

Minutes of a Special Called (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, March 30, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: Lafayette Dickens

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

Town Staff: Philip Vannoorbeeck, Town Manager; Jennifer Daniel, Town Clerk; Tony Mayton, Police Lieutenant.; Lee Williams, Assistant Fire Chief

Town Attorney: Robinson Hubbard - Zoom

Those Absent:

Mayor Dickens called the March Council Meeting to order. This meeting is a Special Called Meeting due to postponing the original date of March 16, 2026 because of the forecasted weather that day.

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

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Dickens delivered the Invocation, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

VISITORS:

1. Ms. Tonia Boothe – Craigwil Ministries Walkathon

Ms. Boothe said this would be their Fifth Annual Spring Fling Walkathon for the Craigwil Ministry. She said this helps with scholarships for Nottoway, Lunenburg and Brunswick for those being the first in their families to attend college or vocational schools.

Ms. Boothe said the walk would be Saturday, April 25, 2026, with the walk starting at 8:45 a.m. She said it starts at the Fire Station.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked if there were any street closures. Councilman Nash replied no, they just usually have a police escort.

Ms. Boothe asked Mayor Dickens to help with the Welcome. She asked for prayers for a good walk, and donations. She said it would be a 3K walk. She said they had already coordinated with the Fire and Police Departments.

2. Ms. Kelly Parker – Farmer’s Market – Town Square

Ms. Parker said the Farmer’s Market would begin on May 2, 2026 in the Town Square. She asked for approval of the signage. Included in the packet was the banner information to hang over Main Street two weeks prior to the start date.

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

Councilman Miller asked what happens if someone wants to use the Town Square on a Saturday. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed Council was committing the Farmer’s Market to use the Town Square every Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. He believed it would be first come first served.

Clerk Daniel said Ms. Parker had already filled out the application for the season, so DBi will know what is available for those wanting to use the Town Square.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Page said he spoke with USDA recently about marketing and job fairs. He said they have funding for farmer's markets. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town was working with the Virginia Department of Agricultural Services, so Community Development Specialist Bryant and Ms. Parker would be working together on this for any grant opportunities.

Ms. Parker said her second banner, she would like to hang on a weekly basis on the pavilion. She said this would only be hung during the hours of the event.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the banner on the pavilion in the Town Square weekly, with no advertising. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Page questioned how the banner would be hung. Ms. Parker believed hooks would have to be installed. Councilman Page preferred the banner be hung on the fence. A member from the audience recommended bungy cords. Councilman Page was concerned about nails in the new pavilion; he preferred the banner be hung on the fence. Ms. Parker agreed to use bungy cords.

Ms. Parker asked for approval for banner flags at the fence during the days of the market. She said the base would be double-pronged with a stake going in the ground. Council agreed to the flags and sidewalk signs.

Ms. Parker said Tin Can Coffee and The Sippin Spot have applied to be part time vendors. She said they were trying to get the food vendors behind the pavilion, but would take too much parking, which they want to reserve for the public. She asked if they could use two parking spaces on the street.

Councilman Allman said this request was different, it is 12 days, which is more than the Ordinance addresses. He said food trucks are currently reserved for big events, such as Juneteenth or anything major for once a year. He said this is for respect to businesses downtown. Councilman Page believed it could be approved for one day.

Ms. Parker asked if this only applies to mobile trucks. Councilman Allman said selling unprepared foods, sealed foods, vegetables or jams, it does not have anything to do with that. He said if a vendor is preparing food, that involves meals tax, that's where the line is drawn.

Councilman Page suggested talking to the restaurants for deals on farmer's market days.

Councilwoman Williams believed food vendors were supposed to apply to the Town for events, not the farmer's market.

Councilman Allman clarified food vendors would be those that prepare food on-site.

Councilman Page said there could be a farmer's market food truck day, but could only be one time.

Ms. Parker said the challenging part for farmer's markets is attraction and making sure there is enough to keep the vendors coming back. She said they wanted to have a coffee vendor or someone preparing a biscuit sandwich. She said they would be having a kid's section for educational purposes. She believed long term this could help them.

Councilman Page suggested they team up with Sweet Dreams Bakery.

Ms. Parker asked by having more options, is that a negative. Councilman Allman said if he opened a coffee shop downtown, paying property taxes, then a coffee truck was parked 50' away, he would not be happy about that.

Ms. Parker said the food trucks had applied through them, so they would deny them for now.

Mayor Dickens referred farmer's market food vendors to the Health & Ordinance Committee.

Councilman Gormus believed the food trucks might be a draw to the farmer's market.

3. Mr. Donal Gee – Champion Cafeteria Plan

Mr. Gee was not in attendance.

Councilman Page will report on this during the Insurance Committee portion of the meeting.

4. Mrs. Lisa Johnson – Trippin Billie's

Mrs. Lisa Johnson asked to waive the Noise Ordinance at Trippin Billie's every Thursday night from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. from April 2, 2026 through October 31, 2026.

Councilman Allman made a motion to approve the Noise Ordinance waiver for the requests as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Mrs. Johnson asked for a street closure for High Street, from Broad Street to their property line on High Street, per the dates in their request. She said the last Friday of each month would be the bike show, and they have planned some festivals through the season.

Councilman Miller said this area is in his Ward, so he wanted to look at it.

Clerk Daniel asked if alcohol would be permitted in the streets as previously done. Mrs. Johnson replied yes, and they would provide the insurance policy for each event.

Councilman Nash suggested we approve the requests presented through the month of June for now.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve as presented the street closures, and include the alcohol insurance, through the month of June. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Ms. Beverly Ambs

Ms. Ambs said she had come to Council in the past about being good stewards with the Town's money. She said with last year's budget there was only \$5,000.00 in excess. She said now the Town is spending money left and right, buying property from the County for almost \$700,000.00. She asked where the money was coming from. Mayor Dickens said the Reserve Fund.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town had not closed on the property yet, but the Town has roughly \$4.1 Million in Reserves. He said he was intending to use \$651,000.00 of the Reserve Fund.

Ms. Ambs said every June we sweat on whether taxes are going up because we cannot make a balanced budget. Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was maybe a \$.02 increase in taxes ten years ago.

Councilman Page said one of the reasons the Town is able to do things, is projects like this that create growth.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we are good stewards of the Town's money, we don't raid our Reserve Account.

Councilman Allman said we are hoping the airport property will pay the Town back, it is an investment.

Ms. Ambs just wanted to be sure there was money available to cover the expenses without going into the citizens pockets.

Mayor Dickens said we appreciate the concern, but we would never approve a purchase if that were the case. He said in the long run, the benefits far out way the expenditures.

MINUTES:

Councilman Nash made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Continued Meeting on February 18, 2026 and the Regular Council Meeting on February 23, 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Assistant Chief Williams thanked Council for their continued support. He said the radio system was on schedule for December 2026. He said the hydrant testing was still underway with town staff.

Assistant Chief Williams said they were submitting a grant for \$3,000.00 for new fire hose. He said the Town had received approval for roughly \$367,000.00 in grants with minimal cost share for the Town.

Assistant Chief Williams said last month during their Training Meeting, they discussed the recent incidents in past months to be sure they are doing best practices. He said the Blood Drive was held at the fire station on March 18, 2026. He said the Food Truck Rodeo was on March 20, 2026, and was successful.

Assistant Chief Williams said they do an extensive maintenance program on all the equipment weekly and monthly. He said they have it checked annually by a service agency.

Assistant Chief Williams said they had three people that had completed the Emergency Medical Technician Class. He said on March 28, 2026 they held their first quarterly live burn at the Fire Training Grounds.

Assistant Chief Williams announced the years of service. He said Nottoway High School has a Fire Science Program they are participating in, and helps to remain as a volunteer department as long as possible. He said this includes nine students participating and they have to join one of the fire departments within Nottoway County. He said they brought on two new members this month.

Assistant Chief Williams said they had been to several churches checking their alarm systems. He said some need help, and they are working with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management for grants.

Mayor Dickens asked how churches are to reach out to the fire department for inspections. Assistant Chief Williams said they do not have certified inspectors, but are going into businesses to be sure things are up to date.

Councilman Page asked to be notified when they have another training, he would like to see this in action. Assistant Chief Williams said he would reach out to Council for the next training.

APPROPRIATIONS:

Appropriation #1 – Fire Programs = \$30,000

Mayor Dickens said this appropriation is for funds received from the Department of Fire Programs for the exhaust system.

Assistant Chief Williams said this grant will finish off the gas powered apparatus.

Councilman Page made a motion to approve the appropriation in the amount of \$30,000.00 as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

ALREADY PAID:

Councilman Miller made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$721,999.59. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

TO BE PAID:

Councilman Page made a motion to approve as presented; the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$210,963.02. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Health & Ordinance – met 3-4-26 – minutes included in March’s Council Packet

Food Trucks

Chairman Page said the proposed policy presented was not approved, the Committee will maintain the Ordinance that was adopted.

Yard Sale Ordinance

Chairman Page said they voted to waive the fees for yard sales. He said he would have the new Ordinance ready for adoption at the May Council Meeting.

Councilman Allman made a motion to waive all yard sale fees until the Ordinance is adopted. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Chairman Page said a permit is still needed, but fees are free.

Councilman Nash asked how is this policed. Councilman Allman said if you open a business in your front yard, then it would get policed.

Cash Handling Policies/Procedures

Chairman Page said they were working on policies to provide to Council and staff, but was still ongoing.

Insurance – met 3-4-26 – minutes included in March’s Council Packet

Health Insurance Renewal

Chairman Page said the Committee recommended staying with the current provider, The Local Choice in the amount of \$910,236.96. He said an RFP would be issued again next year. He said an RFP was issued this year, and The Local Choice was the only proposal received, and has to be renewed by April 1, 2026.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the renewal of health insurance with The Local Choice in the amount of \$910,236.96. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Champion Cafeteria Plan

Chairman Page said he read the binder, and everything seems to be in order. He said staff provided the information needed, and he had the statistics. He said 61 employees were submitted and 59 of them would see a net increase and 2 would see a decrease in pay. He said if all 59 employees signed up, the Town would save \$34,990.00, and the employees would be paid a cumulative amount annually of \$88,967.00. He said the extra money is currently being sent to the federal government, but this would be pre-taxed, so more would be distributed to the employee and employer.

Chairman Page said the Committee was recommending this be offered to the employees. He said if Council agrees to offer this, it would be up to Champion to educate the employees. He said an employee has to engage with the program to receive the benefits.

Councilwoman Wynn made a motion to allow Champion Cafeteria Plan to offer their services to Town staff, with Manager Vannoorbeeck authorized to execute necessary documents. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Property Insurance

This was not discussed.

Account & Finance – met 3-5-26 – minutes included in March’s Council Packet

FY27 Proposed Budget

Chairman Nash said no recommendations were made.

Buildings, Property & Cemetery – met 3-11-26 – minutes included in March’s Council Packet

Armory Policy

Chairwoman Williams said the Committee discussed the Armoy Policy and is attached for approval. She said we may have to tweak some things in the beginning.

Councilman Gormus read the portion on alcohol that was included in the policy.

Councilman Page said his only issue was having to be 21 years old to rent the building, he believed it should be 18 years old.

Councilman Gormus made a motion to approve the Armory Rental Request Form as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Councilman Nash asked if the rooms available were confirmed. Councilman Gormus replied yes, there is one room available.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Nash asked if the latest event would be 9:00 p.m., or can this be changed. Councilwoman Williams said it can be changed. Councilman Gormus added, we have to work around the colleges.

Mayor Dickens asked about basketball. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was meeting tomorrow with the Town's architect.

Councilman Miller said they had secured the Intermediate School Gym this summer for basketball for the kids. He said they may have league ball in the fall. He said the gym could not be used from December through March because of Rec Basketball. He said he was still waiting on the rules.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he met with the Town's insurance carrier, and if the Town is providing insurance, it has to be a Town sanctioned event.

Employment & Police – met 3-11-26 – minutes included in March's Council Packet

Salaries, Merits & Evaluations

Chairman Miller said this was discussion on the budget, so they are still waiting on that.

Chairman Miller said they met on March 26, 2026 to review applications for the Treasurer position. He said 12 applications were received, and they chose 6 to interview, and will bring the top 3 to Council for interviewing.

HR Renewal

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Bookkeeper Benson had an email that clarified the \$180.00 an hour. He said OneDigital agreed to honor that price through May, when the contract can renew.

Councilman Nash asked if staff felt comfortable with the job that had been done. Councilwoman Williams suggested doing a survey with the employees. Manager Vannoorbeeck said his experience had been positive.

Councilman Nash said he liked keeping prices in check, but this company is already trained. He said if we go with another company that will waste another 10 hours getting them on board. He asked if the Town could keep them and not bid out, if the price stays the same. Attorney Hubbard could not answer without seeing the contract.

Councilman Page suggested we send the agreement to Attorney Harf tomorrow.

Councilwoman Williams suggested we advertise the RFP, rather than waiting, if Council is considering a change.

Councilman Allman did not believe an RFP should be issued before reading the contract.

Councilman Allman made a motion, if need be, Manager Vannoorbeeck can issue an RFP for HR Services. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Mr. John Montoro – Status Update

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there was an email included from Mr. Montoro for audit preparation. He said Mr. Montoro was estimating an additional \$10,000.00.

Councilman Page hoped this issue will be fixed with the new software. Councilman Gormus believed Mr. Montoro should be on staff, since he has been on Council, Mr. Montoro's name has been in every quarter for money.

Councilwoman Williams made a motion to approve the additional \$10,000.00 for Mr. John Montoro as requested. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

Councilman Gormus asked where this money would come from. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town has \$90,000.00 in Professional Services. Councilman Page suggested using the money budgeted for the Treasurer position, that is not being used right now. He suggested using four weeks of Treasurer pay to lower the burden from Professional Services.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

2. 2026 Blackstone Tourism Committee

Mayor Dickens asked Council to appoint the Tourism Committee members as presented with the following changes. He said DBi has removed Mrs. Sallie Glenn, Mrs. Jenny Davis Bunn has resigned, and Mr. Billy Coleburn may have to step off.

Mayor Dickens said new members will be Mr. Carl Bassfield and Ms. Mae Tucker. He said the Committee would consist of Mr. Eric Nash, Mr. Chris Page, Mr. Carl Bassfield, Ms. Mae Tucker, Mr. Robert Thomas, Mrs. Lisa Johnson, Mr. William Clarke, Mr. Jerome Wilson, and Mr. Billy Coleburn.

Councilman Page made a motion to approve the additional members as presented.

Councilman Gormus asked what the purpose of this committee was in comparison to DBi, the Chamber or the Town itself. Mayor Dickens said to promote the Town and bring in more visitors. Councilman Gormus asked if that was what DBi does. Mayor Dickens believed DBi's focus was primarily in the Historic Business District. He said the Tourism Committee would go beyond that scope.

Councilman Nash said when we funded the DBi position, they are also supposed to reach out beyond the Historic Business District.

Mayor Dickens said we are trying to bring people in to show what we have to offer.

Councilman Miller said if we have a Tourism Committee, what will DBi do. Mayor Dickens said they help the Town with grants. Councilman Allman said Virginia Main Street is focused on the Town's Historic Business District. He said when the Town funded this position there was a portion to represent the tourism aspect for the entire Town. He said DBi is limited with the funds they can use that are given by Virginia Main Street.

Councilman Allman said DBi is the designated marketing organization for the County.

Mayor Dickens said Manager Vannoorbeeck recently met with DBi and was presented with proposals on the corridors that bring people into Blackstone.

Councilman Page believed the Tourism Committee would still be working with DBi. He said if the Committee wants to apply for a grant, they have to go through DBi as they are the DMO.

Mayor Dickens believed the Committee was more focused on events for tourism, where DBi has a more spread out focus.

Councilwoman Williams asked if the Tourism Committee would be taking their ideas to DBi, how will the public be informed. Councilman Page said the Tourism Committee was advisory, and would still have to get approval from Council.

Councilman Nash said he and Mayor Dickens have talked and the in the Mayor's words, the Committee has been a big nothing burger over 2-3 individuals' overreactions. Mayor Dickens said the Committee has done good work. Councilman Nash said the overreactions is why some people have resigned from the Committee.

Councilman Miller said it seems there is a problem between the Tourism Committee and DBi. Councilman Allman said he would not say that. Mayor Dickens said there was a misunderstanding.

Councilman Nash said it is a Town appointed committee, and Councilman Page pointed out that the meetings needed to publicly advertised and minutes needed to be done, as well as being subject to FOIA. He said the Committee did not feel comfortable, and removed themselves.

Councilman Page said it is the same as the IDA, BZA and Planning Commission, who are all volunteers and appointed. He said they were not notifying all the members where the meetings were.

The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Page said the motion did not dissolve the Committee; it just does not allow the new members to come on.

Councilman Gormus made a motion to dissolve the Tourism Committee. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Gormus said based on what we know about DBi, he believed there would still be events. He said he did not know what happened, but recognized the names, and could see some ingredients for challenges.

Councilman Page asked for clarification, the motion was to dissolve the Tourism Committee and delegate tourism, which is part of the Town's goals, to DBi. Councilman Gormus said that was included. Councilman Page said DBi was only a DMO, which means they have to sign off on anyone else that files for a tourism grant. He said the DMO is only for the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

Ms. Beverly Ambs said the DMO was created when Zack Whitlow was with DBi.

Councilman Allman said DBi has no problem with continuing the tourism initiative, to continue the great work members from the Tourism Committee were doing.

Councilman Page said he mentioned to DBi two years in a row about the Virginia Tourism Corporation Marketing Grant, and it has not been taken advantage of. He said the Tourism Committee was trying to take advantage of this. Councilman Allman said DBi has no problem continuing the efforts. He added this was a great leadership initiative by the Mayor, and wanted to keep those involved comfortable.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

3. Ditchline Adjacent to Armory

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Council previously approved the Town doing work on some private ditches. He said in the packet is the cost estimate for materials to handle the improvements at 410 Fourth Street. He said Town staff can do this project. He said curb and gutter was installed, and the property now has drainage issues.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said B&B Consultants met with the son-in-law on Friday, and was still comfortable with their plans for the property.

Councilman Page asked where the funds would come from. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would have to provide an appropriation next month.

Councilman Gormus made a motion to proceed with the drainage work at 410 Fourth Street, pending an appropriation for the funds.

Councilwoman Williams asked about the concerns on Luke Street. Manager Vannoorbeeck said this was on Town property and there is no issue with that. He said his plan was to bring ditch requests monthly to Council for approval, specifically if there is a dollar figure included over \$10,000.00.

The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

Councilman Page questioned why the Town would not do the ditches that staff can do first, is the ditch on Fourth Street a priority. Manager Vannoorbeeck said likely the Town caused this with the installation of curb and gutter.

Councilman Nash said before the Town does any projects, think about what the future could be.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the other ditch on private property, does not have a dollar figure other than Town labor, and is next to the Armory. He said the water is not staying in the ditch, and running across the new parking lot, and affecting the Town's property.

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town's attorney is still working on 819 and 915 Falls Street. He said there is information at Council's desk from the attorney.

2. Meals Tax / Lodging Tax

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Meals Tax report did not include a restaurant that they have collected on three months, but they were multiple months behind, and he did not know why.

Mayor Dickens asked if this was because of the health of the business, or poor bookkeeping. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he did not know. Mayor Dickens said he knew there was a business that had closed, and was notoriously late.

Councilman Gormus asked if any part of the process was followed with this restaurant since September. Manager Vannoorbeeck said they were notified, and the steps have started since he has been doing some treasurer work. He said Utility Billing Clerk Williams found this error, and they met with the business owner and they admitted they had not paid it. He said since then they have paid three months and are supposed to pay the current and a month delinquent each month to catch up.

It was clarified the delinquent business was included in this month's Meals Tax report.

Councilman Page said the business associated with Arts & Crafts; they cannot find them. He said they are on their do not allow list.

3. Street Improvement Projects

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Adams Construction is scheduled to begin on N. Main Street on April 13, 2026.

4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex

Manager Vannoorbeeck said included in the packet is the ad for asbestos removal for 410 and 615 S. Harris Street. He said he talked with the Fire Department about burning the debris after the asbestos abatement, but has not heard back.

5. Dillard Crawley Building – 114 S. Main Street

Manager Vannoorbeeck said included in the packet is the ad for fire alarm replacement and sprinkler repairs at the Dillard Crawley Building. He said this would be grant funded, and the Town has already provided their match by paying \$42,000.00 for the building, legal fees, and \$45,000.00 committed with architectural fees.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said one proposal was received from the RFP for developers of the Dillard Crawley Building. He said the proposal was from Waukeshaw Development. He said the proposal needed some work, and he would be meeting with DHCD to be sure his proposal was in line with their requirements. He said the proposal was presented as fee simple.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would email the proposal to Council.

6. Armory

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was meeting the architect tomorrow about installing basketball goals.

7. Weatherization

There was nothing to report.

8. Workforce Housing

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would provide a diagram of the proposed lots on Patterson Street at the April Council Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Surplus List – Old School Building

Manager Vannoorbeeck said these are all the items that were left in the old Cafeteria Building.

Councilman Page made a motion to approve the surplus list as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

2. Wrigglesworth Use – Nottoway Middle School Softball Team

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this request is from the Nottoway Middle School's softball team. He said Mr. Charlie Atkinson is the head coach and a Town employee. He said they are requesting to use the batting cages and Field 1 on Tuesdays from March 17, 2026 – April 28, 2026 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Councilman Nash said this is community use, and as long as Mr. Atkinson is using it off of Town time.

Councilman Miller said if the fields were being used, they agreed to line off the field. He said he would check into this tomorrow.

Council agreed to let Manager Vannoorbeeck handle these requests in the future.

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

1. Cash Reconciliations

Mayor Dickens referred this to the Health & Ordinance Committee.

2. Security Badges/Keys

Mayor Dickens referred this to the Health & Ordinance Committee.

3. Digital Security

Mayor Dickens referred this to the Health & Ordinance Committee.

4. Proposed Compensation for Elected Officials

Mayor Dickens referred this to the Account & Finance Committee. He said he would provide his proposal to Account & Finance, and believed it was affordable. He said there is only a window for this, every four years.

5. Code Enforcement Ordinances

Mayor Dickens said for Health & Ordinance, he wanted them to look into clutter and Code Enforcement Ordinances. Councilman Page believed the ordinances were old, and thought the State had given more authority.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said staff sends letters out quite often. He said some people comply, and others we have to issue a summons.

MAYORS MINUTE:

1. Mural Program

Mayor Dickens said he met with Mrs. Sallie Glenn of DBi and there is a Mural Program that Virginia Main Street has offered. He said they have looked at several buildings throughout Town, and included in the packet are renderings that look like a postcard.

Councilman Allman said most of DBi's mission statements involve our relationship with service members and support contractors. He said this idea is called Letters to Home, that originated from Camp Pickett back in the day.

Councilman Allman said this is a T-Mobile Grant that had been applied for, with no match. He said with the amount of money, they hoped to get 3-4 murals done.

Mayor Dickens said he was asked to provide a letter of support for this effort.

Councilman Page said this was a good idea, and asked if there was anything available for all around Town. Councilman Allman said they were checking into more, they wanted 10-15 around Town.

Mayor Dickens believed there was another program that Manager Vannoorbeeck liked for the entrances into Town. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was invited to a Small Area Planning Grant presentation that looked good for the Town.

Mayor Dickens believed Blackstone was a progressive town on a lot of fronts, and something like this adds to the flavor. He said he liked seeing efforts like this come to fruition. He wanted to see the Town be progressive across the board, which is why he is proposing a compensation adjustment. He said whoever will sit in council seats in the future may not be as well off as us up here.

POLICE REPORT:

There was nothing reported.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Mr. William Berry

Mr. Berry asked if there were alternatives to the murals, what was provided looked like we were being dragged back 70 years. Councilman Allman said what was provided was put together by those doing the planning grant. He said there would be lots of people in the decision making process. He said what was provided tonight were just examples.

Mrs. Tyler Scott

Mrs. Scott said Blackstone was a charming, small town, and she wants to keep it looking charming. She did not believe the murals were the look of a historic small town, and hoped the public would have some say so.

Mrs. Scott said we need to push tourism, we live in an area rich with history

Mrs. Scott said with respect to Council's hard work, she is a taxpayer and did not believe anyone on council should be making \$10,000.00 a year with benefits. She said this should not be a full time job, it is just your way of contributing to the community. She said if you are doing this for the money, then maybe you shouldn't be doing it. She hoped the public would have a say in this.

Councilman Miller asked where \$10,000.00 came from. Mrs. Scott said someone told her that. Mayor Dickens said that is not true. He said what he is proposing would be reasonable.

Councilman Nash said to address tourism, all citizens need to have pride. He said people should not just rely on council for tourism; it starts with the businesses.

Mr. Allen Queen

Mr. Queen asked about the compensation increase, is this on the ballot. Mayor Dickens replied no, this cannot be proposed during the four year term, but during an election year, it can be proposed for the new slate. Councilman Page said if approved, this would not go into effect until the new council takes office January 1, 2027.

Mr. Queen said in his opinion, raises should be on the ballot because it is the taxpayer's money, and they should be making the decision. Councilman Allman did not disagree, but said Virginia makes it hard to get a referendum question on the ballot.

CLOSED SESSION:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711-A

- 3/ Acquisition or Disposition of Real Property – Airport Property
- 7/ Legal Matters

Councilman Page made a motion to go into Closed Session for (3) 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, and (7) Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Miller made a motion to certify that to the best of each member’s knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened, were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Page made a motion authorizing the Town to retain Milberg Coleman Bryson Phillips Grossman, LLC, Bryson Harris Suci & DeMay, PLLC, and Napoli Shkolnik, PLLC for the national PFAS settlement claims. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Dickens said at the Chamber Dinner, he was presented a plaque on behalf of the Town for their honorary membership for 2025. He said this is a lifetime membership.

Mayor Dickens officially presented the plaque to the Town of Blackstone, on behalf of the Blackstone Chamber.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Dickens adjourned this meeting at 9:50 p.m.


MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

April 20, 2026 APPROVED AND ADOPTED


TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA