

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL  
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 28, 2015 – 7:00 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 JULY 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; Human Resource Director/Public Information Officer Becky Wilburn; Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell; Police Chief Sisson; Sarah Belcher, Farmers' Market Manager; Chief Building Inspector Bill Aldridge; Crime Prevention Officer Phillip Townley.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. A Conditional Use Permit request by Matthew Hicks, agent for Andrews Roofing and Construction, LLC, for a single family residence at 100 Depot Street, N.E. (tax parcel 496 – ((15)) – 61A) in the B-3 General Business District. Town Manager Helms read the Planning Commission resolution recommending Town Council approve the issuance of the CUP with four (4) conditions. The Planning Commission vote was 10 ayes, 1 absent. Matthew Hicks explained his plans to redevelop a former commercial building into commercial on N. Franklin Street at street level with upstairs apartment rentals on a nearby property and his desire for single-family use at this location. Planning Commissioner Tacy Newell said she was the commissioner who was absent for the vote, but would have voted in support of the CUP had she been present. She too has redeveloped commercial buildings into apartment rentals and is looking forward to Mr. Hicks' redevelopment project.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR BARBER.**

**II. CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. Council Meeting Minutes of July 14, 2015
2. Monthly Bills
3. Approval of the agreement with the Virginia Army National Guard for the use of the armory facility.

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 – Abstain.

*Councilman Hall made a motion to amend the agenda to include Council discussion and action on the Conditional Use Permit request by Matthew Hicks for a single family residence at 100 Depot Street, N.E. Councilman Stipes seconded the motion and Council was polled as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye. The item was placed as item #1 under Discussions by Mayor and Council Members.*

**III. RECOGNITIONS:**

1. WILL RHODES EAGLE SCOUT SKATE PARK SHELTER (Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell). Terry Caldwell, Aquatics Director, introduced Eagle Scout Will Rhodes to Council and explained that he approached her two years ago to ask if the Town would be interested in a covered shelter at the Christiansburg Skate Park. She said yes and he

returned later with plans for the shelter, which he offered to build with help from others. Through much communication and collaboration with the Town, along with concrete donation by Chandler Concrete and the assistance of Public Works in digging holes, Will and his group built the shelter in April. Ms. Caldwell showed pictures of the completed shelter that was used during a recent skateboard competition attended by approximately one hundred spectators and forty-five skateboarders. Ms. Caldwell presented Will with a plaque of gratitude and appreciation on behalf of the Town of Christiansburg and the Christiansburg Aquatic Center. Will recently graduated from Blacksburg High and will be attending Virginia Tech in the fall. He was accompanied by his parents and sister.

**IV. CITIZEN'S HEARING:**

1. **SUSAN MILLER FROM MONTGOMERY COUNTY EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO ADDRESS COUNCIL.** Susan Miller introduced to Council the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program (MCEAP) started by Father Scott to assist people in need of basic living supplies. Ms. Miller, President of the Board, explained that the organization provides food items, clothing, shoes, and household items for the poverty-stricken and homeless populations, and also meets the basic needs of individuals recently released from jail. Beginning this year, MCEAP will provide some of the clothing items for the Montgomery County Christmas Store. MCEAP is in the process of purchasing the property at 308 West Main Street, which will provide high visibility, ample parking, and will allow for future expansion. The organization relies on the efforts of volunteers and Ms. Miller requested assistance from the Town and the community with clean-up and maintenance of the existing building prior to move-in. MCEAP also relies on donations and contributions from the community and it has begun an active campaign to raise \$200,000 over the next five years to help cover operational costs and the cost of purchasing the property. MCEAP is a volunteer based organization with only one paid staff position. The organization applies for small local grants, but its income is primarily from its thrift store sales. Ms. Miller stated that the organization is committed to the citizens of Christiansburg, Blacksburg, and Montgomery County, and wants to be a success for the benefit of each community. Ms. Miller thanked Council for its time.
2. **RICHARD BALLENGEE TO ADDRESS COUNCIL REGARDING NEW RIVER VALLEY AGENCY ON AGING.** Former Christiansburg mayor, Richard Ballengee, said it has been almost two years since he left his position as mayor and he is proud of the progress Council has made in leading the Town over the years. He came before Council to invite them to join the New River Valley Agency on Aging in celebrating the Town's representative on the agency, Scott Weaver. Mr. Weaver has been committed in his service on the agency for many years and during the agency's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on August 13, he will be recognized for his contributions and his service. Mr. Ballengee serves as the alternate representative and has attended the meetings since last fall. He briefly shared with Council the valuable services the agency offers that provide support and enhance the lives of the aging population. The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration will be held at the Christiansburg recreation center.
3. **CITIZEN COMMENTS:**
  - a. No comments.

**V. STAFF REPORTS:**

1. **UPDATE ON THE IT DEPARTMENT BY ASSISTANT TO THE TOWN MANAGER ADAM CARPENETTI.** Assistant to the Town Manager Adam Carpenetti provided Council with an update on the Town's information technology (IT). He began by explaining the importance of the IT department in making sure that the electronic operations within each Town department run smoothly and efficiently. The IT department is staffed by Charles Burris, IT Tech, and Eric Vaught, Systems Administrator, who handle approximately 1000 – 1200 service requests each year. Mr. Carpenetti provided Council with an overview of IT management by the numbers that include offices, users, desktop/laptop computers, servers, applications, mobile devices, and network devices, along with a breakdown of the number and location of service requests. The projects of the IT department during FY 14-15 included card access to Town Hall, network improvements, new storage area network, firewall replacement, among other important upgrades and program implementations. The department continues to look for ways to improve the security of mobile devices such as tablets and phones. Project goals for FY 15-16 include a network security penetrations test that would reduce the vulnerability of the Town's electronic systems. Mr. Carpenetti reported on the Town's radio communications system that operates twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week. He recognized the Town's radio technician, Pete Haislip, who provides management and installation of all radio communication devices, manages licenses, and responds to radio service requests. Mr. Carpenetti offered to answer questions of Council. Council expressed its appreciation for the update.
2. **UPDATE ON THE CHRISTIANSBURG FARMERS' MARKET BY SARA BELCHER, FARMERS' MARKET MANAGER.** Mr. Bill Alderige thanked Council, Mayor Barber, Town Manager Helms, Assistant Town Manager

Wingfield, Emilie Tydings, Kelly Scott from the Virginia Cooperative Extension Office, Pamela Ray of the New River Health District, Sarah Belcher, farmers' market manager, along with the members of the Farmers' Market Committee for working together to establish the Christiansburg Farmers' Market. The Town has now held twelve market days and he attributed the success of those days to Sarah Belcher, market manager, and the vendors. Sarah Belcher provided Council with an overview of the mission statement and the current organization of the market, and she recognized and thanked Assistant Town Manager Wingfield for his valuable assistance and support during the planning process. She explained her vision for the market as the place people want to be on Thursday evenings, a place that will bring vitality and life to the downtown area. The market opened on May 7 with approximately four hundred visitors and now has thirteen participating vendors. Council was provided a listing of current vendors and community partnerships that include the New River Health District, Department of Social Services, Downtown Christiansburg, Inc., Share the Spare, and others. Pam Ray of the New River Health District explained how their partnership puts money back into the Christiansburg community through a block grant that funds the advocacy of a healthy diet and lifestyle. The partnership with the Department of Social Services has allowed the market to participate in the SNAP program, opening the market to a wider community. Participating in the SNAP program also puts money back into the community. Ms. Belcher expressed her appreciation for Neal Turner and David Linkous who provided emergency preparedness signage for use in community. Council was provided with market highlights and a preview of upcoming events. Ms. Belcher spoke about the avenues of advertising through fliers, signs and banners, local media, and the internet, and she noted her goal of finding ways to reaching individuals not connected through the internet. Ms. Belcher then reviewed the revenue and expenditures of the market, along with items for future consideration including applying for non-profit status and the anticipation of a sustainability grant of \$25,000. Council expressed its appreciation for the update and Mayor Barber encouraged all to visit the market.

## VI. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. COUNCIL ACTION ON:
  - a. A Conditional Use Permit request by Matthew Hicks, agent for Andrews Roofing and Construction, LLC, for a single family residence at 100 Depot Street, N.E. (tax parcel 496 – ((15)) – 61A) in the B-3 General Business District. Councilman Hall made a motion to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation to issue the CUP as requested, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.
2. SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER GRANT. Police Chief Sisson provided Council with a fact sheet outlining the options regarding the school resource officer (SRO) grant and his opinion on this grant opportunity. According to Chief Sisson, the SRO(s) provided through the grant would be assigned to Falling Branch Elementary, Christiansburg Elementary, and Christiansburg Primary schools and would be responsible for maintaining the current D.A.R.E. program. The current D.A.R.E. officer would then be assigned to crime prevention. Council has the option to only accept one SRO position, at a lower cost to the Town, and the one SRO would rotate between the three schools. The grant does require that the Town retain the full-time SRO position after the grant has ended, and while the state expects the funding to be available for four years, it has given no guarantee that funds will remain available. Chief Sisson voiced his support for accepting the grant for one officer and he spoke about the importance of SRO placement within the elementary schools, not only for security reasons, but also for the opportunity to build positive relationships with the children. Chief Sisson explained that the Montgomery County School Board is receptive to the SRO placement, if the Town moves forward with accepting the grant. Councilman Vanhoozier said he has concerns with the grant stipulation that the Town must continue to fund the full-time SRO position for an indefinite period of time once the grant concludes. At most, he is only willing to support accepting one position to minimize costs and to meet Chief Sisson's goal to provide security and community relations at the elementary schools. Councilman Hall said unreported abuse and neglect are concerns within the younger populations and are evident to trained police officers. He voiced his support for accepting one position and is open to considering accepting two. Councilman Huppert requested that, if approved, the officer(s) appointed SRO come before Council to talk about the position. Councilman Showalter expressed his support for either one or two position and pointed out that Falling Branch Elementary and Christiansburg Elementary are open campuses that use mobile classroom units that are open to anyone. Christiansburg Primary and Christiansburg Elementary are close enough to share an officer, but Councilman Showalter said he believes the more remote location of Falling Branch Elementary school justifies a second SRO and the grant may not become available again. Councilman Stipes expressed his support for accepting one officer position based on the information provided and after reflecting on budget talks. Councilman Bishop asked for clarification on Montgomery County's position concerning the grant. Chief Sisson replied that school superintendent Brenda Blackburn was aware of, and supportive of, his application to the state for the SRO positions and she verbally agreed to approach the school board concerning the matter. The school board will vote on the acceptance of SRO(s) into the elementary schools on August 4, 2015. Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to approve accepting the grant funding for one school resource officer position, seconded by Councilman Stipes.

Councilman Hall expressed his concern for the likelihood that the county would increasingly utilize mobile classroom units due to lack of funding for building expansion, which increases the vulnerability of school campuses. His focus is primarily on Falling Branch Elementary School, which has special needs due to its unique location, and he feels it is important to take advantage of the opportunity to create two SRO positions while it is available. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Nay, with the clarification that his vote did not reflect a lack of support for accepting the SRO position, but was due to his strong belief that the Town was missing an important opportunity in not accepting both positions; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier - Aye.

**3. PROPOSAL TO UPDATE TOWN ENTRANCE SIGNS** (Councilman Vanhoozier). Councilman Vanhoozier addressed Council regarding the need to update the gateway signs into Christiansburg. Pictures were shown of the existing signs, which are dated and partially hidden by overgrown landscaping. Councilman Vanhoozier proposed replacing six existing signs and adding a new one along Peppers Ferry Road; he provided several design concepts, which were based on the appearance of the newly opened Huckleberry Trail bridge, for Council consideration and discussion. According to Councilman Vanhoozier, the cost of two signs would be approximately \$58,000, with a total cost of \$162,000 to place the six signs at one time. Councilman Vanhoozier requested that Town administration take the information he has provided and research the most feasible plan for replacing the signs. He then presented his proposal for the civic signs, which would be separated from the gateway signs. Councilman Showalter recommended that signs also be placed near the mall area, near the new park and ride at I-81, and off the 460-Bypass near Lowes, because these areas are highly visible to people visiting Christiansburg even though they are not defined "gateways". Town Administration will study the sign replacement proposal, including the development of four new sign locations, and will bring its findings to Council.

**4. FINANCING OPTIONS FOR LAND PURCHASE AND FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT UPGRADES.**

Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie provided Council with an outline of its options for financing renovations to the third floor of the police department and the purchase of land for a future road. She reviewed the three options and explained the financial breakdown of each that included annual debt service and total debt. Her recommendation to Council was that they seek a bond loan to cover the cost of both financial needs and to borrow from the emergency services fund to fund the debt service until another source of funding can be established. An important consideration was that the waste water treatment fund would retire in 2018 and could provide a means for absorbing the debt service on a new bond. Council agreed that it was important that any money borrowed from the emergency services fund must be used to cover costs associated with the police department building renovation. Councilman Hall made a motion to accept Mrs. Tweedie's recommendation to seek a bond loan to provide funding for the police department renovation and for the purchase of land for a future road, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier. Councilman Hall modified his motion to include that the bond loan was to be financed for ten years with the first two years of debt service payments realized by the emergency services fund. Councilman Vanhoozier seconded the modified motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.

In conjunction with the above, Town Manager Helms, asked council to consider adopting a resolution declaring its intent to reimburse itself from the proceeds of one or more tax-exempt financings for certain expenditures made and/or to be made in connection with the acquisition of property, and construction of certain capital improvements projects. 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. A copy of the resolution is attached herewith.

**VII. COUNCIL REPORTS**

- a. Councilman Showalter reported that the Central Business District Committee recently met and was given a brief presentation on the farmers' market by Bill Aldridge and Sarah Belcher. The committee also discussed updating the Town's wayfinding signs. He further reported that the committee will be proceeding with forming an eight or nine member committee to assist with matters concerning the downtown area and Cambria. He voiced his support for funding a market study that would cohesively join the various small studies by Town committees into one central plan for marketing the Town.
- b. Councilman Stipes expressed his appreciation for the information provided during the staff reports.
- c. Councilman Hall requested that Harkrader Sports Complex and the recreation center be included in the wayfinding sign update.
- d. Mayor Barber reported that he planned to prepare and present to Council a proclamation proclaiming the month of October as "Help Save the Next Girl in Christiansburg" month, with a specific date of October 17, 2015. This item will be placed on the agenda for the September 22 regular Council meeting.

**VIII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORTS:**

1. PUBLIC HEARING REQUESTS: Town Manager Helms presented the following request and recommended setting the Public Hearing for September 8, 2015:

1. Rezoning request by Harless Todd and Jeanie M. Ratliff for property located at 1050 Peppers Ferry Road, N.W. (tax parcel 434 – ((A)) – 22) from A Agriculture to B-3 General Business. The property contains 5.49 acres and is scheduled as residential in the Future Land Use Map of the Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

On motion by Councilman Hall, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier, Council voted to set the Public Hearing for September 8, 2015, as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier - Aye.

**2. PROGRESS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Downtown Christiansburg, Inc. has requested the closure of Main Street from the Town Square to Dunkley Street on September 25, 2015 for a food truck rodeo. Council agreed to approve the request without a formal voice vote.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 9:25 P.M.

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Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

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D. Michael Barber, Mayor