

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, April 19, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: William D. Coleburn

Council Members: Christine Hasbrouck, Shelia Jones, Lonnie Morgan, Barbara Thompson, Nathaniel Miller, Eric Nash, Tom Wilkinson

Town Staff: Philip Vannoorbeeck, Town Manager; Jennifer Daniel, Town Clerk; Nicholas Kuzmiak, Police Chief

Town Attorney: Tessie B. Bacon

Those Absent: Dion Tomer, Jennifer Hardy

Mayor Coleburn called the April Council Meeting to order.

Mayor Coleburn delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Coleburn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Police Department – Resolution of Appreciation – KORA

Mayor Coleburn said Kora was being retired due to some changes in the Law, and is being returned to her original owner. Officer Shay Farley said Kora was certified in marijuana and is 9 years old.

Mayor Coleburn read the Resolution enclosed.

Mayor Coleburn asked Officer Farley if he would get another dog in the future. Officer Farley replied, yes sir, it has been discussed and they need to find the right dog. He said Kora was a blessing to him and thanked the Town for encouraging him to come back to Blackstone.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Resumption of Utility Disconnections

*NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TOWN OF BLACKSTONE*

The Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on April 19, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blackstone Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia. The Town Council will receive public comment regarding the resumption of utility disconnections previously banned by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Town is considering relief from the disconnection moratorium as it has reached the state's milestone of account receivable arrearages that exceed 1% of the utility's annual operating revenues. The Town Council may approve this policy 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 enclosed in the packet was guidance from the State. He said as of what Finance Director Hardy updated today, the arrears for water, sewer and electric are \$93,839.00. He said according to the Governor's guidance, anything in excess of 1% of our revenues, which would be \$48,613.00, allows for utility disconnections.

Mayor Coleburn asked if there was anybody here to speak for or against the Town resuming cut offs.

Mayor Coleburn asked when cut offs would begin. Manager Vannoorbeeck recommended June 15th.

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the Town may be eligible for a portion on money from DHCD, because some utilities did not use this money previously.

Mayor Coleburn closed the Public Hearing.

Councilman Nash was concerned about waiting another two months before disconnecting, we are trying to help, but waiting will not urge those to pay now, and their bills will continue to accumulate.

Councilman Nash made a motion to proceed with utility disconnections effective May 15, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.

Councilman Miller agreed with Councilman Nash. He said if you are already behind \$2-\$3 thousand, June 15th is only going to sink you further. He said he talked with the Finance Director and realized those that received the utility funding, that helped them, but then they never made another payment.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

2. Historic Business District

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF BLACKSTONE

The Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on April 19, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blackstone Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia. The Town Council shall consider a revision to the boundaries of the Blackstone Historic Business District. Specifically, the ordinance amends and reenacts Section 18-117 of the Blackstone Town Code. The ordinance, if approved would amend the boundaries of the district. All properties located south of Irvin Street and that property known as the Harris Armory would be removed from the district and certain properties which abut Brown Street between W. Irvin Street and W. Maple Street would be added to the district. The Town Council may adopt this ordinance following this public hearing. Any individual desiring to address the board should attend the public hearing at the above stated date and time.

Mayor Coleburn said this Public Hearing was just to have the Virginia Main Street and Town of Blackstone Historic Business District Map match.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town's Ordinance that was adopted, does not match what DBI operates under. He said if the Town changes their map, the Armory would be removed, property south of Irvin Street would be removed, and a few would be added.

Mayor Coleburn asked the record to reflect, the Courier Record building would be added.

Mayor Coleburn opened the Public Hearing and asked if there was anyone here to speak for or against the proposed boundary line adjustment.

Mayor Coleburn closed the Public Hearing.

Councilman Wilkinson made a motion to approve the Virginia Main Street's Blackstone Historic Business boundary map as presented, instead of the Town of Blackstone's current map adopted. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

13. Virginia Main Street - MOU

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed this MOU was voted on every two years. He said the only discrepancy was the boundary lines, and since that has been resolved, he recommended approval.

Councilwoman Hasbrouck made a motion to approve the Virginia Main Street Memorandum of Understanding as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

MINUTES:

Councilman Miller made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Regular Council Meeting on March 15, 2021 and the Special Called Meeting on March 31, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

VISITORS:

1. Southside Electric Cooperative – Mr. Lloyd Lenhart, Mr. Jacob McCann and Mr. George Felts

Mr. George Felts

Mr. Felts said the length of the outage started on February 13, 2021 and ended midday on February 26th. He said the overwhelming reason, was the amount of ice, he said it was a half inch of ice in their footprint. He said it was a tree related event that caused 73% of the outages.

Mr. Felts said they operate an aggressive tree removal program, where they look for trees that are dead, damaged or could cause a hazard. He said that is not what these trees were during this ice storm.

Mr. Felts said there had been questions about prestaging for the ice storm. He said they have roughly 86 outdoor personnel, with a total of 141 employees, the day before the event hit, they were already 200 plus employees available, standing by ready to go to work. He said midway through the event, they were over 1,000 employees. He said during the event with over 1,000 employees working, there were only 3 minor injuries, but were not their employees.

Mr. Felts said there had been comments about materials. He said they did not run out of any material; all materials were readily available to them. He said their maintenance procedures and practices are noted in utility best practices and we have good strong budgets.

Mr. Felts said the State Corporation Commission asked them, Dominion and Mecklenburg Electric to provide data, and they submitted theirs on April 1st.

Mayor Coleburn asked why Ridge Road was out so long. Mr. Felts replied, across the entirety of their system, there were pockets of damage, that was one of the areas with broken pole and pine tree damage.

Councilman Wilkinson said he saw the estimate to place everything underground was over \$1 Million. He asked if that was a cost the Town would have to eat entirely, or is it split, are there funds from anywhere. Mr. Felts said with their construction estimates for their 6600 miles of overhead, to bury it, would be \$1 Billion. He said as for funding there are very small amounts from FEMA mitigation dollars that might be made available, but other than that, it would be funded through their rates.

Mayor Coleburn believed Southside Electric had the fewest number of paying customers per mile of line, and oh by the way, their region is as big as the State of Connecticut or Delaware and it is a high, low to moderate income area. Mr. Felts added they are predominantly residential, they have very little in the way of industrial load.

2. Mr. Devin Foster – Blackstone Fire Department – Cruise Ins

Mr. Foster was not present.

Mayor Coleburn said Mr. Foster wants to have cruise-ins on the last Saturday of every month at Schwartz Tavern from April through October. He said it would be a fund raiser for the Fire Department. He said Mr. Foster was requesting to waive the Noise Ordinance, food will be sold and after the fourth sale, Meals Tax will be collected, and he wants High Street to be closed from Tavern to Dinwiddie Avenue.

Clerk Daniel said she and Finance Director Hardy had been talking with the insurance company. She said the Fire Department was insured through Chesterfield Insurers and they are covered for this event. Mayor Coleburn added, there would be no alcohol at these events.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the requests for the Fire Department Cruise-In Fund Raiser. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilkinson.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

3. Mr. Michael Bagley

Mr. Bagley said he was here to discuss the proposed tax increase that was in the paper last week. He did not believe now was the time for increases, is it because of the tax stimulus, well right now the unemployment rate was up and people are not back to full time employment. He said the restaurants were not back to normal. He said Blackstone was basically a retiree, senior citizen community, all living on a fixed income, you need to think about that.

Mr. Bagley said it seems like Blackstone has developed our economy prices based on Ft. Pickett and FASTC's salaries. He asked if the Town was trying to build back their surplus based on this harsh winter storm. He asked Council to consider lowering the increase percentages or propose this increase at a later date, when things are more operational.

Mr. Bagley said as for the Armory, he thought it was said that grants would be submitted to help with repairs. He asked if there had been a grant written and submitted. Mayor Coleburn replied, not yet, but several are coming.

Mayor Coleburn said the Town Manager is required by Law to present a balanced budget; it does not mean he loves tax increases. He said Town Council had not had a discussion on this budget yet. He said to apply for grants, you have to show general fund activities. He said after speaking with Congresswoman Spanberger, there may be funds through the American Recovery Act. He said the Town has some large utility customers that may be coming back online, such as Clay's Rest Home and VUMAC. He believed there were ways besides raising taxes.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this Budget was built around zero dollars going into the Reserves. He said the entire proceeds of the tax increase in the General Fund, which is real estate and personal property, is specific and solely intended to be used for the Armory.

Councilman Nash believed \$750,000.00 could be received in grants, but the rest would have to be raised somehow, through a tax increase or whatever.

Councilman Miller said he had talked to the Supervisors about putting a Historical Black Museum in the Armory, and they agreed to help write that grant.

Mayor Coleburn said slow and steady wins the race, nobody has said this has to be done overnight. He said he knew Council pretty well, he did not believe personal property taxes would be raised 80%, or real estate by 30%.

Councilman Nash said what he heard from Manager Vannoorbeeck was we have to show we are collecting this in order to even apply for grants.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said his intention was to make application to the Virginia Resources Authority to find funding, but the problem is, in ten years, he was still not sure what would be in the building. He said we need a specific list of low to moderate income eligible activities.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

3. Waukeshaw Development – 610 Second Street

Mayor Coleburn said this property had already been declared surplus through Public Hearing.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the property, as it stands, was appraised at \$40,000.00, it was mainly so low because the water tank on the property is a liability. He said he received a quote in writing from East Coast Demolition in the amount of \$95,000.00 for demolishing the water tank, but this did not include disposal. He said Mr. McCormack was looking for roughly \$100,000.00 in credits, but this would include the \$40,000.00 that the property is appraised at. He said that would leave \$60,000 in credits, which would include waiving tap fees, purchasing transformers for the property, it could also include curb and gutter.

Mayor Coleburn said Mr. McCormack plans to build 44, one-bedroom units. He asked what the monthly utility bills may be for this. Mr. McCormack said he was not sure what he currently paid.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would be new real estate taxes. He said the Town would be collecting Lodging Tax. He said if the stay is more than 30 days, lodging tax does not apply according to State Code.

Mayor Coleburn clarified this would transfer the property to Mr. Dave McCormack, plus an agreement to provide \$60,000.00 in credits.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there would be 120 days for demolition. Mr. McCormack said the construction would begin after the closing.

Mayor Coleburn said if Mr. McCormack got the property tomorrow, how long before it was open. Mr. McCormack replied roughly 14 months.

Mayor Coleburn said these units would be geared towards FASTC, and asked if he would rent to others. Mr. McCormack replied, they could, sure.

Attorney Bacon asked Council to look under Buyer's Obligations on the Performance Agreement and the Land Contract where it says, the credit amount will be increased at a later time by the actual cost of the disposal of the water tank, that the Town agreed to dispose of.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the estimated cost for disposal is \$20,000.00. He clarified, if the \$20,000.00 is paid, it will increase the credit to Mr. McCormack to \$80,000.00. He said he hoped to save some of this money by taking it to Rocky Bump or the Courthouse Road landfill.

Councilman Wilkinson suggested using some of the material in the ditches they have looked at.

Mayor Coleburn said we have a lot that is generating zero tax dollars, and even if the credits were \$80,000.00, probably after his first year of operation, those would be offset by the gain in utilities, plus taxes, plus possibly lodging taxes.

Councilman Nash said he wanted to clarify, because there had been a lot on social media about the Town doing back door deals. He said he and Councilman Wilkinson pushed this back a few months trying to see if there were other offers, but nobody was interested.

Councilwoman Thompson made a motion to approve the Land Contract and Performance Agreement as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Tomer was not present, the report was in the packet.

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Mayor Coleburn stated the bills that have already been paid are in the amount of \$670,278.42.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$670,278.42. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

Mayor Coleburn stated the bills not yet approved, and to be paid, are in the amount of \$369,686.11.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve as presented, the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$369,686.11. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said some of this could become reimbursable if FEMA decides to reimburse the Town from the ice storm.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

APPROPRIATIONS:

Mayor Coleburn said if the Town spends money that was not budgeted, we let you know about it and Council votes on it.

Appropriation #1 – Council Discretion = \$10,000.00

Mayor Coleburn said Council made two donations, \$5,000.00 each in recent months, with \$5,000.00 to Juneteenth and \$5,000.00 to the Chamber’s fireworks event.

Appropriation #2 – Council Communications = \$1,000.00

Mayor Coleburn said this covered Chromebooks and email subscriptions.

Appropriation #3 – Water/Sewer = \$5,928.00

Mayor Coleburn said this was from the ice storm and had to be moved to cover overtime.

Appropriation #4 – Seay Park = \$5,000.00

Mayor Coleburn said this money was moved to cover maintenance expenses in Seay Park.

Appropriation #5 – Electric Fund = \$155,765.00

Mayor Coleburn said this money was moved to cover ice storm expenses and more than likely will be reimbursed through FEMA.

Mayor Coleburn hoped that Juneteenth and the fireworks would grow and not have to provide \$5,000.00 each year. He said Council chose to spend money from the Council Discretionary Fund, but there was no money there, so the appropriation had to be made.

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

Councilman Nash said it looked like all the appropriations came from delinquent tax collections. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the first two, yes, then the \$155,000.00 was to pay the other organizations to help get the power back on during the ice storm. He said this money was left over from a street project.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. *Account & Finance – met 3-18-21 & 3-31-21 – minutes included in April’s Council Packet*

March 18, 2021

Department Head Budget Requests

There were no recommendations.

Power Cost Adjustment

Chairman Nash said this would not increase anyone’s utility bill, but when there is a fuel adjustment cost, it will show in a separate line item instead of being included in the total figure. Manager Vannoorbeeck added, this will also include the SEPA cost and True-Up.

Mayor Coleburn said the bill will have more information on what is being paid for.

Councilwoman Thompson made a motion to approve the Power Cost Adjustment be included on utility bills. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

Mayor Coleburn asked when this would show up on utility bills. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, July 1, 2021.

March 31, 2021

FY22 Budget

This was not discussed.

Cole Harbor Study

This was discussed during the Health and Ordinance portion.

2. Employment & Police – met 3-18-21 – minutes included in April’s Council Packet

FY22 Salaries

There were no recommendations.

3. Health & Ordinance – met 4-13-21 – minutes included in April’s Council Packet

Garbage Collection Fee Policy

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Committee voted to approve the enclosed Policy and have trash collection apply to each electric meter.

Councilwoman Jones made a motion to adopt the Garbage Collection Fee Policy as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

Cole Harbor Utilities

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Committee recommended contacting the lady that wrote the letter and have her do a petition. He said the Town was contacted mainly about the road.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said staff provided some figures and he did not think the Town would be in the red.

Mayor Coleburn clarified, this is an area that is not in Town, but was discussed a few months ago, and had no idea it could be a revenue positive for the Town. He said if it was even close, there are lots of things that need to be considered.

Councilman Nash said as discussed previously, this would include a special tax district to fund the roads.

Ordinance – Playing Ball

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town has an Ordinance that prohibits playing ball in the streets in Town. He said this has not been being enforced.

Councilman Miller recommended following the Ordinance.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we can start with a warning at first.

4. Street & Light – met 4-14-21 – minutes included in April’s Council Packet

N. West Avenue

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he told the Committee he would find out if there was a drainage easement on this property, and the easement only extends to the outfall of the pipe. He said this ditch was on private property.

Doswell Street

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was some interest in seeing Doswell Street closed. He said the Committee asked to have a meeting with the neighbors. He said he noticed recently someone had hit the fire hydrant.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we would hold a Public Meeting to give the neighbors an opportunity to come speak with us.

Councilman Morgan asked about the ditch behind Phillip Armes’ house. Councilman Wilkinson said it was discussed but no action was taken, because a true cost was not provided. Councilman Nash believed it was going to try and be included in the grant area. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mr. Armes’ area was in the first phase of East End and there was not enough money left, it would have to be local funds.

N. Main Street

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the tax records say the Town owns this street, which is past 736 N. Main Street, a dirt road. He said Councilwoman Jones lives on this road. He said the Town does use this road for garbage pick-up.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the culvert was looked at and it is not long enough, nor large enough. He said the recommendation from the Town’s engineer was a double barrel 18” culvert be placed in that area.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he had roughly six different projects that he would be bidding out as a package.

Viewbank Street

This was not discussed.

505 Tavern Street

This was not discussed.

200 Forest Drive

This was not discussed.

College Road

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was going to have the engineer rework the plans for this area.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the newest house built across from the York's, the driveway is too high. He said the water in front of Gwen Tuck's house is supposed to continue going down towards the proposed subdivision. He said when it rains, Ms. Tuck has a lake in front of her house. He said the Town should never have let the driveway go in the way it is.

Mayor Coleburn said the area we are talking about, used to be out of Town, and they did not want to be annexed, but was taken into Town in 1992. He said there is a lot to think about when expanding boundaries.

404 Sixth Street

This was not discussed.

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no Consent Agenda items.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Police Department – Resolution of Appreciation - KORA

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

2. Tourism Zone

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the boundaries of the Tourism Zone would be the boundaries of the Town of Blackstone. He said qualifications for incentives have been discussed, with one being the abatement of improvements for real estate taxes for three years. He said existing businesses would qualify at \$50,000.00 and new businesses qualify at \$250,000.00.

Mayor Coleburn clarified, this would be more for businesses that are tourism geared, such as lodging establishments, bed and breakfasts, seated restaurants, recreational businesses, etc.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said each request would be brought to Council.

Mrs. Diana Mitchell asked what the purpose of the zone was, is it a taxable issue. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no, this would be an abatement of taxes.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this plan came from him, based on the number of lodging and hospitality requests the Town has been getting, such as FASTC related items.

Mrs. Mitchell said when she hears tourism, she is thinking taxes. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied there will be no new tax.

Mayor Coleburn said we are trying to show FASTC the Town is doing what they can, so they don't build a lodging facility at Pickett.

Councilwoman Jones made a motion to approve the Tourism Zone, to include the real estate abatement for three years. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Abstain
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

3. Waukeshaw Development – 610 Second Street

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

4. Trash Can Purchases

Mayor Coleburn showed a sample of the trash can being proposed. He said the cost to the Town would be \$140,000.00 up front. He said Council would also consider once a week pick-up. He said this would require citizens to roll the can to the street, because we have had problems with complaints against the garbage men. He said the \$140,000.00 is not included in the budget.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Clerk Daniel has proposed starting a phased in project and have the citizens purchase the trash can.

Councilman Miller did not think this project should be taken on right now, especially when we are talking about raising taxes. He said if we go to one day a week trash pick-up, what would the garbage guys do the rest of the week.

Mr. Bagley said when he lived in Florida and these trash cans were implemented, the driver and the truck did everything and it put two men out of a job.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the one day a week would not apply to dumpsters, it would just be residential.

Mayor Coleburn asked to have this on the December 2021 Agenda, for further discussion.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the trash can purchase would not be optional, it would be all through Town. He said it could be started by wards, until the Town has all new trash cans.

Mrs. Sally Beale thought maybe if individuals knew it would be helpful, they would bring their trash to the street, regardless of the container.

5. Greenview Cemetery

Mayor Coleburn said Greenview was not in Town, but a lot of people in Blackstone have been laid to rest there.

Councilman Miller said they found the property owner. He said right now we are working on a G Fund and they have some equipment. He said he was notified today that Luck Stone is giving them crush and run, but trucks would have to be provided to bring it in.

Councilman Miller said he talked to Mr. John Procise, and once the 8 acres of cemetery is separated from the 100 acres, then they could work on getting the cemetery tax exempt. Councilman Nash believed the owner needed to have the property surveyed.

Councilman Miller said several people have talked about contributing to the G Fund and this money will go towards cleaning up the cemetery. He said anything left over will go in a perpetual care fund and a committee will be formed.

The Council did not believe this fund should be linked to the Town.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to approve use of the Town’s dump trucks, motor grader and skid steer in assisting with clean up at Greenview Cemetery. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn said this would be on a date to be decided.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

Councilman Miller said every organization in Blackstone will be getting a letter asking for help and donations.

6. Police Department – Sewer Replacement Bids

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Police Department has a flat sewer line and in order to prevent backups, a manual valve was installed in the line. He said this has not worked flawlessly in the past and there have been several sanitary sewer backups.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said a pump and tank system has been designed so it will not back-up any longer. He said he received two bids, with the low bid being from Precision Pipe, in the amount of \$34,398.00. He said the money is set aside for this project.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to award the low bid to Precision Pipe in the amount of \$34,398.00 for the sewer replacement at the Police Department. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

7. School Property – Tree Removal Bids

Mayor Coleburn said the low bid was from Treescapes, which is a local company, in the amount of \$11,375.00. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the funds would come from the pool of money from the ice storm, with the expectation we will get reimbursed.

Councilman Miller made a motion to award the low bid to Treescapes, Inc. in the amount of 11,375.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Councilman Wilkinson asked if this price included hauling it off. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied yes, it would be taken to Rocky Bump.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

8. Industrial Development Authority Nominations

There were no recommendations.

9. Board of Zoning Appeals Nominations

Councilman Nash made a motion to nominate Mr. Jacob Allman for the Board of Zoning Appeals. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

10. Juneteenth Jubilee – Saturday, June 26, 2021

Ms. Chastiddy Bryant said a Committee had been formed. She clarified they did not want to close the street the night before. She said their street closure would be from Irvin Street to Tavern Street and towards the Armory.

Ms. Bryant said she presented the banner information to Clerk Daniel today, and this consists of a banner to hang in front of the Post Office and two smaller banners for the Town Square, which will show sponsorships.

Ms. Bryant said the Committee changed the name from Jubilee to Juneteenth Celebration.

Councilman Miller made a motion to waive the banner fee for the Juneteenth Celebration. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

Ms. Bryant said the banners in the Town Square would be hung the day of.

Ms. Bryant said the event would be from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. She said the first DJ would start playing around 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and a second DJ playing from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. She said the DJs would be playing in the Town Square.

Councilman Miller believed a band would be playing as well. Ms. Bryant said that is correct.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to waive the noise ordinance for the Juneteenth Celebration until 10:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

Ms. Bryant asked for the street closure from Irvin Street to Tavern Street. Mayor Coleburn thought it was just too Broad Street, so some of the businesses could be open.

Councilman Miller said if there was going to be a kid's area, why not use the field by the Armory. Ms. Bryant believed they wanted everything in sight where events would be going on.

Councilman Nash said as long as the streets being blocked were utilized, then closing the streets would be fine, but if areas are not being used, then reduce the areas of the street closures.

Mr. William Clark said they would need a stage. Councilman Wilkinson believed there was a stage in the Armory. Mr. Clark said they needed two stages.

Ms. Bryant thanked Council for their donation.

Ms. Beverly Ambs asked about the car show. Ms. Bryant said the gentleman backed out, so there would be no car show.

Ms. Ambs asked about the bouncy houses. Ms. Bryant said they were still discussing this, it depended on whether the owners of the houses would be there to supervise and provide insurance.

Councilwoman Jones made a motion to approve the street closure request for the Juneteenth Celebration, subject to Chief Kuzmiak's approval. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

11. Arts & Crafts – Armory Use

Councilman Miller made a motion to allow Arts & Crafts and the Juneteenth group be allowed to use Armory, but nobody else. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Thompson.

Councilman Morgan said his only objection to using the Armory was because the Town's insurance company did not approve until the renovations were completed. He did not understand why this needed to be brought up all the time, the insurance company made the recommendation trying to protect the Town.

Councilman Nash said we should not stipulate who can use the building, if one person can use it, then everybody should be able to use it. Mayor Coleburn added, at some point, renovations will begin and nobody will be able to use it.

Mrs. Mitchell said if you are going to allow for one group, you need to allow for all groups. She asked if a waiver could be signed for anyone that wants to use it. Mayor Coleburn replied absolutely, there was a wedding reception there two Octobers ago, and they signed a waiver.

Ms. Mitchell asked if the insurance company could be contacted and see if there is something specific, they would require, because the Town feels the need to offer the building as a community service.

Councilman Miller withdrew his motion.

Mr. Jake Allman asked if the insurance company gave specifics as to why the building should not be used. Mayor Coleburn replied yes, the appearance of mold, lead paint and asbestos. Councilman Wilkinson added, two of those have been abated. Councilman Nash said there were curtains hanging over dangerous areas that kids could escape to, there were dangerous areas, it is not just environmental issues, it is safety issues too.

Councilman Morgan made a motion to close the Armory down until the renovations are completed. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Nash said local government should not be involved in manning a building like this right now, it is so toxic. Mayor Coleburn said governments own public buildings. Councilman Nash added, he has said all along, give it to the Armory Group. Mayor Coleburn said they don't want it.

Councilman Miller said he understood what Councilman Nash was saying, the decisions we make up here about the Armory, it casts a shadow on you in the streets, he can vouch for that.

Mayor Coleburn said Councilman Morgan's logic is rock solid, but we are looking for boogeymen that don't exist. He said he coached basketball in the building when it was really a health hazard. He said if Council is going to deny, they need to work with the Chamber to find a venue.

Councilwoman Jones suggested checking with the insurance company to see if people signing a waiver would help. Mayor Coleburn believed they would say no, but we can ask. Councilwoman Hasbrouck added, that is the insurance company's job, they are protecting themselves. She said we let the Chamber use it last year and let the wedding party use it with a waiver, what is the difference this year.

Councilman Wilkinson suggested having the insurance company come back and look at the building. He said at the time they were talking about three issues, and now we are down to one issue. He said with lead paint, that requires someone to be there long term, not short term.

Councilman Nash said if it is only lead paint, what is the expense of fixing it. Mayor Coleburn replied \$11,000.00. Councilman Nash asked what was in the Armory Fund currently.

Councilman Morgan said it was not just the paint. He said let the insurance company come look at it again.

Mayor Coleburn asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Nay
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Nay
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Nay
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

Councilman Nash said the money is there to use for the Armory, use it.

Mayor Coleburn said the insurance company would be called tomorrow and have the Town Manager present and anyone on this Council can be present. He said he would also like to have someone from the Armory Group there.

Mrs. Mitchell suggested contacting the Town Attorney to help problem solve.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town has \$13,000.00 in the Armory Fund. He said \$10,000.00 of that was an anonymous donation for brick and mortar.

12. Washbucket Initiative, Inc. – Armory Use

This was included in the motion to deny.

13. Virginia Main Street – MOU

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

14. Route 46 – Water Agreement

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would cost the Town nothing. He said VDOT needs to work on our water line on Route 46, this would include a concrete encasement for roughly \$4,500.00, at their cost.

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the bridge replacement would start in 2022.

Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the Agreement with VDOT for the water line encasement. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Hasbrouck.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

There was nothing to discuss.

2. Meals Tax

There were no new outstanding Meals Tax.

3. Street Improvement Projects

Mayor Coleburn said there had been some crews in Town, and this was using the Town's VDOT money.

4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex / TAP 21

Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to advertise for sealed bids for Phase II of the TAP 21 project. The motion was seconded by Councilman Morgan.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

5. East End Neighborhood Project

Mayor Coleburn said enclosed was the ad for the water and sewer project for Phase II of the East End Project.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the water and sewer portion would be roughly \$900,000.00, with the total project being over \$3 Million.

6. Weatherization

There was nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Reimbursement Request

Mayor Coleburn said Ms. Wilma Rutledge was requesting reimbursement in the amount of \$113.61, for damage that was said to have occurred with her security system associated with the town guys and the ice storm. Manager Vannoorbeeck added this was from the power going out at her house. He added, it was nothing specific that the guys did.

Councilman Morgan and Councilwoman Jones said this falls under home insurance.

Councilman Nash made a motion to deny the request. The motion was seconded by Councilman Morgan.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

2. Sandy River Reservoir

Mayor Coleburn said he, Manager Vannoorbeeck and Councilman Wilkinson attended a meeting. He said Prince Edward County is still talking to Nottoway County about potentially allowing folks to use the Sandy River Reservoir. He said the meeting was very positive, and basically everyone agreed to continue talking.

Mayor Coleburn asked the question at the meeting, what would be the cost of the lines for the people of Nottoway County, and he did not want anybody making a play on FASTC or Ft. Pickett, he did not think they would, but data was still being gathered.

Councilman Nash asked why they wanted Blackstone. Mayor Coleburn said they want the three facilities in Burkeville. He said this might be a situation where if a locality is growing, if there is a water resource that is not spoken for, they get to get it. He said Prince Edward is trying to be proactive and make sure they can protect.

Mayor Coleburn said the State was so concerned about their facilities, and the water they get, they may build a water treatment plant and the lines, with the problem being, Crewe may lose their three biggest customers.

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed everyone should think long and hard because the cost is going to be astronomical to build an 8 million gallon a day facility, a figure mentioned was \$41 Million.

3. Request for Continued Meeting – Budget Workshop – 5-5-21

Councilman Wilkinson said he would be out of state on May 5th.

Councilman Nash made a motion to continue this meeting to Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

4. USDA – Ladder Truck Resolution

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was a Resolution included in the packet. He said he was not ready to purchase now, but he was contacted by USDA and they have year-end money that may be available. He said it could be up to \$200,000.00 available in grant funds.

Councilman Nash asked if it had to be a new truck. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no, it could be a used truck. He added, if we don't apply, we won't get any money, and this does not commit us to anything. Councilman Nash believed a used truck could be purchased for \$500,000.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he appreciated the County doing more in the budget for apparatus, but maybe it was still not out of the question to ask them to give more of a contribution.

Councilman Morgan said if it was going to be a used truck, there needed to be somebody there to inspect it thoroughly.

Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize Mayor Coleburn to execute the Resolution of Governing Body from USDA for the Ladder Fire Truck. The motion was seconded by Councilman Morgan.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

5. Delinquent Real Estate Taxes

Mayor Coleburn said enclosed is a list of delinquent real estate taxes being submitted to James Elliott's office.

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

Councilman Nash said he was asked about the number of animals for an occupancy and boarding under houses. Mayor Coleburn said the number of animals is four. Councilman Nash asked the Ordinance be enforced.

Councilman Nash said he would discuss further with Manager Vannoorbeeck.

MAYORS MINUTE:

Mayor Coleburn said for two years the Town has been offering to run a water line down Cox Road to help residents that have poor wells. He said the County was going to conduct a survey to determine how many people would be opposed to a mandatory water hook-up.

Mayor Coleburn said the Town has been slated to receive some Tobacco Grant Funding for the hotel project at VUMAC. He said the Board of Supervisors was asked to participate in some revenue sharing with the Town. He said basically it would be a portion of the gain of revenue received from the improvements.

Councilman Miller said the new infrastructure the President has out, the two priorities are rural water and broadband, he said maybe we can help out that way too. Manager Vannoorbeeck added the American Recovery Act does specify water, sewer and broadband.

POLICE REPORT:

There was nothing to report.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Mr. Bagley asked if there was a committee in place to pursue grants for the Armory. Mayor Coleburn believed since it was such a big issue, it would be the Council as a whole.

Mr. Allman said it has been discussed that the Town would not get any grants until they decided what would be in the Armory, but that is exactly what you are asking the citizens of Blackstone to do when you are voting on this as well.

Councilman Morgan suggested moving storm shelter to the top of the list.

Mayor Coleburn said we do need to define what we will seek grants for. He said the Town Manager had been in contact with a University that has expressed interest in the building, and plans to make a visit at some point.

Mr. Harris asked about the drainage at his home, would this be discussed in the Closed Session. Mayor Coleburn replied no. Councilman Nash added the Town Manager was waiting to get more information from the contractor.

CLOSED SESSION:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711

1/ Personnel – Administration

Councilman Morgan 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. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Coleburn asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

Councilman Morgan	-	Aye
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Aye
Councilman Miller	-	Aye
Councilman Nash	-	Aye
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Aye
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Aye
Councilwoman Jones	-	Aye

Councilman Miller 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 Morgan	-	Certify
Councilwoman Thompson	-	Certify
Councilman Miller	-	Certify
Councilman Nash	-	Certify
Councilman Wilkinson	-	Certify
Councilwoman Hasbrouck	-	Certify
Councilwoman Jones	-	Certify

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Coleburn continued this meeting to Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. for a Budget Work Session.

This meeting adjourned at 9:41 p.m.



MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

May 12, 2021 APPROVED AND ADOPTED



TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA