

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
WORK SESSION MINUTES – 5:30 P.M.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – 7:00 P.M.
APRIL 28, 2015**

A WORK SESSION OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD AT CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA, ON APRIL 28, 2015 AT 5:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor R. Cord Hall; Samuel M. Bishop; Steve Huppert; Henry D. Showalter; Bradford J. Stipes; James W. Vanhoozier. ABSENT: None.

WORK SESSION

I. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR BARBER.

II. DISCUSSION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. Christiansburg Aquatic Center free passes.
2. Stricter enforcement of ordinances for building and site construction.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The work session was adjourned at 6:50 P.M.

---Adjourned until 6:00 P.M.---

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD AT CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA, ON APRIL 28, 2015 AT 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor R. Cord Hall; Samuel M. Bishop; Steve Huppert; Henry D. Showalter; Bradford J. Stipes; James W. Vanhoozier. ABSENT: None.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Barry Helms; Assistant Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Clerk of Council Michele Stipes; Town Attorney Theresa Fontana; Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie; Assistant to the Town Manager Adam Carpenetti; Director Nichole Hair; Director of Engineering and Special Projects Wayne Nelson; Assistant Director of Engineering Todd Walters; Director of Public Works Ricky Bourne; Superintendent of Public Works Jim Lancianese; Director of Human Resources and Public Information Becky Wilburn; Building Official Jerry Heinline; Director of Aquatics Terry Caldwell; Aquatics Service Manager Allison Zuchowski; Public Works Utility and Construction Division Assistant Superintendent Tommy Sullivan; Public Works Streets Division Assistant Superintendent David Sutphin; Police Chief Mark Sisson.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Proposed Water and Sewer fee increases for the Fiscal Year 2015 – 2016, effective June 1, 2015, in accordance with *Code of Virginia 15.2-2119 and 15.2-928*, as follows:

Water fees:

Minimum bill from \$19.00 to \$21.00 for the first 4000 gallons.
The next 96,000 gallons from \$5.50 to \$5.90 per 1000 gallons
The next 5,900,000 gallons from \$3.20 to \$3.50 per 1000 gallons
5/8 inch connection fee: from \$2500 to \$3000, larger meters based on cost plus \$3000

Sewer fees:

Minimum bill from \$ 28.00 to \$30.00 for the first 4000 gallons
Connection fee: from \$2500 to \$3000

Out of Town customer fees will be 50% higher.

There was no one to speak for or against the proposed increases.

2. Proposed Real Property tax rate increase from \$0.13/\$100 to \$0.16/\$100.

Robert Hodges asked for clarification on the reasons for the proposed real property tax increase. Mayor Barber responded that the increase would support customer services and protective services, and Councilman Stipes, member of the Finance Committee, added that the real property taxes would support several identified capital improvement projects, including improvements to the Police Department.

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR BARBER.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Minutes of April 14, 2015.
2. Monthly Bills.
3. Resolution in Recognition of National Police Week.
4. Resolution in Recognition of a citizen.

Councilman Hall made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.

III. RECOGNITIONS

1. Proclamation in Recognition of Water Safety Month. Mayor Barber read the Water Safety Month Proclamation and presented a copy to Aquatics Director, Terry Caldwell, and Aquatic Facilities Manager, Allison Zuchowski. Ms. Caldwell thanked Council for the proclamation which helps to bring water safety awareness to citizens.
2. Resolution honoring National Police Week. Mayor Barber read the resolution and presented a copy to Police Chief Sisson who thanked Council for bringing recognition to National Police Week.

IV. CITIZEN'S HEARING

1. MELISSA ALMOND AND RANDY BOND OF THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER TO ADDRESS COUNCIL IN RECOGNITION OF CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH. In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, Melissa Almond, Family Services Supervisor and board member of Children's Trust, also known as the Child Advocacy Center, spoke to Council about the child protective services the non-profit organization provides in the New River Valley. The main focus of Child Trust is to decrease the trauma of abuse by providing a child-friendly environment in which victims of abuse can tell their story only once or twice, instead of numerous times to numerous agencies. Child Trust works with local law enforcement, social services, and the court system to investigate allegations of abuse, prosecute perpetrators, and provide necessary services to victims and their families. Child Trust also works to educate the community on all forms of child abuse. Ms. Almond explained that to offer these programs, the organization relies on the financial contributions of individual localities. The operating budget of the Christiansburg location, which serves the New River Valley, is close to \$100,000 per year, with approximately \$32,000 of support coming from Roanoke's annual budget. All local donations stay within the New River Valley, and Ms. Almond said she envisions the Christiansburg site eventually becoming self-supporting.

Christiansburg Police Officer Randy Bond, who also serves on the Children's Trust board, spoke to Council about the important role the center plays in helping abuse victims and their families heal, and in prosecuting perpetrators of abuse. He explained how the multidisciplinary process works in addressing allegations of abuse, noting that the process was used 175 times in the New River Valley in the past four years. The organization is a part of the Christiansburg community, and Mr. Bond asked Council to consider providing financial support that would help them

to meet their financial goals. Ms. Almond reported that the organization recently acquired a service dog to assist with child interviews and she offered to give Council a tour of the center. Councilman Hall commented that, as an attorney who handles child abuse cases, he is personally familiar with the Child Advocacy Center and he stressed the importance of the organization as part of the multidisciplinary team that addresses cases of child abuse in the New River Valley.

2. **CHRIS TAYLOR OF NEW RIVER VALLEY COMMUNITY SERVICES TO ADDRESS COUNCIL IN RECOGNITION OF CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH.** In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, Chris Taylor, Assistant Director of New River Valley Community Services (NRVCS), addressed Council regarding the programs and services offered by NRVCS that are designed to provide a safe home environment and needed services to individuals and families affected by all types of abuse. The agency has on staff three psychiatrists, one medical doctor and one nurse, and has placed counselors in every school in the New River Valley, except two. The agency partners with a local farm to provide therapeutic equine services, and it also provides emergency services for individuals who are at risk of harming themselves or others. In-home services are available when needed. Mr. Taylor thanked Council for the opportunity to speak about the active role NRVCS plays in bringing important preventative programs and therapeutic treatments to the children and youth of the New River Valley. Councilman Hall thanked Mr. Taylor for his willingness to speak to Council about the services provided by NRVCS, then thanked all the speakers who addressed Council on behalf of Child Abuse Prevention Month and expressed his appreciation for Council's support in bringing awareness to child abuse. Mayor Barber thanked Councilman Hall for organizing the Town's recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month.
3. **MIKE MILLER TO ADDRESS COUNCIL REGARDING PROPERTY AT 100 WEST MAIN STREET.** Mr. Miller brought to Council his vision for developing a multi-purpose regional music, art, and cultural venue to the vacant church property at 100 West Main Street, in the ongoing effort to bring vibrancy and tourism to the downtown area. Mr. Miller provided Council with a visual rendering of the proposed redevelopment and explained how he and a group of volunteers, with guidance from Lisa Bleakley of the Tourism Committee, and the New River Valley Planning District Committee, have met weekly to discuss and develop a plan that includes a green room, art spaces, performance hall for Crooked Road type performances, restaurant, and a courtyard. Mr. Miller believes the venue would be financially successful because of ample parking availability, its location within the historic district, and its close proximity to two universities, I-81 and Route 460, the Crooked Road, and the Transamerica bike route. Another asset to its location is the five regions within a fifty mile radius that collectively hold a population of approximately 300,000 people. Mr. Miller offered the Lincoln Theater in Marion, Virginia as an example of a similar venue that has found success as a tourist destination. Investors would be necessary to meet the costs of the project, which were estimated to be approximately three million dollars, not including the cost to purchase the property, and operating costs. Mr. Miller asked for collaboration with the Town in advertising, grant writing, loan guarantees, and possible tax incentives and financial support. Fundraising efforts would also provide funds for the project. Mr. Miller reported that he sought public opinion about the proposed project on Facebook and received an overwhelmingly positive response with few concerns. Mr. Miller asked the Town to consider appointing a Council liaison to work with the volunteer committee on this project. Mr. David Hill, Roanoke resident and president of Hill Studios, reported that he provides consultation services for community development projects and he has worked with music, cultural, and historic development master plans. He explained to Council the processes necessary to make a redevelopment of this nature successful, using the Town of Floyd as an example of a successful cultural redevelopment. Mr. Hill has worked with Christiansburg in the past on the early parks and recreation master plan, and he stated that he believes the time may be just right for this type of redevelopment in Christiansburg, if implemented properly.
4. **REPRESENTATIVES FROM CHRISTIANSBURG INSTITUTE TO UPDATE COUNCIL ON A FINANCIAL SUPPORT REQUEST.** Mr. Bob Leonard, chairman of the board of Christiansburg Institute (CI), along with N. L. Bishop, who also serves on the board, addressed Council regarding ongoing strategic planning for the CI property, which was provided in the form of a handout and is attached to these minutes. Mr. Leonard reported on the board's ambitious goals to renovate the Edgar A. Long building at an estimated cost of two million dollars, which would be obtained through grant funding, contributions, and fundraisers. Mr. Leonard talked about the activities that were completed using the Town's contribution last year and shared goals for the year 2015-2016, noting that the Town's support has provided stability that has attracted other funding, including a significant contribution from an anonymous donor. In response to questions from Council regarding the usage of its annual contributions to CI, Mr. Leonard reported that for years the Town's contribution was CI's primary source of funding, which was used to support operating costs. The volunteer organization continues in its commitment to use available resources to move forward in revitalizing the CI property.

Mr. N. L. Bishop thanked Council for its continued annual support of CI and spoke about the quality education that students received from the institute, including his sister who went on to obtain a higher education. Mr. Bishop spoke to Council about the many stories of CI within the community and surrounding areas, stressing the historical importance of CI to many in the community, which served to establish the board's goal to maintain the historic nature of the institute during redevelopment. At Council's request, Mr. Leonard agreed to provide Council with a copy of the CI redevelopment timeline, noting that the board has worked with a consultant from North Carolina to develop a workable strategic plan. CI currently has enough funding to renovate the roof of the Edgar A. Long building, and Mr. Leonard reported that he expects a timeframe of two to three years for completion of renovations from the grant submission date. CI is actively seeking partnerships to help with funding renovations. Councilman Hall asked if the Town could assist with grant writing, which Mr. Leonard said would be greatly appreciated, along with assistance with planning and engineering preconstruction plans.

5. **RICKY BOURNE, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, TO UPDATE COUNCIL ON SNOW REMOVAL.** Ricky Bourne, Director of Public Works, thanked Council for the opportunity to speak and introduced Jim Lancianese, Field Operations Superintendent, Tommy Sullivan, Superintendent, and David Sutphin, Assistant Superintendent, who were integral to the snow removal operations. He then thanked Terry Caldwell, Director of Aquatics, and Brad Epperley, Director of Parks and Recreation, for providing employees who also helped with snow removal. Mr. Bourne reported to Council on the Public Works staffing structure and the types of snow events that require attention in the form of pre-treatment and roadway scraping. He explained the routing map and level of service classifications used for each event, along with the snow preparation process that includes weather monitoring, supervisor briefings, truck/equipment preparation, and operational staff notifications. Included in Mr. Bourne's report was a review of the equipment used in snow removal and a review of the actual events of the twenty-seven hour snow storm experienced in February 2014, during which the roads were completely cleared within sixty-six hours. During that particular event, the Public Works department fielded over two hundred telephone calls from residents, and cleared a total lane mileage of 280 miles, traveling approximately 4,000 miles because of the amount of snowfall. The goal of the department is manage any snow event within 48 hours. Councilman Huppert reported that numerous people contacted him to compliment the Town's snow removal process during this past winter's snow events. Councilman Bishop commented that he has heard a few complaints about the Town's snow scraping that blocked driveway entrances. Mr. Bourne noted that information has been provided on the website on how to shovel a driveway to minimize this from occurring. Council thanked Mr. Bourne for his report.
6. **CITIZEN COMMENTS.**
 - a. Linda Wurtzburger, owner of the Oaks Victorian Inn, spoke about the recent tree topping along Main Street. She provided Council with information about the harm topping causes trees and asked if the Town had consulted with an arborist prior to the tree topping. Ricky Bourne, Director of Public Works, stated that best practices guidelines are consulted prior to tree topping, and that he will get the details about the recent topping on Main Street. Mayor Barber noted that tree topping is usually done when public safety is a concern.
 - b. Tacy Newell, addressed Council in support of the concept of a cultural venue at 100 West Main Street proposed by Mike Miller. Ms. Newell said she grew up in a community with theatre of a similar fashion, and the theater is still an active, viable venue today. She believes that the proposed redevelopment meets many of the goals established in the Town's Vision 2020, and also meets the master plan goals for historic districts. Many individuals within the community are willing to volunteer time to develop, organize, and manage the redevelopment project, which would answer the demand for downtown events and provide revenue through real estate taxes and tourism dollars. She urged the Town to support the proposal and to assist in determining the feasibility of the redevelopment.

V. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. **REAPPOINTMENT OF DAVID FRANUSICH TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION.** Planning Director Nichole Hair reported that Mr. Franusich's meeting attendance is good and his contribution on the commission is an asset to the Town. Councilman Hall made a motion to reappoint David Franusich to serve another term on the Planning Commission, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.
2. **COUNCIL ACTION ON:**
 - a. Proposed ordinance amendment to Chapter 42 "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to definitions, conditional zoning, setbacks, off-sets for two-family dwellings and sidewalk requirements. The public hearing was held on March 24, 2015. Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to approve the proposed ordinance amendment,

seconded by Councilman Huppert. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – aye; Hall – aye; Huppert – aye; Showalter – aye; Stipes – aye; Vanhoozier – aye.

2. CONSIDERATION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE DRIVE TOURISM PROGRAM (CARRYOVER ITEM FROM APRIL 14, 2015). Council requested that Town Manager Helms invite Randy Rose, Senior Development Specialist for Partnership Marketing for the Virginia Tourism Corporation, and Lisa Bleakley, Montgomery County Tourism Director, to revisit Council regarding the Drive Tourism program.
3. IDEAS CONCERNING OPTIONS TO IMPROVE VACANT PROPERTIES. Councilman Showalter requested that Council begin discussions to address the properties in Town that have been vacant for a long period of time. Market Place and downtown vacancies were mentioned as a specific focus, and Councilman Showalter requested that the Town Attorney advise Council of its options for encouraging placement of businesses in existing vacant buildings. Councilman Huppert commented that Council worked with Montgomery County Economic Development last year to address the ongoing vacancy at Market Place, without satisfactory results. Town Attorney Fontana advised that the Town cannot single out locations for additional taxation, and as long as the owner of a vacancy is in compliance with Town ordinances, and the building is structurally sound, penalties cannot be imposed. Virginia does allow towns to register vacant buildings, but usually that is only done in cases where the owner is unknown. While nothing punitive can be done to address vacancies that are compliant with *Town Code*, Town Attorney Fontana noted that the Town can come up with creative measures to encourage businesses such as creating an enterprise zone. Ideally, the goal is to get tenants, not punish property owners. Town Manager Helms reported that there are plans for a new business to occupy the retail space next to Office Max in Market Place. Councilman Stipes commented that it is his professional opinion that the Town will not see Market Place developed until a more direct access into the property is created.
4. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE AGREEMENTS WITH THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DURING THE YEAR 2015. Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to adopt the resolution, seconded by Councilman Hall. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – aye; Hall – aye; Huppert – aye; Showalter – aye; Stipes – aye; Vanhoozier – aye. The resolution will become an annual action item on the reorganization agenda beginning in January 2016.

VI. COUNCIL REPORTS

1. Councilman Huppert expressed his appreciation for the presentations during tonight's meeting.
2. Councilman Showalter reminded Council of the upcoming New River Valley Regional Commission annual dinner in Floyd that will feature food trucks and honor awards.
3. Councilman Vanhoozier reported on the VT Knowledge Works event that he recently attended as a member of Council. The event was informational and included presentations from organizations that had won various types of research grants.
4. Councilman Hall expressed his appreciation for those who participated in bringing attention to Child Abuse Prevention Month. He then reported that on May 4th at the recreation center a community input meeting would be held to discuss development of the Truman Wilson property, and on May 16th a "Help Save the Next Girl" meeting will be held at the aquatic center from 4 – 6:00 P.M.

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORTS:

1. PROGRESS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:
 - The VDOT traffic study count at Quin W. Stuart Boulevard and Peppers Ferry Road is scheduled to begin this week.
 - Virginia is offering a grant for three school resource officers for four years at a cost to the Town of \$23,000. The officers must be placed in three different schools. Chief Sisson commented that currently the Police Department does not have the personnel to place school resource officers in the primary/elementary schools, although there is a D.A.R.E. officer at the elementary schools. The grant deadline is May 1st and Chief Sisson stated his support for the Town applying for the grant.
 - The Montgomery County Sheriff's Department will host the annual police officer memorial service on May 18th at 5:00 P.M.
 - The 2015 Roanoke Regional Equipment Rodeo was held last week with the following results: Dennis Minnick, refuse driver, 3rd place; Jason Price and Travis Lester both placed _____; and Town Manager Helms placed 7th in the executive mowing contest.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to bring before Council, Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 P.M., seconded by Councilman Hall. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor