to rebid to roof project at Schwartz Tavern, using the less expensive shingle alternative, and notify the Tavern Authority. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Schwartz Tavern is on the National Register, and wanted to be sure this was not a violation.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

3. Award Annual Concrete Bids

Manager Vannoorbeeck said on September 14, 2023, staff opened sealed bids for the annual concrete schedule, with two bids received. He said the lowest responsive bid was from S. Walker Construction in the amount of \$455,200.00. He said this money is only spent if we do the actual unit items in their entirety. He said this is appreciably less than last year, so competition is a good thing.

Councilman Nash made a motion to accept the low bid from S. Walker Construction in the amount of \$455,200.00 for concrete work. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Nash asked why his price was lower this year. Manager Vannoorbeeck said S. Walker's unit prices were less than last year, but he was taking some risks, if he does small projects.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there were probably 12 different unit prices provided for such things as demolition, curb and gutter, valley gutters and handicap ramps.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Clerk Daniel will send Council the bid prices from both concrete bids.

4. 222 Forest Drive Update

Manager Vannoorbeeck said B&B Consultants were there last week and did an assessment of what can and cannot be done. He said Mr. Randy Jones advised there would be a set of plans within 45 days. He said he did not have the money for this project right now.

Councilman Gormus asked about the blocking off of the drainage from the other side of the road. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that would be included in the construction drawings.

Councilman Nash mentioned the additional speed bumps had been installed in Pickett Court.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said most people in Town want speed bumps.

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was working with the property owner at 301 N. High Street, and other private entities to help. He said if we proceed with eminent domain, it will put the residents in the street.

2. Meals Tax / Lodging Tax

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is one outstanding Meals Tax and eight outstanding Lodging Taxes. Treasurer Morgan said she was waiting on the Air B&B reports for Lodging Tax.

3. Street Improvement Projects

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the tar and gravel schedule was complete for this year. He asked for authorization to seek bids for tar and gravel for 2024.

Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to solicit sealed bids for tar and gravel for 2024. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

4. Wigglesworth Sports Complex

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we will be ready for football next fall.

Councilman Miller said we need to make a decision if the Gators can use the LCCDC Building. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Preston Williams would be handling the seller side for the sale of the School Property, and Attorney Bacon would be handling the closing for the Town.

Clerk Daniel said Council was waiting to get the Deed before accepting the property.

Councilman Nash made a motion to accept all the surplus school property from Nottoway County. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck said now that the Town has accepted the property, there is not a valid lease with LCCDC and the Town.

Councilman Nash asked to have a Buildings, Property and Cemetery Committee Meeting to discuss the LCCDC Building. Mayor Green asked if this could be ready for a vote by the October 4th meeting.

5. East End Neighborhood Project

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the final house in this project will be completed by October 1, 2023. He said this item would be removed from Ongoing Projects.

Councilman Miller said the sheds that were provided are not working. He said there are 3 people living in one place, with only one shed. He asked if Council could find money for two more sheds. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the shed belongs to the property owner, Mr. John Hill. Councilman Miller said one of the tenants is controlling the shed and not letting others use it. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that is a private matter, and Mr. Hill needs to handle that.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the only street without curb and gutter is Hurt Street, between Tavern and Dinwiddie, but the homes were not technically in the East End project. Mayor Green asked this be discussed during the Budget next year. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it would be roughly \$60,000.00.

6. Taylor Bottom Block Grant

Community Development Specialist Bryant said there would be a Public Meeting on October 4, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. Mayor Green asked who was on this Committee. Community Development Specialist Bryant believed it was Councilwoman Wynn, Earl Howerton, Eric Paul, Rachel Maddox, Earlene Powell and herself. She said they would also be adding another member from Taylor Bottom.

7. Armory

Manager Vannoorbeeck said as of last week, all abatement is done. He said the Town's inspector has approved the removal of the lead based paint.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Community Development Specialist Bryant and Todd Fortune with Commonwealth Regional Council were working on the draw downs. He said once the money is refunded, it would go back into the ARPA Funds that have been being used.

8. Weatherization

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town had received the \$40,000.00 from the County for Weatherization. He said the Town had budgeted \$50,000.00, but it was not yet set aside.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we are near to closing on the first Workforce Housing home. Community Development Specialist Bryant said by October 15, 2023. Manager Vannoorbeeck said this mortgage would be through Virginia Housing. He said the grant money fronted for construction would then come back to the Town for a Revolving Fund.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there were originally three lots to work with, and \$405,000.00 in Workforce Housing Funds. He said the next two homes were out for bid, and they have qualified homeowners. He said one house would be on Broad Street and the other on Dillard Street.

Councilman Nash asked what the total amount was for the first home built. Community Development Specialist Bryant believed it was \$139,000.00. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that included the land also. He said the first house is located at the intersection of Hurt and Broad Street.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said one of the next lots is on Broad Street. He said Mr. Earl Howerton purchased the property, with the Town putting in \$4,500.00 of its Weatherization Funds. He said the Town tore it down, and titled with Southside Outreach. He added a new home would be built there, and there was already a qualified buyer.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the other home to be built is on a lot across from the old Levi Strauss Building, on Dillard Street, and the Town owns that lot. He added there was already a qualified home owner for this lot as well.

Councilman Nash asked about the expenditures for the lot on Broad Street, such as the demolition. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the Town would get their \$4,500.00 back.

Councilman Nash asked what the Town would be getting back each month for these properties, for the Revolving Fund. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it would not be each month, because the Town would not be servicing the debt. He said the debt would be held by Virginia Housing, and will pay the Town back at closing.

Community Development Specialist Bryant said for this grant, the properties have to be owned by Southside Outreach or the Town.

Councilwoman Williams asked if this was considered affordable housing. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied yes. Community Development Specialist Bryant said the current homeowner is getting a three bedroom, two bath and the payments are hoping to be under \$750.00/month.

Councilman Allman asked what the cost of the home was. Community Development Specialist Bryant believed it was \$139,000.00, with a 30 year term.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Blackstone was the only community in southside Virginia that applied for this grant and received it, in the amount of \$405,000.00.

BB&T Bank Building

Manager Vannoorbeeck said for years he thought it would be helpful to have that drive-thru for the Treasurer’s Office. He expressed interest with the new owner, and was quoted \$7,000.00 a month, but was willing to negotiate. He suggested this be discussed with the Buildings, Property and Cemetery Committee to gauge the interest and tour the building.

Councilman Nash said he works for the owner and has tried to stay out of it, but with conversations he has had, the owner was considering the \$4,000.00 range, with the owner renovating for the Town.

Councilman Nash said if this was considered, would there be a way to increase services through DMV. Manager Vannoorbeeck said we are only a DMV Select, but DMV is not a money maker. He said this would still include inside and outside services.

Mayor Green referred the BB&T Building to the Buildings, Property and Cemetery Committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Lakeview Cemetery – Headstone Request - Monahan

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this individual purchased four single lots, with each single lot being entitled to one headstone. He said this person’s husband was already interned, she would go next to her husband, and instead of two single headstones, she wants one double headstone. He added it will stay in line, but does violate one headstone per grave.

Councilman Nash made a motion to grant the headstone request for the Monahan family. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

2. Surplus List

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is a truck that has given up from the Water and Sewer Department. He said this list also includes an old check printer, utility printer and the old cardboard baler. He said the truck would be put on GovDeals, and if we don't receive at least \$400.00, it would be taken to ABC Recycling.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the surplus list as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Green said he and Manager Vannoorbeeck discussed today some items to be surplus from the Armory. Manager Vannoorbeeck suggested having an auction in the yard or putting the items on GovDeals.

Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to surplus the items in the Armory, and dispose of at his discretion. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

3. Town Square Request – Waive Noise Ordinance/Street Closure

Councilman Allman said it was previously discussed and decided that DBi would handle Town Square requests to reduce the workload at Town Hall, unless there was a Noise Ordinance waiver, alcohol being served or street closures. He believed there may have been a disconnect somewhere. Manager Vannoorbeeck said we are happy to let DBi handle this.

Clerk Daniel said Ms. Wright with DBi gave it to her for approval because of the street closure and Noise Ordinance.

Councilman Allman made a motion to approve the Town Square application as presented for the street closure and waive the Noise Ordinance for a Woodstock Reunion. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

4. Security Light Refund Request

Manager Vannoorbeeck said two security lights were being charged for, but only one was in use. He said if a three year credit will be given, he preferred to cut one check instead of applying a credit every month.

Councilman Nash asked if we know the light wasn't there. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mr. Charlie Atkinson confirmed, and an email was included confirming.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve writing a check to the property owner with a total from February 2021 through the date it was confirmed cut off. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

These were dispatched throughout this meeting.

MAYORS MINUTE:

Mayor Green said he and Manager Vannoorbeeck met today with Nottoway's Treasurer, Ms. Tammie Raiford to allow Blackstone to issue dog tags, and she declined the request. He said after further conversation, Ms. Raiford convinced them the Town did not want to do this, there are lots of forms to fill out, follow up, and there was no money to be made.

Mayor Green asked Ms. Emma Wright if a date had been set to meet with the business owners. Ms. Wright said she did not have her calendar but believed it was on a Wednesday, November 8th.

Mayor Green said we are going to gauge how many will attend, and he would come back to Council for authorization for a locale.

Councilman Nash asked if this was just for downtown businesses. Mayor Green replied, it was for the entire Town.

Mayor Green said he had a nice meeting last week with the Blackstone Baptist Church. He said Community Development Specialist Bryant and DBi Director Wright accompanied him. He said the retired people in attendance asked about things for senior citizens.

Mayor Green said he also attended a Rev Up Meeting through Virginia Main Street at 101 on Main. He said there were lots of Main Street officials and they complimented the Town's downtown and beyond.

Mayor Green said he recently spoke with Ms. Lizzie Stokes, who invited him to speak at Mt. Nebo Church on October 1, 2023 at 2:30 p.m. working on. Councilwoman Williams said that would be their Friends and Family Day.

Mayor Green said this is the ninth meeting and we have talked about microphones for these Chambers. Clerk Daniel said she received two quotes and was trying to compare them.

POLICE REPORT:

Councilman Allman asked if there were really 99 traffic stops. Detective Murphy was not sure about the stops, but summons are being written.

Councilman Allman said this was a drastic change from past months, and citizens have been giving thanks. He said we are seeing a difference and appreciate it.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Community Development Specialist Bryant said she and Manger Vannoorbeeck were tasked to do something for the Nottoway Ponytails. She said before the October Council Meeting the Town would be recognizing the team at 6:00 p.m. at the Police Station, with rings, a plaque and pizza.

Mayor Green said he would prefer the presentation be in the Chambers on October 16, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Community Development Specialist Bryant reminded Council about the invitation to Virginia Union University's Homecoming on October 21, 2023.

CLOSED SESSION:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711

- 1/ Personnel – Town Manger
- 7/ Legal Matters

Councilman Nash made a motion to go into Closed Session for 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 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 Wynn.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash made a motion that Council ratify an Engagement Letter between the Town of Blackstone and Ms. Missy York with Harman, Claytor, Corrigan & Wellman at the rate of \$275.00 per hour, in the matter of Christopher Page versus the Town of Blackstone. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

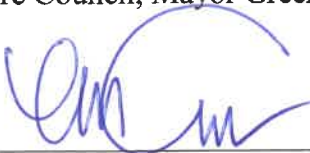
Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

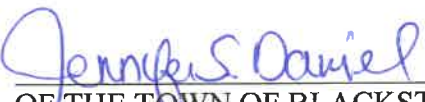
Mayor Green continued this meeting to Wednesday, October 4, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Green adjourned this meeting at 10:09 p.m.



MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

November 20, 2023 APPROVED AND ADOPTED



TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA