

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, January 23, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: L. Benjamin Green

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

Town Staff: Philip Vannoorbeeck, Town Manager; Jennifer Daniel, Town Clerk; Brittany Harris, Treasurer; Dion Tomer, Fire Chief; Nicholas Kuzmiak; Police Chief, Mary Murphy, Transit Director; Chastiddy Bryant, Community Development Specialist

Town Attorney:

Those Absent: Lloyette Wynn

Mayor Green called the January Council Meeting to order.

Mayor Green delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Green led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Green welcomed the Honorable Wanda Morrison, Mayor of Kenbridge.

MINUTES:

Councilman Nash made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Regular Council Meeting on December 19, 2022. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

VISITORS:

Mr. Devin Foster – Fire Department Fundraiser

Captain Foster said the Fire Department is seeking approval to use the Complex across the street from Blackstone Primary School, on Saturday August 5, 2023 for a fundraiser. He said the name is Food Fest featuring Cow Pie Palooza, and the goal is to have 10-13 vendors, including food trucks, kettle corn, activities for kids. He said this will also include music, a few dunk tanks, along with ciders and beer for those 21 and older.

Captain Foster said this event will also include Cow Pie Bingo. He said individuals will purchase a square, and bet on where a cow will defecate on a certain area of the field. He said the Fire Department would handle the cow, and clean the field following the activity. He asked for permission to use the parking lot for the event. He said they would like to make it one way traffic down S. Harris Street. He said there would be no outside food or drink and provide wristbands for those 21 and older. He said we would involve the Blackstone Police Department and the Nottoway Rescue Squad. He said the event would be from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., with any final clean up on Sunday.

Councilman Miller asked if the Cow Pie Bingo would be on the football field. He said the Gators would be practicing by then. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Captain Foster spoke to Mr. Dan Martin today, and they thought it would work better inside the baseball field, because there are fences there.

Councilman Nash said he hoped there would be fencing around the football field by then. He asked Captain Foster if there was a rain date. Captain Foster replied, no, not currently.

Mayor Green asked if Council needed to approve diverting S. Harris Street. Manager Vannoorbeeck said typically Council approves street closures, but he and Chief Kuzmiak have also been granted the authority.

Mayor Green asked if the Fire Department would have insurance, or be under a blanket with the Town. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it would be a blanket under the Town, but because of the alcohol, they will need to get a TULIP Policy through VRSA. Captain Foster said they would have an ABC License as well.

Mayor Green said to be sure all serving alcohol are of age. He asked if there would be a limit of beverages being served. Captain Foster said that is a great idea, but no limit had been determined yet. He said we are just in the planning phase right now, but by next month there can be a limit set.

Councilman Nash said with the food vendors, and being done through the Fire Department, will Meals Tax be charged. Manager Vannoorbeeck asked if the money would go to the Fire Department or will the vendors keep the money. Captain Foster said the money would go to the vendor, with a portion going towards the Fire Department. Councilman Nash said the vendors will have to make sure they pay their portion of Meals Tax, minus what is contributed to the Fire Department.

Councilman Allman suggested donating the Meals Tax collected back to the Fire Department.

Mayor Green and Councilman Nash suggested letting the Fire Department handle the limit of beverages served.

Councilman Nash asked if the vendors would need business licenses. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that could be waived.

Councilman Nash made a motion to waive vendors from getting a business license, diverting the traffic on S. Harris Street, TULIP Policy acquired for the alcohol, use of one of the baseball fields, and the Town dedicate all Meals Tax to the Fire Department as part of their fundraising, with this event being on Saturday, August 5, 2023 from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Councilman Miller asked if this would just be allowed for the Fire Department. Councilman Nash said typically if it is a non-profit, then we proceed, but for-profits would pay a rental fee. Mayor Green believed each request needed to come to Council for approval.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Ms. Christina Collazo

Ms. Collazo was not present.

Mr. James Jones, on behalf of Ms. Judy Bennett of Jan's Residential Home

Mr. Jones said he was here to seek an extension; he has been brought in to help her with her business and to meet some of her deadlines. He said it was his understanding that Council had previously granted Ms. Bennett six months of extensions. He said the reason she had not reached her deadline is because as a small business, issues with personnel, and two years during the pandemic, it has wreaked havoc on her business. He said we have a lot of plans for the business, as far as upkeep.

Councilman Allman asked Mr. Jones if he was representing Ms. Bennett as an attorney. Mr. Jones replied no, he was just a church member of hers. He said his personal background is having worked with community development and healthcare centers with federally qualified health centers. He said some of his skills may be transferrable in helping Ms. Bennett.

Councilman Miller asked how much of an extension Mr. Jones was asking for. Mr. Jones said when you are dealing with a business like this, it is not as cut and dry. He said she is vested in the community, and the request is to reduce the number of people in her home. He said Ms. Bennett actually has another building that she was trying to develop, but needs time. He said combining anything that may have come up as far as compliance with agencies, so keeping current and still trying to advance has been a challenge. He said with reductions in residents, also reduces potential revenues.

Mr. Jones said their goal is to seek a more partnership and collaboration with the Town of Blackstone, as opposed to what may appear from her side, adversarial.

Councilwoman Williams said when Ms. Bennett was here previously, the Town gave her a 6 month extension, and asked if she had tried to work on that, has there been any progress. Mr. Jones said that has been the challenge, lack of communication. He said you have to call around to facilities that are willing to take residents, and since the pandemic, people have tightened their noose. He said you also have to talk to relatives and see if they can visit occasionally. He said the whole thing came about because of the demand for housing, her house is a place of refuge.

Mr. Jones said Ms. Bennett sought to expand and is what raised the flag. He said prior to that, Ms. Bennett had been working seamlessly since possibly 2007. He said she was paying taxes on 12 residents and is now being demanded to reduce it, so that has had an impact. He said Ms. Bennett has been so busy trying to meet this demand, she has not had a chance to move forward. He said it is a small business, less than five employees. He said because she is vested in Blackstone, ideally, she would like to just transition them to the new home, but needs time and assistance to do it.

Mr. Jones said currently they have a grant coming to help with the current residence, it will rehab it, for the people to have a place to live in comfort. He said some of the people that can be accepted, it also helps reduce the possibility of homelessness here. He said the residents are highly independent, but some do have issues from schizophrenia to delusional. He said this provides them with a place to receive meds from doctors and provides transportation to get to doctor appointments. He said they get three meals a day. He said he was asking for a more collaborative effort for a business that wants to be here.

Councilman Gormus asked how many residents have been reduced since June. Mr. Jones believed Ms. Bennett had reduced down to 9, but has had as many as 12. Councilman Allman said eight is the limit.

Mr. Jones said the max Ms. Bennett is allowed with the Agency is 12 in her licensing. He said she has been operating with 12 and there has been no significant impact to the community. He asked for a waiver, given what she provides. He said when these gentlemen get funding, they spend money in the community. He said he has begun to spend money in Blackstone.

Councilman Page asked if the over occupancy was contributing to the violations she is receiving from the State. Mr. Jones replied no, the two year pandemic and having employees is what we are talking about, it is just things that need to be cleared up.

Councilman Page said you can see how it would be difficult to give an extension to an over occupied building that is also out of compliance with State violations. Mr. Jones said due to the pandemic, as other businesses who have suffered the same challenges during that time.

Councilman Nash said he did look at it as putting back in our community, because these facilities can be located pretty much anywhere in in Town. Manager Vannoorbeeck said in any residential district the Town has, by State Code. Councilman Nash said do we turn a blind eye, there are rules in the book, and we have already given extensions. He said is it fair to have more residences than allowed.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said it was presented to the Planning Commission to modify the zoning, and it was denied, by Council as well. He said the Town is obligated to allow up to eight residents. He said Ms. Bennett did not mislead anybody, she self-reported 12 residents.

Councilman Nash said a 30 day extension at this time would be a blessing, 6-9 months would be egregious.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

7. Jan's Residential – Extension Request

Councilman Allman asked Mr. Jones if he had a vested interest, because he kept saying “we”. Mr. Jones replied, no, nothing financial, he was helping her out.

Councilwoman Williams said she is a nurse, and knows it is hard for placement, but we did already give her a six month extension. She recommended giving Ms. Bennett 30 days since she has gone from 12 residents to 9.

Mr. Jones said Ms. Bennett understands the 8 residents, but we are seeking to have more than that with a special waiver.

Councilman Page made a motion to reject the extension request. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Councilman Gormus said it sounds like Mr. Jones was asking for a waiver, not an extension.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is one individual that stays there, who had a homeless issue, and now appears to be on his meds, and we don't have that homeless issue anymore.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Tomer said every month he does provide a report in the Council Packet, and we do our best to have a representative here for the meetings. He said the majority of us work shift work, with the exception of one retiree.

Chief Tomer said we did apply for radios through a Firefighter Grant, at \$200,000.00, and would have cost the Town \$10,000.00, but were denied the Grant. He said they were hoping to use these radios to help offset the \$8 Million radio system that the County is going to be putting an RFP out for.

Chief Tomer said the County was working on a County-Wide Fire Code, but there is no update. He said he approached Council several months ago about testing the fire hydrants in the Town, and still wished to have that pursued because it is recommended by the National Fire Protection Association. He said within the Town there are roughly 450 hydrants.

Councilman Nash asked to make a note of this for the Budget process.

Mayor Green referred the fire hydrants to the Fire and Water Committee.

Chief Tomer said they have been dealing with smoke detectors and property inspections. He said recently someone came to the Fire Station after midnight saying their stove caught fire, and they had been trying to get a smoke detector installed by their landlord, and no action was ever taken. He said this is a requirement in the State Code that landlords are responsible for placing smoke detectors and inspecting them. He said the renter is not allowed to tamper or remove the batteries. He said we have fallen behind with the inspection process, and is extremely complicated for one building inspector to take on this role.

Chief Tomer said enclosed in the packet, and he was not sure how to implement this, but the form would have landlords certify there are working smoke detectors within the property. He said this would also be provided to the renter.

Mayor Green referred the Landlord Certification Form to the Fire and Water Committee.

Mayor Green said he and Manger Vannoorbeeck have talked about the need for a Code Enforcement Officer.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the hydrant testing would have to be budgeted. He said with the County-Wide Fire Code, he was contacted by Mr. Buddy Hyde, but our previous building inspector said do not adopt. Chief Tomer agreed, the County was still working on this, once they adopt, then the Town would adopt it.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said with the rental inspections, we have not been doing a great job, maybe 1-2 a month, he said it is kind of self reporting. He said that would definitely be a responsibility of a Code Enforcement Officer.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in the Town Code, it says Town Council shall appoint a building inspector, who will serve at the pleasure of Council. He said currently we share a building official with the County, but he doesn't serve at the pleasure of Council. He said we need to look at that, and maybe modify it.

Mayor Green referred the Building Inspector Code Section to the Health and Ordinance Committee.

Mayor Green asked Manager Vannoorbeeck how he wants to go forward with a Code Enforcement Officer. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it needs to be a Budget item. He said Ms. Yvonne Jackson was the last person to really handle rental inspections, and that has been several years now.

Mayor Green referred Code Enforcement Officer to the Account and Finance Committee.

Councilman Allman said before we add a new position, we may need to decide as a full Council, if we want a Code Enforcement Officer. Councilman Nash believed the Budget was going to decide what we can afford. Councilman Page said he would argue it would be decided when the Ordinance is passed that requires us to provide it.

Clerk Daniel asked Mayor Green what he was referring to Health and Ordinance. Mayor Green replied, Ordinance 18-36, having to have a building inspector. He said we either need to do it or repeal it.

Mayor Green said he has labeled himself as the enforcement mayor, his duties are clear, he is to run the meeting and see that the will of Council with laws and policies that are passed re enforced.

Chief Tomer said they held their elections in January, and included is the new slate of officers elected by the membership. He said per Town Code, it has to come before Council for appointment.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve and appoint the following officers as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

- * 601 Fire Chief – Dion Tomer
- * 602 Deputy Fire Chief – Zachery Beares
- * 603 Assistant Fire Chief – Benjamin Haug
- * 604 1st Captain – Cody Lewis
- * 605 2nd Captain – Devin Foster
- * 606 1st Lieutenant – Phillip Armes Sr.
- * 607 2nd Lieutenant – Robert "Hunter" Oakes
- * Treasurer – Tony Bradford
- * Secretary – Tonya Langenstein

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Chief Tomer said a Blood Drive was held, and a large success. He said the American Red Cross has scheduled another blood drive for June 30th. He said the units of blood collected would support 75 donations to individuals.

Chief Tomer said Engine 4 was back in service, and had been out for 3 months. He said the last Council approved the ability for them to have a preventative maintenance program, and the vehicles being serviced by emergency vehicle service technicians. He said we used to get the Town to do it, but they are not certified to work on fire trucks, so it is outsourced, which has been a delay. He said they were looking at another company now, that would come to the station and do all inspections and service in quarters.

Councilman Allman asked about getting our own mechanics certified. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he had not done much investigating, but he would report back to Council.

Chief Tomer said Captain Cody Lewis arrived at Smith Mountain Lake yesterday for the Virginia Fire Officer Academy, which is a 6 day residential program. He said it enhances leadership skills and is a huge investment, with Captain Lewis taking 6 days away from his family and employment to better himself as an officer for this Town.

Chief Tomer said they had a Southside Firefighter's Association Meeting in the Fire Station. He said this is 19 counties that are represented within this organization, with 40 people attending.

Chief Tomer said they submitted their Capital Improvement Plan and Budget requests to the County. He said each fire department does this. He said they receive funds from Nottoway County and goes directly into their bank account, and then a check is written to the Town of Blackstone. He said this is a pass through from us to the Town, to help offset their Budget. He said he asked for a Maintenance Line Item for the aerial device. He said he also asked for an 8% increase in their allocation. He said he was trying to get funding, to include the training center.

Chief Tomer said they currently have 54 senior members. He said the juniors had their elections last night, with Daryl Sellers as their Fire Chief.

Mayor Green asked how many members were in the Charter. Chief Tomer said for the seniors, 65.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

2. Fire Department Floor Coating – Award Bids

Manager Vannoorbeeck said sealed bids were publicly opened on January 11, 2023, with the low bid being from Engine Bay Floors in the amount of \$106,910.54. He said there was an alternate to the bid, which included a 6" molding on all the walls. He said this price would be \$8.95 per linear foot, at approximately 255 linear feet, per Chief Tomer, with the additional cost being \$2,282.25. He said the total bid, if the alternate is accepted, would be \$109,192.79.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he had \$115,000.00 set aside in a money market account. Mayor Green said he attended the bid opening and the contractor knew his stuff.

Chief Tomer believed the job completion would be before July 1, 2023. He said we would need to do some coordination about moving the fire trucks this time of year.

Councilman Page made a motion to award the floor coating at the Fire Station to the low bid from Engine Bay Floors in the amount of \$109,192.79. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Councilman Nash asked Chief Tomer if he thought it was necessary for the alternate of \$8.95 per linear foot. Chief Tomer said right now they have the plastic molding glued up to the floor, he thought it would make a difference.

Councilman Nash said it was hard to digest \$110,000.00 for a floor that is only 20 years old, but it is dangerous. He said it should have been done correctly to begin with.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Green said there was an idiot on Eighth Street that got carried away with his fireplace, and had a chimney fire. He said he greatly appreciated the fire department coming, and the police department too.

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Mayor Green stated the bills that have already been paid are in the amount of \$42,834.19.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$42,834.19. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash asked about Mr. Eddie Moreno, and testing fees. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it was for his classes. Clerk Daniel said employees pay up front for their testing, then the Town reimburses them.

Councilman Miller asked about a tax refund for Mary Bell. Treasurer Harris said for Ronald Frisby, that was an IRMS overpayment. She said she was not sure about Mary Bell, that may have been another overpayment. She said this is when a customer pays, then we receive an IRMS payment, so we refund the customer.

Mayor Green stated the bills not yet approved, and to be paid, are in the amount of \$173,521.45.

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve as presented, the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$173,521.45. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

APPROPRIATIONS:

Mayor Green said Manager Vannoorbeeck is requesting \$403,050.00 be appropriated for the Workforce Housing Program, which is funded by the Virginia Regional Council.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said last year the Town wrote an application for this exact amount of grant funds. He said the grant funds were awarded for three different homes. He said these homes will be located on Town or Southside Outreach owned properties. He said Ms. Jennifer Hardy prepared this appropriation because it is not currently included in the Budget. He said in order to spend the money, it needs to be appropriated into the Budget. He said it is all grant funds and provided by the Virginia Housing Corporation through the Commonwealth Regional Council.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in Phase I, a spec house would be built at the intersection of Hurt and Broad Street. He said Southside Outreach owns this property. He said this is Workforce Housing, and not based on poverty level or LMI standards. He said this is for a working person that can pay a mortgage, and work with a local lender that can get someone qualified.

Councilman Nash asked if there was a match from the Town. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the only match would be running the water and sewer lines at roughly \$30,000.00 and installing driveways.

Councilman Gormus asked who the houses would be bought from. Manager Vannoorbeeck said last month Council approved QMB Construction as the contractor. He said \$95,000.00 is the estimated cost to build each house. Clerk Daniel said the first bid came in at \$100,500.00. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that will reduce from the second and third houses to be built.

Councilman Nash asked how does someone get in line to purchase this home. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Community Development Specialist Bryant will provide application materials. He said it is a Town project, but we are going to try and work with local lenders, and if they can get qualified, there can be a construction loan to be paid out, then the Town can lend money again. He said one of the biggest hurdles is finding someone that can put down the 20% payment. He said if a lender will assist, he would like to use some of the grant funds to help with the down payment.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the appropriation as presented in the amount of \$403,050.00 for the Workforce Housing Program. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Employment & Police – met 1-18-23 – minutes included in January’s Council Packet

Closed Session – DBi Interviews

Chairman Miller said this meeting was in Closed Session to interview the DBi candidates. He said a name would be presented later tonight.

Mayor Green said Council will go into Closed Session tonight to hear the recommendation and take action.

2. Account & Finance – met 1-19-23 – minutes included in January’s Council Packet

Bus Budget Presentation

Chairman Nash said Transit Director Benson presented the 2023/2024 proposed Budget. He said Transit Director Benson has to submit her Budget prior to the Town’s. He said it was presented with no increase to the Town. He said last year’s Town obligation was \$42,224.18, with the same obligation this year.

Chairman Nash said Capital Improvements have gone up because bus purchases are more expensive. He said fuel increases are pretty substantial. He said Transit Director Benson included a 4% increase in salaries across the board, so she advertised high, and when the Town does their Budget, it cannot go above 4% or the Town would be responsible for anything over that.

Councilman Page asked when the shelters would be completed. Chairman Nash said five have been approved for this budget year. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the locations will be a Magnolia Place, Nottoway Manor, Mann Street Apartments, Academy Square and Peele Manor. He said there will be two additional, one at VUMAC and one on College Avenue. He said the shelters are here now.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this will be B&B Consultant’s next project.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the 2023/2024 Bus Budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Councilman Nash clarified the total budget is \$977,112.01.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

Batting Cage Use – Nottoway Softball Teams

Mayor Green said this request is for use of the batting cages. Clerk Daniel said Mr. Andrews provided the email included in the packet.

Councilman Nash made a motion approving the Consent Agenda as presented, noting it is providing for the youth in the County. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Nottoway County Budget Requests

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Council approved two budget requests to be submitted to the County, with a deadline of January 13th. He said one was submitted in the amount of \$100,000.00 for Weatherization improvements, and the second request was for \$50,000.00 as assistance to help complete the Gator’s Concession Stand.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he and Mayor Green met with County Administrator Costin and Board Member Roark on January 13, 2023. Mayor Green said Councilman Miller joined us as well.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said they found out the County was not holding \$100,000.00 of Program Income; it was more like \$72,000.00 and County Administrator Costin suggested the Town adjust the request to \$40,000.00.

Councilman Miller made a motion to change the requested amount from \$100,000.00 to \$40,000.00 to Nottoway County for Weatherization Funds. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Miller - Aye
Councilman Nash - Aye

2. Fire Department Floor Coating – Award Bids

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

3. B&B Consultants – Task Order #20 – Taylor Bottom

Manager Vannoorbeeck said a Community Development Block Grant has been discussed in the Taylor Bottom area. He said in order to start this process a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) has to be prepared. He said back in the spring the Town submitted to the Department of Health an ARPA related grant/loan application for three activities, which included the Aeration Project, replacement of the raw water line and Taylor Bottom improvements. He said in order to make this application the PER had to be done, and was for \$25,000.00. He said the PER is completed and has already been paid for with ARPA Funds.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this Task Order was never signed, and the work has been done, so he asked to ratify Task Order #20.

Councilman Miller made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute Task Order #20 with B&B Consultants for the Taylor Bottom Project in the amount of \$25,000.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Miller agreed to include in the motion ratifying the request, because the work had already been done.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the second request is for Infrastructure Funding from the Department of Environmental Quality. He said DEQ handles sewer issues. He said in order to be eligible for ARPA and Infrastructure money from DEQ, an application had to be submitted for the sewer work in December. He said the application included the Hurricane Branch Interceptor, which is the sewer line that crosses under Route 40, near the Fire Training Grounds and runs back to the Lion of Judah Church. He said the application in the amount of \$5,954,107.00 was submitted, but the Town is not obligated to accept anything.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was asking for ratification for the application submitted.

Councilman Nash what would be the In Kind if received. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not believe it was In Kind, it would be majority loan, with some Principal Forgiveness.

Councilman Nash asked how to prioritize a trunk line like this, as opposed to the main raw water line from Pickett. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, the raw water line would take precedent.

Councilman Nash made a motion to ratify the DEQ Application submitted for sewer under Route 40 in the amount of \$5,954,107.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

4. East End – Curb & Gutter – Award Bids

Clerk Daniel said the new paperwork was at Council's desk.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the bids were opened on January 18, 2023. He said the Engineer's estimate was \$830,000.00, and the bid came in at \$827,000.00. He said this exceeds cash on hand, which is \$462,000.00 in grant money and \$300,000.00 the Town has saved for this project. He said the Town's budget is \$762,000.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mr. Randy Jones with B&B Consultants has negotiated with S. Walker Construction and decided it would be best to use the lower prices for paving that we have already bid out. He said Southern Paving is the Town's paving contractor, and their unit prices are much less than S. Walker Construction's prices. He said we have taken the asphalt out of S. Walker Construction's portion of this project to use a lower price from a bid already in place. He said S. Walker Construction's price is now at \$674,950.00. He said with Southern Paving, instead of doing 5", with a 3" base and 2" top, it will be less, except around the entrances at Garrett, Moon & Pool.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said with the change in S. Walker's price, it leaves \$306,000.00 for paving, which will come from the VDOT payment in March. He said the Change Order came about after the bids were opened.

Councilman Nash asked if it was fair to those that did bid to not have the same option to lower their price. Manager Vannoorbeeck said no one else bid the project. Councilman Nash asked if there were any other interested parties. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there were three parties that received sets of plans, but only S. Walker submitted a bid.

Councilman Allman asked if we missed out on bids for just the concrete portion because of the inability to do pavement. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no.

Councilman Nash said he understood we need to finish up this project, but we are taking away paving that could be done where ever else in Town, to do a project that was budgeted at \$827,000.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we have \$762,000.00 to do this project, and \$300,000.00 that Council approved with Southern Paving.

Councilman Allman asked if it would be fair to rebid with the Change Order included. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it could be rebid, but did not think it was a matter of fairness because the other parties chose not to bid.

Councilman Nash asked if the \$306,000.00 was calculated as the Town's In Kind towards this project. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no.

Councilman Allman made a motion out of fairness to the other bidders, to rebid with the Change Order to include the change with the base.

Councilman Miller said the people in the East End have suffered long enough, they can't drive their cars, there are big holes in the road, and asked why do you want to hold it up. Councilman Nash said paving cannot take place for another three months. Manager Vannoorbeeck said rebidding would take about two months.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said what has been done with the contractors, did not violate anything, it was legal.

Councilman Nash seconded the motion.

Councilman Allman said as a contractor at his day job, he believed that was a pretty big change to the RFP that could change whether he bid on the project or not.

Councilman Page asked if the adjustment being made would get the project done within the budget, and nothing else to do. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he hoped they didn't find anything else.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Miller made a motion to accept the bid from S. Walker Construction in the amount of \$674,950.00 for the East End Project. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

5. Town Square – Request for Proposals

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Council asked that we solicit RFPs for activities or event planning in the Town Square. He said one proposal was received.

Councilman Nash said when the individual is ready, it can go to committee.

Councilman Gormus wondered why we are considering selling the Town Square, when we have a position that was interviewed the other night, and part of their job description was having activities there. Manager Vannoorbeeck said buying the property has been this individual's preference.

Councilman Nash said Council has never said we want to sell it, but an individual came to us wanting to purchase it.

Councilman Page said he was not interested in selling it. He said we could always look at leasing the property.

Councilman Gormus made a motion to not sell or lease the Town Square and have DBi manage the use of the property. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Councilman Nash said Councilman Gormus' point was we are looking to hire somebody to make that space more functional, so let's give them a chance to put their best foot forward.

Mayor Green said if the individual wants to use the property, he should work through DBi to lease it through them.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

6. Electrical Engineer – Award RFP

Manager Vannoorbeeck said because we had not it done previously, and in order to bring ourselves in compliance with State Procurement, this was bid out. He said the Town had been using Progressive Engineering since 1984, as an engineering consultant. He said one proposal was received from Progressive Engineering. He said this is an hourly, on call as needed service.

Councilman Nash made a motion to award the Electrical Engineer bid to Progressive Engineering Consultants, Inc. on an as needed basis. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash asked what is roughly spent with this firm in a year's time. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he did not know and would get back with Council.

7. Jan's Residential – Extension Request

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

8. N. West Avenue Ditch

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he instructed the engineers to fill in a significant ditch on the west side of N. West Avenue, which was the origination of the request. He said Mrs. Shelia Jones brought this request to Council through Mr. Bobby Evans. He said then there was a request from Mr. Somerville to pipe in the ditch next to his home. He said the drawings included to the back of Mr. Evans' property. He said he gave the same instructions to the engineers for Mr. Somerville's property. He believed Mr. Somerville has interest in extending the pipe that was installed.

Mayor Green said going forward, if you want Council to spend that kind of money, please provide plans and or specs. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he did not want Council to spend this kind of money.

Councilman Miller said he thought it was stated we would go to the end of Mr. Somerville's property. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he did say in a meeting that it may go to the railroad tracks.

Councilman Miller asked how much more pipe is needed. Manager Vannoorbeeck suggested asking Mr. Somerville because he did not know if anything additional was needed.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said if you want to put money into something that is a danger and a mess, look at the rest of Mr. Evans' ditch., it is very deep. He said Mr. Somerville has a ditch and has complained on more than one occasion about mosquitos and snakes, but the depth of Mr. Evans' ditch is 12-15' deep.

Councilman Nash said we also have residents in this room that complain about snakes on a regular basis as well.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said if you want to determine how much further to go for Mr. Somerville, he can provide an estimate. He said Mr. Evans was thankful. Manager Vannoorbeeck thought it was premature to vote tonight, and added he did not have the money right now.

Councilman Allman asked if there was a structural reason to extend Mr. Somerville's ditch. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it is just an open ditch. He said this got started trying to preserve Mr. Evans' house, and Mr. Somerville had also asked.

Councilman Page said he was on the fence about this, because he was not a fan of doing private property, unless it is a ditch we worked on that caused the problem or it affects multiple homes.

Councilman Page said this was discussed over several meetings and the Town Manager said to Council, he believed it started at the railroad tracks. He asked what was the intent of Council upon approval.

Mayor Green said he would like Council to make a decision, are we done according to the plans, or do we want to move forward.

Councilman Allman said he wanted to clarify, the changes we would be making are aesthetic. Manager Vannoorbeeck said they were not structural.

Councilwoman Williams believed from the beginning that Mr. Somerville's issues were affecting Mr. Evans', they were flowing over there, eroding his property. She asked if that was fixed. Councilman Nash said there is still the same water going under the road, but it is cleaned up now.

Councilman Miller asked Manager Vannoorbeeck to get pricing and report back to Council. Manager Vannoorbeeck said let me know how far you want to go, and he would provide pricing. Councilman Miller said Mr. Somerville told him he would be satisfied if we go to the end of his property. Councilman Nash said that is over double of what is currently there, looking at the map.

Councilman Allman said that is a big cost to the taxpayer, for what is aesthetic. He said if the ditch has been made to flow water and the issue with Mr. Evans house have been fixed.

Councilman Page said he would like to hear from Mr. Somerville.

Mr. Aaron Somerville – 312 N. West Avenue

Mr. Somerville said Mr. Evans never went to Mrs. Shelia Jones, he went to Mrs. Jones, because the water is sitting right next to his yard and stinks, and had his whole house smelling. He said it does have snakes and rats in there, but he came to Council and had Mr. Evans come with him. He said there are trees growing up in there.

Councilman Allman asked if the trees had been removed. Ms. Somerville said not on his side of the property. He said somebody dug the ditch, because he didn't do it.

Councilman Nash said water creates the ditch. Mr. Somerville said it comes from the railroad tracks and through his property. He said only 40' of the ditch was repaired. He said Manager Vannoorbeeck told him his property goes back 175'. He said the Town used to clean the property years ago, he knew because he was born and raised there.

Councilman Nash asked if the ditch was on Mr. Somerville's property. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the pipe that was installed does not sit on his property.

Mr. Somerville said the water is still just sitting there. Councilman Nash said where do we eventually stop, what about the next person, we are just pushing the buck up to them.

Councilman Miller said we started this project and Mr. Somerville is not satisfied. He said we will deal with other people, like we dealt with Mr. Somerville.

Councilman Nash made a motion that we not proceed on with the ditch next to Mr. Somerville's property, keep it as is. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Green said we have a body of 6 tonight, and in the unfortunate case we have a tie, then he would have to break the tie. He asked to weigh in, in case he may have to vote.

Mayor Green asked Mr. Somerville if more than one Council Member came to his dwelling and told you that Council voted and this is what was going to happen. Mr. Somerville replied no, but he heard Councilman Nash say, you have spent this kind of money, and haven't finished the job, we might as well have kept the money.

Mayor Green asked Mr. Somerville if anybody contacted him after Council originally voted to do the project. Mr. Somerville replied yes. Mayor Green asked if they described the project to you. Mr. Somerville said yes, it was going to be 175'. Mayor Green asked who this person was. Mr. Somerville replied, Mr. Philip. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that was both sides of the road.

Mayor Green said he was against going on private property for ditches, we will open Pandora's Box, and will bankrupt this Town. He said another thing he was against, is Council telling you one thing, and not backing it up tonight.

Councilman Page said he did not think Mr. Somerville was misled on purpose, but according to the meetings, it was said to start at the railroad tracks.

Mayor Green asked Manager Vannoorbeeck if Mr. Somerville was misinformed. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no, he only remembered talking to him about the easement.

Mayor Green said the Town does not have money to do this, but we have an obligation to keep our word. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mr. Somerville was never told 175'. Mayor Green asked Mr. Somerville if a member of Council told him this. Mr. Somerville said no, he talked to Mrs. Jones when she was on Council.

Councilman Allman said he was not trying to be rude, but he has a fundamental obligation to taxpayers, he did not believe in spending tax money on aesthetics. He said he has a ditch in his yard and has to maintain it as a homeowner.

Councilman Nash said looking at the tax map, it looks like 110' on Mr. Evans', and 132' would go from the road to the back of Mr. Somerville's property, so this would include another 90'.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Page made a motion to proceed with getting pricing and drawings for the next available meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Miller said we have a moratorium, where we would not do anything for two years with ditches. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the Armes' family would take exception to that.

9. DEQ Litter Grant

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town has been awarded two litter prevention and recycling grants, with one being \$12,500.00, and the second being \$4,402.50. He said these funds are earmarked to host a Household Hazardous Waste Day. He said we can take up to \$16,902.50, which is the total amount of the grants awarded.

Councilman Nash made a motion to accept the grant awards in total of \$16,902.50. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Gormus asked what contractor would be handling the hazardous waste. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it would be someone like Atlantic Waste, who the Town used previously.

Councilman Gormus asked how will the contractor determine when they get to the \$16,000.00. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he did not know; we will just have to tell them to quit when we get to \$16,000.00.

10. Goals / Focus Points

Mayor Green said he asked Council at the Special Called Meeting to provide some goals and focus points, and has not heard from anybody. He asked Council to email the Clerk so it can be discussed at the February Council Meeting.

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

Manager Vannoorbeeck said at this time we are awaiting an Order from Nottoway Circuit Court to permit entry on 806 Falls Street to demolish a previously condemned building. He said the owner previously allowed the Town to demolish the structure by signing an agreement, but never had it notarized. He said a tree fell through the house.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said staff had been working on an application to DHCD for a MUMS Grant. He said if awarded, this would assist with the acquisition and stabilization of the old Dillard Crawley Building, which has been declared blighted by staff. He said the owner had not performed any improvements based on the two certified letters sent.

Manager Vannoorbeeck requested authorization to submit an application to DHCD in the amount of \$500,000.00, without any matching funds. He said the Town had hired an appraiser. He said this building touches 6 additional properties.

Councilman Allman made a motion to authorize the Town to submit an application to the Department of Housing and Community Development for a Mixed Use on Main Street Grant in the amount of \$500,000.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

2. Meals Tax / Lodging Tax

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is one new delinquent Meals Tax and one has been sent to Taxing Authority Consulting Services, TACS. Treasurer Harris said the delinquent Meals Tax reported in the Council Packet was paid yesterday.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said as of December 20, 2022, there were four outstanding Lodging Taxes. He said we have received payments from Air BNB, but they don't specify who they apply to.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town put out some procurement documents and found TACS, they work with Meals Tax, Business Licenses, anything, and we do not pay their fees, they are paid by the individual.

3. Street Improvement Projects

There was nothing to report.

4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex / TAP 21

There was nothing to report.

5. East End Neighborhood Project

There was nothing to report.

6. Taylor Bottom Block Grant

Manager Vannoorbeeck said enclosed is an application for Planning Grant Funds and has already been submitted in the amount of \$60,000.00. He said the \$25,000.00 match was approved earlier in the meeting with the B&B Consultant's Task Order, and has already been paid with ARPA Funds.

Councilman Nash made a motion to ratify the submission to DHCD for a Planning Grant in the amount of \$85,000.00 for the Taylor Bottom Block Grant. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

7. Armory

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town had received bids for the asbestos removal at the Armory in the amount of \$78,000.00, from WACO Contractors. He said the agreement had been executed and their time started today, so nobody can be in the building.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there had been an award for the removal of the underground storage tank at the Armory, but the contract had not been signed yet, because Mr. Todd Fortune our Project Administrator has COVID.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said after these projects are completed, the lead based paint would be moving forward.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said as soon as we have the award documents, we will present to Council, which will include a \$1 Million Grant from DHCD Industrial Revitalization Fund and a \$581,000.00 Grant from the Virginia Tobacco Commission.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there were four sources of funding in place, which include \$2.25 Million from ARPA Funds that came from the Federal Government, a \$250,000.00 Brownfields Grant, \$1 Million from the IRF, and \$581,000.00 from the Tobacco Commission. He said we still have one pending application with the Department of Agriculture in the amount of \$247,000.00 that will finish the kitchen and provide technology improvements.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said included in the packet is a list of items that have been stored in the Armory and need to be declared surplus.

Mayor Green asked where the funds would go from the proceeds.

Councilman Nash said to be sure the Chamber is aware that Arts and Crafts may not be able to be inside the Armory this year. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it depends on scheduling, as it may be under construction by then.

Councilman Nash made a motion that the Armory is closed until further notice. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash made a motion to declare surplus the list of items as presented, with the proceeds going towards the Armory. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Councilman Page asked about the roller skates. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed Mr. Walter Mac Osborne was removing the roller skates to refurbish. Councilman Miller said the Armory Group was going to sell the skates and turn the money over to the Town.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilwoman Williams made a motion at Manager Vannoorbeeck's discretion, to surplus any other items the Armory Group has found and sell them, with the proceeds going to the Armory Fund. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Councilman Nash said he would like any other items be turned over to the Town, and they be included in GovDeals.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

8. Weatherization

There was nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Virginia Main Street – Biennial MOU / DBi Agreement

Manager Vannoorbeeck said included is a two year agreement from Virginia Main Street stating the Town will provide support and in turn DBi will provide a Main Street approach. He said there is no dollar commitment with this.

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

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the DBi Agreement was approved previously, but never executed. He said Clerk Daniel made corrections from the previous Agreement.

Councilman Allman made a motion to approve the Agreement as presented between the Town and DBi, and authorize Mayor Green to execute it. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

2. The Inn at Blackstone – Lighting

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was approached by the operators of the Inn at Blackstone and they have requested assistance with exterior lighting issues next to the auditorium. He said the current lights are on wooden poles, one is a stadium light and the other two are security lights. He said these lights don't keep with the improvements of the property. He said the operators have inquired if these lights could be replaced with period lighting. He said these lights are on private property, and materials would be about \$6,500.00.

Mayor Green said we would still be charging them the monthly fee for the lights. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied no, the intention was to attach them onto Town lights, but it can be done otherwise.

Councilman Nash said he was in favor of helping a business, but this Council has already put forth a large amount of money, and this is private property. Mayor Green said a private property that brings in a tremendous amount of revenue.

Mayor Green asked Council to consider the scope of the project and then the dilapidated lights.

Councilman Allman asked if they were Town owned light poles. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied yes.

Councilman Allman made a motion approving the installation of three period light poles at the Town's expense, with the monthly cost being on the property owner. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Councilman Nash asked if any other individuals that have placed significant dollars out of their own pockets, request the same thing. He asked if Mr. Rapp's poles on his property could be replaced. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, if Council so chooses.

Mayor Green said his point was, we put the poles all around the property and this would tie it together.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Clerk Daniel asked for clarification, \$6,500.00 would include three poles. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, correct.

3. Spring Meeting with Merchants

Mayor Green asked Council for their blessing to partner with DBi and the new Executive Director, to plan and carry out a meeting with ALL the town merchants. He said many of the merchants don't live in Town limits, so they cannot vote, but he would like them to have a voice.

Mayor Green said Council agreed by Common Consent.

COMMITTEE REFERRAL:

1. Forest Drive Ditch

Mayor Green said this is at 222 Forest Drive.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is a private property ditch. He said the Mayor would like to divert it away from private property.

Mayor Coleburn referred this to the Street and Light Committee.

Mayor Green said there may be a way to keep it on Town property. He said his concern for the Town is at the end of the street, which is a Town pumping station.

Councilman Gormus said the drainage under the gentleman's driveway, the Town installed, and he paid for the pipe, wasn't installed correctly. He said all the water is washing under his house. He said he is spending \$16,000.00 with JES to address it. He said his fenced in back yard is squishy. He said when the pipe was installed, the ditch wasn't routed as it should have been. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that has nothing to do with water running back to his house. He said the ditch at the street, takes a right hand turn across a private piece of property adjacent to his, and that is running back onto his property.

2. 207 Bird Road – Drop Inlets

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is on private property, but the Town installed a pipe many years ago, and the drop inlets are in bad shape. He said this property is owned by Mrs. Carolyn Davis, but she did not make the request.

Mayor Green referred this to the Street and Light Committee.

3. Two Hour Parking

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we have on the books, two hour parking, and wants to know if the Town wants to start enforcing it.

Mayor Green referred this to the Street and Light Committee. He said he was going to ask Council to enforce or repeal.

4. Police Officer Position

Mayor Green said this request is for an additional police officer position.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said in the Budget is a police officer position, however, we had a Cops Grant we were hoping to get, but were turned down. He suggested we still consider this position, but they cannot start until July.

Mayor Green referred this request to the Employment and Police Committee to see if there is a need.

Councilman Miller said he would like to discuss with Account and Finance first. He said after Employment and Police meet, he will assign to Account and Finance.

MAYORS MINUTE:

Mayor Green said there was a letter from Supervisor Roark at your desk. He said Supervisor Roark would like the County to look at their current Zoning Ordinances and Codes, and is asking for the Town’s blessing.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there is already Council approval for the Town Manager to hire a firm to codify the Town’s Zoning Ordinances. He said our Ordinances are updated through MuniCode. He believed Supervisor Roark was wanting to have the three towns in the County cooperatively work together.

Councilman Page believed Supervisor Roark was wanting a letter of support to take to the other Supervisors. Councilman Nash understood it to say it might be a better price if everyone was involved.

Mayor Green did not see a problem with listening. Councilman Nash said he would like to see a price first.

Councilman Allman said if we make significant changes, that could change the direction of our Town, he would like it to come before Council. Manager Vannoorbeeck said all Ordinances have to be voted on after an advertised Public Hearing.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he did not want to get in a situation where the County selects somebody and then the Town is obligated to work with a particular individual. He said we want to be cooperative, but we want a seat at the table when decisions are made on who to hire and how much it is going to cost.

Mayor Green asked Manager Vannoorbeeck to craft a letter.

Councilman Allman made a motion to support Supervisor Roark’s efforts and would like to hear his proposal. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Green asked if any member of Council would like to serve on the Town’s Industrial Development Authority. He said we need to appoint one position.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the IDA members still have to fill out Statements of Economic Interest.

Councilman Allman said he would be interested, but wanted to look at the paperwork first.

Councilman Nash made a motion to appoint Mr. Jake Allman to the Industrial Development Authority, upon his reviewal of necessary documents. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Green asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

POLICE REPORT:

Mayor Green said he enjoyed meeting with Chief Kuzmiak, and shared his pride and gratitude for his department. He said he was excited to work with Chief Kuzmiak.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Manager Vannoorbeeck said with the MUMS Project on the Dillard Crawley Building, there was a fire marshal inspection last week, he was not allowed to release the report, but Manager Vannoorbeeck did FOIA the report.

Councilman Page said he has a conflict of interest with DBi, they do work with his company, so he would be abstaining from the discussion.

CLOSED SESSION:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711

- 1/ Personnel – DBi Position
- 7/ Acquisition of Real Property

Councilman Miller made a motion to go into Closed Session for Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body, and 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 Gormus.

Mayor Green asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck said chickens have become an issue, four chickens are allowed, but no roosters. He said they cannot be closer than 50' to an occupied dwelling, and no closer than 25' to a property line. He said he was going to start enforcing.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Green adjourned this meeting at 10:11 p.m.


MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

February 27, 2023 APPROVED AND ADOPTED


TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA