

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, October 20, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

There Were Present:

Mayor: Lafayette Dickens

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

Town Staff: Philip Vannoorbeeck, Town Manager; Jennifer Daniel,
Town Clerk; Sam Murphy, Police Chief; Zac Beares, Fire
Chief; Karen Morris, Treasurer

Town Attorney: Attorney Harf - Zoom

Those Absent: Lloyette Wynn

Mayor Dickens called the October Council Meeting to order.

Reverend Allen delivered the Invocation.

Mayor Dickens led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES:

Councilman Miller made a motion to dispense with reading and approve as presented minutes from the Special Called Meeting on September 10, 2025 and the Regular Council Meeting on September 15, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Councilman Page made a motion to move Unfinished Business #1 – Accounting Software to the Visitors section of the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

VISITORS:

Ms. Bess Gregory – Water/Sewer Leak

Mayor Dickens said Ms. Gregory would not be in attendance tonight, and asked if it could be discussed without her. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was not prepared to discuss without her here.

Clerk Daniel asked about penalties and interest. Manager Vannoorbeeck said we can go back and waive after hearing from her if needed.

Council agreed to table this issue.

Mrs. Sallie Glenn – Tourism Committee Requests

Mrs. Glenn said she was the Executive Director for DBi, as well as the Tourism Coordinator for Blackstone. She said with her was the Chair of the Tourism Committee, Mr. Bob Thomas.

Mrs. Glenn said they were looking to have a Curator, part time, for the museums. She said this person would provide the history and give tours to help increase foot traffic. She said this person would be hired at \$15.00 an hour for 20 hours a week. She said we realize we missed the budget planning, the Tourism Committee was not formed at that time. She said from January to the end of the fiscal year would be approximately \$7,800.00.

Councilman Miller said on behalf of the Employment & Police Committee, they had not received any information on this. He asked this request be referred to his committee. Councilman Miller said he would discuss further with Mrs. Glenn for the Committee.

Councilman Page believed this position should be more a Tourism Director, to include tours, booking the Armory, and getting schools involved.

APPROPRIATIONS:

Appropriation #4 – Council = \$5,000

Councilman Page made a motion to approve the appropriation as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Mrs. Glenn said the Tourism Committee and DBi are working on Grand Illumination, and a committee member has secured an outfit from Richmond for a train display. She said they can be here December 12th and 13th. She said the committee member is working on having some vendors, but Mrs. Glenn did not have any information on this. She asked for use of the Armory for those two days.

Councilman Miller asked if the Town was ready for events in the Armory. Councilman Page said this is the Tourism Committee, so it is just the Town using their own building.

Councilman Gormus asked the times of the train display. Mrs. Glenn did not know the times yet.

Councilman Allman made a motion to approve use of the Armory for the Tourism Committee for a train display on December 12th and 13th, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Accounting Software – Mr. Riley Davis – RDA Systems – attended by Zoom

Councilman Page said this is what the Software Committee put together, which included himself, Councilman Allman and Treasurer Morris.

Councilman Page said we met with four different companies, including Bright, who the Town currently has. He said we are making a recommendation, so there is a Service Agreement from RDA Services at Council's desk. He said on Page 38, it shows costs, there were no page numbers on the document provided.

Councilman Page said currently the Town pays Bright \$37,000.00 annually, and facing a \$60,000.00 hardware upgrade starting January 31, 2026. He said the Committee decided to get rid of the hardware, and not continue to pay maintenance. He said they believed a web based program would be better and more secure.

Councilman Page said RDA Systems would handle all finance, revenues, bank reconciliations, and offer a better customer experience. He said it would be a \$73,000.00 implementation fee, which will take roughly 10 months. He said Phase 1 would start in March 2026, if procured rather quickly, and Phase II would be July 1, 2026, and be fully operational by the fall of 2026. He said there would be an annual license agreement of \$20,000.00, which is \$17,000.00 less than what we are paying Bright currently. He said this would increase annually with a cap of 8%.

Councilman Page said if the Town decided to go with RDA Systems, payments are made in a schedule, at contract signing the Town would pay 25%, \$18,250.00, after the initial data load another \$18,250.00 would be due. He said the start of user training would be \$18,250.00 due, when the Town goes live \$10,950.00 will be due, then after 60 days live, \$7,300.00 will be due.

Councilman Page said RDA Systems comes highly recommended from other counties, and all references were checked.

Councilman Gormus asked what other towns and counties use RDA Systems. Councilman Page said he spoke with Mr. Morgan Quicke who was with Richmond County, and he spoke highly.

Councilman Nash asked what package would the Town be getting. Mr. Davis from RDA Systems said they don't want the Town to pay for anything they will not use, so it was quoted with the Core Package and a Revenue Package. Councilman Page believed it would be a mixture of the Core and Plus Package.

Councilman Page said the agreement asks the Town to set aside \$15,000.00 for customization, if needed. Councilman Page said staff and the committee were very thorough during the demonstrations about the Town's needs so it should limit customizations.

Councilman Allman asked once the switch was completed, is there a need for the Town's servers for RDA's software. Mr. Davis replied, no sir, staff will have access as long as there is WIFI.

Councilman Allman asked Treasurer Morris if the Town would need servers for any other systems, such as DMV, etc. Treasurer Morris did not think so, nor did Mr. Davis. Councilman Page said DMV is web based.

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked if after January 31, 2026 the AS400 expires, would all information be transferred so the Town will not need the server. Councilman Allman said as of January 31, 2026, no matter what company the Town went with, that would not be possible. He said there are things you can do in the meantime to back up the data, where there may be a small lapse in service but accounts would not be lost.

Councilman Page said according to Mr. Davis, they can take all data and move to another web based program, a ghost system.

Councilman Nash asked how many years are we considering transferring. Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town started with Bright in 1992. Mr. Davis said it depends on what the Town wants to do. He said they discussed revenue would be six years. Councilman Allman said we can keep the information on a hard drive in a safe.

Mr. Davis said they have a camp site, which will be next to the site of live data, and can store from the 1980s.

Clerk Daniel asked if this would be an extra charge. Councilman Page replied yes, roughly \$4,000.00 a quarter. Councilman Nash said so that is to get the Town through the time period.

Councilman Nash said he would like to see what this looks like, especially on the customer side. Councilman Allman said he would like to have another meeting to show demonstrations.

Councilman Gormus asked what the drop dead date was to commit. Mr. Davis said if an agreement is reached by November, they can be done by February.

Councilwoman Williams asked about the training, is this done in person or remotely. Councilman Page said they discussed a mixture of in person and online because this is going to be ten months of training. Mr. Davis said the training goes much smoother online. He said with the revenue training, you will want someone onsite to train.

Councilman Allman said the Town has recently had some glitches with reconciliation, and during the presentation Mr. Davis said it would be easier with RDA Systems. Mr. Davis said this may be something to show during the demo.

Councilman Gormus said if the Town goes with RDA Systems, is there a simulated bill that we can share with citizens, so they will know what it looks like beforehand. Mr. Davis said this was discussed during the live meetings, coming up with a plan and releasing what is to come.

Council agreed to continue this meeting to Wednesday, October 29, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. for the RDA demonstration.

Treasurer Morris explained the problems she had dealt with through Bright.

Councilman Allman asked that anything staff does routinely, to get a list for the demonstration.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Beares said the Radios were in. He thanked Manager Vannoorbeeck for getting the hydrant marking off the ground. He said they were still waiting on the diesel exhaust piping to complete this project.

Chief Beares said they applied for a \$100,000.00 grant through VDFP to assist with turnout gear. He said they also applied for a \$30,000.00 through VDFP for equipment and gear. He said neither of the grants have a match.

Chief Beares said they did a live fire training at the Fire Training Grounds last month. He said they also had their Family Fun Day at the Fire Training Grounds.

Chief Beares said the Red Cross was able to collect 31 units of blood last month.

Chief Beares said they currently have three members participating in an EMT class in Victoria. He said their Tanker was still out of service, so Crewe has loaned theirs. He said the Tanker is a 2016, and the tank is covered under warranty, only paying \$1,000.00. He said Pierce is charging \$10,000.00 to take the tank out to repair it.

Chief Beares said their Open House was a great success, roughly 100 citizens. He said they were doing a poster contest with the best getting a fire truck ride to school at Blackstone Primary.

Chief Beares said the Food Truck Rodeo scheduled for last week was cancelled, and they are now asking it be rescheduled to the third or fourth week of November. Councilman Page suggested the third week.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Fire Department's Food Truck Rodeo for a day in November. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Chief Beares announced the years of service.

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

ALREADY PAID:

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the bills that have already been paid in the amount of \$482,515.65. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Councilman Nash asked about the Verizon Wireless bill for \$1,045.00, it says cell phone, he hoped it was cell phones. He said an employee text him, and clarified it was for cell phones, plural.

Councilman Page asked about CareRing Health for \$2,802.00. Clerk Daniel said the company did not figure their business license correctly, and paid too much, so this is their refund.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

TO BE PAID:

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve as presented; the bills not yet paid in the amount of \$474,774.45. The motion was seconded by Councilman Page.

Councilman Nash asked about \$300.00 from VML/VACo. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that was the first invoice sent from Mr. John Montoro. He said Mr. Montoro was here today. Councilman Nash asked how long the process would be to wrap up the reconciliation. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not know.

Councilman Nash believed we wanted reconciliations completed prior to implementing new software. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it has to be; he did not think Mr. Montoro knew how to use the new software.

Councilman Page said ultimately the new software will do reconciliations quickly. Clerk Daniel asked what happens if the Town transfers the old number into the new system. Councilman Allman believed the new system would find the errors.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

APPROPRIATIONS:

Appropriation #1 – Water/Sewer = \$43,548.35

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this was for a sewer line that backed up on FASTC. He said during construction they filled in the sewer line with concrete and rubble, and finally backed up in the driving track area. He said Lee's Excavating did the repair work, and FASTC reimbursed the Town.

Councilman Page made a motion to approve the appropriation as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Appropriation #2 – General Fund-Armory= \$70,667.84

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this money was expected last fiscal year, and are still drawing it down. He said these are Tobacco Commission funds to purchase kitchen equipment at the Armory.

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

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Appropriation #3 – Water/Sewer = \$42,842.05

Manager Vannoorbeeck thanked Transit Director Wilkinson for the great job submitting to FEMA for the sewer break. He said the Town still had not received all the ice storm money.

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

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Appropriation #4 – Council = \$5,000

This was approved earlier in the meeting.

Appropriation #5 – Airport = \$10,800

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town applied for aviation grant money for signage at the Airport. He said this is the first amount being drawn down.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the appropriation as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no Committee Meetings to report on.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Accounting Software

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

2. Task Order #3 – B&B Consultants – Raw Water Line

Manager Vannoorbeeck said three documents were included in the packet. He said B&B Consultants Task Order is in the amount of \$797,480.00, and planned to be paid with grant funds in the amount of \$1,351,000.00. He said this includes design, inspections and instruction administration. He said this is a \$9 Million project.

Manager Vannoorbeeck was not sure the grant would cover the \$206,800.00 for resident project representative services. He asked the motion reflect if this is not covered by grant, it is not included.

Councilman Page asked what construction phase meant for \$147,500.00. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that is contractors asking for progress payments and engineers handling requests from contractors.

Councilman Nash asked if this Task Order was within budget of the \$9 Million project. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it is included.

Councilman Page made a motion to approve Task Order #3 with B & B Consultants in the amount of \$797,480.00 for the raw water line, contingent on granting funding. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck said included in the packet is an email from the Virginia Department of Health advising the letter included is considered the contract.

3. DHCD – IRF – 114 S. Main Street

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is a contract between the Town and DHCD for IRF. He said this is a \$475,000.00 grant, and if the Town does not partner with someone else, the Town has to pay this back. He planned for a private developer to put this money up.

Councilman Page asked if any of the match could be in-kind, as Town employees have been working in the building. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed in-kind could be used, but would not make up the \$475,000.00.

Councilman Nash said it may be that the Town won't use the entire \$475,000.00.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said there would be some match from the Town, as we have purchased the building at \$42,500.00. He said Council authorized him to enter into agreement with an architect at \$45,000.00, which was not eligible for grant funds.

Councilman Nash did not want the costs to be close to \$1 Million for a developer to purchase. Councilman Allman believed the building would be appraised for the sale value.

Councilman Miller made a motion to authorize Mayor Dickens to execute the contract between DHCD and the Town for \$475,000.00 in grant funds for the Dillard Crawley Building at 114 S. Main Street. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Councilman Gormus said by signing the contract, the Town is committing they will match the \$475,000.00, though we don't know where those funds will come from. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that is correct.

Clerk Daniel clarified a developer would not have to pay \$475,000.00 for the building, they would just have to do \$475,000.00 worth of work to match the grant.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would like to get the roof started, and other repairs then solicit an RFP, and hoped to issue something by January.

4. Award Bid – Tree Removal – Fort Avenue

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this was part of the Fort Avenue sewer replacement. He said this includes cutting down 11 pine trees. He said the low bid was from J-Bird's Tree Service for \$5,000.00.

Councilman Nash made a motion to award the low bid to cut down 11 pine trees at the intersection of Fort and S. West Avenue in the amount of \$5,000.00 to J-Bird's Tree Service. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

5. DEQ – Fort Avenue/Forest Drive Force Main – Revolving Loan Fund

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this is a \$4,780,078.00 sewer project to replace the force main on Forest Drive and install sewer on Fort Avenue. He said the Town had been approved for a loan for the full amount by DEQ. He said the Town would continue to look for grants.

6. SCADA Upgrade

Manager Vannoorbeeck said as part of the reconductoring project, the first phase is replacing the electric SCADA System. He said the estimated cost is \$130,000.00, and asked to solicit bids.

Councilman Gormus asked if the Town currently had a SCADA System. Manager Vannoorbeeck replied, yes.

Councilman Page made a motion authorizing Manager Vannoorbeeck to solicit bids for the new electric SCADA System. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

7. Drainage Improvements – 410 Fourth Street

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this was on private property. He said if a contractor does this work it is estimated at \$40,000.00. He believed Mr. Andre Hicks could do the work.

Councilman Allman asked if the piping could be cut back from what is shown on the drawings that are included. He suggested the piping end at the ditch in the alley. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he only knew of getting the water to the ditch on Lunenburg Avenue. Councilman Nash asked why we couldn't get it to the curb and gutter in the front of the house. Manager Vannoorbeeck said that is the problem now, because it flows by gravity.

Councilman Gormus asked why this was coming up again. Manager Vannoorbeeck said because there is a new house getting ready to be constructed next door. Councilman Gormus said this request is for economic development, previous requests were because the Town gave their word it would be done. He added this is the same situation as Mr. Armes, which was caused by Town work being done.

Councilman Miller said Council has said they would not be going on private property. Councilman Gormus added until the Armes ditch was fixed. He said he was one vote, but he was a nay until the Armes ditch was fixed.

Councilman Allman said one issue the Town created, the other is debatable.

Councilman Nash asked if this could be fixed with some regrading. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not think so. Councilman Nash said the curb and gutter work should not be at the cost of the homeowner.

Councilman Gormus made a motion to deny the request at 410 Fourth Street or anywhere until Mr. Phillip Armes' ditch is done. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Page made a substitute motion to approve having Town staff do the repairs at 410 Fourth Street. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Councilman Page said it may be worth revisiting the Armes ditch.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

8. W. Entrance Road & Hungarytown Road – Boundary Adjustment

Manager Vannoorbeeck said mapping was included for the two boundary adjustment requests. He said there are three areas, but two are being requested by property owners. He said the third area; there is already an agreement with Nottoway County for the Nottoway Commons property.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the two main issues are on W. Entrance Road and Hungarytown Road. He said there is a 17 lot subdivision request on W. Entrance Road. He said the majority of the property is outside the Town's electric system area. Councilman Nash said it makes sense because the property already abuts the Town.

Councilman Nash said if utilities were left out of Town, the Town would get the extra 50% surcharge for water and sewer.

Councilman Gormus asked if costs had been discussed with the property owners.

Attorney Harf told Council, annexation is an involved process.

Councilman Gormus said the time and money that could be spent to make this happen, the juice was not worth the squeeze. Councilman Allman disagreed, he believed this was an opportunity to get significantly more housing.

Manager Vannoorbeeck believed with no opposition, the cost of annexation would be roughly \$10,000.00 each.

Councilwoman Williams said it was great having new houses being built, but nobody can afford \$1,800.00 a month. Councilman Page said the more houses being built, the lower the payments go. He said you have to outbuild demand. Councilwoman Williams suggested working with the developers for more reasonable rentals.

Councilman Allman said to make housing more affordable in Blackstone, supply has to be increased.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he would talk with the property owners making the requests to see if they will share in the costs. He asked this be on the Agenda at the upcoming Continued Meeting.

Councilman Allman asked for the current property owners, could the Town grandfather some of the privileges they already have. He said property owners between the requests have made significant investments, and their game management and hunting privileges could be lost in the boundary adjustment. He asked if there could be exceptions for their agriculture and wildlife management. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed if the predominant use was agriculture, it could continue.

ON-GOING PROJECTS:

1. Dilapidated Buildings

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we are still working on houses on Falls Street. He said Velvet Textile was looking rough, and would be taking action.

2. Meals Tax / Lodging Tax

Manager Vannoorbeeck asked Treasurer Morris about Pizza Hut, did they not pay everything. Treasurer Morris said there is still a balance, they owe for last month.

3. Street Improvement Projects

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the paving on S. Main Street was complete. He said the surface treatment in the west end was complete.

Councilman Page said the turn lane going into Walmart has 3 large holes in the new asphalt. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed that may be water meters.

Councilman Gormus said the new roads would look better with the yellow curbing.

4. Wrigglesworth Sports Complex

There was nothing to report.

5. Taylor Bottom Block Grant

Manager Vannoorbeeck said we are waiting on a response that had been submitted.

6. Armory

Mayor Dickens referred the Armory Usage Policy to the Buildings, Property & Cemetery Committee.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the parking lot had been approved for payment from the engineer.

7. Weatherization

Councilman Gormus said cold weather is coming, and to his knowledge, nothing weatherization had been done this year. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Council wants to focus on smaller projects, and more projects. He said once they get into a home, they find out the house is worse than expected.

Councilman Gormus believed the Weatherization Program needed to be defined. He said in a few months people will be coming in here with high utility bills.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the scope needed to be widened to rentals, because that is where the problems are. He said currently we only do owner occupied. Councilman Miller did not think we wanted to extend the program to rentals.

Councilman Gormus said doing nothing is not the answer, there are people in need. Councilman Allman suggested doing a social media campaign to educate people on setting their thermostats.

Councilman Page said we can correct rental problems by enforcing the rental inspections. Manager Vannoorbeeck said heating is not part of rental inspections.

Councilwoman Williams suggested letting the property owners decide what work they want done. Clerk Daniel suggested setting a \$10,000.00 limit per house. Manager Vannoorbeeck said what good is working on a house if the roof leaks.

8. Workforce Housing

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he signed two contracts to sell two of the homes, and believed he would sign the third contract this week.

Councilman Page asked to have photos inside and out with the workforce houses for the website. He suggested having a link for people to apply.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said once these three workforce houses are sold, the Town will walk away with over \$400,000.00. He said the Town committed itself to building one workforce house for the Taylor Bottom project.

Councilman Nash asked why there were concrete driveways versus gravel driveways. Manager Vannoorbeeck said Mr. Earl Howerton included that in the specifications for building the houses.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Reappoint Planning Commission Members

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Planning Commission members as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Allen Queen – 1 Year, Tom Watkins – 2 Years, Denis McCarthy – 3 Years, Edwin Nash – 4 Years, and Nathaniel Miller as the Town Council Representative.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

2. Genesis Utility Inc. – Access Agreement - Airport

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this company came to him looking for an area to store some equipment. He said Genesis Utility is running fiber line down Route 40, from here to McKenney. He said at the Airport there is a vacant piece of property, and they will have to purchase water from the Town.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said with the recently purchased airport property, in exchange for the equipment storage, Genesis would install fiber optic conduit at no cost. He said this would be (2) inch and a quarter conduit, and run a string through it.

Councilman Nash said if they are running fiber on Route 40, will they not splice it and go to the Airport. Manager Vannoorbeeck said UAV Pro and Textron already had fiber, that’s why the Town rejected the grant.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the storage location would be the grassy area near the railroad tracks.

Councilman Page made a motion authorizing Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the Access Agreement with Genesis Utility, Inc., with Attorney Harf’s revisions. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

3. DMV – Copy Paper Agreement

Manager Vannoorbeeck said DMV used to deliver copy paper to the Town on a regular basis, and now they want to provide a stipend. He said to do this the agreement enclosed needs to be signed.

Councilman Nash made a motion authorizing Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the Agreement for Funds for Copy Paper. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Dickens asked how much would be provided. Manager Vannoorbeeck did not know. He clarified this would be money the DMV reimburses the Town for paper use.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

4. Seay Park – Blackstone Primary – Reading/Math Night

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this request is from the Blackstone Primary School for use of Seay Park for tomorrow.

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

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

5. Letter Agreement – Dept. of Army – Water/Wastewater

Manager Vannoorbeeck said this process originally started in 2020 for more capacity at the Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant. He said included in the packet is a Letter Agreement reducing Pickett's capacity from 1.5 million treatment capacity to 1.1 million.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said the Town has a 2 million gallon a day wastewater treatment plant, and Pickett reserved 1.5 million. He said the Town added recirculation pumps that gave the Town more capacity at 2.2 million, with the County paying for these modifications.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said with water, the permit is 9 million gallons a day, but the plant can only do 3.28 million gallons.

Councilman Page said since most of the raw water line runs through Pickett, can the increased funds from Pickett go towards that. Manager Vannoorbeeck believed it was a stretch, but he may be able to make sense of it.

Councilman Nash asked about the \$7,900.00 reimbursement. Manager Vannoorbeeck said it is a one-time fee from the Corp of Engineers. Councilman Nash asked this be paid from the water/sewer funds allocated for Pickett.

Councilman Nash made a motion authorizing Manager Vannoorbeeck to execute the Letter Agreement as presented and pay the Corp of Engineer's fee of \$7,900.00 from the water/sewer reserves from Pickett. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gormus.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

6. Tourism Zone Request – NEC Investments

Manager Vannoorbeeck said NEC Investments has made a request for the Cross Thomas House, the Event Center and the Deco Den.

Councilman Nash said Council in 2021 approved his tourism zone application, but was never given. He said that request was for the duplexes, and agreed they did not meet the criteria. He was requesting the three properties now, but excluding the duplexes.

Councilman Gormus said in 2021, Council self-proclaimed themselves as a Tourism Zone without notifying the State of Virginia, because Blackstone is not on the list. He believed Mrs. Sallie Glenn with DBi was looking into this now.

Mayor Dickens said the optics are not the best in the world. Councilman Nash said those that talk, do they put forth the money to bring tourism to Blackstone. He said just in the Event Center and the Cross Thomas House he has invested \$1.5 Million, why should he as a citizen of Blackstone not get the same benefits. He said he would not push the issue from the past, he should get a check, because it was approved. He said we should not pick and choose who gets it, when he makes the same investment.

Councilman Page believed we should treat businesses fairly when they make investments for tourism.

Councilman Page made a motion to approve the Tourism Zone request from NEC Investments for 1112, 1302 and 1312 S. Main Street. The motion was seconded by Councilman Allman.

Clerk Daniel asked what year would be this effective. Councilwoman Williams suggested not going back, to start with this year.

Councilman Nash suggested Council rescind the motion from 2021. Councilman Gormus said if we go back and remove motions that didn't get action, it would be a list.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

7. Schwartz Tavern – Painting/Plasterboard

Manager Vannoorbeeck said Schwartz Tavern needed to be painted again, and he had the money set aside.

Councilman Miller made a motion authorizing Manager Vannoorbeeck to seek bids to repair the plasterboard inside and repaint the exterior. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Williams.

Manager Vannoorbeeck said he has had the building painted twice in the past 7 years.

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

8. Christmas Parade Requests – 12-12-25 @ 6:00 p.m.

Councilman Page said everything for the parade is the same as last year, the second Friday in December, starting at 6:00 p.m. He said they were requesting to have food trucks downtown. He asked for the annual \$1,000.00 donation to help with expenses for the Christmas parade. He also requested to waive the banner fee and Noise Ordinance.

Councilman Page said the Chamber was investing additional monies in the Parade to have it on TV in hopes of bringing others into Town. He said the Chamber has asked Mayor Dickens to be the Grand Marshal.

Councilman Nash made a motion to approve the Blackstone Chamber's Christmas Parade requests as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Miller.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

COMMITTEE REFERRALS:

There were no referrals.

MAYORS MINUTE:

Mayor Dickens said one thing that was asked to him while being interviewed for Mayor was what was his Policy. He said we all have to stand for something, and he believed we should all respect each other's point of view, even if we don't agree. He said we will accomplish more by focusing our efforts on the issue at hand, rather than debating our political views. He said must learn to disagree without becoming disagreeable with each other. He said big picture thinking is to be embraced, supported and encouraged. He said the beginning of wisdom lies in the realization that he did not have all the answers, and he cannot do it all on his own, so he has to rely on the entire Council. He said he recognizes people for what they bring to the table, and lean on their strengths in areas that can benefit the greater good. He said he strives to leave things better than he found them. He said he believes in giving more than taking. He believed actions speaks louder than words, but words should be carefully chosen. He said his desire is not to tear down, but to build up, but pruning is not the same as tearing down, because if done correctly it will yield greater fruits.

POLICE REPORT:

Councilman Nash said he got good reports on the cookouts.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Councilman Miller asked about the Dinwiddie Bus route. Manager Vannoorbeeck said he was trying to coordinate a way to incorporate into the Dinwiddie Route, picking up students from Virginia State. He said as part of the Town's MOU, we are trying to make bus routes available for students at VSU. He said we may have to use the Town's bus periodically.

CLOSED SESSION:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711-A

- 1/ Personnel – Sanitation
- 3/ Acquisition or Disposition of Real Property – School Buildings
- 6/ Legal Matters

Councilman Page 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 (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 (6) Discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nash.

Mayor Dickens asked all in favor or opposed:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Dickens asked for a Roll Call Vote:

VOTE:

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

Mayor Dickens continued this meeting to Wednesday, October 29, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Dickens adjourned this meeting at 10:30 p.m.

 MAYOR
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA

November 17, 2025 APPROVED AND ADOPTED

 TOWN CLERK
OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, VIRGINIA