

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, February 28, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: William D. Coleburn

Council Members: Annie Scott, Shelia Jones, Lonnie Morgan, Carolyn Williams, Nathaniel Miller, Eric Nash, Tom Wilkinson

Town Staff: Philip Vannoorbeeck, Town Manager; Jennifer Daniel, Town Clerk; Zac Beares, Deputy Fire Chief; Tony Mayton, Police Sergeant, Brittany Harris, Treasurer; Jennifer Hardy, Finance Director; Edward Harris, Director of Water and Sewer

Town Attorney: Tessie B. Bacon

Those Absent:

Mayor Coleburn called the February Council Meeting to order.

Councilwoman Jones delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Coleburn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Policies, Procedures & Rates – Leachate & Septage

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF BLACKSTONE

The Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m., February 28, 2022 in the Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider an ordinance adopting Policies, Procedures and Rates for the disposal of Leachate and Septage. Specifically, the proposed ordinance would establish rates for the disposal of these wastes into the Town's Wastewater collection system. The public is invited to speak either in favor or in opposition to the proposed ordinance.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said leachate is landfill juice.

Mayor Coleburn said Mr. Costin, the County Administrator, was here tonight.

Mayor Coleburn said for many years the Town of Blackstone has charged Nottoway County a rate of \$.8/10 per gallon. Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is the cost of an in town sewage customer.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we had noticed an increase from the County for sludge in 2021. He said the Town was hauling sludge from the Wastewater Treatment Plant to the County landfill for \$27.00 a ton, and increased to \$52.00 a ton in September 2021. He said the rubbish charge went from \$37.00 a ton to \$42.00 a ton. He said Mr. Costin and himself had a discussion about the County adopting a new landfill rate schedule, which would increase again the cost for sludge and rubbish.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he got to thinking the charges when the refugees were here and asked discussed with Mr. Edward Harris. He said we were charging Edmonds Waste Removal \$.15 for servicing the porta potties. He said the County is being charged less than a penny for leachate, and provided a copy of the figures to Council for a 12 month schedule. He said the Town has received over 15 million gallons leachate from the County during a 12 month period.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the agreement, but he and Mr. Costin did not believe it was ever written down, but according to Mr. Roark, the trash rates would be left alone, if the leachate rates would stay the same.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mr. Harris called around and found some rates for septage and leachate. He said the Town of Farmville charges \$.15 per gallon for septage. Mr. Harris said Farmville only accepts leachate from Prince Edward County.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Hopewell's septage is \$.05 a gallon and leachate is \$.13 a gallon. He said South Hill is \$6.5 cents for septage and leachate is \$3.3 cents.

Mayor Coleburn asked where the septage and leachate are deposited. Manager Vannoorbeeck said currently they bring the leachate to Division Street, off of N. West Avenue.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Lawrenceville accepts septage at \$7.8 cents a gallon and does not accept leachate. He said the Town of Crewe does not accept anything; they would have to do significant upgrades.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was not trying to charge \$.15 per gallon for the County, but currently they are only being billed 50% of flow of the first 3,000 gallons, so basically it is \$8.48 per thousand gallons. He said the total revenues from this 12 month period was \$61,252.72.

Councilman Nash asked how much it costs to treat this. Mr. Harris said they have to do metal tests for this, and is \$5,000.00, but did not know how much in chemicals. He added the testing is supposed to be done three times every five years.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said at \$.15 a gallon and based on the numbers given to him, it would cost the County \$1,145,000.00. He said the \$3.00 landfill charge on the utility bills is only about \$75,000.00 annually.

Mayor Coleburn opened the Public Hearing and said we don't want to punish the County, because we all live in the County. He said the County is trying to make their landfill not in the red.

Mayor Coleburn asked if there was anyone here to speak on this issue.

Mayor Coleburn asked if Council could get together with the County and do some horse trading, and come up with an agreement in writing. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mr. Costin sent him an email today and asked that the Town not go to full volume this year, to allow them to build in the cost.

Councilman Nash said the full volume needs to be charged, he did not agree on \$.15, but thought it needed to be the percentage that was increased to the Town. He said it is the Town taxpayer's money. He said we need to be good stewards to our citizens; the County doesn't have to answer to the ones sitting here.

Mayor Coleburn referred the septage and leachate rates to the Account and Finance Committee. He suggested having Account and Finance meet with the County's Budget Committee. Mr. Costin said they were not using a Budget Committee this year, it is as a whole, and would certainly negotiate.

Councilman Nash asked to have this meeting quick, because the Town was already being charged the higher rate.

Mayor Coleburn hoped to have an update at the March 9th Continued Meeting.

2. Section 62-8 – Involuntary Discontinuance of Service

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TOWN OF BLACKSTONE

*The Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m., on February 28, 2022 in the Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider amending and readopting **Section 62-8, Involuntary Discontinuance of Service**, of the Blackstone Town Code. This change would modify the Town's Code to make it consistent with the current policy of the Blackstone Town Council. More specifically, this ordinance eliminates the section of hand delivered notices, that the Town no longer delivers. The public is invited to speak either in favor or in opposition to the proposed policy.*

Mayor Coleburn said this is basically just adopting the Ordinance because we no longer send pink slips. Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would amend and reenact Section 62-8.

Mayor Coleburn opened the Public Hearing, and there were no comments, he then closed the Public Hearing.

Councilman Miller made a motion to adopt Section 62-8, Involuntary Discontinuance of Service, as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

3. Section 54-119, Letter J – Rate of License Taxes

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TOWN OF BLACKSTONE

*The Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m., on February 28, 2022 in the Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider amending and readopting **Section 54-119, Letter J - Rate of License Taxes**, of the Blackstone Town Code. This change would modify the Town's Code to make it consistent with the current policy of the Blackstone Town Council. More specifically, this ordinance allows Council to approve Special Events for the sale of goods on Town owned property. The public is invited to speak either in favor or in opposition to the proposed policy.*

Mayor Coleburn said this clarifies where Itinerant Merchants can sell their wares. Clerk Daniel said this would require Council approval for anyone to sell wares on Town owned property. Councilman Nash said typically this is for non-profits.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to adopt Section 54-119, Letter J, Rate of License Taxes, as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

MINUTES:

Councilman Morgan made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Work Session on January 12, 2022 and the Special Called Meeting on January 12, 2022. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

VISITORS:

1. Ms. Tonya Boothe – Spring Fling Walk-A-Thon

Mayor Coleburn said this would take place on April 23rd, with a rain date of April 30th.

Ms. Booth said her family wants to give 3 deserving seniors in Nottoway, Brunswick and Lunenburg a \$500.00 scholarship. She said one way they are trying to do this is with a Walk A Thon. She said the one mile walk would start at 8:15 a.m. and the 5K would start at 9:30 a.m. She asked Mayor Coleburn to present opening words for the walk. She encouraged anyone to participate.

Mayor Coleburn said we usually ask the organizers to work with the Police Department. Ms. Boothe asked for police escorts, if possible.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to approve the Spring Fling Walk-A-Thon, contingent on working the Police Department. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

2. Ms. Ellen Eppes – Juneteenth

Mayor Coleburn said the second annual Juneteenth Celebration would be Saturday, June 25, 2022.

Ms. Eppes said the Committee was asking for funding like last year, to cover the same things as last year.

Mayor Coleburn said last year the Town gave \$5,000.00 seed money, as it did for the Chamber for fireworks. He said everyone agreed Juneteenth was a wonderful first time event.

Mayor Coleburn asked about Seay Park being used from 8:00 a.m. -7:00 p.m. Ms. Eppes said they wanted to add more for the youth, and this would have kids in a designated area.

Mayor Coleburn said there would be a DJ in the Town Square. He said after looking at the costs from last year, he believed the police officers on duty were paid with the seed money.

Mayor Coleburn asked if there was a rain date. Ms. Eppes replied no.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve the \$5,000.00 donation from the Town for the Juneteenth Celebration. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Councilman Nash asked if there was an exact dollar amount. Ms. Eppes replied, \$5,000.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said one of the requests is use of the Town's tax exempt status, he wanted to be sure Attorney Bacon was ok with this.

Councilman Miller amended his motion to include the tax exempt use be contingent on Attorney Bacon's approval. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

3. Ms. Julie Krake – Art Walk

Ms. Krake said she had recently opened up an Art Gallery and Studio. She said she was also on the Chamber and Rotary. She said they had been planning the Second Saturday Art Walk in Blackstone. She said they were asking every business to open their doors and host one or two artists. She believed this would bring visitors to our Town.

Ms. Krake said they had been paying out of pocket for printing, and other things, but it is getting to be a little much. She asked to have a banner hung at Main and Tenth Streets. She requested \$1,000.00 in donation, to help with printing and the banner.

Mayor Coleburn said this would be April through October. Ms. Krake said it would be from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., being a jazzy and artsy feel.

Councilman Nash asked Manager Vannoorbeeck's opinion on hanging a banner for 7 months. Manager Vannoorbeeck suggested a sturdy banner.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the banner request and waive the fee. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

Mayor Coleburn said Ms. Krake asked for some seed money. Councilman Nash said his concern was, we just had a Walk-A-Thon come up, he said if we start giving to everybody, it will be an endless pot and people will keep coming, but believed this would benefit Blackstone.

Mayor Coleburn said we do give \$750.00 a year to the Christmas Parade. He said that money, chances are, does not stay in our community. He said what he has seen lately, Saturdays in Blackstone is a sleeper, and this could be a draw to help on Saturdays. Councilman Nash preferred to just pay for the banner, he would rather stick to one item to purchase.

Mayor Coleburn suggested to preserve the banner, the first of each month it gets put up, and immediately afterwards, take it down.

Councilman Nash made a motion that the Town purchase a good quality banner for the Second Saturday Art Walk. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

Mayor Coleburn said Ms. Krake had her Open House on March 11, 2022.

4. Ms. Beverly Ambs

Ms. Ambs said on Saturday, May 7, 2022, the Chamber would like to have an event called the Taste of Southside. She said they wanted to use the historic areas and are not asking for any monies. She said this would be from 12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. She said this would include entertainment, food vendors and food trucks. She said this would show people what south of Richmond has to offer. She said right now there would be no banner involved. She said they did not want to use the inside of the Armory.

Mayor Coleburn asked where the event would be held. Ms. Ambs replied, Schwartz Tavern, the Carriage Museum, the lot beside the Armory and on the streets, just like for Arts & Crafts.

Ms. Ambs said they were trying to get alcohol for the event, but have not heard back from the wineries and breweries. She said this would include southside vendors as well. She added Tavern and High Streets would be closed.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve the requests for the first annual Taste of Southside on Saturday, May 7, 2022 from 12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., contingent on working with the Police Department. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

5. Mr. Bob Alston – 303 College Avenue

Mr. Alston said he was new to Blackstone and purchased a house that has an upstairs and downstairs, with the upstairs that used to be rented. He was recently surprised when he received two utility bills, because there were separate meters. He said he has been trying to find someone to take the extra meters out and just have one meter. He asked if anything could be done in the meantime, while they were waiting on someone to come do the work. He said the upstairs is no longer a rental area.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this house is actually a duplex.

Mayor Coleburn said the Town's policies are based on the meters. Manager Vannoorbeeck suggested cutting the service off for the upstairs. Mr. Alston said there are two bathrooms in the house, one upstairs and one downstairs, and they do use the water upstairs.

Mr. Alston said with the sewer, there is only one exit from the house, and asked why he was being billed for two. Mayor Coleburn replied, because of the stringent standards on the Town treating sewage, that whatever your water bill is, that is what your sewer bill will be too.

Mr. Alston said he was paying for two trash pick-ups. Mr. Alston said he moved here January 20, 2022.

Mayor Coleburn welcomed Mr. Alston to Blackstone and apologized for things not starting off well.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Deputy Chief Beares said the 50/50 grant was approved and they would be getting rescue tools that will be battery operated. He thanked Council for approval.

Deputy Chief Beares said he returned from the Chief's Conference yesterday, and Engine 3 was there. He expected to have the Engine in service by the middle of March.

Mayor Coleburn said this 2022 Engine would be replacing a 1986 Ford.

Deputy Chief Beares said house numbering would begin this weekend, they had 20 people call in to participate, to include businesses and houses. Mayor Coleburn added there is a Town Ordinance that requires your homes and businesses to have proper numbers, so it can be seen by Fire and EMS.

Councilman Miller asked about turn out gear, he read an article about the gear may be causing cancer. Deputy Chief Beares replied, not them, when the gear is in the racks, we keep it away from the trucks. He said when the trucks pull into the bay areas, they cut them off to keep exhausts from going throughout. He said thanks to the Town, their gear is top notch.

Councilman Nash said the fire station has a ventilation system that if it measures a certain level of carbon monoxide, the doors raise up and fans come on.

Mayor Coleburn said the tax levies, he would refer to the Account and Finance Committee. He said Chief Tomer has said in the Blackstone fire service territory, if the County were to allow a \$.3 extra on Real Estate, it could generate \$200,000.00 for the Fire Department.

Deputy Chief Beares said Chief Tomer sent out Ladder Truck information to Council yesterday, and asked if there were any questions. Mayor Coleburn said we just need to make sure Nottoway County remembers their \$200,000.00 pledge.

Mayor Coleburn said tonight is the last Council Meeting for our Ward C representative, Colonel Tom Wilkinson. He said his term expires tomorrow. He said Councilman Wilkinson has served his time here, not just on Council, but has been very active in the community as a Rotarian, a former commander for Pickett. He said he has worn the uniform for many years and served in Operation Desert Storm and Shield. He believed Councilman Wilkinson also served in Afghanistan, and one of those aided by interpreters.

Mayor Coleburn presented a plaque of appreciation and a key to the Town to Councilman Wilkinson. He said Councilman Wilkinson brought Oktoberfest to Blackstone. He said Councilman Wilkinson is moving to Tennessee, Councilwoman Thompson moved to Georgia, and Councilwoman Hasbrouck moved to Arkansas.

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Mayor Coleburn stated the bills that have already been paid are in the amount of \$608,492.72.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$608,492.72. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

Councilman Nash asked about Jackson Street concrete for \$108,000.00, is that in addition to what has already been appropriated. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no, there is an appropriation later tonight for this.

Councilman Nash said the over \$200,000.00 already appropriated is not included in this. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that only included two blocks as part of the project.

Mayor Coleburn stated the bills not yet approved, and to be paid, are in the amount of \$130,313.84.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve as presented, the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$130,313.84. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Councilman Nash asked about locks at Town Hall, was this done with ARPA Funds. Finance Director Hardy said this was for re-locking file cabinets that had no keys.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the new a/c units at the Police Department are being paid for with CARES Funds.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

APPROPRIATIONS:

Mayor Coleburn said these are items that come up during the course of the year, but are not budgeted.

Appropriation #1 – Wigglesworth = \$108,000.00

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is for the grading and drainage of the football field at Wigglesworth for the Gators.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the interest from the CD at Benchmark from last year was \$158,000.00, he said the \$108,000.00 comes from that and only leaves \$50,000.00, and received a bid for the concession stand of \$99,000.00.

Appropriation #2 – Blackstone Hotel Project = \$689,000.00

Mayor Coleburn said this money is being reimbursed to the Town through an IRF Grant. Manager Vannoorbeeck said \$600,000.00 is the Industrial Revitalization Grant and \$89,000.00 is from the Tobacco Commission, which is \$44,500.00 in grant and \$44,500.00 in loan, that Mr. Patel is required to pay back.

Manager Vannoorbeeck apologized and said there is not an appropriation for the Jackson Street concrete work, it was actually for the football field.

Appropriation #3 – Taylor Bottom Neighborhood Project = \$25,000.00 (ARPA Funds)

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is for a Planning Grant, he would like to look at a neighborhood improvement grant there. He said the Department of Health does have lots of money for infrastructure and potential ARPA Funds right now. He said he wanted to start focusing on utility replacements, to include the trunk line at the Rocky Bump Pump Station. He said there are some 100% grant funds for lines that may have lead in them, and we believe this area has some lead goosenecks.

Appropriation #4 – Taylor Bottom Neighborhood Project = \$25,000.00

Finance Director Hardy said there is only \$25,000.00 being appropriated, this is just moving into the proper funds.

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

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no Consent Agenda items.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Redistricting – Request for Public Hearing

Mayor Coleburn said the Wards will be largely as they are now, but the big change being in Eppington Forest, which will now all be in Ward C. He said a Public Hearing needed to be held before anything could take place.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said at Council's desk was Plan 1A and 1B as a result of discussions at the last Council Meeting. He said the biggest modification in 1A was moving those 17 people from Lunenburg Avenue Extended into Ward C. He said this map does not address the deficiency in Councilwoman Jones' Ward, population wise. He was not recommending Map 1A.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Map 1B, we have left those 17 people in Councilwoman Scott's Ward, and have put all the east side of Gravatt Avenue in Councilwoman Jones' Ward to give her more population. He believed this would only make Councilwoman Jones' Ward short 2.2%. He said Councilwoman Williams' Ward would only be 1.9% short.

Mayor Coleburn said all wards must have, ideally the same population, plus or minus 5%. He said three of the Wards must have African American majorities and that is achieved with this plan.

Attorney Bacon said according to the General Assembly, if you are making changes to redistricting and polling places, the governing body has to publish on the official website a proposed covered practice, and a general notice of opportunity for public comment. She said this has to be published at least 45 days of the last date for public comment. She said within that time period there has to be 30 days for public comment. She said the public comment period has to include the opportunity to interested persons to submit data views for argument by mail, fax or email, or through an online public forum on the official website.

Attorney Bacon said during the 30 day period of public comment, there has to be at least one Public Hearing to receive any comments. She said after that time is up, if there are any changes, then there are additional comment periods. She said following the public comment period, the governing body shall publish the final covered practice, basically the final Ordinance with the Maps, showing the polling places and the plain English description of what is being done in the text of the Ordinance regarding the practice. She said there needs to be a notice of when the Ordinance will take effect in 30 days.

Mayor Coleburn said we are on a timeline, because if someone wanted to run as Mayor or Council as a political party, the Primary is in June. He asked what happens if we cannot make the timeline. Attorney Bacon replied, we are cutting it close, but can make the deadline, so let's start immediately.

Attorney Bacon said there was an alternative, in lieu of the provisions, the public body may submit the maps to the office of the Attorney General for issuance of a certificate of no objection. She said such practice may not be given effect until the Attorney General has issued the certification, which if it takes 60 days, that would be too late.

Manager Vannoorbeeck suggested proceeding with Map 1B and Council authorizing all the Public Notices.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to advertise Map 1B for Public Hearing, and all necessary documents to advertised for public comment. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

2. Airport – Apron Rehabilitation

Mayor Coleburn said this is to repave the Apron at the Airport. He said there is a grant for \$458,400.00 and a local match of \$114,600.00. Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would repave the taxiway at the Airport. He said this would be the asphalt portion between the Fuel Farm and the Administration Building. He said this would include milling and putting in base, reclaiming the asphalt and any stone that is there as base, and then repave.

Mayor Coleburn said the match would come from the Aviation sales. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was not \$114,000.00 in the fund right now. He said he would borrow from ourselves, and Finance Director Hardy would make sure the funds are put back.

Councilman Nash asked Manager Vannoorbeeck how much money was in the fund right now. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, under \$10,000.00. He added one good summer would make this money back.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to accept the grant of \$458,400.00 from the Department of Aviation and proceed with the local match of \$114,600.00 borrowing from ourselves, and pay back within 2 years and if not, come back to Council. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Manager Vannoorbeeck suggested no other projects at the Airport, until the money is paid back.

Mr. Jake Allman said he works out there and they are seeing a lot more larger aircraft, and the asphalt is deteriorating and is unknown how much weight it can hold.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is a lot higher than the Engineer's estimate, which was in the mid \$300s.

The motion was amended to include entering into agreement with J.R. Caskey as the contractor.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

3. Code Blue Contract Renewal

Finance Director Hardy said the Town has grown with Code Blue, originally it was only Town Hall that was under agreement, but now they help at the Bus Shop, the Police Department and Public Works. She said any issues the Town has with IT, Code Blue can remote in.

Finance Director Hardy said originally, she was going to try ala carte this year, but was in the process of getting new accounting software, and Code Blue is helpful with this. She said this agreement is offering a lower hourly rate, with this bid estimating what they think we will spend.

Finance Director Hardy requested renewal for the next twelve months, but did not believe every department needed it. She asked to let her determine which departments need the reoccurring monthly cost.

Finance Director Hardy said the Town has spent \$64,000.00 this year, but they did a lot of upgrades, to include the new phone system here, at the Police Department and the Fire Department. She believed there was \$18,000.00 budgeted this year. She said they back up every computer at Town Hall and we pay for storage in the Cloud. She said pre budget, she has \$22,000.00 for administration.

Finance Director Hardy said she still needed to talk to the Police Department.

Councilman Nash made a motion to renew the IT Agreement with Code Blue for Town Hall, and allow the other departments discretion The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

4. RFP – Auditing Services

Mayor Coleburn said Robinson, Farmer, Cox has been serving the Town for over 30 years for auditing services. He said Council and staff has suggested getting bids to see what else is out there.

Councilman Nash said Finance Director Hardy came to him and said because we are changing accounting systems, she would like to get through this year and not change auditing the same year.

Mayor Coleburn said there is no action at this time, and this would be brought back up next year.

5. Brownfields Remediation Grant - Armory

Mayor Coleburn said the Town has won a grant for \$250,000.00 to remove lead, asbestos and an underground fuel tank at the Armory.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town applied for \$268,000.00, and this includes reimbursing the Town for some previous work, and includes \$8,000.00 for administration costs to the Commonwealth Regional Council that was cut out, so hopefully the work will be less and we can take the difference.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is not included in the \$2 Million budget, this is in addition. He said they were working with DHCD Rural Development for technology and furnishings. He said the Planning Grant was being put together for a consultant to see what can be done to get broadband from the Water Tank to the Armory and how to disseminate it through downtown. He did not believe anything would be coming from the Tobacco Commission.

6. Black History Heroes

Mayor Coleburn said he would announce the Committee at the March 9, 2022 Meeting. He said this would include two members of Council and staff members. He said he may be on there because he did not count as a Council Member.

7. BABS Lane - Sale of Property

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Council asked by February 1, 2022, to have a Performance Agreement from both interested parties. He said there was one submitted by SWCI. He said Mr. Jason Walker would pay for the survey, he is offering \$1,800.00 an acre, and would have after 24 months, one leasable site. Mayor Coleburn said he would like that to say "Leased", anything is a leasable space.

Councilman Nash believed it to be a structure. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed it should say structure or improvement. Councilman Nash did not believe the Town could dictate it must be leased at that time, because he would be at the mercy of the market.

Mayor Coleburn said this property is owned by the people of Blackstone, and we had another proposal that would include revenue on an annual basis. Manager Vannoorbeeck said this proposal was offering about \$36,000.00 a year as a lease payment, to install a 7 megawatt solar farm. He said this was proposed to serve Mr. Carlo's building and sell the difference back into the system through Southside Electric. He said he has talked to this person, but nothing new has been provided.

Mayor Coleburn said Mr. Walker was proposing to buy the last 35 acres in the Town's Industrial Park for \$1,800.00 an acre. He added there really is no Industrial Park because the Town does not have 3 phase electric.

Mayor Coleburn asked Council if they wanted to have Mr. Walker fine tune his proposal and also reach out to the other interested party for a final call.

Mayor Coleburn said by Common Consent, March 15, 2022 would be the deadline for proposals.

8. Affordable Workforce Housing Grant

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Commonwealth Regional Council has notified the Town they would be receiving \$434,850.00 in grant funds for the construction of three single family workforce housing projects. He said these houses are not necessarily for low to moderate income, this has different income requirements. He said these homes will be owned, not built for rent.

Mayor Coleburn asked where these homes would be built. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town is part owner of the old Tucker place on E. Broad Street, and Southside Outreach owns the other half. He said Southside Outreach owns a property at the corner of E. Broad and Hurt Street, and the Town owns property at the corner of Dillard and Fitzgerald Street.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would not be a free home, the owners would have to pay a mortgage. He said the expectation is the payments would come back to the Town and go into a fund for other housing projects.

Councilman Nash said the way Manager Vannoorbeeck explained it to him, if the house costs \$125,000.00, then the purchaser will pay \$125,000.00 also. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there may be terms and conditions more favorable for the purchaser.

Mayor Coleburn asked how the Town would openly and fairly seek those that want to participate. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the Housing Rehab Board would have to handle this. He said we will have Council award the approvals.

9. Ordinance – Section 54-141 – Definitions

Mayor Coleburn said at the last Council Meeting there was discussion on who has to pay Lodging Tax. He said the ruling is, if you book a room for 35 days, you are exempt from Lodging Tax. He said Lodging Tax is only for those that stay 30 days or fewer.

Mayor Coleburn clarified the Public Hearing had already been held.

Councilman Nash made a motion to adopt Section 54-141, Definitions, as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Morgan.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

10. VUMAC – IRF Agreements

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town is providing assistance in the amount of \$600,000.00 for infrastructure improvements for a \$12 Million project that will bring a hotel to Blackstone.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town borrowed a Revenue Anticipation Note for \$600,000.00. He said the revenue anticipation was the Town would get a grant for the \$600,000.00 through the Industrial Revitalization Fund, administered by DHCD. He said the Town has been successful, but we have to put a sign up. He said we have a Performance Agreement, that was drawn up by Attorney Bacon. He said the Agreement states it has to be a hotel for 10 years and there is discussion for the prorated reimbursement if it is not a hotel for 10 years.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mr. Raj Patel had executed both, the Performance and Restriction Agreements. He said the plan was to submit this to DHCD after the Mayor executes each Agreement.

Councilman Nash questioned the 35 jobs. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that was the number originally given to the Tobacco Commission, and is 35 full time equivalents.

Councilman Nash made a motion authorizing Mayor Coleburn to execute the Performance and Restriction Agreements as presented with Blackstone Hotel Partners, LLC. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

11. Award Bid – Gators Concession Stand

Mayor Coleburn said one bid was received from 4H Construction in the amount of \$99,800.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is only \$50,000.00 left to go towards the concession stand. He said in his opinion, he would reject the bid. He said we have asked the County to match the \$50,000.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this concession stand would mirror what is already there, so it would be split face block on the first floor, framing on the second floor, green metal roof and yellow siding.

Councilman Miller suggested putting this back out for bid. Manager Vannoorbeeck agreed, but said it would push the project back and may not be ready for football season.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to reject the sole bid from 4H Construction in the amount of \$99,800.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

Councilman Nash said we are creating our own Parks and Recreation Department, which is a County function, and he stood firm that the Town needs to make it up with the leachate costs.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the field would be ready, it is going to be nice.

Councilman Miller asked how soon before it could be rebid. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would put in the paper tomorrow morning, because it has to be advertised.

Councilman Miller said if we get the \$50,000.00 from the County then we would be ok. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the cost may be less, but remember, this bid is just for the four walls and the floor. He said Town staff would be doing the wiring, insulation, air conditioning, and such.

Tourism:

Mayor Coleburn asked if this Council had a will to advertise for a part time guide, for the Carriage Museum and Schwartz Tavern.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he and Councilman Nash met with DBi this week, and it was the intention that the Town wants a tourism, Armory, DBi, one person full time position as a Town employee. He said if we want to accelerate that, we can.

Mayor Coleburn asked if at the March 9, 2022 Meeting, have an ad for the type of person we are looking for. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he had a job description that DBi provided.

Mr. Robert Thomas said there was a total of 108 people that went through the antique mall, imagine if 25-50 of those people went through the museums, if they were open.

Mr. Thomas said he and his sister were working with Longwood for interns, for the summer and holidays.

Mayor Coleburn asked by Common Consent that Council wants to move in this direction for the budget. Councilman Nash said absolutely, but we have tried this part time before, and did not achieve that goal, so he believed it had to be a full time dedicated person.

Mayor Coleburn said starting this year he was thinking of having someone on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the museums.

Ms. Beverly Ambs said the Inn at Blackstone would be opening in the summer, and could feed into tourism and the museums.

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he had been in touch with the owners of Velvet Textile and SB Cox has obtained a Zoning Permit for their blighted property. He said the cost for demolishing a portion of the property was \$82,000.00. He said the property owners also have to fix the roof on the portion that used to be the sign shop. He said he informed the property owner that the leaks in this building from their fire sprinkler system are unmetered usage, so from now on additional leaks that the Fire Department gets called to, will then be billed for water usage.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is a property on Nottoway Avenue and he had spoken with the property owner. He said he had given the owner 30 days, and now the blight enforcement would begin.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the old hardware store downtown, is falling into great disrepair. He said that building's failure would affect a lot of other buildings because they are all attached with common walls. He said there is an excessive leak in the building, and the property owner will be getting a blight letter.

2. Meals Tax / Lodging Tax

Treasurer Harris said there were two outstanding Meals Tax.

Mayor Coleburn said restaurants are not paying Meals Tax, they collect Meals Tax.

3. Street Improvement Projects

There was nothing to report.

4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex / TAP 21

Mayor Coleburn said the concrete work was completed. He said the Town would be installing antique lights.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the fencing would be going back up. He said as part of the secondary budget, the Town would be paving the portion of Jackson Street adjacent to the curb and gutter when Colony Construction comes.

Mayor Coleburn asked about the seed for the football field. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the grass, seed and fertilizer was coming from Greg Young, and would be the same as on the baseball fields.

5. East End Neighborhood Project

Mayor Coleburn said contractors were completing one home and seeking bids on two more properties. He said sewer installation was complete and one block of water remains to be constructed on Harris Street.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was another element of street improvements and drainage, and are waiting on the plans from B&B Consultants.

Ms. Shirley Eppes said she lives on Stokes Street and it looks bad, with lots of trash. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would write up a work order.

6. Weatherization

Mayor Coleburn said the Town had not yet been notified as to the availability of their Program Income Funds.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he discussed with Mr. Costin this morning, and did not have a formal answer.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Metal Detecting – School Property / Seay Park

Mayor Coleburn said the Policy is if you want to metal detect on Town owned property, it has to be approved by Council. He said the requests are for the old School Property and Seay Park. He said both gentlemen can keep what they find, but have offered to share anything with the Town if they find anything unusual.

Councilman Morgan did not think it was a good idea to dig around Seay Park. Councilman Nash questioned if the Town could allow someone to metal detect on the school property, since the Town does not technically own it.

Mayor Coleburn said the rule is metal detectors have to repair holes they dig.

Clerk Daniel said both gentlemen received permission from Mr. Robbie Templeton with the County.

Councilman Wilkinson asked Attorney Bacon if there would be any liability issue for the Town, from the School's perspective, since the Town leases the property. Attorney Bacon asked if there was renters' insurance on the property, and if so, check with the insurance carrier.

Councilman Nash said the front portion of Seay Park could not be used for metal detecting. Manager Vannoorbeeck agreed, because the Town pays for fertilizing that portion.

Clerk Daniel will send the Policy to Attorney Bacon for approval.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the metal detecting requests for Seay Park, from the gazebo back towards Oak Street, and the old School Property. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

2. Collections Attorney

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town has been using Mr. James Elliott for many years. He said when the properties get to Mr. Elliot, they are already three years delinquent, then taking another year or so for the attorney.

Councilwoman Jones made a motion authorizing Manager Vannoorbeeck to issue an RFP for the Town's Collections Attorney. The motion was seconded by Councilman Morgan.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

3. Wrigglesworth – Batting Cage Use

Mayor Coleburn said the Town has received a request from the Lady Cougars to use the batting cages at Wrigglesworth on rainy days. He said Mrs. Marcia Martin from the Rec Association has blessed this.

Councilwoman Jones made a motion to allow the Nottoway Lady Cougars use of the batting cages on rainy days during softball season, and the fees be waived. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

There were no referrals.

MAYORS MINUTE:

Mayor Coleburn said we have new folks coming to Town, and he is getting more inquiries about the fire sirens. He believed they were set between 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. He said people have asked if fire sirens needed to go off for wrecks.

POLICE REPORT:

There was nothing to report.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Ms. Ellen Eppes said the Juneteenth Committee wants to do a fundraiser, using the basketball courts on March 26, 2022, and have a police presence. She said this would be a basketball tournament.

Councilwoman Jones made a motion to allow the Juneteenth Committee to hold a basketball tournament fundraiser on Saturday, March 26, 2022 all day, and have a police presence. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

Ms. Ambs asked what the street closures would be for Juneteenth. Mayor Coleburn replied the same as last year, from Irvin to Tavern Streets, with Broad Street being left open.

Ms. Ambs asked to leave Maple Street open as well. Mayor Coleburn said we do not want to hurt anybody’s business. He believed good minds could work something out.

Ms. Ambs said the Town has recognized Councilwoman Thompson for the work she did, but what about other council members. Mayor Coleburn said yes, by all means we need to do something. He said the Town had been working with the Neal Family for a memorial either in these Chambers or outside. He said as for Councilwoman Constance Tucker Wynn, in June 2000, Blackstone’s newest street is Tucker Lane, in honor of her family.

Mayor Coleburn said maybe a committee could be formed, but cautioned this would need thought and making sure nobody is left out.

Mayor Coleburn said Councilman John Neal is the reason Blackstone is only allowed two billboards. He was tired of billboards being neglected by out of town firms.

Mayor Coleburn said Councilman Jerry Wilson was one of the longest serving members on Council. He said we would need to talk to members of the families.

Mayor Coleburn asked that Council Member Recognitions be on the July Agenda.

Manager Vannoorbeeck reminded everyone that Lakeview Cemetery clean up would be the week of March 7, 2022.

CLOSED SESSION:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711

7/ Legal Matters – Consultation with Legal Counsel

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

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

Councilman Morgan 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 Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Certify
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Certify
Councilwoman Scott	-	Certify
Councilwoman Jones	-	Certify
Councilman Morgan	-	Certify
Councilwoman Williams	-	Certify
Councilman Miller	-	Certify

Mayor Coleburn said there were two firms in this Town that received some Town funding in an emergency situation during the pandemic, and dates back to 2020 since payments have been made. He said Council discussed in Closed Session collection efforts.

Councilman Nash made a motion for Attorney Bacon to proceed with collection efforts, keeping with the contracts that were signed in 2020, and there would be a report at the Continued Meeting on March 9, 2022. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn said on March 9, 2022, Ward C applicants would be interviewed.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

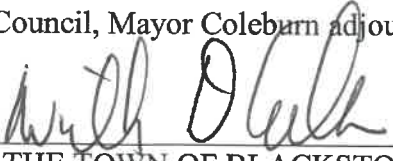
VOTE:

Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Scott	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye
Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Williams	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye

Mayor Coleburn continued this meeting to Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Councilman Wilkinson said originally, he was going after Mayor Coleburn's job, but it became a three person race. He said he decided to run for Council and was glad he did, he has enjoyed it, sometimes it was frustrating, and sometimes it was fruitful and you go home with a smile on your face. He wished Council continued success.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Coleburn adjourned this meeting at 9:19 p.m.


MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

April 18, 2022 APPROVED AND ADOPTED


TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

