

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 17, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: L. Benjamin Green

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

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

Town Attorney:

Those Absent:

Mayor Green called the April Council Meeting to order.

Councilwoman Wynn delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Green led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. 415 Oak Street – Declare Surplus

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there were two Public Hearings tonight that have been advertised in reference to 415 Oak Street. He said the Town acquired this property as a Deed of Gift, as a result of the pursuit of the blighted condition of the house.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this Public Hearing was to declare the property surplus because it is currently titled in the Town of Blackstone's name.

Mayor Green opened the Public Hearing and asked if there was anyone here to speak for or against declaring 415 Oak Street surplus.

Mayor Green closed the Public Hearing.

Councilman Nash made a motion to declare 415 Oak Street surplus. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

2. 415 Oak Street – Sale of Property

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this Public Hearing was to discuss the proposal received. He said Council voted to hire Southern Virginia Realty and have the property listed at \$25,000.00 with a 6% commission. He said Southern Virginia Realty suggested listing it at \$27,000.00, and the Town received a bona fide offer from Oakstone Properties in the amount of \$25,000.00. He said the property was zoned R1, and has to be a single family home.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town spent \$18,605.00 on the property to include legal fees, demolition, asbestos abatement and disposal costs. He believed the \$25,000.00 offer would cover all costs. He said the difference in legal fees for closing would go to the original property owner.

Mayor Green opened the Public Hearing and asked if there was anyone here to speak for or against the sale of 415 Oak Street. He said hearing none, what is Council's pleasure.

Councilman Page made a motion to accept the offer of \$25,000.00 for 415 Oak Street and authorize Mayor Green to execute the Deed. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

3. 114 S. Main Street - Blight

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is the old Dillard Crawley Building and has come into great disrepair. He said we have been through the building, along with a Fire Marshal, who noted several deficiencies. He said an appraisal had been done, along with an architect and contractor, who provided cost estimates to renovate the building. He said three certified letters had been sent to the property owner and communicated with the realtor. He said we have not received any communication from the property owner, and no activity or action had been taken to his knowledge on the Fire Marshal's noted deficiencies.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the next step in the process is this Public Hearing. He said an Ordinance is at Council's desk declaring 114 S. Main Street blighted. He said he would like a motion if Council chooses, to authorize Attorney Bacon to proceed with enforcing the Town's Blight Policy, up to and including acquisition of the property through eminent domain.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is an interesting old building, but our pleadings have fallen on deaf ears with the property owner. He said it is currently a significant fire hazard.

Mayor Green opened the Public Hearing and asked if there was anyone here to speak for or against the enforcement of the Blight Ordinance at 114 S. Main Street.

Mayor Green closed the Public Hearing.

Councilman Nash said if this is approved tonight, what would be the next step. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed there would be additional notifications, but thought Attorney Bacon would petition the court for a hearing date. He said we have enforced two other properties, one was actually sold, and the Town purchased the other one.

Councilman Nash said this would be a big investment on the Town's end. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town made a bona fide offer, the property was appraised at \$42,500.00, and we submitted an offer of \$42,500.00, but was rejected by the property owner.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Ordinance declaring 114 S. Main Street as a blighted property. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Councilman Page said in the Ordinance under #4, it says "Council will adopt the Ordinance declaring the property to be blighted and adopting a Spot Blight Abatement Plan, the Plan will either direct the Town Manager to acquire the property". He said there was a property similar to this a few weeks ago that exploded in Illinois, where the suppression system had been disconnected a long time and overlooked. He said with 114 S. Main Street being connected to so many businesses, he believed we needed to adopt the plan to acquire the property because we have had no response and working on this quite some time. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the owner may come here prepared to spend, and the cost estimate was \$465,000.00 to stabilize the building. He said he was not advocating spending that, and if the property owner wants to step forward to do the repairs, that was the best solution. He said he was agreeable that this may end up as eminent domain.

Councilman Nash made a motion to amend his original motion and adopt the Ordinance declaring 114 S. Main Street as a blighted property, and have the Town Manager proceed with up to acquiring the property. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the property owner had already exceeded the time limits provided by the Town.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

MINUTES:

Councilman Nash made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Continued Meeting on March 15, 2023, the Regular Council Meeting on March 20, 2023 and the Special Called Meeting on March 27, 2023. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

VISITORS:

There were no visitors to speak.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Mayor Green said in the Fire Chief's Report, it says they were awarded a grant from Walmart in the amount of \$2,000.00. He asked if Council needed to approve this. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, he did not know enough about it to recommend. He said typically something like this would not even pass through Town coffers. Councilman Nash believed it was an EMS Grant.

Mayor Green said the Clerk provided a proposed Policy for the electronic sign at the Fire Station, and asked Councilman Allman if we wanted to weigh in on this. He said Councilman Allman was the Chairman of the Fire and Water Committee.

Councilman Allman believed it seemed fair, and the Fire Department came up with it, since it is in front of their building. He said the purpose of the Policy is to be sure things on the sign are appropriate.

Councilman Page asked to wait on a vote until the next meeting. Councilman Miller asked what we were waiting on. Councilman Page said he saw some things that concerned him. He said it allows for exceptions, and that is something that could backfire. Councilman Miller said he did not see a problem. Councilman Page asked to have the exceptions portion of the Policy reviewed by legal.

Councilwoman Williams made a motion that the Town proceed with the Policy. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Councilman Page made a secondary motion that the Policy be approved, pending legal review of the exceptions.

Councilman Page said this particular area of law has had a lot of cases; a lot of towns have been bitten by it.

The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Councilman Miller said every time somebody comes up with something, somebody always sees an exception, and he did not see it.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Mayor Green stated the bills that have already been paid are in the amount of \$674,279.79.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$674,279.79. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Nash pointed out the high amount, which included utility bills and Engine Bay Floors. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it also includes some home constructions through Weatherization.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Green stated the bills not yet approved, and to be paid, are in the amount of \$541,276.43.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve as presented, the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$541,276.43. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Councilman Nash asked about Administration, Debra Robinson, he asked if that was the lady helping the Town. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, correct.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the bills are high due to the first installment of payment for East End.

Councilman Nash asked about Austin Electrical Construction for the Airport. Councilman Allman said it was for AWOS inspections, the weather stations have to be inspected every so often. He said he couldn't remember if that was an 80/20 or 100% reimbursement.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

APPROPRIATIONS:

There were no appropriations this month.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Health & Ordinance – met 4-5-23 – minutes included in April’s Council Packet

BUILDING OFFICIAL / INSPECTOR / ENFORCEMENT

Councilman Page said the Committee looked over the Building Inspector, and everywhere it is mentioned in the Town Code, it be changed to Building Official. He asked to set a Public Hearing. He said they also recommended a referral for a Code Official to Account and Finance.

Clerk Daniel said included are Attorney Bacon’s comments on Council designating a Building Official on behalf of the Town.

Councilman Page made a motion to have Attorney Bacon review Section 18-36 in the Town Code and advertise a Public Hearing to change Building Inspector to Building Official. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Councilman Nash asked if the County could every say they were not going to provide a building official to Blackstone. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, he did not ever think they would do that, they would have to do that to Crewe and Burkeville as well.

Councilman Page amended his motion to send to Public Hearing the new language for Section 18-36 provided by Attorney Bacon, and change the word Building Inspector in the Chapter 18 Code to Building Official, to be a repeal and replace at the May 15th Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

2. Account & Finance – met 4-13-23 – minutes included in May’s Council Packet

DEPARTMENT HEAD BUDGET REQUESTS

Councilman Nash said the Committee heard from the Department Heads on their requests. He said they were waiting on the first draft of the Budget. Manager Vannoorbeeck said they hoped to have a rough draft by this Friday.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Armory was going to be a significant project, and even if we don’t take on much, it is still going to be a very busy year. He said Councilman Gormus said something poignant a few months ago, we talk about projects and numbers, but when are we going to go over the numbers, and where they apply. He would like to discuss with Council prioritizing projects.

Mayor Green asked to continue this meeting to May 3, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Councilman Allman said as the DBi liaison, he announced they had hired Ms. Emma Wright as the DBi Executive position.

Ms. Emma Wright thanked Council for the opportunity, and said she was excited to be working with Council. She said she graduates from Randolph Macon at the end of May, and hoped to be full time by the middle of June. She hoped to be working Mondays and Fridays to train with Mr. Justin Sarafin. She said her degree was in Business Management, and a Minor in Communication Studies.

Mayor Green said Council had authorized him to have a meeting with all the business owners, he said he would like he and Ms. Wright to partner together on this.

Councilman Miller made a motion to hire Ms. Emma Wright as the DBi Director. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Councilman Page said it was nothing against Ms. Wright, he thought she was going to do a wonderful job, but he had to abstain due to conflict with DBi.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no Consent Agenda items.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Reservoir Aeration System – Grant Funds

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there had been an issue with the aeration system the summer of 2021, which helps with THMs and the quality of our water treatment. He said this is the bubbler going across the bridge at the Reservoir. He said the Town replaced the system last year with on hand cash, primarily ARPA Funds that were set aside for meter replacements. He said the Town also applied for \$12 Million of Health Department Funding for water infrastructure projects. He said this would have replaced water lines in Taylor Bottom, replaced the entire raw water line and paid for the aeration project. He said of the three components, the Town was approved for one, the aeration project, in grant funds for \$566,000.00. He said the Health Department calls it Principal Forgiveness. He asked Council to accept the \$566,000.00, that will reimburse the Town.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this would help pay the line of credit with Benchmark, that we used to purchase the meters. He said the Town borrowed \$204,000.00, and we will leave the account open. He said projects for reimbursement are now requiring a paid receipt, and then they reimburse.

Councilman Miller made a motion to accept the Health Department Grant Funds in the amount of \$566,000.00 and authorize signatures to execute all documents, as well as pay off the line of credit at Benchmark in the amount of \$204,000.00. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

2. *Award Bid – Armory – Lead Based Paint Abatement*

Manager Vannoorbeeck said one bid was received from Waco Environmental in the amount of \$112,365.00. He said this was for the abatement of lead based paint inside the Armory. He said this would be reimbursed through the Brownfields Grant. He said the asbestos and underground storage tank portion of this project was already completed.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town’s consultant negotiated the price, as it was high, and is now \$98,760.00.

Councilman Nash made a motion to award the lead based paint abatement to Waco Environmental in the amount of \$98,760.00, and authorize execution of the necessary documents. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the grant was \$250,000.00 total, and spent \$20,000.00 for the removal of the underground storage tank, and was submitted to the DEQ LUST Fund for reimbursement, which left more cash to do other things.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the asbestos abatement was \$78,000.00, consultant fees and inspectors were \$13,000.00. He said HydroGeo, the Town’s contractor, submitted the documentation for the LUST Fund.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

3. Bus Shelters

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in this fiscal year, the Town is required to install five bus shelters. He said the grant money had been awarded and the shelters are here. He said included in the packet is the location of the shelters and the easement plats. He said the design drawings show seven shelters, and two will be installed next year. He said the first five will be located at VUMAC, Magnolia Place, Nottoway Manor, Peele Manor and Mann Street Apartments. He said Academy Square and the old Town Shop will be next year.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked for authorization to bid out five slabs for the bus shelters.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there has been a problem with erosion and washing away in the Cemetery. He said he met with Simmons Monument today, and the price was exceptionally high. He said he also met with Mr. Jason Walker for estimates on a head wall. He said this wall would be about 70' long, 3' tall, and RW3 VDOT Standard. He said there is money in the Cemetery Fund.

Councilman Nash made a motion to bid out the five concrete slabs for the Bus Shelters and authorize signature for the easements for the shelters. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash asked where the head wall would be located in the Cemetery. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed it was in Section 2, going in on Memorial Drive, it would be almost at the creek.

Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize bidding out the head wall at the Cemetery. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

4. HDH Associates – Task Order #1

Manager Vannoorbeeck said at the last Council Meeting, he was authorized to enter into contract with HDH Associates for design services associated with roofing. He said the priority is Schwartz Tavern, and had set aside enough cash for the construction of a new roof.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was some rot as well in Schwartz Tavern in the back room, where some siding had fallen off.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this Task Order is in the amount \$9,500.00. He said this work would replace with a scallop shaped shingle roof.

Councilman Miller made a motion to authorize execution of Task Order #1 with HDH Associates in the amount of \$9,500.00, and authorization to seek bids. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

5. DEQ Grant – Hazardous Waste Day

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town was previously awarded \$16,000.00 in grant funds to conduct a Household Hazardous Waste Day. He said Ms. Jennifer Hardy submitted this grant application. He said this money has to be committed before the end of the fiscal year. He asked for authorization to solicit proposals from contractors, who will accept the waste and properly dispose of this. He said this will include liquids or other items that are not acceptable at the landfill. He said this would be for Town residents only, and would have a cut off once the \$16,000.00 was reached.

Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize seeking bids from environmental firms for a Hazardous Waste Day. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Gormus said he was curious how someone will determine when they hit the amount. Manager Vannoorbeeck suggested partnering with the County and open it up countywide. Councilman Nash said Manager Vannoorbeeck may have to be there to confirm town residents.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

6. Chicken Ordinance

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he wants the public properly notified, through this video and the paper would probably pick this up. He said in Section 14-91, Subsection (e), it says chickens may be kept in Town subject to the following provisions. He said this is on the books now, and was not modified during the dog discussions.

- (1) It shall be unlawful to keep roosters in the Town. **For the purposes of this section, the term "keep" or "keeping" shall mean to regularly maintain, tend, harbor, feed or provide shelter for a chicken.**
- (2) No household (defined as all of the residents living on a property) shall keep more than four female chickens on any property.

- (3) Chickens shall be contained in a fenced area, pen or structure suitable for keeping such chickens. Every fenced area, pen or structure for keeping the chickens shall be located at least twenty-five feet away from all property lines of the property on which the chickens are located.
- (4) All fenced areas, pens or structures shall be kept in a clean and sanitary manner.
- (5) All fenced areas, pens or structures in which chickens are kept shall be located behind the primary structure on any property. No fenced areas, pens or structures shall be located in the side yard or in the front yard of any dwelling.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he plans to start enforcing this Ordinance this week. Councilman Page noted the only change to this section was the Section number.

Mayor Green said this has been duly voted on, and Manager Vannoorbeeck is requesting a vote of confidence from Council to enforce this.

Councilman Miller asked about a request for companion chickens. Manager Vannoorbeeck said you can have companion chickens, and put a diaper on it, but you can only have four. He believed the companion animal may have been a rooster, or may have been in excess of the four.

Councilman Gormus made a motion to enforce the Chicken Ordinance as it is on the books currently. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Councilman Nash asked about pens being located behind a house and gave his house as an example. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he has to be able to see it from the public right of way. He said with enforcement, certified letters would be sent out.

Clerk Daniel advised Suburban Agricultural does not exist in the Town, and needs to be changed. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town calls it Residential Suburban. He said if Attorney Bacon was satisfied without a Public Hearing, he would move forward.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Miller made a motion to have a Public Hearing on May 15, 2023 for the correction of Suburban Residential if required, per Attorney Bacon's review. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

There was nothing to report.

2. Meals Tax / Lodging Tax

Mayor Green said this would be discussed at the end of the meeting, it might warrant a Closed Session.

3. Street Improvement Projects

There was nothing to report.

4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex / TAP 21

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the grass was growing on the football field.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the LRA provided the Town with several stainless steel kitchen equipment items for the Gators' concession stand. He said he would like to prepare a letter of thanks for the Mayor to sign. He said the items included a sink and some shelving.

Councilman Miller made a motion authorizing Mayor Green to sign a thank you letter to the LRA at Nottoway County. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

5. East End Neighborhood Project

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the curb and gutter work was half way completed.

6. Taylor Bottom Block Grant

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town applied for a \$60,000.00 Planning Grant through DHCD, we were not turned down, but were asked to reapply because the funds were already committed for this fiscal year. He said reapplying would have the same conditions, and be no additional local match.

Councilman Nash made a motion authorizing the resubmittal of a \$60,000.00 Planning Grant for Taylor Bottom after July 1, 2023. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

7. Armory

Manager Vannoorbeeck said as we are completing activities at the Armory, the full project completion is required by August 2024. He requested authorization to solicit sealed bids for the renovation of the Armory. He said the deadline is imposed with the ARPA Funds.

Councilman Nash made a motion authorizing Manager Vannoorbeeck to seek sealed bids for the renovation of the Armory. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Green said he was very much for the Armory.

8. Weatherization

There was nothing to report.

Councilman Gormus asked as ongoing about the speed bumps in Pickett Court. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it was coming, the pavers were not here yet.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Surplus Items

Councilman Page made a motion to approve the items for surplus as presented, with the doors being donated to Habitat for Humanity. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said all the items, except the doors, will be sold on GovDeals.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

2. Flagstar Bank

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this was informational. He said we received information from Flagstar Bank in reference to some financing the Town had done with a company they acquired because of its insolvency. He said Signature Public Financing refinanced the Water Treatment Plant in 2020 for \$4.4 Million at 2.55%. He said Signature Bank has been acquired by Flagstar Bank, and we have contacted VML VACo, and they said just continue to make the payments.

3. Planning Commission Reappointments

Clerk Daniel said she had heard from each member and they are all in agreement to be reappointed. She said the Commission is reappointed every year, with terms that rotate annually.

Councilman Allman made a motion to reappoint the Planning Commission Members as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Councilman Nash said as he has stated many years previous, those that serve the Town of Blackstone, he wants to be sure they are current on taxes.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

1. N. Main Street Sidewalks

Mayor Green referred this to the Street & Light Committee.

2. Code Official

Mayor Green referred this to the Account and Finance Committee.

MAYORS MINUTE:

Nottoway County Economic Development Committee

Mayor Green said at the February Meeting he briefed Council that this Committee was being reformed. He said there was talk about five members from the Board of Supervisors and possibly the three mayors on this Committee. He said this would allow these members to meet regularly, the fourth Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. He apologized because he did not seek a motion, but spoke with Councilman Nash, who was the Chairman of this Committee until disbanded due to COVID. He said he was met with silence and assumed it was Common Consent, he made a mistake and apologized.

Mayor Green asked to be appointed to the EDC and granted the authority to sign documents or letters in his capacity as the Vice Chairman, as long as the actions do not obligate the Council or do anything to usurp Council's authority.

Councilman Page made a motion to appoint Mayor Green to the Nottoway County Economic Development Committee, and grant Mayor Green the authority to sign documents or letters in his capacity as the Vice Chairman, as long as the actions do not obligate the Council or do anything to usurp Council's authority. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Animal Control Ordinance

Mayor Green said when we were working on the Animal Control Ordinance, it was agreed that he and Manager Vannoorbeeck would report to Council in 30 days. He said where we are now with the Town issuing County tags, we met with the County Treasurer, and she was enthusiastic about it, but needed to confer with others.

Grants

Mayor Green said the first grant is a Downtown Investment Grant, "DIG", for \$75,000.00, with a \$37,500.00 match in kind. He said he had seen pictures of a timber pavilion. He said if there are any volunteers, they would be paid \$29.00/hour.

Councilman Nash asked if this was for the Town Square. Mayor Green replied yes, and would also include a kiosk, landscaping and the possibility of electric vehicle charging stations.

Mayor Green said this application is due on April 28, 2023.

Councilman Nash said it was fine to apply, but would the funds come from the Town if awarded. Mrs. Field Green replied, it would be in kind. Mrs. Green said DBi is just asking for a letter of support right now.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve a letter of support to apply for the Downtown Investment Grant in the amount of \$75,000.00, and authorize the Mayor's signature. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Councilman Nash asked to have the \$37,500.00 match budgeted.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Green said the second grant was called a Resurgent Grant for small business training and grants.

Mrs. Green said the Resurgent Grant is also due on April 28, 2023. She said the Town can apply for this Grant, for up to \$100,000.00. She said they were proposing the Town apply for \$75,000.00, and use the funds for a small business training series. She said if businesses participate, they would be eligible for grants after the fact. She said this Grant was a 5 to 1 match, and the best application would be for the Historic Business District receiving the funds. She said maybe the Town's matching funds could be used for the businesses outside the Historic Business District.

Mrs. Green said if the Town applies for \$75,000.00, the Town's match would be \$10,000.00 cash, and \$5,000.00 in kind. She said this money will go away; it was tied to COVID for relief to small businesses.

Councilman Nash asked if the \$10,000.00 of Town funds are not used, will it be returned to the Town. He said if no businesses outside the Historic Business District use the funds, will they be returned. Mrs. Green said they could be returned or put in the Revolving Loan Fund. Mayor Green said if the Town accepts the Grant, the Town is committing the \$10,000.00 match, plus the \$5,000.00 in kind.

Councilman Nash said this would be \$10,000.00 that is not budgeted. Mrs. Green said the Grant has to be started by October 31, 2023 and be completed by May 2024.

Councilman Allman asked if the Town was obligated by submitting an application. Mayor Green replied, no. Councilman Nash did not think it was good to apply for grants and not accept them.

Councilman Nash said if this is done next budget year, he would not want it to come from the General Fund, and then have to raise XYZ for this. He asked if there was a tax revenue this money could be pulled from. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would take it out of a Fund Balance or cash on hand.

Mayor Green asked this request be approved and he would refer it to the Account and Finance Committee.

Councilman Nash made a motion that the Town be a partner in the application for the Resurgent Grant.

Mrs. Green said the Town was taking the lead on this Grant, but DBi would be a partner.

The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green said if the Town invests \$10,000.00, and we have one entrepreneur that stays in Town, we will get paid back many times.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

School Property

Mayor Green said there was a motion that was duly passed, that the Town would enter into Agreement with the Nottoway County School Board, that the Town at our expense would demolish the one story building. He said since this Council took office, he has heard from a few members that there may be a consensus, that if the Town was going to spend money on this, the Town should own the property.

Councilman Allman made a motion to rescind any and all motions, as well as documents and or agreements with the Nottoway County School Board to demolish the one story building, without acquiring the property. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Councilman Page asked when it was passed. Mayor Green replied, 2019. Councilman Nash said there is no signed Agreement from the Town.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said a motion did pass to tear down the one story building, but Councilman Nash and Councilman Allman were not here that night. He said he asked Councilman Allman if he wanted to revisit this, and with new Council coming on, it was just never signed.

Councilman Page asked how the negotiations were going to become owners of the school property. Mayor Green said he preferred to discuss that in Closed Session.

Councilman Nash said he did not want the rescinding of the motion to look negative towards the process.

Councilman Miller asked why we can't sit down and talk to the School Board. Mayor Green said there would be a Closed Session about that tonight.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

POLICE REPORT:

Mayor Green said the Police Report was provided at everyone's desk tonight.

Councilman Nash said he saw 236 traffic stops; and asked if a section could be added to designate speeding. Chief Kuzmiak said he would see if that was an option in the program they have. Councilman Nash said he would like to see how many tickets were issued from the stops.

Chief Kuzmiak said the program they use, it is difficult for certain breakouts, such as summons versus warnings, but he would check into it.

Councilman Gormus said it was good to see that seven Noise Ordinances were included on the report. He said a few people had contacted him about it.

Councilman Page pointed out there were four hit and runs reported this month. Chief Kuzmiak said yes, that is when anyone leaves the scene of an accident.

INFORMATIONAL:

Councilman Nash asked if a report could be created from the Bus Ridership for the separate new route.

Councilman Page made a motion to add items to tonight's Agenda, a Closed Session for Personnel, Administration, briefing by Staff on Legal Matters, and Disposition of Real Property concerning the School Property. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Ms. Sharon Streat – 26 Pickett Court

Ms. Streat said speed bumps had been discussed in Pickett Court, will there be paving. Councilman Nash said the paving will be only for the new speed bumps.

Ms. Streat asked how to get a handicap parking space. She said she has an issue in the summer and she cannot park in front of her house. Manager Vannoorbeeck suggested she submit something in writing and it would be referred to the Street and Light Committee.

Mayor Green said if there were no objections, he would refer this to the Street and Light Committee.

Ms. Streat said she has noticed since last year, there is a gentleman that resides in the local laundromat downtown. She said her concern was when Mr. Antonio Stokes was loitering around Town, there were issues that were in the paper, and he was arrested several times.

Ms. Streat said as a nurse, she was concerned about the gentleman in the laundromat, his health and well-being. She questioned if he was eating, is his health being taken care of. She said if he is residing there, what liability does the Town or the owner of the property have. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it is private property, there is no action for the Town to take. Ms. Streat said Mr. Stokes did the same thing. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mr. Stokes was sleeping in the Park.

Councilman Nash said he deals with Mr. Lewis; he takes care of him. Ms. Streat asked if Mr. Lewis could have a better sleeping place. Councilman Nash replied, he has tried, there is not much out there.

Ms. Streat asked if the back room of the laundromat could be made into sleeping quarters. Councilman Nash said it is an unconditioned space that the exhaust of the dryers go into. He said Mr. Lewis is highly appreciative of what he and the owner have allowed him to do.

Councilman Gormus asked if the owner had an issue. Councilman Nash replied no, Mr. Lewis is given jobs to do. Ms. Streat said others have stayed there too.

Councilman Miller asked if anyone had called Social Services.

Ms. Streat said this is a big issue, people come to her because she volunteers, but they feel like it is discrimination, you can do for one but not others. She said it is not fair, and if Social Services did get involved, you cannot make them do anything, but how does this look for the Town and the owner of the property just letting him lay there any kind of way.

Councilman Nash said he as the person that helps manage the laundromat, if he wasn't there, where would he be, he said he would be outside somewhere.

Councilman Gormus asked Councilman Nash if four more showed up tonight, would he be ok with that. Councilman Nash replied no, they were not doing anything. Ms. Streat said there has been others staying there also. Councilman Nash said he has a bigger heart, rather than telling him he has to leave.

Councilman Page asked if there was an occupancy restriction in that zone. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the property is zoned General Business and could not be zoned residential because it is open 24 hours. He said if the goal is to get him out of the laundromat, he was sure the government could find enough rules to put him out.

Councilman Nash said he would love to find him a place. Ms. Streat said why not get him a room at the Wedgwood. She said Nottoway puts people there when they don't have a place to stay.

Mayor Green said this is not in the purview of this Council, it is on private property. Ms. Streat said the owner pays taxes to the Town for his business, the Town allows him to have the business, so she thought Council should have something to say. Mayor Green said we cannot meddle in someone's business when they are doing the appropriate things that are required of them.

Ms. Streat said the sign says no loitering. Councilwoman Wynn said it was private property.

Councilwoman Wynn said, has anybody asked Mr. Lewis what he wants to do. She said he is a grown man and of sound mind. She said we cannot do anything, no matter how compassionate we are, without his permission.

Councilman Nash said he did speak to a board member with Social Services, so it is on their radar to try to figure something out.

CLOSED SESSION:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711

- 1/ Personnel – Administration
- 7/ Legal Matters – Briefing by Staff – Probable Litigation
- 3/ Disposition of Real Property – School Building

Councilman Page 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, 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 and Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Alman 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 Councilman Nash.

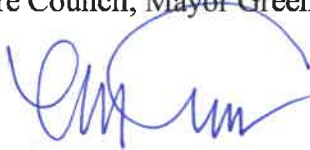
Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Green continued this meeting to Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Green adjourned this meeting.


 _____ MAYOR
 OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

May 15, 2023 APPROVED AND ADOPTED


 _____ TOWN CLERK
 OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA