

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, August 17, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: Lafayette Dickens

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

Town Staff: Philip Vannoorbeeck, Town Manager; Jennifer Daniel,  
Town Clerk; Shay Farley, Police Lt.; Zac Beares, Fire Chief

Town Attorney: Julian Harf - Zoom

Those Absent: Nathaniel Miller, Christopher Page attended through Zoom

Mayor Dickens called the August Council Meeting to order.

Reverend Snodgrass delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Dickens led the Pledge of Allegiance.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to allow Councilman Page to attend this meeting through Zoom, as he was home sick. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.***

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

## **PUBLIC HEARING:**

### **1. Conditional Use Permit – 114 S. Main Street - TOB**

#### **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF BLACKSTONE**

*The Town of Blackstone Town Council shall hold a Public Hearing on August 17, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blackstone Town Council Chambers, 100 W. Elm Street, Blackstone, Virginia. The applicant, **The Town of Blackstone** is requesting a Conditional Use permit as required by Section 8-2.6 of the Blackstone Zoning Ordinance. The request, if granted, would permit residential use on the first and second floors of an existing structure. The Conditional Use permit request specifically applies to property known as Nottoway County Tax Map Number 50A27-1-W-4 and is also known as 114 S. Main Street. This property is currently zoned G-B, General Business. The Town Council may act on this request following this public hearing. Any individual desiring to address the Town Council should attend the public hearing at the above stated date and time.*

Mayor Dickens opened the Public Hearing.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this application was prepared by the Town of Blackstone, as we are still the owner. He said the Town's Ordinance does specify residential uses on the first or second floor in the General Business District requires a Conditional Use Permit. He said this has already been presented to the Planning Commission.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Waukeshaw Development is proposing to lease the property from the Town, which is a requirement of the grant for ten years. He said they are intending to develop up to 21 residential units, and two retail/commercial spaces that are not housing. He said one retail/commercial space would face Broad Street at 750 square feet and the other face Main Street at 835 square feet.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the recommended approval from the Planning Commission also included parking be considered with the lease. He said the residential units would be on the first and second floors.

Mayor Dickens asked if there was anyone here to speak for or against this request. There were no comments.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said next month the details of the lease will be discussed.

Mayor Dickens closed the Public Hearing.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit request from the Town of Blackstone to permit residential use on the first and second floors of Nottoway County Tax Map Number 50A27-1-W-4, also known as 114 S. Main Street, as well as retail/commercial spaces facing Broad Street at 750 square feet and facing Main Street at 835 square feet. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.***

Councilman Nash asked Mr. McCormack about the rooms on the side, are they closets, mechanical areas or just dead spots on the drawing. Mr. McCormack said they would not be closets, they were still playing with the space.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Allman said he had been vocal about first floor apartments, but the investment required in this emergency situation, he thought it would be a good fit.

Councilman Nash clarified the gray spots on the drawings are other buildings.

#### **MINUTES:**

***Councilwoman Wynn made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting on July 20, 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.***

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

## VISITORS:

Mayor Dickens said attached to everyone's Agenda is a copy of the Public Comment Policy. He said one requirement is providing a summary of remarks prior to the meeting, and speaking time is limited to three minutes.

### 1. Mrs. Molly Black Lashway

Mrs. Lashway said on July 26<sup>th</sup>, she and her husband received letters in the mail, stating they had town property taxes that had gone into collections, and would be taken from our refund so they didn't have to pay. She asked why this was the first time she heard about unpaid property taxes. She said she was in the office monthly paying multiple bills.

Mrs. Lashway said they took care of everything on July 28<sup>th</sup>. She said the bill was from 2025, and she was unaware they owed anything because they moved in 2024. She said another incident happened in October 2024, when she was pregnant with her son Richard, she did not receive a bill for her business property tax, and never thought anymore about it. She said when she was paying her utility bill, the cashier told her she had a delinquent bill, and it was paid that day. She asked why a notice was not sent about a hold that was going to be placed on her DMV account.

Mrs. Lashway said with a newborn, she was not thinking about bills she had not received. She said if this happened to her, how many more is this happening to. She said that is a missed opportunity to collect money immediately. She said this is money being accounted for in the budget, and not being collected.

Mrs. Lashway said everything was handled, she just wanted to bring to Council's attention. She suggested letters be sent ahead of time.

Councilman Nash asked if this was the same situation he called Manager Vannoorbeeck about today. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he did not review every letter that goes out, but there was a series of letters recently mailed, that were not correct. He said the letter stated the deadline for payment was August 1<sup>st</sup>, but postmarked on August 7<sup>th</sup>. He said he spoke to the Treasurer about this, as she is learning, but it was not excusable.

Councilman Nash asked if staff takes the time to call people. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not know.

Mayor Dickens said it sounds like Manager Vannoorbeeck was blaming the new Treasurer, but we have been collecting before she came here. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the misunderstanding for that instance are things we just cannot do. He said there is a manual and list of things to do, and that needs to be followed.

Councilman Nash said we are a small town, so before sending letters, maybe just make phone calls. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there could be 500 people, he was not sure.

Councilwoman Williams asked if everyone on the list had been contacted. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not know. Councilwoman Wynn suggested doing a mass call.

Mayor Dickens said we will try to do better.

2. Mr. Benjamin Eaheart

Mr. Eaheart said he was here as a concerned citizen, and asked if there was an alternative solution for the \$9 Million project for new pipes. He said utility bills already increased on July 1<sup>st</sup>, and now being asked to consider another increase for water and sewer rates in March. He said he understood maintaining the infrastructure is important, but we need to consider the financial impact on the citizens of Blackstone.

Mr. Eaheart said he wanted to stay in Blackstone and raise his family, and wants citizens to be able to do the same. He said moving may not be as simple or realistic as it sounds, and referred to the meeting from January 10, 2024 where Councilman Gormus said if you don't like it, you can move.

Mr. Eaheart said with elections coming up in November, he hoped Council would continue to listen to the people they represent. He asked to follow up on an issue he brought up previously with traffic signs and speeding on Ridge Road.

Mr. Eaheart said he cares about Blackstone, and wants the Town to succeed, he wants families to be able to afford to stay here, and wants the citizens to feel their concerns are being heard.

Councilman Nash said he believed the presentation for rate increases for the raw water line was premature. He said we are still way off from proceeding, and still waiting on grants. Manager Vannoorbeeck said we have an 85 year old water line, and the Town can do nothing, and wait until it fails.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he wants to raise revenues through growth, additional connections, and industrial connections. He said the Town's consultant has recommended a 4% increase in water and 4% in sewer every year to keep up with inflation.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the raw water line is the only source of water for Blackstone, Pickett, and FASTC.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would work on the requests from Mr. Eaheart. Mayor Dickens asked if speed traps could be set since school is opening.

Councilman Gormus said he was quoted tonight from a meeting in January 2024, that was taken out of context. He said that discussion came from a meeting the night before when utility extensions were being discussed. He said Councilman Page spoke on people moving into Blackstone, and the Town's policies discourage people from moving here. He said his point was they can move, and not come here. He said it was not they could move if they don't like it.

Councilman Gormus said to Mr. Eaheart, if he did win the election, he hoped the citizens respected him enough to come to him, and not the podium.

Councilwoman Williams thanked Manager Vannoorbeeck for his explanation on the water and sewer, because she got a lot of calls after the meeting.

### **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:**

Chief Beares said the radio project had been pushed back to July 2027, as they have to test the towers in full foliage. He said hydrant flow testing continues, and thanked staff for painting the bonnets.

Chief Beares said they received a \$3,000.00 grant from Dominion Energy to purchase more carcinogen blocking hoods. He said last month's training was on stokes basket drills. He said they had 10 participants for their CPR class. He said two new members were brought on, and tabled three new applicants to be voted on. He announced the years of service.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

#### **1. Fire Department – Rescue 6 – USDA Grant**

Chief Beares said last week he sent everyone a justification letter for the need. He said the current Rescue 6 is 27 years old, and they continue to have to purchase equipment for this vehicle for calls. He said he had also talked to Manager Vannoorbeeck about adding items for trenching. He said the NFPA says these trucks have a max life of 25 years.

Chief Beares asked Council for permission to look into a USDA Grant. He said it usually takes up to 48 months and they would have roughly \$500,000.00 towards the purchase by then.

Councilman Nash asked if the fire levy that gets distributed to each department goes towards this purchase. Chief Beares said yes, they are getting roughly \$50,000.00 each year.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Fire Department is interested in a \$1.5 Million fire truck. He said because of our 2020 Census, the Town is only eligible for 35% now. He said they told Community Development Specialist Bryant that \$50,000.00 was the largest grant available.

Councilman Nash suggested we take a broad brush and start looking for grants. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town does have \$200,000.00 in their Apparatus Fund.

Councilman Nash asked what is the next thing in line, if the Town did purchase this vehicle, and how far down the road. Chief Beares replied they want a refurbish on Engine 6-2. Councilman Nash was inquiring how long the Town can use the levy funds to pay for Rescue 6, before another vehicle is needed. Chief Beares said Buddy has a calendar that keeps up with this.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town was currently paying on two apparatus, the ladder truck at \$3,500.00 a month, and the engine at \$2,500.00 a month. He said the debt service for the engine will be paid off in 2032. He said the ladder truck will be paid off in 2039.

Chief Beares said Engine 6-2 should not be over \$300,000.00 for reframing. Tim Haug said it would be 5-6 years after the purchase of Rescue 6. Chief Beares said the Town shop mechanics keep them good.

Chief Beares said they were looking for permission for the Town to seek funding through USDA. Councilman Nash said we all know what they are trying to do, let the Town do its work with the fire department. Mr. Tim Haug added, you can expect a 4-6% price increase on apparatus every year.

Mayor Dickens asked if there was anything to report on Family Dollar. Chief Beares said he spoke to Mr. Buddy Hyde, and the clean-up crew has been there since Saturday. He said DEQ and VDH were called, which prompted things to move a little faster. Manager Vannoorbeeck thanked Mr. Hyde for getting this process going.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Fire Department's Annual Boot Drive from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on September 12, 2026 per the streets provided, and use of the Town's speed devices. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.***

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

#### **PAYMENT OF BILLS:**

##### **ALREADY PAID:**

***Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$920,115.58. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.***

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this was the highest VMEA bill since he had been town manager. He said the Governor has announced another \$14.00 a month increase for a small user because of Greenhouse Gas.

Councilman Nash asked what bond payment was \$340,000.00. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that was for the Water Treatment Plant project from 2007, and is an annual payment, that varies.

Mayor Dickens asked what can we do about these payments. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the only thing the Town can do is try to get the credits for \$14.00 a month. He said VMEA was working on this.

Councilman Allman said for the record, any increases for electric are pass throughs.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town went up 3.8% on the base rate for electric, but the true rate increase was 6.7%, and it was not passed on. He said the Town ate a 2.9%, because the Town received a true-up last year that was saved.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

TO BE PAID:

***Councilman Nash made a motion to approve as presented; the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$349,597.77. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.***

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

APPROPRIATIONS:

There were no appropriations this month.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### **1. Fire Department – Rescue 6 – USDA Grant**

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

### **2. 410 Fourth Street – Property Lines**

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Council approved some drainage work to be done at the Taggart property. He said the owner of property at Lunenburg Avenue and Third Street does not agree with the location of the storm sewer. He said that property owner believed the alley was vacated and they own 10', but by the survey included, the people to the south own the 10'. Manager Vannoorbeeck believes the survey is flawed and done incorrectly.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the alleyway has never been abandoned. Councilman Nash asked if this causes any issue with what is there. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the people that purchased the property own 10' less than they thought because it was purchased from the 1997 survey, which he believes is incorrect.

Councilman Nash asked if the surveyor was insured, and has to resurvey the property. Manager Vannoorbeeck said they are no longer in business. He said he met with Mr. Jeff LaVelle, and he believed the original surveyor must have thought the alleyway had been abandoned to get the extra 10'.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town may have to abandon this to clean it up. Councilman Nash asked if the deeds showed 150'. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would have to check, but Mr. LaVelle's most recent survey shows 150'.

Councilman Nash suggested referring to the deeds, and go with that. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he may need Council to formally vacate the alley, but acquire an easement from the property owner to finish the project. He said he was still working on it.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the property facing Fourth Street, they technically own 150', but the survey only shows 140', and he did not have a solution for that.

### **3. Hodges Street Water Line**

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this project is included in the budget at \$155,000.00. He said Hodges Street, to his knowledge, is the only street that does not have a public water line. He said a property owner at the end of Hodges Street (Pickett Street), has presented a plan to develop six duplexes and one single family home.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was trying to time this project when the Town could do the work, to save money, but at this time he could not confirm Town staff due to unforeseen circumstances. He requested authorization to solicit sealed bids for this work.

Councilman Page asked if this would require mandatory connection. Manager Vannoorbeeck said two existing homes on Hodges Street are served by private well. He asked Council if the Town would waive tap fees and do the connection at the Town's cost.

Councilman Nash advised Council that his parents own a home in that area.

Councilman Gormus asked what had been done in the past. Manager Vannoorbeeck said we would connect them while going through the area, but if done later, there would be a charge.

Councilwoman Williams asked if the two private owners had been advised. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he spoke to Councilman Nash's mother, but had not talked to the other owner.

***Councilman Gormus made a motion to authorize soliciting bids for the Hodges Street waterline, and use standard practice to be connected to the water line. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.***

Councilman Page asked about the new owner. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the new owner had already paid the tap fees.

Councilman Nash asked about the homes already connected to Main Street. Manager Vannoorbeeck said they would be connected to the new system and abandon the lines that run parallel to Hodges Street.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

#### **4. Architect Agreement – Raymond Global, Inc.**

Manager Vannoorbeeck said included was a term agreement for architectural services between Raymond Global and the Town. He said this agreement has been reviewed by Attorney Harf and the addendum is attached.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this does not include a dollar amount. He said the agreement does discuss four years, but by State Code it can only be three years.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to enter into Agreement with Raymond Global for architectural services, changing Section 6, terms not to exceed three years.***

Councilman Gormus said it does not cost anything unless we use them. Manager Vannoorbeeck said correct, work would be done through task orders and approved by Council.

***The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.***

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

**5. B&B Consultants – Task Order #5 – Forest Drive Force Main**

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we had another blow out from the Forest Drive Force Main, which was the same from 2025. He said the Town had been awarded a loan for this project in the amount of \$4,168,000.00. He said included is a task order in the amount of \$461,500.00 and reimbursable through loan funds.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he had already executed Task Order #5 because of the failure we had in the sewer line, and asked for ratification.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he held off because he wanted to finish the Fort Avenue project first, as the Town has to front the money for this work, and get paid back when the loan closes. He said the Town has a line of credit for \$900,000.00; \$500,000.00 with Citizens Bank and \$400,000.00 with Benchmark.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was being held up on closing the loan because of the USDA opinion on the parity, and the 2025 audit.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to ratify the execution of Task Order #5 with B&B Consultants in the amount of \$461,500.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.***

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

6. Award Bid – Asphalt Patching

Manager Vannoorbeeck said sealed bids were opened on July 10, 2026, with three bids being received. He said two of the bids were the same base price of \$130.00 per square yard. He said he discussed with Attorney Harf, and because Southern Paving's alternate price was lower at \$45.50 per square yard, it is being recommended to award to Southern Paving Corporation.

Councilman Gormus asked about the alternate. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the base price includes cutting out 4" of asphalt and putting 4" back. He said if we find mud under the 4" then they will excavate an additional 4" and put compacted stone there, which is the alternate.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he came up with roughly 750 square yards around Town.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to award the Asphalt Patching to Southern Paving in the amount of \$130.00 per square yard and accept the alternate at \$45.50 per square yard. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.***

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

**ON-GOING PROJECTS:**

1. Dilapidated Buildings

There was nothing to report.

2. Meals Tax / Lodging Tax

Councilman Gormus said it looks like both delinquent accounts were given statutory assessment, and asked if we had heard from them yet. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he did not know, but would find out from the Treasurer.

3. Street Improvement Projects

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he received preliminary plans for widening a portion of S. Main Street associated with Tractor Supply. He said a resident was concerned about Catawba trees, but they do not seem to be impacted.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the property still had not closed for Tractor Supply.

Councilwoman Williams asked Manager Vannoorbeeck to look at the Amelia Avenue Bridge, there is a big bump going across the bridge. Councilman Nash said it is where the concrete meets the asphalt.

4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex

There was nothing to report.

5. Dillard Crawley Building – 114 S. Main Street

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this building now has operational fire and sprinkler systems, that are being monitored. He said this was grant reimbursable for \$24,000.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the next step was to abate the asbestos, which is through a grant as well.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to authorize Manager Vannoorbeeck to solicit sealed bids for the Dillard Crawley Building for the asbestos in the crawlspace and the front flashing. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.***

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

6. Weatherization

There was nothing to report.

7. Workforce Housing

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Planning Commission was scheduled to meet August 31, 2026 to rezone a portion of property located at the intersection of Patterson and Harris Street. He said they will also consider the subdivision of the property to accommodate four single family homes.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Lakeview Cemetery – Headstone Request - Burnette

Manager Vannoorbeeck said they already have a family headstone, but are now requesting to add another headstone.

Councilman Nash asked if this would be in line. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied yes.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the headstone request for the Burnette family. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.***

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

## 2. Seay Park Requests

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there are two requests for use of Seay Park, one from Blackstone Primary School, and the other from Ms. Tisha Stewart. He said both events will have amplified sound, and the school will have over 40 people.

***Councilman Page made a motion to approve both events as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.***

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

## 3. Police Car – USDA Grant

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we do have a police car in the budget. He asked for authorization to apply through the USDA. He said this would be a 35% grant, and a favorable loan.

***Councilman Nash made a motion authorizing Manager Vannoorbeeck to apply for a USDA loan/grant for a new police car. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.***

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

## 4. Electronic Participation Policy – Annual Adoption

***Councilman Nash made a motion to adopt the annual Electronic Participation Policy as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.***

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

5. MBC – Fiber Install

Manager Vannoorbeeck said MBC would be installing a new fiber trunk line throughout Town. He said they are in Town now. He did not believe this was household internet, it is the backbone.

Councilman Nash asked that the yards torn up, be dressed up when completed.

6. Resolutions – Pastor Allen & Bishop Farrar

Mayor Dickens said he had two requests from Ministers for resolutions. He said one is for Reverend Allen for her 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary, who does the Town's invocation monthly. He said the other is for Bishop Ernest Farrar for his 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to adopt both Resolutions as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.***

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

## **COMMITTEE REFERRALS:**

### **1. Adopt A Street Signage**

Councilman Nash said this request was from the Rotary. He said this would be for Church Street, which is where the Rotary cleans.

***Councilman Gormus made a motion to purchase two Adopt A Street signs for the Blackstone Rotary on Church Street. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.***

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

#### **VOTE:**

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

## **MAYORS MINUTE:**

Mayor Dickens said he had three tenants as Mayor, transparency, positivity and an informed citizenry. He said he would like to implement a mayoral award of excellence, at his discretion. He said he would award to those from Blackstone and surrounding areas who achieve major milestones in their chosen career that could shed a positive light on the community. He said this would also include civic organizations that exemplify profound and positive impact on the community.

Mayor Dickens said the award would consist of an engraved plaque, and a framed certificate that would be presented by the Mayor during a council meeting.

Mayor Dickens asked if Council would support this small investment of up to \$1,000.00 for the whole year. Councilman Nash suggested using the Council Discretionary Fund.

***Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Mayoral Award of Excellence as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.***

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilwoman Williams asked Mayor Dickens how he would come up with the selections. Mayor Dickens said it would be at his discretion, but would be open to suggestions. He said he had a short list in mind already.

### **POLICE REPORT:**

There was nothing to report.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

#### **Mr. Carl Bassfield**

Mr. Bassfield said he was here previously, and asked for an update on where he could find the economic evaluation. He said his second request was to possibly annex his street into Town. He also asked how much of the sidewalk can be used in front of their building, in case they want to set up some of their products outside.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said products are not supposed to be on the sidewalks. He said there are occasions, such as grand openings. He said the Town does allow sandwich boards. Manager Vannoorbeeck asked Mr. Bassfield to come see him and he would work with him.

Mayor Dickens asked if DBi had any requirements. Mrs. Glenn said it is not DBi's requirements, it is the Town's requirements. She said the sandwich board does have to be a certain size.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town has a Comprehensive Plan, but not a formal business plan. He said DBi may have something specific to downtown. Councilman Nash said DBi should have something that Virginia Main Street helped create.

Mr. Bassfield said this should be looked into, so we would know what kind of programs are needed to feed particular groups.

Manager Vannoorbeeck showed the map of the current boundary adjustments being proposed. He said the current requests came to him, and already have water, sewer and paved roads, there is no capital cost to the Town. He said being on the Town's water/sewer is 50% cheaper being in Town limits. He said Sullivan Street Extended does have water and sewer, but the road will have to be paved. He said we asked VDOT to take it into the system, but they said no because the water and sewer is in the right of way.

Councilman Nash asked Mr. Bassfield how many areas are past him. Mr. Bassfield said there are three empty lots, and one duplex beside him. Councilman Nash told Mr. Bassfield a petition could be done. Councilman Allman said it would not hurt.

Ms. Marilyn Wilson

Ms. Wilson said she was here about an article that was in paper about the Gators. She said we are not ungrateful for what is being done for the Gators. She said the field was still not football ready, and yes, they would be playing their home games at the high school this year. She said water had not been connected, and the field had not been lined off. She said the concession stand was too close to the field.

Ms. Wilson also questioned kids from the Primary School coming over and picking up rocks. She asked who authorized those kids while they were at school.

Ms. Wilson said Councilman Miller does not speak for the Nottoway Gators, he is not involved, and hasn't been for several years. She said she called him several times and he was never available. She said there are only three people that speak for the Gators, herself, the athletic director and the assistant athletic director.

Ms. Wilson said the Town said they spent \$330,000.00 on the field, she did not see it. She said she met with Manager Vannoorbeeck and they discussed where to put the scoreboard and lights for the field. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed the playground would need to be moved as well.

Mr. Wilbert Coleman, with Ms. Wilson said before building the field, they voiced their concerns about where the concession stand currently sits. He said at that time he asked it be put in either end zone. He believed the field was the only thing considered, not the sideline for coaches and players.

Councilman Nash asked if the corners for the field had been marked. Ms. Wilson said the high school coaches marked the field. She said for the concession stand, the side windows would have to be used. She said we need to think about the safety of everyone.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said moving things are fine, but the issue is there is only so much room available.

Councilwoman Wynn explained how the field was when she went to school there.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said it is not just a concession stand, it was also requested to have an announcer's booth, which is why it is in the middle.

Ms. Wilson said they are grateful, they want it finished, but want it done right.

Councilman Page asked if this could be referred to Parks & Recreation, and have them walk the field to find out what needs to be done. Councilman Gormus said he would be happy to be a part of whatever it takes to get this done.

Mayor Dickens referred the Gators football field to Parks & Recreation.

Councilwoman Williams said there is a quote, "it is what it is", but the end of that quote is "until you change it", so we need to finish this.

Ms. Wilson said their Board meets once a month.

Ms. Beverly Ambs

Ms. Ambs asked who owned the property at Wigglesworth. Councilman Nash said the Town now owns the entire property. Ms. Ambs asked if someone gets hurt on the football field, does that fall on the Town. Councilman Page said there is an exemption for parks and recreation. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town carries liability insurance for the property. Ms. Wilson said they have insurance as well.

Mr. William Berry

Mr. Berry asked if there is a published schedule of when Schwartz Tavern is open for tours. Council said that was a DBi question. Mrs. Glenn said it was on DBi's website and their Facebook page. She said per the request from the Employment & Police Committee she sent all the information they requested.

Councilman Allman said if anyone is interested in tours, the easiest way is to contact Mrs. Glenn, if there is no conflict, she would make herself available. Councilman Nash believed in the past it had been staffed by volunteers on Saturdays. Mrs. Glenn said it had been staffed but they could not get volunteers during the week.

Mr. Berry said his point was, Schwartz Tavern is on the Town's logo, and advertised as a historical Town. He believed they should be manned 100% of the time, especially since the Town advertises it.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711-A

1/ Personnel - Administration

5/ Prospective Business or Industry – Airport Property

***Councilwoman Wynn made a motion to go into Closed Session for (1) 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 (5) Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.***

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

***Councilman Nash 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 Allman.***

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Dickens adjourned this meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Gayette Dickens MAYOR  
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

September 21, 2026 APPROVED AND ADOPTED

Jennifer S. Daniel TOWN CLERK  
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA